

**Othered Flesh: Social-Scientific and Critical Spatial Investigations into the  
Tattooed Ancient Near Eastern Body as Space and Body in Space.**

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**Othered Flesh: Social-Scientific and Critical Spatial Investigations into the  
Tattooed Ancient Near Eastern Body as Space and Body in Space.**

by

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Melissa Adendorff

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## ABSTRACT

The study of the ancient tattooed Mediterranean people from Assyria (*circa* 3300 BCE-2100 BCE), Egypt (*circa* 2000 BCE-300 BCE) Nubia (*circa* 2000 BCE-300 BCE), Israel (*circa* 1500 BCE-1200 BCE), Greece (*circa* 510 BCE-323 BCE), and Rome (*circa* 510 BCE-323 BCE) comprises the interpretivist investigation into the social-scientific and critical spatial practices of the cultures in order to establish whether or not the tattooed individuals would have been othered because of their marks. This othering is investigated in terms of the body in space, as well as the body as space.

The social-scientific and critical spatial interpretation of the tattooing practices of the ancient Mediterranean cultures show that there are nine social values which are common to these cultures. These values are clothing, communicativeness, honour and shame, humility, nudity, ordering, prominence, social norms, customs, and laws (originally referred to as Torah-orientation), and wholeness. The analysis of these values as they are applied to each of the aforementioned cultures allows for the establishment of the social body as an entity within social space, as well as a spatial entity in itself. The critical spatial interpretation of the phenomenon of Thirthing-as-Othering is applied in terms of how the tattooed individuals are othered within the social spaces they inhabit. Critical spatiality is further applied in order to analyse the tattooed body in space, based on its social interaction within societal space, as well as to body as space which is analysed based on the individual who bears the tattoos, and the meaning, affect, and esteem that are imparted to that individual by virtue of his or her marks.

This study shows that there is a distinction between honourable and shameful tattoos, and that the othering which occurs based on the honour or shame of the tattooed individual either otheres the marked individual in the case of shameful tattoos, or, in the case of honourable tattoos, other the unmarked individuals by refusing them access and entry into elite communities, such as those of the military.

Finally, the study identifies four factors of the ancient Mediterranean tattooing process which may be compared, namely, whether or not the tattooing process is engaged in under the individual's own volition, whether the tattooing process is only applicable to one or both sexes, whether the tattoos are honourable or shameful, and whether the tattoos are decorative, religious, military, or punitive and preventative.

## KEY TERMS

Ancient Mediterranean

Social-scientific criticism

Critical Spatiality

Thirthing-as-Othering

Iconography

Description

Other

Tattoos

Values

Clothing

Communicativeness

Honour and shame

Humility

Nudity

Ordering

Prominence

Social norms, customs, and laws

Wholeness

Body in space

Body as space

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. Introduction

The study of othered flesh incorporates social-scientific and critical spatial theories in order to analyse the tattooed bodies of the ancient Mediterranean as bodies in space, as well as bodies as spaces themselves. The underlying assumption about the tattooed body, whether in ancient or in modern times, is that the body is othered from unmarked civilians because of the fact that the body has tattoos inscribed upon it, and that the messages embedded within the design of the tattoos could affect their bearers in terms of further othering due to the social interpretation of these tattoo designs. Based on this assumption, and the meaning attributed to the interpretation of tattoos in a social context, the tattooed body is understood to be a social body, and, as such, that the tattooed body can be analysed through social-scientific criticism.

The analysis of social values which are relevant to societal bodily practices allow the establishment of the social body as an entity within social space, as well as a spatial entity in itself. The body in space is analysed based on its social interaction within societal space, whereas the body as space is analysed based on the individual who bears the tattoos, and the meaning, affect, and esteem that are imparted to that individual by virtue of his or her marks.

This thesis aims to investigate the process by which tattooed individuals are othered from the ancient Mediterranean societies of Assyria (*circa* 3300 BCE-2100 BCE), Egypt (*circa* 2000 BCE-300 BCE) Nubia (*circa* 2000 BCE-300 BCE), Israel (*circa* 1500 BCE-1200 BCE), Greece (*circa* 510 BCE-323 BCE), and Rome (*circa* 510 BCE-323 BCE). This othering is investigated in terms of a social-scientific investigation into the cultural values which apply to the tattooing practices in which these cultures engage. The investigation is continued in terms of a critical spatial exploration of the effect of this othering upon the tattooed body in space, based on the access to or restriction from public spaces based on the tattoos which an individual bears, as well as the effect that the tattooing process itself, and the othering has on the individual's body as space, in terms of personal and social esteem.

The following chapter presents an introduction to the study of the othered flesh of tattooed individuals of the aforementioned ancient Mediterranean cultures. This chapter consists of the rationale of the study, the motivation for the study, and the research problem which the

study centres upon. An overview of the methodology of the study is presented in order to contextualise the outcomes of the study, as well as the expected results of the study. Chapter One also presents a breakdown of the study in terms of the information provided in each of the five chapters which comprise the thesis, titled *Othered Flesh: Social-Scientific and Critical Spatial Investigations into the Tattooed Ancient Near Eastern Body as Space and Body in Space*.

## 2. Rationale of the Study

The concepts of the body in space and the body as space have been investigated in various disciplines, such as that of philosophy, for example by Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Michele Foucault; that of drama, dance and movement studies, for example by Rudolph Laban, and in terms of ancient cultural history, specifically in terms of honour and shame, for example by John Pilch and Bruce Malina, as well as Johan Coetzee. The body in space is also investigated in critical spatiality, as promulgated by Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja. The significance of the culture of the tattooed body has been studied in the field of tattoo anthropology by, for example, Dr Lars Krutak, of the Smithsonian Museum.

Anthropological investigations into ancient tattooing practices have yielded data on the Japanese tattooing culture, as well as that of the Maori, Peruvian, and Polynesian cultures. Some of the oldest discovered mummies with tattoos are Peruvian, and were found to have originated from cemeteries from Peru's and Chile's coastal regions (Pabst *et al* 2010:3260). One of these mummies bears two different styles of tattoo, on two parts of his body.

Another mummy with tattoos is believed to have been a Skythian nomad prince from the Altai Mountain, dated to 500 BCE. This mummy's tattoos were found to be designs of mythical creatures, which were inscribed on his arms, shoulders, chest, back and the right leg (Pabst *et al* 2010: 3260).

Anthropological studies have also been conducted into the ritual of the tattooing process, an example of which is the process of the inscription of a Maori Moko, which James Cowan (1921:242) documented. Cowan describes how one particular *tapu* ceremony was performed during winter, and he explains the veneration of the tattoo artist, by stating that the artist was always well-paid, and was offered the best choice of foods during the ceremony, which could last for as long as two weeks. The tattoo artist would chant during the tattooing process in order to distract the individual being tattooed from the pain of the engraving of the Moko (Cowan 1921:242).

The tattooed body in space, and the tattooed body as space, have not been widely investigated, as applications for examples of interdisciplinary investigations, such as anthropology and social-scientific criticism, or anthropology and ancient cultural history. The following brief literature review is thus compiled to show evidence of available theoretical data, as well as evidence of primary data in the case of tattooed remains, in order to support the possibility of the application of the theories related to the body in space and the body as space to the ancient Mediterranean tattooed body.

Modern-day tattooing practices stemmed from older cultural influences, which can be traced back to discoveries made from as far back as 4000-3500 BCE, as there were ancient Egyptian figurines of human females, which had tattoos represented on their thighs (Lineberry 2007). There is also evidence of ancient tattooing implements, which date back as far as 1450 BCE, which were discovered in the town of Gurob in Northern Egypt (Lineberry 2007).

More evidence to support ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices can be seen on the remains of some mummies, which retained the tattoo markings, which date back to 2000 BCE; and later examples which were discovered in Akhmim (Lineberry 2007).

Herbert Winlock excavated tattooed mummies from Deir el-Bahari from 1922-1923, which showed evidence of tattooing being done on the face and the hands of women (Tassie 2003:86). There have been discoveries of the tattooed mummified remains of 42 women from Egypt and Nubia, dating from the Middle Kingdom to the Ptolemaic Period (Tassie 2003:89).

Another example of tattooed mummies being excavated is that of the adolescent and adult female mummies found at the excavations at Aksha, dating to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, just south of Abu Simbel and Faras (Tassie 2003:91). The tattoo designs on the mummies consist primarily of geometric designs, but there is evidence to suggest that tattoos of the god Bes, as well as the goddess Tawaret, were also inscribed on certain women. Some tattooed mummies from 1300 BCE are inscribed with pictographs of Neith (Green 2001).

Various tattooed mummies, including ancient Mediterranean mummies are on display as part of the “Mummies of the World” exhibition, which is housed in Mannheim’s Reiss-Engelhorn Museum.

This study aims to investigate these occurrences of ancient Mediterranean tattooing through investigating the recorded incidents and remnants of tattooing practices from Assyria, Egypt, Nubia, Israel, Greece, and Rome.

The tattoos which are to be examined are based on the conceptual framework of bodily spatiality, focusing both on the body in space and the body as space.

The body as space entails a somatic reality, which, for Maurice Merleau-Ponty, is explained inasmuch as the phenomenological body having a somatic presence, and as such, the body has the potential for socio-semiotic interactionism, as the body as space contains the inherent potential to be a “sign-vehicle, and to be an object” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:9-11). The body as a sign vehicle lends itself to the interpretation of a tattooed body as space, as it can be construed as one of the forms of narrative bodies which have been othered because of “deviance and diversity” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:9-13).

“Othering” in this context refers to the fact that the tattooed bodies are different and thus segregated from un-tattooed bodies. This term is used within the context of Thirthing-as-Othering, as the power relations of a space inherently imply that those in opposition to the power will be other to it. Thus, the othering that occurs in a given Thirdspace are directly linked to the history and the society that inhabits it. Thirdspace contains the presupposition of being-in-the-world of “historical-social-spatial beings who actively participate individually and collectively in the construction/production – the ‘becoming’ – of societies” (Soja 1996:73).

The body as space as a canvas for a tattoo is a reflexive process, which has to be “negotiated within the context of social networks wherein desires, resources, and power” function (Waskul & Vannini 2006:27). It can be assumed that the social context within which this reflective process occurs sets the boundaries for interaction between the tattooed body and other bodies. The concept of boundaries can be more closely linked to the body as space, however.

Arthur Kleinman (1980:115) posits the idea of the body being a model for a “bounded system”, and as a whole within that system. The ancient Near Eastern value of wholeness relates directly to this idea, as this value is centred upon being complete in body, thought and action (Pilch & Malina 1998:8-209). The fact that the ancient Mediterranean body represents boundaries is important when considering the fact that the process of tattooing requires the breaching of several of the boundaries associated with the body.

The first bodily boundary that is breached in order to tattoo the space of the body, is that of nudity. This value pertains particularly to women, as the exposure of women’s bodies can be related to both sin and shame (Pilch & Malina 1998:8-209), as a woman is required to be as fully clothed as possible in order to maintain honour. As such, the space of the body is exposed in order to undergo the tattooing process, and after that process has been completed, the space of the body may remain exposed in order to show a tattoo.

Pilch and Malina (1998:8-209) identify the head as an honourable part of the body, but since they also state that “God made no blemished or imperfect beasts” in relation to the value of wholeness (Pilch & Malina 1998:8-209); it can be assumed that to tattoo, and thus blemish, the face or the head, may alter the honourable stature of that particular body part. This idea of the forbidden blemish is directly related to tattooing in Leviticus 19:28, which states the following:

<p>וְשָׂרְטָה לֹא תִתְּנוּ          בְּבְשָׁרְכֶם וּכְתֹבֶת־קַעֲקָע לֹא          תִתְּנוּ בְּכֶם          אֲנִי יְהוָה:</p>	<p>“Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead,          nor imprint any marks upon you:          I am the LORD”</p>
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The prohibition of imprinting marks may be interpreted as the prohibition against tattooing, as a tattoo is an imprinted mark on the body.

Through tattooing on the face, and drawing attention to the eyes and the mouth, one may question whether the facial tattoos would influence the value of purity that is related to the mouth, in particular. The significance of tattooing the spaces of the hands and feet may show either power and honour or shame, respectively, based on the designs tattooed, or the individual upon which the tattoos were inscribed. This is due to the fact that the value of hands-feet is strongly grounded on the principle of agency; and a person’s “capabilities of doing, of making, and of having a physical effect on others and [that person’s] environment” (Pilch & Malina 1998:8-209). As the removal of an individual’s shoes is a gesture of shame, it may be considered that the tattoos on the feet, once exposed, would similarly denote shameful “blemishes”.

In the ancient Mediterranean, and specifically in Assyria, body modification was used as a means to enforce dominance over captured individuals who were defeated in battle, as well as over slaves (Pilch & Malina 1998:8-209). While this body modification is not explicitly explained in terms of tattooing, through the process of reducing the social and religious status of an individual, it is plausible that tattooing may have been used, as tattoos vividly identify the social status of an individual (Fleming 2001).

The idea of the space of the skin being blemished by a tattoo can be linked to the idea of “unclean skin”, which Pilch (1981:111) explains to be a concern about the boundaries of the body, as “the skin is the body’s boundary”. Once the skin is tattooed, it is no longer whole, and thus the space of the body is no longer un-breached in terms of its boundaries.

Tattoos can be seen as blemishes, and as mutilations, which supports the idea of breaching the boundary of the skin. The process of mutilating, and thus, the process of tattooing, manipulate the space of the body in order to mark the space of the body and to effect a physical change due to the somatic alteration (Lemos 2006:226).

The functioning of the body in space is explained by Victor Matthews (2005:140) as space “shape[ing] behaviour and cognitive factors”. As such, a body as space will necessarily be a body in space, as behaviour has a spatial quality. This “spatial frame of reference includes physical objects and influences the identity and status changes as a person shifts from one type of space to another” (Matthews 2008:140-141). Thus, “space is the fluid environment in which we make our homes” (West-Pavlov 2009:241).

Valerie Preston-Dunlop and Lesley-Anne Sayers (2010:32-35) explain that the spatial construct is a projection from within the subject, and thus, from the body in space. Space is therefore “living” (Preston-Dunlop & Sayers 2010:35).

The living space as experienced by the body is necessarily a corporeal experience, which encompasses the “five anatomical zones of the body, as well as the body’s centre from six directions radiate” (Preston-Dunlop & Sayers 2010:35). This corporeality creates a spatial sense within which the body functions. The body in space requires a unity of body and mind, as well as the psychophysiological and psychophysical. The latter two may be interpreted as limits or boundaries.

Foucault states that “we could write a history of limits”, inasmuch as the boundaries present that through which a culture identifies itself (West-Pavlov 2009:123). These boundaries would be enforced upon bodies which, due to social stature, may or may not be allowed to breach certain boundaries. If bodies with tattoos were identified as being other to bodies without tattoos, then this system of boundary enforcements may apply to the tattooed body in space. The tattooed body in space may thus be interpreted according to Foucault’s hypothesis of a shift from banishment, to an “internal mode of exclusion from society” (West-Pavlov 2009:151).

Tor Hernes (2004:15) uses the following criteria to establish boundaries, which can be used as guidelines to investigate the othering and inhabitation of space in relation to the creation of boundaries based on the values of a certain group of people: Physical Boundaries (bonding of core ideas and concepts that are central and particular to the group, such as those of honour and shame, and the values of wholeness and nudity), Social Boundaries (identity and social bonding tying the group together, such as the bonding of non-tattooed individuals, as well as the bonding of a group of tattooed individuals) and Mental Boundaries (formal rules, physical



structures regulating human action, interaction in the group which would be implied in the boundaries enforced through the interpretation of the tattooed body in space).

These three boundaries are related and subject to Ordering (the extent to which boundaries regulate internal interaction), Distinction (the extent to which boundaries constitute a clear demarcation between internal and external spheres) and Threshold (the extent to which boundaries regulate flow or movement between the external and the internal sphere) (Hernes 2004:15-16).

Within these spaces, the othered characters become redefined as something other to what they once were (fallen as opposed to “un-fallen”, rebels as opposed to obedient servants, for example), and as such in their othered state inside of their othered space, their manner of inhabiting the space “displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority and new political initiatives” (Lu 2000:20).

“The link between spatiality, historicity and sociality” (Merrifield 1999:345), shows that how being othered and placed into an other space can change the psychology of the othered people in question, as it has a direct effect on the body in space. This link shows that while there is a possibility for harmony within the movement of bodies in space, the boundaries of power and social status and otherness impede on the space harmony, and thus render it static (Hodgson 2001:189).

### **3. Motivation for the Study**

The tattoo occupies a kind of boundary status on the skin, and this is paralleled by its cultural use as a maker of differences, an index of inclusion and exclusion ... The tattoo has been taken to mark off entire ‘civilisations’ from their ‘barbarian’ or ‘savage’ neighbours; to declare a convict’s criminality, whether by branding him as a punishment or because he has inverted this penal practice by acquiring voluntary tattoos (thereby, ironically, marking himself); and more generally to inscribe various kinds of group membership, often in opposition to a dominant culture (Caplan 2000:xiv).

Rosemary Joyce (2005:140) states that the body is a metaphor for society, and that it thus becomes an “instrument of lived experience”, and also, that it is “a surface of inscription”. This concept is expounded upon by Mike Featherstone and Bryan Turner (1995:1-3), who posit that the body is both “a sign and a symbol of social and political processes”. The body encompasses symbolic significance, as it is both a means of representation in metaphorical discourse, and a representation of social processes (Featherstone & Turner 1995:3).

The body, thus, has a socio-semiotic function, according to Dennis Waskul and Phillip Vannini (2006:11), as the body serves as a sign-vehicle, as well as an object. There is also a narrative

aspect to the body, which exemplifies the idea of an “intersection between the socio-linguistic and the physiological” in order to serve as “a terrain for the socio-political emancipation of those whose ‘abnormal’ bodies have been silenced by the cultural side-effects of illness, deviance, and diversity” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:13).

One of “abnormal bodies” is the tattooed body. Tattoos, “literally demarcating the skin, create permanent marks, unlike the use of clothing or ornaments, which can be adopted or changed more easily” (Joyce 2005:145). The tattooed body is an example of the body as space, as the body becomes the space upon which tattoos are inscribed. In addition, the tattooed body is an example of a body in space, as certain social conventions prohibit the entrance of tattooed individuals into certain demarcated areas. Juliet Fleming (2001:84) states that the tattooed body becomes a representation of “border skirmishing’ between themselves and others and between social groups”. Fleming (2001:84) continues by stating that tattooed individuals “redefine the relationship between [the] self and society through the skin”.

For Enid Schildkrout (2004:321), the tattooed body “mediates relations between persons, the sacred, and the present and the past”. Thus, the tattooed skin “negotiate[s] between the individual and society and between different social groups, but also mediates relations between persons and spirits, the human and the divine” (Schildkrout 2004:321).

Distinguishing a person through tattooing the skin is not a purely modern-day practice. Evidence of this is found on the mummified remains which bear tattoos which were found in Egypt (Deir el-Bahari) between 1922 and 1923 (Tassie 2003:86). The evidence of the ancient Egyptian tattooing practices draw upon the ideas of the body in space as well as the body as space, inasmuch as the placement of the tattoos, as well as the people being tattooed.

Firstly, it has been discovered that the ancient Egyptian tattoos were mostly inscribed upon the face (chins and/or foreheads), the backs of the hands, arms, feet, and the middle of a woman’s bosom, or a man’s chest (Tassie 2003:87). Secondly, Geoffrey Tassie (2003:87) explains that one of the purposes of this practice would have been to “play a role in defining an individual and maintaining the continuity of social units and social relationships”. This is relevant in terms of the body in space, as the vast majority of tattooed mummies have been identified as female, apart from one male mummy from “one Dynasty XII stele from Abydos” (Tassie 2003:87).

As such, knowing that women were distinguished by tattooing, it is important to note that there are two primary examples of distinction of tattooed women: women of the lower classes were readily found to have been marked with tattoos, both in Egypt, and in Nubia (where the C-

Group women were tattooed) (Tassie 2003:87), and also, Priestesses of Hathor were tattooed, the most notable of these being the priestess Amunet. This shows that a physical inscription on the skin would limit the social interactions available to the marked women, as their social standing would other them from the general population, with more access to places and occasions for social interaction, or it would limit their interactions within the space of the temple, and limit their interactions with other priestesses.

This tattooing practice can be interpreted social-scientifically, in terms of the compliance to ancient Near Eastern and ancient Mediterranean values which would centre upon honour and shame. A community's values influence the matrices of an individual's psyche and personality development, due to the fact that they shape the individual's behaviour and thus, motivation (Pilch & Malina 1998:xv-xxix).

The practice of tattooing the face of a woman of lower societal stature would influence the personality development of that individual, and thus shape that person's behaviour, in a way that would force that person to behave in accordance with the social standards that the mark would imply. Although the tattoos of the priestesses were inscribed on the lower abdomen, and would thus not have an overt influence of their *prima facie* acceptance and/or rejection based on their markings, it could be posited that the priestesses would feel imbued with the power of Hathor, for example, and be guided and protected by the symbolism of the tattoos which they bore. The values (Pilch & Malina 1998:xv-xxix) that would be influenced by and, in turn, influence the behaviour of a tattooed individual could be posited to include the values listed below.<sup>1</sup>

1. Clothing;
2. Communicativeness;
3. Honour and shame;
4. Humility;
5. Nudity;
6. Ordering;
7. Prominence;
8. Social norms, customs, and laws;
9. Wholeness.

The purpose of tattooing, as can be inferred from the list above, is to differentiate and to distinguish the tattooed individual(s) from the rest of society. This differentiation can be

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<sup>1</sup> These values are explained and contextualised in Chapter 2.

interpreted as a form of othering<sup>2</sup>. This interpretation of othering has been pioneered by Henri Lefebvre, through his argument that “difference be contextualised in social and political practices that are linked to *spatio-analysis*, the analysis, or better, the knowledge (*connaissance*) of the (social) production of (social) space” (Soja 1996:34-35). These social and political practices are exemplified in Thirdspace (*espace vécu*, lived space), as opposed to Firstspace (*espace perçu*, perceived space), or Secondspace (*espace conçu* conceived space) (Flanagan 1999:15-43).

Otherness is exemplified within the context of the lived space, as this is there where the power dynamics of the space’s inhabitants become lived; where the lower classes are identified, and marked, for example. This othering practice is a psychosocial attribution that is tied to psychosocial relations of power and knowledge (Flanagan 1995:15-43). Through social practice, representations of space occur, which lead to the existence of representational spaces (lived spaces).

Edward Soja (1996:60) explores Thirdspace through introducing Thirthing-as-Othering in Lefebvre’s terms the *trialectics* of relationships of binary opposites, such as the relationships between subject-object, continuity-discontinuity, open-closed, as seen in the paradigm of Western philosophy. This binary opposition has become ineffectual, though, as the signifier and the signified is inherently more than a relation between two terms. “One always has Three. There is always the other” (Lefebvre 1991:225, 143).

The importance of the Thirdspace comes to the fore inasmuch as “the spatiality that is claimed and whose recognition is desired in stories must be the territoriality of a segmented society. It is a ‘people space’, not bordered territories; and it is Thirdspace, the lived space of outsider peoples” (Flanagan 1995:15-43). An important feature of the othered space would be its boundary, or border, as it is through the border that the Thirdspace becomes effectual.

Thirdspace fuses the physical of Firstspace and the emotional of Secondspace into a “double illusion” that becomes a social space with two distinct features; one being that it is a field which can be separated from the physical and mental, and two, that it becomes an “approximation for an all-encompassing mode of spatial thinking” (Soja 1996:62). Thirdspace, then, is present alongside the other two modes of space, but it encompasses them, as Thirdspace shows how the space is directly *lived* and how it is dominated and subjected (Soja 1996:62-68).

The power relations and thus the othering that occurs in a given Thirdspace are directly linked to the history and the society that inhabits them. As such, by othering individuals through

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<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this study, othering will be regarded as a spatial phenomenon.

tattooing them, they become othered within the Thirdspace of that society, as well as limited to the Firstspace and Secondspace that they may inhabit, such as temples, by virtue of that othering.

McNutt (2003) expands upon Lefebvre's Thirdspace power-relations in terms of the relationships between centres and peripheries, and the power of the spatial divisions, dominated spaces and their counterspaces. In segmented societies, without permanent governmental authorities, power becomes dependant on how the segments relate to one another in terms of membership, kinship and, in turn, genealogy. The othered people, in this instance, the tattooed people are treated with ambivalence tinged with fear, and could be forced to live in separate areas to the populace (McNutt 2003:30-50).

This study will, therefore, investigate the process of othering through the tattooing process, and then investigate the effects of that othering in terms of the Thirthing-as-Othering which results from the individual(s) being tattooed.

#### **4. Research Problem**

The primary question that this investigation aims to answer is how the body is othered according to the theories of the body in space and the body as space, based on the social-scientific and critical spatial interpretations of ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices.

The question of the body in space is answered through investigating the spatial boundaries that are enforced upon the tattooed people of the time.

The question of the body as space is answered through investigating the significance of the parts of the body (the spaces of the body) that would have been tattooed in the ancient Mediterranean, as well as how honour or shame is assigned to the space of the body by the tattoos inscribed upon it, and how that affects the tattooed individual social and personal esteem.

#### **5. Research Approach**

The research approach to be employed in this study comprises three theoretical frameworks.

The first of these is the framework of social-scientific criticism, which identifies the values of ancient Mediterranean people, in terms of the body as space (what is honourable or shameful to show in terms of body parts, and bodily behaviour), as well as the body in space, in terms

of where certain bodies are allowed or banished from. Through a social-scientific analysis of ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices, it will be possible to identify that which is othered, both in terms of body parts that are tattooed, and the social and physical boundaries of the tattooed people.

The second framework is that of critical spatiality, which investigates the aforementioned othering in terms of the spatial significance of the tattooed body parts in question, as well as the power-relations and spatial behaviour of the othered individuals. This analysis will focus on Thirthing-as-Othering, as the most important spatial application of the analysis is done in regard to the lived space of the ancient Mediterranean people.

The third framework is that of iconography, which is not necessarily overtly executed throughout the study, but which forms the background against which to interpret the images of the tattoos. An example of the significance of the tattoos themselves, and thus the necessity for an iconographical analysis, is shown by Tassie (2003:88), who explains that ancient Egyptian tattoos show that the recipient or artist, respectively, may have had an affinity for certain numbers, which would then be embedded within their tattoos. This indicates that there would be a symbolic significance to the tattoos, beyond mere social status identification, as “certain numbers held magical properties”, such as “two symbolising duality, three symbolising plurality in the families of the gods” (Tassie 2003:88).

While this study is conducted in the field of ancient cultural history, it draws upon the implicit fourth framework of anthropological data in order to investigate the cultural phenomenon of tattooing in order to create a context for the investigation into ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices. Due to the nature of the research methodology, and the fact that it is not possible to conduct action research in terms of the cultures being investigated, this implicit, overarching field is acknowledged, but not investigated, in order to avoid the need for the appointment of a co-supervisor from the Department of Anthropology. Furthermore, the methodology utilised in the study is based on social-scientific criticism and critical spatiality, as opposed to the field research and ethnographic analyses which are used in anthropological data collection and analysis

## **6. Methodology**

This study falls within the qualitative paradigm, within the realm of interpretivism. Interpretivism is centred around the interpretation and understanding of the social world that has been produced by people through assigning meaning which is “embedded in language”, to actions and activities that constitute the “social reality” of a given group of people at a given

time (Mason 2002:56). The interpretivist approach uses texts and objects as primary data sources in order to analyse “what they say or how they are constituted in people’s individual or collective meanings” (Mason 2002:56).

This study will thus rely upon textual interpretations of accounts of the values and tattooing practices of the ancient Mediterranean people, in order to establish a social-scientific context for the investigation(s) into the body as space, and the body in space. This study will also rely upon these accounts in order to create a critical spatial context for the investigation(s) into the body as space, and the body in space.

Once these contexts have been established, through the textual analysis of secondary data, a social-scientific and critical spatial analysis can be carried out on the images of the tattoos on the various mummified bodies that have been discovered, which will include discoveries dating from 5500-3360 BCE, to 1069-747 BCE. This anthropological primary data will be investigated in terms of iconography, as well as the body as space.

## **7. Objectives of the Study**

Given the purpose of this study, the objectives are to:

- investigate and explain the ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices in terms of social-scientific values, as they relate to the body in space and the body as space;
- investigate and explain the significance of the tattoo designs used in ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices;
- investigate and explain the ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices in terms of the body as space and the significance of the placement of the tattoos, and their effects on the individual’s social and personal esteem;
- investigate and explain the critical spatial concept of Thirthing-as-Othering in terms of how the tattooed people of the ancient Mediterranean would have been treated with regard to physical boundaries and spatial behaviour.

## **8. Expected Results**

It is expected that this study will yield the following results:

Firstly, the demonstration that tattooing was practiced in ancient Mediterranean cultures, namely, the Assyrians, Egyptians, Nubians, Israelites, Greeks, and Romans; with a specific social purpose; to show the social stature of tattooed individuals, and to indicate that the individual is honourable or shameful, based on the tattoo that he or she bears.



Secondly, the demonstration that the practices of tattooing in the ancient Mediterranean exemplify the body as space, because of the specific placement of the tattoos, and that there is a correlation between the (iconographic) significance of the tattoo designs and the specific parts of the body upon which those designs are typically tattooed. It is also expected that these tattoos will assign either honour or shame to the body as space, and, as such, the tattoos would affect the individual's body in terms of social and personal esteem.

Thirdly, the demonstration that, through identifying social stature through tattooing practices, ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices influence and are influenced by the social-scientific values of clothing, communicativeness, honour and shame, humility, nudity, ordering, prominence, social norms, customs, and laws, and wholeness.

Lastly, the demonstration that through the differentiation of social stature based on the either honourable or shameful marking of the skin through a tattoo, ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices exemplify the application of the interpretive theory of the body in space, as the process of marking the individual others him/her based on his/.her bodily appearance, and limits the movements and social behaviour of that body within cultural spaces, through the process of othering those with tattoos.

## **9. Breakdown of Chapters**

Chapter One serves as the introduction to the study, providing the title, the rationale, and the motivation for the study. This chapter contextualises the choice of qualitative, interpretivist research methodology, and states the research question, the objectives of the study, and the expected results of the study.

Chapter Two explains the research design of the study and provides the methodological overview of the research. This chapter provides the contextualisation of this study within the qualitative paradigm with an epistemology based on interpretivism, and the ontology of ancient Mediterranean societies, focusing on the body in space and body as space of tattooed individuals. Following this contextualisation, the interpretative theories are discussed in order to establish the methodological foundation for the research design of this study. These theories and interpretative models are social-scientific criticism, critical spatiality, bodily studies and body symbolism, the body in space and the body as space, tattooing, and iconography. This chapter also includes an overview of the study's research questions in order to determine how the interpretative theories and models will address and answer the questions.



Chapter Three provides the historical and contextual overview of the ancient Mediterranean. This is done through the investigation of the social, military, and religious practices of each of these cultures which are known to serve as the basis of the function of ancient tattooing, against the context of the geographical setting of the ancient Mediterranean in order to create the context against which the tattooing practices of these cultures will be analysed in Chapter Four. The ancient Mediterranean cultures whose practices will be analysed are identified as the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Nubians, the Israelites, the Greeks, and the Romans.

Chapter Four provides the data presentation and the data analysis of the textual and photographic evidence of the existence of ancient Mediterranean tattoos. This chapter provides the evidence for the theories of the body in space and the body as space being used to interpret the cultural significance of ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices based on the common values that the cultures shared in terms of marking the flesh of individuals as other; and how these markings influenced those who wore them in the space that they inhabited both publically and privately. This evidence is then discussed in order to answer the research problem presented in Chapter One.

Chapter Five provides the conclusion to the thesis. This chapter explains how the research questions were answered, and explores the possibility for future research based on this thesis' results. Chapter Five provides a summary of the thesis, in terms of the rationale of the research question, an overview of literature, a summary of the methodology applied in order to answer the research questions, a summary of the results of the data presentation and analysis, and a discussion based on the reflection on whether the objectives of the thesis have been met.

## **10. Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter provides the context and introduction to the study, entitled *Othered Flesh: Social-Scientific and Critical Spatial Investigations into the Tattooed Ancient Mediterranean Body as Space and Body in Space*.

This study aims to investigate and explain the ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices in terms of social-scientific values, as they relate to the body in space and the body as space; as well as to explain the significance of the tattoo designs used in ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices. Through doing so, this study aims to explain ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices in terms of the body as space and the significance of the placement of the tattoos; and to relate the practice to the critical spatial concept of Thirthing-as-Othering in terms

of how the tattooed people of the ancient Mediterranean would have been treated with regard to physical boundaries and spatial behaviour.

Chapter One explains the rationale of this study, which is centred around a deeper investigation into the social anthropology of the tattooing practices of ancient cultures, specifically those of the ancient Mediterranean, in order to analyse the practice based on social-scientific (Pilch & Malina 1998) and critical spatial theories (Soja 1999; Lefebvre 1991) of cultural values, and how the values which are either honourable or shameful influence the behaviour of those whose bodies have been tattooed; thus influencing the body in space and the body as space.

Following this explanation, this chapter provides a brief contextualisation of the methodology which is to be employed throughout the study. This study is qualitative and interpretivist in nature, and utilises the interpretive theories of social-scientific criticism, critical spatiality, and iconography in order to analyse the data on ancient tattooing practices.

Finally, this chapter explains the expected outcomes of the study. These expected outcomes are that the study will yield results which show that tattooing was practiced in ancient Mediterranean times with a specific social purpose; to show the social stature of tattooed individuals through decorative, religious, military, or punitive means. The outcomes also include the demonstration that the practices of tattooing in the ancient Mediterranean exemplify the body as space, because of the specific placement of the tattoos, and the (iconographic) significance of the tattoos on certain spaces of the body. Further outcomes are to show that through identifying social stature through tattooing practices, that ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices influence and are influenced by social-scientific values, and that, through the differentiation of social stature, ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices exemplify the body in space, through the process of othering those with tattoos, and thus influencing and limiting their social behaviour.

## CHAPTER TWO

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter provides a contextualisation of the research methodology and research design which comprise this study. This is done through the contextualising the establishment of this study within the qualitative paradigm, with an epistemology based on interpretivism, and the ontology of ancient Mediterranean societies, focusing on the body in space and body as space of tattooed individuals.

Following this contextualisation, the interpretative theories are discussed in order to establish the methodological foundation for the research design of this study. These theories and interpretative models are social-scientific criticism, critical spatiality, bodily studies and body symbolism, the body in space and the body as space, tattooing, and iconography. This chapter also includes an overview of the study's research questions in order to determine how the interpretative theories and models will address and answer the questions.

#### 2. Research Methodology

This study takes place within the qualitative paradigm of interpretivism. The word “qualitative” contains an inherent emphasis on the qualities of entities, processes, and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency (Denzin & Lincoln 1995:8). Qualitative research stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is being studied, and the situational constraints that shape the research (Denzin & Lincoln 1995:8).

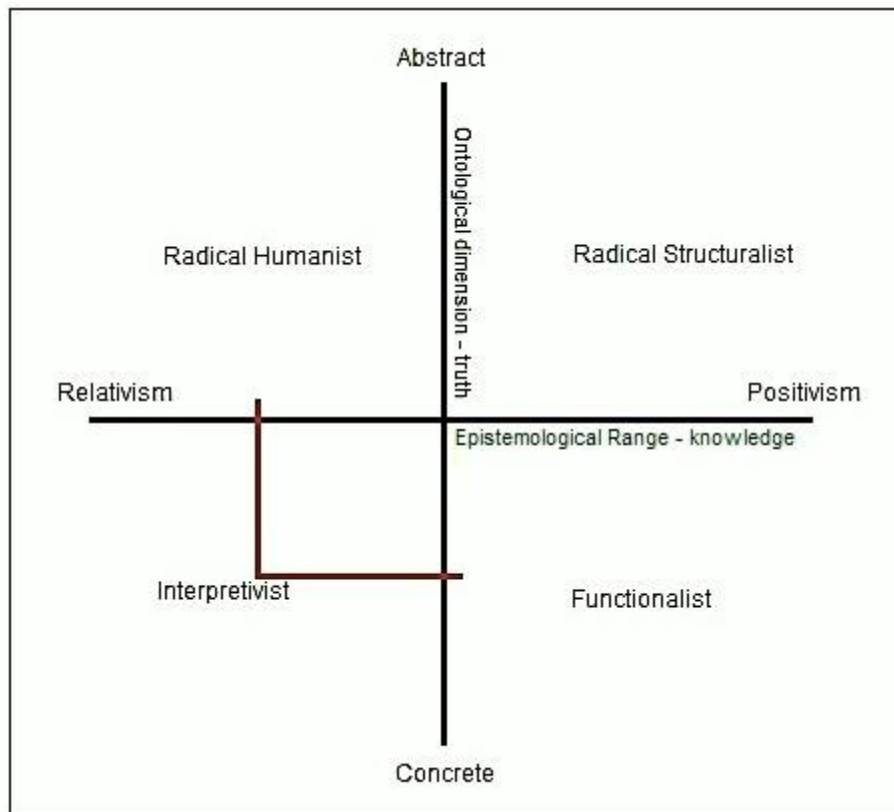
Jennifer Mason (2002:3-4) contextualises qualitative research as follows: it is based on philosophical positions which are considered to be interpretivist due to their interest in the social world in terms of its interpretation, its understanding, its experience, and its production (Mason 2002:3). The methods of data gathering and generation in the qualitative paradigm are “both flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced”, and the methods of data interpretation necessarily “involve understandings of complexity, detail, and context” (Mason 2002:3). Qualitative research focuses on the context and contextual understandings of the people or phenomena being studied, which renders it “holistic in its forms of analysis”, even though “statistical forms of analysis are not seen as central” (Mason 2002:3-4).

Interpretivism is distinguishable from positivism, as even though the research is objective, it is not necessarily quantifiable; due to the nature of the data available, as well as the nature of the research problems, which necessarily investigate social realities. When making use of the interpretive approach, the researcher does not stand empirically and objectively “above or outside” the research in question, but is a participant observer (Carr & Kemmis 1986:88), seeking to discern the meanings of actions as they are expressed within specific social contexts.

The data available for this study consists mainly of the written and translated interpretations and accounts of behaviours, actions, customs, and religions of ancient Mediterranean people, as well as pictorial evidence of tattoos on mummies, and the tattooed mummies themselves. This data cannot be empirically verified or replicated, thus rendering it qualitative, rather than quantitative. This data is used in order to further the understanding of the social life of the relevant ancient cultures through the mechanism of interpretive social science (Carr & Kemmis, 1986:90), because of the fact that the interpretive paradigm views the social world from the subjective experiences of individuals (Burrell & Morgan 1979:22-23).

The research design of this study can be graphically plotted as follows, based on an adaptation of Burrell and Morgan (1979:22).

**Figure 1: Plotting the Study**



Due to the social nature of the data, and the fact that no text or image can exist separately from the culture in which it originated, the methodology required to interpret this data falls within the ambit of the social sciences. The initial interpretation of the data in this study is done through social-scientific criticism, which is a qualitative method of interpretation, which has as a presupposition that “objectivity is illusory” (Elliott 1993:37).

The nature of social-scientific criticism is such that it draws from various fields in the social sciences, such as anthropology, philosophy, semiotics, political sciences, in order to create an interpretation of texts written during ancient times. This interpretation is influenced by the interpreter’s “psychological, social, and cultural locations that affect [his/her] general perceptions of reality” (Elliott 1993:37). The interpreter must overcome the present-day perceptions of the text in order to correctly interpret the author’s cultural location and intended meaning.

Because of this, social-scientific criticism utilises a “process of logic which is neither exclusively deductive nor inductive, but inclusive of both in a procedure characterised as ‘abduction’ or retroduction” (Elliott 1993:48). This process entails “conjecture checked by experience” (Elliott 1993:48). Social-scientific criticism involves the use of models, which may

be explained as “abstract and simplified representations of reality which are generally formulated as a result of empirical research, and serve to simplify, abstract, or generalise the findings, such that they can be further tested elsewhere” (Horrell 2000a:86).

David Horrell (2000b:86) notes that there is a danger in the creation of social-scientific models in terms of the interpretation of ancient cultural practices, particularly related to ancient Mediterranean cultures and New Testament data. He explains that the definition of models, as employed by Bruce Malina, encompasses the “purpose for ‘understanding, control, and prediction’” (Horrell 2000b:86). The concern that is raised is that social interpretation does not meet the “scientific aim to be able to discover repeatable regularities, and to predict their occurrence and outcome”, and therefore questions the status of social generalisations of models in terms of their acquisition “of the status of social law” (Horrell 2000b:86). Horrell (2000b:89) furthermore states that the anthropological study of ancient cultures is a humanistic interpretation, as opposed to a scientific one, and, that the nature of methodology may lead to the “researcher [viewing] the evidence in a particular way, or to assume that a certain pattern of conduct must be present” (Horrell 2000b:90)

While this criticism of the social-scientific model employed by Pilch and Malina (1998) is noted, this study does not use social-scientific criticism in order to impose the presence of behaviour upon the given cultures. The ontology of the study is the ancient Mediterranean world, and the behaviours which are being investigated are the tattooing practices of the Assyrians, the Egyptians, Nubians, Israelites, Greeks, and Romans, and, as such, the use of the social-scientific model is only employed to provide categories for the interpretation of the aforementioned behaviour based on the critical spatial effects of the behaviour on the tattooed individual and the society in question.

Smith (1989:171) contextualises ontology as follows: While reality is concrete, and can be explored, there are various constructs within each perceived reality which are exemplified through the behaviours and interactions of a people in a given place at a given time. Thus reality is constructed through human interaction. The ontology of this study, therefore, is the world of the ancient Mediterranean, governed by the values and actions surrounding the concepts of the body in space and the body as space, as experienced by tattooed individuals of the time.

The primary data available for this study is based on discoveries dating from 5500-3360 BCE, to 1069-747 BCE, and includes the actual mummified remains of ancient Near Eastern tattooed mummy of Amunet which is on display at the Museum of Antiquities in Cairo, Egypt; as well as the mummies of two Hathoric dancers which are displayed at the Metropolitan

Museum of Art in New York in the United States of America. The preserved remains of Nubian tattooed hands and forearms are housed in the Department of Anthropology at the Arizona State University in the United States of America. Further primary data includes figurines and art artefacts which are displayed at the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology in Oxford, England; and ancient near Eastern tattoo instruments, on display at the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology in London, England.

The secondary data of this study comprises of the written accounts of excavated mummies found to have tattoos, as well as the written descriptions of the tattooing process of the ancient Mediterranean. Another source of data is the book of Leviticus in the Hebrew Bible, which, through forbidding the act of tattooing, confirms its practice in ancient Israel.

### **3. Social-Scientific Criticism**

John Elliott (1993:7) identifies social-scientific criticism as “that phase of the exegetical task which analyses the social and cultural dimensions of a Biblical text and its environmental context through the utilisation of the perspectives, theory, models, and research of the social sciences”. Social-scientific criticism was developed as a theory which specifically interprets the social context of the origination of Biblical texts with regard to the author, audience, purpose, strategy, and genre of the text.

Social-scientific criticism has four inherent goals, as described by Elliott (2008:28), which are, firstly, to provide a description of the “social facts contained in early Christian materials”, secondly, to “entail a composition of a social history of early Christianity or specific phases thereof, thirdly, to analyse the social organisation and social institutions of the early Christians, and finally, to interpret early Christianity in order to provide “meaning and a plausibility” for modern-day scholars.

The social context of the Biblical texts is based on the study of the people of the ancient Near East and Circum-Mediterranean (Elliott 1993:7-8). For the purposes of this study, the scope of social-scientific criticism is broadened in order to include the interpretation of tattoo designs and thus, the inherent iconography of ancient tattoo designs, with particular reference to the ancient Mediterranean people of Assyria, Egypt, Nubia, Israel, Greece, and Rome.

Rosemary Joyce (2005:140) states that the body is a metaphor for society, and that it thus becomes an “instrument of lived experience”, and also, that it is “a surface of inscription”. As such, for the purposes of this study, the body being used as a canvas upon which to write and illustrate through the process of tattooing, is included within the scope of social-scientific criticism. Mike Featherstone and Bryan Turner (1995:1-3), reinforce Joyce’s argument, as

they express that the body is both “a sign and a symbol of social and political processes”. The body thus encompasses symbolic significance, as it is both a means of representation in metaphorical discourse, and a representation of social processes (Featherstone & Turner 1995:3).

The tattooed body can be seen as having a socio-semiotic function, according to Dennis Waskul and Phillip Vannini (2006:11), because the tattooed body serves as a sign-vehicle, as well as an object. There is a narrative aspect to the body, which exemplifies the idea of an “intersection between the socio-linguistic and the physiological” in order to serve as “a terrain for the socio-political emancipation of those whose ‘abnormal’ bodies have been silenced by the cultural side-effects of illness, deviance, and diversity” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:13).

Social-scientific criticism was developed in the 1970s as a “programmatic methodological enterprise” with which to study the Bible and its environment (Elliott 1993:17-18). This method of interpretation “studies the social aspects of the form and the content of texts, as well as the conditioning factors and intended consequences of the communication process” (Elliott 1993:7)<sup>3</sup>.

Social-scientific criticism considers a text as a response to the social conditions in which it originates, as well as a reflection of those same conditions. The aim of this method of interpretation is to determine the meaning(s) that is both explicitly stated and implied within a text, by paying attention to the “social and cultural systems inhabited by both authors and intended audiences” (Elliott 1993:8). The social conditions that are reflected in a text are comprised of the dynamics of the relevant social system in which a group of people that are in some way related to one another are involved in a collective action; as well as the particular social phenomena of that society, which encapsulates the “regularities of behaviour imposed on individuals by a social system” (Elliott 1993:14).

This method of textual interpretation is particularly relevant to this study, as it focuses on the patterns and codes of social behaviour that are encoded in texts. These patterns and codes include “social norms, customs, and laws, purity codes, honour and shame codes, familial and friendship relations, and patron-client relations” (Elliott 1993:10). The social codes which

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<sup>3</sup> The study itself is neither narratological, nor exegetical, and the understanding of a biblical text is based on the understanding of the meaning and implications of a text gained through linguistic and sematic analyses. The hermeneutic imperative of a given people forms part of the formation of values and norms of that given culture, and those factors influence the texts and images produced by that culture. However, these texts and images are not interpreted in an exegetical manner. The only culture to which biblical references are relevant is the Israelites, and the relevant texts are interpreted based on their social attributes based on the cultural practices of the Israelite people, as opposed to the interpretation of the “Word of God” and the message the Holy Spirit has led the human author to convey to the original readers. The interpretation of the biblical text is only embarked upon in order to establish the occurrence of the tattooing practice. This practice is then interpreted based upon social norms and values, as they relate to the body in space and the body as space.



govern honour and shame, as well as the ancient Mediterranean value of wholeness, are used as the foundation of the interpretation of the behaviour of the tattooed people of the ancient Mediterranean, as well as the behaviour of others towards them.

Social-scientific criticism complements the field of hermeneutics, which is also concerned with “delineat[ing] principles or methods for interpreting an individual author’s meaning” (Osborne 1984:5). While hermeneutic interpretation is not exclusively applied to the interpretation of Biblical texts, it shares its presuppositions about the relationship between the interpreter, the text, and the author with social-scientific criticism. Within both of these interpretative models, the interpreter’s past is the necessary condition to him/her being able to understand a text. “Shaped by the past in an infinity of unexamined ways, the present situation is the ‘given’ in which understanding is rooted, and which reflection can never entirely hold at a critical distance and objectify” (Linge 1977:xv).

An interpreter’s reading of any given text will necessarily be coloured by his/her *a priori* linguisticity and historicity. As such, the interpreter brings the past into the present, where the act of understanding itself serves as the “translation of past meaning into the present situation”. Because “understanding is an event, a movement of history itself in which neither interpreter nor text can be thought of as autonomous parts” (Linge 1977:xvi).

When interpreting a historical text, the questioner is not necessarily the interpreter, because the text poses a question to him/her; and in order for the interpreter to understand the text, he/she has to understand the question that it asks (Gadamer 1989:369-370). This may be seen as the fusion of horizons of the text’s intended meaning within its original cultural context, and the reader’s current cultural context. This is evidenced through the fact that there is more to the question than what is at face value (what the reader wishes to understand from the text), because there is the unsaid, what lies behind what is said.

The unsaid necessitates that the interpreter takes cognisance of the context of the text, the context of its author, the context of the author’s intentions for the text, the context of the interpreter, and the current context within which the text is read. These elements are all vital to the holistic understanding of the text.

For the social-scientific interpreter, the linguistic aspect of the text and the genre, as well as the content, implicit and explicit strategies, and meaning, are identified and analysed in order to establish the social context of the text’s author, and to attempt to deduce the author’s intended meaning. This intended meaning is seen to be a response to the social system in

which the text was produced, as well as a reflection of it; and this forms one of the basic presuppositions of social-scientific criticism (Elliott 1993:10).

Another presupposition of social-scientific criticism is that “total objectivity is illusory”, because of the fact that social, psychological, and cultural “locations” of individuals in a social group affect those individuals’ perceptions of reality, since their reality is ultimately a social construction (Elliott 1993:36-37). John Pilch and Bruce Malina (1998) further this argument, through stating that while the [objective] reality remains the same, the way in which it is perceived varies from culture to culture, and that this varied view of reality is transmitted in any particular culture’s texts and literature, as interpretations of reality become the reality that is written down.

Reality, as perceived by a given society, is not only translated in its literature, but also in the accounts of that society’s customs, beliefs, and behaviours. Customs and beliefs, as well as the translation of belief to behaviour, are pertinent to this study, as the social-scientific focus of the interpretation that this study employs is an investigation into the cultural values (which inherently comprise of customs, beliefs, and behaviours) of the ancient Mediterranean people.

A value is “some general quality and direction of life that human beings are expected to embody in their behaviour. A value is a general, normative orientation of action in a social system” (Pilch & Malina 1998:xiii). Values, then, may be classified as social phenomena, as described earlier, as they influence the collective behaviour of individuals in a society. This argument is supported by the fact that values are realised through the creation of social institutions “which mark the general boundaries within which certain qualities and directions of living must take place” (Pilch & Malina 1998:xv).

Carl Jung’s theory of archetypes may be applied to the values of ancient people, as they too, are common in all societies, in their myths and conceptions of their worlds, and are portrayed through myths. Anthony Stevens (1982:37) writes that Jung understood the need of a people to “remain in touch with the archetypal core of their nature” and that “myths provide an entire cosmology compatible with a culture’s capacity for understanding, [which] establishes a transcendent context for our brief existence here in earth, [and] validate the values which rule our lives”.

John Pilch (2000:3) contextualises the value orientation of ancient Mediterranean people as the “generalised and organised conception, influencing behaviour, of nature, of man’s place in it, of man’s relation to man, and of the desirable and non-desirable as they relate to human-environment and inter-human relations”. Pilch (2000:3) bases this on the premises that there

are a finite number of human problems that are common to all people(s), and for which all people(s) must attempt to find a solution; that these “possible solutions are neither limitless nor random”; and finally, that all possible solutions to these human problems are present within the “total cultural structure of every society” to varying degrees.

This is an observation made with specific reference to healing in ancient Mediterranean societies, but it can be extended to encompass the values of honour and shame, as well as wholeness, as discussed below. The values that are of particular significance to this study with reference to the tattooed individuals within an ancient Mediterranean are summarised in the table below:

**Table 1: Ancient Cultural Values in Relation to Tattooing Practices**

<b>Value</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Application/Relevance</b>
<b>Clothing</b>	This value shows that clothing is not merely a bodily covering but an indication of one's status and role in the community, and is thus to be reviewed in terms of honour and shame.	Clothing may not necessarily hide the marks of the tattoos, thus indicating status.
<b>Communicativeness</b>	This is reflected in the concrete images of the mouth and ears, which are boundaries of the human body.	Tattoos on the face, specifically on the chin, would draw attention to the mouth.
<b>Honour and Shame</b>	As a concept, honour is intrinsically tied to a community, or tribe. For example, if someone stems from the Beni Hassan tribe, he thinks, acts and dresses as a Beni Hassan. His actions reflect on the honour of the tribe. If he acts honourably, the tribe is honoured. If he acts shamefully, the whole tribe is shamed.	Tattoos may be used to indicate honour and/or shame respectively.
<b>Humility</b>	This value directs people to stay within their inherited social status.	A tattooed individual cannot deny and therefore usurp the given social status, as marked by the tattoo.
<b>Nudity</b>	Nudity is linked with sin and shame, purity and pollution in myth and practice.	Tattoos on certain body parts may require the person to be tattooed to be nude, thus exposing and shaming that individual. The tattoo itself can also be seen as something which obscures nudity.
<b>Ordering</b>	A value encompassing the entire range of cosmic and human relationships whereby one is embedded in a family, society, culture and universe.	Through identifying the social stature of an individual through tattoo marks, that person is then bound in certain relationships and social interactions because of the tattoos.
<b>Prominence</b>	This is an evaluative label used in acclaiming a person or thing to be of a certain social worth.	Tattoos would label a person in terms of social worth.
<b>Social Norms, Customs, and Laws</b>	This value focuses on the law being a systematic statement of social norms, which enshrines beliefs and values of the group.	Being tattooed may not be seen as a social norm, as only a specific group of people are subjected to the process.
<b>Wholeness</b>	This value emphasises the importance of being complete in body, thought and action.	Tattoos may be seen as blemishes and imperfections, rendering a body abnormal, and thus not whole. Wholeness is a value that is expressed as all-or-nothing, which means that the tattooed part of the body would render the whole body to be other than whole, and thus, possibly impure. The question may then be raised though, why priestesses were tattooed, as their nudity and blemishes would still be impure and shameful.

(Pilch & Malina 1998:8-209).

The values in the above table can all be classified into categories of primary or secondary values, means or ends values, and core or peripheral values (Pilch & Malina 1998:xvii<sup>4</sup>). The main primary, core value of the ancient Mediterranean people is that of honour and shame. All actions performed in accordance with most other values directly influence the society's perception of an individual's consequent honour or shame. Wholeness is another core, primary value, as it is fundamental to ancient Mediterranean societies, by virtue of the fact that it is assumed that their "[gods] made no hybrids" (Pilch & Malina 1998:180).

There is a distinction between the male and female bodies in terms of honour and shame. A female's reproductive organs are seen as her shame, and she must be shameful and aware of her bodily shame in order to uphold the honour of her male spouse by not exposing herself and being as fully clothed as possible at all times (Pilch & Malina 1998:121). Male nudity is shameful when a man is stripped naked involuntarily by another, or if another man aggressively exposes either the penis or buttocks to that man (Pilch & Malina 1998:121). As the nude body is "out of place", it would be seen as impure, and because the process of tattooing necessitates some form of clothing being removed in order to expose the bare skin upon which to inscribe a design, there is an impure breach of the body's boundary of clothing, which may render the process shameful.

For the purposes of this study, the value of wholeness is seen as encapsulating the consequence of a tattooed body<sup>5</sup>, as a tattoo may be interpreted to be a blemish, and in some sense, even a defect, which identifies the wearer as something other than whole, and thus as inherently shamed and shameful. The other values described in the table are secondary, means values which an individual employs to either gain honour, or to ensure that honour is maintained (Pilch & Malina 1998).

Pilch and Malina (1998:xxx) identified the general societal characteristics of the people of the ancient Mediterranean and the ancient Near East. These characteristics include the fact that these societies viewed privacy differently from modern-day societies, as, because the close relation of friends and families, people were not "left alone". This is due to the fact that the reality of the time was that of "group realism", a reality that is necessary of a dyadic community.

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<sup>4</sup> Due to the number of references to this text, and the way in which the references are grouped, citations lists the names of the editors as opposed to the contributing authors. These authors are:

Jerome Neyrey (Clothing, Nudity, and Wholeness), Mark McVann (Communicativeness), Joseph Plevnik (Honour and Shame), Bruce Malina (Humility), Carolyn Osiek (Ordering), Chris Seeman (Prominence), and Dennis Duling (Torah-Orientation).

<sup>5</sup> The value of purity is included under the values of nudity and wholeness, and is thus incorporated into the interpretation of those values.

Based on this group reality, the individual's imperative is bound to the group's morality, and is thus "to be good to those in the group" (Pilch & Mallina 1998:xxx). In such communities, kinship relations are paramount, and are seen to be ordained by God, and not a matter of personal choice. Within the structure of ancient Near Eastern and ancient Mediterranean societies, the individual is subordinate to the group, and a god is supreme in the social hierarchy, which could be shown to mean that the people's religion is "embedded in their kinship and politics", and their religious practices would be tied to moral order, as well as public order (Pilch & Malina 1998:xxxv).

The primary research question of this study is how the body is othered according to the theories of the body in space and the body as space, based on the social-scientific and critical spatial interpretations of ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices. As such, this method of interpretation will be used in order to establish the cultural context for the practice of tattooing in the ancient Mediterranean, as well as its consequences for the tattooed individual, as well as the consequences for the tattooed individual's cultural group, based on the dyadic nature of ancient Mediterranean societies. The incidence of tattooing will then be investigated according to the relationship between cultural values and the practice of tattooing of each relevant culture from Assyria (*circa* 3300 BCE-2100 BCE), Egypt (*circa* 2000 BCE-300 BCE) Nubia (*circa* 2000 BCE-300 BCE), Israel (*circa* 1500 BCE-1200 BCE), Greece (*circa* 510 BCE-323 BCE), and Rome (*circa* 510 BCE-323 BCE) in order to discern the honour and shame inherent in the practice for each culture. While the tattooing practices do not all occur concomitantly, the similarities in terms of cultural values creates the basis for interpretation.

The social-scientific investigation thus lays the foundation upon which the spatial behaviour of the tattooed individuals is to be analysed, as behaviour is dictated by cultural norms and values. As the values of wholeness and purity are pertinent to the human body, and the fact that there are specific cultural interpretations of the purpose, value, honour and shame of each part of the body, the social-scientific investigation also creates the context for the application of the theories of body symbolism when interpreting the significance of the parts of the body that would have been tattooed. Thus, this initial interpretation facilitates the addressing of the facets of the research question which relate to the body in space and the body as space.

#### **4. Critical Spatiality**

David Greene (1983:375) states that "it is implicit in the Newtonian worldview that space logically precedes human consciousness of spatially located objects, that space is indifferent to the particular objects that occupy it". Space is incumbent in the most "primitive consciousness", and the concept of spatiality develops and becomes more refined through

the development of a person's "reflexive awareness" as that person sees and perceives the world (Greene 1983:378).

The study of space is, therefore, essentially, a humanistic undertaking, because it is only understood through the experience of "sensation, perception, and conception" (Tuan 1977:388). "The space we can perceive spreads out before and around us, and is divisible into regions of differing quality" (Tuan 1977:399). Yi-Fu Tuan (1977:399) explains the visual interpretation of and cognition of space as follows: far away from the body, a person perceives a seemingly "static" space with indistinct objects in it. Closer to the body is the visual-aural zone, through which space is interpreted through both sight and sound. Next to the body is the affective zone, within which space is experienced through sight, sound, smell, and touch.

The fact that spatiality stems from awareness and perception is related to the fact that, according to Henri Lefebvre (1991:405), "the whole of social space proceeds from the body". When the body is understood in spatial terms, the senses "prefigure the layers of social space and their interconnections" (Lefebvre 1991:405). The body's perception of space, whether active or passive, is what creates a spatial understanding of the world for the individual who inhabits that body.

Critical spatiality and related spatial theories, such as the theories of boundaries, analyse how a particular place (and its inherent space) is constructed through the perceptions of it, and attributions made to it in terms of the psychosocial perceptions and understandings of its inhabitants at a given time (Matthews 2008:165-168). This can be extended to include an interpretation of the human body as a space, as the body is a physical location, and has psychosocial attributes due to its existence in a social reality; a relevant extension by virtue of the fact that critical spatiality encapsulates the physical location proper, individual cognitive associations as well as cultural meanings that are explored in terms of the social dynamics that occur within it subjectively and reflectively (Matthews 2008:168).

Russel West-Pavlov (2009:15-17) states that space has been regarded in two ways in the past: "on a microcosmic level, as the gaps between things which keep them apart", and on a macrocosmic level "as the larger container into which all things are inserted". Space, however, exists on more than these two planes, as it is "a medium with its own consistency and its own productive agency". Place has the "unique ensemble" of substance, according to Tuan (1977:387), who explains that a place has both an inherent history, as well as meaning.

Tuan (1977:387) continues to say that any given place "incarnates the experiences and aspirations" of the people who inhabit it. These experiences and aspirations give a place



meaning through the spirit that they engender. “A key to the meaning of place lies in the expressions that people use when they want to give it a sense carrying greater emotional charge than location or physical node” (Tuan 1977:409).

A given place is a mere location and not a “space” until it is given an attributed meaning by somebody in it. Thus, the concept of space is simultaneously objective and subjective, and simultaneously both real and imagined. In terms of the body, the place and location of the body is given meaning both by the self of the person whose body it is, as well as by the other people in the society within which that body functions.

A space is also a socially constructed reality inasmuch as it becoming “powerful” by virtue of the attributes given to it, and how these given attributes dictate the behaviours that will be tolerated within it. “Space is not a pre-existing container for artefacts and practices, but it is constituted by them [through] reciprocal influence and inflection. Artefacts are made possible by the spatial configurations which give rise to them, and artefacts give rise to the spaces they inhabit” (West-Pavlov 2009:24). “Space stands for simultaneity, the synchronic order of social reality, whereas time denotes the diachronic historic process of social production” (Goonewardena, Kipfer, Milgram, Schmid 2008:29).

The concept of place, much like history and language, is an *a priori* condition of social life, in that it is “prior to all things” (Casey 1993:13). A place exists, even without bodies in it, or events happening in it; having the potential of inhabitation and being the location for events taking place. This social attribute to spatial interpretation is what spurred the need for a critical spatial reading, as modernism and the move to postmodernism saw a change in space and time experiences (Flanagan 1995:15-43).

While place can exist without bodies in it, bodies cannot exist without being in a space. For Lefebvre, social space is a social product, because a social space “is fundamentally bound up with social reality”, and space in itself is produced; it does not exist in a vacuum (Goonewardena *et al* 2008:28).

Just like space does not exist in a vacuum, events do not occur outside of space; any event in time needs to take place in a certain space. “There are no *nonimplaced occasions*”; existence, material or immaterial, experienced or observed, is an *implaced* phenomenon (Casey 1993:13). This means that even for the body being a space, it needs to function in a space outside of itself, and that is why this study aims to analyse both the ancient Mediterranean body **as** space, as well as the ancient Mediterranean body **in** space.



Postmodern spatial theory is based on the philosophy of Michel Foucault, and the theory of critical spatiality promulgated by Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja. These three authors share the common premises that space and place are socially produced, situated within relations of power, and that alternative spaces can be seen as places of resistance, struggle, or change (Flanagan 1995). For the purposes of this study, “alternative spaces” will be extended to include alternative bodies.

Foucault’s spatial discourse forms an “epistemic trihedron” which brings together the three aspects of discourse, namely “the general space of knowledge, the systems of simultaneity, and the series of mutations necessary and sufficient to circumscribe the threshold of new positivity” (West-Pavlov 2009:134). For Foucault, “space is fundamental in all forms of communal life; space is fundamental in all exercises of power” (West-Pavlov 2009:147). Foucault considers literature to be social space, within which heterotopias occur.

Heterotopias “are places of epistemological and representational disorder on the margins of a society’s order of representation” (West-Pavlov 2009:137). For the purposes of this study, the tattooed bodies will be interpreted in relation to the heterotopias that they both represent and inhabit.

The creation of an “other” space on the margins of a society is directly related to how a society’s power relations dictate how a space is inhabited. Foucault identified a “power-knowledge-space complex” which “designates an overlapping bundle of ways of acting, modes of thinking, seeing, speaking, and understanding, as well as modes of coercion and strategies of production” (West-Pavlov 2009:147). The power-knowledge-space complex allows for those spatial inhabitants with power to banish other inhabitants to the margins of the society, brandishing them as outsiders, and essentially, “other”.

Foucault identified the following set of principles to apply to heterotopias (Soja 1996:159-162):

1. heterotopias are found in all cultures, every human group, in primarily two forms, namely “crisis” (those in a state of personal crisis are othered from the rest of society) and “deviation” (those whose behaviour is deviant from “required” norms);
2. heterotopias can change their function and meaning over time, according to the “synchrony” of the culture in question;
3. heterotopias are capable of juxtaposing in one real place several different places, “several sites that are in themselves incompatible” or foreign to one another;
4. heterotopias are linked to time (heterochronies) as “invented” places which both abolish and preserve time and culture and appear to be temporary and permanent;

5. heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that simultaneously makes them both isolated and penetrable, different from freely publically accessible places;
6. heterotopias function in terms of the space that remains outside of them.

These principles of heterotopias will be applied to the body as space, as well as the body in space when analysing the ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices. Edward Soja and Henri Lefebvre's theory of critical spatiality is based on premises which govern the experience of a space, and can be categorised as follows (Flanagan 1995:15-43):

1. Spatial Practice: *espace perçu* (perceived space), which serves as the medium and outcome of human activity, behaviour and experience [Firstspace];
2. Representations of Space: *espace conçu* (conceived space), which serves as the mental spaces that represent power, ideology, control and surveillance, and whereby resistance to these relations make them visible [Secondspace];
3. Representational Spaces: *espace vécu* (lived space), which are spaces that are directly lived, spaces of freedom and change [Thirdspace].

"Lefebvre was the one to first theorise *difference* and *otherness* in explicitly spatial terms ... by insisting that difference be contextualised in social and political practices that are linked to *spatio-analysis*, the analysis, or better, the knowledge (*connaissance*) of the (social) production of (social) space" (Soja 1996:34-35). For Lefebvre (1991:410-411), space is the element which unifies the "materials and resources" that are inherent to the "social-political arena", by "substitute[ing] itself for each factor separately by enveloping it" (Lefebvre 1991:410-411). Space, therefore, serves as a "medium, milieu and intermediary", as an active participant in the events which take place within it.

Lefebvre's lived spaces are the spaces in which otherness becomes prominent, due to the fact that through a society inhabiting a space, having given it certain attributes, that society's power dynamics become apparent. This occurs because the attributions made by a society are intrinsically based in power and knowledge, resonant of Foucault's power-knowledge-space complex (Flanagan 1995:15-43). Through social practices which occur in a given place, representations of space are made, which lead to the existence of representational spaces.

Foucault's heterotopias would occur in these representational spaces, and this banishment to another place may be equated to Lefebvre's term "Thirthing", which is describes "othering" a certain social group or member of society to a space which is other than the locus of power.

Thirdspace comprises of the physical of Firstspace and the emotional of Secondspace simultaneously, and within Thirdspace, these conceptions become a “double illusion” that gives birth a social space with two distinct features; one being that it a field which can be separated from the physical and mental, and two, that it becomes an “approximation for an all-encompassing mode of spatial thinking” (Soja 1996:62).

Thirdspace thus becomes the “spatiality that is claimed and whose recognition is desired in stories that must be the territoriality of a segmented society. It is a ‘people space’, not bordered territories; and it is Thirdspace, the lived space of outsider peoples” (Flanagan 1995:15-43). These heterotopias and Thirdspaces are not necessarily demarcated physical locations, especially since these places may have been on the margins of society, and the society would thus “obscure these places’ existence through practices of avoidance and ideologies of denial” (Berquist 2003:14-29).

Thirdspace is initially neutral, with no inhabitant privileged *a priori* (Soja 1996:68), but it is within the Thirdspace that othering occurs. Soja (1996:56) states emphatically that “everything comes together in Thirdspace” because within it, all the places incumbent in that space are visible and can be interpreted. These places, while being open to scrutiny, can still maintain their inherent “illusions and allusions” because of their subjective, social attributes, which means that these places may maintain some “secret and conjectured object” (Soja 1996:56). Thirdspace is “a space that is common to all of us yet never able to be completely seen and understood”, an “unimaginable universe, and the most general of products” (Soja 1996:56).

The process of othering has been described as the “discursive process by which powerful groups who may or may not make up a numerical majority, define subordinate groups into existence in a reductionist way which ascribes problematic and/or inferior characteristics to these subordinate groups” (Jensen 2011:65). This process ensures that the powerful groups retain their power and gain more power, through the subjugation of their subordinates. This process plays an important role in the formation of the identities of the subordinates, or others, as it gives them the choice to accept their banishment or to rebel against it.

This choice means that the human body becomes a centre of power in its own right, through the potentiality of taking the power to act, and becoming a space of othering when physical ramifications for other behaviour are exacted upon the body in the form of punishment. This ties in with Foucault’s theory that the body is a space that exists for the exercise of discipline as well as punishment. For Soja (1999:351) “among the most important issues facing critical human geography today are those that concern voice, alerity and what some now call the tyrannies of difference”.

The potentiality of action and its inherent intent and its own power cannot occur outside of space and place. This is because “lived body” is a cohesive entity that has a sense of place, past (memories), and power inherent to place. “The body is the only aspect of our being-individual or collective-capable of performing place, that is to say, making place a living reality” (Casey 2001:718).

If one were to interpret the modified body as a Thirdspace, and as a body being banished to a Thirdspace, that body would be shunned and avoided, and may not necessarily be afforded recognition by its society. The process of Thirthing and the space of the Thirdspace demonstrate the importance of a common societal perception and interpretation of reality, especially in terms of inner space in relation to others. The concept of Thirthing is grounded in the categorisation of space into Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace, which are illustrated in the table below (Flanagan 1995:15-43):

**Table 2: Lefebvre’s Conception of Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace**

<b>Firstspace</b>	<b>Secondspace</b>	<b>Thirdspace</b>
Human occupation of the surface of the Earth;	Ideational;	Strategic reopening and rethinking new possibilities that shift epistemology to ontology;
Built environment;	Made up of projections into the empirical world from conceived/imagined geographies;	Ontological rebalancing through the introduction of a radical scepticism toward all established epistemologies;
Read at two levels: objective, accurate descriptions of surface appearance, and special explanations of psychological, exogenous social and biophysical processes;	Material reality is processed and comprehended through thought; <i>res cognito</i> , “through things”;	Political choice and lived space;
Dominated geography;	Explanation becomes reflexive, subjective, introspective, philosophical and individualised;	Strategic locations, places of resistance;
Positivist, materialist;	Domain of artists and architects who present the world through their imaginations;	Dominated spaces;
Space of the physical world;	Cognitive maps;	Ideology and politics and power;
Alone, it is fundamentally incomplete and partial.	Spatial workings of the mind.	Chosen spaces for struggle, liberation and emancipation.

Thirdspace is “a knowable and unknowable, real and imagined lifeworld of experiences, emotions, events, and political choices that is existentially shaped by the generative and problematic interplay between centres and peripheries ...” (Soja 1996:31). Heterotopias and Thirdspaces, as well as their inherent power relations, function in terms of centres and peripheries, and essentially become “counterspaces” to the dominant spaces (McNutt 2003:30-50). A society that is divided into hierarchical structures and relationships is dependent on the relationship between the hierarchical segments based on of membership,

kinship and, in turn, genealogy. People who are othered and sentenced to the periphery of a given society may be treated with “ambivalence tinged with fear” (McNutt 2003:50).

Russel West-Pavlov (2009:66) describes Julia Kristeva’s notion of the “*Chora*” in such a way that it can be related to Thirdspace, as the *Chora* is explained as “a space in which a sort of proto-identity is constantly being constructed and deconstructed in the movement of sounds, colours, rhythms, motions, and pulsations of desire”. This desire can be equated to the human being’s desire for power, which is lived out within a lived space, which is essentially a Thirdspace. The space of the *Chora* shows power-relations and discrimination, banishment, and othering through the notion of disgust. “Disgust is a reaction-formation which focuses upon viscosities symbolising the absence of clear demarcation, the blurring of boundaries” (West-Pavlov 2009:66). Anyone that is othered from the *Chora* will bear a “trigger of disgust” (West-Pavlov 2009:68), such as a bodily modification.

Spaces take on significant meaning based on what occurs within them. An example of this would be temples in the ancient Mediterranean, where only the “holiest” of priests are allowed into the inner sanctum of the building, while some of the populace may not even be allowed in the temple complex itself. This spatial “discrimination” enshrines the “cultural politics of difference” (Soja 1996:86). This spatial discrimination shows the importance of centres and peripheries within the functioning of a society’s bodily expression in terms of where certain bodies are allowed to be.

Centres and peripheries are tied to the idea of boundaries. Tor Hernes (2004:10-13) uses the following criteria to establish boundaries: Physical Boundaries (bonding of core ideas and concepts that are central and particular to the group), Social Boundaries (identity and social bonding tying the group together) and Mental Boundaries (formal rules, physical structures regulating human action, interaction in the group) (Hernes 2004:10).

These three Boundaries are related and subject to Ordering (the extent to which boundaries regulate internal interaction), Distinction (the extent to which boundaries constitute a clear demarcation between internal and external spheres) and Threshold (the extent to which boundaries regulate flow or movement between the external and the internal sphere). The relations between the aforementioned categories are illustrated in the following table (Hernes 2004:15-16).

**Table 3: Boundary Relations**

	<b>Physical Boundaries</b>	<b>Social Boundaries</b>	<b>Mental Boundaries</b>
<b>Ordering</b>	To what extent are main ideas and concepts decisive for what members do?	To what extent do structures regulate the way the group is socially bonded?	To what extent do formal rules or physical structures regulate the work of members?
<b>Distinction</b>	To what extent are core ideas and concepts distinctively different from those of Other groups?	To what extent are we socially distinct from Other groups?	To what extent is it possible for outsiders to be considered full members of groups?
<b>Threshold</b>	To what extent can outsiders assimilate core ideas and concepts?	To what extent is it possible for outsiders to be considered full members of groups?	To what extent do formal structures hinder the recruitment of outsiders?

(Hernes 2004:15-16)

These boundary relations will be used as the basis for the analysis of the ancient Mediterranean tattooed body in space and body as space.

The creation of boundaries, heterotopias, and other spaces is “coeval with the production of life itself” (West-Pavlov 2009:172). The fact that people question the hierarchical structures within a given space gives rise to the change in “conceptual order”, is a spatial reality. This is demonstrated in the process of territorialisation. For Deleuze, territorialisation takes place through “the vectorality of desire [which] creates spaces in which life takes on new and evolving forms. These forms are brought forth by the conjunctive production of territory, and define the nature of that territory” (West-Pavlov 2009:179).

The production of territories is an integral part of the production of social space, because “territorialisation and de-territorialisation are two of the hallmarks of life, as contingent couplings dissolve so as to make space for new connections” (West-Pavlov 2009:183). Boundaries and territories are both fluid, and change as a society’s power-relations and power hierarchy change. “A territoriality, because it coagulates or crystallises out of flow, can equally easily revert to such fluidity. Potently, what can be territorialised can also be de-territorialised” (West-Pavlov 2009:192).

The creation, allocation, and destruction of territories, like the production of all space, may be interpreted to be bound to three fields of spatial knowledge, namely, physical, mental and social (Soja 1996:62). For the purposes of this study, critical spatiality will be employed to create the context against which the ancient Mediterranean body in space and body as space will be interpreted.

The Firstspace and Secondspace of each of the ancient Mediterranean countries and territories in question will be established in order to create a geographical context, after which



the Thirdspace of each of these countries and territories will be established in terms of power-relations and “others” with tattoos and body modifications. Once those who have been othered because of their tattoos have been identified, their boundaries will be identified and analysed according to Hernes’s categories of boundary relations.

## 5. Bodily Studies and Body Symbolism

In the last few decades, the prominence of the body in popular culture has generated intense academic interest and activity. Instead of viewing the body as an uninteresting prerequisite of human action, fields from across the disciplinary spectrum have turned their attention to the body as a central concern of social theory. Seeking to overturn a naturalistic approach to the body as biological given, this broad literature has redefined the body as a sociocultural and historical phenomenon (Reischer & Koo 2004:298).

The concept of the human body is not limited to its anatomical and biological function. The “self” of a person is an “embodied self” with the capability of being employed as a material body with a social function, in order for the self to be embodied in such a way as to “act on the world” (Reischer & Koo 2004:307). The body is thus objective in its biological and physiological function(s), and also subjective because of the fact that it can “mediate the relationships between persons and the world: We meet the world through our bodies” (Reischer & Koo 2004:307). “Each body provides a unique repertoire of physical competencies and possibilities” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:104).

The world that a person meets through his or her body is a socially constructed world within which that body has to function. The world within which a body functions is ruled by bodily interaction, to an extent, and as such, “one’s self-concept is constructed out of how one understands certain impressions that are given off in the course of face-to-face interaction” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:299). This means that the concept of the self is rooted within the bodily expression of communication, as “presenting oneself is a communicative act” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:300). Bodily expression and interaction within a social world create the foundations for the development of social principles, which in turn, serve as the foundation for more interaction (Waskul & Vannini 2006:301).

The human body is conceived of in terms of the culture and society in which the given body has to function. These societies have different conceptions of what the body should look like, and should function, and within these parameters, body modification takes on significance. “Humans are the only creatures that steadfastly refuse to let nature alone dictate their appearance” (Reischer & Koo 2004:297). Nature dictates the general anatomy of a human body, but a society dresses it, and dictates the way in which it is adorned, and the way it moves.

The human body in society functions on three levels: the first is that of the individual's self-experience in relation to the group experience; the role the body plays in the production of social meanings (especially in terms of modification and adornment); the body's role in power relations within a society as either the subject and object (McGuire 1990:285). The human body, through adornment and modification, serves both as a symbol of its social world and as an agent in the creation of that social world; rendering the body both "artefact" and "agent" (Reischer & Koo 2004:315).

As a society dictates how a body should be modified in order to conform to social norms, body modification, including piercings and tattooing, is "clearly a cultural phenomenon" (Reischer & Koo 2004:297). "Bodies are modified for many reasons, for example, to register participation in a social group, to claim an identity in opposition to a social group, to signal a significant change in social status" (Reischer & Koo 2004:297).

The body that is "cultivated" within a given society is "ultimately [an] index and expression of the social world [it] inhabits", and its modification is "an icon of social values and, less benignly, as a mechanism of social power and control" (Reischer & Koo 2004:299). "Because the body is such a potent symbol, its form and appearance often are highly politicised" (Reischer & Koo 2004:308), which is why any modification to the body which strays from a social norm of what the body is expected to look like is so significant.

Dennis Waskul and Phillip Vannini (2006:3) state that "the body is an enormous vessel of meaning of utmost significance to personhood and society". The meanings that can be attributed to a body can be categorised into three principles, as follows: the principle of "the imagination of our appearance to another person"; the principle of the "imagination of his judgement of that appearance"; and the principle of "some sort of self-feeling", either pride or mortification (Waskul & Vannini 2006:3). The tattooed body is imbued with meaning for both the person who is tattooed, as well as for any person who sees and judges the tattooed individual.

The body is a living canvas for both a tattoo artist, as well as for a tattooed individual. Therefore, the body becomes imbued with a particular significance, because seeing the skin as a canvas is "other" to what the skin is generally seen to do. The skin contains the organs and the skeleton of the anatomical body, and as such, it is imperative that the skin remain whole in order to fulfil this purpose. Tattooing breaches the wholeness of the skin by puncturing it repeatedly, and then leaving a mark that showcases this breach. The skin and the body of a tattooed individual is thus "other" from the "normal" body, which society condones; "man has always distinguished 'bad' from 'good' – as he distinguished enemy from



friend and strange from familiar – because as a social mammal he is programmed to do so” (Stevens 1982:210).

According to Terence Turner (1980:112), the adornment, and by extension the modification, of the body as a social construct “consists of the construction of the individual as social actor”. The skin serves as the medium which transmits the signs that communicate an individual’s “rank, authority, ethnicity, group membership, gender, and ritual condition” (Steiner 1990:431). The skin, the surface of the body, serves as “the common frontier of society, the social self, and the psychobiological individual” (Turner 1980:112) and thus the skin’s adornment and modification expresses the language of the body and its inherent culture. The interpretation of these signs and language necessitate an awareness of the self and of others, in order to be able to signify and interpret the signs appropriately within the context of a given culture.

Every society and culture cultivates its own bodily signs and symbolism, because of the inherent problem of the “non-distinctiveness of the human body” (Lock 1993:134). The human body is individuated only inasmuch as the cultural influence upon it, in terms of adornment and modification, because it is “a universal biological base upon which culture plays its infinite variety” (Lock 1993:134). Bodily expression is essentially a learned practice (Lock 1993:135) based on external stimuli. This bodily expression is then interpreted by the society within which that body functions in order to deem it as part of the norm and in accordance with the group’s values, or as other.

The fact that the bodily expressions of a tattooed individual, or an ill individual, or any “other” individual with a body which does not conform to societal norms of bodily expression is distinguished by society, is due to the fact that a person, comprised of both physiological, psychological and psychosocial experiences, exists within a context of a society. A person thus exists within a social reality (Pilch 1981:109), and his body and psyche are to be interpreted within the context of that reality.

“Tattoo wearers cannot conform to dominant social norms, values, and beliefs” because of the fact that a tattooed body is “other” to the bodies which can conform to society’s norms (Atkinson 2004:127). Mike Featherstone and Bryan Turner (1995:3) provide a context for the interpretation and study of the body in a societal reality as follows, based on the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty: “The body is a sentient entity and it is the capacity of the body as flesh to be both sentient and sensible, to be a visible-seer, a tangible-toucher, and an audible-listener”. The perception of the body is rooted in a cultural interpretation of it, and is also “transmitted” to the individual culturally, in order to guide behaviour (Benoist & Cathebras 1993:858), “hence, the body becomes imagery and message”.

The social and cultural perceptions and construction of the body means that the function of the body is tied to a social reality as well, and that a person's daily bodily activities would be governed by these social and cultural conceptions (Benoist & Cathebras 1993:858). The social conception of a body in one culture, though, may vary from that of another, but to that particular society, their conceptions are their truth, and their bodily practices, as culturally prescribed, give the bodies in that society "meaning and direction" (Benoist & Cathebras 1993:858).

Even though the "social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived", because the physical experience of the body is socially mediated, it "sustains a particular view of society" itself (Benoist & Cathebras 1993:858). For Comaroff (1985:6), there is a fundamental relationship between the human body and the idea of a social "collectivity", which, similar to Jung's idea of the collective unconscious, is present as a "dimension of consciousness of all societies". The body's "selfhood" is based on an individual's own experience, as well as the individual's collective experience. These sets of experiences provide the body with "a constellation of physical signs with the potential for signifying the relations of persons to their contexts" (Comaroff 1985:6).

This collective experience of an individual in a society can be tied to the principle that the body is "an instrument of lived experience", and is thus a "metaphor for society" (Joyce 2005:140). The body, therefore, becomes pivotal in a society's metaphorical discourse, as through the "use of the body as representation", social processes are expressed (Featherstone & Turner 1995:2-3). "The body is the dominant vehicle for social interaction" (Waskul & Vannini 2006:295) and is thus a focal point of a person's social reality. The body's role as the conveyor of symbolism is coupled with its ability "to participate in the creation of social meaning" (Reischer & Koo 2004:307).

Creating social meaning means that the individual becomes a participant observer of sorts within a society, because one individual must interpret the bodily expression of another, while creating bodily expressions in order to contribute to the society. This is true of the body in modern times, as well as in ancient times.

Christina Riggs (2010:1) states that in the field of interpretive archaeology, "the past is inextricably linked to the theories of the body and the embodied self", because of the nature of the social realities that ancient people constructed. The importance of the body is exemplified in ancient Egyptian thought, where a person was deemed to be comprised of a physical *form* which constituted "a self", and this concept of a body was seen to outlast the physical *body*. The physical body of a live person is also distinguished from a corpse or a

mummy (Riggs 2010:2). For the ancient Egyptians, a human being is a whole or a complete being by virtue of the composition of “a physical body, fate, a lifetime, a name, a shadow, one’s life force, and one’s soul” (Riggs 2010:2).

In ancient Mesopotamia, there were similar interpretations of what constituted a person, including a similar delineation of a physical body, or “external body which can also stand for society *per se*” (Asher-Greve 1997:433), and an internal body which contains the heart and soul of an individual. The Sumerian verb *dim*, can be interpreted as “to form the shape of the body”, and is used in creation myths to signify the creation of mankind by deities (Asher-Greve 1997:433).

This human body, whether internal or external, physical or spiritual, needs to be whole in order to fulfil its purpose. Even in death, when a body would no longer be whole, “the fragmentation of the self into several components mirrored the fragmentation of the body, which consists of a multitude of discrete parts which must be bound together in both life and death for completeness” (Riggs 2010:3).

John Robinson (1951:13-14) states that during the Old Testament times, “Hebrews never posed, like Greeks, certain questions, the answer to which would have forced them to differentiate between the ‘body’ and the ‘flesh’”. While the body formed a critical part of a person’s identity, there was no distinction between “form and matter”, as the Hebrew thought consisted of a life-substance of men and beasts shaped into a corporeal form without a distinction between the life-substance of a soul in opposition to a physical form in which to contain it (Robinson 1951:14). For all intents and purposes, man did not have a body, but man was a body. This would necessitate the maintenance of the integrity of bodily boundaries and the honour of a “whole” body.

“The body is the critical juncture between the natural order of the world and the cultural ordering of the world” (Riggs 2010:1). The ancient Mediterranean body is a construct of a social identity (Riggs 2010:4) and that identity necessitates the wholeness of the body.

Wholeness is a fundamental value of the ancient people of the circum-Mediterranean, which pertains to bodily integrity and the idea of “perfection”, as it is expressed in Genesis that God did not create any “hybrids” (Pilch & Malina 1998:180). Wholeness, as previously stated, necessitates that the boundary of the skin remain intact, in order to ensure the perfection of the human body as God’s creation.

A blemished body, or a body with any noticeable defect, lacks wholeness, and is thus other than the perfect body that society cherishes, and by extension, “is unqualified for the presence

of God” (Pilch & Malina 1998:180). A whole body is a pure body, and purity is a means value which aims to maintain honour and avoid shame (Pilch & Malina 1998:151). A body with a breached boundary of skin cannot be seen as pure, and thus cannot be seen as “clean”.

The boundary of the skin is responsive and tactile, and is both internal and external, as it keeps the organs and skeleton of an individual contained, while keeping external threats and contact out of reach of the internal anatomy. This has a symbolic connotation to containment and permeability, as the skin is the “geography where the two can meet” (Ronnberg & Martin 2010:338). While the skin is the organ which is tattooed, the specific locations on the bodily form where the skin is tattooed are also symbolically significant.

In the ancient Mediterranean, the head was considered to be an honourable body part (Pilch & Malina 1998:20). A tattoo on the face or the head would thus be significant, as the head is the “uppermost part of the human body”, and contains all of the sense organs which give an individual awareness and perception (Ronnberg & Martin 2010:340). Ronnberg and Martin (2010:240) continue to say that most ancient peoples considered the soul to be located in the head.

Tattoos that adorn the area close to the eyes are also significant, because the eyes are associated with “light, insight, intelligence, reason, and spiritual awareness. The inner eyes see with a night time vision and darker awareness, elements that comprise full human understanding” (Ronnberg & Martin 2010:352). There is also the element of warding off a curse, or the evil eye, in some cultures (Ronnberg & Martin 2010:352).

Arms may be seen to “encompass the world at large [as they are] innately expressive, naturally move outward, and are situated at the level of the heart, which is the locus of their energy” (Ronnberg & Martin 2010:358). Because arms are used in gesture and expression, tattoos on arms are particularly conspicuous. As an extension of the arm, the hand is also used in gesture and expression and is more conspicuous when tattooed. Hands signify “a world-creating reach of consciousness, and embody the possession of a will for creative and destructive ends” (Ronnberg & Martin 2010:380).

Tattoos on the torso can be covered with clothing, but the torso is inextricably linked to sexuality, eroticism, and maternity in terms of the breast and womb (Ronnberg & Martin 2010:388). The thighs are also seen as erotic and sexual, due to their close proximity to the pubic region (Ronnberg & Martin 2010:420), and thus tattoos on thighs may have similar connotations.

Due to the fact that this study rests on the ability to examine mummified corpses in order to see the ancient tattoos *in situ*, it is important to pay attention to the attitude of these ancient people toward dead bodies. John Wortley (2006:8) explains that the Jewish law dictates that the “cadaver is a source of ritual pollution, a thing to be disposed of as quickly as possible”. He continues to say that this need for swift burial is not isolated in the case of the Jews, but that even the ancient Greeks and the ancient Romans ensured that dead bodies be buried, as they would not even let an enemy’s body remain unburied (Wortley 2006:9).

The need to bury the bodies of the dead is to ensure that dead do not stay upon the earth and become wraiths (Wortley 2006:9). The ancient Egyptians and Assyrians also “feared laying unburied”, as the “earth not receiving their bodies” would inhibit the deceased’s soul from embarking on the journey to the afterlife (Wortley 2006:9).

Even though there is an emphasis on the burial of a dead body, there is also considerable preparation done to the body prior to burial. This is particularly evidenced by the mummification practices of the ancient Egyptians. The term “mummy” is derived from the Persian *mumeia* or *mum*, which means “pitch” or “asphalt”, and relates to the ancient Egyptian using a naturally-occurring salt called natron, supplemented with oils and resins in order to embalm a body (Cockburn & Cockburn 1980:1). Today the term is commonly used to describe all well-preserved bodies.

The ancient Egyptians embalmed and mummified their dead in order to avoid the corruption of the corpse, and to maintain an appearance that is similar to the appearance of the live person (Cockburn & Cockburn 1980:11). The embalming process, however, was not instituted until after the Predynastic Period, during which the dead body was not prepared for burial (Cockburn & Cockburn 1980:1).

There are three documented parts of a ritual of mummification, as described by Cockburn and Cockburn (1980:15): which include the ceremonial acts, the prayers and incantations, and the methods of applying ointments and bandages. There are two documented methods of embalming, described in Cockburn and Cockburn (1980:15-16) as follows:

The first mode of embalming: they take first a crooked piece of iron, and with it draw out the brain through the nostrils, this getting rid of a portion, while the skull is cleared of the rest by rinsing with drugs; next they make a cut along the [left] flank with a sharp Ethiopian stone, and take out the whole contents of the abdomen, which they cleanse, washing it thoroughly with palm-wine, and again frequently with an infusion of powdered cassia, and every other sort of powdered spicery except frankincense, and sew up the opening. Then the body is placed in natrum ... and covered entirely over. After the expiration of that space of time, the

body is washed and wrapped around from head to foot, with bandages of fine cloth, smeared over with gum.

The second mode of embalming: syringes are filled with oil made from the cedar-tree, which is then, without any incision or disembowelling, injected into the bowel. The passage is then stopped, and the body laid in natrum the prescribed number of days. At the end of the time, the cedar oil is allowed to make its escape; and such is its power that it brings with it the whole stomach and intestines in a liquid state.

During the New Kingdom, the complete sequence of the mummification process was recorded as follows (Cockburn & Cockburn 1980:19):

1. putting the corpse on the operating table;
2. extraction of the brain;
3. extraction of the viscera;
4. sterilisation of the body cavities and viscera;
5. embalming the viscera and placing the viscera into canopic jars;
6. temporary stuffing of thoracic and abdominal cavities to ensure complete desiccation
7. dehydration of the body;
8. removal of temporary stuffing material;
9. packing body cavities with permanent stuffing material;
10. anointing the body;
11. packing the facial openings;
12. smearing the skin with molten resin, and
13. adorning and bandaging the mummy.

The purpose of incorporating bodily studies and body symbolism into the research design and methodology of this study is to broaden the cultural context provided by the initial social-scientific analysis of the values of the peoples of the ancient Mediterranean in order to show the specific cultural bodily expressions that were deemed to be the social norm. The social norm of bodily expression is established in order to create the background against which the tattooed, “other”, bodily expression is to be interpreted.

Through the identification of the ancient Mediterranean cultural of the significance of the body as a canvas for tattoos, as well as the specific body parts that are tattooed, the realm of bodily studies and body symbolism lays the foundation for the analysis of the body as space.

Bodily studies and body symbolism are thus part of the foundational and initial analysis of this study, as these two realms of interpretation and analysis create a context for the spatial analysis of the ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices. The context that is created is pivotal

in the establishment of the parameters of the social world that is being investigated, in order to effectively delineate the meaning which is “embedded in language” (Mason 2002:56) of actions and activities of bodily expression and bodily modification that constitute the “social reality” of the people of the ancient Mediterranean.

## 6. The Body in Space

The human body is both “a sign and a symbol of social and political processes” (Featherstone & Turner 1995:1). The body is a social construction, much as space is a social product. The spatial construct, stemming from an individual and that individual’s society, is “an emanation of the human being present, a projection from within the subject, irrespective of whether we physically place ourselves inside the space, or mentally project ourselves into it” (Preston-Dunlop & Sayers 2010:32). A person’s sense of space is “living” (Preston-Dunlop & Sayers 2010:35) because of the nature of the production of space. This living space is also an embodied space.

The idea of a body being situated in space requires the notion of “space” to be contextualised in relation to the body. The first type of space that is tied to the body is the actual, physical space of the body, exemplified by “air in the lungs, expansiveness of breath, and movements between cranial bones” to name a few (McNeur 2008:21). The second space involved in the body is its emotional space, where the self of the body feels its relation to the space it is situated in. The third space that is relevant to the body in space is that of architectural space which “ranges from the intimacy of interiors to the extroverted dimensions of public spaces” (McNeur 2008:21). The final space which is relevant to the body in space is that of spiritual space, where the body can engage in sacred ceremonies (McNeur 2008:21). These elements of space come together to form the embodied space where the body functions, because “all of these spaces are inextricably linked and are experienced simultaneously” (McNeur 2008:21).

The embodied space of the body in space has been imprinted by the “implications of actual bodily experience for imagining and acting upon the forces of history” (Farnell 1999:353). The body in space is a living memory of the bodies that have been in that space before it, and is culturally bound to that bodily history. The body’s cultural past is sedimented in “neuromuscular patterning and kinaesthetic memories – the way in which specific experiences and concepts of time and space are built into our bodily *modus operandi*” (Farnell 1999:353). “Places hold experiences together” (Farnell 1999:354).



Marga Viljoen (2009:3-11) states that space is relative to the place where the “I” can be positioned, and that the situation of the “I” provides a sense of space and place that has the power to orientate people within that given space. This exemplifies how space is a social product, and how the situation of a body within a certain space renders both the body and the space as significant. The body’s situation in space allows for social interaction with and social perception of a space. The body’s inhabitation of a lived space, which makes it an embodied space is the location which is bound to human and bodily experience (Low 2003:9). The body in space functions because in embodied spaces, human consciousness and experience “take on a material and spatial form” (Low 2003:9).

How the body functions within a space is also a social process, and is pivotal for the investigation of the ancient Mediterranean tattooed body, in order to establish the spatial imposition of boundaries and Thirthing on these particular bodies, and to explore the ramifications of these impositions. These impositions occur because a society “uses the visual cues of another’s ‘body’ to ‘schematise’ the person into several classes” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:51), and this schematisation renders the body in space as an other body in an other space.

“Cultural groups often draw on the human body as a template for spatial and social revelations” (Low 2003:12). The othering of bodies in a social space is a necessary function within a social group, in terms of power relations. The body in space wears a “social skin”, and is thus the “symbolic stage upon which the drama of socialisation is enacted” (Low 2003:11).

The othering of the social space of the body and the space in which the social body functions may be seen to be an extension of the idea that “increasing mobilisation of the body for publically expressive purposes [is] closely related to the privatising enclosure of the naked, organic body” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:69). The social values of the ancient Mediterranean people governed the space of the body in such a way that it would be shameful for the body to be nude and “organic”, and naked skin is a necessary condition for the tattooing process to occur. The values that govern the body are linked to “ideals of physical perfection”, and are “inextricably tied to a people’s shifting actions and orientations within different interpretive communities”, and have the power to deem certain bodies as “more appropriate, acceptable, and correct than others” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:125-127).

This would mean that people who were to be tattooed would have to go into a space where that nakedness would not be aberrant, and also where the practice itself would not contravene any values. The tattooed skin would be part of a person’s “naked organic secret” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:70) which would not be displayed in public spaces. This tattoo would be an



imposition of a boundary onto the territory of the body, or the “territory of the self” which inherently assumes “the body’s ability to assert itself through motion, movement, products, and material artefacts” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:85-86).

The body’s assertion of itself, even though other than societal norms, is key to the body’s “materiality” and the way that the tattooed person will inhabit this other skin, in order to “have a meaningful impact on the world around [him/her]” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:144). The tattooed individual has no choice than to embrace his/her “embodied otherness”, because the “signitive presence of the ‘other’ body is given meaning to in relation to the working of a historical context which forms the basis of interpretation” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:169).

This has been and will be the norms until the context of the tattooed body being other than the social norm changes, the tattooed body will always be interpreted as not belonging within a society of unblemished skin. In a sense this renders society “somatic”, as anxieties and politics are projected onto the bodily expression of individuals (Waskul & Vannini 2006:170). In a somatic society, the body becomes the “metaphorical map of social problems and community, public space (margins), and the marginalised” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:170).

The human body in embodied space can be related to Rudolph Laban’s idea of corporeality, as it relates to the five anatomical zones of the body, namely the head, arms, and legs; and how those zones function within a given space (Preston-Dunlop & Sayers 2010:35). Laban explains that “inner and intercorporeal movement [are] the fundamentals of the mover’s intuition of space that emerges from his/her ‘volition’” (Preston-Dunlop & Sayers 2010:35). Corporeality is therefore both anatomical and spatial, based on awareness and action. Spatial awareness and acting within that space are facets which stem from the body.

Michael Jackson (1983:329) explains that the “meaning of the body praxis is not always reducible to cognitive and semantic operations”. The way a body inhabits a social space through movement communicates things that “lie outside of speech” through “codifying, signifying, and symbolising thoughts”. These “thoughts” would be intrinsically bound to social norms and customs of bodily expression. The movement of the body in space does not merely “symbolise” a social reality, but it “is” that reality (Jackson 1983:329). The way a body moves in space is directly related to the idea of the kinesphere.

A body’s relation to a space can be interpreted as being bound to the kinesphere, which is common to the human body, as well as to nature (Hodgson 2001:137). The kinesphere has been described as a “three-dimensional, globe-shaped space in which the body can operate” (Hodgson 2001:181) This relation to space is due to the fact that the body moves in space,

and is thus the “change” which occurs in the “locality” of space (Hodgson 2001:181). The space in which a body moves is thus distinguished from the general space around a person.

The kinesphere may be seen to comprise of an inner horizon, which entails the “possible profiles an object can have without losing its identity or essence”, and an outer horizon, which is the “boundary which separates the object from the background against which it appears” (Viljoen 2009:32). The object in this case applies to the body of an individual as a self, and the bodies of the other individuals which surround the individual in a social setting. The body itself is the “first horizon” which moves and acts in space, alongside other bodies, against a background, the “second horizon” (Viljoen 2009:33). These horizons and the bodily expressions that constitute them form a “spatio-temporal situation” (Viljoen 2009:33).

The idea of the kinesphere and its inherent horizons can be linked to Lefebvre’s concepts of the “field of action” and the “basis of action”, as the kinesphere represents a “mobile spatial field” which is embodied by an individual (Low 2003:14). This mobile spatial field is defined as a “culturally-defined, corporeal-sensual field stretching out from the body at a given locale, or moving through locales” (Low 2003:14). There is a limitation to this field, though, as even though it is culturally defined and thus socially constructed, it is fixed and centred around the individual body, which means that it is “separate from a fixed centre or place” (Low 2003:14).

The body’s relation to space is related to the “structure of enacted spaces” (Farnell 1999:357). These structures create the limits and boundaries of human action within space. The space in which the body moves is “Euclidean” inasmuch as it has three dimensions of space and one dimension of time, in which the dynamic body is “centred” (Farnell 1999:357).

It is important to note that the dimensions of space and time within which the body moves “are included into a human value system” (Farnell 1999:357) and are thus socially significant. The social “taxonomies of the body, movement, spatial dimensions, and space/time” are “observed, learned, and practiced” and thus form a basis of a person’s understanding of their own body and bodily expression within a social space. This understanding of the self is paired with the understanding of other bodies within the same space, through the poetics and politics of lived experience” (Farnell 1999:357).

The movement of the body in space is an undeniable action; “the dynamically embodied signifying practice of a human agent” (Farnell 1999:343). The body in space has an undeniable agency and the “complex structures of bodily action” that people engage in are “laden with social and cultural significance” (Farnell 1999:343). The agency of the body thus

has an inherent “embodied intentionality to act” (Farnell 1999:343), because it is only through action and movement that a body can inhabit a space.

Even though bodily movement is an organic and naturally occurring process, there are certain forms of movement and bodily expression which are learned through the awareness of other’s movements, through “inter-subjective practices” (Farnell 1999:343). “Some modes of action are acquired during childhood, and, as a result of habit and skill, remain out of the focal awareness of their actors” (Farnell 1999:343). These actions include vocal gestures, non-verbal gestures, eating, dressing, and walking, to name but a few. These behaviours are socially developed and bound to space because some behaviours are not allowed outside of certain spaces, such as being nude in a room in a private abode would be permissible during the process of dressing, but would not be permissible outside of the privacy of that abode.

The basic bodily expressions and behaviours which allow for day-to-day functioning occur without much attention being paid to them, but other movements and actions are bound to be learned and mastered with awareness, based on “age, ethnicity, class, family tradition, gender, sexual orientation, skill, circumstance, and choice” (Farnell 1999 343). This may involve learning the movements involved in a certain craft, such as the movements involved with being a tattoo artist, and these movements would still be bound by spatial boundaries and enclosures. Another example of these learned movements are “action sign systems” which are found in rituals and ceremonies, and in performance traditions (Farnell 1999:343).

“Such dynamically embodied signifying acts generate an enormous variety of forms of embodied knowledge” (Farnell 1999:343). The knowledge that is gained from inhabiting a lived space is culturally significant, because is the basis of “human subjectivity and intersubjective domains” (Farnell 1999:343). This, once again, reinforces the subject-object relationship of a body in space.

It has been established that an individual’s spatial perception is cultivated based on the body (Viljoen 2009:23) and bodily expression and movement. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2003:74) explains this as follows: Even though the body is the site from which sensation stems, it also serves as the “exterior accomplishment of things” which occurs within a space, which is perceived from the seat of the body. The body is the basis for an individual’s understanding of the world (Merleau-Ponty 2003:74). This understanding of the space as it extends from the body means that an individual lives in his/her body, while living in space through his/her body. The space that an individual inhabits thus has a “carnal unity” with that individual’s body, as the space is “enclosed in [the body’s] functioning” (Merleau-Ponty 2003:74).

Viljoen (2009:27) furthers this idea through stating that “all places of space proceed from [the] body” due to the fact that perception is localised in the body and reaches outward, and that within the space of the body, “optimal forms are defined”. Viljoen (2009:27) continues to say that the idea of the norm is born in the body. The perception of space and the norm of spatial inhabitation are thus bound to the subjective interpretation of a body’s self, and then subject to the reconciliation of that individual spatial and behavioural norm based on the bodily expression of others within a social group. The body-subject is the means through which communication occurs, and as such, the individual has an embodied existence within space.

The embodied existence is governed by body image, inasmuch as body image constitutes “the law by which our bodily spatiality is constituted [in terms of] posture in the inter-sensory world” (Viljoen 2009:47). This “posture” may be extended to mean the physical inhabitation and action of a body within a space, which is inherently tied to the spaces where certain bodies may or may not move in. Through this interpretation of spatial inhabitation, the body schema takes form, because it is based on “bodily actions within the world” (Viljoen 2009:47).

The *gestalt* of the body image can be broken down as follows: firstly, there is a body boundary, which is the “psychic boundary that defines inside personal space from outside, extra-personal space, and is a sensitised zone” (Bloomer 1975:8). The second component of the body image is based in the “organic, internal system” of the internal domain and centrality of the body. The third component entails the psycho-physical coordinates of the body in space, which orientate the body in terms of “left-right, front-back, and up-down” (Bloomer 1975:8). The final component is the “face-as-body-substitute”, which focuses on the role of facial expression in communication, as the face is the “second corporeal centre in the bodyscape” (Bloomer 1975:10).

The body of an other, which has a body schema different to the social norm of bodily expression, is not isolated from the social bodily norm. Viljoen (2009:50) states that “I experience the other’s body as a mysterious continuation of my own, and that we are ‘tied together’ in a sort of anonymous existence”. The other body does not exist in isolation from the norm, because the body in space is both a subject and an object of perception and experience, and is in an interdependent relationship with the bodies around it in order to be perceived and to perceive. “Flesh is the formative medium of the subject and object” (Viljoen 2009:75).

The subject-object relationship of bodies in space exemplifies the “relationship between the human body and the social collectivity [being] a critical dimension of consciousness in all societies” (Comaroff 1985:6). The subject-object relationship of bodies in a social space is

exemplified by the fact that “the givenness of the body is inapprehensible in that one cannot concretely know one’s body as one’s own; one cannot see one’s own seeing as one’s own act of seeing” (Greene 1983:378). The matrix of the body and the body in a social space, and space itself (Bloomer 1975:8) is bound to the bodily perceptions of the subject and the object. These perceptions of the self and the other in space are tied to the communication of bodily expression.

The body in space communicates over and above speech and sound through “somato-sensory modes of knowledge” (Farnell 1999:344). This knowledge stems from the body interacting with its spatial environment and experiencing “touch, smell, taste, [and] pain” through its kinaesthetic sense. The way in which these modes of knowledge communicate is to “complement vocal signs and action signs to complete the range of semiotic systems open to human processes of meaning-making and communication” (Farnell 1999:344).

The communication of bodily movement is thus more significant than mere “physical behaviour” and “motor function”, even though it is inclusive of these in order to be meaningful. The bodily expression of communication is “culturally and semantically laden actions couched in indigenous models of organisation and meaning” (Farnell 1999:358). Human bodily movement is thus a biological function that is “subject to the transformative power of human psycho-social realms of meaning, including language” (Farnell 1999:358).

The way a body expresses movement in a space is related to the emotions and qualities of the environment within which that body is situated. This is of particular importance when it comes to the othered bodies of the ancient Mediterranean tattooed individuals, whose bodies necessarily express different messages than the social norm, and because of that, will be located differently to the “normal bodies”. How people feel in their environments is inherently tied to their bodily expression, as movement can be seen to communicate emotions. This is because without a body, able or disable, unblemished or modified, “[the]spirit has no voice, no physical movement, no relationship with the world” (McNeur 2008:23).

There is a universality of gestures made and actions performed in a given social space based on the emotions of the individual. These expressions and actions may be seen to follow a “principle of antithesis” (Gruber 1980:1), as “certain states of mind lead to habitual movements, and when a directly opposite state of mind is induced, there is a strong and involuntary tendency to the performance of movements of a directly opposite nature” (Gruber 1980:1-2). The states of mind and emotionality which lead to movement within a space may be related to the boundaries and restrictions of space enforced upon bodies in a given societal setting. The other body would follow similar patterns of emotional expression.

The other body in space, while still capable of movement and communication, is inherently limited in its expression because of the fact that it is not accepted to function within a social norm. Sebastian Abrahamsson and Paul Simpson (2011:331) state that there are limits imposed on these other bodies, which, essentially, imprison them. The notion of the “limit” is important on both a microcosmic level as it applies to the body itself, and on a macrocosmic level, as it applies to the body in space.

On a microcosmic level in relation to the body, a limit is something “which separates inside from outside; as a skin or a membrane that separates an organism from its environment, as a boundary between categories” (Abrahamsson & Simpson 2011:332). On the macrocosmic level, a limit is also “something to be pushed and/or reached beyond; as a maximum or minimum capacity to act; or, as the threshold beyond which one can never reach” (Abrahamsson & Simpson 2011:332). “The limit, then, is highly significant to our understanding of what a body could be and its inhabitation of space” (Abrahamsson & Simpson 2011:332).

For the purposes of this study, the limits of the othered ancient Mediterranean tattooed body will be examined in order to determine how tattooed individuals inhabit the spaces to which they were othered. In order to do that, the social geography of ancient Mediterranean people are contextualised according to the power relations of the inhabitants of these spaces, and the norm of social bodily expression will be established against which the ancient Mediterranean tattooed bodily expression in space will be contrasted and compared.

This analysis will also investigate the movements and bodily expression of these tattooed individuals based on the nature of their tattoos and their social status – how would the tattooed slaves and captives of Mesopotamia move differently than the tattooed priestesses of Hathor in Egypt, for example.

## **7. The Body as Space**

“Basic social practices” can be broken down into two categories, namely that of “enchainment” and that of “accumulation” (Knappett 2006:240). The term “enchainment” is the name given to the social processes that distribute humans and artefacts, while constraining them in “socio-technical networks” (Knappett 2006:240). The term “accumulation” refers to the social practices through which identity is “not distributed, but ‘accumulated’ at particular locales” (Knappett 2006:240). The first term is relevant to the body in space, as it situates bodies. The second term is relevant to the body as space, because it is on the body that the social artefacts



of body modification and tattoos are found, and those modifications add a layer of meaning to the individual's existing identity.

For Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the phenomenological body has a somatic presence, and as such, the body has the potential for socio-semiotic interactionism, as the body as space contains the inherent potential to be a "sign-vehicle, and to be an object" (Waskul & Vannini 2006:9-11). The body as a sign vehicle lends itself to the interpretation of a tattooed body as space, as it can be construed as one of the forms of narrative bodies which have been othered because of "deviance and diversity" (Waskul & Vannini 2006:9-13).

"Bodies are matter" (McGuire 1990:285). The space of the body as it exists in space is that which gives human experience a foundation of understanding and context. The body as space is what creates lived space within a society; and "society inscribes itself upon the concrete bodies of its members" (McGuire 1990:285). The body as space is where "culturally meaningful idioms" of body imagery and body boundaries are expressed, because the body itself is a "natural symbol" and a "locus of control" (McGuire 1990:289).

"The unadorned, unmodified body is an unspoilt, pure surface upon which culture works" (Mascia-Lees & Sharpe 1992:3). The body as space is the surface which "reflects and constitutes our biographies. Its surface can tell about our past (scars) and our current habits and activities" (Waskul & Vannini 2006:39). The surface appearance of the body's skin "can transform people into objects in a distorted looking-glass" (Waskul & Vannini 2006:40).

"Human bodies from all cultures are littered with inscriptions of cultural and social meanings and significance. There are no natural bodies" (Cole & Haebich 2007:294). Every body is marked by its culture and its history in some way, and these marks are often "deliberate and irreversible" (Cole & Haebich 2007:294). The corporeal surface of the body may be altered by "whipping, scarification, cicatrisation, piercing, branding, and tattooing" (Cole & Haebich 2007:294). These alterations are either made forcibly under duress, or through personal volition; but they are "products of cultural and personal values, norms, and commitments which reflect the morphology and categorisations of the [space of] the body in socially significant groups" (Cole & Haebich 2007:294).

For the purposes of this study, the body as space is related to the field of dermographics, due to the fact that the skin becomes culturally significant in different ways (tattooed versus unmarked) in different contexts (honour and shame). The skin is the "interface between the "psyche and body, self and others" (Schildkrout 2004:321). The skin is also the space on the

body where “perceptions and memories are entangled inside and through the body's surface” and as such, it becomes somewhat of a “mystic writing pad” (Schildkrout 2004:321).

Body modifications done to the skin take the person and turn him/her into a “landscape” and in some sense, into “another species” (Schildkrout 2004:330). This turns the human body into a representational space in itself, because it “disrupts notions of ‘the human body’ and refigures the role of ‘skin’ inscription” (Schildkrout 2004:330). Because of the cultural significance of the rituals of body modification, its results are “constitutive in the production of cultural identities and differences” (Schildkrout 2004:330).

For the ancient Mediterranean people, the surface of appearance of the body's skin was not something that was prominently displayed, because of their value system. The cultural values governing clothing and purity would have restricted the viewing of the skin, because of its connotation to shame. Even though “flesh” and therefore skin, was known to be a “substance common to all men and beasts”, and understood to be a part of the body (Robinson 1951:17-30), it was not seen as something which was meant to be bared.

Arthur Kleinman (1980:115) posits the idea of the body being a model for a “bounded system”, and as a whole within that system. Because the skin is on the outside of the body, and it serves as a boundary of the body, it is doubly significant to the core value of purity (Pilch & Malina 1998:151), because it would be susceptible to being threatened due to its dual situation. If the skin is to be breached or blemished, then that individual would be impure, not whole, and essentially shameful.

The skin is a boundary of the body, which means that contains, and “separates the outer from the inner” (Pilch & Malina 1998:38). The skin is also something which may not be publically displayed, as, in the case of a woman, it would mean that her body is no longer her husband's possession (Pilch & Malina 1998:120). The skin would have to remain covered in order to retain an individual's purity and honour. The discernible question is thus why would some ancient Mediterranean people bare their skin in order for it to be tattooed?

Tattoos can be seen as blemishes, and as mutilations, which supports the idea of breaching the boundary of the skin. The process of mutilating, and thus, the process of tattooing, manipulates the space of the body in order to mark the space of the body and to effect a physical change due to this somatic alteration (Lemos 2006:226).

The surface of the skin is the canvas upon which tattoos drawn and imprinted into. This means that the skin of the body is a space in itself, and means that the body, as the underlying structure upon which this canvas rests is a place in itself as well. “Skin, flesh, body: none are



synonymous, but they are all inseparable from one another. Flesh precedes in a sense the body, while skin covers the flesh” (McCarron 2008:85). The skin covers the space of the body as a whole, but there are specific spaces in terms of body parts where the skin is tattooed which are of particular significance.

Examples of the significance of the particular tattooed spaces of the body can be seen in facial tattoos, as well as tattoos on the hands and feet. Through tattooing on the face, and drawing attention to the eyes and the mouth, one may question whether the facial tattoos would influence the value of purity that is related to mouth, in particular.

The significance of tattooing the spaces of the hands and feet may show either power and honour or shame, respectively, based on the designs tattooed, or the individual upon which the tattoos were inscribed. This is due to the fact that the value of hands-feet is strongly grounded on the principle of agency; and a person’s “capabilities of doing, of making, and of having a physical effect on others and [that person’s] environment” (Pilch & Malina 1998:92). As the removal of an individual’s shoes is a gesture of shame, it may be considered that the tattoos on the feet, once exposed, would similarly denote shameful “blemishes”.

George Tassie (2003:85) explains that the practices of body modification, and in particular, “permanent body decoration”, such as tattooing, scarification, and branding, have both psychological and practical purposes within traditional societies. These permanent body modifications serve as “social signals” which denote both social values and social relationships. They “demonstrate permanent social relationships between the individual and society” (Tassie 2003:85). The body as space is the site where these modifications are made. The modified and tattooed skin “negotiate[s] between the individual and society and between different social groups, but also mediates relations between persons and spirits, the human and the divine” (Schildkrout 2004:321).

The body as space is the place where an individual “experience[s] pain, pass[es] through various kinds of ritual death and rebirth, and redefine[s] the relationship between self and society” (Schildkrout 2004:320). All of these experiences are obtained through body modification, which is done to the bodily space of the skin.

The space of the body is an embodied space, and as such, has an effect on the individual whose body is in question. “Alterations of the embodied self-identity have either a positive or negative impact on one’s emotional experience” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:298) in terms of pride or embarrassment; and in ancient Mediterranean terms, honour or shame. The space of the naked body, tattooed or unblemished is not meant to be inherently sinful or shameful, but

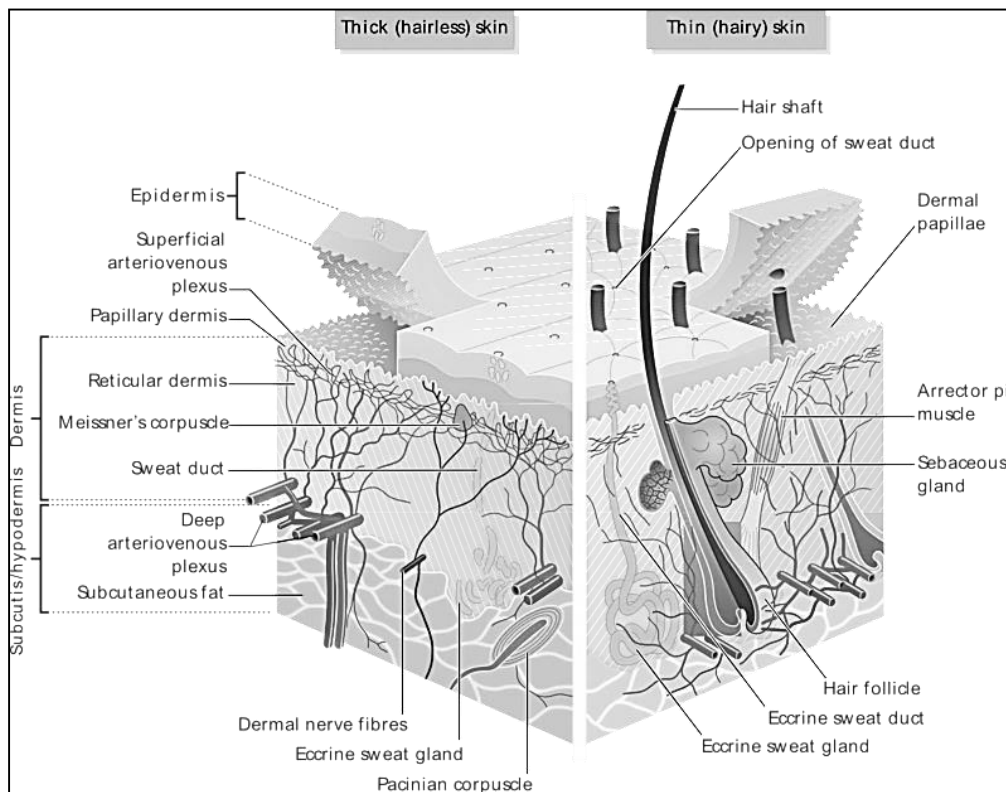
because of the value associations related to the naked space of the body, the naked bodily expression takes on special significance.

For Christopher Richardson (2010:83), the body is the “foundational source of theological knowledge”, as a space where the “word of God becomes flesh and the body becomes the speaker” (Richardson 2010:85). Even though not all body modifications are religious in nature, the extension can be made that the body is made to speak through soft tissue modification. Frances Mascia-Lees and Patricia Sharpe (1992:2-3) explain that soft tissue modification, such as tattoos, “reveals the tensions that characterise the contemporary theorising of the body”, and that there is “unity in the body” because it is the space upon which all societies and cultures “inscribe significant meaning” (Mascia-Lees & Sharpe 1992:3).

The canvas of skin, and thus the body as space, is the place where “the culture of beauty chronicles the modification and mortification of the somatic self” (Mascia-Lees & Sharpe 1992:82). The styles of modification and mortification are culturally specific, but the processes are universal inasmuch as they “literalise the vision of the body as a surface or ground onto which patterns of significance can be inscribed” (Mascia-Lees & Sharpe 1992:147). Through being a canvas for the display of culturally and socially significant signs and symbols, “the materiality of the body makes language into something which can be known and felt” (Mascia-Lees & Sharpe 1992:146).

“Body decoration is the representational formulation of the body”, as “subjective meanings are materially inscribed on the body, and the body itself remains an object, given meaning through decoration” (Joyce, 2005:145). Modifications to the body create an “altered corporeal plane” on the skin (MacCormack 2006:59). The unaltered corporeal plane of the skin is significant in the interpretation of the body as space, because it is the medium in which the tattoos are preserved over time. The unaltered anatomy of the skin is presented as follows:

**Figure 2: The Anatomy of the Skin**



Sourced from Health Hype (2011).

The particular parts of the anatomy of the skin which are of concern to the body as space, as a canvas for tattoos, are the epidermis and the dermis.

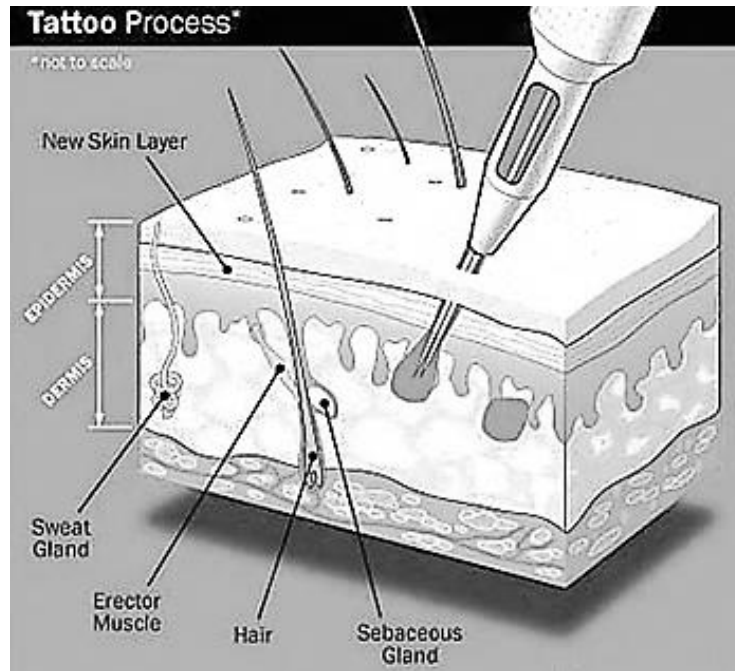
The epidermis is the first layer of skin, and it serves as the body's first boundary. The epidermis is comprised of keratin and lipids, which allow it to protect the body from intrusion by foreign substances. The epidermis consists of five layers of *strata*, namely the *stratum corneum*, which is the outermost layer, followed by the *stratum lucidum*, the *stratum granulosum*, the *stratum spinosum*, and finally, the *stratum basale*, which is its innermost layer (Forslind *et al* 1997:374). Tattoos are visible through the epidermis, even though they are not placed in it. The epidermis is between 0.1mm and 0.2mm thick, and has no blood supply of its own (Forslind *et al* 1997:374).

The dermis is the layer of skin in which tattoos are situated. The dermis lies under the epidermis, anchored by the *stratum basale*, which is the "basement membrane" of the epidermis (Forslind *et al* 1997:374). The dermis is between 1mm and 4mm thick, and contains capillaries, connective tissue, and nerve endings (Forslind *et al* 1997:374). Both ancient and

modern-day tattoos are situated in the papillary dermis, which is made up of connective tissue. This is why they do not “shed” with the generation of new skin.

The following diagram illustrates the placement of tattoo ink within the dermis:

**Figure 3: Insertion of Tattoo Ink into the Dermis**



Sourced from Sciencebuzz (2009).

“Tattooing needs to be understood as the inscription of a history on the body, ‘a wrapping in images’ that does not just mark, but actually forms the skin of a person” (Joyce, 2005:145). Even though the skin remains the body’s first boundary (Knappett 2006:241), through the insertion of a tattoo, a new boundary is layered into and onto the skin. This is a social boundary, as well as a psychological boundary. The tattoo is not an additional physical boundary in itself, though, as the tattoo essentially forms part of the skin, in the same manner that a hypertrophic scar would.

The space of the body “adjusts itself to the incorporated object through different means, either by pouring itself out into the object, or by bringing it in, or both” (Knappett 2006:241). The tattoo is taken into the body, and made to be a part of it, while the body as space now “extends beyond itself” (Knappett 2006:242) through the additional meanings and messages it carries by virtue of being tattooed. Through a materialistic consideration of the body, the “process of social inscriptions on the exterior surface coalesce to construct a psychic interior” (Joyce, 2005:149).

The space of the body is given new meaning by the tattoos inked into it, but it still requires interpretation outside of itself. The body as space is still, in essence, a social space, a Thirdspace, and a heterotopia, because of its other nature when juxtaposed with un-tattooed bodies. “The tattooed body is most profitably conceptualised as an unfinished corporeal and social phenomenon that is transformed as a result of social interactions” (Kosut 2000:80).

For the purposes of this study, the idea of the body as space is used to interpret the location of tattoos on ancient Mediterranean bodies. The body as space serves as the canvas upon which the pictorial messages of tattoos are interpreted through iconographical analysis. This analysis is done based on the context of ancient Mediterranean values and body symbolism. The analysis of the body as space will thus affirm the analysis of the body in space, through an examination of the boundaries and banishment of tattooed individuals, based on the location of their tattoos.

## **8. Tattooing**

“The tattoo signifies a certain degree of resoluteness; it inscribes on the body an incontrovertible expression and this permanent alteration of the body is experienced as more concrete, more forceful and more persuasive than any form of verbal expression” (Karacaoglan 2012:6). The superficial interpretation of the process of tattooing is that it is “a reflection of the basic human desire and need to decorate the body” (Ferguson & Procter 1998:10). “Literally demarcating the skin, tattoos and related body practices (scarification and piercing) create permanent marks, unlike the use of clothing or ornaments, which can be adopted or changed more easily” (Joyce, 2005:145).

Because of the pain and permanence involved in the process of tattooing, it may be assumed that desire for decoration, which can be satisfied through adornment or even through the less painful and impermanent process of piercing, is not the driving force behind the motivation to undergo the tattooing process. Adornment and piercings may convey similar indicators of status and rank as permanent marks such as the scars of scarification and tattoos, but they do not require the submission to prolonged painful stimulus in order to be obtained. Tattoos are thus set apart from other methods of adornment, because of their vivid imagery, their permanence, and the pain involved in the process.

“Practices like tattooing require explicit consideration of the significance to a bodily identity of the interplay of permanence and impermanence” (Joyce, 2005:145). The permanent alteration of the body is both “painful and palpable” (Karacaoglan 2012:18). While the tattoo is being inked or inscribed into the skin, it is still a separate entity to the body, but “once the

damaged skin has healed, the picture becomes integrated into the body on a tactile, sensory level” (Karacaoglan 2012:18). The tattoo can be seen and felt, both by the individual who has the tattoo, as well as by others, and that sensory stimuli reaffirms the permanence of the mark, as it becomes part of the wearer.

The modification to the skin that occurs as a result of tattooing is permanent, and inescapable. The implications of being tattooed are serious because a tattoo fundamentally alters a part of the body that serves as a point of contact between the self and the outside world, and the tattoo will be seen and interpreted by others in a way that the tattooed individual has very little to no control over. “This is because of the foundational character of skin itself as marking the very boundary of our identity in the world, and also the skin’s function as an organ, embodying or instantiating our sense of being in the world” (Taliaferro & Odden 2012:11).

The question of why a person would “submit to the pain involved in defacing his/her own skin” has been asked many times of tattooed individuals in modern times. The question is still relevant to ancient tattooing practices, even though the answer is more difficult to fathom. “Throughout the ages, tattoos have been indulged in as protection against danger, as love charms, to restore youth, to ensure good health and long life, to implement fertility, to bring death to an enemy, to cure illness, to divest a corpse of its malevolent powers, to ensure a happy afterlife, to propitiate supernatural powers, and to acquire supernatural power” (Roeningk 1971:179). These motivations are all rooted in cultural and religious beliefs and “superstitions” because they are learned responses based on values and beliefs, which are taught in a society.

Tattooing is a “reflexive process” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:21). The process of tattooing is a formative process of “reflexive embodiment” and an “aspect of the reconstruction of the self” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:21). Even though tattooing is strongly related to the construction and reconstruction of the self, “body projects like tattooing have to be negotiated within the context of social networks” because the self-consciousness and bodily awareness inherent in “reflexive embodiment presupposes relations with others” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:21). The tattooing process is a “conscious attempt to alter the body’s natural parameters; to inscribe upon the body a set of symbols that instantly distinguish it from the mainstream and connect it affiliatively or disaffiliatively with the other marked bodies and groups” (Atkinson & Young 2001:120).

In the field of psychology, theorists such as Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung posited that “the original function of an infant’s skin is to contain and constrain the individual’s most primitive personality traits” (Karacaoglan 2012:18). This notion is then extended to explain tattooing as



“the attempt at direct confrontation with an object that contains and constrains the self” (Karacaoglan 2012:18). For Freud, the ego of an individual is a bodily ego; “it is not merely a surface entity, but it is itself the projection of a surface” (Karacaoglan 2012:18). Therefore, altering the skin’s surface alters the body and thus alters the ego, altering the self and the identity of the person who has a tattoo.

The word “tattoo” as it is used today is derived from the Tahitian word *tatau* or *tatu*, which means “to mark something” or “to mark the skin” (Steiner 1990:432). The word and practice came about, according to Tahitian myth, “when the two sons of the god of creation, Ta’aroa, taught the art of tattooing to humans” as a sacred art form, or *tapu* (Scheinfeld 2007:362). The word was initially introduced into the English language as “tattooing” by Captain James Cook in 1776 (Caplan 2000:1). The word has also come to include the ancient Graeco-Roman notion of *stigma* which encapsulated body markings made by branding and tattoos (Caplan 2000:2).

There is evidence of tattooing being practiced in numerous ancient cultures, including those from Syria during the Hellenistic Period, Mesopotamia, Egypt and Nubia from c 2000 BCE, in Israel, as well as in ancient Greece and Rome, Polynesia, Tahiti, Japan, and Burma (Caplan 2000:2-6; Ferguson & Procter 1998:14-30). These ancient tattoos were done in a fashion that is similar to the modern-day technique, as needles (grouped together in needle combs) were used to insert ink, made from coal into a black-blue pigment, into the dermis of the skin. This was done by pricking the skin with the ink-covered needles, or by rubbing the ink into the pricked skin (Caplan 2000:2; Ferguson & Procter 1998:14). An alternative method to using needles would be to carve the design into the skin with a blade, and then rub the ink into the wounds (Ferguson & Procter 1998:14).

Another method of ancient tattooing is that of sewing; a technique used to create lines (Tassie 2003:86). Up to 40 stitches would be used to create a line, as an eyed needle would be threaded with a piece of “blackened twine or sinew is pulled through the skin in short, deep stitches” (Tassie 2003:86). After this, pressure would be applied to the skin where it was stitched in order to force the pigment deeper into the wounds.

As will be discussed in Chapter Four, the ancient tattoos in question were done with various motives, from decoration, to religious purposes, to protection from a deity, to a rite of passage, as well as marking slaves and captives.

Tattooing is a “learned cultural habit” (Atkinson 2004:131). Because a tattoo signifies social status and place in society, it is a mark of a person’s “civilised individuality” within a society

(Atkinson 2004:130), as he or she has been marked by that society. Tattooing marks a person in such a way that he or she is bound to the society which marked him or her by the otherness that the tattoo bestows, because “personal control is intentionally inscribed into the skin” (Atkinson 2004:141).

Historically, tattoos have been used to mark “groups whose bodies are regulated by the nation state” (Fisher 2002:103). Tattoos form boundaries between people; distinguishing those with tattoos from those without. These “physical markers” (Karacaoglan 2012:6) are indelible factors which function within a social group in order to differentiate members and others. It is important to note that a tattoo is a mark that provides additional information, signs, and symbolism to a body which is already entrenched in meaning. The skin is “the site of encounter between enfleshed self and society” (MacCormack 2006:59). The skin that is marked by a tattoo is given meaning additional to its “race, gender, class, and age” (MacCormack 2006:59).

The “enfleshed” message that is displayed through a tattoo has the power to “mark off entire ‘civilisations’ from their ‘barbarian’ or ‘savage’ neighbours” through the boundaries that tattoos create (Caplan 2000:xiv). Tattoos have the power to “declare a convict’s criminality, whether by branding him as a punishment or because he has inverted this penal practice by acquiring voluntary tattoos ... and more generally to inscribe various kinds of group membership, often in opposition to a dominant culture” (Caplan 2000:xiv). Tattoos are innately other, and have the power to other bodies that would have been part of the social norm.

The interpretation of ancient tattoos must be done from a standpoint which considers the ancient cultural context in which the tattoo originated. “Tattoos have a cultural dimension that is not necessarily subject to private interpretation” (Taliaferro & Odden 2012:8). The interpreter is bound to the fact that “cultural norms control how society collectively interprets common imagery” (Taliaferro & Odden 2012:8). The image that is tattooed into an individual’s skin is permanent, and endures over centuries, but the intended meaning of the tattoo is not permanent, but “fluid” (Taliaferro & Odden 2012:8).

Tattoos “juxtapose interiority with exteriority” (Taliaferro & Odden 2012:11). Even though the tattoo is inside of the skin, and thus part of it because the cells that are coloured by the ink form part of the “larger collection of cells” (Taliaferro & Odden 2012:11) within the skin. A tattoo is a “physical object”, though, due to the fact that the ink used in the tattooing process “takes up tangible space” (Taliaferro & Odden 2012:11).



“The physical barrier between the ink and the skin draws attention to the exterior of the skin, while also sectioning off access to the interior” (Taliaferro & Odden 2012:11). The skin and the tattoo are perceived as one even though a tattoo is a “separate physical object” to the skin, while being in it (Taliaferro & Odden 2012:11). The image that the tattoo portrays is what is distinguished from the skin.

The fact that a tattoo is both “under” the skin, while still being visible on top of the skin has been interpreted as a “double skin” (Taliaferro & Odden 2012:11). This double skin is “an elaboration of the skin’s surface, an indelible insertion that is both visible and out of reach” (Taliaferro & Odden 2012:11). The double skin, while unreachable, is in a sense immortal, because the tattoo does not fade or disappear as the skin regenerates itself every seven years. The tattoo stays under the skin, unchanged, unmoved. “The image of the tattoo is visible on the skin while, at the same time, its multi-layered, intimately personal message can only be determined in context, and so its meaning remains relatively obscured” (Karacaoglan 2012:22).

The image that rests in the double skin is pivotal. “A visual image always carries symbolic meaning” (Karacaoglan 2012:22). The image has meaning for the one whose skin it is in, as well as those who see it, and for those who orchestrated its creation. “Whether in reality or mere fantasy, a picture is always meant to address the person viewing it” (Karacaoglan 2012:23). The image does not change, but the perception of it does. The symbolism of the image stems from the “process of symbol formation”, which is an unconscious process, wherein “symbols represent the self, the direct objects of its desire, and its relationships which result from intra-psychic conflicts” (Karacaoglan 2012:22). Whether the image is religious, or marks a convict or a slave, there is inherent social symbolism within the image.

For the purposes of this study, the images portrayed in the tattoos of the ancient Mediterranean people will be iconographically analysed against the backdrop of the social and cultural values related to the body, as well as the religions of the people in question. The documented ancient Mediterranean people who practiced tattooing are the Assyrians, Egyptians, Nubians, and Israelites (Caplan 2002-6). These cultures’ tattooing practices should not be isolated from those of the ancient Greeks and Romans. The documented and photographed tattoos of the ancient Mediterranean people include tattoos on hands, forearms, faces, torsos, and thighs. The vast majority of these tattoos were found on female remains. These tattoos are discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

## 9. Iconography

Like social-scientific criticism, the field of iconography forms part of cultural studies. This means that iconographic analyses necessarily focus on “the forms and practices of a culture including its texts and artefacts, their relationship to social groups and the power relations between those groups as they are constructed and mediated by forms of culture” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:61). The artwork and imagery of a culture is thus approached from a “circuit of culture” in order to investigate the following aspects of an image (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:64):

1. an image’s social life and history;
2. an image’s cycle of production, consumption, and circulation, through which meaning is accumulated and transformed;
3. an image’s specific material properties, and the medium and technologies through which it is realised;
4. an image’s “visuality”, based on its material properties intertwined with its historicity;
5. an image being a representation, the outcomes of the process of attaching ideas to and giving meaning to our experience of the world.

Roland Barthes (1966:41) explains that a language, whether it be in text, in speech, or in the form of an image, is a social institution and a system of values. Images represent simultaneous signs and signifiers, as what is represented is as important as that to whom is being represented (Barthes 1966:41) notes that the function of the sign, of that which is being represented, “becomes pervaded with meaning”. This meaning is then interpreted by the signifier, and is necessarily place value on the sign (Barthes 1966:51). This value is based on the societal reality that is present in both the sign and the signifier.

Images are analysed in order to gain an understanding “through” them. A given culture’s world, its “social reality is represented by, but also constituted or produced by pictures or images” (Bohnsack 2009:298). There are two ways in which to understand the construction of a social world through images. The first way is to acknowledge the fact that “the interpretation and explanation of the world [is] applied in the medium of iconicity” (Bohnsack 2009:298). The second way to understand this phenomenon is based on the fact that images and pictures “provide orientation for our actions and our everyday practice” (Bohnsack 2009:298).

Images and pictures are commonly understood on a basic level. “Behaviour in social situations or settings as well as forms of expressions through gestures and the expressions of

faces are learned through the medium of mental images. They are adopted numerically and are stored in memory through the medium of images” (Bohnsack 2009:298-299).

When analysing an image in a cultural context, the context of the viewing of the image is important in terms of it being on public display, or intended to be viewed privately. This requires in investigation into its location in its social world as well as the physical world (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:65). Once the image’s original location has been established, it is also important to ask “how the image got there” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:68), based on its production. An image’s production and location is interpreted against the cultural conventions of the time; which include the pictorial and artistic conventions, as well as the semiotics of what the sign and signifier mean in a certain culture’s images, at a certain time (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:68).

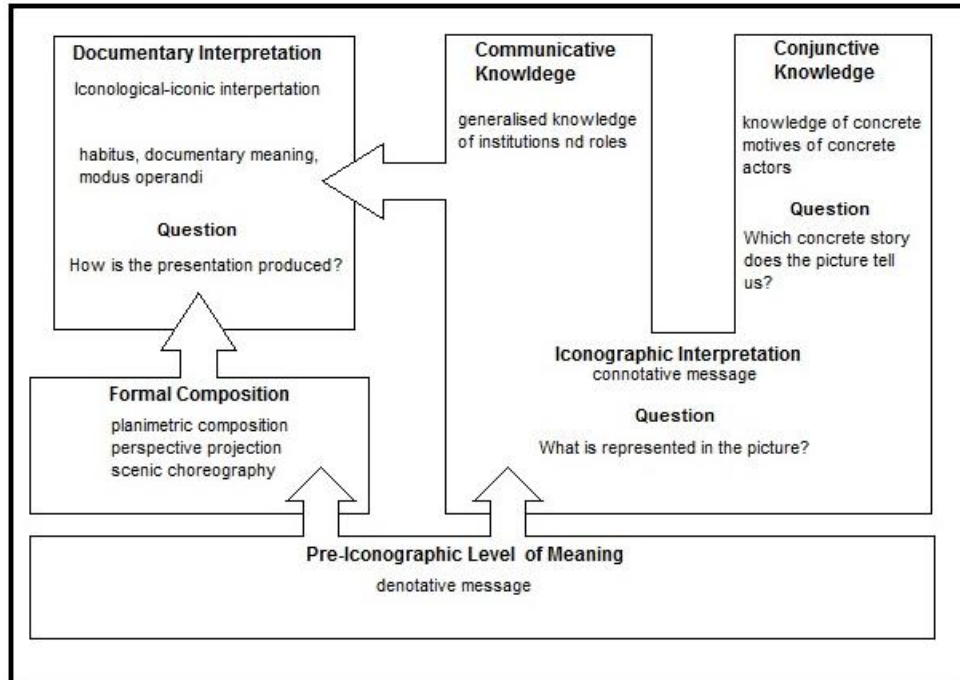
The fields of semiotics and iconography ask the same two fundamental questions, namely, what do images represent and how (question of representation); and what do the images stand for (question of hidden meanings of images) (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:92). In terms of meaning, whether hidden or *prima facie*, there are two layers of meaning in a given image. The first layer of meaning is based on who and/or what is depicted, and is known as denotation (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:94). The second layer of meaning is based on what values and/or ideas are being expressed through what is represented, and is known as connotation (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:94). In Barthian visual semiotics, denotation and connotation are exemplified as follows:

When examining the denotation of an image, it is important to perceive the reality of an image. Photographs are seen to be “analogous to perceiving reality because photographs provide a point-by-point correspondence with what is in front of the camera” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:94). For the purposes of this study, it is possible to view most of the tattoos in question on the mummies in their reality, as well as to examine photographs of the tattoos. The meaning that is found in the denotation of the image is first and foremost its literal meaning, rather than the symbolic meaning, which is interpreted through connotation.

The connotation of an image entails a “layer of broader concepts, ideas, and values which the represented people, places, and things stand for, or are signs of” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:96). This layer of meaning is imposed upon the reality of the image and its literal meaning as established through its denotation. “Connotative meaning is a broad and diffuse concept which condenses everything associated with the represented people, places, and things into a single entity [of] ideological meaning” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:97).

The various dimensions of meaning within an image can be visually represented as follows (Bohnsack 2009:300):

**Figure 4: Dimensions of Meaning and Interpretation in the Picture**



Sourced from Bohnsack (2009:300).

There are three “analogous levels of meaning in art”, namely, the pre-iconographic, iconographic, and iconological interpretation (Hasenmueller 1978:290). Pre-iconographic meaning is found in “pure forms”, and is based on the “direct association of a new visual experience with memory” (Hasenmueller 1978:290). This is extended to the “recognition of the motif in art as a representation of the world of experience” (Hasenmueller 1978:290). Iconographic meaning rests on themes and concepts in an image in conjunction with an interpretation of social facts (Hasenmueller 1978:290). This is taken further through iconology, where the ideology of the social group is interpreted based on and in addition to the representations in the image.

Iconography distinguishes between the following three layers of meaning: firstly, representational meaning; secondly, iconographical symbolism, and thirdly, iconological symbolism (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:100). Iconographical representational meaning entails the analysis of primary (natural) subject matter. Representational meaning is understood through the “recognition of what is represented on the basis of our practical

experience” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:100), while considering the stylistic conventions involved in the production of the image.

Iconographical symbolism is based on secondary subject matter, as it is concerned with meaning over the literal portrayal in an image. This symbolism is found in the “object-sign denoting a particular person, place, or thing, as well as the ideas and concepts attached to that person, place, or thing” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:100). Iconographical symbolism distinguishes between abstract symbols (abstract shapes with symbolic values) and figurative symbols (represented people, places, and things with symbolic value) (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:107). This is important for the purposes of this study due to the geometric pattern designs of some of the tattoos being abstract, as opposed to the tattoos of the god Bes, for example, which is figurative.

The iconological symbolism of an image is based on the image’s ideological meaning (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:101). This form of symbolism is analysed in order to “ascertain those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, period, class, or a religious or philosophical persuasion” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:101).

Iconography interprets images as well as texts in order to find the correct context for the images in question. Through intertextual and documentary evidence, iconographic analyses are able to support interpretations based on more than the bias and experience of an interpreter. Within this context, it is important to distinguish between open symbolism and disguised symbolism (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:109), which is why the cultural context of the image is vital to its interpretation. Open symbolism in an image means that the motif is not represented naturalistically, based on the stylistic conventions of the time (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:109). Disguised symbolism is seen when the motif is represented naturalistically, with both a literal and a symbolic interpretation possible for that particular motif (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:109).

The theory of iconography was promulgated by Erwin Panofsky. For Panofsky, the image is “meaningful only in a particular cultural setting with distinctive traditions” that would be unfamiliar to other cultures (Hart 1993:536). “Panofsky’s definition of image as a conventional association of motif and literary content is easily seen as parallel to the concept ‘sign’. An image was defined by its explicit duality: it constituted the point of intersection between reference in art to nature and reference to literature” (Hasenmueller 1978:290).

Meaning changes over time (Hart 1993:536). Because modern day interpreters look at ancient images in a way which may be different to the way that the ancient culture’s people did, it is

important to interpret more than just the image. For Panofsky, “the idea was to view the work of art as *given* and then interpret it from historical, grammatical, logical, and transcendental-philosophical points of view” (Hart 1993:542).

Keith Moxey (1986:266) explains that an iconographical interpretation of an image needs to include an iconological analysis, because the “analysis of the pictorial traditions on which a given work of art depends on the broader cultural context in which the work was produced”. This creates a form of contextual art history, “in which the interpreter’s task is often regarded as complete once the work has been embedded in its historical setting” (Moxey 1986:266).

This type of analysis comes about from “Panofsky’s concern for the content of the work of art as much as with its formal qualities” (Moxey 1987:267). Panofsky thus developed his theory of interpretation based on the “intrinsic, formal qualities of the work of art in which the organising principle was the relation of form to content” (Moxey 1987:267). This system of analysis focuses on opposing qualities within an image, namely the “optic/haptic, depth/surface, fusion/distinction, and time/ space which were thought to interlock in such a way as to control the relation of form to content” (Moxey 1987:267).

Similar to the requisite interpretation of an author’s intended meaning when doing a hermeneutical analysis of a text, for Panofsky, there is a need to “focus on the ‘intention’ underlying [an image’s] creation” (Moxey 1986:271). In order to ascertain this meaning, it is necessary for the interpreter to study “the biography of the artist; the social and cultural makeup of the patrons for whom the work was undertaken; and the historical circumstances in which the work was carried out” (Moxey 1986:271). The reception of the image is also important for this analysis, in terms of the way that the image would have been “understood by different individuals, groups, or classes” (Moxey 1986:271).

The tattoos of the ancient Mediterranean people are forms of art, and must be visually interpreted as such. They serve as “visual records of human experience” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:35) *in situ* on the canvas of the space of the body. These visual records must be interpreted in such a way as to find their pattern and meaning based on their originally intended cultural context.

The establishment of a cultural context within which to analyse the images of the tattoos requires three phases of interpretation: The first phase of interpretation is an “open viewing” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:40). An open viewing is an “open immersion” and it allows the visual records to “speak” to the interpreter “on their own terms” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:40). In an open viewing, images “should be viewed repeatedly, initially grouped in an



order that approximates the temporal, spatial, and other contextual relationships of the subject matter they reflect” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:40). This allows the interpreter to view the “natural set of relationships” of the images.

The second phase of interpretation entails “structured processes” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:43). This phase consists of a “more detailed analysis” and is a “closed” and structured viewing of the images. “The product of this stage is descriptive specificity” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:43). Through a close analysis of the images, the interpreter should examine variables such as the “proxemics relationships” inherent in the images, as well as perform a content analysis; identify the participants; record temporal shifts; track behaviour; explain details of gesture, expression, posture, and other kinesic details (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:43).

The third phase of interpretation consists of “a return to the whole view” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:44). Because the second phase of interpretation generates an almost overwhelming amount of detailed data about the images in question, it is necessary to return to an open view of the entire array of images, which is not only bound by the analytical details, but combines the details with the context and impressions of the images, into a holistic “big picture”. Through returning to the open view, the details of the structured processes can be seen in their intended context and interpreted as such (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:44).

For the purposes of this study, the theory of iconographical interpretation will be used to analyse the tattoos found on ancient Mediterranean mummies and preserved remains, as well as the images depicting tattooed bodies on artefacts, such as sculptures and painted bowls. These analyses will be done through the three phases of interpretation of both abstract and figurative images, in a process which includes of the open view, the structured processes, and the return to the whole view, in order to establish the historical and cultural context of the images, as well as their representational, iconographical, and iconological meaning.

## **10. Summary and Conclusion**

Chapter Two aimed to provide a contextualisation of the research methodology and research design of this study of the ancient Mediterranean tattooed body in space and body as space based on an examination of the cultural practices in Assyria (*circa* 3300 BCE-2100 BCE), Egypt (*circa* 2000 BCE-300 BCE) Nubia (*circa* 2000 BCE-300 BCE), Israel (*circa* 1500 BCE-1200 BCE), Greece (*circa* 510 BCE-323 BCE), and Rome (*circa* 510 BCE-323 BCE)

The research methodology of this study has been established as being within the qualitative paradigm, because of the fact that this study necessarily considers the social world of the

ancient Mediterranean, and bases its investigation on the interpretation, understanding, and the production of meaning (Mason 2002:3) of those ancient cultures. The primary and secondary data used for this study are socially produced, and as such, are not quantifiable.

This study is conducted in the field of interpretivism because the researcher does not stand empirically and objectively “above or outside” the research in question, but is a participant observer (Carr & Kemmis 1986:88), seeking to discern the meanings of actions as they are expressed within specific social contexts.

In order to interpret the data, it is necessary to establish both a historical and a social context of the production of meaning within a culture, as well as to establish the ancient cultural values that would have influenced the tattooing practices of the ancient Mediterranean people. This is done through the method of social-scientific criticism.

Social-scientific criticism is a field of interpretation which is rooted in numerous social sciences, such as anthropology, philosophy, semiotics, political sciences, in order to create an interpretation of texts and images created during ancient times. Because of the diverse nature of the field, it provides an accurate context of the entire social world of the ancient cultures in question. Social-scientific criticism is used in this study in order to establish the ancient cultural values which would influence the tattooing process of the ancient Mediterranean people. These particular values have been identified by John Pilch and Bruce Malina (1998). For the purposes of this study, the values in question are:

1. Clothing;
2. Communicativeness;
3. Honour and shame;
4. Humility;
5. Nudity;
6. Ordering;
7. Prominence;
8. Social norms, customs, and laws, and
9. Wholeness.

Once these values have been discussed in terms of each of the tattooing ancient Mediterranean cultures in question, a critical spatial interpretation is done in order to establish the spatial relations of those individuals with tattoos with those who are unmarked. This is done through an analysis based on the theories of Thirdspace and Thirthing-as-Othering, as posited by Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja.



Thirdspace comprises of the physical of Firstspace and the emotional of Secondspace simultaneously, and within Thirdspace, the real and the imagined spaces meet in a “lived space”, where the power relations of the society govern its spatial inhabitation. Thirdspace is essentially an “approximation for an all-encompassing mode of spatial thinking” (Soja 1996:62). Thirling”, which describes “othering” a certain social group or member of society to a space which is other than the locus of power. For the purposes of this study, the people being othered are those who have tattoos.

Once the other spaces into which the othered bodies are banished to have been established, this spatial othering will be interpreted based on the theory of boundary relations as posited by Tor Hernes. The relevant boundaries are physical, social, and mental boundaries. These boundaries are related and subject to Ordering (the extent to which boundaries regulate internal interaction), Distinction (the extent to which boundaries constitute a clear demarcation between internal and external spheres) and Threshold (the extent to which boundaries regulate flow or movement between the external and the internal sphere).

The interpretation of the body (in and as space) is based on an initial interpretation of body symbolism in the ancient Mediterranean. This is necessary in order to establish the body as more than an anatomical and biological shell, because the notion of the “self” of a person is an “embodied self” with the capability of being employed as a material body with a social function, in order for the self to be embodied in such a way as to “act on the world” through the mechanism of the body (Reischer & Koo 2004:307). Body symbolism is used to establish the social way in which the human body is conceived of based on the culture and society in which given body has to function. These societies have different conceptions of what the body should look like, and should function, and within these parameters, body modification takes on significance.

Once the body has been given its cultural context and symbolism, the body can be interpreted based on its spatial inhabitation, thus, as a body in space. The human body in space is bound to the following notions of space: the actual, physical space of the body; the emotional space of the body (where the self of the body feels its relation to the space it is situated in); architectural space, and spiritual space (McNeur 2008:21). These spaces function simultaneously in order to create the embodied space within which a body has agency. The body as space is tied to the notions of Thirling-as-Othering, and boundaries, because it is the body in space which lives out the banishment and boundary relations as imposed on it by the power structures in a social hierarchy.

The body as space is directly related to dermatographics, because for the purposes of this study, the skin is the space of the body where the primary data is found. The skin is culturally significant in different ways (tattooed versus unmarked) in different contexts (honour and shame). The skin is the “interface between the “psyche and body, self and others” (Schildkrout 2004:321). The skin is also the space on the body where “perceptions and memories are entangled inside and through the body’s surface” and as such, it becomes somewhat of a “mystic writing pad” (Schildkrout 2004:321). The body as space is used to analyse the specific locations of tattoos on the ancient Mediterranean bodies, in order to evaluate the significance of the location in terms of the social and cultural values which are related to the body.

The process of tattooing is understood to be a social process. Even though tattooing is strongly related to the construction and reconstruction of the self, “body projects like tattooing have to be negotiated within the context of social networks” because the self-consciousness and bodily awareness inherent in “reflexive embodiment presupposes relations with others” (Waskul & Vannini 2006:21). The tattooing process is a “conscious attempt to alter the body’s natural parameters; to inscribe upon the body a set of symbols that instantly distinguish it from the mainstream and connect it affiliatively or disaffiliatively with the other marked bodies and groups” (Atkinson & Young 2001:120).

Tattooing is thus the method through which the body as space is othered and thus the motivation for the othering of the body in space. The images portrayed in the tattoos of the ancient Mediterranean people will be iconographically analysed against the backdrop of the social and cultural values related to the body, as well as the religions of the people in question. The documented ancient Mediterranean people who practiced tattooing are the Assyrians, the Nubians, the Egyptians, the early Israelites, the Greeks, and the Romans (Caplan 2002-6). The tattoos of the ancient Mediterranean people include tattoos on hands, forearms, faces, torsos, and thighs.

The iconographic interpretation of the tattoo images is done in order to ascertain the “social life and history” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:64) of each tattoo type in question. This will lead to the ability to contextualise the way in which these tattooed images were produced and received, and how they had meaning attributed to them. Each of the images of the tattoos themselves, as well as artefacts which show tattooed individual will be analysed in terms of representational meaning, iconographical meaning, and iconological meaning. This analysis will be used to answer the question of the motivation behind tattooing ancient Mediterranean individuals, based on the abstract and figurative meaning found in the tattoos.

The methodological foundation for the research design of this study is thus based on the contextual foundations of the interpretative models of social-scientific criticism, critical spatiality, body symbolism, and iconography. These contextual backgrounds are used in order to analyse the ancient Mediterranean body in space and the body as space, based on the situation of tattoos and the images portrayed in them. This investigation thus answers the research question of how the tattooed body is othered according to the theories of the body in space and the body as space, based on the critical spatial and social-scientific interpretations of ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices. The question of the body in space is answered through investigating the spatial boundaries that are enforced upon the tattooed people of the time. The question of the body as space is answered through investigating the significance of the parts of the body (the spaces of the body) that were tattooed in the ancient Mediterranean, and how the marked body as space is affected in terms of its social and personal esteem.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE HISTORICAL AND CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW OF THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN

#### 1. Introduction

For the purposes of this study, the region known as the ancient Mediterranean will be examined in terms of the habits and lifestyles of the various cultures which inhabited it. The region is vital to this examination, as its climate and setting created the matrix against which the cultures functioned and developed in terms of social practices, military practices, and religious practices. The people whose cultures practiced tattooing within this region have been identified as the Assyrians, Egyptians, Nubians, Israelites, the Greeks, and the Italians, with specific focus on the ancient Romans.

This chapter aims to establish the social, military, and religious practices of each of these cultures, against the context of the geographical setting of the ancient Mediterranean in order to create the context against which the tattooing practices of these cultures will be analysed. The three categories of social, military, and religious practices have thus been identified as the cultural practices which have been associated with tattooing in ancient times. The analysis of these forms of tattooing requires a cultural context, as tattooing is an inherently social and cultural phenomenon, which is highlighted in Chapter Three.

#### 2. The Geographical and Historical Contextualisation of the Ancient Mediterranean

The geographic situation of the ancient civilisations of the ancient Near East, Egypt, Greece and Italy is centred round the Mediterranean Basin. The geography of the ancient Mediterranean is of paramount importance to this study, because of the fact that geography encompasses the “interaction of man and his environment” as well as tracing of the interaction of man in society. The occurrence of the practice of tattooing is an example of man’s interaction in society, and the fact that certain cultures’ tattoos influenced others’, it is reasonable to assume that tattooing spread geographically throughout the development of various civilisations.

The following image represents the situation of the civilisations around the Mediterranean Basin:



Figure 5: Map of the Mediterranean Basin



Sourced from: Shepherd (1923:12).

The cultural development of the Mediterranean Basin can be plotted as follows (Semple 1921:47): the Sumerians (c. 3500 BCE); the Akkadians (c. 2340 BCE); the Babylonians (c. 2000 BCE); the Hittites (c. 1600 BCE); the Assyrians (c. 1300 BCE); the Medes (c. 609 BCE), and the Persians (c. 560 BCE). The Egyptian civilisation developed from c. 3200 BCE. The Greek civilisation developed from c. 2900, and the Roman civilisation developed from c. 753 BCE.

Mesopotamia and Egypt are both situated around river valleys, which negate the “inhospitability” of the surrounding environment enough for the sake of the survival of these civilisations. The oases that the river valleys provide ensure that the inhabitants have a constant supply of water, which sustains the fertility of the soil, as well as the constancy of the crops (Semple 1921:47). This allowed for these civilisations to become sedentary and agrarian to an extent. As civilisation spread to the west, to Greece and Italy, it becomes apparent that the people of the ancient Mediterranean could both “exploit the natural environment”, and “make good use of it” (Harris 2005:16-17).

“The ancient history of Mesopotamia is usually associated with the two distinct areas from which political leadership stemmed, namely Babylonia and Assyria” (Laessoe 1963:12). This study focuses on Mesopotamia only in terms of Assyria. The geographical situation of Assyria surrounds the Tigris river, stemming from the “mountains of Armenia in the north to the Hamrin Hills in the south; a flood plain including the upper reaches of the Tigris and its eastern tributaries” (Laessoe 1963:12). The Assyrian landscape is comprised of low hills, and is dependent on winter rainfalls (Laessoe 1963:12). The rivers of Mesopotamia, namely, the Tigris and the Euphrates, are dependent on rainfall and the melting snow of the northern and eastern mountains (Laessoe 1963:12).

The Assyrian people thrived during the time of *circa* 2000 BCE until 612 BCE. “The heartland of Assyria, named after its traditional centre at Assur, lay on the middle course of the river Tigris, expanding and retracting to north and south as opportunity offered” (Moorey 1987:29). Assyria is situated in such a way that the people who inhabited the land could access the resources of the “mountain massif” behind her, where raw materials and horses were found (Moorey 1987:29). The region is not seen to have been secure, though, as the state of Urartu would force Assyria to defend herself against marauding (Moorey 1987:29).

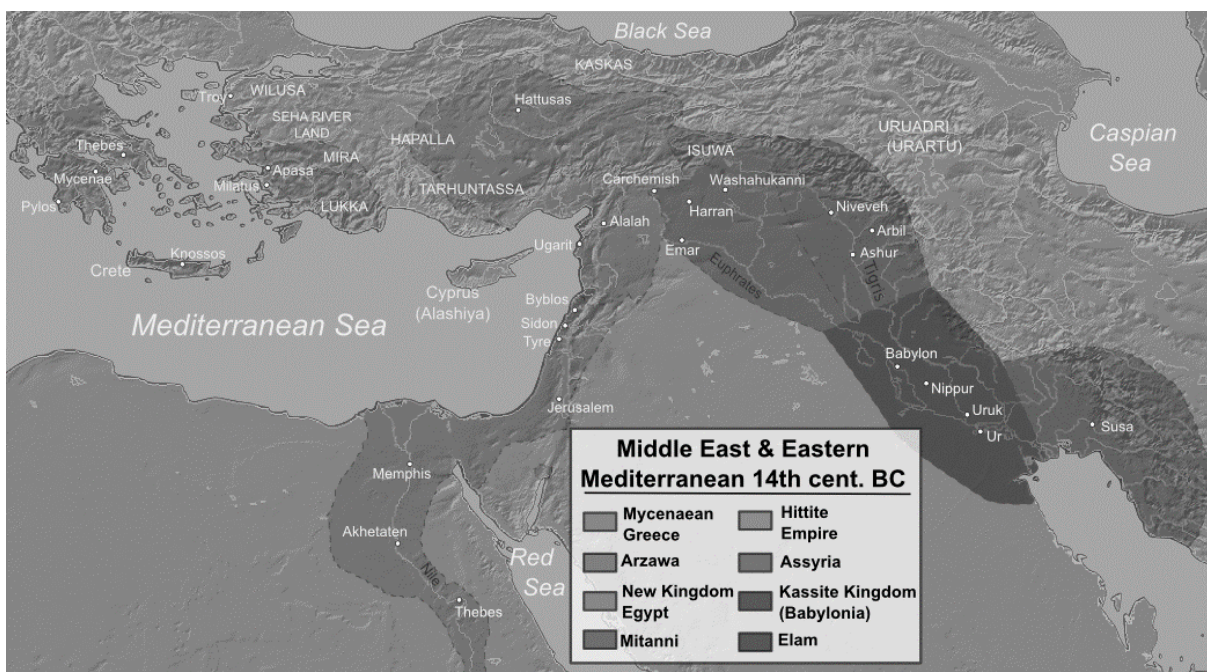
Erika Bleibtreu (2002:2) explains that Assyrian “territory covered approximately the northern part of modern Iraq”. The capital city of the region, Assur, was situated on the west bank of the Tigris River, and is the name upon which “Assyria” is based. The Assyrian military aimed



to expand its territory, and led campaigns into Mesopotamia, Syro-Palestine, Israel, and Judah (Belibtreu 2002:2-3).

Another ancient Near Eastern empire that is important to mention, if briefly in overview, in terms of tattooing practices, is that of the Persians. Under the ruler Cyrus, Babylon was taken in circa 538 BCE, and the Persian rulers would overrule the “policies of earlier conquerors in the Near East, [by] permitting conquered peoples to maintain their cultures in their homelands” (Furgason 2003:6). Furgason (2003:6) sets the Persian rulers out as follows: Cyrus (538 BCE to 529 BCE), Cambyses (529 BCE until 522 BCE), Darius (522 BCE to 486 BCE), Xerxes (485 BCE until 465 BCE), and Artaxerxes (464 BCE to 424 BCE).

**Figure 6: Map of Ancient Assyria**



Sourced from: Wikimedia Commons (2013).

Ancient Egypt is a river civilisation, situated on the banks of the Nile River. There are two predominantly juxtaposed geographical features which are prominent in terms of the Egyptian landscape, namely the oasis of the Nile Valley, and the deserts that encroach on Egypt from either side of its situation (Bard 1999:17-20). The desert to west is the Sahara Desert, and the desert to the east is the Arabian Desert, which is separated from the Red Sea by mountain ranges. The Egyptians referred to Egypt as “the Black Land” and called the desert “the Red Land” (Shaw 1993:192). Egypt established rule over the oases found in the Libyan Desert during the Dynastic Period.

Due to the fact that the only fertile and arable land was situated right next to the Nile River, and was surrounded by desert on either side, agriculture was limited to a small region. As nomadic people started to settle in the Nile Valley, they started to follow a sedentary way of life, and thus had to start producing food, which led to the invent of agriculture as well as the domestication of animals for food and clothing (Bard 1999:17-20). There is evidence of settlements along the banks of the Nile from the Early Palaeolithic Period, and it may be posited that those inhabitants had started to domesticate animals (Bard 1999:17-20). Even though there is very little rainfall in Egypt, the annual flooding of the river served as the basis for the origin of agriculture in the region (Bard 1999:17-20).

It was essential that the Egyptian people create and maintain a sustainable system of water management. Agriculture was based on three seasons that depended upon the annual inundation of the Nile River. The climate, which is hot and dry, emphasised the importance of the water source, and made every person dependent upon it in order to be able to grow crops. Also due to the annual inundations of the Nile, rich deposits of alluvium were found in the soil, increasing its fertility, and harmful excess mineral salts were leached away (Bard 1999:17-20).

Religion was influenced by the geography and climate in terms of the yearly inundation of the Nile. As the king of the land possessed the Divine Kingship, and was thus close to the gods, it was accepted that the natural and physical manifestations of everyday life was directly influenced by the king's relationship with the gods, for example, if there was a drought, it was thought that the kings had angered the gods. If there was plentiful water and crops, the king was in favour with the gods. This greatly influenced the political stability (Bard 1999:17-20).

The following is summarised from Hornung, Krauss, and Warburton (2006:55-264). The main periods of Egyptian history are the Predynastic Era, which lasted from 5500 BCE until 3100 BCE. The first and second Dynasties followed during the Early Dynastic Period (3100-2682 BCE). The third, fourth, and fifth Dynasties followed from 2682 BCE until 2181 BCE during the Old Kingdom. The First Intermediate Period lasted from 2181 BCE until 2055 BCE, and saw the rise and fall of the seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh Dynasties. These Dynasties were followed by the Middle Kingdom, which lasted from 2055 BCE to 1650 BCE, during which time the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth Dynasties were in power. The Second Intermediate period lasted from 1650 BCE until 1550 BCE and saw the reign of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth Dynasties. The New Kingdom lasted from 1550 BCE till 1069 BCE during which time the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth Dynasties reigned. The New Kingdom was followed by the Third Intermediate Period, 1069 BCE to 747 BCE, during which time the twenty-first, twenty-second, twenty-third, and twenty-fourth Dynasties



came to power. The Late Period, 747 BCE to 332 BCE saw the twenty-fifth through thirtieth Dynasties, and ended with the Second Persian Period, from 343 BCE until 332 BCE. This was followed by the Ptolemaic Period (332 BCE until 30 BCE), and the Roman Period (30 BCE to 395 CE).

Nubia forms a part of “the Nile Valley which extends upstream from Egypt to the junction of the Blue and White Niles” (Adams 1974:39). Nubia was originally politically structured to be a “province of the Egyptian empire during 1580 BCE and 1000 BCE” (Adams 1974:39). Nubia developed a culture that was separate from the Egyptian culture which dominated it, though, as the “native population was gradually detribalised and acculturated, and acquired a considerable veneer of the civilisation of its overlords” (Adams 1974:39).

Nubia consists of “peoples who have traditionally inhabited that strip of the Nile between Aswan, Egypt, and Dungola, Sudan” (Kennedy 1975:175). The people who comprise Nubia are “neither wholly Mediterranean nor wholly African: since earliest times they have presented a unique blend of the two”, and as such, they serve as the “only permanent connecting link between the ancient centres of Mediterranean civilisation and the cultures of sub-Saharan Africa” (Van Gerven, Carlson & Armelagos 1973:555). Stuart Smith (1998:259) explains that even though the cultures of Egypt and Nubia developed from the same, “widespread north-eastern African group with a similar material culture”, the two cultures diverged by the late Predynastic period. Nubian culture developed in “groups”.

The first of these groups is the A-Group, which came into existence in Lower Nubia during 3500 BCE to 2900 BCE. The people who comprised this group stemmed from a group of chiefdoms, and created a “stratified, complex chiefdom” (Smith 1998:259). While there were still strong ties between Nubian and Egyptian “elites”, “punitive and slave-taking campaigns sent from Egypt in the Early Dynastic period and early Old Kingdom (*circa* 2900 BCE to 2600 BCE) precipitated the collapse of the A-Group culture” (Smith 1998:259). The second group, namely, the C-Group, “reoccupied Lower Nubia after the Egyptians abandoned the handful of small mining communities established in the Old Kingdom. The C-Group consisted of largely egalitarian chiefdoms that supplied mercenaries and other services to Egypt in exchange for trade goods” (Smith 1998:259).

When the Egyptian Middle Kingdom collapsed during *circa* 1680 BCE, Lower Nubia was dominated by the Kerman State which developed in Upper Nubia, and engaged in “Thriving” trade with Egypt (Smith 1998:259-260). Even though the C-Group still inhabited Lower Nubia, “two or perhaps three large polities eventually combined into an extensive state with a large urban centre. By *circa* 1680 BCE, the Kermans expanded their control into Lower Nubia,

where the local C-Group and Egyptian expatriates acknowledged the Ruler of Kush as suzerain” (Smith 1998:260), which occurs where a given region is a subordinate tributary to a dominant region which controls the subordinate region’s foreign affairs while granting it internal autonomy.

The Kerman State of Nubia came under Egyptian domination, though, during the New Kingdom (*circa* 1550 BCE to 1050 BCE) (Smith 1998:260). Egypt conquered both Upper and Lower Nubia. “In Lower Nubia they deliberately adopted a policy of acculturation, co-opting local rulers of the C-Group and eventually drawing the entire population into the Egyptian cultural sphere” (Smith 1998:260). In contrast, the local rulers of Upper Nubia were granted a measure of autonomy and were able to maintain the practices of their “native cultures” within the “more hegemonic imperial system” (Smith 1998:260).

When the New Kingdom fell, however, in *circa* 1050 BCE, the Egyptian occupation of Lower Nubia was retracted to the extent that it “formed a lightly occupied buffer zone with Egypt” (Smith 1998:260). Upper Nubia was left under the rule of a “series of independent chiefdoms” (Smith 1998:260). A new Kingdom of Kush was formed during *circa* 850 BCE, when Napata conquered Egypt. “The Napatan dynamic mixture of Nubian and Egyptian culture continued from *circa* 300 BCE to CE 400 during the Meroitic period, when the capital shifted south from Napata to Meroe” (Smith 1998:260-261).



biblical crafts and industry (Har-El 2003:21). The liminal space that Israel occupies between the desert and the Mediterranean also situated it as a “political nexus between Egypt and Cush in the south, and the Hittites, Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia in the north” (Har-El 2003:21). Israel is the land that succeeded Canaan in terms of boundaries, as categorised by Zecharia Kallai (1997:72).

Israel’s borders are established and expanded through conquests and the waging of war (Kallai 1997:73). The boundaries of the land of Israel include Transjordan areas, as well as Canaan. “The southern boundary of the land of Israel is identical with that attributed in biblical historiography to the land of Canaan. In the north it falls short of the frontier of Canaan, and is drawn from the Mediterranean Sea, somewhat north of Sidon, to Baal-gad, at the southern end of the Valley of Lebanon, below Mount Hermon” (Kallai 1997:73). The boundaries of Israel, therefore comprise “the Bashan, Gilead and the Plain (Mishor) up to the river Arnon. Further south, the eastern boundary continues along the Dead Sea to its southern end” (Kallai 1997:73).

It has been noted that Israel is also delineated by patriarchal boundaries, ranging from “the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates (Gen. 15:18). The three references in Deuteronomy 1:7; 11:24 and Joshua 1:4 add Mount Lebanon as a marker” (Kallai 1997:73). The patriarchal boundaries designate the area which is called “the Promised Land”, and marks out the area which consists of “ten indigenous peoples; the land of Canaan by its geographical circumscription and the seven pre-Israelite nations; and the land of Israel by various territorial descriptions, comprehensive and regional, and by reference to the tribes of Israel” (Kallai 1997:76).

The chronology of Israel follows the following pattern (Levine 2002:xv-xvii): The city of Jerusalem became a religious capital city after David’s conquest in *circa* 1000 BCE. Jerusalem’s political and religious notoriety as at its height in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, under the reign of Hezekiah (727 BCE -698 BCE). Under Hezekiah, the Israelites gained notoriety after the destruction of Samaria by the Assyrians. The retreat of Assyrian forces under Sennacherib in 701 BCE was seen to be “proof of God’s protection of the city” (Levine 2002:xvi). During the First Temple Period in 622 BCE, “Josiah’s reforms established Jerusalem as the sole legitimate site for [religious] activity” (Levine 2002:xvi). During the Second Temple Period, the Temple and the Temple Mount were reconstructed in order to establish the greatness of the city. The Second Temple Period falls under the following eras, namely the Persian (*circa* 536 BCE-332 BCE), the Hellenistic (*circa* 332 BCE-63 BCE), the Roman eras. The Temple was destroyed in 70 BCE after the institution of the *pax Romana* in 63 BCE.

Figure 8: Map of Ancient Israel



Sourced from: Wikimedia Commons (2010).

The geographical region of Greece comprises a mountainous peninsula (Spielvogel 2011:54). “The mountains and the sea played especially significant roles in the development of Greek history” (Spielvogel 2014:54). The Greek people who inhabited the mountainous regions were essentially isolated from each other by virtue of the Greek geography, and this forged independence among the Greek people; an independence which they would defend through fighting each other for geographical advantages (Spielvogel 2014:54).

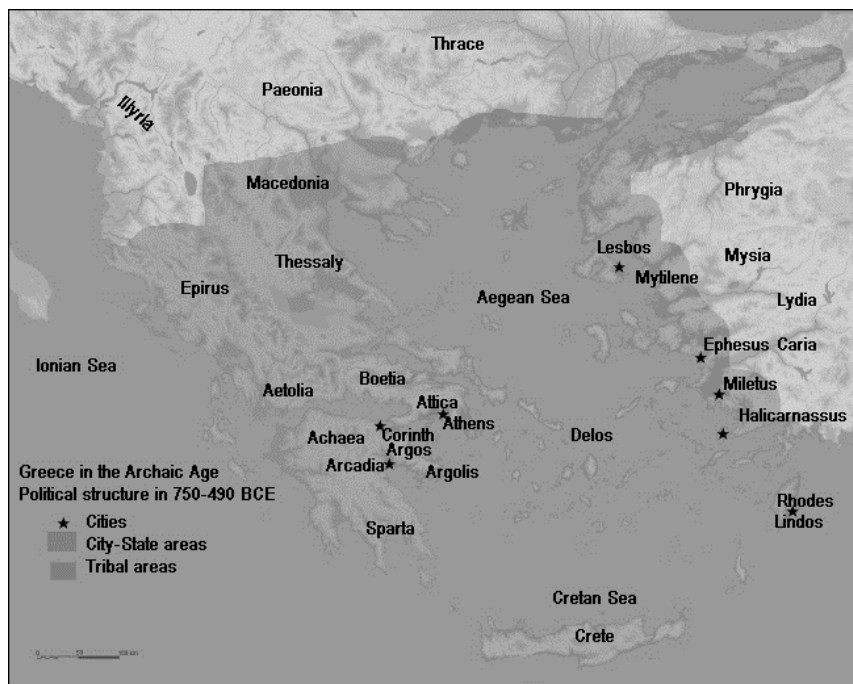
The sense of isolation and independence was reinforced by the geographical impact of the sea on the Greeks, as “Greece had a long sea coast, dotted by bays and inlets that provided numerous harbours ... the Greeks inhabited a number of islands to the west, the south, and particularly the east of the Greek mainland” (Spielvogel 2014:54).

Greece was divided topographically into the following major territories (Spielvogel 2014:54):

South of the Gulf of Corinth was the Peloponnessus which was virtually an island. Consisting mostly of hills, mountains, and small valleys, the Peloponnessus was the location of Sparta, as well as the site of Olympia, where the athletic games were held. Northeast of the Peloponnessus was the Attic peninsula, the home of Athens, hemmed in by mountains to the north and west and surrounded by sea to the south and east. Northwest of Attica was Boeotia in central Greece, with its chief city of Thebes. To the north of Boeotia was Thessaly, which contained the largest plains and became a great producer of grain and horses. To the north of Thessaly lay Macedonia.

The chronological development of ancient Greece may be broken up into the following categories of periods (University Press Inc 2012): The Neolithic Period, which lasted from 6000 BCE until 2900 BCE. This was followed by the Early Bronze Age, which lasted from 2900 BCE until 2000 BCE. The Minoan Age followed, from 2000 BCE until 1400 BCE; after which the Mycenaean Age stretched between 1100 BCE and 600 BCE. During this age, though, Greece transitioned into the Archaic Period, from 750 BCE until 500 BCE. The Classical Period followed from 500 BCE until 336 BCE.

**Figure 9: Map of Ancient Greece**



Sourced from: Wikimedia Commons (2007).

Barker *et al.* (1991:16) explain that the nature of the geography of the ancient Mediterranean had a distinctive characteristic of “transhumance” which is evidenced by “the movement of herders and their stock from winter grazing on the lowlands to summer grazing in the uplands”.



This phenomenon occurred over long distances, as well as on a smaller scale, where “movements of stock between lowlands and uplands, carried out by families or groups of families at a subsistence level rather than for market production” (Barker *et al.* 1991:16). This phenomenon was common in ancient Italy, where there was a pastoral way of life.

Italy’s geography is shaped in the form of a peninsula which extends from north to south for approximately 750 miles, but which is relatively narrow, measuring only 120 miles from east to west (Spielvogel 2014:112). The Apennine Mountains form a ridge that divides the west of Italy from the east. The climate and geography of this region ensured that a pastoral lifestyle would be possible, due to the number of large, fertile plains, which were “ideal for farming” (Spielvogel 2014:112). One of the most fertile agricultural regions of ancient Italy was that of the Po valley, situated in the north. The plain of Latium, where the city of Rome was located, was also a fertile plain, as was Campania, to the south (Spielvogel 2014:112).

The Italian peninsula met the Adriatic Sea to the east, and the Tyrrhenian Sea to the west, where the islands of Corsica and Sardinia are located. Another important island is that of Sicily, which is situated to the west “of the toe of the boot-shaped peninsula” (Spielvogel 2014:112). “The Italian peninsula juts into the Mediterranean Sea, making it an important crossroads between the western and eastern Mediterranean” (Spielvogel 2014:112).

Ancient central Italy, similar to Assyria and Egypt, was developed and populated along a river. This river is the Tiber. Like the Nile, the Tiber also formed a delta plain, around which the settlement of Ostia was formed, and its natural harbour was “the first landing place of Rome” (Bellotti *et al.* 2011:1107). Around the Tiber there were another two artificial harbour basins in the town of Portus. Portus was also the location of a necropolis, “at the sides of Via Flavia-Via Severiana”, which were the “Roman coastal roads (Bellotti *et al.* 2011:1107). The village of Vicus Augustanus was built on the Laurentine shore of the Tiber.

The city of Rome was located 18 miles from the Tiber River, and while Rome had access to the sea, it was far enough inland to not be perpetually threatened by pirates. Rome was built in, on, and around seven hills, and it was “easily defended, and because it was situated where the Tiber could easily be forded, Rome became a natural crossing point for north-south traffic in western Italy” (Spielvogel 2014:112).

Figure 10: Map of Ancient Italy



Sourced from: Wikimedia Commons (2011).



### 3. The Social, Military, and Religious Practices of Ancient Mediterranean Cultures

Through the historical accounts of cultural practices “memory and its representations [that] touch very significantly upon questions of identity, of nationalism, of power and authority” are contextualised and represented (Said 2000:176). “The memory of a people is a social, political, and historical enterprise” (Said 2000:178). A hermeneutic interpretation of a people’s historical records make an absolute truth of history impossible to establish, “the invention of tradition is a method for using collective memory selectively by manipulating certain bits of the national past, suppressing others, elevating still others in an entirely functional way. Thus memory is not necessarily authentic, but rather useful” (Said 2000:179).

The memory of the people of the Ancient Mediterranean is what is being examined in order to establish the social, military, and religious practices of the people who inhabited the region. As memory is tied to geographical space, the formation of nations is important when interpreting the social patterns of a people.

Ernest Gellner (1983:1-5) explains that the formation of nations, and inherently, their cultures, is based on a homogenous public culture with a focus on the relations of the people. Bruce Routledge (2003:217) explains that the networks of social relations, especially in terms of kinship, locality, and the patron-client bonds are what defined societal classes in the ancient Near East, and by extension, the ancient Mediterranean. The societal bonds that form the networks within each society are, for the most part, rooted in behaviours which follow the basic tenets of beliefs in religions which have divine rule over nature and history, as well as divine order (Albrektson 1967:16-23).

Within this divine order, there is a possible interpretation of the ethics of the people who inhabited the ancient Mediterranean region, as ethics depend upon ideology, and ideology depends upon beliefs and behaviours upheld by a given culture (Crouch 2009:5-6). The behavioural norms which conform to the values and beliefs of the ancient Mediterranean cultures stem from the “morality and ethics [which] are themselves conditioned by certain definite situations” (Crouch 2009:16) which can be related to the common concepts of honour and shame, as well as duty and transgression (Crouch 2009:16).

The values and beliefs of societies form part of the “means by which the intellectual construct of human society is created” (Crouch 2009:16). This socialisation is the way through which one leads an ordered and meaningful life, as human beings “project themselves onto the world through externalisation; and the product of this externalisation confronts the producers with something external to and other than themselves (objectification)” (Crouch 2009:17). This

process leads to the re-appropriation and internalisation of that which has been objectified, and through this process human relationships are structured, and these relationships form the framework of societies' ethical frameworks (Crouch 2009:17).

Carly Crouch (2009:17) continues to explain that this process of socialisation is natural, and that it is universal to the people of a given culture, because it becomes the norm, and “a society's members cannot conceive of a different way of doing things”, and that, “in such a society, the given social order is one and the same as the natural world” (Crouch 2009:17). Religion becomes a common element of this natural societal order, and it strengthens a society through providing an answer to the question of why the society has been structured in a certain way (Crouch 2009:18).

Within this religious order of a given culture, the people become dependent upon systems of symbols and signs through which societal norms are communicated in order to reinforce the order in which man lives. Symbols and signs, whether honourable or shameful, provide concrete interpretations of the word, and that provides order which counteracts chaos (Crouch 2009:19). Tattooing practices form part of this concretisation of the signs and symbols within a given society, as they are cultural marks which designate order upon the body, which exists within a societal structure.

The interpretation of symbols and signs plays a vital role in the understanding of ancient cultural beliefs around the topic of the body. During the Late Pleistocene era, the representation of the body became commonplace, and the “adaptive value for the success of human cultures” becomes apparent through the representation of signs and symbols of those ancient cultures, who had the ability to “take a form out of context and place it into a new one” (Fontaine 2008:34). Using forms in this manner meant that the “ornamentation of the body [became] a way of constructing a set of social distinctions that would not otherwise exist” (Fontaine 2008:34).

Even though there may be a discrepancy between the representation of the subject in its depiction and the subject itself, the interpretation of the signs and symbols within a given context allows the interpreter to understand the purposive nature of the representations, through a study of the relevant iconography and social-scientific criticism of the culture. When interpreting the signs and symbols of ancient cultures, it is necessary to see the representation as enlightening the interpreter to “how environment, everyday life, and culturally specific ways of thinking, acting, and believing must be woven together to provide a contextualised understanding of the acts of constructing and interpreting representations; whether they be stories, sculptures, songs, or engravings” (Fontaine 2008:35).

The representation of the body in ancient cultures is problematic, as there is no true concept of the body as a “unified, discrete entity in space” (Fontaine 2008:38). The problem arises when one recognises that the body is, essentially, “the sensations of being inside a vessel of skin, flesh, and bone” where the body itself is an agent with potentiality of inhabiting space and acting out in a given space in a certain way. The representation of the body is a “social and linguistic construct” while the body itself is pre-cultural and pre-linguistic, because the bodily experiences of pleasure and pain occur “outside of language” (Fontaine 2008:39). The representations of the body use the language of signs and symbols to show these experiences in a tangible, linguistic, corporeal way.

It is in the face of pain and mortality that the work of representing the body falls into line with the aims of abusers of bodies, those torturers, those victorious commanders, the priestly rituals that invade or curse ... The precise point of abuse of the body is to re-inscribe a different worldview in the person whose body is violated: the new power relations that favour the physically dominant are introduced as the abuse, terror, and fear that continually drive the victim into a pre-linguistic, almost inhuman collection of moans, shrieks, and cries (Fontaine 2008:39).

The signs and symbols that are represented on the body are cultural demonstrations of power relations, and either honour or shame the person upon whom the representation is inflicted. In order to understand the purpose of the representations on the body, one must first understand how a given culture conceived of the body within its value system. The value systems of cultures are tied to their religious, military, and social practices, and, as such, those aspects will be discussed for the cultures of the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Nubians, the Israelites, the Greeks, and the Romans.

The cultures of the ancient Mediterranean show common religious features which exemplify the postulation that “religion and its ritual permeated life in most societies” (Moorey 1987:43). “Law and government, art and craft, and the entire range of written record and intellectual life in complex urban communities were deeply rooted in religious observance and temple worship” (Moorey 1987:43). The occurrences and interactions of daily life would be attributed to the work of deities, “who were manifold, not to natural or historical causes” (Moorey 1987:43). The agency attributed to deities could be used to manipulate the agency of man to conform to social norms, as man should mirror the divine agency in terms of honourable deeds in terms of adherence to custom.

The Assyrian culture functions upon the belief that order is synonymous with everything the Assyrians understand to be native to them, while everything non-Assyrian is considered to be chaotic (Crouch 2009:21). The Assyrian universe is thus centred toward the geographical “heartland and capital cities”, and this centre creates an ordered boundary where everyone

who does not reside within the Assyrian centre is considered to be *nakru*, strange, foreign, hostile, and/or an enemy (Crouch 2009:21). The fact that the Assyrians view everything that is not central to them as a threat, however, means that the “order-chaos dichotomy was as self-perpetuating phenomenon” (Crouch 2009:22).

It follows that, as a result of the “alignment of the Assyrian centre with order and the periphery with chaos, combined with the ideological necessity of eradicating the threat of chaos to order”, the expansion of the Assyrian empire was not a voluntary matter, but rather a tacit fact of Assyrian existence. As such, military violence became a necessity (Crouch 2009:22), and the enemy who would be conquered became portrayed as those who would be turned to order from-out chaos through being conquered (Crouch 2009:22). This conquering of the chaotic enemy would create the opportunity for the conquered other bodies to be marked as conquered, through tattooing practices.

The Assyrian religion also embodies this conquest of chaos through divine order; “it is specifically through warfare that the victory of order over chaos is achieved. Marduk defeats Tiamat after a violent battle which employs both conventional weaponry and the forces of nature”, and Marduk is declared as the king of the gods because of this victory (Crouch 2009:23). The Assyrian institution of kingship is founded upon the relationship between the acts of gods and the acts of men, since the function of the human ruler of the Assyrians is to serve as a military leader (Crouch 2009:25). “The human king symbolically receives the divine commission to go to war by receiving the weapons of the gods”; and “such a conception of the divine warrior inherently implies a synchronised historical, human agent” (Crouch 2009:25-26).

For Assyrians, the “willingness to mutilate the human body for purposes of publicity suggests a particular attitude toward the human body – or at least to the enemy body – which allowed it to be used as a billboard for Assyrian domination” (Crouch 2009:42). There is iconographic evidence in one of Sargon II’s reliefs of scarification, as an Assyrian soldier is seen applying a “scraping tool” to a victim’s arm (Crouch 2009:53). Another relief shows evidence of body piercing, where three men are depicted to have “leashes run through either [their] tongues or lips” (Crouch 2009:53).

In everyday life, “various forms of mutilation, physical punishment, and fines were meted out, based on the seriousness of the offense and the social class to which the offender and victim belonged” (Fontaine 2008:80). Slaves who tried to run away would have their heads shaved, or they would be branded, or mutilated. Prostitutes would be stripped and beaten and have pitch poured over their heads as punishment for not wearing a veil. (Fontaine 2008:80).

Paradoxically, “the law codes show a sense of value for life and bodily integrity” (Fontaine 2008:81). Physically wounding another to the extent that there would be permanent damage to the victim could lead to the fining or wounding of the perpetrator. The interpretation of the legalities of physical harm fell to the relevant patriarchal authority.

The Egyptian culture is unified under the “central cosmological tenets” that the pharaoh is the guardian of right order (*ma’at*), through which civilised life is made possible, as the pharaoh uses this right order to “keep the forces of chaos at bay” (Routledge 2003:218). In Egypt, the cultural and social norms were defined around value systems of “diligence, loyalty, deference, and honesty in the execution duty” (Routledge 2003:219). These behavioural norms form bonds of kinship. This kinship is also solidified through the practices of religious rituals and calendric festivals, as the “Egyptian state ritual incorporated parallel practices carried out by the general population” (Routledge 2003:219), and the “similar experience of religious practices from within different social positions was important to the reproduction of those social positions over time” (Routledge 2003:219).

The nation of Egypt, however, is divided according to the societal values which unify it, in terms of class and hierarchy. “Nobles could be embedded in kinship systems, temples could mobilise their dependents in opposition to palace institutions, and local elites could seek regional solidarity to resist central authorities” (Routledge 2003:220). Values which reinforce division consist primarily of gender-based values (patriarchal authority and female cloistering) which “can both cut across and reinforce class divisions, especially when the realisation of these values is aided by direct access to resources, such as servants, education, and agricultural surpluses” (Routledge 2003:220-221).

Egyptian culture is inextricably linked to its religion. Egyptian religion is based on polytheistic, mythopoeic thought, inasmuch as it is “sustained by man’s experience of the universe alive from end to end. [These] powers confront man wherever he moves, and in the immediacy of these confrontations the question of their ultimate unity does not arise” (Frankfort 1948:4). Both cosmic and natural phenomena would be explained in terms of this manner of thinking, and, as such, the gods that the Egyptians believed in served as the manifestations of “powers that reveal themselves” (Frankfort 1948:14). This interpretation of the gods as manifest powers means that the Egyptians would recognise all natural powers as gods. These natural powers would include cosmic phenomena, “such as the course of the sun and moon, and the changeless rhythm of the seasons”, and these phenomena signify both “transcendent power and order” (Frankfort 1948:15).

Natural powers and phenomena also provide man with insight into survival after death as being the “desired order of human life”, and provide answers for the problem of meaning as related to existence through correlation with the sun’s rising and setting, and the annual “sprouting of grain” (Frankfort 1948:16-19). The Egyptian gods were seen to be anthropomorphic, and imperfect individuals who wielded divine power, as the gods are constituted by divine command (Frankfort 1948:19-24).

Kurt Raaflaub (2007:10) states that it was a common practice among both the Egyptian pharaohs and the Mesopotamian kings to display the “bloody harvest of war” of mutilation and bodily modification enacted upon prisoners of war and upon enemy soldiers, on monuments. This served as both a deterrent to enemies, and as a record of the nation’s victories. The mutilations and modifications carried out on prisoners of war included, but was not limited to being blinded, having hands severed, having the lower lip cut off, as well as death by decapitation and display (Raaflaub 2007:10).

“Recurring events in the archaeology of funerary monuments in north-eastern Africa support the thesis that a religious tradition was shared by the major peoples of the Nile Valley and adjacent regions in ancient times” (Williams 1997:91). One religious tradition that is seen across Egypt and Nubia is that of cult members bringing external offerings to superstructures (Williams 1997:92).

William Adams (1974:44) explains that Nubian religion followed the model that had been enforced upon it under Egyptian rule, and that it exemplifies a “theocratic despotism on the pharaonic model, dominated by a god-king who was [simultaneously] the nexus of social, political, economic and religious life”. The Nubian religion falls under the auspices of Meroitic religion, and archaeological evidence shows temple reliefs depicting “the royal personages in association with many of the familiar Egyptian gods (Amon, Osiris, Isis, Horus and others) as well as with one purely local deity, the lion-headed Apedemak” (Adams 1974:44). Further evidence of the influence of Egyptian religion on that of the Nubian people is that numerous Meroitic rulers took the name Amon (Amani) (Adams 1974:45). There was also a prevalence of Isis worship in the southern provinces of Nubia (Adams 1974:48). It is important to note that the male and female deities were seen to be of equal stature, as “all male deities had female counterparts of equal importance ... the equality between men and women in Egyptian [and Nubian] antiquity was an integral part of the divine order” (Monges 1993:561).

In Egypt, criminal and civil crimes were dealt with by tribunals which rendered decisions without enforcement (Fontaine 2008:82). “The community values and shaming for dishonourable conduct were the ultimate guarantors of compliance with verdicts” (Fontaine



2008:82). In accordance with Mesopotamian law, penalties in Egypt also included wounding perpetrators, even though mutilations were rare in the Old and Middle Kingdoms. The practice became more commonplace during the New Kingdom, “as foreign captives were imported as slaves” (Fontaine 2008:83). The Egyptians viewed the body as property, and the marking of property would alter its worth (Fontaine 2008:83). In both Egypt and Nubia, “it was generally accepted that public violent crime is minimised by the collective consciousness of the rural community and its intolerance for individual diversity. Deviant behaviour would propel the individual into community prominence through social controls” (Judd 2006:354).

William Adams (1984:40) explains that the interaction between the cultures of Egypt and Nubia was based on the Nubian resources which the Egyptians viewed as exportable, namely, “the ‘unholy trio’ of gold, ivory, and slaves” (Adams 1984:40). Although the animal trade was “peaceful”, procuring Nubian slaves was achieved through warfare and capture (Adams 1984:42), and this would force the Nubians into a state of shame, which would be enforced by Egyptian social controls, as mentioned above. As Egypt conducted a “policy of formal imperial exploitation in Nubia” (Carroll 1988:122), she began appropriating Nubian wrestlers from the Nubian military. Nubian wrestlers were depicted as participating in combative sports used for military training, and the Egyptians also recruited Nubian archers into their own military (Carroll 1988:123).

As Nubia adopted the pharaonic structure itself, it also adopted the principle of the “ethic of acting in accordance with one’s awareness of the universal order” of things (Epsztein 1986:18). This universal order translated into a quest for justice and equity in terms of the collective social character of the individual (Epsztein 1986:23). Injustices such as theft, fraud, looting, and crimes of war were met with severe punishment which included mutilation and exile (Epsztein 1986:36).

Carole Fontaine (2008:15) contextualises the beliefs of the Israelites as part of the “trio of religions which call the Torah sacred; [which] all began in the Fertile Crescent of the ancient Near East”. These religions include Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. All three of these religions promulgate that “all value, including morality, derives from God, not humanity. Humans are deserving of salvation not because of anything to do with their nature or rights, but because God has created them and would redeem them” (Fontaine 2008:16). Ancient Israel and Judah were populated by societies who “worshipped a deity known as the God of the Fathers”, and believed that this god had delivered them from slavery (Fontaine 2008:17). This deliverance is reflected in their societal values of “respect for slaves, foreigners, for the widow and orphan, as well as the ‘citizen army’” (Fontaine 2008:17).



Judaism is the name that was given to the beliefs of the people of Israel and Judah; who upheld their social norms, customs, and laws through “zealous guardianship of standards of endogamous marriage and a focus on religion” (Fontaine 2008:18). It is important to note the importance of the woman in Judaism, as they are “valued as mothers of an embattled minority”, and often served as negotiators for their families “in the marketplace and the village” (Fontaine 2008:23). The fact that women are valued in this culture means that the affiliation of shame with women and their bodies is lessened, to a degree.

The militaristic practices of the Israelites were bound to the ideology that “the enemy is an evil-doer who opposes cosmic order and, as such, deserves no mercy” (Fontaine 2008:67). The community becomes cleaner when the evil-doers are “removed”, through the *herem*, or ban placed upon them. According to the Torah, “the taking of life in war” exposed soldiers to dead flesh and blood, and thus threatened the soldiers’ ritual purity. As such, it was understood that the “model of Temple Sacrifice conveyed a different meaning to such a liminal and irreparable act”, and thus the ban was “authentic and good because it was a sacrifice to God [whereby] the human is offered as a sacrifice because [his] life has intrinsic value” (Fontaine 2008:67). “War is metaphorised as a ritual of surrendering life to its Creator, not a cleansing of the land of undesirables” (Fontaine 2008:67).

The values of the Greeks centred upon a “religious secularism”. This belief system was founded upon the ideals of life, which were embraced as being “health, beauty, respectable wealth, and the enjoyment of youth”; all the while maintaining values which distinguished between the “sacred and the profane” through the attempt to overcome fate through service to the gods (Furgason 2003:8). The values which the individual would embrace and live by were bound to the social structure and organisation, in the ascending order of family, tribe, and finally, city (Furgason 2003:8). The Greek city, known as a *polis*, “was an independent state comprising a town and its surrounding country (Furgason 2003:8).

Furgason (2003:8) explains that, in Greek culture, “the individual took turns ruling and being ruled”, but he continues to say that by the fourth century BCE, the Greeks struggled with the concept of having the city states united, and that, due to the Greek “fondness” for competition, they would fight amongst themselves (Furgason 2003:8). The competitive spirit of the Greeks fuelled the war that would become “endemic in the fifth century, culminating in a long war between two ‘superpowers’ and their allies that was increasingly understood as a fight for domination over the entire Greek world” (Raaflaub 2007:9). Philip II of Macedon eventually ended the war between the city states through ultimate subjugation (Raaflaub 2007:9).

The ancient Greek society centred upon the ideal of freedom which were granted to the free person, the freed man or woman, but not to the slave. These categories are (Furgason 2003:57):

1. The right of the individual to be his own representative in legal matters;
2. The right of the individual to have protection from illegal seizure;
3. The right of the individual to work where he pleases, and
4. The right of freedom of movement of the individual.

The practices of body modification and tattooing affect all of the aforementioned rights. In terms of the cultural practices of body modification, the Greeks used “scarification as an endurance test” (Jones 1987:142). This practice has been interpreted to be the origin of the words “stigma”, and “stigmatisation”, which mean “mark” (Jones 1987:140). The mark that is being referred to in the ancient Greek context, is that of a “brand impressed by iron”. The Greeks also employed punitive marking through tattooing, especially in terms of punishment of war criminals and slaves. These practices dictated the nature of the structure of the societal relationships in terms of honour and shame (Crouch 2009:16).

Italy was colonised by Greece during the period of 750 BCE to 550 BCE, after the initial Greek settlement in the south of Italy (Spielvogel 2014:112). The Greeks founded Cumae, Naples, and Tarentum, and expanded their colonisation up into Brindisi, and into Sicily, of which they occupied two thirds (Spielvogel 2014:112). The Greek colonisation was implemented with the intention of the establishment of permanently settled communities, which meant the securing of “coastal plains for agriculture” and the building of “walled cities with harbours to carry trade” (Spielvogel 2014:112). The Greek colonisation of Italy meant that the exposure to the Greek culture would influence the Italian people, especially the Romans.

The Greeks initiated the cultivation of “olives and the vine”, “passed on their alphabetic system of writing, and provided artistic and cultural models through their sculpture, architecture, and literature” (Spielvogel 2014:112).

The Romans came into direct contact with Greek culture as a result of their own conquest of southern Italy and Sicily; and were indirectly exposed to the Greek culture through the Etruscan people (Spielvogel 2014:112), who had settled north of Rome in Etruria. The Etruscans were “a city-dwelling people who established their own towns in commanding positions and fortified them with walls” (Spielvogel 2014:113), and are presumed to have emigrated from Lydia to Italy. The Etruscans expanded throughout Italy, and became “the

dominant cultural and economic force” in the regions that they occupied (Spielvogel 2014:114), especially after 650 BCE.

The people who inhabited the region of Rome – which, according to legend, was founded by the twins Romulus and Remus (Spielvogel 2014:114) – were a primarily pastoral people who spoke the Indo-European language of Latin. “The Roman historical tradition maintains that early Rome, from 753 BCE to 509 BCE, had been under the control of seven kings, and that two of the last three had been Etruscans (Spielvogel 2014:114). Rome emerged as a city during the sixth century BCE, under Etruscan influence, where the building programme of the Etruscans became apparent. This programme incited the construction of the first roadbed of the Via Sacra (the Sacred Way), which would become the main street through Rome (Spielvogel 2014:114). The Etruscan building programme also included “temples, markets, shops, [various streets], and houses” (Spielvogel 2014:114).

The city of Rome expanded beyond the seven hills upon which it had originally been constructed, and necessitated the construction of the Servian Wall to enclose the city in the fourth century BCE (Spielvogel 2014:114). Within the walls of city, the Romans “adopted the Etruscan dress, the toga and short coat”, and the Etruscan royal insignia was adopted by the Roman magistrates. Rome transitioned from a monarchy into a republic, and this transition marked the initiation of military expansion which eventually included the entire Italian peninsula (Spielvogel 2014:114).

The Romans, similar to the Greeks, “concluded peace only under their own terms and only from a position of victory and strength” (Raaflaub 2007:7). Romans entered into peace treaties whereby the nation or people that had been defeated by the Romans would subject themselves, their land, as well as their property and possessions into the trust of Rome (Raaflaub 2007:7). This trust was known as “*fides*”. The peace that was concluded by the Romans may be seen to be “nothing but an intermission between wars”, though, as there was “a century of violence and civil was that” would ultimately “destroy the republic” (Raaflaub 2007:7).

The Roman Empire came into being through three stages, namely: “the conquest of Italy, the conflict with Carthage and the expansion into the western Mediterranean, and the involvement and domination of the Hellenistic kingdoms in the eastern Mediterranean” (Spielvogel 2014:122).

Under the rule of Emperor Augustus, peace became a goal, rather than an occurrence between conflicts, and he was “the first to proclaim it as his policy, both in writing and though

monuments”, such as the “Altar of Peace” (Raaflaub 2007:7). Emperor Augustus also ordered the performance of the ritual “the closing the Gates of Janus”, when Roman victories had brought peace “by land and sea throughout the whole empire of the Roman world” (Raaflaub 2007:7). This peace included civil peace, and the cessation of civil war; and it became known as the *pax Augusta* (the Augustan peace), or as the *pax Romana* (the Roman peace).

Peace allowed the Roman culture to unify and to prosper, while external conquests were still carried out in order to expand the empire’s borders (Raaflaub 2007:7). The border expansions under Augustus were referred to as “pacifications”, however, as it was stated that he had “made the sea peaceful (*pacavi*) and freed it from pirates”, and that he had “brought peace to the Gallic and Spanish provinces, as well as to Germany” (Raaflaub 2007:7). This peaceful expansion was achieved without the “waging of unjust war on any people” (Raaflaub 2007:7).

The Roman Republic “developed political institutions that were in many ways determined by the social divisions that existed within the community” (Spielvogel 2014:114). This occurred during the period of expansion through Italy. The constant initial threat of war and battle would mould the society into a state of being conditioned to the risks and profits of battle. The individual accepts that participation in warfare and battle are to be a part of his existence as a Roman, and that his military honour would bring honour to all Romans, as Rome seeks to accrue “communal power and wealth, and to impress allies and subjects with new victories [while] deter[ring] them from revolts” (Raaflaub 2007:12). The status of the individual, his or her *gloria* and *dignitas*, regardless of hierarchical social class, could be honoured and increased through “service to the community, especially during war” (Raaflaub 2007:12). In order for a member of the aristocracy to rise to higher ranks in the social hierarchy, he would have to demonstrate successful leadership during war.

The culture of the Roman people was founded upon a religious foundation that permeated everyday life. “The official state religion focused on the worship of a pantheon of gods and goddesses, including Juno (the patron goddess of women), Minerva (the patron goddess of craftspeople), Mars (the patron god of war), and Jupiter Optimus Maximus (the patron deity of Rome)” (Spielvogel 2014:124). The Roman religion amalgamated with the religions of other peoples; the Romans “simply adopted [the] new deities”. This is evidenced through the parallels between the Greek and Roman religions, such as “the Greek Hermes became the Roman Mercury, and the Greek Demeter becoming the Roman Ceres”, for example (Spielvogel 2014:124). “Eventually, a complete amalgamation of Greek and Roman religion occurred, giving the two peoples the same Graeco-Roman religion” (Spielvogel 2014:124).

#### 4. Cultural Practices Related to Tattooing

The marking of the skin in a permanent manner can be seen to be a physical manifestation of the manipulation of the marked individual's sense of self, both in body and in mind, as it affects the perception and interpretation of the "self" that is embodied beneath the marked skin. It is necessary, therefore, to explore the ancient cultural significance of the way in which a person was seen to be comprised in terms of the body and the mind. Piotr Bienkowski (2006:2) explains that there are four categories of mind-body relation in ancient cultural thought, namely: dualism (mind and body are two separate substances); materialism (only body, or matter, exists); idealism (only mind exists, everything else is an illusion); panpsychism/animism (mind and matter always go together).

For the purposes of this study, the category of panpsychism/animism is used as a matrix against which to interpret the tattooing practices, as the values associated with the practices involve the integration of the mind and the body through thought, feeling, and action. Panpsychism is "derived from the Greek for 'all soul' or 'all mind'", and holds the view that "a mental element – sentience, consciousness, spirit, mind – is present in everything that exists. The alternative term is animism, from the Latin for 'breath', 'soul', or 'spirit'" (Bienkowski 2006:3). This category is founded upon the assumption that consciousness and matter have always existed in some form, as they do now, and that "matter is intrinsically sentient. Matter and consciousness are not separate, but always go together" (Bienkowski 2006:4).

The sufficient and necessary characteristics of consciousness thus comprise (Bienkowski 2006:4):

1. Sentience and feeling – the capacity to experience – *Tattooing is experiential and the tattooed individual has an altered social experience after being marked;*
2. Subjectivity – the capacity for having a unique point of view – *The tattooed individual's perception of the self and society is altered through the tattooing process;*
3. Knowledge – the capacity for knowing anything – *The interpretation of the tattoo is linked social knowledge inasmuch as the tattoo allows the observer to know something about the tattooed individual;*
4. Intentionality – the ability to refer to, or be about, something else – *The tattooed individual becomes an object of reference;*
5. Choice – the capacity to move itself internally – *The voluntariness of entering into the tattooing process is relevant to the choice of the individual as opposed to the choice of his/her society to mark the individual*

6. Self-agency – the capacity to move itself externally – *The marked individual may lose his/her ability to act in certain ways based on the mark, thus tattooing affects self-agency, especially in terms of the aforementioned characteristic of choice;*
7. Purpose – the capacity to aim at a goal – *The purpose of the tattooed individual is altered with the inscription of the mark, as the mark declares that individual to be what the mark designated;*
8. Meaning – the capacity to be “for itself” – *The meaning of the mark dictates the social value and meaning the tattooed individual is assigned;*
9. Value – the capacity for intrinsic worth – *The honour and shame of the tattoos assign value to the marked individual.*

These characteristics can be directly related to the tattooing process, as the experience and feeling of being tattooed is both a physical and emotional phenomenon. The mark alters the appearance of the body permanently, and that alteration affects the individual’s sense of personhood internally.

The marking also affects the individual’s subjectivity, as he or she will have a different point of view of himself/herself, and of his/her place within society after being marked with a tattoo, and this view may shift from positive to negative, or *vice versa*. This shift in perception influences the individual’s knowledge of the self, as the manner in which that individual has come to know his/her body as changed through the tangible experience of bearing a mark.

That mark also affects the knowledge of every person that perceives the mark upon that individual. The individual’s intentionality is affected in terms of the shift from not bearing a mark to being marked, and thus to change into that which the mark symbolises, whether volitional or not. The individual’s choice is affected in conjunction with the intentionality, as the choice to be tattooed is not necessarily offered to the individual, when the tattoo is not for decorative purposes, but is punitive, for example. The individual only has the choice to accept the mark or to rebel against it, and in that way, is offered the choice of accepting the status of being othered.

Within the choice of acceptance or rebellion of the othered status the characteristic of self-agency presents itself through the option of action which is in accordance with the status that the tattoo affords its bearer. The agency that is offered grants the individual the opportunity to embrace the other nature that the mark gives him/her, and through that opportunity, the individual’s purpose is affected; as the individual would need to act in a way which is concomitant to the nature of the tattoo and its implied associations.



The characteristic of meaning is inherently affected through the tattooing process, as the mark assigns meaning to the body of the person who bears it, whether or not that is the meaning that the individual had intended or not; and that meaning affects that person's value, both in society and individually, as a sense of self-worth, as the value that is assigned by the collective is the value that is ultimately accepted or rejected, and embraced or rebelled against, in terms of othering.

In terms of the personhood that is implicit in the category of panpsychism, where matter and mind exist in conjunction with one another, an important feature is that of the skin which serves both a physical and metaphorical purpose.

As the tattooing process involves the marking of the skin, it is necessary to take cognisance of how the skin was perceived by the ancient Mediterranean peoples, in terms of its relation to the values which are influenced by the tattooing process, as discussed below. Heinrich von Staden (1992:227-230) explains the significance of the skin as an organ, as well as a metaphor for society. The skin is a bodily space of liminality, and as such, bears the symbolism of "wholeness" and of "oneness" inasmuch as it contains within it "the integrity of [the] individual or collective organisms that might become susceptible to disintegration or fragmentation" (Von Staden 1992:228).

The significance of the skin's dual perception is that the skin "operates at mutually reinforcing individual and communal levels ... a sacred skin serves as a visible symbol of the invisible 'skin' that envelops and protects the community" (Von Staden 1992:228). The skin becomes a "manifest sign of that which gives the community unity and cohesion, of that which expresses the solidarity of its members, and of that which ensures that the collectivity will function as a social entity in which all parts have their stable, proper place, as do parts inside of the skin of a healthy individual body" (Von Staden 1992:228).

This reinforces the notion that the appearance of the skin reflects the state of that which it contains, and as such, any marking of the skin of an individual would have an effect on the appearance of the culture to which that individual belonged, as the individual was seen to be and to exist only in terms of the group that he or she existed within. The marked skin of the individual, therefore, would mark the skin of the collective – the appearance of the people of a given society would reflect the values and practices of that society. This reflection would be either honourable to the society, or shameful, as the honour or shame of one member of a society would be the honour and shame of the collective. If the tattoo was given as a mark of honour, for example, to a priestess, it would reflect honourably upon her culture. Conversely,



if the tattoo marked an escaped prisoner, or a slave, that tattoo would reflect shamefully upon the other members of that individual's society.

The skin is thus “an external symbol of order and orderliness” (Von Staden 1992:229). The skin serves as the canvas upon which the individual's status, health, and age are displayed and read. “The skin is seen as an inviolable, natural map: as a surface on which the order or disorder of the organism it encloses can be deciphered” (Von Staden 1992:229). The skin is the “exterior sign-system of the interior, the external surface upon which both internal physical disorder and internal moral pollution become physically manifest” (Von Staden 1992:229). The skin shows the natural marks of an organism's progression through life – it shows symptoms of disease, which originates from within, but it also shows marks of external influence. External markings may be seen to disrupt the order of the inviolability of the skin, which is the body's boundary and protection against the world in which it functions. The external breaching of the skin's boundary may be seen to be an interference with the “surface version both of the physical and of the moral condition of a person” (Von Staden 1992:229). This reinforces the fact that the tattooing process was not engaged in without forethought to the implications of the effect that the mark would bear.

In ancient Greek practices, for example, where the skin would be breached, there would be an oath sworn before the skin was broken, and this brings about a “paradox characteristic of the ‘ambiguity of the sacred’” as the Greek word for oath, *horkos*, “has been thought to cognate with *herkos*” which means “fence” or “enclosure” (Von Staden 1992:230). It may be posited that the “physical violation of the ‘skin fence’ is rendered culturally tolerable by the magical verbal fencing in of the complicitous”, in the event of the marking being done in ritual. The breaking of the boundary of the skin is not solely the realm of ritualistic or religious practices, though.

The skin is the orderly boundary of the body. That may be interpreted in terms of the Foucauldian “formulations of the disciplined body”, which also serve the dual purpose of being an individual, anatomical statement, and a “social metaphor” (Hill 2000:317). These formulations are based on the premise that “the body as transformational arena privileges its liminal features” (Hill 2000:317), especially through some form of sacrifice, such as the permanent alteration of the appearance of the skin, in either an honourable or shameful manner, as seen through the eyes of a given society. The skin and the body thus serve as the physical media of communication of social practices.

These social practices may be interpreted as being disciplinarian in the sense that they inflict a practice upon the body which is both painful and permanent, regardless of the honour or

shame involved in the process. Thus, the body “functions as a discursive field”, and it “is literally the site upon which power relations are mapped” (Hill 2000:318). The body, regardless of its anatomical and biological function and importance to the individual who inhabits it, is “socially constructed through the exertion of power. The body is transformed into a malleable, ‘docile’ entity upon which codes of conduct are inscribed” (Hill 2000:318).

In terms of tattooing practices, the body becomes a space “of resistance and/or discipline” while being the space of lived experience within a socially constructed value-system, and simultaneously serving as “representational metaphor” (Hill 2000:318). This lends a “tripartite” structure to the concept of the body, as it is composed of “discourses, institutions, and corporeality” (Hill 2000:318). Erica Hill (2000:318) explains that the discourses are the “cognitive aspects of the body’s limits and potentialities which exist within the context of temporally and spatially constituted institutions. The corporeality comprises the human physiology, the fleshy composition of the body”.

The tattooed body thus becomes the space where there are transformations of the body, of the person, as an individual, and within a society, and as such, the body has “liminal potentials” which are “vested within the bodily variables of ornamentation, alteration, and decoration” (Hill 2000:319). These liminal potentialities ultimately situate the individual with an altered body within a certain ambit of society, essentially “creating ambiguities between the individual and the social group” (Hill 2000:319). “The liminality of the body is pregnant with dialogue, dialogue to which the body itself contributes as both the site of discourse and the medium through which the internal agent acts” (Hill 2000:319).

For the purposes of this study, it is necessary to contextualise the body as “a historically contingent social phenomenon”, and to “locate” it “at the intersection of four social tasks” which are based on the reproduction of populations within a given timeframe; the regulation of bodies in space; the restraint of the interior body through discipline; and the representation of the exterior body in a given social space (Turner 1984; Hill 2000:319.).

“The corporeal existence of the body” that is to undergo the tattooing practice “is appropriated and manipulated by the social body. Appearance and behaviours are altered to meet institutional requirements, rather than those of the individual” (Hill 2000:320). The marks that are tattooed onto the bodies of individuals serve to demonstrate “and illustrate how and to what extent power has been exerted” over that individual (Hill 2000:320). This power is exerted through the violation and penetration of the boundary of the skin, and is thus the powerful “penetration of the human body, and the social body”, as it others the individual within

his/her societal borders, just as the mark others that part of the skin from the rest of the bodily border of orderliness, rendering it other than whole. Virginia Burrus (2003:410) states:

This mark that both says and makes who I am – this mark by which the I is written – is a mark made by a brief and partial absence of the very body that I am, that becomes me. For a moment – for a time that may range from minutes to months – there was an opening in the surface, in my corporeal self-containment ... I carry the marks of my own rapture.

C.P. Jones (1987:141) states that “tattooing had several functions in antiquity”, and these functions were identified as being self-decorative, religious, military, and punitive. These functions are explored in greater detail in Chapter Four in terms of global ancient tattooing practices which are examined in terms of specific cultural examples.

The self-decorative aspect of tattooing often involved the mark being used to signify social status, such as that of being a slave (Jones 1987:145). The religious function of tattooing may have been used as protective talismans and invocations of a certain deity’s power. Some religious tattoos also had an erotic significance (Jones 1987:144). Punitive tattoos have been recorded to have been “inflicted” upon “delinquent slaves, criminals, and prisoners of war” (Jones 1987:146). These three functional categories of tattooing can be related to the value systems of the relevant cultures, as a community’s values influence the matrices of an individual’s psyche and personality development, due to the fact that they shape the individual’s behaviour and thus, motivation (Pilch & Malina 1998:xv-xxix). For the purposes of this study, the cultural practices that are relevant to tattooing can be categorised according to John Pilch and Bruce Malina’s (1998:8-209) list of ancient Mediterranean values which centre upon honour and shame.

The first value which is of cultural relevance is that of clothing. As clothing is as much an indication of status as it is a bodily covering, it reflects the social hierarchy within a culture, as well as indicating an individual’s role in a given community (Pilch & Malina 1998:8-209). Clothing could be used to cover and hide tattoos, especially when those tattoos were not inflicted with a decorative purpose.

The second value that ties in with the function of tattoos is that of communicativeness. This value marks bodily boundaries, especially in the “concrete images of the mouth and ears” (Pilch & Malina 1998:8-209). Tattooing the face, which was a practice spanning all three functions, breaches this bodily boundary.

The third and fourth values are a set of values, namely, honour and shame. “As a concept, honour is intrinsically tied to a community, or tribe. For example, if someone stems from the

Beni Hassan tribe, he thinks, acts and dresses as a Beni Hassan. His actions reflect on the honour of the tribe. If he acts honourably, the tribe is honoured. If he acts shamefully, the whole tribe is shamed” (Pilch & Malina 1998:8-209). The tattoos an individual wears are either meant to bestow honour or to bestow shame. This is one of the central tools of analysis to situate the tattooed body in space, based on where that body would be allowed to venture within its society if it were a body marked as other because of shame, as opposed to being marked honourably.

The fourth value is that of humility which “directs people to stay within their inherited social status” (Pilch & Malina 1998:8-209). When an individual is marked with a tattoo, he or she cannot alter their marked social status, and are thus confined to the position based on the ink that is in his or her skin. Tattoos therefore enforce the value of humility, whether honourable or shameful.

The fifth value which is relevant to tattooing practices is that of nudity. The value of nudity is closely linked with both sin and shame (Pilch & Malina 1998:8-209). Tattooing is a practice which is done on the naked skin, and as such, breaches an honourable bodily boundary through exposing the tattooed individual’s nakedness. Conversely, tattoos may also be seen as adornments which obscure nudity. The nudity involved in the procurement of a tattoo is proportional to the location of the tattoo on the body as space.

The sixth value related to tattooing is that of ordering, as it is a value which encompasses “the entire range of cosmic and human relationships whereby one is embedded in a family, society, culture, and universe” (Pilch & Malina 1998:8-209). Through identifying the social stature of an individual through tattoo marks, that person is then bound in certain relationships and social interactions because of the tattoos.

The seventh value is closely related to the sixth, and is that of prominence. Prominence is an “evaluative label used in acclaiming a person or thing to be of a certain social worth” (Pilch & Malina 1998:8-209). Tattoos not only situate an individual within a given social order, but also assign the tattooed individual certain worth, based on the honour or shame that the tattoo bestows in terms of its function.

The eighth value is that of social norms, customs, and laws. This value is originally referred to as Torah-orientation. The use of the term “social norms, customs, and laws” allows for the wider application of the concept of the value, as Torah-orientation names the law of the Israelites, and may lead to misinterpretation in terms of its application to the people of the ancient Mediterranean. This value focuses on the law being a systematic statement of social

norms which enshrines beliefs and values of a social group (Pilch & Malina 1998:8-209). Being tattooed may not be seen as a social norm, as only a specific group of people are subjected to the process, and this may show the tattooed individuals to not be Torah-orientated, depending on the function of the tattoos. If the tattoos in question serve a religious purpose, those without those tattoos may be seen to be contravening this value.

The ninth value of importance to the practice of tattooing is that of wholeness, and this value is paramount to the investigation of the body in space as well as the body as space. This value emphasises the importance of being complete in body, thought and action (Pilch & Malina 1998:8-209). A tattooed person of low social stature may be made to feel, by virtue of the tattoo markings, that he or she is not a whole person, especially if the tattoos are penal. Conversely, a tattooed priestess of Hathor may not feel whole without the tattoos which have religious significance in terms of the practices of her daily and her social status.

“Mutilation, whether of citizens for legal reasons, or of captives for political reasons [or for religious purposes] carries a special impact in honour-and-shame cultures, signalling a newly established power dynamic between the victim and the aggressor” (Fontaine 2008:91). The parts of the body which are mutilated have clear symbolic meaning and convey a message of honour or shame in public, when on display. “The ancient fetish with bodily purity meant that the mutilated person might well be excluded from ritual activities or other community events” (Fontaine 2008:91). This inclusion or exclusion of the other body is indicative of the honour and shame practices within ancient civilisations, and also exemplifies Thirthing-as-Othering. “The permanence of the shame implied by the mutilation is the goal; not so much the shame of the actual experience of being mutilated” (Fontaine 2008:91).

These aforementioned values which are influenced by the tattooing process are all intrinsically bound by the principles of honour and shame. Honour may be explained to be “the positive value of a person in his or her own eyes plus the positive appreciation of that person in the eyes of his/her social group” (Malina & Neyrey 1991:25). It is important to note that honour may be related to the “socially approved and expected attitudes and behaviour in the areas where power, sexual status, and religion intersect” (Elliot 1993:130). Honour is the publically acknowledged worth and status, and provides “a nexus between society and their reproduction in the individual through his or her aspiration to personify them” (Mahlangu 2001:89). “Honour is the apex of the pyramid of temporal social values and it conditions hierarchical order. Cutting across all other social classifications, it divides social beings into two fundamental categories, those endowed with honour and those deprived of it” (Peristiany 1994:10).

Those who are deprived of honour are seen to be shameful, as shame may be described as “The reversal of honour; it is contempt, loss of face, defeat, and a loss of honour” (Malina, Joubert, Van der Watt 1996:8). Mahlangu (2001:90) states that shame may have a conversely positive effect to its nature, though, as it may serve as “people’s mindfulness of their public reputation”. This, however, does not negate the effect of shame on an individual, and the effect of the individual’s shame on his or her immediate relations. The mark borne by one person becomes a mark that is imprinted upon that individual’s family. Shame in terms of the practice of tattooing affects a range of other values, as the nature of the practice requires the exposure of skin, and thus the modesty of the person being tattooed. The skin of the individual becomes an “arbitrating social index for reputation” (Cornwell & Lindisforme 1994:83).

## 5. Summary and Conclusion

This chapter established the historical, geographical, and cultural context of the societies which are to be examined in terms of their tattooing practices. Those societies and cultures have been identified as Assyria (*circa* 3300 BCE-2100 BCE), Egypt (*circa* 2000 BCE-300 BCE) Nubia (*circa* 2000 BCE-300 BCE), Israel (*circa* 1500 BCE-1200 BCE), Greece (*circa* 510 BCE-323 BCE), and Rome (*circa* 510 BCE-323 BCE). These cultures constitute part of the Mediterranean Basin, and, as such, justify the ontology of this study as focusing on ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices.

Due to the common values, beliefs, and practices of the people who inhabited the ancient Mediterranean, it is possible to investigate the tattooing practices of each of these cultures against a matrix of the following common values, as identified by Pilch and Malina (1998:8-209):

1. Clothing, which serves as a display of status, as well as a means through which to either hide or expose tattoos;
2. Communicativeness, which enforces the bodily boundaries that are breached through the acquisition of the tattoo, as well as what the tattoo betrays about the individual who bears it for public interpretation;
3. Honour and shame; which indicate an individual’s social status and sense of worth within a given community, and which are directly affected through the tattooing process, based on the intention behind the tattoo’s infliction;
4. Humility, through which the tattooed individual is given the opportunity to accept the alteration of his or her status through the tattooing process, or to rebel against his/her othered nature;

5. Nudity, which is a shameful concept that has to be exploited in order for the tattooing process to take place;
6. Ordering, which explains that the tattooed individual will occupy a different place within the societal hierarchy because of the tattoo that he or she has been marked with;
7. Prominence, which relates to the individual's sense of worth, which is altered by virtue of the tattoo inasmuch as it either increases the worth of the individual if it signifies an honourable station, or decreases his or her worth if it is a mark of shame;
8. Social norms, customs, and laws, which serve as the reminder that that the individual may no longer be seen to act in accordance with the society's laws, and is thus marked accordingly. It also relates to the Hebrew prohibition against the practice of tattooing.
9. Wholeness, which is impossible to maintain when the boundary of the skin is breached through the tattooing process, and renders the individual as impure, and incomplete because of this bodily modification.

Within the context of the aforementioned values, it becomes apparent that ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices are bound to social, military, and religious practices, as the three primary functions of tattooing in antiquity are decorative, religious, military, and punitive (Jones 1987:141). As such, this chapter provides a brief overview of the social demographics of each of the identified cultures, as well their religious and military practices. This overview reinforces the similarity of the value systems of these cultures, and as such, provides an interpretative basis from which to analyse specific examples of each culture's tattoos in Chapter Four.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 1. Introduction

In order to analyse the tattooing practices of the six identified ancient Mediterranean cultures, namely those of Assyria (*circa* 3300 BCE-2100 BCE), Egypt (*circa* 2000 BCE-300 BCE) Nubia (*circa* 2000 BCE-300 BCE), Israel (*circa* 1500 BCE-1200 BCE), Greece (*circa* 510 BCE-323 BCE), and Rome (*circa* 510 BCE-323 BCE), in terms of social-scientific, critical spatial, and iconographic and representational theories, this chapter provides an analytical model comprising physical, social, and mental boundary relations which apply to the tattooing process, and its individual and social effects on the body in space, as well as the body as space.

Each of the aforementioned theories are addressed by the model in order to identify the boundary effects, namely order, distinction, and threshold, which apply to the cultural values related to tattooing, which have been identified as clothing, communicativeness, honour and shame, humility, nudity, ordering, prominence, social norms, customs, and laws, and wholeness. Once these relations have been established, the critical spatial application of the boundary effects is examined both in terms of the tattooed body in space, as well as the body as space. The textual or representational and iconographic evidence of tattooing in the ancient Mediterranean is then examined based on Barthian visual semiotics and layers of meaning either described in texts or depicted in images. The tattooing practices of these six ancient Mediterranean cultures are finally compared in terms of the following:

1. Is the tattooing process entered into voluntarily?
2. Is the tattooing process sex specific?
3. Is the tattooing process honourable or shameful?
4. Which categories of tattoos were inscribed (military, punitive, religious, decorative)?

#### 2. Analytical Model of Boundary Relations

Tor Hernes (2004:10) developed a model for the analysis of boundary relations within organisations where there are interactions between people. This model is used in this study in terms of its application to the identified ancient Mediterranean societies of whom their tattooing practices are investigated. The boundaries that are present within organisations can be applied to these societies because of the similarities in the structure of authority

boundaries, political boundaries, identity boundaries, hierarchical boundaries, inclusionary boundaries, normative boundaries, and behavioural boundaries (Hernes 2004:12).

Hernes (2004:10) explains that boundaries are present within all organisational structures. “Boundaries are central, not peripheral, to organisations”, because of the nature of the processes of change that occur within inter and intra personal structures, as “boundaries emerge and are reproduced through interactions” (Hernes 2004:11). Boundaries between people within a given organisational structure are not incidental to the organisation, but rather inherent to it, and through the construction and reconstruction of boundary relations, the stasis within the organisation is maintained based on “past experiences and changes in the environment” (Hernes 2004:10-11).

Boundaries are formed within the lived space, the Thirdspace, of a group of people. The Thirdspace of boundary relations comprises physical, social, and mental spaces. The physical aspect of this space “is essentially material, and extends from habitation to urban spaces and territories” (Hernes 2004:13). The social space “consists of social relations, and it is what enables production and reproduction of boundaries” (Hernes 2004:13). The mental space “accommodates the sphere of theory and meaning” (Hernes 2004:13) within the behavioural interpretation of the members of the group. These spaces create that regulative (physical), normative (social), and cognitive (mental) matrices against which the interaction and behaviour of group members are interpreted in terms of organisational boundaries.

Hernes (2004:13-15) categorises organisational boundaries as follows:

1. Physical boundaries: Structure, for example, to prescribe a group’s outer limits, such as the execution of tasks and the discretion in the use of resources. Physical boundaries tend to be tangible, and are erected for instrumental purposes, although symbolic effects are also important (Hernes 2004:14).
2. Social boundaries: Structured through the social bonding between people in a group. Social boundaries are mechanisms connected to identity, and social distinction can be maintained through internal social bonding translated into norms of behaviour (Hernes 2004:14).
3. Mental boundaries: Related to mechanisms such as ideas, understandings, and beliefs that guide organised actions. Within organisations, the mental boundary conditions represent the conditions under which explanations for behavioural norms hold or do not hold. Mental boundaries create the social lens through which group members create “islands of meaning”; insular compartments into which a group member’s reality is “forced” (Hernes 2004:14).

These three boundaries have three types of effects on groups of people, or organisations. Hernes (2004:15-16) describes these effects as follows:

1. **Ordering:** The organisational tolerance limits for human actions and interactions. Crossing the ordering boundary implies transgressing organisational arrangements, such as breaking formal rules (in relation to physical boundaries), violating social norms (in relation to social boundaries), or practising heresy (in relation to mental boundaries) (Hernes 2004:15).
2. **Distinction:** Boundaries are markers of identity serving to convey distinct physical, social, and mental features by which a group or organisation differentiates itself from the environment. Organisations are formed through the drawing of distinctions between themselves and the external environment; and therefore, distinctions are continually redrawn over time (Hernes 2004:15).
3. **Thresholds:** Boundaries are permeable. Very high thresholds signify that an organisation regulates strictly what crosses its boundaries. A consequence may be that the organisation remains intact over longer periods. Low thresholds signify a higher degree of exchange with the external environment, and have, as a main consequence a high degree of malleability (Hernes 2004:16).

“Two sets of three dimensions (physical/social/mental and ordering/distinction/thresholds) can be plotted against each other, thereby forming an analytical framework of nine different combinations to assist in the analysis of organisational boundaries” (Hernes 2004:16). These dimensions are represented in the table below, alongside the appropriate research questions that may be asked of each intersection between the boundaries and their effects.

**Table 4: A Framework for Interpreting Boundaries and Corresponding Research Questions**

	<b>Mental Boundaries</b> (relate to core ideas and concepts that are central and particular to the group)	<b>Social Boundaries</b> (relate to identity and social bonding tying the group together)	<b>Physical Boundaries</b> (relate to formal rules and physical structures regulating human action and interaction in the group)
<b>Ordering</b> The extent to which boundaries regulate internal interaction	To what extent are the main ideas and concepts decisive for what members do?	To what extent do members feel that they are socially bonded together by, for example, loyalty?	To what extent do formal rules or physical structure regulate the work of members?
<b>Distinction</b> The extent to which boundaries constitute a clear demarcation between the external and internal spheres	To what extent are the core ideas and concepts distinctly different from those of other groups?	To what extent is one group socially distinct from other groups?	To what extent does a group's formal structure set it apart from other groups?
<b>Threshold</b> The extent to which boundaries regulate flow or movement between the external and internal spheres	To what extent can outsiders assimilate core ideas and concepts?	To what extent is it possible for outsiders to be considered full members of the group?	To what extent do formal structures hinder the recruitment of outsiders?

These boundary relations are the foundation for the methodological application of social-scientific criticism and critical spatiality to the tattooing practices of the ancient Mediterranean people of Assyria, Egypt, Nubia, Israel, Greece, and Rome. The aforementioned boundary relations are applied to both the body in space and the body as space, based on the organisational Thirdspace of each of the ancient Mediterranean societies. This application is done through the following analyses:

### 2.1 Social-Scientific Criticism

The identified values of clothing, communicativeness, honour and shame, humility, nudity, ordering, prominence, social norms, customs, and laws, and wholeness serve as the organisational boundaries of the identified ancient Mediterranean cultures. As each culture comprises social interaction based upon common beliefs and behavioural norms, the relevant cultural values may be used to construct the boundaries which are affected by the tattooing practices of these people. The identified values may be categorised according to Hernes's (2004:12-16) physical, social, and mental boundaries and ordering, distinction, and threshold effects as follows:

**Table 5: Social-Scientific Values as Boundaries**

<b>Mental Boundaries</b>	<b>Social Boundaries</b>	<b>Physical Boundaries</b>
Honour and shame	Communicativeness	Clothing
Humility	Honour and shame	Honour and shame
Nudity	Humility	Nudity
Prominence	Nudity	Ordering
Wholeness	Ordering	Prominence
	Prominence	Wholeness
	Social norms, customs, and laws	
	Wholeness	

Honour and shame are values which serve as physical, social, and mental boundaries. This boundary is represented as physical because a shamed person would not have spatial access to places where the honourable would be welcome. Honour and shame are social boundaries because they affect the hierarchy of a society, as well as interpersonal interactions. This boundary is also mental, because of the fact that an individual's honour or shame is intrinsically tied to his or her sense of self.

Communicativeness is a social boundary because of the way that the mouth and ears are used in interaction in interpersonal relations.

Clothing serves as a physical boundary to the body as space, as well as to the body in space, because it serves as a boundary between the observer and the naked skin of the bearer of tattoos. Clothing also indicates social status within a community, which serves as an enforcement of the hierarchical spatial practices which dictate where people of different classes may or may not go within the inhabited space of a community.

Humility is a social and mental boundary. As it is a value that directs people to stay within their inherited social status, it is social, and because social status is tied to honour and shame, it forms part of a person's sense of self, and is therefore a mental boundary as well.

Nudity is a physical, social, and mental boundary. Physically, nudity is linked with clothing, whereby the bodily boundary is breached. Nudity is not behaviourally condoned to be expressed outside of the confines of a private abode, and is thus physically restricted. Nudity is a social boundary, because of its connection to the concept of shame; as someone being publically shamed may be stripped. This also affects an individual mentally, because of the shame of being naked, coupled with the stigma of certain types of tattooing would affect an individual's sense of self, rendering him or her shameful and shunned, and have that shame influence his or her social circle and family.

Ordering is a physical and social boundary. Physically, ordering dictates an individual's place within his or her family, society, and culture, and thus dictates status, and access to various spatial elements within a society. This translates into a social boundary because an individual's place within a society would control his or her interpersonal interactions with other members of that society.

Prominence is a physical, social, and mental boundary. Prominence proclaims the social worth of an individual, affecting his or her physical access to spaces, interpersonal interactions, as well as sense of self.

Social norms, customs, and laws relate to a society's norms, and is thus a social and mental boundary, as it affects societal values, behaviours, and beliefs.

Wholeness is a physical, social, and mental boundary. Being whole physically is a physical boundary that is breached by the tattooing process. Being other than physically whole affects social interaction, and also affects an individual's sense of self.

These values and their respective boundary categories are examined in terms of the effect that the tattooing practice of each of the ancient Mediterranean cultures has on the core ideas of the culture, as well as the behavioural norms, and spatial practices. Once the effect of the tattooing practices has been established in terms of the aforementioned boundaries, the following questions are addressed:

1. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice differ from the other identified cultures' tattooing practices?
2. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice affect the social bonds within the community?
3. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice regulate the spatial practices of the tattooed individual?

## **2.2 Critical Spatiality**

Societal boundaries are inherently tied to the power structures within a society. Those power structures dictate the rules and norms of the societal behaviour. This dictation may lead to the phenomenon of Thirthing-as-Othering. Within the lived space that combines the physical space of Firstspace, and the emotional connection to a given space, namely, Secondspace, Thirdspace is the social phenomenon that exists simultaneously with Firstspace and Secondspace, while encompassing them (Soja 1996:62-68). Thirdspace is where domination and subjugation take place, even though it is "initially neutral, with no inhabitant privileged a

*priori*" (Soja 1996:68). The domination and subjugation that occur within a Thirdspace represent the power relations of a given society. Those with power impose their will upon those who do not have power, and thus create physical, social, and mental boundaries within the inhabited societal space. The imposition of powerful will may be equated to othering. The inscription of tattoos against the will of an individual is therefore a form of Thirling-as-Othering.

Stephen Pritchard (2001:28) explains that the cultural practice of tattooing is tied to "practical" cultural issues in terms of the "definition and control of cultural objects and knowledge". A tattoo, once inscribed upon the skin to mark an individual as other than the rest of that society's people, imposes a form of control over the wearer, as the tattoo alters the individual's status, and thus controls that person's body in the space of the society. The tattooed individual becomes a cultural object because of the control that the tattoo assigns to the society over the one who wears it. It marks the wearer as other, and makes that otherness common knowledge to all who see the marking. This is how the tattooing process relates to the concept of Thirling-as-Othering.

Within the lived space of a society, the tattoo others the wearer, and strips that individual of his or power over the concept of self, as well as ordering within the community. Stripped of the power over the self, the tattooed other becomes the property of those who issued the mark, of those with the power within a community. The only power that is left to the tattooed individual is the choice of whether or not to accept the tattoo as a part of that individual's new selfhood, to accept the status that the tattoo bestows, and to act in accordance with the societal behavioural norms that are imposed by the tattoo; or, to rebel against the imposed mark, to behave in contradiction to the mark's imposition of norms, and to refuse to accept the mark as an inherent part of the self's identity. "These choices are inherently spatial responses, individual and collective reactions to the ordered workings of power perceived, conceived, and lived spaced" (Soja 1996:87).

Thirling-as-Othering affects the physical, social, and mental boundaries of a given culture, because of the fact that it presupposes an enforced set of cultural values and behavioural norms. The Thirling-as-Othering of tattooed individuals may be examined based on the following questions:

1. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on physical boundaries within the culture?
2. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on social identity and interpersonal interaction within the culture?
3. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on the tattooed individual's perception of his or her place within the culture?



The fact that space is a social product means that the body in space and the body as space can be interpreted in terms of the social-scientific values which have been identified to relate to the tattooing process. Hernes' (2004:15-16) effects of boundaries on organisations may be used to examine the effect of the tattooed body in space and the tattooed body as space, based on the cultural values as categorised according to physical, social, and mental boundaries. The tattooed body in space affects the aforementioned value boundaries in the following manner:

**Table 6: The Boundary Effects of the Tattooed Body in Space and Body as Space**

<b>Boundary</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Effect: Body in Space</b>	<b>Effect: Body as Space</b>
Clothing	Physical	Ordering, Distinction	Ordering, Distinction
Communicativeness	Social	Ordering, Distinction	Ordering, Threshold
Honour and shame	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold
Humility	Social, Mental	Ordering, Threshold	Distinction, Threshold
Nudity	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold
Ordering	Physical, Social	Ordering, Threshold	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold
Prominence	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	Ordering, Threshold
Social norms, customs, and laws	Social, Mental	Ordering, Threshold	Distinction, Threshold
Wholeness	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold

The tattooed body in space affects the physical boundary of clothing in terms of ordering and distinction. As ordering mitigates the rules of interaction, if a tattooed person could conceal his or her tattoos with clothing, their social interaction and status may not be altered; however, if the tattooed person cannot conceal a tattoo with clothing, the tattooed flesh is exposed to other members of the society. As some tattoos are shameful, not being able to hide them behind clothing distinguishes the tattooed individual from the other members of the society, marked as an other, shamed both by the mark and by the absence of clothing to cover it.

The tattooed body as space necessitates the breaching of the physical boundary of clothing. In order for the body to be tattooed, the skin must be exposed, which contravenes values of shame, clothing, and nudity. This boundary breach distinguishes the tattooed body as space from non-tattooed bodies because it is altered in such a way that clothing could not hide or redeem the marked skin in accordance with social values. Clothing no longer distinguishes the tattooed body's rank within society, the tattooed skin itself serves as the hierarchical landmark imprinted upon the person.

The boundary of communicativeness is directly related to the features of the ears and mouth, which are natural bodily boundaries. The tattooed body in space affects this boundary in terms of ordering and distinction. Facial tattoos, in particular would affect the communicative attributes of an individual because of the fact that facial tattoos cannot be hidden with clothing, and that an individual with facial tattoos would be known as an other wherever he or she would go within a societal habitation. This creates an ordering boundary because of the fact that the facial tattoos mark the individual to the extent that by virtue of the mark, he or she becomes confined to certain spaces based on the social hierarchical structure. Communicativeness is also tied to the boundary of distinction because tattoos on the face, emphasising the ears and the mouth mark the person as unable to communicate through any form but through the meaning of the tattoos. This other communication limits the tattooed individual's social interaction within the community when he or she is outside of his or her private space.

The tattooed body as space affects the boundary of communication through ordering and threshold. Similarly to the body in space, the body as space affects interpersonal interaction. In order for a tattoo to be inscribed into an individual's skin, boundaries of clothing and nudity are breached, and the individual may be touched in a manner which is not socially prescribed. The fact that the body as space is altered to the point where its wholeness is affected, especially in terms of the face, means that the order of the body itself is altered. The space of the body becomes other, and that otherness affects the perception of that body, rendering it a heterotopia for the rest of people of that society. This othering means that the body as space becomes a private space, isolated, and unable to ever transition back into the societal conception of the norm in terms of appearance. This inability to revert back to social standards of appearance is the manifestation of the threshold effect.

The tattooed body in space affects the boundary of the concept of honour and shame in terms of ordering, distinction, and threshold. The tattooed body in space is displayed in such a way that its honour or shame is the *prima facie* characteristic that the individual wearing the tattoo bears. This honour or shame directly influences the social interaction that is allowed for that individual, thus dictating the ordering of his or her interpersonal relations within the society. This display of the tattoo markings which proclaim the individual's honour or shame distinguishes him or her from the rest of the members of that society who are not tattooed. This distinction, coupled with the fact that once the individual has been tattooed, his or her honour or shame is permanently marked, and his or her status cannot be altered, therefore have a threshold effect, because the mark cannot be removed in order to change the individual from an other to one of his or her people again.

The tattooed body as space affects the honour and shame concept similarly to the tattooed body in space. Societal ordering in terms of bodies necessitates wholeness, and clothing. The process of acquiring the tattoo breaches that order, because the skin is exposed, and is made other than whole through the tattooing process. This othering of the skin marks its status as honourable or shameful in a manner other than the way in which other members of the society mark themselves according to their status, through clothing, for example. Again, the permanence of the tattoo affects the boundary in terms of threshold because the skin, once tattooed, is marked until the individual dies, and then remains marked after death. This means that the skin will be forever other, never able to return to the state which its society accepts as whole. The space of the body becomes a heterotopia through the process of tattooing, it becomes an other space, even though the tattoo may signify honour, its distinction from the skins of the rest of the people within the community means that that honour may be worn as a mark of pride in terms of the otherness, rebelling in a sense, to the Thirthing-as-Othering that the tattooing process affords.

The boundary of humility as it pertains to the tattooed body in space, is affected by ordering and threshold. The tattooed body, the othered body, is necessarily bound to stay within the confines of where the marks permit the tattooed individual to go. This means that the honourable marks afford the individual access to more social and religious spaces than the shameful body. Once a body has been marked, the individual may not act outside of the mark's designation of honour, shame, and status. This ordering is tied to the threshold of this boundary, because the honour, shame, and status afforded by the mark cannot be altered in order for the individual to reclaim his or her past status, or to create new, more favourable status after being tattooed.

The tattooed body as space affects humility in terms of distinction and threshold. The space of the body is that which alters the tattooed individual's status, regardless of the status with which the individual would have identified internally. The skin becomes that which enforces the value of humility, and it is that external enforcement of honour, shame, and status that distinguishes the tattooed individual from the other members of his or her society, because the unmarked members may gain honour and redeem shame through actions, whereas the tattooed individual gains permanent status through a mark which the individual may not have chosen. This distinction is linked to the threshold of the tattooed body as space's humility, because there is no way for the marked flesh to assimilate back into the societal status structures; thereby othering it, enforcing the value of humility until the individual would die.

Nudity relates to the body in space through ordering, distinction, and threshold. Nudity is inherently shameful, and is not an act that upholds societal values outside of an individual's

private space where he or she can be nude in order to wash and dress appropriately for social interaction. This means that the fact that the skin is bared in order to get a tattoo outside of the individual's private abode renders the ordering of this value breached, because the tattoo "artist" would not necessarily be the individual's spouse for whom nudity would not be shameful. The fact that the tattoo would not be applied within the individual's private space means that ordering is breached in terms of special behaviour as well. This practice of nudity outside of the private space of the individual affects the boundary in terms of distinction, because this other practice being performed in an other space is aberrant to generally accepted social practices of bearing the skin in certain spaces. The fact that the tattooed individual's naked skin is exposed outside of his or her private space, to another person, is an act that is commemorated by the tattoo itself, and as such affects the threshold of the boundary, because the mark means that the practice of nudity cannot be erased, or forgotten, or forgiven. The tattoo renders the individual unable to recover honour in the face of the shame of bearing his or her skin publically.

The tattooed body as space is necessarily nude and exposed because the skin becomes the space upon which the individual's mark will be inscribed. This affects the value of nudity in terms of ordering, because it not only breaches the social norms of being clothed and covered in public, but also breaches the skin itself, which is ordered to be whole. The skin can only be breached when it is exposed; thus the tattooing process necessitates the shame of nudity and being other than whole in order to portray the mark upon the individual. The naked tattooed body is distinguished from the un-tattooed naked body because the skin is permanently marked, and no longer appears as itself when naked and exposed, regardless of the public or private space within which it is exposed. The skin, once tattooed, is indelibly othered, through the insertion of the ink which renders it other than whole. The skin cannot recover from this wound, as the scar tissue becomes the mark that resides in the skin permanently; thus affecting the threshold of the space of the skin, because it cannot heal a tattoo in the same way that it would an ordinary wound, which fades in time, in order to leave the skin only slightly blemished, if not less whole, after healing.

The boundary of ordering reinforces the relationship between the individual and his or her society, his or her family, and with his or her deities of choice. This boundary essentially prescribes the individual's place in his or her social world. This boundary is affected by the tattooed body in space because of the fact that the tattooed individual's place in his or her society is permanently altered based on his or her marking. The mark may be shameful, and this leads the individual to lose certain social status and relationships; alternatively, if the mark is honourable, the individual gains access to new relationships and status. The newly afforded

status caused by the tattoo is not something which the individual can alter through actions, and thus affects the threshold of ordering because the individual's place in his or her society is no longer the same as what it was prior to the tattooing process, regardless of the honour or shame of the tattoo, and the individual can only live in such a way to abide by his or her newly assigned status because of the tattoo.

The ordering of the tattooed body as space is affected by ordering, distinction, and threshold. The ordering of the body itself is altered by the introduction of a tattoo, because it changes the natural structure of the skin. The body itself becomes a space of contention, and the parts of the body fit together differently because of the tattoo, just as the mark affects the body in space inasmuch as the tattooed individual fits into his or her society differently after being marked. The part of the body that has been tattooed is distinguished from the rest of the body, marking it as an other space within the singular space of the individual's body, thus affecting the ordering of the bodily composition, as well as distinction, because of the permanence of the alteration. This permanence exemplifies the effect of threshold, because the body cannot remove or heal the tattoo, and can thus not return to a state of being unmarked and whole; and thus remains out of order with itself.

The prominence of an individual is directly related to his or her social worth, both in terms of the individual's sense of self, as well as his or her perception of worth from the other members of the society. The tattooed body in space affects prominence in terms of ordering, distinction, and threshold. The tattooed individual is assigned social worth when he or she is tattooed, and that assigned worth overrides the worth that the individual would have had before the tattooing process would be undertaken. This assigned worth is distinguished from the worth that un-tattooed members of the society have, because they gain or lose social worth through inherited status and actions, while the tattooed individual is marked as being of a certain worth despite heredity or behaviour. This means that the tattoo presents the effect of threshold because the newly assigned worth others the individual from the rest of his or her community, as it other him or her from her original status and worth which cannot be reclaimed.

The prominence of the tattooed body as space is affected by ordering and threshold. The space of the body is rendered as a heterotopia by virtue of the mark; and that mark means that the worth of the skin is no longer socially considered as whole or pure. The order of the social worth of the skin of a tattooed individual becomes other, regardless of the tattoo being honourable or shameful. This altered skin, and its altered worth is permanent, and cannot be altered in any way other than to add more markings to it, thereby othering the skin and the prominence of the tattooed individual further. The tattoo's prominence proclaims the body as being of a certain perceived worth in the society in which the marked individual lives, and binds

the individual to the social behaviour that is required of the assigned status and worth because of the appearance of his or her skin.

The boundary that governs the social norms of a given society is that of social norms, customs, and laws. This value is affected in terms of ordering, distinction, and threshold by the tattooed body in space. The social norms which apply to nudity, clothing, honour, shame, and wholeness are affected by the tattooing process, thus affecting ordering within the society. The tattooed individuals who have acted divergent from these social norms are marked forever as having done so, and as such, their other behaviour by virtue of their tattoos, mark them as other. This otherness in terms of adhering to social norms and behaviour is marked as Thirthing-as-Othering, and the individuals, once tattooed, have a choice of acting in accordance with the norms, or to stay othered from them.

The tattooed body as space affects social norms, customs, and laws in terms of distinction and threshold. The fact that the body as space becomes othered by the tattooing process through becoming other than whole, means that the space of the tattoo is an animate transgression of social norms. The tattooed skin is aberrant in terms of social norms, and the behaviour of the tattooed individual cannot detract from the otherness of his or her skin. This translates to the effect of threshold, which is evidenced through the fact that the tattooed skin marks its wearer as other, regardless of behaviour and adherence to the social norms and behaviours outside of wholeness.

The boundary of wholeness is affected by the tattooed body in space in terms of ordering, distinction, and threshold. The fact that the boundary of the skin is breached, as well the boundaries of clothing, nudity, honour, and shame, mean that the process of inscribing a tattoo onto an individual contravenes the social norms and order based on the necessity for the body to be whole and unmarked. Once the body is marked, and is no longer whole, the individual who bears the mark is considered to be less than whole, and is othered by the “whole” community. The status of being other than whole is irrevocable, thus rendering the tattooed individual as an outsider, and shows the threshold of the boundary.

Wholeness is similarly affected by the tattooed body as space, through ordering, distinction, and threshold. The boundary of the skin being breached renders the tattoo site as an other site upon the space of the body; the tattooed site becomes a heterotopia. This other space within the special confines of the body breaches the boundary of wholeness, as the ink being introduced during the tattooing process is not natural, and is extraneous to the body’s design. The otherness of the site of the tattoo distinguishes it from the rest of the body’s space, and reinforces it as a heterotopia, which is not whole. The otherness of the tattoo site can never

be other than other to the rest of the body. The tattoo will not heal and fade, and thus the threshold of the tattoo site renders it in a permanent state of Thirthing-as-Othering within the space of the body.

## 2.3 Iconography

Izaak de Hulster and Rüdiger Schmitt (2009:225) state that “an image is a mediated representation”, and that an image is “formulated in the perspective of the product”. The product of the image is a socially constructed, and because of the social influence on image creation, iconographic interpretation is bound to a culture’s context. The iconographic interpretation of a culture’s art is directly related to the social-scientific interpretation of that culture’s values and behaviour, because of the fact that the culture’s art reflects its beliefs, values, and behavioural customs. Van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001:64) explain that the approach to images follow a “circuit of culture” where the researcher is “interested in an image’s social life and its history”, where the interpretation focuses on the image’s “production and consumption, through which their meanings are accumulated and transformed” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:64).

As such, the iconographic interpretation of the tattooing practices of the identified ancient Mediterranean cultures are examined in terms of the social-scientific values which are related to the tattooing process. These values and their corresponding boundaries, physical, social, and mental, are used as the matrix against which the following questions are asked in terms of the depiction of tattoos and the tattoos themselves:

The first set of questions relate to the Barthian visual semiotics of the image (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:94):

1. What/who is depicted? (first layer, denotation) – *Open Viewing*
2. What values/ideas are expressed through what is being represented?(second layer, connotation) – *Structured Process*
3. Which boundary (physical, social, mental) is represented in the depiction? – *Structured Process*
4. Which boundary effect (ordering, distinction, threshold) is represented in the depiction? – *Structured Process*

The second set of questions relate to three layers of pictorial meaning (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:100-101):



1. What is the representational meaning of the image? (primary or natural subject matter; recognition of what is being represented on the basis of the interpreter's practical experience, taking into account stylistic conventions and the technical transformations involved in the representation) – *Return to the Whole View*
2. What is the iconographical symbolism of the image? (object-signs denote a particular person, place, or thing and also the ideas and concepts attached to that person, place, or thing; secondary or conventional subject matter) – *Return to the Whole View*
3. What is the iconological symbolism of the image? (ideological meaning; underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a notion, period, class, religious, or philosophical persuasion) – *Return to the Whole View*

With regard to the iconographic interpretations of tattoos, the following questions are answered:

1. What is the category of tattoo (religious, punitive, military, decorative)?
2. Which part of the body is tattooed?
3. What is depicted in the tattoo?
4. How does this tattoo affect the body in space?
5. How does this tattoo affect the body as space?

In the cases where there is no pictorial evidence of tattooing, and only textual recollection, the aforementioned questions are adjusted as follows in order to create a narratological and historical interpretation of the explanation of the tattooing process:

With regard to the Barthian visual semiotics of the description (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:94):

1. What/who is described? (first layer, denotation)
2. What values/ideas are expressed through what is being described?(second layer, connotation)
3. Which boundary (physical, social, mental) is represented in the description?
4. Which boundary effect (ordering, distinction, threshold) is represented in the description?

With regard to the three layers of pictorial meaning (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:100-101) as adjusted to relate to the textual recollection of the tattooing process:

1. What is the representational meaning of the description?
2. What is the social-scientific and ideological meaning of the description?

The questions regarding the tattoo itself remain the same for the description of the process as they do for the interpretation of the image of the tattoo:

1. What is the category of tattoo as described (religious, punitive, military, decorative)?
2. Which part of the body is described tattooed?
3. What is described to be depicted in the tattoo?
4. How does this description of the tattoo affect the body in space?
5. How does this description of the tattoo affect the body as space?

### **3. Application of the Analytical Model to Assyrian Culture**

#### **3.1 Contextualisation of Cultural Tattooing Practices**

Assyrian tattooing formed part of two cultural practices which were military and punitive, respectively.

Ramsay MacMullen (1990:225-235) explains that Assyrian soldiers identified themselves in terms of a “semiotic self-fashioning” whereby, in addition to embellishments to their garments, they were tattooed on their hands. Men impersonating soldiers would be identified as being fraudulent in their endeavours by their lack of a certain designated belt, dagger, style of hair and beard, and the identifying tattoo (Sidelbottom 2003:432).

The Assyrian army would also mark prisoners of war, even though the marking was not through tattooing alone, it is important to note that bodily modification was practiced in this regard. An enemy king or prince who were captured would have been “led on a leash that had been passed through a hole bored in his lip or nose” in order to treat the conquered ruler like an animal (Adamson 1990:312). The mutilation of a captured prisoner served as punishment for “taking up arms against the conquering ruler, as well as to make him recognisable through branding, blinding, and scarring” (Adamson 1990:317). “Male prisoners were generally disfigured deliberately in order to punish them, and to remind the conquered peoples of the power of the king; and in this way they were differentiated from other innocent citizens” (Adamson 1990:318). These deliberate wounds were oftentimes inflicted on the face, ears, and lips (Adamson 1990:318).

The other bodily modification practice centred around the marking of slaves, and consisted of three parts, whereof tattooing served as the second. The categories of modification include the shaving of the head save for a single lock of hair, tattooing the slave, and the mutilation of a slave’s ear which could include amputation. The first of modification categories is to mark a

slave with an *abuttu* which is a terms which “designates a sign of slavery” (Hurowitz 1992:54). The *abuttu* is presented as a single lock of hair left to grow on a shaven scalp. While the lock of hair designated slavery, it was generally selectively interpreted as a “selectively practised sign of punishment” (Hurowitz 1992:54).

The modifications were used to serve as increasingly severe forms of punishment for rebellion, and the tattooing is explained in a piece of wisdom literature, namely *KBO I’ 12:7-16*. This text is translated by Ebeling (1954) and is based on the principles of caring for slaves. Hurowitz (1992:57-58) presents the text as follows:

<b>Text</b>	<b>Translation</b>
<u><i>[ki(?)] tunahha arda nahda ahâ lā u[bara(?)] ē tu] pissu</i></u>	When you placate/heal an obedient slave, [don’t] behave towards him like a stranger ...
<u><i>[lā] tušēšibšu ina kussî elīti ana šūtabili marussu</i></u>	Don’t seat him on a high chair in order to diagnose his disease.
<i>ki-i(?) išī(?)ia-t amīlūtum ana mitguri mūša marsu inihhu [ardu] bēlišu ittanazzar ana mār bēlišu ahīmi iqabbi i(?) [parr(?)]u(?) mā[r] bēlišu ugallat ina s[ū]qi šilla[ta] iqabbīma</i>	When a slave is [negligent] to comply and all night he turns away like a sick man and [the slave] curses his master again and again and he says “my brother” to his master’s son and he vom[its](?) on his master’s son and he strews terror in the street and he speaks of rebelliousness
<i>ikkab amassu tušša inaddima</i>	So that his word is an abomination and he spews calumny/lies
<i>sab[it ina kī]lum ša ardūti</i>	And for this reason, when he will be imprisoned in slaves’ prison
<i>kursu likīl šēpšu simat panisu [lu] abuttu</i>	fetters should grab his foot <b>the brand on his face [should be/surely is] an <i>abuttu</i></b>
<i>ina šittišu likettâ zussu ina [šipri] liddi</i>	he will awake from his sleep and sweat in his work
	Among human beings, who is called a “mooring post”?

*ina mārū amili manni iqabbû tarkullu*

The slave is a mooring post who  
burdens/ensnares his master.

*ardu tarkullu muššišu bēlišu*

The brand that the aforementioned text refers to the tattooing of the rebellious slave's face. The text refers to a slave who had not been marked by an *abuttu*, but only by the tattoo, namely a *šimtu* (Hurowitz 1992:59). The word "*šimtu*" is a common word for tattoo, as are "*šindu* and *šindu amēlūtī*" (Hurowitz 1992:61).

The tattooing of slaves was undertaken in order to mark a slave as being suspected of "trying to escape". A slave who was caught while fleeing was tattooed for a second time. Tattooing fulfilled a dual role, similar to that of the *abuttu*, namely to mark ownership and to serve as a warning (Hurowitz 1992:61).

Tattoos were either inscribed on the hands (*nittu*) or the faces (*pānû*) of the slaves (Hurowitz 1992:61). The marks typically consisted of the name of the slave's master, or with a sign which signified the slave as rebellious. If a slave were to be transferred from one master to another, the slave would receive an additional tattoo to show the name or mark of the new master alongside the initial tattoo of the name of his previous master (Hurowitz 1992:61). Temple slaves were marked with religious symbols recognised as the symbols of the god worshipped at a particular temple (Hurowitz 1992:61).

Hurowitz (1992:60) explains that the Eshnunna Laws 51 and 52 limit the possibility of a tattooed slave's movement as follows: "A male or female slave who is marked with a *kannu*, *maškannu*, or an *abuttu* shall not exit the gate of Eshnunna without his [or her] master's permission" (Hurowitz 1992:60). Furthermore, "a male or female slave under the guard of a messenger who enters the gate of Eshnunna must be marked with a *kannu*, *maškannu*, or an *abuttu* so that he [or she] may be watched for his [or her] master" (Hurowitz 1992:60). The marking was done to ensure that the [unmarked] slave could not disappear into the city where he or she would not be recognised as a slave (Hurowitz 1992:60).

Preventative tattooing is "illustrated by a legal anecdote found in the lexical series *ana ittisu* Tablet II Column 14 lines 3-14" (Hurowitz 1992:61):

**Text**

**Translation**

*ugallibšu*

He has shaven him.

*abuttu iškunšu*

He has marked him with an *abuttu*.

<i>ana kaspi iddinšu</i>	He has sold him for silver.
<i>ana bēlīšu ul [imgur]</i>	He has not [complied] with his master.
<i>ištu bīt bēlīšu ihliq</i>	He has fled from his master's house.
<i>ištu ihliqu utērūniššu</i>	After he fled he returned him.
<i>ištu [ihliqu] utērūniššu</i>	After [he fled] he returned him.
<i>kursa ana šēpišu iškun</i>	[and] placed a fetter on his foot.
<i>šeršerata ṭpassu</i>	He made him a chain.
<i>bukanna ušētiq</i>	He made him pass by/over the <i>bakannu</i>
<i>halaq sabat</i>	<b>“This one is a runaway, capture him!” he</b>
<i>ina pānīšu iqqur</i>	<b>incised on his face.</b>

The aforementioned passage shows the utilisation of a tattoo as a preventative measure in terms of a slave running away repeatedly. This preventative tattoo may be inscribed in addition to other tattoos and marks, including the *abbuttu* (Hurowitz 1992:63).

The third form of modification, namely the mutilation of a slave's ear, is either enacted through the cutting of the ear, or its piercing. It is stated in the Laws of Hammurabi that “a slave who has denied his master or a slave who has slapped the cheek of his master's son, will have his ear cut off by his master” (Hurowitz 1992:64). The severing of an ear serves as punishment. Another form of modification to the ear is in the form of the voluntary piercing of the ear, especially of Israelite slaves; as Mosaic law does not apply to prisoners of war. The Jewish law prohibits the mutilation of the skin of the Israelites, but the voluntary piercing was permitted as a sign of servitude (Adamson 1990:318).

### 3.2 General Boundary Relations and Associated Research Questions

#### Mental Boundaries (Core beliefs)

**Ordering:** To what extent are the main ideas and concepts decisive for what members do?

The core beliefs of the Assyrian people with regard to tattooing practices and body modification in general centre upon identifiable marks of either inclusion or exclusion.

For the military, the mark serves as inclusion into a group of people who necessarily need this form of identification in order to avoid the infiltration of civilians.

The Assyrian military would also be responsible for the marking, branding, tattooing, and mutilation of prisoners of war, once again distinguishing them from civilians. The innocent civilians are excluded from the marked prisoners of war.

The marking of slaves is practised in order to distinguish slaves as rebellious, and is, as such, similarly punitive, and preventative, as slaves could be marked with a warning. Marked in this way, slaves would be excluded from being appropriated by new masters for fear of repeated rebellion.

**Distinction:** To what extent are the core ideas and concepts distinctly different from those of other groups?

There are four groups of Assyrian people who are essentially affected by bodily modification – the military who mark themselves volitionally, prisoners of war who are marked as such and punished, slaves who are marked for rebellion, and unmarked civilians.

The marked group of military soldiers view tattoos in a different light than the prisoners of war and the rebellious slaves. For the soldiers, the marks distinguish them as a part of the military, in honourable positions. This view differs from the prisoners of war who are marked by the military, as their marks are shameful, and strips them of their former, unmarked status within their own culture. Their marks exclude them from their people.

The slaves who are marked for rebellion are othered because the marks point them out as risky “commodities”, and are thus shamed within the already shameful position of slave. Their marks are, for the most part, irredeemable, and as such their marks designate their futures as slaves held in particularly low esteem.

The unmarked civilians view the marked military, prisoners of war, and slaves in terms of their identification by the marks, inasmuch as they form their judgements of the individual based on the mark’s features without regard for who the person was prior to the mark being inscribed. A marked slave will not be seen to be more than his or her rebellious mark proclaims him or her to be, in the eyes of the civilian public, and the public is thus guarded against those who are marked shamefully. Marked slaves and prisoners are watched in public spaces to the point of being guarded, in order to avoid the infiltration of the civilian society by the marked slave.

**Threshold:** To what extent can outsiders assimilate core ideas and concepts?

Those who have been marked as prisoners of war and as rebellious slaves are outsiders to the rest of civilian Assyrian society, based on the fact that their marks identify them indelibly as “other”. Outsiders are therefore presented with the choice of accepting their marked status and station, or to rebel against it, at the peril of incurring additional marks.

The volitional marks of the soldiers which other civilians and excludes those not in the military are obtainable only to those who are permitted to enter into military service, and are thus exclusive markings of honour and community within the military kinship. The unmarked civilians are able to recognise this as an honourable mark, and accept its meaning.

### **Social Boundaries** (Social identity)

**Ordering:** To what extent do members feel that they are socially bonded together by, for example, loyalty?

Marked soldiers share a bond of loyalty and camaraderie and, essentially, identity as soldiers, based on the inclusion afforded by the tattoos. The fact that the mark excludes civilians means that it has the ability to strengthen the bond of those who wear it, as it designates them as honourably other.

The slaves and prisoners of war are not bonded in the same way by their marks, which are shameful, as opposed to the honourable inclusion of the military marks. Marks of punishment, shame, and warning isolate the marked individual from his or her society, even among prisoners and slaves, other him or her for his or her status and behaviour, and as such, ostracise him or her from the people with whom he or she would have found a sense of kinship.

**Distinction:** To what extent is one group socially distinct from other groups?

Assyrian tattooing distinguishes four sets of people, namely the military, rebellious slaves, prisoners of war, and unmarked Assyrian civilians. The four aforementioned groups which are affected by tattooing practices are physically distinct from one another in the following ways:

The marked soldiers wear honourable marks which designate their military identities. The prisoners of war are marked shamefully in order to punish their rebellion against the conquering leader, and mark them as being stripped of their former status. Rebellious slaves are distinguished from other slaves by the inscription of their rebellion and warnings thereof upon their hands and faces, which are areas of the body which cannot be covered in order to blend in with the other slaves. The unmarked civilians are othered from the marked individuals because of their lack of marking, and their ability to attain honour or shame through actions, rather than being assigned honourable or shameful status by virtue of a mark.

**Threshold:** To what extent is it possible for outsiders to be considered full members of the group?



The only way for civilians to attain the military markings is to enlist in the military if permitted by law and custom. Unmarked civilians are thus the outsiders in terms of military tattooing.

There is no way for the marked prisoner of war or marked slave to rejoin his or her previous groups of unmarked prisoners or slaves; and they can also not rejoin the unmarked civilian society, because of the permanent nature of the marks, and the location of the marks on the body, which cannot be disguised by clothing.

### **Physical Boundaries** (Formal rules and physical structures)

**Ordering:** To what extent do formal rules or physical structure regulate the work of members?

The tattooing of soldiers allow the soldiers to “work” as part of the military as it identified them as part of the military and not as fraudulent civilian infiltrates. This means that the military tattooing practice forms part of the structure of military identification.

The marking of prisoners of war and rebellious slaves inhibit their ability to work, and to function within their societies, because their marks are shameful, and serve as warnings for them to not be employed because of their status and behaviour.

**Distinction:** To what extent does a group’s formal structure set it apart from other groups?

The formal structure of the military others civilians in terms of class, status, and access to areas within the Assyrian territory. The soldiers of the military were marked in order to affirm their place within the formal military structure.

The structure of the Assyrian people is the structure within which the prisoners of war and slaves are othered, as the slaves and prisoners of war are identified as being different from society at large because of the marks on their hands and their faces. These marks shame the prisoners and rebellious slaves, in order to set them apart from their counterparts of prisoners and slaves who did not have particular rank, or who have not been rebellious, respectively.

**Threshold:** To what extent do formal structures hinder the recruitment of outsiders?

The formal structures of the military hinder the recruitment of outsiders in terms eligibility to enlist based on rank and social stature. The marks that the soldiers wear mean that infiltration is hindered because the mark cannot be forged, as it is permanent, and specific.

The outsiders to civilian society, namely the prisoners of war and their marked slaves, are hindered by their marks because of the fact that the marks cause their access to various places to be limited, as well as limiting their ability to work as slaves, because the marks serve

as a warning to prospective masters. The formal structures of Assyrian society necessitate that the marks be taken into consideration in interaction with these individuals, and, as such, the marks are the basis of the judgement upon which a slave would not be employed.

### 3.3 Social-Scientific Boundaries

**Table 7: Physical Boundaries and their Assyrian Cultural Applications**

Physical Boundaries	Cultural Application
Clothing	<p>The military tattoos are almost part of the military uniform, and not concealed by clothing, due to their placement on the hands of soldiers.</p> <p>The fact that the tattoos of the prisoners of war and the rebellious slaves are on their faces means that the value of clothing becomes moot, because the tattoos cannot be disguised by garments.</p>
Honour and shame	<p>The military tattoos mark their wearers as honourable, and grant them access to public spaces within Assyrian territories.</p> <p>The marks of the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves are shameful, and limit their access to public spaces within Assyrian territories.</p>
Nudity	<p>Because of the placement of the tattoos on either the hands or the faces of the individuals, their naked skin is on display in order to show the marks, and is not covered by clothing by virtue of the tattoos' locations. This is done in order to ensure that access is either granted or prohibited in accordance with the <i>prima facie</i> interpretation of the marks.</p>
Ordering	<p>The mark of the soldier shows his social rank as part of the military, and designates him as honourable for bearing this mark, because of the esteem of the military under the Assyrian king.</p> <p>The tattoos of the prisoners of war and of rebellious slaves strip them of their social status prior to capture, and assign them a new shameful status, as portrayed through the tattoo designs.</p>
Prominence	<p>The military tattoo shows that the soldier bearing it is of a high social worth, thus prominent in Assyrian society.</p> <p>The shameful tattoos of the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves proclaim them to have close to no social worth; regardless of the worth they had before being marked.</p>
Wholeness	<p>The honourable military tattoos, being part of the soldiers' identification as members of the military would affect the value of wholeness in terms of making the soldier whole by virtue of bearing the mark.</p> <p>Conversely, the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves are less whole because of the marks that they bear, because the facial tattoos strip them of their identities beyond the inscriptions that they wear. They are only seen to be that which their tattoos name them to be.</p>

**Table 8: Social Boundaries and their Assyrian Cultural Applications**

<b>Social Boundaries</b>	<b>Cultural Application</b>
Communicativeness	The placement of the tattoos on the hands and faces of the individuals, regardless of the honour or the shame reflected in them, shows the importance of visibility, especially in terms of the agency of the hands, and the communicative features of the facial tattoos which reshape the individual's identity based on the mark, as opposed to that individual's history, language, and cultural affiliation.
Honour and shame	<p>Military service, and its inherent actions on behalf of the Assyrian king, such as the conquering of territories, and taking and marking prisoners of war as enemies of the Assyrian king, highlights the honourable status of the military, as well as individual soldiers' honour and social status, which is recognisable to Assyrian civilians.</p> <p>The public shame of the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves' punitive tattoos show Assyrian society that these individuals are animals, and criminals, and are not to be left unguarded in public spaces. Their tattoos dictate interpersonal interaction with them, because they are marked as inherently shameful individuals, and the community as a whole would be shamed to accept them.</p>
Humility	<p>The high esteem of the military would require the social honour of the soldiers who bear the military tattoos.</p> <p>The public shaming of the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves shows the power of punitive tattoos to rescind social status, as well as personal esteem, as the marks designate what the individual is to be perceived as by his or her community, as well as the unmarked Assyrians.</p>
Nudity	The public display of the tattoos on the hands and faces of tattooed Assyrian individuals show how the value of nudity is either affected in terms of honour, with the military tattoos being on proud display; as opposed to the shameful tattoos which are born by the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves which marks their naked flesh as shameful, and as un-whole.
Ordering	<p>The socially recognisable mark of a soldier affords him the recognition of his rank within the military, as well as his honourable place within Assyrian society.</p> <p>The tattoos of the prisoners of war and of rebellious slaves strip them of their social status prior to capture, and assign them a new shameful status, as portrayed through the tattoo designs. This means that their new status dictates their interpersonal interactions with Assyrian civilians, as well as their peer groups, and this loss of status leads to them being othered, shunned, and isolated from their communities.</p>
Prominence	<p>The military tattoo shows that the soldier bearing it is of a high social worth, thus prominent in Assyrian society, and this mark is recognised and respected for its representation of the honour of the soldier and the military as a whole.</p> <p>The shameful tattoos of the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves proclaim them to have close to no social worth; regardless of the worth they had before being marked, and as such require Assyrian civilians and the individuals' immediate social circles to other them in order to treat them in accordance with their new status.</p>
Social norms, customs, and laws	The social customs of Assyria require the recognition of military honour, and as such, the honour of bearing the military tattoo. The same customs apply to the recognition of the shameful marks born by the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves, and requires them to be othered from the general society, as well as to be recognised as having lost their former social status.
Wholeness	<p>Because of the sense of community that the soldiers share due to their military service, and because they perceive themselves to be whole because of their identification as such, means that they would other civilians for not having a mark which renders them part of an honourable community.</p> <p>Being rendered as less than whole because of the marks that they bear, means that the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves are othered from their own communities, as well as from Assyrian society at large.</p>

**Table 9: Mental Boundaries and their Assyrian Cultural Applications**

<b>Mental Boundaries</b>	<b>Cultural Application</b>
Honour and shame	<p>The honour of being a member of the military, serving under the Assyrian king, and conquering territories in the name of the Assyrian king reinforces not only the collective status of the military, but individual honour and social status as well, and this would reinforce the individual's esteem, and pride in terms of the military tattoo.</p> <p>The shame of the punitive tattoos show Assyrian society that the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves are nothing more than animals, in the case of prisoners, and rebellious, untrustworthy, and criminal slaves. This portrayal provides the prisoners and slaves with the option to rebel against the low societal esteem, in spite of their marks, or to rebel against it by not behaving in accordance with the newly stripped status, nor believing that they have been stripped of their previous identities, and believing in their past honour and status.</p>
Humility	<p>The military tattoo affords the individual soldier the opportunity to rise within military ranks and to increase his social status as well of his honour, by virtue of the fact that the tattoo grants him access and acceptance into the military community.</p> <p>The loss of social status for the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves, without the hope of re-attaining their prior status, would mean that they have to accept their new status with the requisite, customary humility, or to rebel against it, at the risk of further mutilation and modification which would signify a further loss of status.</p>
Nudity	<p>The fact that the tattoos on the hands and faces of the Assyrian people were on display on the naked flesh would either be worn and shown proudly, as is the case with the military, or could potentially drive the individual bearing the shameful mark to want to hide his or her naked skin, or to stay away from public spaces, because of the fact that facial tattoos could not be obscured by clothing.</p>
Prominence	<p>The honourable prominence of the military would once again enhance the individual's sense of esteem and honour, and affirm his individual status within the socially esteemed military community.</p> <p>Being stripped of his or her prior societal status would affect the prisoner of war and slave in terms of his or her own esteem, and present the opportunity to accept the othering to which he or she had been exposed, or to rebel, and other those who had othered him or her through not accepting the assigned, branded status written in his or her skin.</p>
Social norms, customs, and laws	<p>The honouring of the mark of the soldier, would ensure that the social customs uphold military honour, in order to reinforce the individual soldier's sense of honour, status, and esteem.</p> <p>The othering and public shaming of the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves necessarily isolates them from Assyrian civilians and even their peer groups, because of the nature of the marks which they bear. This isolation could cause the individual to question his or her own esteem, and the possibilities of regaining honour through behaving in accordance with Assyrian laws and customs.</p>
Wholeness	<p>Because the soldiers are whole by virtue of their marks which identify them as being part of the military community, the honour they wear by virtue of the mark would positively affect their esteem, both individually, and as a community of soldiers. The mark grants them a sense of identity.</p> <p>The shame of the tattoos worn by the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves strips them of their identities, and others them because of the fact that the shameful marks are seen to detract from their wholeness, and as such, renders them as outsiders from their communities and their peers. This would isolate these individuals, and would affect their esteem inasmuch as they lose their sense of kinship, which is paramount to the ancient Mediterranean cultures.</p>

### 3.4 Social-Scientific Research Questions

1. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice differ from the other identified cultures' tattooing practices?

Assyrian tattooing culture centres upon honour and shame, based on inclusion and exclusion. Customary and volitional military tattoos include male soldiers into an honourable, elite community, while excluding civilians. The imposed tattooing of prisoners of war and rebellious slaves of both sexes shows the shame of these individuals on their faces, and excludes them from civilian society, as well as from their unmarked peers.

2. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice affect the social bonds within the community?

The military tattooing practice strengthens the bond between the marked soldiers, because of the shared honour of their military roles that casts them elite members of Assyrian society. The fact that the military tattoo prevents the infiltration of the military by civilians means that there is some social discord in terms of the honourable othering of the military from the Assyrian civilians.

The tattooing of prisoners of war and rebellious slaves break communal bonds, because of the othering that occurs from these tattooed individuals' peers, as well as from society at large.

3. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice regulate the spatial practices of the tattooed individual?

The areas which are under the military's control are not open to the general public, and the military tattoo served as a way to enforce this spatial regulation. The military had access to general Assyrian public and private space, however, and, as such, the military tattoo afforded the soldier spatial access to Assyria with more freedom than the Assyrian civilians had.

The marks upon the faces of rebellious slaves means that they are guarded in public spaces in order to prevent accidental infiltration, and in some Assyrian areas, marking is required before a slave were to gain entry into a social space.

Temple slaves were given access to the inner recesses of temples because of their tattoos which mark them as being in service to the god of a particular temple. This access would have been denied to civilians, as the inner sanctums of temples were sacred, and were places where rituals and sacrifices took place.

### 3.5 Critical Spatial Research Questions (Thirling-as-Othering)

1. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on physical boundaries within the culture?

Tattooing is used to grant or restrict access to Assyrian space. The marks of honour and shame are exclusive inasmuch as they other certain members of Assyrian society from those who are marked.

The military tattoos rescind the potential access of civilians within military spaces, as the unmarked civilians cannot fraudulently infiltrate the space without the tattoo, and the accompanying identifying dress and weaponry.

The marks on the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves prohibit access in certain public spaces without being guarded and watched for the slave's master. The unmarked civilians, therefore, have full access to the public spaces in Assyrian territories, while the tattooed individuals are restricted.

Temple slaves are granted access to the private spaces within the temple in which they serve by virtue of their markings; unmarked civilians are denied access to the private spaces within a temple.

2. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on social identity and interpersonal interaction within the culture?

The effects of the tattooing process are exclusionary, and, as such, alter personal and social identity, and as a result, restrict interpersonal interaction within Assyrian culture.

The marks of the soldiers exclude civilians from military culture – the marks of the soldiers are honourable, and are worn with pride, as part of the military uniform. The honour of the mark affects the individual in terms of the need to uphold the assigned honour of the status afforded by military service, and the interpersonal interaction between soldiers is that of service, kinship, and community. The military are ranked higher in the social hierarchy than Assyrian civilians and slaves, as well as the prisoners, and, as such, the interpersonal interaction with the populace would be based on military service, and be generally limited.

The othering of the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves is more severe in terms of the effect on interpersonal interaction and social identity. The facial tattoos which declare the person as shameful and rebellious render that individual branded with a new identity, shaped by the inscription. Prisoners of war are stripped of their former social rank, which may have been royal, and are leashed and marked as animals by the Assyrian forces. The facial marks are

permanent, and irredeemable, and the individual is presented with the choice of accepting this mark, and re-identification, or to rebel against it at the threat of incurring further shaming and punishment.

Rebellious slaves are shamed in a similar fashion, whereby the slave is marked as rebellious for a certain action, which is irredeemable. The mark permanently warns future masters, as well as the slave's peers of the potential for risky behaviour from the slave, and that brand becomes the basis of interaction with that individual. The marked slave also has the choice to continue to rebel, and to be faced with the third category of punishment whereby he or she would have his or her ear mutilated or amputated; or the slave could choose to behave in a penitent manner in order to avoid further mutilation and modification. The mark of rebellion others the slave from his or her peer group, however, and as such, limits interpersonal interaction, because of the negative and shameful association which that mark bears.

3. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on the tattooed individual's perception of his or her place within the culture?

The tattooed individual's place within Assyrian culture is tied to that individual's honour or shame.

The military tattoos mark a soldier as being part of an elite, honourable force, in service of the Assyrian king. This provides the soldier with social status, and encourages him to act honourably, in order to maintain and gain more honour for his military community. The soldiers' tattoos other Assyrian civilians, as opposed to the soldiers being othered.

The tattooing of the prisoners of war strip them of the identity they had outside of the conquering nation of Assyria, where they are marked and treated like animals. The marked prisoners lose their former social status, and are forced into servitude, or face the potential of further mutilation, torture, and even death. The prisoners of war are thus othered from who they were, which would have been honourable soldiers in their own right, and they are forced into shameful servitude of the conquerors. This shameful place within the conquering culture presents the choice of rebellion, or acceptance. Being rebellious toward the othering is faced with further marking and punishment, and ultimately death, although the individual may feel that rebelling against the imposed shame is an attempt to regain his honour. Accepting the marks is tantamount to accepting the shame, and newly lowered status within the conquering society.

The punitive marking of rebellious slaves presents a similar effect of the esteem of the slave and his or her place within the slave community and Assyrian society as a whole. The mark



of rebellion strips the slave of his or her former identity, lowers his or her status, and ultimately shames the slave to the point where the mark serves as a warning for anybody who reads it. The facial tattoos mean that the slaves wear their shame as their primary identifying feature, stripping them of who they may have been prior to their rebellion. The slaves are also faced with the choice of acceptance of the tattoo, or rebellion, which would incur further punishment and mutilation. There is no social redemption of honour for the rebellious slave, as the marks are permanent, and serve as the basis for social interaction for anybody with whom he or she comes into contact.

### 3.6 Boundary Relations of the Tattooed Body *in Space*

**Table 10: Boundary Effects of the Tattooed Assyrian Body in Space**

Boundary	Category	Effect: Body in Space	Explanation of Effect
Clothing	Physical	Ordering, Distinction	The movements of the body in space are either hindered or accepted based on the visibility of the tattoo marks, which is affected by clothing. The fact that the hands and the faces of the tattooed individuals are not covered by clothing, thus exposing their marks, means that clothing cannot hide the distinction of these individuals. The distinction of the military grants them access to public spaces, while the access of the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves is restricted based on the visibility of their tattoos. This also demonstrates the ordering of these two sets of tattooed individuals.
Communicativeness	Social	Ordering, Distinction	The tattoo designs portray messages to civilian interpreters, and as such, the body in space becomes an animated signifier, shown to be different from civilian bodies because of the tattoos, and these bodies are treated in accordance with the messages portrayed in the designs.
Honour and shame	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The tattooed body in space is either recognised as honourable or shameful by virtue of the message that the tattoo displays to its interpreters. The honourable body is distinguished as having a high social status, and is given spatial access, and is revered by civilians, giving the individual bearing the honourable mark a sense of high esteem. The body marked as shameful is stripped of its social status, lowering the esteem of the individual, and restricting his or her spatial access based on social custom and law. The honour and shame assigned by tattoos distinguish the tattooed bodies from unmarked civilian bodies who earn honour and shame through behaviour.
Humility	Social, Mental	Ordering, Threshold	The honourably tattooed body of the soldier gains spatial access, and access to territories yet to be conquered in the name of the king. This body moves with pride, and asserts its status. The shamefully tattooed body of the prisoner or the slave is stripped of status, and is restricted in terms of its spatial access, and the shamefully tattooed body is guarded in public spaces. Just as status cannot be reclaimed, access to spaces cannot be reclaimed because of the permanence of the tattoo.

Nudity	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The exposed skin of the tattooed bodies in space force the bearers of the marks to show the marks to all who look upon them, in order to either allow spatial access, or to rescind and restrict it. This necessitates the acceptance of the exposure of naked, tattooed skin, in order to comply with laws in terms of guarding those marked as dangerous, and granting access to those marked as military.
Ordering	Physical, Social	Ordering, Threshold	The mark of the soldier assigns him honourable status because of the honour and high status of the military in Assyrian community. The marks of the prisoners of war and of the rebellious slaves assign them minimal social status, and strip them of their previous social status, by virtue of the messages that their tattoos relay about them, marking them as animals, and as criminals.
Prominence	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The respective honourable or shameful tattoos assign the body wearing them a certain worth, based on the interpretation of the design. This means that the social interaction and spatial inhabitation of the tattooed body in space is based on its tattoos.
Social norms, customs, and laws	Social, Mental	Ordering, Threshold	Social norms and Assyrian law dictate the spatial behaviour of tattooed bodies. The soldiers bearing the honourable military marks are granted spatial access based on custom and law, while the shameful bodies bearing marks of criminality are guarded and restricted in terms of their spatial inhabitation of public spaces.
Wholeness	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The body of the soldier, marked with the honourable, military tattoo, is seen to be whole because of its mark. This body is thus allowed to freely move within civilian society, among whole, unmarked civilians. The bodies of prisoners of war and rebellious slaves are rendered to be un-whole because of their shameful marks, restricting their access in terms of movements among whole, unmarked citizens.

### 3.7 Boundary Relations of the Tattooed Body as Space

**Table 11: Boundary Effects of the Tattooed Assyrian Body as Space**

Boundary	Category	Effect: Body as Space	Explanation of Effect
Clothing	Physical	Ordering, Distinction	The effect of clothing on the body as space is that of exposure, due to the fact that the hands and faces of tattooed individuals cannot be covered by clothing. As such, the exposed tattooed skin is clearly marked and distinguished from the unmarked skin of civilians.
Communicativeness	Social	Ordering, Threshold	The body as space loses its identity outside of that which the tattoo communicates it to be – the body of the prisoner of war, or of the slave becomes an object and a space of shame, whereas the soldier's body is a space of honour. This affects the social ordering of the body as space, because it is treated as what the mark declares it to be. This distinguishes the marked bodies from unmarked civilians whose identities are not based on externally assigned meaning, and whose ordering are based on behaviour, rather than interpretation.
Honour and shame	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The tattooed body becomes a space of honour or of shame, based on the tattoo inscribed on it. This mark others it from unmarked civilians, and dictates how the individual will be treated. The mark of honour others the honoured body from unmarked bodies, almost rendering the unmarked bodies to be less honourable, even less whole, and unable to attain the honour of the mark. Conversely, the shamefully marked body is othered from unmarked bodies because it is no longer whole, and the wholeness of the body cannot be restored because of the permanence of the mark. The shame is therefore permanent.
Humility	Social, Mental	Distinction, Threshold	The honourable tattoo of the soldier elevates his social status because of his military affiliation, and as such, honours his body with the mark. The shameful tattoos of slaves and prisoners strip them of their previous status, and force them into the shameful status declared by the tattoos. They are thus othered from society, while the honourable bodies of soldiers other society because of their lack of marks. The permanence of the marks mean that the newly designated status cannot be physically usurped, without the threat of further marking, further shaming the space of the individual's body.
Nudity	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The exposure of the tattooed body as space signifies its distinction from unmarked bodies. The marks, being permanent, permanently alter the naked skin of the tattooed individuals, and permanently alter that individual's sense of esteem and self. The alteration of the naked skin alters its wholeness, and alters its essential being, both for the marked individual, and for the civilian who interprets the mark.
Ordering	Physical, Social	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The tattoos of the soldiers, prisoners of war, and rebellious slaves assign their bodies with honour or shame, respectively, and, as such, create physical spaces of individual and social esteem. This physically assigned esteem designates how the individual functions within the public and private spaces of Assyrian territories.
Prominence	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Threshold	The tattooed body becomes an honourable or a shameful space in accordance with its mark, and, as such, the body's societal status is either elevated because of the mark, or lowered, and even stripped

			away completely, in the case of the prisoners of war. The newly assigned status is permanent because of the permanence of the marks.
Social norms, customs, and laws	Social, Mental	Distinction, Threshold	Tattoos dictate the body's wholeness, depending upon its application in terms of honour or shame, and, as such, affect the way in which the body as space is interpreted and how it is treated based on social custom and law. Bodies bearing honourable marks which mark them as whole are treated as being worthy of spatial inhabitation. The shameful tattoos which mark bodies as un-whole leave those bodies to be interpreted as spaces of shame, and to be shunned and othered, by custom and by law.
Wholeness	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	Bearing the honourable mark which affords wholeness to the soldier because of his kinship within the military community allows the soldier to take pride in his mark, and as such, in his body. The shame in having wholeness stripped from the body by the addition of a shameful mark strips the slaves and prisoners of war of their bodily esteem, because their bodies become un-whole, ostracised, othered places of shame. Their status as being less than whole others them from their communities.

### 3.8 Interpretation Based on Textual References to Tattooing Practices

#### 3.8.1 Barthian Visual Semiotics as Applied to Descriptions

1. What/who is described? (first layer, denotation)

The description of the military tattoos are described in terms of the way that the military tattoos are part of the identifying factors of the soldiers, along with designated belts, knives, and styles of beard.

The marking of the prisoners of war are described alongside other forms of body modification, namely blinding, and piercing. The tattoos are described synonymously with branding, and are described as being part of the facial modification of the captured kings and princes.

The tattooing of rebellious slaves is described to be a practice which is enacted when the initial mark of rebellion, the *abbuttu*, is not enough of a deterrent for the slave in terms of his or her rebellion.

2. What values/ideas are expressed through what is being described?(second layer, connotation)

The primary values which pertain to the descriptions of the Assyrian tattooing practices are honour and shame. The military tattoos are honourable, juxtaposed to the shameful tattooing of the prisoners of war and the rebellious slaves.

3. Which boundary (physical, social, mental) is represented in the description?

The boundaries related to the military tattoos are physical, inasmuch as civilians are physically othered from the soldiers because of the tattoo mark; social, because the mark distinguishes the military from civilians; and mental, as the mark is a mark of honour which affects the esteem of the soldier who bears it.

The boundaries of the shameful marks of the prisoners of war and the rebellious slaves are physical, inasmuch as being physically restricted within the boundaries of Assyrian territories because of their markings; social, because of the fact that the shameful marks identify the prisoners and slaves as other from their peers and counterparts; and mental, because of the fact that the shameful marks are permanent, and affect the esteem of those upon whom they are inscribed.

4. Which boundary effect (ordering, distinction, threshold) is represented in the description?

The boundary effects of the military tattoos are ordering, because of the fact that civilians cannot infiltrate the military because of the soldiers' identifying tattoos, thus enforcing a rule of inclusion and exclusion; this rule is evidenced through the effect of distinction, because the soldiers are marked as honourably other from Assyrian civilians because of their markings. The effect of threshold is not present in this application, because the boundary of the military inclusion to all but soldiers is not permeable.

The boundary effects evident in the tattooing of prisoners of war and rebellious slaves are ordering, in terms of the restrictions of access that the marked prisoners and slaves have in Assyrian territory, and public spaces, as the contravention of the restrictions would mean that the marked prisoner or slave was breaking the Assyrian law; and distinction, because of the fact that the permanent facial marks render these individuals as other from both civilians and their prisoner and slave peers. The effect of threshold is present only inasmuch as slaves and prisoners can be marked in order to be othered. Once this mark has been inscribed, however, threshold is no longer applicable, because the marked individuals cannot rejoin civilian society, or even their prisoner and slave communities because of the permanence of the marks, the warnings that the marks yield, as well as the associated judgement of shame that the marks portray.

### 3.8.2 Layers of Meaning as Applied to Descriptions

1. What is the representational meaning of the description?

On a purely representational level, the tattoos of the military, as well as those of the prisoners of war, and the slaves are labels, identifying these individuals as soldiers, prisoners, and rebellious slaves. These labels are used in order to enforce access, in terms of gaining access into the military, as well as denying access into the general populace because of the labels as prisoners and slaves which identify them as other from the rest of Assyrian civilians.

2. What is the social-scientific and ideological meaning of the description?

The social-scientific and ideological meanings of the tattoos are based on the values of honour and shame. The military marking shows a certain status, and marks the individual as part of an honourable community which serves the ruler in order to conquer territories in the name of Assyria, and to mark those who have been conquered in turn. The honourable mark of the military is not attainable by any Assyrian, and, as such is elite, as well as honourable.

In contrast to this honourable mark, which is worn with pride, the marks on the conquered prisoners of war are shameful, as these marks strip the individuals of their past rank and status, and marks them as shameful in the Assyrian culture. The marks are permanent, and, as such, the shame is irredeemable. Similarly, the rebellious slaves are shamed for their rebellion, and no amount of contrition could remove the tattoo which marks the slave. The shame of being a rebellious slave means that even within the lower ranking status pool of slaves, this particular slave is othered, and shamed, and will be unwanted by potential new masters, while being perpetually judged on the basis of the mark that he or she wears while in service.

### 3.9 Descriptive Interpretation of Tattoos

1. What is the category of tattoo as described (religious, punitive, military, decorative)?

Assyrian tattooing practices are military in terms of identification, and punitive for both prisoners of war and rebellious slaves. The punitive marking of slaves was employed as a preventative measure as well, as the marks would warn prospective masters of the slave's rebellion.

2. Which part of the body is described tattooed?

The hands (military, punitive), and the face (punitive and preventative)

3. What is described to be depicted in the tattoo?

The military tattoos identify soldiers as members of the military, and is in the form of script.

The marks on the prisoners of war and those of the slaves were also script which labelled the infraction of which the individual had been accused.

4. How does this description of the tattoo affect the body in space?

The marked body of the soldier is given access to spaces due to his military identification. The soldiers have access to nearly all of the Assyrian territory, and are also part of conquering new territories, and taking prisoners of war in the name of their conquering ruler.

The marked body of a prisoner and a slave are restricted in their access and movement within the inhabited spaces of Assyrian territory. The exception of this would be the temple slaves, who would have access to the inner sanctums of the temples in which they served, based on their identification as a slave of a particular deity.

5. How does this description of the tattoo affect the body as space?

As the military mark is honourable, the body as space is exalted for the soldier, as his marked body affords him community within the military structure. The mark is placed on the hand, which signifies honourable agency in action.

The marks of shame which are worn by the prisoners of war and by rebellious slaves permanently mark their bodies as objects of shame. The marks are most often inscribed upon the faces of the prisoners and the slaves, and can thus not be covered or hidden. The facial markings alter the identity of the individual wearing them, rendering him or her incapable of identifying himself or herself as the person he or she was prior to the mark being inscribed, regardless of previous status or behaviour. The body therefore becomes a space of shame, which is worn as the identity of the individual because of the facial placement of the mark.



## 4. Application of the Analytical Model to Egyptian Culture

### 4.1 Contextualisation of Cultural Tattooing Practices

Mummies excavated in Deir El-Bahari during 1922 to 1923 yielded evidence of Egyptian tattooing practices. The female mummies showed tattoo marks on the backs of their hands, around their mouths, on their chins, foreheads, arms, feet, and the middle of their bosoms (Tassie 2003:87). The tattoo designs consisted of dots and lines in geometric patterns, and were applied either through sewing the design into the skin, or by puncturing the skin. Geoffrey Tassie (2003:86) explains that sewing the tattoo design into the skin created lines; and an eyes needle was used with twine or sinew that had been blackened with soot to be “pulled through the skin in short, deep stitches” with pressure being applied to the area in order to ensure the absorption of the “ink”. The method of puncturing the skin was utilised to create the dot patterns, as well as lines, and figures, whereby a sharp instrument would be used to puncture the skin, and then pigment would either be pricked into the wound, or rubbed over the wound repeatedly (Tassie 2003:86).

Of these aforementioned mummies, one was Amunet, a priestess of the goddess Hathor. Amunet is said to have borne the title of the “King’s favourite ornament” (Tassie 2003:90). The two mummies that were discovered near that of Amunet are considered to be Hathoric dancers from the King Mentuhotep II’s court. Tassie (2003:90) explains that the Amunet mummy bears tattoo marks on her left shoulder, and her breast, in the design of a row of dots between two lines. “On her right arm, below the elbow, there are approximately nine rows of tattooed dots” (Tassie 2003:90). There are also abdominal tattoos which form an “elliptical pattern of dots and dashes, below the navel and below the chest”, where the design consists of “seven to nine rows of nine strokes in a rectangular pattern”. (Tassie 2003:90). There is another tattoo, upon the “medial line at the top of the epigastric basin which comprises six lines of three dashes each” (Tassie 2003:90). Amunet also bears a “rectangular tattoo on her right thigh, formed by numerous diamond-shaped patterns, which are composed of dots” (Tassie 2003:90). Amunet’s mummy shows a scarification design in the groin area, consisting of three, horizontal, parallel lines (Tassie 2003:90).

While Egyptian tattoos have been found on women of lower social status, the tattoos were not inscribed to strip them of status; the tattoos were voluntary inscribed as rites of passage, to fight off evil and disease, as well as to show social relationships, values, and religion (Tassie 2003: 85-87). The Egyptian tattooing process could therefore be interpreted to be decorative

and religious. Tattooed Egyptian women seem to have had a preference for the number of dots or rows of lines in their tattoo designs, and Tassie (2003:87) postulates that this relates to the significance of the symbolism of numbers, as well as to how many times the tattooing implement would strike the skin.

It is important to note that “there is no artistic or physical evidence that men were tattooed apart from one Dynasty XII stele from Abydos [which describes] a male with tattoos on his chest” (Tassie 2003:88). It is therefore posited that only women were tattooed in ancient Egypt.

A mummy dating back to the fourth century BCE, found in Aksha in Nubia, bears a tattoo of the god Bes on her thigh (Tassie 2003:94). The design was tattooed using the puncture method. The tattoo of Bes has been thought to have been interpreted as “encouragement to indulge in carnal fulfilment” due to his mythological origins of having “evolved from a leonine deity of the Predynastic Period, and serving as the tutelary deity of revelry and unbridled cavorting” (Tassie 2003:95). Bes was also thought to preside over childbirth, and, to provide protection from venereal diseases (Tassie 2003:95). Bes was considered to be a protective deity in terms of both fertility and reproduction, though, and, as such, women are thought to have had images of Bes tattooed on their thighs to protect them during childbirth (Tassie 2003:95).

Tassie (2003:96) notes that there is “impressive” evidence of a Bes tattoo on the thigh of a lute player, thought to be a priestess of Hathor “due to the triple plait on the crown of her tripartite hairstyle”, as illustrated on a bowl from the New Kingdom, currently on display at the Leiden Rijksmuseum van Oudheden. Another depiction of a woman bearing a Bes tattoo is that of a naked dancer with a dark blue Bes tattoo on each of her thighs, found on a “Dynasty XIX wall painting from the Workmen’s Village at Deir el-Medina” (Tassie 2003:96).

The evidence of Bes tattoos have been found on representations and mummies of dancers and musicians from Dynasty XVIII through until the end of the New Kingdom. “Dancers and musical troupes could be attached to royal, religious, and private households; music and dance were associated with Hathor, the goddess of sexuality and love” (Tassie 2003:95).

Egyptian tattooing is postulated to have been a predominantly feminine practice, and “the positioning of the tattoos, such as the dot-and-dash designs, as well as Bes and Tawaret figures, on the thighs and abdomen indicate that the tattooing practice was closely linked to the feminine spheres of life” (Tassie 2003:96). Egyptian tattoos can therefore be interpreted to be related to fertility, as well protection in terms of childbirth (protection from death or

disability). Taliaferro and Odden (2012:6) explain that the abdominal tattoos are net-like, and that this signifies “the custom of wrapping mummies in bead nets as a way of containment; the tattoo [thus imbuing] magic to help carry the foetus throughout the pregnancy.

Paul Lippert (1980:161-12) suggests that the religious function Egyptian tattooing extended to assistance in terms of navigating the afterlife, due to the discovery of figurines bearing tattoo marks in the tomb of Seti I. These figurines bore representations of tattoo marks representing the goddess Neith (also referred to as Nit, Neit, and Net), mythologically described to be the patron goddess of the red crown of Lower Egypt, and both mother and daughter to Ra, whose journey into the underworld, and emergence therefrom symbolises life, death, and the afterlife.

## 4.2 General Boundary Relations and Associated Research Questions

### **Mental Boundaries** (Core beliefs)

**Ordering:** To what extent are the main ideas and concepts decisive for what members do?

The core beliefs of Egyptian society are based on religious piety and gaining honour through honouring the gods. The tattooing process which invokes the blessing, protection, and assistance from a god would therefore be an honourable and religious practice. The decorative tattooing would also be seen as an honourable practice, because of the fact that adornment would make the individual more attractive and, in a sense, more whole.

**Distinction:** To what extent are the core ideas and concepts distinctly different from those of other groups?

As the Egyptian tattooing practice is primarily feminine, the distinction would occur between the sexes. Male Egyptians would invoke blessings, protection, and assistance from the gods through rituals and honourable behaviour, comprising of the acknowledgement and obeisance of law and social custom. Female Egyptians would similarly act in accordance with custom and law, but would further seek favour from the gods by acquiring the tattoos. In terms of tattoos for adornment, these too, are primarily feminine. Egyptian males would dress and adorn themselves through clothing, hair, and additional apparel, as opposed to the female practice of facial tattooing.

**Threshold:** To what extent can outsiders assimilate core ideas and concepts?

Because of the voluntary nature of the Egyptian tattooing process, acquiring a tattoo would be an action that could reasonably be undertaken by any woman who would feel the need to either adorn herself through facial tattoos, or to invoke the blessings of a particular god. As it

has been noted that practice is primarily feminine, it would mean that males are othered from the practice, and that they would have to use other norms and behaviours to achieve the same goals.

### **Social Boundaries** (Social identity)

**Ordering:** To what extent do members feel that they are socially bonded together by, for example, loyalty?

Because of the individual's ability to choose whether or not to be tattooed, there is no common bond between a group of individuals who have been tattooed. The bond between the women of Egypt would be religious, as those who share certain beliefs would share in specific religious tattoos, such as the priestesses of Hathor. The other bond that the tattooed women of Egypt share is that of motherhood, as the tattoos relating to fertility, pregnancy, and childbirth would bond them through their common invocation of the gods' assistance, blessing, and protection during their pregnancies and their labours. Due to the fact that the tattooing practice of Egyptians has been found to be a predominantly female endeavour, the final bond that the tattooed Egyptians share is that of the female sex.

**Distinction:** To what extent is one group socially distinct from other groups?

The tattooed Egyptian women are socially distinct from their unmarked counterparts by virtue of their tattoos. This distinction may not be obviously recognisable in public spaces, though, because the placement of the tattoos on the torso, abdomen, and thighs allow these tattoos to be concealed with clothing. The decorative facial tattoos are the only tattoos on display with public spaces, and are the only marks which distinguish the tattooed women from the unmarked women without revealing their naked bodies. The other distinction between tattooed and un-tattooed groups is sex, as tattooing was a female practice in ancient Egypt.

**Threshold:** To what extent is it possible for outsiders to be considered full members of the group?

As tattoos were not interpreted to assign social status, societal ranking did not influence an Egyptian woman's ability to acquire a tattoo. The fact that tattoos were voluntarily acquired means that any woman could choose to be tattooed. The only members of Egyptian society who are othered by the tattooing process are Egyptian men, as the tattooing practice was a female endeavour. Therefore, it would be relatively easy for an unmarked "outsider" to join the marked group, provided that she is female and has access to a tattooist.

## **Physical Boundaries** (Formal rules and physical structures)

**Ordering:** To what extent do formal rules or physical structure regulate the work of members?

Due to the voluntary nature of the tattooing process, the tattooed Egyptian body was not restricted in terms of spatial access or the ability to function within society because of the tattoos. Tattoos were found on priestesses, as well as musicians, and on members of varying social status. The tattoos, therefore, are not a physical boundary for the Egyptian women who choose to acquire them.

**Distinction:** To what extent does a group's formal structure set it apart from other groups?

The tattooing practice of ancient Egypt only distinguishes between the sexes in terms of the formal structure of the tattooed individuals as opposed to the unmarked individuals. This distinction arises because of the fact that tattoos have been found on primarily female remains, and have only been pictorially and textually recorded to have been inscribed on female Egyptians. The lack of relation between tattoos and social status equate to there not being formal structures in terms of tattooed individuals, such as the tattooed Egyptians being othered from society, or being spatially restricted because of their marks. Instead, the tattooing process has been found to be voluntary and accessible by women from all classes, and they are thus only othered from the unmarked men because their sex allows them to participate in the tattooing practice.

**Threshold:** To what extent do formal structures hinder the recruitment of outsiders?

As previously stated, there are no recorded formal structures which regulate the ancient Egyptian tattooing process, in terms of social status, or punitive measures. As such, the only formal structure identifiable in terms of the tattooing practice is that of sex, as the practice has been found to have been almost exclusively female. This means that any Egyptian woman could choose to undergo the tattooing process, for either religious or decorative purposes. This practice is not restricted by class or by profession, and therefore, no Egyptian woman would be denied the choice of acquiring a tattoo. The threshold of the physical boundaries of the ancient Egyptian tattooing practice is applicable to Egyptian men, however, as they cannot alter their sex in order to invoke the blessing of the gods, nor to adorn themselves, in the same fashion of Egyptian women.

### 4.3 Social-Scientific Boundaries

**Table 12: Physical Boundaries and their Egyptian Cultural Applications**

Physical Boundaries	Cultural Application
Clothing	Clothing, although capable of concealing tattoos, would only have been used as additional adornment for the tattooed Egyptian, due to the voluntary nature of the tattooing process, and the fact that there would be no imposed shameful tattoo which the individual would want hidden under clothing when entering a public space.
Honour and shame	The decorative and religious natures of Egyptian tattoos show them to have been honourable marks based on the importance of religious practices in social custom. Tattoos identified priestesses, musicians, and dancers, which would have been honourable professions in service of the gods, as well as the upper echelons of Egyptian society.
Nudity	As some dancers and musicians are depicted nude, bearing tattoos, nudity was not a boundary of shameful affiliation. The physical boundary of nudity would be breached during the actual tattooing process, but this process was also not a shameful one.
Ordering	The Egyptian women's social status and their place within society are not affected by their tattoos, as the practice was participated in from the lower classes, to priestesses, and women of higher social status.
Prominence	The social worth of an individual was not given by the tattoos inscribed on that individual. Any women of any social status could engage in the tattooing practice. Tattoos may have shown the social status of the woman who bore them, but they did not determine that status based on their honour or their shame.
Wholeness	Religious tattoos would be interpreted as making the individual more whole, in terms of her devotion to the gods, and her honouring them through physical invocation through acquiring the tattoos. Similarly, the decorative tattoos would be acquired for the individual to feel more whole in appearance.

**Table 13: Social Boundaries and their Egyptian Cultural Applications**

<b>Social Boundaries</b>	<b>Cultural Application</b>
Communicativeness	The facial tattoos acquired by Egyptian women would have served the purpose of adornment, and was thus not symbolically significant in terms of the communicative function of the mouth and ears. The tattoos did not communicate social status or punitive warnings, and are, as such, not bound to the value of communicativeness.
Honour and shame	As social status and public honour and shame were not appropriated because of the tattoos with which an individual is marked, the social boundaries of honour and shame remain unaffected by the tattooing process. The display of the tattoos would have been at the discretion of the women who bore them, and they were not required to show the marks in order to show their assigned honour or shame.
Humility	Staying within one's born social status would not have been affected by the tattooing process, as the tattooing process was voluntary, and unrelated to assigned status. The value of humility is therefore not applicable to the Egyptian tattooing process.
Nudity	The only social boundary that would be affected by the value of nudity is the instance during which the individual is undergoing the tattooing process, as she would then be bearing her naked skin to somebody with whom she does not have an intimate relationship, nor bond, such as that of marriage. This instance of nudity is not shameful, however, because of the nature of the tattoos being inscribed.
Ordering	The Egyptian individual's place within his or her family, as well as in society is related to birth right and inherited status. Social status was not assigned through tattoos, and, as such, the tattooing process is not directly related to the value of ordering. Its partial relation may be interpreted in terms of the professions which have been recorded to have tattooed practitioners, such as the priestesses of Hathor, musicians, and dancers. By virtue of their marks, these individuals would be known to be from a certain profession, and that profession would declare them to be of a certain worth. However, the correlation of the tattoos with the professions is not cause for ordering.
Prominence	As with the value of ordering, the tattoos of Egyptian women do not assign their social status, and as such, the tattoos do not proclaim the individual's social status. The tattoos interpretation honourable may influence the individual's social esteem, but this is not related to her status, as women from various hierarchical orders acquired tattoos, and those tattoos were acquired for the same reasons by women of various classes.
Social norms, customs, and laws	Due to Egyptian religion being prominent in social values and custom, honouring the gods through the tattooing process whereby the god is invoked for blessings, protection, and assistance would mean that the tattooing practice is honourable in terms of social custom.
Wholeness	As the tattoos on the torso, abdomen, and thigh would be covered by clothing, there would be little room for the public interpretation of the perception of the wholeness of the tattooed individual. The tattoos, however, were acquired for religious and decorative purposes, which would add to the honour of the individual, and as such, would not render them as being less whole for bearing these marks.



**Table 14: Mental Boundaries and their Egyptian Cultural Applications**

<b>Mental Boundaries</b>	<b>Cultural Application</b>
Honour and shame	Invoking the blessing, assistance, and protection of deity by having a tattoo inscribed would have been an honourable practice, and would therefore have positive effect on the esteem of the marked individual, because of the sense of security that the marks would bring. Similarly, marks for adornment would make the individual feel more attractive by social standards, and would thus have a positive effect on her esteem as well.
Humility	The tattooed individual's social status is not directly affected by the tattooing process, and, as such, the tattoos would not lead to the individual's esteem being affected in terms of status. The tattooing process was honourable, and, as such, the tattooed individual would be behaving in an honourable manner through beseeching the gods during the tattooing process, regardless of social status.
Nudity	The act of exposing naked skin in order to be tattooed would not have had a negative mental effect on the individual, because the tattoo, whether acquired for religious or decorative purposes was a socially accepted and honourable act which falls within the ambit of social behavioural norms.
Prominence	An individual's esteem was not affected by assigned social status, and, as such, the proclamation of an individual's status would be tied to his or her actions and behaviour within his or her inherited status. The tattoos that Egyptian acquire are therefore not tied to their social esteem, and as honourable actions, would allow the individual to have a positive bodily esteem because of her marks. This esteem would be unrelated to her social status, or the behavioural proclamation thereof.
Social norms, customs, and laws	As honouring the gods through acquiring religious tattoos, and honouring social customs through acquiring tattoos for adornment are customarily positive behaviours, the mental boundaries of social norms, customs, and laws in terms of the tattooing process would be positively enforced.
Wholeness	Honouring the gods through invoking their blessing through the tattooing process would allow the tattooed individual to feel whole because of her marks. Similarly, the tattoos of adornment fall within social custom which would increase the individual's honour and esteem, allowing that individual to feel whole by virtue of that form of adornment.

#### 4.4 Social-Scientific Research Questions

1. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice differ from the other identified cultures' tattooing practices?

Egyptian tattooing is a primarily feminine endeavour. The tattoos are acquired voluntarily by women of various social classes, for decorative and religious purposes. Tattoos are also noted to be acquired by priestesses, dancers, and musicians. The Egyptian tattoos do not indicate honour or shame by virtue of the design or the interpretation of the tattoo, but the process is honourable as it is congruent with social customs of honouring the gods, and of decoration and adornment.

2. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice affect the social bonds within the community?

As tattooing does not alter the marked individual's social status, it does not affect the individual's social interaction. The tattooed body is othered because of the meaning of the marks that it bears. On the contrary, decorative and religious tattoos fall within the ambit of social custom, and are common among women from various social classes. The social bond

between tattooed individuals is based on sex, as the tattooed individuals are female, as well as the bond of motherhood, because of the invocation of the blessing of Bes in terms of fertility and birthing.

3. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice regulate the spatial practices of the tattooed individual?

The spatial practices of tattooed Egyptians are unaffected by the tattoos, as they do not mark the individual as inherently shameful, nor as a fugitive or criminal. The tattooed women are free to move within public spaces as their unmarked counterparts and men do. The only spatial practice affected by the tattooing process is that of tattooed priestesses, who are identifiable by their tattoos, and who, by virtue of profession are allowed access into the inner sanctum of the temple of the god they serve.

#### **4.5 Critical Spatial Research Questions (Thirthing-as-Othering)**

1. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on physical boundaries within the culture?

Physical boundaries are not enacted in terms of tattooing, beyond that of the priestesses being marked and having access to more temple space than an Egyptian citizen would. Because the tattoos do not mark their bearers as criminal, or as fugitives, the tattooed individuals do not require spatial restriction for the protection of public space. The voluntary nature of the acquisition of tattoos, as well as the tattooed individual's ability to disguise tattoos on her torso, abdomen, and thigh through clothing affords the tattooed individual the same physical spatial privileges as any unmarked individual of her social status. Even though facial tattoos cannot be hidden, they too were considered to be decorative, and fell within the ambit of general adornment in Egyptian custom, and would, therefore, not impose physical spatial limitations on the facially marked individual.

2. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on social identity and interpersonal interaction within the culture?

The bonds that would be formed due to the Egyptian tattooing process encompass women in general, as the practice is feminine, and thus the social group of Egyptian women who have the potential to engage in the practice other the men who have to beseech the gods for blessings through other customary behaviour, and who would have to adorn themselves through clothing, without the aid of tattoos. Another bond within the female "sorority" would be that of motherhood, as the abdominal tattoos have been linked to fertility, as have the tattoos representing the god Bes. Because tattoos were acquired voluntarily, and did not

assign shame, nor social status, they would not have had an influence in terms of othering marked bodies.

3. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on the tattooed individual's perception of his or her place within the culture?

The Egyptian woman who would adorn herself with facial tattoos, or who would seek to honour the god Bes through acquiring a tattoo in his likeness, or who acquires tattoos in order to aid with fertility, pregnancy, and the birthing process is undertaking the tattooing of her own volition, in a socially acceptable manner, in order to honour both her body, her family, and a god of her pantheon. The tattooing process would thus reflect honourably upon the individual, and would positively affect the individual's esteem. This effect on the individual's esteem would mean that the individual would not perceive herself to be othered from her society by virtue of her tattoos. Her place within her family, and her society would remain unaltered by the tattooing process, as the process has not been shown to be punitive, or to mark her as of lower social status than she would have been perceived to be prior to undergoing the tattooing process.

#### 4.6 Boundary Relations of the Tattooed Body *in Space*

**Table 15: Boundary Effects of the Tattooed Egyptian Body in Space**

Boundary	Category	Effect: Body in Space	Explanation of Effect
Clothing	Physical	Ordering, Distinction	The tattooed body in space would be able to hide its tattooed distinction in public spaces, because the placement of the tattoos on the torso, thighs, and abdomen would be able to be covered by clothing. Facial tattoos, which serve as adornment would distinguish the individual as marked, and would not be covered by clothing, but due to the nature of the tattoos, the tattooed body in space is not hindered in terms of spatial access in public spaces because of the visibility of tattoos.
Communicativeness	Social	Ordering, Distinction	The decorative facial tattoos would have affected the communicativeness of the tattooed body in space, but only in terms of the acknowledgment of the decorative features of the tattoos. The religious tattoos were placed on the torsos, abdomens, and thighs, and were, as such, not placed where their communicative value would be seen in public spaces.
Honour and shame	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The nature of the tattoos on the torsos and abdomens of Egyptian women are not shameful, and as such, the tattooed body in space was not interpreted to be a shameful body. The tattoos of priestesses, dancers, and musicians granted them access to private spaces; and, as such, the tattooed body in space was an honourable body, baring marks of religiosity and adornment, and marks of profession.
Humility	Social, Mental	Ordering, Threshold	As humility dictates that an individual stays within his or her designated social status, the tattooed body in space is unaffected by this value, as Egyptian tattoos did not mark or assign social status to be shown in public spaces. The tattoos are not related to ordering, as women from all social hierarchical levels could acquire them, and the threshold of the tattooing practice is easily breached because of the voluntary nature of the engagement in the practice.
Nudity	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The tattooing process would distinguish the bodily interaction from that of an unmarked man or woman, but would be able to be concealed in terms of the religious tattoos. The only application of the naked body in space is that of the bodily boundary being breached when the tattoos are inscribed upon the body, in a space of the tattooists choosing. The decorative facial tattooing would not be affected by the boundary of nudity, as the face was bared and naked in both public and private spaces.
Ordering	Physical, Social	Ordering, Threshold	Voluntary tattoos which are not tied to social status do not affect the tattooed individual's place within her family, or her society at large. As such, the tattooed body in space is only limited spatially in terms of its inherited social status, or by its profession. For example, tattooed priestesses have access to the inner sanctums of temples, whereas even unmarked members of society would not have that access because of their inherited status.
Prominence	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The tattooed body in space proclaims its honour, shame, and social status through its spatial inhabitation and behaviour based on inherited status, customs, and profession. This behaviour and adherence to social customs is the same behaviour

			that an unmarked individual would embark upon within public spaces.
Social norms, customs, and laws	Social, Mental	Ordering, Threshold	As the tattooed body is not proclaiming shame, or assigned a status by virtue of the tattoos it bears, based on proscriptive laws or punitive measures. Therefore, the tattoos are interpreted to be voluntary. The decorative and religious tattoos which are acquired by Egyptian women do not mark their bodies contrary to social custom or law, and, as such, the tattooed body in space is not restricted because of the marks.
Wholeness	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	Due to the fact that Egyptian tattoos are not socially labelled as shameful, the tattooed body was not rendered any less whole for being marked. As such, the tattooed body in space was not restricted or othered because of the perception of its wholeness. The tattooed bodies of the priestesses of Hathor, as well as those of dancers and musicians would have been considered more whole for their marks, and would have been granted access into temples, as well to private spaces of high social esteem because of the marks that the bodies bear.

#### 4.7 Boundary Relations of the Tattooed Body as Space

**Table 16: Boundary Effects of the Tattooed Egyptian Body as Space**

Boundary	Category	Effect: Body as Space	Explanation of Effect
Clothing	Physical	Ordering, Distinction	The tattooed body as space is not a space of shame by virtue of the marks, and therefore, clothing could be used to further adorn the tattooed body. Tattoos which would be concealed under clothing due to placement on the space of the body were not hidden out of shame.
Communicativeness	Social	Ordering, Threshold	The placement of the religious tattoos on the torsos, abdomens, and thighs of Egyptian women indicates the importance of the part of the body in relation to the protection and assistance from the relevant deity in terms of fertility and childbirth. This means that the communicativeness of the religiously tattooed body as space was limited to the bodily affiliation with fertility and childbirth. The decorative facial tattoos showed the importance of the appearance of the body in public spaces.
Honour and shame	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The religious nature of the tattoos would render the body that bears them as honourable, because of the importance of piety and religious practice to Egyptian culture. This honour would apply to the tattooed body of any class, as any class could honour the gods. The tattoos which invoke blessings, assistance, and protection in terms of childbirth honour the process of becoming a mother, as the family unit was of great social importance in terms of honour. The decorative tattoos would also have been perceived as honourable, because of the value that Egyptians placed on appearance and adornment. The unmarked Egyptian men would show their piety and adornment through social customs and behavioural norms, distinguishing them from the marked women.
Humility	Social, Mental	Distinction, Threshold	The choice of marking the body is not related to the social status of the individual. Therefore, the tattooed body as space carries the same social status that it had prior to being tattooed. The distinction of the tattooed body as space is not related to its status by virtue of the mark, but rather by virtue of the sex of the body, as tattooing was a feminine practice, and in terms of the choice of religious tattoo inscribed on the body.
Nudity	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The voluntary tattoo process necessitates that the body as space be bared in order to be marked at the request and volition of the individual who has chosen to acquire a tattoo. While the tattooing process itself requires the nudity of the individual, general social interaction and activities in public spaces would not – as the process would distinguish the bodily interaction from that of an unmarked man or woman in terms of acquisition, but not in daily life, as the body's marks would be able to be concealed in terms of the religious tattoos. The naked body as space becomes a canvas for the tattooist, and the tattoos may be revealed to those in front of whom the tattooed body would be displayed in its naked form in private space. The decorative facial tattooing would not be affected by the boundary of nudity, as the face was bared and naked in both public and private spaces.
Ordering	Physical, Social	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The Egyptian body as space would not be assigned social status by virtue of the tattoo marks upon that body. The tattooed body as space is thus ordered in

			terms of inherited status and honourable actions, as opposed to the assigned status by an imposed tattoo.
Prominence	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Threshold	The tattooed body as space would not be assigned its social status by virtue of its tattoos, and, as such, the tattooed body would function as unmarked bodies do, in accordance with social customs, values, and laws, in order to act within its inherited social status. The tattoos are voluntarily acquired as part of these actions which honour the gods, and adorn the individual, based on custom.
Social norms, customs, and laws	Social, Mental	Distinction, Threshold	The tattooed Egyptian body as space fulfils the social mandates of religious obedience and honouring the gods. The religious tattoos invoke favour from the gods, and, as such, are honourable based on the social customs of the Egyptian people. The decorative tattoos also fall within the ambit of social custom, and therefore also contribute to the tattooed body being an honourable space.
Wholeness	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	Because the Egyptian body is tattooed in order to gain protection and assistance from the gods, as well as for decoration, the tattooed body as space would be seen to be more whole because of the tattoos which invoke the gods' blessings. The tattooed body would thus be religiously honourable, as it honours the gods through its invocation. While the tattooed body is distinguished from unmarked bodies, it has a positive effect on the individual's esteem, because of the protective and assistive nature of the tattoos.



#### 4.8 Iconographic Research Questions

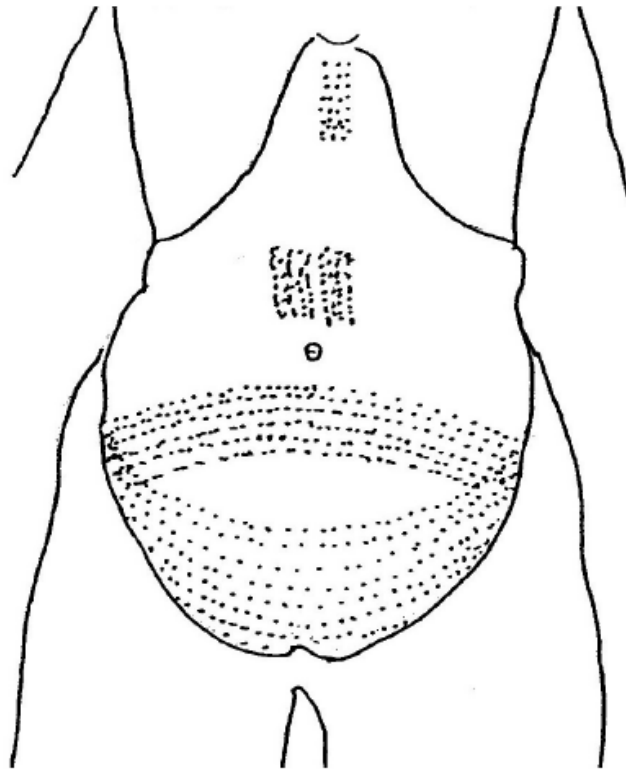
**Figure 11: The Tattooed Mummy of Amunet**



Sourced from: Green (2001).

The figure above shows the geometric tattoos on the lower abdomen of the mummy of Amunet, a Priestess of Hathor, and is dated to *circa* 4040 BCE. This mummy is housed in the Museum of Antiquities in Cairo, Egypt. Two figures of Hathoric dancers with similar tattoos are currently housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

**Figure 12: Detail of the Abdominal Tattoos visible on the Dynasty XI Mummy of Amunet**



Sourced from Tassie (2003:90).

#### 4.8.1 Barthian Visual Semiotics of the Image

1. What/who is depicted? (first layer, denotation)

The first figure above shows the geometric tattoos on the lower abdomen of the mummy of Amunet, a Priestess of Hathor, and is dated to *circa* 4040 BCE. This mummy is housed in the Museum of Antiquities in Cairo, Egypt. Two figures of Hathoric dancers with similar tattoos are currently housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

The second figure shows a line drawing of the details of the aforementioned mummy's abdominal tattoos.

2. What values/ideas are expressed through what is being represented? (second layer, connotation)

The social values related to these tattoos are primarily religious, as these tattoos were found on the body of a priestess of Hathor. This particular tattoo design is also related to fertility, pregnancy, and the birthing process.

3. Which boundary (physical, social, mental) is represented in the depiction?

The tattoos depicted above are representative of a physical boundary, as the bodily boundary of the skin would be physically breached in order to inscribe the tattoo. Because the tattoo does not affect the body's social status, there is no social boundary related to the image. The mental boundary is represented in terms of honour, as the religious tattoo inscribed on the body of a priestess would honour her position, as well as the gods, which was a pivotal part of Egyptian cultural customs.

4. Which boundary effect (ordering, distinction, threshold) is represented in the depiction?

The tattoo represents the boundary effect of distinction, as the tattooed body is othered from unmarked bodies. The religious nature of the tattoos on the body of a priestess also indicate order, as the marks may identify the body as that of a priestess, among customary dress and adornment. The boundary effect of threshold is not represented, as women from various classes and professions acquired this tattoo style and design, and therefore, any women could choose to acquire it, rendering the threshold moot.

#### 4.8.2 Layers of Pictorial Meaning

1. What is the representational meaning of the image? (primary or natural subject matter; recognition of what is being represented on the basis of the interpreter's practical experience, taking into account stylistic conventions and the technical transformations involved in the representation)

The tattoo represents a net-like dot and dash design around the abdomen, which signifies "the custom of wrapping mummies in bead nets as a way of containment; the tattoo [thus imbuing] magic to help carry the foetus throughout the pregnancy.

2. What is the iconographical symbolism of the image? (object-signs denote a particular person, place, or thing and also the ideas and concepts attached to that person, place, or thing; secondary or conventional subject matter)

The mummy depicted above is the mummy of Amunet, a priestess of the goddess Hathor. Amunet is said to have borne the title of the "King's favourite ornament" (Tassie 2003:90). The tattoos form an "elliptical pattern of dots and dashes, below the navel and below the chest",

where the design consists of “seven to nine rows of nine strokes in a rectangular pattern”. (Tassie 2003:90). The tattoos found on the mummy of a priestess show that the practice was honourable, and that it had religious significance.

3. What is the iconological symbolism of the image? (ideological meaning; underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a notion, period, class, religious, or philosophical persuasion)

The underlying principles represented by the tattoos on Amunet’s mummy are that the tattooing practice was honourable, especially in terms of religious connotations, as the priestess of Hathor would bear these identifying marks to honour her goddess, as well as to honour her profession and status. The placement of the tattoos have connotations to fertility, pregnancy, and childbirth, which would be periods requiring the blessing, protection, and assistance from a god, which is then invoked through the tattooing process.

**Figure 13: The Blue Bowl Depicting a Tattooed Musician**



Sourced from: Lineberry (2007).

### 4.8.3 Barthian Visual Semiotics of the Image

1. What/who is depicted? (first layer, denotation)

The figure depicts a blue bowl which is dated to *circa* 1300 BCE, and features what appears to be a musician, with a tattoo of the god Bes on the musician's thigh. The geometric dots on the musician's chest may also be representative of the style of geometric tattoos of the time, as female figures were often tattooed with dots, dashes, and lozenges, or diamond shapes (Lineberry 2007).

2. What values/ideas are expressed through what is being represented? (second layer, connotation)

The values related to this tattoo depicted on the musician's thigh are related to religion, as the tattoo is a representation of the god Bes. These tattoos were associated with the professions of musicians, dancers, and prostitutes, due to Bes' mythological representation, but also with fertility, pregnancy, and childbirth, as Bes was regarded as a protector in terms of the aforementioned processes.

3. Which boundary (physical, social, mental) is represented in the depiction?

The boundaries represented by the Bes tattoo are physical, as the musician would have had to bear naked flesh for the tattoo artist in order to have the tattoo inscribed. The musician is also depicted to show naked skin, which is both a physical and social boundary, physically because it breaches the boundary afforded to the body by clothing, and social, because the exposure of naked flesh would not be appropriate in all social, public spaces. The musician would not be affected by mental boundaries related to the tattoo because it is a religious tattoo, which is honourable, and as such, would affect the musician's esteem positively.

4. Which boundary effect (ordering, distinction, threshold) is represented in the depiction?

The tattoo shown on the figure of the musician represents the boundary effect of distinction, as the tattooed body is othered from unmarked bodies. As musicians, dancers, and prostitutes are recognisable by virtue of these marks, the distinction is also notable in terms of profession. This identification also relates to order, as the professional distinction can be related to social status, although the tattoo itself does not assign status. The Bes tattoo has been identified on women of various social classes and professions, therefore the boundary effect of threshold is not represented.

#### 4.8.4 Layers of Pictorial Meaning

1. What is the representational meaning of the image? (primary or natural subject matter; recognition of what is being represented on the basis of the interpreter's practical experience, taking into account stylistic conventions and the technical transformations involved in the representation)

The image depicted is that of a musician bearing a tattoo of the god Bes on her exposed thigh.

2. What is the iconographical symbolism of the image? (object-signs denote a particular person, place, or thing and also the ideas and concepts attached to that person, place, or thing; secondary or conventional subject matter)

The tattoo of Bes bears connotations to protection during fertility, pregnancy, and childbirth, as well as "encouragement to indulge in carnal fulfilment" due to his mythological origins of having "evolved from a leonine deity of the Predynastic Period, and serving as the tutelary deity of revelry and unbridled cavorting" (Tassie 2003:95).

3. What is the iconological symbolism of the image? (ideological meaning; underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a notion, period, class, religious, or philosophical persuasion)

Bes tattoos show the religious nature of the tattooing process through the invocation of the god through inscribing his representation into the thigh. The placement of the tattoo itself can be interpreted as invoking the god's blessing for carnal interactions, as well as invoking his blessing and protection in terms of fertility, pregnancy, and childbirth. Because the tattoo represents a god, and serves as a bond between its bearer and the god, the tattoo is honourable, and, as such forms part of the social custom of honouring the gods.

**Figure 14: Predynastic Female Figurine**



Sourced from: Lineberry (2007).

#### **4.8.5 Barthian Visual Semiotics of the Image**

1. What/who is depicted? (first layer, denotation)

The figurine above can be dated to 4000-3500 BCE, and displays a female figure with numerous tattoos of the thighs and chest, as well as on the arm(s). This figurine is currently on display at the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology in Oxford.

2. What values/ideas are expressed through what is being represented? (second layer, connotation)



The tattooed figure may be a representation of the extension of the tattooing process to the afterlife, as this figure was discovered in a tomb. The tattoos on the figure represent symbols which would guide the individual through the journey through the afterlife.

3. Which boundary (physical, social, mental) is represented in the depiction?

The boundaries related to the tattooed figurine are physical, as the figurine portrays tattoos which breach the physical boundary of the skin. The figurine also represents the mental boundary, as its placement in a tomb, and its potential significance with regard to the individual's journey through the afterlife would affect the individual's esteem, comforting the individual to know that the figurine has been marked appropriately. The figurine may also represent a social boundary, as not all graves were provided with the same preparations for the afterlife, and as such, the marked figurine would have been found in the tomb of a more affluent member of society, of an individual with a high social status.

4. Which boundary effect (ordering, distinction, threshold) is represented in the depiction?

The tattooed figurine represents distinction, as these figurines were not available to individuals from all social classes and professions, distinguishes those individuals who would be buried alongside such figurines. This also represents the boundary effect of threshold, because access to these figurines would have been limited, as opposed to access of tattoos in general, which would have been common to all Egyptian women.

#### 4.8.6 Layers of Pictorial Meaning

1. What is the representational meaning of the image? (primary or natural subject matter; recognition of what is being represented on the basis of the interpreter's practical experience, taking into account stylistic conventions and the technical transformations involved in the representation)

The representational meaning of the image is a tattooed figurine which would have been placed in a tomb, to assist the individual with his or her journey through the afterlife.

2. What is the iconographical symbolism of the image? (object-signs denote a particular person, place, or thing and also the ideas and concepts attached to that person, place, or thing; secondary or conventional subject matter)

The tattoos portrayed on the figurine are interpreted to be related to an Egyptian individual's journey through the afterlife after his or her death. The symbols depicted as being tattooed on the figurine are related to the goddess Neith, mother and daughter to the god Ra who

represents life, death, and the afterlife through the daily journey of the sun rising and setting and rising once more.

3. What is the iconological symbolism of the image? (ideological meaning; underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a notion, period, class, religious, or philosophical persuasion)

The tattooed figurine reinforces the religious purpose of the Egyptian tattooing practice, and extends that purpose from the blessing and protection of the gods during the individual's life to the individual's death and afterlife. This process is once again shown to be honourable, as Egyptians placed great emphasis on preparing themselves for the afterlife through honouring the gods and living with honour, so that they would be found to be worthy of a blessed afterlife after their judgement.

**Figure 15: Ancient Egyptian Tattooing Needles**



Sourced from: Lineberry (2007).

#### 4.8.7 Barthian Visual Semiotics of the Image

1. What/who is depicted? (first layer, denotation)

The above figure represents bronze tattooing instruments, which are dated to 1450 BCE from Gurob in Egypt. These instruments are currently on display at the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology in London.

2. What values/ideas are expressed through what is being represented? (second layer, connotation)

As these instruments are used to inscribe the tattoos into the flesh, they represent the values of nudity, as the tattooed flesh is naked, as well as wholeness, because it is through the agency of the tattooist with these instruments that the individual's wholeness is altered by virtue of the tattoos being inscribed.

3. Which boundary (physical, social, mental) is represented in the depiction?

The tattooing instruments represent a physical boundary, as these are the instruments through which the skin is breached, and through which the tattoos are inscribed into the flesh. As any Egyptian woman had the choice of acquiring a tattoo, the instruments would not have been reserved for access by certain classes, and as such do not represent a social boundary. As the instruments themselves have no esteem value, they do not represent a mental boundary.

4. Which boundary effect (ordering, distinction, threshold) is represented in the depiction?

The tattooing instruments represent distinction, both in terms of their nature, which identify and distinguish the tattooist from other professions, as well as their product, the tattoos which distinguish the marked Egyptians from the unmarked Egyptians. Due to this distinction of professions, the tattoo instruments could be seen to represent ordering as well, as they assign a profession and a status to the tattooists who use them in their practice. The instruments represent the boundary effect of threshold as they are the means through which the bodily boundary is breached in order to acquire a tattoo, and they are the means through which Egyptian women have their chosen designs inscribed into their skin.

#### 4.8.8 Layers of Pictorial Meaning

1. What is the representational meaning of the image? (primary or natural subject matter; recognition of what is being represented on the basis of the interpreter's practical experience, taking into account stylistic conventions and the technical transformations involved in the representation)

The image represents tattooing instruments constructed from bronze, with instruments of varying size and different numbers of "needles".

2. What is the iconographical symbolism of the image? (object-signs denote a particular person, place, or thing and also the ideas and concepts attached to that person, place, or thing; secondary or conventional subject matter)

The size of the instrument would determine whether it would be used for dotting or lining. The number of needles of the instrument had numerological significance, as did the number of dots and lines within the tattoo design itself.

3. What is the iconological symbolism of the image? (ideological meaning; underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a notion, period, class, religious, or philosophical persuasion)

The discovery and identification of ancient Egyptian tattooing instruments support the claims of the prevalence of the practice among the ancient Egyptian people, and also indicate their method of tattooing, through dotting and lining with certain size instruments, with a certain number of needles. The numerological significance of the number of needles used within the instrument for the inscription of a tattoo reinforces the religious nature of the practice, as numerology, and astrology were both linked to the worship of the gods of the Egyptian pantheon.

#### 4.9 Iconographic Interpretation of Tattoos

1. What is the category of tattoo (religious, punitive, military, decorative)?

Egyptian tattoos are religious and decorative.

2. Which part of the body is tattooed?

Tattooing was most commonly displayed facially, around the eyes and mouth of the tattooed individual; and on the torso, abdomen, and thighs of Egyptian women.

### 3. What is depicted in the tattoo?

Egyptian tattoos have two permutations, patterns constructed through dot and dash patterns, and images of the god Bes. The dot and dash patterns form elliptical patterns, as well as rows, and geometric shapes. The Bes tattoos are inscribed through the puncture method, and are also created using dots and lines, in the likeness of the god's representation.

### 4. How does this tattoo affect the body in space?

The tattooed body in space is unaffected in terms of spatial access, because tattoos are not involuntarily acquired, nor do they proclaim an individual's status or identity. Therefore the tattooed body in space has the same spatial interactions as unmarked bodies, based on social custom and inherited social status.

### 5. How does this tattoo affect the body as space?

The voluntary tattooing process, undertaken for adornment and for religious purposes would bestow honour on the canvas of the body embarking on the tattooing process. The tattooed body as space is a space which adheres to social customs and values, and is, as such, an honourable space.

## 5. Application of the Analytical Model to Nubian Culture

### 5.1 Contextualisation of Cultural Tattooing Practices

Geoffrey Tassie (2003) identifies the Nubian tattooing practice alongside that of the Egyptians, due to the concomitant periods during which the practice has been identified, as well as the geographical proximity between the cultures. The designs found on mummified remain, as well as on tomb figurines indicate a possible cross-cultural influence in terms of the tattooing practices of Nubia and Egypt.

Tassie (2003:88) states that while only C-Group Nubian women were originally tattooed, the practice included men by the Meroitic Period. This differs from Egypt, as it was a gendered practice specific to women in Egyptian practice. Nubian bodily modification also extends to scarification, as well as tattooing (Tassie 2003:88). Evidence of these practices have been found on remains dating from the C-Group period (*circa* 2000 BCE) to the Meroitic Period (*circa* 300 BCE) where 42 female tattooed bodies, and at least one male tattooed body have been discovered (Tassie 2003:89). It is important to note that the Nubian remains had been

found in “simple, round or oval pit graves” which mean that the flesh of the remains has been exposed to the elements, and has been disturbed, and prone to desiccation (Tassie 2003:89).

Tassie further notes that the tattooed Nubian remains had mainly been excavated during “two Nubian archaeological surveys” around 1927. These surveys were conducted near the village of Quban or Kubban, where a tattooed female mummy was discovered in “C-Group grave 271 in Cemetery 110”. This mummy’s tattoos are located on her abdomen, and are comparable to the represented “tattoo marks on the C-Group pottery dolls” (Tassie 2003:89). Other tattooed remains include those from Cemetery 87, and show tattoos on the abdomen, chest, arms, and legs (Tassie 2003:90). The tattoos identified on these remains are primarily based on dotted patterns, posited to have been inscribed with bundles of needles of an uneven number (Tassie 2003:89). The tattoos found on the human remains resemble the tattoos represented on clay figurines found in C-Group graves, and it has occurred that the tattooed remains had tattooed figurines placed in the graves with them (Tassie 2003:90).

Remains from the Meroitic Period also show tattoos similar to those of the C-Group mummies. Numerous examples of tattooing were discovered on the remains of adolescent and adult females in Aksha dating to the fourth century BCE (Tassie 2003:91). These tattoos are blue in colour, and while similar to those of the C-Group, include facial and hand tattoos. “No male mummies from Nubia have been identified with abdominal or thigh tattoos, however, at least one male mummy has been identified with facial tattoos” (Tassie 2003:91).

The cross-cultural influence of custom, religion, and practice between Egypt and Nubia causes there to be speculation about the Hathoric dancers, as Tassie (2003:92) explains that these dancers may have had Nubian origins, while having been born in Egypt, and having had adopted Egyptian “ideology, manners, and customs”. Tassie (2003:92) further states that “it is impossible to tell in which region the tattoos were applied to them and the ethnic origin of the tattoo artists”. Distinguishing between the tattooing practices of Egypt and Nubia, and “apportioning the origin of the tattooing tradition to either of the two is very equivocal” (Tassie 2003:92), because of the fact that Nubians resided in Egypt, and Nubia was under Egyptian rule and political control during the Predynastic and Pharaonic periods (Tassie 2003:92). The influence of Egypt over Nubia is prevalent during the Middle Kingdom during which time Egypt annexed Lower Nubia until the end of the New Kingdom (Tassie 2003:92).

This cultural influence means that the Nubian tattooing practice would represent the same cultural values as that of Egypt, and would have been practiced for the same decorative and religious purposes. This is evidenced through Bes tattoos being discovered on Nubian remains and on tomb figurines (Reece 2013a). These tattoos of Bes have primarily been

found tattooed on the thighs of Nubian women, placed high on either one or both thighs. Tassie (2003:94) notes that this placement is traditionally related to the goddess Tawaret, who is also associated with protection, fertility, pregnancy, and childbirth.

Examples of this placement of the Bes tattoo are found on two wooden statues of naked women, discovered in a tomb in the Egyptian town of Buhen, Nubia (Tassie 2003:94). These statues are presented as “hold[ing] a fruit or flower in one hand, the other hand hanging by their side. They are adorned with bouffant gala hairstyles, necklaces, bracelets, cowrie shell girdles, and at the top of each thigh is depicted a tattoo of Bes” (Tassie 2003:94). These statues are currently on display at the Philadelphia Museum of Art as exhibit 10349. (Tassie 2003:94). Another Nubian figurine depicting the Bes tattoo is on display at the Brooklyn Museum of Art as exhibit 66.27.1. This figurine is made out of bronze, and represents a young Nubian woman, with the image of Bes represented as having been tattooed on each of her thighs (Tassie 2003:94).

## 5.2 General Boundary Relations and Associated Research Questions

### **Mental Boundaries** (Core beliefs)

**Ordering:** To what extent are the main ideas and concepts decisive for what members do?

The core beliefs of Egyptian society influenced Nubian society, and therefore the mental boundaries of the tattooed Nubian women and men would reflect the mental boundaries of the Egyptians. The tattooing process which has been identified as religious and decorative has the same application to the social customs of honouring the gods, and, as such the practice which invokes the blessing, protection, and assistance from a god would therefore be an honourable practice. Similarly, the decorative tattooing practiced by the C-Group women of lower social status would be employed in an attempt to make the individual more attractive and, in a sense, more whole.

**Distinction:** To what extent are the core ideas and concepts distinctly different from those of other groups?

The fact that C-Group women of lower status employed the decorative tattoos, while the religious tattoos were found on women of all classes and professions, including dancers, show that there is an imposition of a restriction in terms of the tattoos that one would acquire based on one's social status. This would mean that the core beliefs related to the importance of social status within Nubian society would be displayed by means of the tattoo that an individual acquires, even though the tattoo itself does not assign social status. As the Nubian practice



has been found to include Nubian men, there is no sex distinction in the practice, and therefore, conversely to the Egyptians, Nubian men had the same option of adornment as Nubian women.

**Threshold:** To what extent can outsiders assimilate core ideas and concepts?

Nubian tattooing is a voluntary process, and therefore, acquiring a tattoo would be an action that could reasonably be undertaken by any Nubian citizen, depending on the time of the acquisition – the practice was identified as primarily female for C-Group Nubians, but during the Meroitic Period, Nubian men have been found to be tattooed as well. The citizens who would be tattooed would feel the need to either adorn himself or herself through facial tattoos, or to invoke the blessings of a particular god, primarily the god Bes.

**Social Boundaries** (Social identity)

**Ordering:** To what extent do members feel that they are socially bonded together by, for example, loyalty?

The voluntary nature of Nubian tattooing leads to the lack of an assigned status as marked others, and as such, the tattooed Nubians are not forced into bonding due to their status which has been assigned to them by their tattoos. The nature of the decorative facial tattoos being acquired by C-Group women of low social status allows for social identification by virtue of the tattoos, even though the tattoos themselves do not assign this low status to the women who bear them. As with the Egyptian practice, the C-Group tattooed Nubians would have been bonded in terms of sex, but as of the Meroitic Period, male Nubians engaged in the practice as well. This means that the ultimate social bond rendered by the tattooing process is based on the individual's perception of his or her wholeness, and its enhancement either through decorative and religious tattooing.

**Distinction:** To what extent is one group socially distinct from other groups?

Tattooed Nubians are physically othered from unmarked members of Nubian society by their own volition because the tattooing process is voluntary. Their distinction is thus self-imposed. Decorative tattoos on the face, arms, and hands would represent blatant distinction between the tattooed Nubians and the unmarked Nubians, while the tattoos on the torso, abdomen, and thighs would not represent *prima facie* distinction, as these tattoos could be covered with clothing in public spaces.

**Threshold:** To what extent is it possible for outsiders to be considered full members of the group?

The central feature of the Nubian tattooing process is that it is engaged in voluntarily, and, as such, any Nubian citizen could breach the threshold of becoming marked through engaging in the process. The distinction of the decorative tattoos being acquired by women of a lower social status may have an impact on the threshold of that particular category of tattooing. This is due to women of a higher social status being bound by social convention to not acquire the facial tattoos, and to only acquire religious tattoos related to fertility, pregnancy, and childbirth, if they would choose to engage in the tattooing process. Whereas the Egyptian tattooing culture has a threshold based on sex, the Nubian tattooing culture does not, as male remains have been identified as having tattoos. This means that the only threshold that exists in terms of becoming a tattooed other is that of status, in terms of the category of tattoo which the individual would acquire.

### **Physical Boundaries** (Formal rules and physical structures)

**Ordering:** To what extent do formal rules or physical structure regulate the work of members?

Because the Nubian tattooing process is engaged in voluntarily by Nubian citizens of all social classes, it does not serve a restrictive purpose in terms of the tattooed body in space. The tattooed Nubian would therefore be able to engage in all the social interaction that an unmarked Nubian would. As with Egyptians, tattoos of the god Bes were found on dancers and on members of varying social status. Decorative tattoos have been found on male and female remains from various periods, and, as such, the religious and decorative tattoos could be seen to be commonplace among Nubian citizens, and due to this commonplace occurrence it is postulated that there would be no physical restriction placed upon the tattooed Nubians in terms of their ability to function within Nubian society.

**Distinction:** To what extent does a group's formal structure set it apart from other groups?

There is no formal structure which applies to the Nubian tattooing practice in terms of the tattoos assigning social status, nor of the practice being restricted to either men or women, nor in terms of the voluntariness of engagement in the process. The only distinction between tattooed Nubians and unmarked Nubians is the appearance of the skin of the tattooed individuals. While there are no formal structures which enforce distinction, among the tattooed groups there is distinction in terms of the tattoo styles which are acquired by women of lower social status, which are the facial tattoos, as opposed to the tattoos on the torso, abdomen, and thighs which serve as the canvas for tattoos for women of higher social status.

**Threshold:** To what extent do formal structures hinder the recruitment of outsiders?

The Nubian tattooing process is not governed by punitive motivations or formal structures, and, as such, there are no formal threshold boundaries which inhibit a Nubian citizen from choosing to acquire a tattoo for decorative or religious purposes. Within this potentiality of acquiring either a decorative or religious tattoo, the only threshold, which is a form of custom, as opposed to a formal structure imposed by law, is the threshold which distinguishes the facial tattoos of C-Group women as being acquired primarily by women of low social status. This threshold implies that the tattoos on the torso, abdomen, and thighs would have been acquired by women of a higher social status than the women who acquire facial tattoos, and, as such, that while the tattoos themselves do not assign status, they portray the social status of the individual who has had them inscribed.

### 5.3 Social-Scientific Boundaries

**Table 17: Physical Boundaries and their Nubian Cultural Applications**

Physical Boundaries	Cultural Application
Clothing	As with the clothing of tattooed Egyptians, the clothing of tattooed Nubian would primarily be used for further adornment, as opposed to being used to conceal the tattoos due to the individual's need to hide the tattoos in public spaces. Because the tattoos are voluntary, there is no social imperative to conceal them with clothing.
Honour and shame	Nubian tattoos fall into the categories of religious and decorative. These categories allow them to be interpreted as being honourable marks based on the importance of religious practices in social custom. Tattoos of the god Bes, worn by female citizens, as well as dancers specifically, show the importance of the god's influence in the individual's life and profession. The tattooed tomb figurines also indicate the importance of the gods' blessings in terms of an individual's afterlife. The decorative tattoos also fall within customary adornment, and as such, are not shameful in their application.
Nudity	As some dancers and musicians are depicted nude, bearing tattoos, nudity was not a boundary of shameful affiliation. The physical boundary of nudity would be breached during the actual tattooing process, but this process was also not a shameful one.
Ordering	As a Nubian individual's social status is neither assigned, nor designed by virtue of his or her tattoos, his or her place within society would not be affected by the tattoos, as the practice was participated in from the lower classes, to priestesses, and men and women of higher social status. The only ordering evident in the practice is the facial tattoos being acquired by lower class C-Group women, whereas women of higher social ranking would not acquire facial tattoos for decorative purposes.
Prominence	The social worth of an individual was not given by the tattoos inscribed on that individual. Any Nubian man and woman of any social status could engage in the tattooing practice. Tattoos may indicate the social status of the individual who bore them, but they did not determine that status based on their honour or their shame.
Wholeness	Religious tattoos would be interpreted as making the individual more whole, in terms of her devotion to the gods, and her honouring them through physical invocation through acquiring the tattoos. Similarly, the decorative tattoos would be acquired for the individual to feel more whole in appearance, as adornment is part of social custom, and behaving within customary convention is honourable.

**Table 18: Social Boundaries and their Nubian Cultural Applications**

<b>Social Boundaries</b>	<b>Cultural Application</b>
Communicativeness	The facial tattoos acquired by Nubian women, and the decorative tattoos found on the arms of Nubian men would have served the purpose of adornment, and was thus not symbolically significant in terms of the communicative function of the mouth and ears, or of the hands. Nubian tattoos did not assign social status or punitive warnings, and are, as such, not bound to the value of communicativeness.
Honour and shame	As social status and public honour and shame were not appropriated because of the tattoos with which an individual is marked, the social boundaries of honour and shame remain unaffected by the tattooing process. Tattooed Nubians have the choice of whether or not display their tattoos within public spaces, and by virtue of that choice, the tattoos may be interpreted as not being shameful, as shameful status-marking tattoos would have compelled the individual to show his or her tattoos in public spaces as a punitive measure.
Humility	Staying within one's born social status would not have been affected by the tattooing process, as the tattooing process was voluntary, and unrelated to assigned status. The value of humility is therefore not applicable to the Nubian tattooing process. It may be mentioned that the fact that only lower class C-Group women have their faces decoratively tattooed would show them to be of a certain status, and their display of these tattoos would show them to be of that status for the rest of their lives, as the tattoos are permanent, and their display of an activity related to a certain social class is therefore permanent.
Nudity	As with Egyptian tattooing culture, the only social boundary that would be affected within the Nubian tattooing practice in terms of the value of nudity is the instance during which the individual is undergoing the tattooing process, as he or she would then be bearing his or her naked skin to somebody with whom he or she does not have an intimate relationship, such as that of marriage. This instance of nudity is not shameful, however, because of the nature of the tattoos being inscribed, as decorative and religious tattoos are not shameful.
Ordering	Nubian social status is not assigned through tattoos, and, as such, the tattooing process is not directly related to the value of ordering. As with the value of humility, the C-Group women with facial tattoos show their status through acquiring the facial tattoos, but it is emphasised that while these tattoos indicate a status, they do not assign it.
Prominence	As Nubian citizens do not have their social status assigned through involuntary tattoos, the tattooing process is removed from social class and status. The prominence of the individual is based on his or her behaviour within social norms, laws, and customs, as opposed to a tattoo which would assign an individual a socially imposed mark of honour, shame, and status.
Social norms, customs, and laws	As Nubian culture and customs are influenced by Egyptian culture, Nubian culture places high value on honouring the gods. Similar to the Egyptians, Nubians would honour the gods through the tattooing process whereby the god is invoked for blessings, protection, and assistance would mean that the tattooing practice is honourable in terms of social custom. The tattoos also beseech the gods for their blessing for the individual's journey through the afterlife, which also falls within the ambit of social custom.
Wholeness	The Nubian tattooing process is a voluntary process through which the Nubian individual chooses to acquire a tattoo for decorative purposes, or for religious purposes, or both. These categories of tattooing are honourable practices based on social custom, and, as such they would add to the honour of the individual, rendering the individual as whole and honourable.

**Table 19: Mental Boundaries and their Nubian Cultural Applications**

<b>Mental Boundaries</b>	<b>Cultural Application</b>
Honour and shame	The process of acquiring a religious tattoo which would invoke a god for a blessing and protection, either in terms of fertility or the afterlife, would be interpreted as an honourable practice and would therefore have positive effect on the esteem of the marked individual, because of the sense of security that the marks would bring. Similarly, marks for adornment would make the individual feel more attractive by social standards, and would thus have a positive effect on his or her esteem as well.
Humility	The tattooed individual's social status is not directly affected by the tattooing process, and, as such, the tattoos would not lead to the individual's esteem being affected in terms of status. This would hold true for the lower class C-Group women as well, as their status would be shown by the tattoos, but they would have acquired the tattoos based on an honourable custom within their status. The tattooing process was honourable, and, as such, the tattooed individual would be behaving in an honourable manner through beseeching the gods during the tattooing process, regardless of social status.
Nudity	The act of exposing naked skin in order to be tattooed would not have had a negative mental effect on the individual, because the tattoo, whether acquired for religious or decorative purposes was a socially accepted and honourable act which falls within the ambit of social behavioural norms.
Prominence	Because an individual's esteem would be affected by their behaviour within social custom in terms of honour and shame, and not by assigned social status, the esteem of a tattooed Nubian citizen would not be tied to his or her social esteem. The tattooed citizen's social esteem is related to his or her honourable actions, one of which would be the acquisition of religious tattoos would allow the individual to have a positive bodily esteem because of the nature of the tattoo marks. This esteem would be unrelated to his or her social status, or the behavioural proclamation thereof.
Social norms, customs, and laws	The Egyptian customs and religion influenced Nubian culture in such a way that honouring the gods through acquiring religious tattoos, and honouring social customs through acquiring tattoos for adornment are customarily positive behaviours. This means that the mental boundaries of social norms, customs, and laws of tattooing process would be positively enforced.
Wholeness	Adornment based on social custom, as well as the process of honouring the gods through invoking their blessing through the tattooing process would allow the tattooed individual to feel whole because of his or her marks.

#### 5.4 Social-Scientific Research Questions

1. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice differ from the other identified cultures' tattooing practices?

While early Nubian tattooing may have been a primarily feminine practice, akin to the Egyptian practice, later Nubian tattooing during the Meroitic Period shows that both men and women engaged in the tattooing practice. The tattoos are acquired voluntarily by men and women of various social classes, for decorative and religious purposes, as influenced by Egyptian culture. Nubian tattoos do not assign honour, shame, or status to the individual who bears them, but the process as a whole may be interpreted as being honourable as it is congruent with social customs of honouring the gods, and of decoration and adornment.

2. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice affect the social bonds within the community?

Even though the tattoos an individual bears may identify him or her as being of a particular social status, the tattoos themselves are not enforced to assign the individual's status. Thus, the tattooing process does not affect the individual's social interaction. Decorative and religious tattoos fall within the ambit of social custom, and are common among men and women from various social classes. The social bond between tattooed individuals is based on the cultural practice of adornment, as well as that of honouring the gods in terms of acquiring tattoos for blessings for fertility, pregnancy, and childbirth, and for their death and journey through the afterlife.

3. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice regulate the spatial practices of the tattooed individual?

The spatial practices of tattooed Nubian citizens are not affected by their voluntary engagement in the tattooing process. The tattoos do not mark the individual as inherently shameful, nor as a fugitive, nor as a criminal, and therefore the tattooed Nubian is free to move within public spaces as their unmarked counterparts do.

### **5.5 Critical Spatial Research Questions (Thirthing-as-Othering)**

1. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on physical boundaries within the culture?

Because the Nubian tattoos are acquired voluntarily, they cannot be forced upon an individual in order to mark him or her as other, and in so doing, restrict their movements within the public Nubian space. Therefore, physical boundaries are not enacted in terms of tattooing. As tattoos on the arms, torso, abdomen, and thigh could be covered by clothing, there would be no spatial behavioural restriction upon them, and even though the facial tattoos cannot be hidden, they are considered to be decorative, which places them within customary practices of adornment.

2. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on social identity and interpersonal interaction within the culture?

The bonds that would form due to the Nubian tattooing process would be bonds based on common religious and social practices. Because tattooed individuals are not othered because of the shame that their marks bear, and because the marks do not serve a purpose of identification of membership within a certain societal sect, the tattoos do not have a function in terms of bonding marked individuals. As marked individuals have the same spatial privileges as unmarked individuals, the social identity of a marked Nubian would not be altered from his or her social identity prior to acquiring the tattoos, save for the honour of engaging in a practice which honours the gods and adheres to social custom.



3. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on the tattooed individual's perception of his or her place within the culture?

Nubians have the choice to voluntarily engage in the tattooing process by acquiring tattoos for adornment and decorative purposes, or for religious purposes where the god Bes may be invoked through his representation to protect a Nubian woman in terms of fertility, pregnancy, and childbirth. Other gods may be beseeched in terms of acquiring tattoos related to death and the afterlife. The tattooing process would thus reflect honourably upon the individual, and would positively affect the individual's esteem. This effect on the individual's esteem would mean that the individual is not mentally or socially othered from the unmarked members of society, because of the fact that the tattooing process is undertaken in order to act honourably in terms of custom and law. The individual's place within his or her family, and society would remain unaltered by the tattooing process, as the process has not been shown to be punitive, or to mark the individual as of lower social status than he or she would have been perceived to be prior to undergoing the tattooing process.

### 5.6 Boundary Relations of the Tattooed Body *in Space*

**Table 20: Boundary Effects of the Tattooed Nubian Body in Space**

Boundary	Category	Effect: Body in Space	Explanation of Effect
Clothing	Physical	Ordering, Distinction	While the value of clothing is intrinsically tied to covering naked flesh, and thus preventing shameful perceptions of the body in space, the application of this value to tattooed bodies which are not deemed shameful is not possible. Tattooed Nubians are not required to use clothing to hide their marks, nor are they mandated to wear less clothing so that the marks could be on display in public spaces. The choice of clothing available to a tattooed Nubian is the same as the choice of an unmarked citizen, and as such, clothing does not affect the spatial inhabitation of the marked body, nor does it distinguish the marked body as shameful.
Communicativeness	Social	Ordering, Distinction	The decorative facial tattoos would have affected the communicativeness of the tattooed body in space, but only in terms of the acknowledgment of the status of the women associated with the practice of facial tattooing. Decorative tattoos on the arms, for example lack this communicative feature. The religious tattoos were placed on the torsos, abdomens, and thighs, and were, as such, not placed where their communicative value would be seen in public spaces. The tattoos, whether religious or decorative distinguish the body as marked, but do not distinguish it spatially in terms of restriction of access based on the message communicated by the tattoo.
Honour and shame	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	Decorative and religious tattoos are acquired voluntarily and based on customary social behaviours and beliefs. Therefore, the marked body would not lose any spatial access, nor would it be perceived to



			<p>be any less honourable than an unmarked body. Therefore, while the tattooed body is distinct in terms of its decoration, there are no boundaries enforced in terms of ordering. The volitional engagement in the tattooing process means that there is no enforced threshold involved in the acquisition of a tattoo which would honour the individual's body.</p>
Humility	Social, Mental	Ordering, Threshold	<p>The value of humility dictates that an individual stays within his or her designated social status. The tattooed Nubian body in space is unaffected by this value, as Nubian tattoos did not mark or assign social status to be shown in public spaces. The tattoos are not related to ordering, as men and women from all social hierarchical levels could acquire them, and the threshold of the tattooing practice is easily breached because of the voluntary nature of the engagement in the practice.</p>
Nudity	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	<p>As with the Egyptian tattooing culture, the only application of the value of nudity to the Nubian tattooing process is the fact that the naked body in space represents the boundary being breached when the tattoos are inscribed upon the body, in a space of the tattooists choosing. The decorative facial tattooing would not be affected by the boundary of nudity, as the face was bared and naked in both public and private spaces, and the decorative tattoos on the arms of Meroitic period men would similarly be unaffected, as the arms would not be required to be covered in public spaces.</p>
Ordering	Physical, Social	Ordering, Threshold	<p>As Nubian tattoos are not enforced, nor assign status, nor shame, the individual's choice to acquire the tattoos does not affect his or her place within his or her family, or Nubian society at large. As such, the tattooed body in space is only limited spatially in terms of its inherited social status.</p>
Prominence	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	<p>As the tattoos of Nubian citizens do not assign status or shame, the tattooed Nubian body in space proclaims its honour, shame, and social status through its spatial inhabitation and behaviour based on inherited status, customs, and profession in the same manner as unmarked citizens do.</p>
Social norms, customs, and laws	Social, Mental	Ordering, Threshold	<p>As with Egyptian tattooing, Nubian tattoos are interpreted as being voluntarily acquired. This means that the tattooed body is not proclaiming shame, or assigned a status by virtue of the tattoos it bears, based on proscriptive laws or punitive measures. The decorative and religious tattoos which are acquired by Nubian do not mark their bodies contrary to social custom or law, and, as such, the tattooed body in space is not restricted because of the marks.</p>
Wholeness	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	<p>The Nubian tattooed body in space is not restricted or othered because of the perception of its wholeness based on its marks because the marks are acquired in honour of the gods and according to social custom. As such the marks contribute to the wholeness of the individual, as opposed to detracting from it as would be the case with a shameful mark, or illness.</p>

## 5.7 Boundary Relations of the Tattooed Body as Space

**Table 21: Boundary Effects of the Tattooed Nubian Body as Space**

Boundary	Category	Effect: Body as Space	Explanation of Effect
Clothing	Physical	Ordering, Distinction	The Nubian tattooed body as space would not have been interpreted as space of shame by virtue of the marks, and therefore, clothing could be used to further adorn the tattooed body. Tattoos which would be concealed under clothing due to placement on the space of the body were not hidden out of shame, but out of adherence to customary dress in public spaces.
Communicativeness	Social	Ordering, Threshold	The tattooed body of space did not communicate a status or a punitive label upon the faces of the tattooed bodies, and as such, the communicativeness of the tattooed body as space is tied to the category of tattoo inscribed upon it. The facial tattoos of C-Group women, along with the tattoos on the arms and hands of Meroitic Period Nubian men indicate nothing more than decoration. The tattoos on the torsos, abdomens, and thighs indicate religious purposes related to fertility, pregnancy, childbirth, and the afterlife.
Honour and shame	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The decorative and religious nature of the tattoos which Nubians acquire would render the body that bears them as honourable, because of the importance of piety and religious practice to Egyptian culture. This honour would apply to the tattooed body of any class, as any class could honour the gods. The tattoos which invoke blessings, assistance, and protection in terms of childbirth honour the process of becoming a mother, as the family unit of was great social importance in terms of honour. The decorative tattoos would also have been perceived as honourable, because of the value that Egyptians placed on appearance and adornment. The unmarked Egyptian men would show their piety and adornment through social customs and behavioural norms, distinguishing them from the marked women.
Humility	Social, Mental	Distinction, Threshold	As is seen in Egyptian tattooing culture, Nubian tattoos did not affect the social status of the individual, and the acquisition of the tattoos is voluntary. Therefore, the tattooed body as space carries the same social status that it had prior to being tattooed. The distinction of the tattooed body as space is not related to its status by virtue of the mark, but rather by virtue of the behaviour of the individual based on social custom and law.
Nudity	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	Because the tattooing process is voluntary, the bearing of skin in order to acquire a tattoo would be voluntary as well. The display of the tattoos would also be voluntary in terms of the tattoos on the torsos, abdomens, and thighs of Nubian women. As the tattooing process is interpreted as being honourable in terms of social customs, the nudity of the tattooed body as space is not a shameful exposure.
Ordering	Physical, Social	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The Nubian body as space is not marked in order to assign social status by an imposed tattoo. The tattooed body as space is thus ordered in terms of inherited status and honourable actions, not by the tattoos that it bears voluntarily.
Prominence	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Threshold	The tattooed Nubian body would be able to have the same social interaction and spatial access as the unmarked Nubian body, in terms of social customs, values, and laws, in order to act within its inherited social status. The tattoos would be acquired as part of

			these actions which honour the gods, and adorn the individual, based on custom.
Social norms, customs, and laws	Social, Mental	Distinction, Threshold	The tattooed body of a Nubian citizen interpreted as a space fulfils the social mandates of religious obedience and honouring the gods. The religious tattoos invoke favour from the gods, and, as such, are honourable based on the social customs of the Nubian people, as they have been influenced by the Egyptians. The decorative tattoos also fall within the ambit of social custom, and therefore also contribute to the tattooed body being an honourable space.
Wholeness	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The Nubian body as space is tattooed in order to gain protection and assistance from the gods, as well as for decoration. This renders the body as space more whole because of the tattoos which invoke the gods' blessings. The tattooed body would thus be religiously honourable, as it honours the gods through its invocation. While the tattooed body is distinguished from unmarked bodies, it has a positive effect on the individual's esteem, because of the protective and assistive nature of the tattoos.

## 5.8 Iconographic Research Questions

**Figure 16: Tattooed Forearm of a Male Nubian Mummy**



Sourced from: Levi *et al.* (1979:853).

### 5.8.1 Barthian Visual Semiotics of the Image

1. What/who is depicted? (first layer, denotation)

Tattooed forearm of a mummified Nubian man, said to date from *circa* AD 250-450.

2. What values/ideas are expressed through what is being represented? (second layer, connotation)

The values expressed through the decorative tattoos on the arms are related to the cultural customs of adornment, and wholeness, through which the individual would feel more whole because of the marks that he bears. These marks would thus be honourable, and their display would be honourable as well.

3. Which boundary (physical, social, mental) is represented in the depiction?

The decorative tattoo design depicted above is evidence of a physical boundary, as the bodily boundary of the skin would be physically breached in order to inscribe the tattoo. Because the tattoo does not affect the body's social status, there is no social boundary related to the image. The mental boundary is represented in terms of honour, as the decorative tattoo

inscribed as adornment is considered to be part of customary Nubian behaviour, as influenced by the behaviour of tattooed Egyptians.

4. Which boundary effect (ordering, distinction, threshold) is represented in the depiction?

As tattoos did not indicate an individual's status, and their acquisition is voluntary and falls within social custom, the above tattoo does not represent the boundary effect of ordering. The tattooed mummy represents distinction, as the marked arms of the individual would set him apart from his unmarked Nubian peers. This tattoo does not represent the boundary effect of threshold, as any Meroitic Nubian male could acquire the decorative tattoos if he were to choose to do so.

### 5.8.2 Layers of Pictorial Meaning

1. What is the representational meaning of the image? (primary or natural subject matter; recognition of what is being represented on the basis of the interpreter's practical experience, taking into account stylistic conventions and the technical transformations involved in the representation)

The image shows the tattooed forearm of a male Nubian mummy, dating to the Meroitic Period.

2. What is the iconographical symbolism of the image? (object-signs denote a particular person, place, or thing and also the ideas and concepts attached to that person, place, or thing; secondary or conventional subject matter)

The tattoo design shows rows of geometric lines running down the length of the mummy's forearm.

3. What is the iconological symbolism of the image? (ideological meaning; underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a notion, period, class, religious, or philosophical persuasion)

The decorative nature of the tattoos is representative of the culture of adornment which the Nubians adopted from the Egyptians. This practice is thus honourable, as it is part of social custom. The placement of the tattoos may be related to communicativeness and agency in terms of the arms and the hands, showing an individual's strength. Because the tattoos are voluntarily acquired, and do not assign social status, this individual would not need to hide his tattoos under clothing if he were to enter public spaces, nor would he be forced to display

them. This individual's display of the tattoos on his arms would have been his choice based on the Nubian customs of adornment and clothing.

**Figure 17: Representation of a Tattooed Figurine Depicting a Nubian Dancing Girl**



Sourced from: Schuster and Myers (1948:72).

### 5.8.3 Barthian Visual Semiotics of the Image

1. What/who is depicted? (first layer, denotation)

The image above is a representation of the tattoos depicted on a tomb figurine of a Nubian Dancing Girl dating to the Nubian C-Group, which is contemporaneous with the Egyptian Middle Kingdom.

2. What values/ideas are expressed through what is being represented? (second layer, connotation)

The tattooed tomb figurine represents religious values, as it shows the application of the tattooing process to the afterlife. The tattoos on the figure represent symbols which would guide the individual through the journey through the afterlife.

3. Which boundary (physical, social, mental) is represented in the depiction?

The tattoos depicted above show that the tattooing process breaches a physical boundary, as the bodily boundary of the skin would be physically breached in order to inscribe the tattoo. While the represented tattoos themselves do not affect a body's social status, and there is no social boundary represented in terms of the tattoos themselves, the social boundary which is represented however is one of status, as the tattooed tomb figurine would only be buried with a wealthy individual of high social status. The mental boundary is represented in terms of honour, as the religious tattoo inscribed on the figurine, as well as the body which may be buried with it honour the gods in the individual's journey through death and the afterlife.

4. Which boundary effect (ordering, distinction, threshold) is represented in the depiction?

As the tattooed tomb figurines are customary burial artefacts, they do not represent the boundary effect of ordering. The tattooed tomb figurine represents distinction, as these figurines were not available to individuals from all social classes and professions, distinguishes those individuals who would be buried with them. This figurine also represents the boundary effect of threshold, because access to these figurines would have been limited, as opposed to access of tattoos in general, which would have been common to all Nubian citizens.

#### **5.8.4 Layers of Pictorial Meaning**

1. What is the representational meaning of the image? (primary or natural subject matter; recognition of what is being represented on the basis of the interpreter's practical experience, taking into account stylistic conventions and the technical transformations involved in the representation)

The representational meaning of the image is a tattooed figurine which would have been placed in a tomb, to assist the individual with his or her journey through the afterlife, based on Egyptian custom and religious beliefs.

2. What is the iconographical symbolism of the image? (object-signs denote a particular person, place, or thing and also the ideas and concepts attached to that person, place, or thing; secondary or conventional subject matter)

The tattoos portrayed on the figurine are interpreted to be related to an Egyptian individual's journey through the afterlife after his or her death. These figurines would be placed in the tomb with the individual's mummy, and it is posited that the tattoos of the individual, alongside the tattoos represented on the figurine would assist the individual through his or her journey through the afterlife.



3. What is the iconological symbolism of the image? (ideological meaning; underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a notion, period, class, religious, or philosophical persuasion)

Nubian tattooing practices follow the Egyptian practice in terms of the religious application of the process. The tattooed tomb figurine shows the application of the religious tattooing process to death and the afterlife, as the blessing and protection of the gods during the individual's life is extended to the individual's death and afterlife. This process is honourable, as Nubians would place the same emphasis on an honourable death and afterlife as the Egyptians do, in terms of living with honour, so that they would be found to be worthy of a blessed afterlife after their judgement

### 5.9 Iconographic Interpretation of Tattoos

1. What is the category of tattoo (religious, punitive, military, decorative)?

Nubian tattoos are religious and decorative.

2. Which part of the body is tattooed?

Tattooing was most commonly displayed facially, around the eyes and mouth of the tattooed individual; as well as on the arms, and hands of; and on the torso, abdomen, and thighs..

3. What is depicted in the tattoo?

Nubian tattoos follow the designs and patterns of Egyptian tattooing culture, and are presented as geometric designs constructed from dot and dash patterns, and images of the god Bes. The dot and dash patterns form elliptical patterns, as well as rows.

4. How does this tattoo affect the body in space?

The tattooed body in space is unaffected in terms of spatial access, as the tattoos do not proclaim the individual as shameful, nor as a criminal, nor a fugitive. Nubian tattoos are voluntarily acquired, and while they may indicate the status of an individual, they do not proclaim an individual's status or identity. Therefore the tattooed body in space has the same spatial interactions as unmarked bodies, based on social custom and inherited social status.

5. How does this tattoo affect the body as space?

The body as space is interpreted as being whole by virtue of its marks. The voluntary tattooing process, undertaken for adornment and for religious purposes would bestow honour on the

canvas of the body embarking on the tattooing process. The tattooed body as space is a space which adheres to social customs and values, and is, as such, an honourable space.

## 6. Application of the Analytical Model to Israelite Culture

### 6.1 Contextualisation of Cultural Tattooing Practices

The assumption that the ancient Israelites practiced tattooing is made based upon the prohibition thereof in the book of Leviticus 19:28 which contains the following statement:

וְשָׂרֵט לֹנְפֶשׁ, לֹא תִתְּנוּ בְּבִשְׂרֵיכֶם,  
וְכִתְּבֹת קִצְקַע, לֹא תִתְּנוּ  
בְּכֶם: אֲנִי, יְהוָה.

“Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor imprint any marks upon you: I am the LORD”

The prohibition of imprinting marks may be interpreted as the prohibition against tattooing, as a tattoo is an imprinted mark on the body. The marks that would be imprinted upon the body would be marks that had not been placed there by Yahweh, and, as such, would render the body as impure. Pilch and Malina (1998:151) explain that the value of purity “marks a person who knows how to be clean”, inasmuch as an Israelite would know not to mark himself or herself in such a manner as to mark himself or herself as impure, and therefore unclean. The value of purity is threatened both internally and externally, as an internally generated disease or illness would also render a body impure, while the external threat could be interpreted as an individual choosing to mark his or her body in a manner which is forbidden.

The value of purity is related to the “idea of things being in place according to the value system” (Pilch & Malina 1998:122). As such, a tattoo which has been scripturally prohibited would be impure, and that impurity would extend to the exposure of naked skin in order to acquire the tattoo. For the Israelites, “nudity was always out of place, in the presence of God” (Pilch & Malina 1998:122). The breach of the bodily boundary of the skin would affect the physical body in terms of status, as well as its role in society. The uncovering of the skin in order to acquire a tattoo would mean that there are no physical boundaries to the body, and this would not be tolerated in a society in which clothing served as a signifier of status and an individual’s place in society. Clothing thus provides clarity, and through that clarity, and the bodily boundary that it enforces, purity (Pilch & Malina 1998:124).

There is an imperative for the Israelite individual to maintain physical wholeness, which is a value which is expressed in terms of “all or nothing” which means that a marked human body would lack wholeness due to the prohibition of the mark, and, as such, that the marked body would be “unqualified for the presence of God” (Pilch & Malina 1993:182). The notion of lacking wholeness is interpreted in terms of a body which bears a “blemish, is maimed, or is defective” inasmuch as it no longer satisfies the condition of physical perfection which the Israelites value in terms of the integrity of the human body.

The importance of the cleanness and purity of the human body can be traced throughout the Early Period’s Covenant Code, to the Later Period in the Levitical Code. William Harper (1901:373) states that the Levitical Code of bodily cleanness comprises “traces of totemism, forbidden food, and non-Israelites” who are deemed as unclean. Harper explains that the ancestor worship that is connected with totemism influences the practices of ingesting “unclean” food which has been sacrificed in totem rituals. Other old customs which are associated with totemism include “cutting the flesh and tattooing”, and these customs are prohibited because they render the body impure and unclean. Regardless of whether the source of the impurity is internal, such as leprosy, or external, such as eating unclean food or acquiring a tattoo, “the person or object, when brought into contact with an unclean thing, itself became unclean” (Harper 1901:375). It is important to note that these old customs, rituals, and totemism to which Harper refers are regarded as foreign to the Israelites, and, as such, the practice of tattooing itself would be foreign. “The spirit of exclusivism is so strong that all foreigners are regarded as unclean” (Harper 1901:376).

One of the foreign cultures to which the injunction refers is that of the Arabs, wherein cutting and marking the flesh in honour of the dead was common practice, as well as the acquisition of a tattoo in order for the individual to mark himself or herself as “a permanent worshiper of [a certain] deity” (Paton 1910:82). The rituals involving marking the body in honour of the dead had been traced to the prophets of the god Ba’al, who would cut themselves “in honour of their god” (Paton 1910:82). These cutting and marking rituals were enacted in order to form blood-covenants with the deity, as well as to make a sacrifice of blood. These rituals would encompass the exposure of skin, in order to cut and to mark the flesh of the individual, which would be an impure and an unclean act. The breach of the bodily boundary of the skin would also be unclean and impure, and would detract from the individual’s wholeness.

It is important to note, however, that Sonia Sahoo (2012:39) posits that an alteration to the prohibition against the marking of one’s body is revealed in the “story of Cain who was marked in punishment for slaying his brother Abel”. There are records of “anatomical dissections [which] were routinely performed at the University of Alexandria in the third century BCE”

which show that Israelites and early Christians bore marks which are considered to be punitive. It has also been recorded that Constantine I enacted a decree which ruled that criminals should not be marked on their faces, but rather on their arms or on their calves, in order to model the punitive application of the tattooing process “on the divine prototype” (Sahoo 2012:40). The punitive tattooing process had then been banned during the proceedings of the Second Nicaean Council in 787 AD.

There is also evidence of tattooing in the Elephantine Papyri which originated among “a colony of Jews” who belonged to a “military colony at Elephantine, which was closely connected with Syene, the seat of the Persian organisation” (Cook 1915:348). These papyri contain detailed records of the colony’s “political, military, social, and religious life” (Cook 1915:348). These records of the colony’s social life include account of the family of the two grandsons of Mahseiah, who was married to Mibtahyah (Cook 1915:358). Upon the death of the Jewess, her grandsons set about dividing her property which included her slaves. These slaves are recorded to have been marked with tattoos which mark them as the property of Mibtahyah (Cook 1915:359). These tattoos were placed upon the arm, with another tattoo, a “yid” which is said to be a practice among the colony which symbolises both the ownership of the slave, as well as marking “adherence to a deity, sect, or group” (Cook 1915:360).

The Israelite tattooing practice is therefore considered to be a shameful practice, because it renders the body unclean, impure, and not whole. Its functions as a punitive and preventative measure in terms of criminals and slaves thus strips them of their place in society outside of the role which the marks afford them.

## **6.2 General Boundary Relations and Associated Research Questions**

### **Mental Boundaries (Core beliefs)**

**Ordering:** To what extent are the main ideas and concepts decisive for what members do?

The core beliefs of the Israelites centre upon the social values of honour, purity, cleanness, and wholeness. All of these values are contravened by the tattooing process. The Israelites would not mark themselves due to the Leviticus prohibition against marking themselves.

Due to the shameful nature of the practice, the Israelites enforced it for slaves, marking them as property which strips them of their previous social identity. Similarly, criminals would be marked punitively, stripping them of social status and rendering them irrevocably un-whole and unclean.

**Distinction:** To what extent are the core ideas and concepts distinctly different from those of other groups?

Unmarked Israelites would other any marked individual, because of their social norms, customs, and laws in terms of the values of wholeness, purity, and cleanness. The marked individuals would thus lose their social status upon acquiring the marks, which would either identify them as property of certain Jews, or as criminals within the community who are to be othered and shamed for their crimes, as well as for the breach of their bodily boundaries in the acquisition of the tattoos.

The marks of property are preventative inasmuch as they mark the individual as a slave which belongs to a master, so that that individual cannot merely choose to abscond and desert his or her duties. The marks of the criminals are punitive, and punish the individual through the perpetual shame born by the mark which indicates the criminal act of which the individual has been convicted. The marked individuals are therefore irredeemably othered from their communities because their bodies are no longer whole, and are thus no longer of the prescribed quality and perfection to be present before their god.

**Threshold:** To what extent can outsiders assimilate core ideas and concepts?

As the marked individuals are considered to be unclean, impure, and un-whole by virtue of their marks, they are othered by the unmarked Israelites. The slaves who are marked to belong to a certain Israelite would be exposed to that individual's religion and culture, and would know that the mark essentially renders the slave as less than human, and as an object of shame. Similarly, criminals are marked shamefully, and become only socially identifiable in terms of their marks. Because of the prohibition on tattooing, and the Israelite emphasis on purity, cleanness, and wholes, the threshold of assimilation into the group of tattooed others is high, and as this practice is punitive and preventative, the threshold is crossed only in circumstances which warrant the social violation of the scriptural prohibition.

**Social Boundaries** (Social identity)

**Ordering:** To what extent do members feel that they are socially bonded together by, for example, loyalty?

The marked members of Israelite society are othered to the extent that they are no longer viewed as functional members of society. They are either seen as property, or shameful criminals who are nothing more than the actions that their marks portray them as having committed. The othering bonds these individuals only because their physical boundaries have

been breached in violation of the scriptural prohibition against tattooing. This othering does not form a social bond among the marked outcasts, as they are not united in their othering. The slaves' loyalty lie with their respective masters, and the criminals are not expected to show loyalty based on social customs.

**Distinction:** To what extent is one group socially distinct from other groups?

The marked Israelites are distinct from the unmarked Israelites by virtue of the breach of bodily boundaries which allow for the tattooing process to take place. The physical distinction of appearance also represents a social distinction between the marked and the unmarked individuals, as the marked individuals are shameful by virtue of bearing tattoos, and are deemed to be unclean, un-whole, and impure. The unmarked individuals comply with the social requirement of physical wholeness and seeming perfection in terms of not marring themselves in terms of the injunction in Leviticus.

**Threshold:** To what extent is it possible for outsiders to be considered full members of the group?

Once an individual has been marked, that individual becomes unclean, un-whole, impure, and shameful by virtue of the mark that he or she bears. The permanent nature of the tattooing process means that this unclean and shameful status is permanent and irredeemable. The marked individual cannot return to his or her previous social status, nor interact socially as he or she would have interacted prior to him or her being marked. The marked group is therefore othered from unmarked society. Each group, the marked and the unmarked, is mutually exclusive. In order to be part of the marked group of others, the individual would be permanently ostracised from the unmarked society.

**Physical Boundaries** (Formal rules and physical structures)

**Ordering:** To what extent do formal rules or physical structure regulate the work of members?

The social values and customs of the Israelites, especially those of kinship, honour, purity, cleanness, and wholeness form the foundation of Israelite culture, and the interaction Israelites would have with one another. Once these values have been contravened in order to inscribe a tattoo upon an individual, that individual becomes permanently shameful, un-whole, impure, unclean, and physically less than the unmarked members of Israelite society. This status of the unclean other renders the marked individual unable to function within the unmarked society, because if an unmarked individual would interact normally and equally with an unclean, marked individual, the unmarked individual would become unclean by association.

**Distinction:** To what extent does a group's formal structure set it apart from other groups?

The distinction of the marked individuals is both physical and social – physically the skin of the tattooed individual is breached in order to be inscribed with the ink which would mark this individual as either a slave or a criminal. This mark renders the skin physically different from that of an unmarked individual. This mark, however, renders the tattooed body unclean, unwhole, impure, and ultimately shameful, which means that the marked individual is physically and socially othered from unmarked Israelites.

**Threshold:** To what extent do formal structures hinder the recruitment of outsiders?

Due to the shameful nature of the tattoo process, the status that a tattoo assigns to an individual is involuntarily imposed upon them. This means that the marked others are assigned to a group of social outcasts with whom unmarked Israelites cannot interact on an equal basis because of the unclean association which could affect the cleanness of the unmarked individual. Israelite social custom and law are the formal structures upon which the unmarked individual base the tattooing process itself, as well as the necessary othering of the marked individual to which the process leads. Unmarked individuals are thus only marked and othered due to their status as slaves, or if they engage in criminal activity which is punished by the tattooing process.



### 6.3 Social-Scientific Boundaries

**Table 22: Physical Boundaries and their Israelite Cultural Applications**

Physical Boundaries	Cultural Application
Clothing	The value of clothing is directly related to purity and cleanness, because clothing hides nakedness, which is a shameful act except in the most private of spaces. Therefore the act of removing clothing in order to tattoo naked skin is a shameful act. It is important to note, however, that the tattoos' placement on either the arms or the legs of the slaves and criminals, respectively, means that they may still be covered with clothing after the tattooing process has been completed.
Honour and shame	Honour and shame are tied to the physical wholeness of an individual's body. As such, a body which is externally marked in contravention to the value of wholeness, as well as the scriptural prohibition against the process, is a space of shame. Honourable bodies are perfectly formed without blemishes, marks, or disease, and are fit for the presence of God.
Nudity	Bearing the naked skin is a shameful act, therefore bearing skin to acquire a tattoo, regardless of the volition of the act, is a shameful process. The knowledge that the skin would have been bared in order for the tattoo to be inscribed means that an unmarked individual would view the marked individual as shameful, because of the process, as well as un-whole, unclean, and impure because of the mark itself.
Ordering	A marked individual's place in society is permanently altered due to the tattooing process because the marked body becomes a place of shame. A marked slave is not a functioning member of society, but rather the property of his or her owner; and a criminal is stripped of whatever status he or she may have had prior to being marked punitively. The lower ordering of a marked individual is thus physically enforced due to the tattooing process.
Prominence	The fact that the physically marked body is a space of shame means that unmarked individuals would avoid interpersonal contact with the marked individual due to a belief that he or she could become unclean by that association. This means that the marked individual's social worth is stripped from him or her, due to his or her physical un-wholeness which is caused by the tattooing process.
Wholeness	The breach of the physical boundary of the skin in order to inscribe a tattoo renders that body marked, and essentially blemished. This means that the marked body is no longer whole. This un-whole body is thus othered from the unmarked society because it is no longer clean, or pure, and it has become a space of shame.

**Table 23: Social Boundaries and their Israelite Cultural Applications**

<b>Social Boundaries</b>	<b>Cultural Application</b>
Communicativeness	While the communicative value of the tattoos is not found in their placement, in terms of being inscribed on either the face or the hands of an individual; the marks communicate that the individual is a slave and property of an Israelite, or as a criminal. These designations further communicate that the individuals who have been marked are unclean, un-whole, impure, and shameful. This bodily shame is what necessitates the othering of the marked individuals, as the association of an unmarked individual with a marked one could cause the unmarked individual to become unclean in the process.
Honour and shame	The space of shame which the marked body represents is necessarily othered from the unmarked and honourable society due to scriptural prohibitions, as well as cultural values and norms. The shame of the marked body is irredeemable, as the tattoos are permanent. This means that the body is left perpetually un-whole, and, as such, perpetually shameful.
Humility	Once an individual has been marked, and his or her status and honour have been stripped, it is not possible for that individual to behave in such a manner as to usurp his or her newly assigned status, because of the permanence of the tattoos which assign the individuals' stripped status as shameful, unclean, and un-whole bodies. The avoidance and othering of these marked individuals by the unmarked Israelites also enforces their humility, because it restricts spatial access and interpersonal interaction.
Nudity	The act of bearing one's skin outside of the private spaces of inhabitation is considered to be a shameful, unclean, and impure act. Thus, the bearing of skin to acquire a tattoo is a shameful act, and the display of the tattoo would be as shameful, as it displays not only naked skin, but marked and blemished skin. This leads to the othering of the marked bodies, due to the risk of association with an unclean body.
Ordering	The othering of the unclean, marked bodies enforce their ordering, as their status as members of the community is nullified, in the case of criminals, and had never existed in the case of slaves. The marks which identify the individuals as criminals and slaves, and thus physical property of another, unmarked member of society ensure that the individuals cannot engage in interpersonal interaction, nor have the spatial access which an unmarked individual would have. This means that the marked individuals are isolated from society, and the permanence of the marks means that these individuals are permanently isolated and stripped of their previous status.
Prominence	Whatever social worth an individual may have had prior to being sold into slavery, or being convicted of a crime would be completely disregarded due to the status assigned to that individual by virtue of the tattoo that would mark that individual as the property of another, or as a criminal. This stripping of status is compounded by the social othering that occurs due to the nature of the tattooing process which is inherently shameful, unclean, un-whole, and impure. The unmarked individuals other the marked individuals because they would risk becoming unclean by association with unclean bodies.
Social norms, customs, and laws	The scriptural prohibition against tattooing, coupled with the Israelite values of wholeness, cleanness, and purity mean that the othering of tattooed individuals is necessary in terms of social customs and religious laws. The othering of the marked individuals maintain the honour of the unmarked individuals while it reinforces the shame of the marked individuals.
Wholeness	The blemished and marked body which is interpreted as being no longer fit to be in the presence of God is considered to be un-whole due to the addition of tattoos. This marking is deemed to be an imperfection and necessarily othered by unmarked individuals for fear of becoming unclean by association. The un-wholeness which the tattoos cause for the bodies which bear them is permanent because the tattoos cannot be removed or healed.

**Table 24: Mental Boundaries and their Israelite Cultural Applications**

Mental Boundaries	Cultural Application
Honour and shame	The shame which the tattoos would cause the individuals who have been marked as slaves and criminals is physical, social, as well as mental. Physically, their bodies are no longer whole, and their bodies are interpreted as spaces of shame. Socially, these individuals are cut off from society, due to the fear of the unmarked individuals of becoming unclean by association. The mental shaming of these individuals has a negative effect on their esteem because the shame not only strips them of social status, but also strips them of their humanity due to the interpretation of their bodies being un-whole, and unclean.
Humility	Due to the othering imposed upon the tattooed slaves and criminals, they do not have the opportunity to behave in a manner which would raise their perceived status. As such, they are socially forced to choose to accept the othering or to rebel against it, at the cost of the potential for further punitive action taken against them. As such, the marked individual faces the options of othering those who have othered him or her, or to strip themselves of their past status and accept to behave in a manner which conforms to their shameful state.
Nudity	Due to the fact that the Israelite tattooing process is not voluntary, the nudity involved in the process would be imposed upon the individual. This means that the individual would be made to feel shame at the nudity that is enforced, and this would negatively affect the individual's esteem.
Prominence	The unmarked Israelites strip the marked slaves and criminals of their social status, as well as their place in Israelite society. By othering these individuals, the unmarked Israelites isolate the marked slaves and criminals from their communities, and essentially strips them of the opportunity of interpersonal interaction and spatial access. This restriction would affect the esteem of the marked individual inasmuch as providing the choice of accepting his or her shame and isolation, or to rebel against it.
Social norms, customs, and laws	The tattooed individuals would understand the significance of the tattooing process as being a punitive and preventative measure based on cultural values, norms, and scriptural laws. As such, the marked individuals would be aware that by contravening the Leviticus prohibition, they would be permanently othered from their society and community. This knowledge would have a negative effect on the individual and social esteem of the tattooed individuals. In order for them to behave within social norms and customs after having been marked, they would need to behave within their othered status, as obedient slaves, and repentant criminals. This behaviour, however, would not provide redemption, as the tattoos permanently mark them as other, unclean, un-whole, shameful, and impure.
Wholeness	The permanent marking of the body renders that body permanently un-whole, unclean, and impure. This lack of wholeness turns the marked body into a space of shame. This physical shame would affect the individual's esteem, due to the emphasis the Israelites place on physical perfection and wholeness. This means that the marked individual no longer complies with social standards of physical perfection, and as such, is isolated from a society in which kinship is paramount. This isolation strips the individual of interpersonal interaction, and would render him or her with a deficient social esteem, as well as individual esteem. This deficient esteem is irredeemable because the un-wholeness is permanent due to the permanence of the tattoo with which he or she has been inscribed.

#### 6.4 Social-Scientific Research Questions

1. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice differ from the other identified cultures' tattooing practices?

Israelite tattooing is practiced punitively in the case of criminals, and preventatively in the case of slaves, in order to prevent escape. The nature of the tattoos is thus shameful, as they strip the individual of his or her prior social status, and mark them other, unclean, un-whole, and impure. These tattoos are inscribed without the consent or volition of the individual undergoing

the process. As slaves have been recorded as being both male and female, the tattooing process is not restricted to being performed only on one sex.

2. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice affect the social bonds within the community?

The unmarked individuals are bonded in terms of their othering and avoidance of the marked individuals, because the unmarked Israelites had a communal, value-based fear of becoming unclean themselves by associating with unclean bodies. The tattooed individuals are not bonded by the process, because the tattooed slaves are spatially restricted to the homes of the individuals whom they serve, and as such do not have access to public spaces where they would have the opportunity to experience interpersonal interaction with other marked individuals. Similarly, the marked criminals are restricted in terms of spatial access, but the criminals are not restricted from interacting with each other while being isolated from the general community.

3. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice regulate the spatial practices of the tattooed individual?

Due to the othering of the tattooed individuals by the unmarked Israelites, the marked individuals do not have the opportunity to engage in social interaction in public spaces. This means that the marked individuals have restricted spatial access, both in terms of public and private spaces.

### **6.5 Critical Spatial Research Questions (Thirling-as-Othering)**

1. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on physical boundaries within the culture?

The tattooing process marks the individual as unclean and as un-whole, which necessitates the imposition of physical boundaries of othering for the unmarked individuals in order to prevent them from becoming unclean by association with the marked individuals. This means that there are spatial restrictions placed upon marked individuals in terms of the communal public spaces, and the unmarked individuals would avoid physical and interpersonal contact with the tattooed slaves and criminals.

2. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on social identity and interpersonal interaction within the culture?

The social identity of the unmarked individuals is unaffected by the tattooing process, with the exception of being united in the othering and avoidance of the marked individuals. The marked

individuals, although they face the same choice of acceptance of their un-whole status or rebelling against it, are not necessarily bonded by the tattooing process. While the marked individuals are isolated from the unmarked community, they are also isolated from each other to an extent, as the tattooed slaves are not likely to have access to slaves from other masters, and criminals are not othered to the extent that they are forced to form their own communities away from the communal social spaces which the Israelite community inhabits.

3. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on the tattooed individual's perception of his or her place within the culture?

The tattooed individuals are completely ostracised from the unmarked community. The tattooed individuals are left irredeemably othered from Israelite culture because the marks render them unclean, and un-whole, and the unmarked community avoids interaction with the unclean individuals for fear of becoming unclean by association. This leaves the marked individuals isolated, and left with only the identity of slave or criminal which has been inscribed upon them. The perception of the marked individuals is what others them, and they are then faced with the choice of accepting their newly stripped status and identity as an unclean, un-whole, almost non-human body, or to rebel against it, and incur further physical punishment which would lead to further othering and isolation.

## 6.6 Boundary Relations of the Tattooed Body *in Space*

**Table 25: Boundary Effects of the Tattooed Israelite Body in Space**

Boundary	Category	Effect: Body in Space	Explanation of Effect
Clothing	Physical	Ordering, Distinction	While clothing indicates social status, and prevents the shameful display of nudity, clothing is removed in order to tattoo a body. The placement of the tattoos of slaves and criminals, on the arms and legs, would mean that the marks could be covered by clothing in public spaces, but that does not negate the removal of clothing in order to tattoo the body. This removal of clothing to facilitate the tattooing process would take place outside of the individual's private space, and is, therefore, shameful.
Communicativeness	Social	Ordering, Distinction	The tattoos of the slaves and criminals of ancient Israel communicate their uncleanness, un-wholeness, impurity, and shame to all unmarked Israelites. This strips them of their past social status, and limits their spatial access due to the judgement, avoidance, and othering imposed on them by unmarked Israelites who are wary of becoming unclean by associating and interacting with the marked individuals.
Honour and shame	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	Because the unclean, marked body is avoided and othered for fear of becoming unclean by association, it is shamed because of its marking by being restricted in terms of spatial access and social interaction. The public nature of both the shaming of the body by imposing the tattooing process, as well as the othering are physically and socially enacted through avoidance, restriction, and isolation of the marked body.
Humility	Social, Mental	Ordering, Threshold	Due to the avoidance and othering of the tattooed bodies, marked individuals do not have the opportunity to engage in interpersonal interactions in such a way as to behave as though they had more worth than that which the tattoos assign to them. The othering enforces ordering of the marked bodies, as it strips them of status and labels them as unclean, while the isolation and avoidance of these bodies enforces a high threshold, as these bodies are not capable of re-entering mainstream society.
Nudity	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The tattooing process necessitates nudity in a space outside of the individual's private space, and, as such, is inherently shameful, as Israelite culture deems nudity to be unclean and shameful. This distinguishes the marked body in space from unmarked bodies, because the unmarked bodies are not exposed in this manner against their volition. The fact that the tattooing practice is punitive and preventative means that the nudity of the marked body in space orders the individuals as slaves and criminals who are stripped of status, and restricted in terms of spatial access due to this stripped status, as well as the marks and their associated shame.
Ordering	Physical, Social	Ordering, Threshold	The physical shunning and othering of the tattooed individuals enforce the ordering of their newly stripped status. The fact that unmarked individuals would avoid interpersonal interaction with the tattooed individuals means that the tattooed individuals would be spatially restricted in terms of access to public spaces due to their shame and uncleanness.

Prominence	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	Due to the stripping of the marked individual's status, and the enforcement of the social othering of the marked body means that the status of shame, uncleanness, and un-wholeness would be perceived and reinforced whenever the marked body enters a public space. This means that the social enforcement of the stripped status would negatively affect the marked individual in terms of social esteem, as well as personal esteem.
Social norms, customs, and laws	Social, Mental	Ordering, Threshold	The social othering and isolation of the marked body in space is necessary based on the communal social belief that exposure to an unclean individual could lead to the unmarked individual becoming unclean by association. The prohibition against the tattooing of Israelites further supports the need to other the marked individuals, both in terms of the restriction of their spatial access to public spaces, as well as restricting their interaction with unmarked Israelites.
Wholeness	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	Due to the enforcement of the unclean, impure, un-whole, and shameful nature of the marked body, its lack of wholeness is irredeemable, both based on the permanent nature of the tattooing process, as well as the permanence of the othering, for fear of the unmarked becoming unclean and un-whole by virtue of association with the marked, un-whole body in public spaces. The marked body is therefore restricted in terms of its social and spatial access because of its shameful distinction of not being whole and fit for the presence of God.



## 6.7 Boundary Relations of the Tattooed Body as Space

**Table 26: Boundary Effects of the Tattooed Israelite Body as Space**

Boundary	Category	Effect: Body as Space	Explanation of Effect
Clothing	Physical	Ordering, Distinction	The tattooed body is a space of shame by virtue of the uncleanness and un-wholeness which the tattoo causes. Even though the tattoos on the arms and legs of slaves and criminals could be concealed with clothing, the clothing would not negate the shame of the bodily space. Clothing cannot conceal the shame which the marks impose, nor could clothing redeem the status of the marked body.
Communicativeness	Social	Ordering, Threshold	Due to the social values of physical wholeness and cleanness, the marked body becomes a space of shame which communicates its un-wholeness and uncleanness to all those who come across it. This means that the shamed body is othered, and that the othering is permanent, due to the nature of the tattoos which are permanent.
Honour and shame	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The isolation and othering of the marked body enforce its physical shame on a social and mental level. The isolation of the marked body reinforces its perception as a space of shame, and this leads to the marked individual to choose to accept his or her shame, or to choose to rebel against the othering and shame which has been imposed upon it.
Humility	Social, Mental	Distinction, Threshold	The marked body as space is assigned the permanent status of shame, and uncleanness, and un-wholeness. This is a permanent distinction from unmarked bodies, and, as such, the shame of the marked body is either to be accepted or to be rebelled against at the risk of further physical punishment and othering. This affects the marked individual's esteem, as the individual would have to see himself or herself as a space of shame, in order to comply with societal norms within which he or she has to function.
Nudity	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The enforced exposure of the body which is about to be tattooed is a process which publically shames the individual, and the tattoo which is inscribed onto the bodily space is a permanent reminder of this process of exposure and shame. This shame strips the body of its previous status, and marks it as a space of shame, while distinguishing it from the clothed and unmarked individuals of Israelite society.
Ordering	Physical, Social	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	As the social status of the marked body is stripped and replaced with an enforced status of shame, uncleanness, and un-wholeness, the tattooed individual would be expected to behave in such a manner which shows acceptance of this shame and uncleanness. This enforced status as a space of shame which would affect the marked body as space distinguishes it from unmarked individuals because the unmarked individuals are not inherently shameful in terms of their bodies, and as such, are not expected to behave within their assigned and enforced status.
Prominence	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Threshold	Being assigned the status of an inherently shameful space in terms of having a marked body would affect the individual in terms of his or her personal esteem, as he or she could either choose to accept his or her body as a space of shame, or to rebel against the perceived shame in order to break out of the status which he or she has been assigned.

Social norms, customs, and laws	Social, Mental	Distinction, Threshold	The marked body is treated as a space of shame because it is culturally regarded as unclean, impure, and un-whole. The marked body is a space of shame which is necessarily othered in order for the unmarked Israelites to avoid becoming unclean due to contact with the marked bodies.
Wholeness	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The tattooing process is designed to mark an individual as a shameful entity which is unclean and lacks wholeness by virtue of the alteration of the body which had not been enacted by God. The practice is prohibited in the book of Leviticus, and is thus an extreme form of physical and social othering which leaves the individual un-whole physically (permanently tattooed), socially (permanently othered), and mentally (permanently stripped of identity and status).

## 6.8 Interpretation Based on Textual References to Tattooing Practices

### 6.8.1 Barthian Visual Semiotics as Applied to Descriptions

1. What/who is described? (first layer, denotation)

The tattoos identify the master of the slave, and the crimes of which a criminal has been convicted.

2. What values/ideas are expressed through what is being described?(second layer, connotation)

The values which are related to this process involve the stripping of the marked individual's social status through exposing his or her naked skin in order to inscribe a mark which is scripturally prohibited in order to permanently mark that individual as shameful, unclean, impure, and un-whole.

3. Which boundary (physical, social, mental) is represented in the description?

The tattooing process represents the physical boundaries of breaching the skin which is an unclean and shameful process, as well as the enforced nudity of the process which also breaches a physical boundary. The physical avoidance of the tattooed individuals by the unmarked individuals is also a physical boundary which is necessary due to the fear of becoming unclean by association with unclean individuals. The social boundaries are represented in terms of the enforcement of an identity and status which the marks designate, while stripping the marked individual of his or her past status; as well as in the othering, shunning, and avoidance of the marked individuals by restricting their spatial access and opportunities for interpersonal interaction. The mental boundaries which are related to the tattooing process are centred upon the marked individual's esteem, as his or her social esteem is stripped along with his or her status; the marked individual therefore is faced with the choice

of accepting society's perception of his or her identity which has been designated to the individual by the mark, or to rebel against it in order to act outside of his or her assigned shame and stripped status.

- 4 Which boundary effect (ordering, distinction, threshold) is represented in the description?

The boundary effect of ordering is present in the Israelite tattooing process as the scriptural prohibition of the practice, as well as the values of clothing, cleanness, purity, and wholeness regulate the social norms surrounding the practice, as well as the treatment of the marked individuals once they have been tattooed. Ordering is also represented through the stripping of the marked individuals' status, and designating them as entities of shame. The marked bodies represent distinction as they are physically altered to the point where the permanent and invasive nature of the tattooing process permanently alters and distinguishes them from the unmarked Israelites. The effect of threshold is represented in terms of the fact that once an individual has been marked, he or she cannot return to the unmarked society from which he or she has been othered because the tattoos which are inscribed are permanent, and, as such, the un-wholeness and uncleanness and shame are permanent, and so too the othering which the unmarked members of society necessarily enforce in order to avoid becoming unclean by associating with the marked individuals.

### **6.8.2 Layers of Meaning as Applied to Descriptions**

1. What is the representational meaning of the description?

The representation of the tattoos consists of the textual inscription of either the name of the slave's master, or of the crime which has been committed in the case of a criminal. Slaves are tattooed on their upper arms, while criminals are tattooed on both the arms and/or the legs.

2. What is the social-scientific and ideological meaning of the description?

The values which are tied to the tattooing process relate to bodily purity, cleanness, wholeness, and shame. These values are contravened by the breach of the skin in order to inscribe a tattoo, as well as by the process of exposing the individual's naked skin in order to inscribe the tattoo. The tattoos themselves strip the individual of his or her past status in order to assign him or her with a mark which either marks the individual as a slave, and thus property of another, or as a criminal convicted of a certain crime.

## 6.9 Descriptive Interpretation of Tattoos

1. What is the category of tattoo as described (religious, punitive, military, decorative)?

Israelite tattoos are punitive when inscribed on criminals, and preventative when inscribed on slaves, in order to prevent defection, or escape.

2. Which part of the body is described tattooed?

The tattoos are recorded as being inscribed on the arms and legs of slaves and criminals.

3. What is described to be depicted in the tattoo?

The tattoos are inscribed in script which identifies the individual's owner in the case of slaves, and to depict the criminal activity of which an individual has been convicted in the case of criminals.

4. How does this description of the tattoo affect the body in space?

The marked body in space is necessarily othered and shunned by the unmarked Israelites because of the fear of becoming unclean by the association with the marked individuals. This shunning and othering forces the marked individuals to be restricted in terms of their access to public spaces in order to restrict their opportunity for social interaction with unmarked individuals.

5. How does this description of the tattoo affect the body as space?

The body as space is permanently rendered as a space of shame, which is unclean, impure, and un-whole. This strips that body of its previous social status, and requires that the marked individual accepts the shameful status in order to behave appropriately in terms of restricting social interaction in order to avoid spreading his or her uncleanness to the unmarked individuals.

## 7. Application of the Analytical Model to Graeco-Roman Culture

### 7.1 Contextualisation of Cultural Tattooing Practices

Due to the similarity in religion, culture, values, and social practices of the Greeks and the Romans, as well as the similar values relating to tattooing practices, these two cultures are analysed simultaneously in terms of the application of the analytical model to their cultures and tattooing practices.

Graeco-Roman records and texts often present the term *stigmata* when referring to the tattooing process which was enacted upon fugitive slaves and soldiers (Jones 1987:140). The term “stigma” translates from Greek to Latin as the phrase “*litteras biberint*” which means to “absorb letters”. The term, thus, refers to the tattooing process, and not the branding process which cattle would have been subjected to (Jones 1987:140). The word “Stigma” first appears in Greek with reference to the spots on the skins of snakes, and it “continues to bear the meaning of ‘dot’ or ‘mark’ or ‘welt’” (Jones 1987:140). The term “to prick” (στικζειν) describes the process of tattooing, while *stigma* refers to “the marks so made” (Jones 1987:142).

The Greek physician and medical writer Aetius (or Aetios) explains that tattoos (περι στικματων) are referred to when indicating the marks which are “inscribed on the face, or some other part of the body, for example, on the hands of soldiers” (Jones 1987:142). Vegetius explains that these military tattoos are inscribed as a pattern of dots after a recruit has received “preliminary training” (*uicturis in cute punctis signorum*) (Jones 1987:149). The constitution of 398 BCE contained the provision that “*stigmata* (public marks) must be made on the arms of *fabricenses* (armourers) in the manner of recruits, so that in this way at least they may be recognised if they hide” (Jones 1987:149).

Aetius also provides the recipe for the ink which is used in the tattooing process, which is applied “by pricking the places with needles, wiping away the blood, and rubbing in first juice of leek, and then the preparation” (Jones 1987:142). The preparation would have consisted of Egyptian pine bark, corroded bronze, gall, and vitriol (Reece 2013b).

Jones (1987:143) explains that the medical texts of Aetius, as well as legal texts found in Rome indicate that the faces of fugitive slaves would be tattooed, as well as the hands and arms of soldiers, and the hands and ankles of criminals. Delinquent slaves and runaways are referred to in Attic comedy, and have been noted to have been commonly tattooed during the Hellenistic period (Jones 1987:148). The third century legal code provided an injunction with

regard to the masters of slaves who may not have sold nor tattooed “good slaves”, while slaves who had been convicted of a crime “would receive no less than one hundred lashes of the whip, and a tattoo on the forehead” (Jones 1987:148).

Burrus (2005:107) provides a further Roman example of the facial tattooing of fugitive slaves, as found in the *Satyricon*, a comic Latin novel of the first century CE, written by Petronius. Two of the novel’s characters, Encolpius and Giton plan to evade capture and punishment, and they choose to “disguise [themselves] as slaves by having their foreheads inscribed with the condemnation of the runaway” (Burrus 2005:107). The text itself explains the slave tattoos as “*sequar ego frontes notans inscriptione sollerti, ut videamini stigmatate esse puniti*”, as “large letters that will appear to be the branding marks found on slaves” (Rimmel 2007:75).

Jones (1987:148) explains that there is further evidence of punitive tattooing in terms of Graeco-Roman criminals, whereby an Attic *amphora* displays the personification of Injustice bearing tattoos. Furthermore, the author of the *Dissoi Logoi* “considered [tattoos] the punishment for criminals among all people other than the Thracians” (Jones 1987:148). In *The Laws*, Plato writes: “if anyone is caught committing sacrilege, if he be slave or a stranger, let his offence be written on his face and hands” (Jones 1987:148). The writer Suetonius comments that Caligula “had many people of the better sort first defaced by the marks of tattoo (*stigmata notis*) and then condemned them to the mines and the paving of roads” (Jones 1987:148). The emperor Constantine formulated a constitution which provided for tattooing; whereby “a person condemned to a gladiatorial school or the mines should not be inscribed (*scribatur*) on the face, but rather on the hands or the calves, ‘so that the face, which has been formed in the image of divine beauty, should be defiled as little as possible’” (Jones 1987:148).

It is important to note that while there is a Graeco-Roman precedent for religious branding, that practice is not tied to the military and punitive tattooing practices of the Greeks and the Romans. The practice of religious branding is “considered to be orgiastic and fanatical” (Jones 1987:152). The writer Philo states that the religious branding of idolators is practiced because “they yearn to enter the service of idols made with hands, confirming it in letters not written in documents as is customary with slaves, but marking the letters on their bodies with heated iron so that they remain indelibly” (Jones 1987:152). This practice is referred to in the third book of Maccabees where “Ptolemy Philopater ordered all his Jewish subjects to be ‘registered and stamped by fire on their bodies with the ivy-leaf; the mark of Dionysus’” (Jones 1987:152). While tattoos are referred to as *stigmata*, brands are referred to as stamps.

## 7.2 General Boundary Relations and Associated Research Questions

### Mental Boundaries (Core beliefs)

**Ordering:** To what extent are the main ideas and concepts decisive for what members do?

The Graeco-Roman tattooing practices serve to exclude fugitive slaves and criminals from society, while including soldiers and armourers in an exclusive military community.

The military mark is a mark of inclusion into a community of military practitioners, such as the armourers, and soldiers, who are marked after undergoing training to earn their military rank. These marks, while honourable, are also preventative, as they prevent soldiers and armourers from defecting, or from hiding among civilians. Thus, the military mark prevents intrusion by civilians, as well as intrusion into civilian society by a member of the military.

The punitive marking of slaves is used to distinguish fugitive slaves, and to mark them both as a punishment and as prevention from further rebellion. Marked in this way, slaves would be excluded from being appropriated by new masters for fear of repeated rebellion.

The marking of criminals is similarly punitive and preventative, as the marks are punishment, while the marks other the criminals from society permanently by stripping them of their past status, and by assigning the individual with an identity which marks him or her as being a criminal, as well as the crime that he or she has committed.

**Distinction:** To what extent are the core ideas and concepts distinctly different from those of other groups?

The Graeco-Roman tattooing practice distinguishes four groups of people; the military comprising soldiers and armourers, fugitive slaves, criminals, and the unmarked members of Greek and Roman societies.

The tattooing of the military distinguishes soldiers and armourers from civilians, and marks them as part of an elite community. The military tattoos also prevent members of the military defecting and hiding as civilians. The military tattoos show the individual's honour due to his inclusion into the culturally prestigious military community.

The marks of the fugitive slaves strip them of their former, unmarked status within their own culture, even though they are already of a low social status in their positions as slaves. The slaves who are marked as fugitives are punished for rebellion and are othered because the marks point them out as risks in terms of being taken on by another master. Their marks are



permanent, and, as such, their shame is irredeemable. Criminals are similarly stripped of their former status and are marked as shameful, and they are also permanently marked as criminals with irredeemable shame due to their crimes.

Unmarked Greek and Roman civilians are distinguished from the marked individuals due to their own honour and shame which are appropriated through customs and behaviour, as opposed to being marked as honourable or shameful. This distinction means that the unmarked individuals would interpret the marks of tattooed individuals as comprising that individual's identity, regardless of who that person may be outside of his or her marking. The military, marked as honourable, would be respected by the unmarked civilians based on social custom, and would be granted spatial access, whereas marked slaves and criminals are treated with suspicion and are watched in public spaces in order to avoid the infiltration of the civilian society by the marked slave or criminal.

**Threshold:** To what extent can outsiders assimilate core ideas and concepts?

The threshold for acquiring military marks is high, as an individual would have to undergo training before he would be marked, and his social status prior to becoming a candidate for military service would have to be high enough to warrant the application. Civilians are thus othered from the marked military community.

The threshold for fugitive slaves and criminals is equally high, as these marked individuals cannot rejoin their societies after being tattooed because of the permanent nature of the marks, which shame these individuals permanently.

**Social Boundaries** (Social identity)

**Ordering:** To what extent do members feel that they are socially bonded together by, for example, loyalty?

Members of the military are bonded by their tattoos in terms of loyalty to their service, and their leader, as well as each other, and that creates a bond in terms of their military identities, which are affirmed by their tattoos. The exclusivity of the military community strengthens that bond, and enhances the honour of the soldiers and armourers who are marked as such.

The tattoos imposed on fugitive slaves and criminals bond them only in terms of their shared consequences, namely being stripped of their former status, and being permanently marked as shameful. These consequences mean that the individual who is marked shamefully is othered from society, isolated, and essentially permanently altered in terms of identity and perception.

**Distinction:** To what extent is one group socially distinct from other groups?

Graeco-Roman soldiers and armourers wear honourable marks which designate their military identities. Criminals are marked shamefully in order to punish their trespasses against Graeco-Roman law and custom, and these marks strip them of their former social status. Fugitive slaves are distinguished from other slaves by the inscription of their rebellion and warnings thereof upon faces, which cannot be covered in order to blend in with the other slaves. The unmarked citizens of Greece and Rome are distinguished from the marked individuals by their lack of either honourable or shameful tattoos, and, as such maintain their ability to attain honour or shame through socially proscribed behaviour, rather than being assigned honourable or shameful status by virtue of an imposed or even a customary, volitional mark

**Threshold:** To what extent is it possible for outsiders to be considered full members of the group?

Any Graeco-Roman individual who has not been selected for military training and service would be an outsider to the military community. Military tattooing thus others any individual who is not a member of the military, such as soldiers and armourers. This means that the threshold for the military tattooing practice is high, as it is an exclusive practice.

The threshold for the punitive tattooing practices which is imposed on fugitive slaves and criminals is equally high, as there is no way for the marked criminal or marked slave to rejoin his or her previous respective communities; nor Graeco-Roman society at large because of the permanent nature of the marks which permanently shames and others them.

**Physical Boundaries** (Formal rules and physical structures)

**Ordering:** To what extent do formal rules or physical structure regulate the work of members?

The tattooing of military personnel such as soldiers and armourers give these individuals the right to work in service of the Graeco-Roman militaries. The marks identify these individuals as members of the military, and ensure that the military is not at risk of being infiltrated by civilians, while simultaneously guarding against soldiers and armourers disguising themselves as civilians in order to break away from their military service.

The tattoos which are imposed upon fugitive slaves and criminals severely restrict their ability to work and to function within Graeco-Roman society, because the marks strip them of their prior identities and only identify them as shameful fugitives and criminals who are not to be trusted in private or public spaces.

**Distinction:** To what extent does a group's formal structure set it apart from other groups?

Graeco-Roman society is structured in such a way that social class and stature would influence an individual's spatial access in terms of public spaces. Thus, the honourable position of soldiers and military personnel would afford them almost unrestricted spatial access, as these are the individuals who conquer territories for Greece and Rome. The military personnel are tattooed in order to mark their honour and their place within the exclusive military community.

The tattoos on the faces of fugitive slaves, and the tattoos on the hands and legs of criminals are shameful, and due to their permanent nature, these individuals are permanently shamed in Graeco-Roman society. The fact that these tattoos are both punitive and preventative means that these individuals are treated with suspicion in public spaces by the unmarked individuals, because of the shameful and cautionary distinction that the marks afford them.

**Threshold:** To what extent do formal structures hinder the recruitment of outsiders?

Graeco-Roman social customs and hierarchy create formal structures of societal norms which restrict the possibility of outsiders entering into military service. The military tattoos cannot be forged, are permanent, and are specific in design, which consisted of dot patterns. This means that the military tattoos hinder the infiltration of the military by civilians, while also preventing members of the military from disguising themselves as civilians.

The outsiders to Graeco-Roman society at large are the marked fugitive slaves and criminals, and these individuals are hindered by their marks in terms of limited spatial access as the marks render them untrustworthy and shameful, as well as limiting their ability to work as slaves, because the marks serve as a warning to prospective masters. This means that the shamefully marked criminals and slaves could no longer function as part of Graeco-Roman society, isolating them from their own communities, as well as society at large. This renders them as outsiders to the Graeco-Roman people.

### 7.3 Social-Scientific Boundaries

**Table 27: Physical Boundaries and their Graeco-Roman Cultural Applications**

Physical Boundaries	Cultural Application
Clothing	<p>Graeco-Roman military tattoos are official marks of military members, and can thus be considered to be part of the military uniform. The placement of the tattoos on the hands of military members means that the tattoos cannot be concealed by clothing.</p> <p>The facial tattoos of the fugitive slaves cannot be concealed by clothing, and the tattoos on the hands of the criminals cannot be concealed either. The tattoos on the legs of criminals may, however be concealed by clothing.</p>
Honour and shame	<p>The tattoos born by the soldiers and armourers mark their wearers as honourable, and grant them access to public spaces within Graeco-Roman territories.</p> <p>Fugitive slaves and criminals are marked as shameful and the display of the marks restricts their spatial access as they are treated with suspicion and wariness by unmarked civilians.</p>
Nudity	<p>The necessary nudity involved in the process of inscribing a tattoo means that the individual is exposed. This exposure would be honourable in terms of the application of military tattoos, and would be shameful in terms of the inscription of the shameful tattoos of the fugitive slaves and criminals. The placement of the tattoos on the faces, hands, and legs of the marked Graeco-Roman individuals would ensure that their naked skin is exposed in order to show the marks. This is done in order to ensure that access is either granted or prohibited in accordance with the interpretation of the messages which the marks portrayed.</p>
Ordering	<p>Military tattoos identify the rank of soldiers, and identify military personnel. This marks the military individuals as honourable, because of the esteem of the military under the Graeco-Roman rulers.</p> <p>As the shameful tattoos of fugitive slaves and criminals strip them of their social status prior to being convicted of offences, and assign them a new shameful status, as portrayed through the tattoo designs which indicate their infractions.</p>
Prominence	<p>The honour bestowed upon military personnel in terms of social status as well as rank and inclusion into the exclusive military community is publically displayed through the military tattoos which soldiers and armourers display. The military tattoo shows that the individual bearing it is of a high social worth, and that the individual is thus prominent in Graeco-Roman society.</p> <p>The shameful tattoos of the fugitive slaves and criminals strip them of their status, and proclaim them to have almost no social worth.</p>
Wholeness	<p>The military tattoos identify military personnel as being included in the exclusive military community and are essentially part of the uniform of the military. These marks would affect the value of wholeness in terms of making the soldier or armourer more whole by virtue of bearing the mark, because of the honour that the mark bestows.</p> <p>Marked criminals and fugitive slaves are rendered less whole because of the marks that they bear, because the punitive tattoos strip them of their identities beyond the inscriptions that they wear. Their bodies therefore become spaces of shame which are un-whole.</p>

**Table 28: Social Boundaries and their Graeco-Roman Cultural Applications**

<b>Social Boundaries</b>	<b>Cultural Application</b>
Communicativeness	The placement of the tattoos on the hands, legs, and faces of the individuals, regardless of the honour or the shame reflected in them, shows the importance of visibility, especially in terms of the agency of the hands, and the legs, as they carry an individual in terms of spatial orientation, and the communicative features of the facial tattoos which impose a new, assigned, perceived status and identity based on the mark that the individual bears, as opposed to that individual's history, and behaviours which could attain honour or shame outside of the tattooing process.
Honour and shame	<p>Military service is done in service of the rulers of the Greeks and the Romans respectively, and involves the conquering of territories, taking prisoners of war, and enforcing the law of the culture. This service is honourable, as it serves to bring honour to the Greeks and the Romans, and the status honour of the military is recognised by Graeco-Roman civilians.</p> <p>The public shame of the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves' punitive tattoos show Assyrian society that these individuals are animals, and criminals, and are not to be left unguarded in public spaces. Their tattoos dictate interpersonal interaction with them, because they are marked as inherently shameful individuals, and the community as a whole would be shamed to accept them.</p>
Humility	<p>The military tattoos bestow honour upon the individuals who bear them, and that honour and status is necessarily acknowledged in terms of social and personal esteem.</p> <p>Punitive tattoos form part of the process of public shaming of the fugitive slaves and criminals, and these tattoos strip the marked individual of his or her status, as well of personal and social esteem.</p>
Nudity	The tattooing process necessitates nudity, as the flesh of the hands, legs, and faces of the individuals is exposed in order to be inscribed. This process itself would be honourable and hard-earned for the military tattoos, and shameful in the case of the imposed punitive tattoos. The placement of the tattoos, regardless of honour or shame is such that, with the exception of the tattoos on the legs of individuals, the hands and faces cannot be covered with clothing in order to disguise the tattoos. The naked, tattooed flesh is therefore displayed in public spaces in order for the marks and their inherent honour, shame, and status to be recognisable.
Ordering	<p>The display of the military tattoos on the hands of soldiers and armourers means that the mark is socially recognisable. The recognition of the mark as honourable, as well as being a mark of rank, and status, affirms the honour and the status of the military within Graeco-Roman society.</p> <p>The tattoos of the prisoners of war and of rebellious slaves strip them of their social status prior to capture, and assign them a new shameful status, as portrayed through the tattoo designs. This means that their new status dictates their interpersonal interactions with Assyrian civilians, as well as their peer groups, and this loss of status leads to them being othered, shunned, and isolated from their communities.</p>
Prominence	<p>The high social worth which military tattoos afford their bearers show these individuals to be prominent in Graeco-Roman society wherein the military marking is recognised and respected for its representation of the honour of the military as a whole, as well as the marked individual.</p> <p>The shameful tattoos of the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves proclaim them to have close to no social worth; regardless of the worth they had before being marked, and as such require Assyrian civilians and the individuals' immediate social circles to other them in order to treat them in accordance with their new status</p>
Social norms, customs, and laws	The social customs and laws of Greece and Rome, respectively, create the precedent for the recognition of military honour, and as such, the honour of the individual bearing the military tattoo. The military members are thus being marked in a customarily accepted fashion. The same customs set the precedent for the imposition recognition of the shameful marks born by the fugitive slaves and criminals. Custom necessitates that these shamefully marked individuals be othered from the general society, as well as to be recognised as having lost their former social status.
Wholeness	The recognition of the honourable space of the military body which is marked by the military tattoo renders that body to be interpreted as being more whole because of the honour that the mark bestows upon it.

	Punitive tattoos turn the bodies of the fugitive slaves and criminals into shameful spaces which have to be othered from society because they are no longer whole, due to them being stripped of their status and identities by the marks which assign them only the characteristics of shame and injunctions. These individuals are thus othered from their own communities and Graeco-Roman society.
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**Table 29: Mental Boundaries and their Graeco-Roman Cultural Applications**

<b>Mental Boundaries</b>	<b>Cultural Application</b>
Honour and shame	<p>The collective honour and status of the military influences the personal esteem of individual members of the military, because the honour of the collective marks the individual as honourable as well. Serving the Greek or Roman ruler, conquering territories, and enforcing Greek and Roman law similarly mark the military as being of a high status, and that collective status is also bestowed upon the individual member of the military.</p> <p>The punitive tattoos strip fugitive slaves and criminals of their identities, and merely identify them as rebellious, untrustworthy, and criminal. This identification renders these individuals as irredeemably shameful, and this means that the individuals are othered from society because of their shame. This othering creates a choice for the marked individual, whereby he or she could accept the othering and behave in a manner appropriate with his or her newly assigned low status, or to rebel against the othering in order to force his or her interaction with general society in public spaces, at the risk of further punishment.</p>
Humility	<p>The basic honour of being a member of the military, as marked by the military tattoo, may be increased in terms of gaining rank within the military structures, and performing optimally in training and in battle. Higher military rank would increase the individual's honour and social status.</p> <p>The irredeemable loss of honour, wholeness, and social status of the fugitive slaves and criminals would dictate that these individuals either accept loss of their status and live in terms of the shame which they have been assigned, with the requisite, customary humility; or these individuals could rebel against it, at the risk of further mutilation and modification which would signify a further loss of status as further punishment for rebellion against social custom and laws.</p>
Nudity	The display of the naked, tattooed flesh of Graeco-Roman individuals would be either honourable in terms of the military, or shameful, for the fugitive slaves and criminals. The placement of the marks limited the individuals' ability to cover their tattoos with clothing, and thus the display of their marks were a part of the public recognition of honour, shame, and spatial access or restriction which the marks afford. The display of the marks also allows for either the acceptance of the individual, or his or her othering, based on the message depicted in the mark.
Prominence	<p>The collective military honour and prominence would transfer to the individual member of the military in terms of both social and personal esteem, honour, and status.</p> <p>The stripping of the fugitive slaves' and criminals' identities and social status would have a negative effect on their social and personal esteems, and this would present the choice of accepting the othering or rebelling against it, at the risk of being othered to a more extreme extent.</p>
Social norms, customs, and laws	<p>The service of the military to the ruler of the society, as well as the military's role in upholding the laws of the society means that the customary marking of military personnel is an honourable process which is recognised by society, as well as by the individual who is to be marked, as a sign of inclusion, of honour, and of status.</p> <p>The public shaming of the fugitive slaves and criminals requires that they be othered from society in order to comply with social custom and laws. This isolation of the shamefully marked individuals strips the fugitive slaves and criminals of both personal and social esteem, and necessarily and customarily isolates them from their communities and society as a whole.</p>
Wholeness	The inclusion of military personnel by virtue of their marks, as well as the honour, esteem, and status which the marks bring to the individuals who bear them provide the individual with wholeness of inclusion, and on a personal level in terms of the honour of being marked as a member of the military.

	The shame which punitive tattoos impose during the process of public shaming, and the stripping of the individual's status and identity, renders that punitively marked body as a space of shame which is un-whole, and which is to be othered. These marks leave the fugitive slaves and criminals as outsiders from their communities, peers, and from Graeco-Roman society, stripping them of kinship, social, personal, and bodily esteem.
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#### 7.4 Social-Scientific Research Questions

1. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice differ from the other identified cultures' tattooing practices?

Graeco-Roman tattooing falls into two categories in terms of honour and shame. The military tattoos which are inscribed on the hands of soldiers and armourers are honourable tattoos which are volitionally acquired by male military personnel who have earned the mark through their training and inclusion into the military community.

The second category of Graeco-Roman tattooing is shameful, and punitive as well as preventative. Fugitive slaves and criminals of both sexes are subject to be tattooed against their will in order to strip of them of their social status, to mark them as punishment and as a warning in terms of future employment and access to public spaces, and other them from civilian society.

2. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice affect the social bonds within the community?

The honourable military tattooing practice marks inclusion into the military community, and, as such, these marks strengthen bonds of loyalty both between soldiers, but also to the rulers of Greece and Rome, as the military serves the ruler in terms of conquering territories and enforcing the law within the community. Military tattoos serve as identification of members of the military and are part of the military personnel's uniform, which is worn with honour and pride. Those who have been marked in such a way have a high social ranking, and have spatial access in public spaces by virtue of their military affiliation.

Fugitive slaves and criminals lose their social status when they are publically shamed by the imposed tattooing which punish them and mark them as dangerous for future employers and for society at large. These marks eliminate the opportunity for interpersonal interaction with civilian society as the marks restrict the spatial access of the shamefully marked individuals. The isolation imposed upon the marked slaves and criminals mean that the marks do not create camaraderie among them, and there is no solidarity in the shame which has been imposed on them through the tattoos. The shameful marks afford their bearers the choice to continue to rebel, and to be faced with the third category of punishment whereby he or she



would have his or her ear mutilated or amputated; or the slave could choose to behave in a penitent manner in order to avoid further mutilation and modification.

3. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice regulate the spatial practices of the tattooed individual?

Members of the military would have open access to all Graeco-Roman public spaces, as the honourable tattoos the military displays are part of the identification of the members of the military, and afford these individuals unrestricted access by law and custom. Conquered territories which may not be open to the general public but which are under military control also afford the military spatial access which is enforced through the identification of the military tattoos.

The marks upon the hands, legs, and faces of fugitive slaves and criminals ensure that these individuals are treated with suspicion, and that they are guarded in public spaces in order to prevent accidental infiltration into civilian society. Spatial access is thus severely restricted in terms of punitive and preventative, shameful tattoos.

### **7.5 Critical Spatial Research Questions (Thirthing-as-Othering)**

1. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on physical boundaries within the culture?

Graeco-Roman tattooing ensures that spatial access is either granted or rescinded based on the category of tattoo with which the individual has been inscribed.

The physical boundaries of the Graeco-Roman societies are enforced by the military, as the military enforces laws within the communities, and conquers territories. Military spaces are only open to members of the military who bear the requisite, honourable marks, and are thus not accessible to the Graeco-Roman civilians, while all civilian space is open to the military.

Punitive marks which shame the fugitive slaves and criminals restrict the spatial practices of these individuals, as the unmarked civilians treat the marked individuals with suspicion, and guard them in public spaces in order to prevent the infiltration of civilian society by these marked individuals. This is juxtaposed to the free access that unmarked civilians have in terms of public spaces in Graeco-Roman territories.

2. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on social identity and interpersonal interaction within the culture?

Graeco-Roman soldiers are part of an exclusive community which others unmarked civilians who have not undergone the necessary military training which affords the soldiers and armourers their honourable military marks. This means that the military tattoos essentially other any unmarked individual, as well as individuals who are marked shamefully. The communal honour and status of the military is transferred to the individual members of the military, who are bonded in service, kinship, and in the community within which they function.

The othering of the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves is more severe in terms of the effect on interpersonal interaction and social identity. The punitive and preventative tattoos placed on the faces, hands, and legs of fugitive slaves and criminals other these individuals from their communities, from their peers, as well as from Graeco-Roman society in general. These individuals are stripped of their social status, and are stripped of their identities. As the tattoos assign them a new shameful status, and an identity that is tied to the injunction which their marks portray, the social identity of the shamefully marked individuals is based entirely upon the interpretation of their marks, as opposed to their behaviour and histories.

3. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on the tattooed individual's perception of his or her place within the culture?

The esteem of the military within the Graeco-Roman social perception is honourable as a whole, and therefore the individual members of the military who bear the military tattoo are perceived to be honourable and of a high social status.

Punitive and preventative tattoos strip the fugitive slaves and criminals of their previous social status and social esteem. The imposed tattooing mark these individuals as bodily spaces of shame, and, as such, others them to the extent of isolation from their peers, community, and general society. The shamefully marked individuals have the choice of accepting their newly lowered status, and behaving with humility within this assigned status in order to avoid the addition of further shame in terms of their personal and social esteem; or to reel against the othering, to act in such a way that allows for the perception that the individual is not staying within his or her assigned status, and thus possibly incurring further punishment and othering.

## 7.6 Boundary Relations of the Tattooed Body *in Space*

**Table 30: Boundary Effects of the Tattooed Graeco-Roman Body in Space**

Boundary	Category	Effect: Body in Space	Explanation of Effect
Clothing	Physical	Ordering, Distinction	The visible placement of the Graeco-Roman tattoos, on the hands, legs, and faces of the marked individuals render the value of clothing moot, as the visibility of the marks is a prerequisite in terms of the access to public spaces. The military personnel are granted access to the spaces because of their identification as members of the military which is aided by the tattoos, and the fugitive slaves and criminals are restricted in terms of access to public spaces because of their punitive tattoos which cannot be concealed by clothing.
Communicativeness	Social	Ordering, Distinction	The tattoos on the hands, legs, and faces of the soldiers and armourers, fugitive slaves, and criminals communicate messages of honour and shame to the unmarked Graeco-Roman civilians, and these messages form the basis upon which the marked individuals are either granted access to public spaces, or have their access rescinded. The marked body in space is thus the signifier.
Honour and shame	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The communicative value of the Graeco-Roman tattooing practice allows for the marked body to be recognised as either honourable or shameful by virtue of the mark that it bears. The tattooed military personnel are distinguished from unmarked civilians as being honourable and of a high social status by virtue of their identification in terms of the tattoos. These individuals are thus granted spatial access without question because of their social honour and esteem.  The punitive and preventative tattoos of fugitive slaves and criminals strip these individuals of social esteem and mark them as permanently shameful. This shame means that they are othered from society, and, as such, experience spatial restrictions in terms of public spaces, because they are not to be trusted due to the injunctions which are portrayed by their marks.
Humility	Social, Mental	Ordering, Threshold	Military personnel are marked honourably, and the honour and status of the military in general transfers to the individual, who is able to move within Graeco-Roman territories with rightful access. The shamefully tattooed bodies of fugitive slaves and criminals are stripped of their social esteem, and have their spatial access rescinded because of this lowering of social status. The loss of status, and thus access, is permanent, due to the permanent nature of tattoos.
Nudity	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The tattooing process necessitates nudity, as the naked flesh has to be exposed to the tattooist in order to be inscribed. The naked flesh which is exposed once tattooed is necessary in terms of the social customs which require the identification of marked individuals by the messages which their marks portray. Therefore, tattoos are placed on the faces and hands of individuals, as well as on their legs, and spatial access is granted or rescinded based on the interpretation of these marks.
Ordering	Physical, Social	Ordering, Threshold	As the communal honour of the military is transferred to the individual members of the military, and this honour is shown in the high social esteem and status

			of military personnel. The shameful marks of the fugitive slaves and criminals strip these individuals of social esteem and status, and thus render these individuals othered from society, especially in terms of spatial access in public spaces.
Prominence	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The worth that is assigned to the tattooed Graeco-Roman bodies is based on the honour or the shame of the marks. Military marks are honourable, while punitive and preventative marks are shameful. The honour or shame of the tattoos portray messages of social esteem, status, and worth about the individual who bears the marks, and thus, the social interaction and spatial inhabitation of the tattooed body in space is based on its tattoos and the interpretation of the tattoos by unmarked civilians.
Social norms, customs, and laws	Social, Mental	Ordering, Threshold	Graeco-Roman customs and social norms require the marking of the members of the military, as well as the marking of fugitive slaves, and criminals. The tattoos influence the spatial access of the marked individuals, as the honourably marked individuals have spatial access, based on social esteem, while the shamefully marked individuals are othered, and thus restricted in terms of spatial access. The othering of the fugitive slaves and criminals is based on social custom, and is thus necessary in terms of social values.
Wholeness	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	Honourably marked soldiers and armourers, whose tattoos form part of their uniform, are considered to be whole by virtue of the marks. The honour and status of this mark means that a member of the military is allowed to freely move within civilian society, among whole, unmarked civilians. Punitive marks which shame bodies of fugitive slaves and criminals render these bodies un-whole and othered, restricting their access in terms of movements among whole, unmarked Graeco-Roman citizens.

## 7.7 Boundary Relations of the Tattooed Body as Space

**Table 31: Boundary Effects of the Tattooed Graeco-Roman Body as Space**

Boundary	Category	Effect: Body as Space	Explanation of Effect
Clothing	Physical	Ordering, Distinction	The necessary exposure of the tattooed skin of the military is an honourable exposure, as the mark is honourable. The punitive tattoos which are necessarily displayed in public spaces render that body to be a shameful space in itself, and, as such, its naked exposure is shameful. This display distinguishes the marked individuals from the unmarked members of Graeco-Roman society.
Communicativeness	Social	Ordering, Threshold	The tattooed body is given an identity based on the nature of the tattoo which is inscribed upon it. As such the only identity the marked body has is the identity which its tattoo(s) proclaim in terms of its communicativeness in placement as well as design. The body of a fugitive slave, or of a criminal becomes an object and a space of shame, whereas the body of a member of the military is a space of honour. The communicativeness of marked bodies distinguish them from the unmarked civilians who are identified through behaviour and customary actions.
Honour and shame	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The nature of the Graeco-Roman tattoo dictates its honour or its shame. The military tattoos are both exclusive and honourable and thus render the military bodies as honourable and esteemed. Punitive and preventative tattoos are shameful and turn the bodies of fugitive slaves and criminals into spaces of shame which have to be othered from society. The honour or shame bestowed by the tattoos are permanent features of the marked bodies, due to the permanent nature of the tattoos, and the effect that the tattoos have on the social and personal esteems of the marked individuals is thus permanently enforced as well.
Humility	Social, Mental	Distinction, Threshold	The status and honour of the military as a whole influences the honour and status of the individual military member, who is marked as being part of the honourable and highly esteemed community by means of the military tattoos. Punitive and preventative tattoos mark the bodies of fugitive slaves and criminals as spaces of shame, which others these individuals from Graeco-Roman society. This lack of social esteem is either to be accepted by the individual with humility in terms of acting in accordance with the new status, or the individual could rebel against this imposition of a lack of status, at the risk of further physical punishment.
Nudity	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	The actual tattoo marks which have been inscribed upon the exposed flesh of marked individuals are what distinguish the marked individuals from the unmarked Graeco-Roman citizens. The permanent tattoos permanently alter the nature of the naked skin, and thus permanently assign that individual's honour or shame, as well as social status. This alteration has an effect on the wholeness of the marked individual, based on the honour or shame of the mark with which he or she has been inscribed.
Ordering	Physical, Social	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	As the status, honour, shame, social esteem, and personal esteem of the marked body is directly related to the tattoos it bears, the body as space falls within its social status by virtue of the honour assigned to it (as with the members of the military), or the shame

			assigned to it (as with fugitive slaves and criminals). This assigned status affects how the marked individual perceives himself or herself in terms of the social hierarchy of his or her society, and also how this individual acts in terms of spatial access and interpersonal interactions within the public spaces of Greece and Rome.
Prominence	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Threshold	The social esteem and social status of the marked body are assigned through the marks which that body bears. As such, a tattoo can either elevate and enhance the individual's status and esteem, such as the honourable military tattoos; or the tattoos can strip the individual of social status and esteem, as is the case with punitive tattoos of fugitive slaves and criminals. The marked individual cannot return to his or her former status after being marked, as the tattooing process is permanent.
Social norms, customs, and laws	Social, Mental	Distinction, Threshold	The tattoos which are customarily inscribed on members of the military, fugitive slaves, and criminals affect the social and personal esteem of the individual who bears the marks, as the social customs honour and shame, as well as the value of wholeness is tied to the honour or shame of the tattoo being inscribed. The honour of the military tattoo is recognised socially and personally, and that individual is perceived to honourable in terms of custom by virtue of the mark that he bears. The punitive and preventative marks strip the individuals of status and mark them as shameful, and, as such, other these bodies from the spaces to which they would have had access for social interaction and customary behaviour.
Wholeness	Physical, Social, Mental	Ordering, Distinction, Threshold	As the military tattoo becomes part of the soldier's and armourer's uniform, it marks the individual in terms of his military identity, and is honourable, the military tattoos render those who have earned them as whole, in terms of the purpose these individuals serve within the military, under the command of their ruler. The shame which is assigned to the marked bodies of the fugitive slaves and criminals strips those bodies of their wholeness, and this reinforces the need to other the shamefully marked bodies from Graeco-Roman society. The un-whole bodies are thus isolated from their communities, because they become spaces of shame which are socially recognised as such, and cannot be redeemed because of the permanence of the tattoos which mark them.

## 7.8 Interpretation Based on Textual References to Tattooing Practices

### 7.8.1 Barthian Visual Semiotics as Applied to Descriptions

1. What/who is described? (first layer, denotation)

Military tattoos are described to be designs of dot patterns which are inscribed upon the hands of soldiers and armourers.

Punitive and preventative tattoos are inscribed on the faces of fugitive slaves, and on the hands and legs of criminals. These tattoos express in text the crimes of which these individuals have been convicted.

2. What values/ideas are expressed through what is being described?(second layer, connotation)

The social-scientific values which are expressed through Graeco-Roman tattooing are those of honour and shame. The military tattoos are honourable, and render the marked military members as honourable, whole, and of a high social status by virtue of the marks. The punitive and preventative tattoos of fugitive slaves and criminals are shameful, render those bodies as un-whole, and cause those bodies to be othered from Graeco-Roman society.

3. Which boundary (physical, social, mental) is represented in the description?

Military tattoos represent physical boundaries, as anybody who falls outside of the military community is physically othered from military personnel because those individuals do not bear the military mark. Unmarked civilians also do not have physical access to military territories, while the military has physical access to all public spaces. Military tattoos present mental and social boundaries as well, as the socially acknowledged honour of the military as a whole is transferred to the individual member of the military, and this affects his personal esteem

The same boundaries (physical, social, and mental) are represented by punitive and preventative tattoos. The shameful marks inscribed upon the fugitive slaves and criminals physically other them from the unmarked Graeco-Roman civilians, and these marks physically restrict these individuals in terms of spatial access within Graeco-Roman public spaces. Socially, these individuals are ostracised because of their shame, and have their former status stripped in order to punish them for their crimes. Being othered from Graeco-Roman society has a negative mental effect on the individual's esteem, and presents the individual with the choice of accepting his or her new status and acting with the appropriate humility to avoid incurring further shame, or to act in rebellion to it, to venture into public spaces and engaging in interpersonal interactions at the risk of incurring further punishment.

4. Which boundary effect (ordering, distinction, threshold) is represented in the description?

Military tattoos represent ordering as the marks prevent infiltration into the military by civilians, as well as infiltration into civilian society by members of the military. The marks thus serve to impose rules of inclusion for military personnel and exclusion for civilians. The marks also represent distinction, as the marks distinguish the soldiers in such a way that others unmarked civilians from the honourable and elite military community. The effect of threshold is not represented, as the requirements for inclusion into the military community is not generally accessible to Graeco-Roman citizens.



Punitive and preventative tattooing represent ordering inasmuch as the spatial restrictions which are placed on these individuals in terms of custom and law which others them and prevent their entrance into public spaces. These tattoos also represent distinction, as these individuals are permanently marked as other from the unmarked citizens. Once the fugitive slaves and criminals have been marked, they cannot re-enter society, as the marks are permanent and their shame is irredeemable. This means that the effect of threshold is not represented by this category of tattooing.

### **7.8.2 Layers of Meaning as Applied to Descriptions**

1. What is the representational meaning of the description?

The tattoos of the military, as well as the punitive and preventative tattoos of the fugitive slaves and criminals serve as labels which identify these individuals. The military tattoos consist of dot patterns which identify the individual as a member of the military, while the tattoos of the fugitive slaves and criminals are text which name the crimes of which the individual has been convicted.

2. What is the social-scientific and ideological meaning of the description?

The values which are represented by the Graeco-Roman tattooing process are honour, shame, and wholeness.

The military tattoos are honourable, and render the individual who has earned the mark as whole by virtue of being marked with it. The military's honour becomes the honour of the marked military member, and his social esteem and personal esteem are positively affected by the military tattoo.

The punitive and preventative tattoos which are inscribed upon the fugitive slaves and criminals are marks of shame, and these marks render the marked bodies as un-whole. This shame necessitates that these bodies are othered from Graeco-Roman society, and that they are stripped of social status and social esteem as punishment for their crimes.

### **7.9 Descriptive Interpretation of Tattoos**

1. What is the category of tattoo as described (religious, punitive, military, decorative)?

Graeco-Roman tattoos are military, punitive, and preventative.

2. Which part of the body is described tattooed?

The faces of slaves were tattooed, as well as the faces, hands, and legs of criminals. The hands and arms of the soldiers and armourers are tattooed.

3. What is described to be depicted in the tattoo?

Military tattoos comprise dot designs which indicate an individual's place within the military. The punitive tattoos are reported as depicting script which proclaim the crime of which the individual has been convicted.

4. How does this description of the tattoo affect the body in space?

Military tattoos are part of the military uniform, and, as such, signal to the civilian that the marked individual has spatial access to public spaces, as well as private spaces, as is stipulated by social custom and Graeco-Roman law. The marked members of the military also have territorial access to new territories which the military conquers in honour of the rulers of Greece and Rome, respectively. The punitive and preventative marks on slaves and criminals strip them of their former social status, and, as such, restrict their access to public spaces, as they are marked in such a way which cannot be disguised.

5. How does this description of the tattoo affect the body as space?

The marked Graeco-Roman body either becomes a space of honour, or space of shame, based on the category of tattoo with which it has been inscribed.

The honour which the military tattoo bestows upon the body of a soldier and an armourer is earned after training and acceptance into the military community. This mark is honourable, and the body which bears it is whole by virtue of it, and becomes a space of honour. This honour is both socially and personally recognised in terms of the individual's social esteem and status, and personal esteem.

Fugitive slaves and criminals are marked with shameful tattoos which permanently strip them of their former status, as well as their identities, as the unmarked civilians interpret their marks as having assigned them identities based on their crimes. These individuals' bodies become spaces of shame which are socially othered. The shame which is assigned to the bodies of the fugitive slaves and criminals is irredeemable because the tattoos are permanent.

## 8. Social-Scientific Comparison of Ancient Mediterranean Tattooing Practices

There are four social-scientific categories of comparison which are considered in terms of the tattooing practices of the ancient Mediterranean cultures, namely, whether or not the tattooing process is undergone voluntarily; whether the tattooing process is practiced on one or both sexes; whether the tattooing process is honourable or shameful; and which types of tattoos are being inscribed (military, punitive, religious, decorative).

The following tables represent the comparison of the aforementioned categories based on the application of the analytical model to each of the following ancient Mediterranean cultures: Assyria, Egypt, Nubia, Israel, Greece, and Rome.

**Table 32: Comparison of the Voluntary or Involuntary Nature of Ancient Mediterranean Tattooing**

	<b>Voluntary or Involuntary</b>
<b>Assyria</b>	<p>Military tattoos are voluntary, as the individual enters into training willingly with the knowledge that being marked is customary military practice.</p> <p>Punitive tattoos on rebellious slaves and prisoners of war are imposed on the individuals, and are thus involuntary.</p>
<b>Egypt</b>	<p>Egyptian tattooing is voluntary, and women from all classes and professions may choose to acquire a decorative or religious tattoo.</p>
<b>Nubia</b>	<p>Nubian tattooing is voluntary, and any Nubian citizen may choose to acquire a decorative or religious tattoo.</p>
<b>Israel</b>	<p>Israelite tattooing is involuntary and is imposed punitively and preventatively on criminals and slaves.</p>
<b>Greece</b>	<p>Greek tattooing is voluntary in terms of the military whereby the individual knows that enlisting in the military requires training after which he will be inscribed with a military tattoo.</p> <p>Greek tattooing has an involuntary category as well, where the punitive and preventative tattooing of fugitive slaves and criminals is carried out against the will of the individual.</p>
<b>Rome</b>	<p>Roman tattooing comprises both voluntary and involuntary tattooing; voluntary in terms of military tattooing which is acquired willingly after the individual has undergone military training.</p> <p>Involuntary tattooing is imposed upon fugitive slaves and criminals punitively and preventatively.</p>

**Table 33: Comparison of the Sex of the Marked Ancient Mediterranean Individuals**

	<b>Sex</b>
<b>Assyria</b>	<p>Military tattoos are inscribed upon males, as military service was a male privilege.</p> <p>The tattoos inscribed on rebellious slaves are inscribed on both male and female slaves.</p> <p>The tattoos inscribed on the prisoners of war are inscribed on males, as military service would have been entered into by males of the other cultures against whom the Assyrians did battle.</p>
<b>Egypt</b>	Egyptian tattooing is a female practice.
<b>Nubia</b>	Nubian tattooing was originally female, but included men from the Meroitic Period.
<b>Israel</b>	Israelite tattooing could be imposed on both sexes as slaves and criminals are not only male or female.
<b>Greece</b>	<p>Military tattoos are inscribed on males, as military service could be entered into by males.</p> <p>Punitive and preventative tattoos are inscribed on either sex, as fugitive slaves and criminals are not exclusively male or exclusively female.</p>
<b>Rome</b>	<p>Roman military tattoos are inscribed on male members of the military.</p> <p>Roman punitive and preventative tattoos are inscribed on men and women, as fugitive slaves and criminals are not exclusively of one sex.</p>

**Table 34: Comparison of the Honour and Shame of Ancient Mediterranean Tattooing**

	<b>Honour and Shame</b>
<b>Assyria</b>	Assyrian military tattoos are honourable, while the punitive and preventative tattoos of prisoners of war and rebellious slaves are shameful.
<b>Egypt</b>	Egyptian tattoos are honourable.
<b>Nubia</b>	Nubian tattoos are honourable.
<b>Israel</b>	Israelite tattoos are shameful.
<b>Greece</b>	Greek tattoos are honourable in terms of military tattoos, and shameful in terms of punitive and preventative tattoos.
<b>Rome</b>	Roman military tattoos are honourable, but the punitive and preventative tattoos are shameful.

**Table 35: Comparison of the Categories of Ancient Mediterranean Tattoos**

	<b>Tattoo Categories (military, punitive, religious, decorative)</b>
<b>Assyria</b>	Assyrian tattoos are military, punitive, and preventative.
<b>Egypt</b>	Egyptian tattoos are religious and decorative.
<b>Nubia</b>	Nubian tattoos are religious and decorative.
<b>Israel</b>	Israelite tattoos are punitive and preventative.
<b>Greece</b>	Greek tattoos are military, punitive, and preventative.
<b>Rome</b>	Roman tattoos are military, punitive, and preventative.

## 9. Summary and Conclusion

Chapter Four presented the textual and pictorial evidence of ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices, as well as the social-scientific, critical spatial, iconographic, and representational interpretations of the tattooing practices of the Assyrians, Egyptians, Nubians, Israelites, Greeks, and Romans.

These theoretical interpretations are applied by means of the analytical model of boundary relations, developed by Tor Hernes (2004). The model of boundary relations had been originally designed to study organisations, but due to its basis on interpersonal interaction, it has been adapted in order to be applied to ancient Mediterranean societies in terms of the following boundaries which are present in both cultural societies and organisations: the structure of authority boundaries, political boundaries, identity boundaries, hierarchical boundaries, inclusionary boundaries, normative boundaries, and behavioural boundaries (Hernes 2004:12).

The analytical model investigates the following for each of the aforementioned cultures:

1. The contextualisation and overview of the tattooing practices of each of the cultures;
2. The mental boundaries (core beliefs) of the culture, comprising the boundary effects of ordering, distinction, and threshold;
3. The social boundaries (social identity) of the culture, comprising the boundary effects of ordering, distinction, and threshold;
4. The physical boundaries (formal rules and physical structures) of the culture, comprising the boundary effects of ordering, distinction, and threshold;
5. Each culture's physical social-scientific boundaries and their cultural application;
6. Each culture's social social-scientific boundaries and their cultural application;
7. Each culture's social-scientific mental boundaries and their cultural application;
8. Answers to the following social-scientific research questions:
  - a. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice differ from the other identified cultures' tattooing practices?
  - b. To what extent does this tattooing practice affect the social bonds within the community?
  - c. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice regulate the spatial practices of the tattooed individual?
9. Answers to the following critical spatial research questions in terms of Thirding-as-Othering:

- a. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on physical boundaries within the culture?
  - b. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on social identity and interpersonal interaction within the culture?
  - c. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on the tattooed individual's perception of his or her place within the culture?
10. The boundary relations and boundary effects of the specific culture's tattooed body in space;
11. The boundary relations and boundary effects of the specific culture's tattooed body as space;
12. Either the iconographic interpretation of the pictorial evidence of the culture's tattooing practice, or the representational analysis of the textual evidence of the culture's tattooing practice, comprising answers to the following questions:
- a. Barthian visual semiotics of the image or the description:
    - i. What/who is depicted? (first layer, denotation)
    - ii. What values/ideas are expressed through what is being represented?(second layer, connotation)
    - iii. Which boundary (physical, social, mental) is represented in the depiction or the description?
    - iv. Which boundary effect (ordering, distinction, threshold) is represented in the depiction or description?
  - b. Layers of pictorial meaning or the layers of meaning as applied to the descriptions:
    - i. What is the representational meaning of the image? (primary or natural subject matter; recognition of what is being represented on the basis of the interpreter's practical experience, taking into account stylistic conventions and the technical transformations involved in the representation);
    - ii. What is the iconographical symbolism of the image? (object-signs denote a particular person, place, or thing and also the ideas and concepts attached to that person, place, or thing; secondary or conventional subject matter);
    - iii. What is the iconological symbolism of the image? (ideological meaning; underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a notion, period, class, religious, or philosophical persuasion);
13. Iconographic or descriptive interpretation of the culture's tattoos, comprising answers to the following questions:

- a. What is the category of tattoo as described (religious, punitive, military, decorative)?
- b. Which part of the body is described tattooed?
- c. What is described to be depicted in the tattoo?
- d. How does this description of the tattoo affect the body in space?
- e. How does this description of the tattoo affect the body as space?

The tattooing practices of the Assyrians, Egyptians, Nubians, Israelites, Greeks, and Romans have the following four social-scientific criteria in common, and, as such, can be compared in terms of the following four social-scientific questions:

1. Is the tattooing process undergone voluntarily?
2. Is the tattooing process sex specific?
3. Is the tattooing process honourable or shameful?
4. Which categories of tattoos were inscribed (military, punitive, religious, decorative)?

The analysis of the data presented in this chapter shows that the social-scientific aspects of each culture's tattooing practices influence the critical spatial interpretation of the marked body in space, as well as the marked body as space in terms of the body's access to public spaces within the society's territories. The honourable tattoos, such as military tattoos (as inscribed by Assyrian, Greek, and Roman cultures) afford military personnel free access to all public spaces within the culture's territories. Honourable religious tattoos (as inscribed by Egyptian and Nubian cultures) do not restrict the individuals who bear them in terms of spatial access. The punitive and preventative tattoos (as inscribed by Assyrian, Israelite, Greek, and Roman cultures) which are used to mark rebellious and fugitive slaves, as well as criminals, and prisoners of war are shameful tattoos, and cause those who bear them to be othered from their respective communities. These shameful tattoos restrict these marked individuals' access to public spaces, as they are treated with suspicion and scorn, and are ostracised by unmarked members of their respective societies. This othering presents the shamefully tattooed individuals with the choice to accept their othered status and to behave with the requisite humility in order to avoid incurring further shame, or to rebel against the othering and to move within the public spaces, at the risk of incurring further physical punishment and increased shame.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, REFLECTION, AND CONCLUSION

#### 1. Summary

This thesis, titled *Othered Flesh: Social-Scientific and Critical Spatial Investigations into the Tattooed Ancient Mediterranean Body as Space and Body in Space* explored the tattooing practices of the ancient Assyrians, Egyptians, Nubians, Israelites, Greeks, and Romans in order to establish the social-scientific values (Pilch & Malina 1998) which apply to the tattooed individuals in terms of how the tattooed body functions in space, as well as how the tattooing process affects the body as a space itself, based on a critical spatial interpretation of Thirthing-as-Othering (Soja 1999; Lefebvre 1991) and boundary relations (Hernes 2004).

The outcomes of this study set out to show that:

1. tattooing practices were present in the aforementioned ancient Mediterranean cultures, through an analysis of the textual descriptions of the practices, as well as through an iconographic analysis of the pictorial evidence of the practices;
2. the tattooing practices had a social function in terms of identifying the marked individual to be of a certain status based on the decorative, religious, military, or punitive application of the tattoos;
3. ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices exemplify the body in space, through the process of othering those with tattoos, and thus influencing their social behaviour;
4. the practices of tattooing in the ancient Mediterranean exemplify the body as space, because of the specific placement of the tattoos, and the effects that the tattoos have in terms of the body's social and personal esteem.

Catherine Grogard (1994:131) states that "in the vast majority of accounts of tattooing, the tattooed body is conceived as the external expression of an inner self. From this conventional humanist understanding of the body/subject, it follows that the individual's character and/or intentions can be deciphered simply reading his or her skin". This study shows that this interpretation of the marked individual's skin is present in ancient Mediterranean culture, due to the social nature of the body itself, as the body "is a metaphor for society" (Joyce 2005:140). The ancient Mediterranean tattooed body becomes a space which encompasses symbolic significance, as it is both a means of representation in metaphorical discourse, and a representation of social processes (Featherstone & Turner 1995:3).

The tattooed body is a body which is other from the social bodily norm. These bodies are permanently othered, because tattoos, “literally [demarcate] the skin, [and] create permanent marks, unlike the use of clothing or ornaments, which can be adopted or changed more easily” (Joyce 2005:145). The tattooed body is an example of the body as space, as the body becomes the space upon which tattoos are inscribed. In addition, the tattooed body is an example of a body in space, as certain social conventions prohibit the entrance of tattooed individuals into certain demarcated areas. This means that the tattooed body is othered in terms of its social function.

The social nature of the body means that the physical tattooing process may be interpreted in terms of the social-scientific values of the ancient Mediterranean people. The values which are relevant to the tattooing practices of the Assyrians, Egyptians, Nubians, Israelites, Greeks, and Romans are:

1. clothing;
2. communicativeness;
3. honour and shame;
4. humility
5. nudity;
6. ordering;
7. prominence;
8. Social norms, customs, and laws, and
9. wholeness.

Each of the aforementioned values is examined in terms of its application to the tattooed body in space, in terms of Thidding-as-Othering. Because tattoos affect the individuals’ social status, it affects the individual’s interactions and behaviour within the communal lived space. As such, the otherness which is assigned to the tattooed body “is a psychosocial attribution that is tied to psychosocial relations of power and knowledge” (Flanagan 1995:15-43). The knowledge of the meaning of the tattoos with which an individual has been inscribed is what affects the tattooed body as space, because that knowledge either names the tattooed body as a space of honour, or as a space of shame.

The social-scientific and critical spatial analyses of the ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices are conducted through their application to Tor Hernes’s (2004:10-16) theory of boundary relations, whereby each value and spatial application is categorised in terms of its physical boundaries (bonding of core ideas and concepts that are central and particular to the group, such as those of honour and shame, and the values of wholeness and nudity), social

boundaries (identity and social bonding tying the group together, such as the bonding of non-tattooed individuals, as well as the bonding of a group of tattooed individuals), and mental boundaries (formal rules, physical structures regulating human action, interaction in the group which would be implied in the boundaries enforced through the interpretation of the tattooed body in space). Each of these boundaries displays a boundary effect, which comprise ordering (the extent to which boundaries regulate internal interaction), distinction (the extent to which boundaries constitute a clear demarcation between internal and external spheres) and threshold (the extent to which boundaries regulate flow or movement between the external and the internal sphere) (Hernes 2004:14-16).

This study shows that the ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices exemplify the “link between spatiality, historicity and sociality” (Merrifield 1999:345) in terms of the honour or shame which is permanently assigned to that tattooed body because this socially recognised honour or shame spatially affects the tattooed individual, and thus can change the psychology of the othered individual in question, as it has a direct effect on the body in space, as well as the body as space. This link shows that while there is a possibility for harmony within the movement of bodies in space, the boundaries of power and social status and otherness impede on the space harmony, and thus render it static (Hodgson 2001:189).

The tattooing practices which affect the ancient Mediterranean body in space, and body as space, all fall within four categories of tattoos, namely religious, decorative, military, or punitive and preventative. These categories of tattoos serve to enforce the “boundary status on the skin” (Caplan 2000:xiv) as the categories reflect the “index of inclusion and exclusion” (Caplan 2000:xiv) which tattoos bestow upon their bearers, based on the honour or the shame which is ascribed to the marks. Volitional decorative, religious, and military tattoos demonstrate inclusion into exclusive and honourable communities with a Mediterranean society at large, while punitive and preventative tattoos may “mark off entire ‘civilisations’ from their ‘barbarian’ or ‘savage’ neighbours; to declare a convict’s criminality ... by branding him as a punishment” (Caplan 2000:xiv).

The tattooing practices of the ancient Mediterranean cultures of the Assyrians, Egyptian, Nubians, Israelites, Greeks, and Romans are investigated in terms of the following classifications: whether the tattooing process is engaged in voluntarily or involuntarily by the individual who is to be marked; whether the tattooing is only done to one or both of the sexes; whether the tattooing is honourable or shameful; whether the tattooing is decorative, religious, military, or punitive and preventative.

## **2. Solution to the Research Problem**

The research problem which this study aims to solve has been formulated as follows: how the body is othered according to the theories of the body in space and the body as space, based on critical spatial and social-scientific interpretations of ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices.

The solution to the research problem is broken down as follows:

1. The social-scientific interpretation of ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices;
2. The critical spatial interpretation of ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices;
3. The ancient Mediterranean tattooed body in space;
4. The ancient Mediterranean tattooed body as space.

The question of the body in space is answered through investigating the spatial boundaries that are enforced upon the tattooed people of the time.

The question of the body as space is answered through investigating the significance of the parts of the body (the spaces of the body) that would have been tattooed in the ancient Mediterranean, as well as how honour or shame is assigned to the space of the body by the tattoos inscribed upon it, and how that affects the tattooed individual social and personal esteem.

### **2.1 The Social-Scientific Interpretation of Ancient Mediterranean Tattooing Practices**

This study uses the interpretive method of social-scientific criticism to formulate the basis of the investigation into the tattooing practices of ancient Mediterranean cultures.

Traditionally, social-scientific criticism serves as an interpretivist tool which analyses texts in terms of their reflections of the social conditions under which they originate. This method of interpretation determines the meaning of a text through focusing on the “social and cultural systems inhabited by both authors and intended audiences” (Elliott 1993:8). The social and cultural systems which are represented in a text denote the dynamics of the relevant social system which is characterised by the interpersonal relations of a group of people who are involved in collective action as well as the particular social phenomena of that society, which encapsulates the “regularities of behaviour imposed on individuals by a social system” (Elliott 1993:14).

Social-scientific criticism is used in this study on order to focus on the patterns and codes of social behaviour that are encoded in texts, and in art, as it can be applied to the iconographic

interpretations of a culture's artwork as well. This extension of the theory allows for the interpretation of tattoos, as they are textually described, as well as in their original pictorial form, either preserved on mummies, or represented in a culture's art. The patterns and codes of social behaviour represent social norms and values which form the basis of the social-scientific interpretation of the ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices. These patterns and codes include "Torah-orientation [ which is understood to mean social norms, customs, and laws], purity codes, honour and shame codes, familial and friendship relations, and patron-client relations" (Elliott 1993:10). The social codes which govern honour and shame, as well as the ancient Mediterranean value of wholeness, are used as the foundation of the interpretation of the behaviour of the tattooed people of the ancient Mediterranean, as well as the behaviour of others towards them.

The common values of the ancient Mediterranean people which have been identified through social-scientific criticism by Pilch and Malina (1998:8-209): may be related to the tattooing practices of the cultures of the Assyrians, Egyptians, Nubians, Israelites, Greeks, and Romans as follows:

1. Clothing, which serves as a display of status, as well as a means through which to either hide or expose tattoos;
2. Communicativeness, which enforces the bodily boundaries that are breached through the acquisition of the tattoo, as well as what the tattoo betrays about the individual who bears it for public interpretation;
3. Honour and shame; which indicate an individual's social status and sense of worth within a given community, and which are directly affected through the tattooing process, based on the intention behind the tattoo's infliction;
4. Humility, through which the tattooed individual is given the opportunity to accept the alteration of his/her status through the tattooing process, or to rebel against his/her othered nature;
5. Nudity, which is a shameful concept that has to be exploited in order for the tattooing process to take place;
6. Ordering, which explains that the tattooed individual will occupy a different place within the societal hierarchy because of the tattoo that he/she has been marked with;
7. Prominence, which relates to the individual's sense of worth, which is altered by virtue of the tattoo inasmuch as it either increases the worth of the individual if it signifies an honourable station, or decreases his/her worth if it is a mark of shame;

8. Social norms, customs, and laws, which serve as the reminder that that the individual may no longer be seen to act in accordance with the society's laws, and is thus marked accordingly. It also relates to the Hebrew prohibition against the practice of tattooing.
9. Wholeness, which is impossible to maintain when the boundary of the skin is breached through the tattooing process, and renders the individual as impure, and incomplete because of this bodily modification.

These values are then interpreted according to the boundary relations, as identified by Tor Hernes (2004:10-16) which affect each of the values, in order to be applied to the analytical model of boundary relations which is used to interpret the tattooing practices of the identified Mediterranean cultures. This application of boundary relations to the social-scientific boundaries creates the foundation upon which the bodily analysis is conducted, as each of these values, and their corresponding boundaries, is explained in terms of the ancient Mediterranean tattooed body in space, as well as the ancient Mediterranean tattooed body as space. The boundaries of each of the aforementioned values are explained as follows:

Clothing serves as a physical boundary to the body as space, as well as to the body in space, because it serves as a boundary between the observer and the naked skin of the bearer of tattoos. Clothing also indicates social status within a community, which serves as an enforcement of the hierarchical spatial practices which dictate where people of different classes may or may not go within the inhabited space of a community.

Communicativeness is a social boundary because of the way that the mouth and ears are used in interaction in interpersonal relations.

Honour and shame are values which serve as physical, social, and mental boundaries. This boundary is represented as physical because a shamed person would not have spatial access to places where the honourable would be welcome. Honour and shame are social boundaries because they affect the hierarchy of a society, as well as interpersonal interactions. This boundary is also mental, because of the fact that an individual's honour or shame is intrinsically tied to his or her sense of self.

Humility is a social and mental boundary. As it is a value that directs people to stay within their inherited social status, it is social, and because social status is tied to honour and shame, it forms part of a person's sense of self, and is therefore a mental boundary as well.

Nudity is a physical, social, and mental boundary. Physically, nudity is linked with clothing, whereby the bodily boundary is breached. Nudity is not behaviourally condoned to be expressed outside of the confines of a private abode, and is thus physically restricted. Nudity

is a social boundary, because of its connection to the concept of shame; as someone being publically shamed may be stripped. This also affects an individual mentally, because of the shame of being naked, coupled with the stigma of certain types of tattooing would affect an individual's sense of self, rendering him or her shameful and shunned, and have that shame influence his or her social circle and family.

Ordering is a physical and social boundary. Physically, ordering dictates an individual's place within his or her family, society, and culture, and thus dictates status, and access to various spatial elements within a society. This translates into a social boundary because an individual's place within a society would control his or her interpersonal interactions with other members of that society.

Prominence is a physical, social, and mental boundary. Prominence proclaims the social worth of an individual, affecting his or her physical access to spaces, interpersonal interactions, as well as sense of self.

Social norms, customs, and laws relate to a society's norms, and is thus a social and mental boundary, as it affects societal values, behaviours, and beliefs.

Wholeness is a physical, social, and mental boundary. Being whole physically is a physical boundary that is breached by the tattooing process. Being other than physically whole affects social interaction, and also affects an individual's sense of self.

The social-scientific values which are related to the tattooing practices of the ancient Mediterranean cultures solve the research problem through the establishment of common cultural values and practices, which allows for the analysis, interpretation, and comparison of each of the cultures' practices on an individual basis. This common set of values form the basis of the study in terms of the analytical model which is applied to the textual and pictorial data of the evidence of the tattooing practices of the ancient Mediterranean cultures. These values are explored in terms of each of the six cultures in Chapter Three, alongside the geographical and historical contextualisation of each of the cultures' religious and military practices.



## 2.2 The Critical Spatial Interpretation of Ancient Mediterranean Tattooing Practices

The critical spatial interpretation of the ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices of Assyria, Egypt, Nubia, Israel, Greece, and Rome is based on the concept of Thirthing-as-Othering. This concept, however, cannot be applied as an interpretative tool without the contextualisation of the concept of the lived space within which othering occurs.

The lived space of a given society forms part of the private and public space in which interpersonal interaction occurs. As this interpersonal interaction is based on bodily placement within a given space, the perception of a social space may be interpreted to be based on bodily perception. Yi-Fu Tuan (1977:388) explains that the study of space is necessarily understood through “sensation, perception, and conception” which are all based on the bodily engagement with a space – Tuan (1977:399) explains the visual interpretation of and cognition of space as follows: far away from the body, a person perceives a seemingly “static” space with indistinct objects in it. Henri Lefebvre (1991:405) also states that “the whole of social space proceeds from the body”. When the body is understood in spatial terms, the senses “prefigure the layers of social space and their interconnections”. The body’s perception of space, whether active or passive, is therefore what creates a spatial understanding of the world for the individual who inhabits that body.

As space is considered to be perceived from a bodily matrix, and because the body is a social construct, any given space inhabited by bodies will be the place in which experiences occur. These experiences give a place meaning through the spirit that they engender. “A key to the meaning of place lies in the expressions that people use when they want to give it a sense carrying greater emotional charge than location or physical node” (Tuan 1977:409).

A space also inherently contains the attributions of power made by those who inhabit it. These attributes dictate the behaviours that will be tolerated within it. “Space is not a pre-existing container for artefacts and practices, but it is constituted by them [through] reciprocal influence and inflection. Artefacts are made possible by the spatial configurations which give rise to them, and artefacts give rise to the spaces they inhabit” (West-Pavlov 2009:24). Artefacts include the social-scientific values and practices which this study investigates.

The spaces within which human experiences occur, based on interpersonal interactions which are given agency through the body and context through social norms, values, and customs are thus spaces which have physical and psychological interpretations and attributes. Edward Soja and Henri Lefebvre’s theory of critical spatiality is based on premises which govern the experience of a space, and can be categorised as follows (Flanagan 1995:15-43):

1. Spatial Practice: *espace perçue* (perceived space), which serves as the medium and outcome of human activity, behaviour and experience [Firstspace];
2. Representations of Space: *espace conçue* (conceived space), which serves as the mental spaces that represent power, ideology, control and surveillance, and whereby resistance to these relations make them visible [Secondspace];
3. Representational Spaces: *espace vécue* (lived space), which are spaces that are directly lived, spaces of freedom and change [Thirdspace].

Private and public spaces within which interpersonal interaction occur are Thirdspaces, and it is within these spaces that othering occurs. Othering becomes evident in lived spaces because as a society inhabits a space, attributes are given to that space, and through those attributes the society's power dynamics present themselves. The importance of the lived space of Thirdspace is that "the spatiality that is claimed and whose recognition is desired in stories must be the territoriality of a segmented society. It is a 'people space', not bordered territories; and it is Thirdspace, the lived space of outsider peoples" (Flanagan 1995:15-43).

An important feature of the othered space would be its boundary, or border, as it is through the border that the Thirdspace becomes effectual. The borders which come into effect in terms of the ancient Mediterranean tattooed bodies are affected in terms of the honour or shame attributed to the tattooed individual, whereby those with honourable tattoos are granted spatial access, while spatial access is rescinded from those with shameful tattoos; enforcing a physical boundary. This boundary effect thus exemplifies othering within a lived space.

Othering is a phenomenon which is tied to the power dynamics of a society, because the process of othering has been described as the "discursive process by which powerful groups who may or may not make up a numerical majority, define subordinate groups into existence in a reductionist way which ascribes problematic and/or inferior characteristics to these subordinate groups" (Jensen 2011:65). This process ensures that the powerful groups retain their power and gain more power, through the subjugation of their subordinates. This process plays an important role in the formation of the identities of the subordinates, or others, as it gives them the choice to accept their banishment or to rebel against it.

The choice of accepting or rebelling against the othering is tied to the social-scientific value of humility which requires an individual to behave within his or her given social status – this status would be assigned by a marked individual's tattoos, and when these tattoos are displayed within a public space, the individual may choose to accept the othering by behaving with the requisite humility and adhering to the spatial restrictions imposed upon him or her, or the individual may choose to rebel against the othering and break the spatial boundaries which

have been imposed upon him or her, by venturing into spaces from which he or she has been banned.

The critical spatial analysis of the ancient Mediterranean tattooing practices solves the research problem in terms of the application of the theory to the Thirthing-as-Othering which occurs within the societies where tattooing is practiced. This application is done by answering each of the following three questions within the cultural context of each of the six ancient Mediterranean cultures:

1. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on physical boundaries within the culture?
2. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on social identity and interpersonal interaction within the culture?
3. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on the tattooed individual's perception of his or place within the culture?

The application of the theory of critical spatiality is further explored by its application to the ancient Mediterranean tattooed body in space, and the ancient Mediterranean tattooed body as space.

### **2.3 The Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body in Space**

The following tables represent the solution of the research problem of the ancient Mediterranean tattooed body in space. Each of the following tables represents a comparison of the application of the nine social-scientific values to each of the six cultures in terms of the tattooed body in space.

**Table 36: The Value of Clothing Applied to the Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body in Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	The movements of the body in space are either hindered or accepted based on the visibility of the tattoo marks, which is affected by clothing. The fact that the hands and the faces of the tattooed individuals are not covered by clothing, thus exposing their marks, means that clothing cannot hide the distinction of these individuals. The distinction of the military grants them access to public spaces, while the access of the prisoners of war and rebellious slaves is restricted based on the visibility of their tattoos. This also demonstrates the ordering of these two sets of tattooed individuals.
<b>Egypt</b>	The tattooed body in space would be able to hide its tattooed distinction in public spaces, because the placement of the tattoos on the torso, thighs, and abdomen would be able to be covered by clothing. Facial tattoos, which serve as adornment would distinguish the individual as marked, and would not be covered by clothing, but due to the nature of the tattoos, the tattooed body in space is not hindered in terms of spatial access in public spaces because of the visibility of tattoos.
<b>Nubia</b>	While the value of clothing is intrinsically tied to covering naked flesh, and thus preventing shameful perceptions of the body in space, the application of this value to tattooed bodies which are not deemed shameful is not possible. Tattooed Nubians are not required to use clothing to hide their marks, nor are they mandated to wear less clothing so that the marks could be on display in public spaces. The choice of clothing available to a tattooed Nubian is the same as the choice of an unmarked citizen, and as such, clothing does not affect the spatial inhabitation of the marked body, nor does it distinguish the marked body as shameful.
<b>Israel</b>	While clothing indicates social status, and prevents the shameful display of nudity, clothing is removed in order to tattoo a body. The placement of the tattoos of slaves and criminals, on the arms and legs, would mean that the marks could be covered by clothing in public spaces, but that does not negate the removal of clothing in order to tattoo the body. This removal of clothing to facilitate the tattooing process would take place outside of the individual's private space, and is, therefore, shameful.
<b>Greece and Rome</b>	The visible placement of the Graeco-Roman tattoos, on the hands, legs, and faces of the marked individuals render the value of clothing moot, as the visibility of the marks is a prerequisite in terms of the access to public spaces. The military personnel are granted access to the spaces because of their identification as members of the military which is aided by the tattoos, and the fugitive slaves and criminals are restricted in terms of access to public spaces because of their punitive tattoos which cannot be concealed by clothing.

**Table 37: The Value of Communicativeness Applied to the Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body in Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	The tattoo designs portray messages to civilian interpreters, and as such, the body in space becomes an animated signifier, shown to be different from civilian bodies because of the tattoos, and these bodies are treated in accordance with the messages portrayed in the designs.
<b>Egypt</b>	The decorative facial tattoos would have affected the communicativeness of the tattooed body in space, but only in terms of the acknowledgment of the decorative features of the tattoos. The religious tattoos were placed on the torsos, abdomens, and thighs, and were, as such, not placed where their communicative value would be seen in public spaces.
<b>Nubia</b>	The decorative facial tattoos would have affected the communicativeness of the tattooed body in space, but only in terms of the acknowledgment of the status of the women associated with the practice of facial tattooing. Decorative tattoos on the arms, for example lack this communicative feature. The religious tattoos were placed on the torsos, abdomens, and thighs, and were, as such, not placed where their communicative value would be seen in public spaces. The tattoos, whether religious or decorative distinguish the body as marked, but do not distinguish it spatially in terms of restriction of access based on the message communicated by the tattoo.
<b>Israel</b>	The tattoos of the slaves and criminals of ancient Israel communicate their uncleanness, unwholeness, impurity, and shame to all unmarked Israelites. This strips them of their past social status, and limits their spatial access due to the judgement, avoidance, and othering imposed on them by unmarked Israelites who are wary of becoming unclean by associating and interacting with the marked individuals.
<b>Greece and Rome</b>	The tattoos on the hands, legs, and faces of the soldiers and armourers, fugitive slaves, and criminals communicate messages of honour and shame to the unmarked Graeco-Roman civilians, and these messages form the basis upon which the marked individuals are either granted access to public spaces, or have their access rescinded. The marked body in space is thus the signifier.

**Table 38: The Values of Honour and Shame Applied to the Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body in Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	The tattooed body in space is either recognised as honourable or shameful by virtue of the message that the tattoo displays to its interpreters. The honourable body is distinguished as having a high social status, and is given spatial access, and is revered by civilians, giving the individual bearing the honourable mark a sense of high esteem. The body marked as shameful is stripped of its social status, lowering the esteem of the individual, and restricting his or her spatial access based on social custom and law. The honour and shame assigned by tattoos distinguish the tattooed bodies from unmarked civilian bodies who earn honour and shame through behaviour.
<b>Egypt</b>	The nature of the tattoos on the torsos and abdomens of Egyptian women are not shameful, and as such, the tattooed body in space was not interpreted to be a shameful body. The tattoos of priestesses, dancers, and musicians granted them access to private spaces; and, as such, the tattooed body in space was an honourable body, bearing marks of religiosity and adornment, and marks of profession.
<b>Nubia</b>	Decorative and religious tattoos are acquired voluntarily and based on customary social behaviours and beliefs. Therefore, the marked body would not lose any spatial access, nor would it be perceived to be any less honourable than an unmarked body. Therefore, while the tattooed body is distinct in terms of its decoration, there are no boundaries enforced in terms of ordering. The volitional engagement in the tattooing process means that there is no enforced threshold involved in the acquisition of a tattoo which would honour the individual's body.
<b>Israel</b>	Because the unclean, marked body is avoided and othered for fear of becoming unclean by association, it is shamed because of its marking by being restricted in terms of spatial access and social interaction. The public nature of both the shaming of the body by imposing the tattooing process, as well as the othering are physically and socially enacted through avoidance, restriction, and isolation of the marked body.
<b>Greece and Rome</b>	The communicative value of the Graeco-Roman tattooing practice allows for the marked body to be recognised as either honourable or shameful by virtue of the mark that it bears. The tattooed military personnel are distinguished from unmarked civilians as being honourable and of a high social status by virtue of their identification in terms of the tattoos. These individuals are thus granted spatial access without question because of their social honour and esteem. The punitive and preventative tattoos of fugitive slaves and criminals strip these individuals of social esteem and mark them as permanently shameful. This shame means that they are othered from society, and, as such, experience spatial restrictions in terms of public spaces, because they are not to be trusted due to the injunctions which are portrayed by their marks.

**Table 39: The Value of Humility Applied to the Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body in Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	The honourably tattooed body of the soldier gains spatial access, and access to territories yet to be conquered in the name of the king. This body moves with pride, and asserts its status. The shamefully tattooed body of the prisoner or the slave is stripped of status, and is restricted in terms of its spatial access, and the shamefully tattooed body is guarded in public spaces. Just as status cannot be reclaimed, access to spaces cannot be reclaimed because of the permanence of the tattoo.
<b>Egypt</b>	As humility dictates that an individual stays within his or her designated social status, the tattooed body in space is unaffected by this value, as Egyptian tattoos did not mark or assign social status to be shown in public spaces. The tattoos are not related to ordering, as women from all social hierarchical levels could acquire them, and the threshold of the tattooing practice is easily breached because of the voluntary nature of the engagement in the practice.
<b>Nubia</b>	The value of humility dictates that an individual stays within his or her designated social status. The tattooed Nubian body in space is unaffected by this value, as Nubian tattoos did not mark or assign social status to be shown in public spaces. The tattoos are not related to ordering, as men and women from all social hierarchical levels could acquire them, and the threshold of the tattooing practice is easily breached because of the voluntary nature of the engagement in the practice.
<b>Israel</b>	Due to the avoidance and othering of the tattooed bodies, marked individuals do not have the opportunity to engage in interpersonal interactions in such a way as to behave as though they had more worth than that which the tattoos assign to them. The othering enforces ordering of the marked bodies, as it strips them of status and labels them as unclean, while the isolation and avoidance of these bodies enforces a high threshold, as these bodies are not capable of re-entering mainstream society.
<b>Greece and Rome</b>	Military personnel are marked honourably, and the honour and status of the military in general transfers to the individual, who is able to move within Graeco-Roman territories with rightful

	access. The shamefully tattooed bodies of fugitive slaves and criminals are stripped of their social esteem, and have their spatial access rescinded because of this lowering of social status. The loss of status, and thus access, is permanent, due to the permanent nature of tattoos.
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**Table 40: The Value of Nudity Applied to the Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body in Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	The exposed skin of the tattooed bodies in space force the bearers of the marks to show the marks to all who look upon them, in order to either allow spatial access, or to rescind and restrict it. This necessitates the acceptance of the exposure of naked, tattooed skin, in order to comply with laws in terms of guarding those marked as dangerous, and granting access to those marked as military.
<b>Egypt</b>	The tattooing process would distinguish the bodily interaction from that of an unmarked man or woman, but would be able to be concealed in terms of the religious tattoos. The only application of the naked body in space is that of the bodily boundary being breached when the tattoos are inscribed upon the body, in a space of the tattooists choosing. The decorative facial tattooing would not be affected by the boundary of nudity, as the face was bared and naked in both public and private spaces.
<b>Nubia</b>	As with the Egyptian tattooing culture, the only application of the value if nudity to the Nubian tattooing process is the fact that the naked body in space represents the boundary being breached when the tattoos are inscribed upon the body, in a space of the tattooists choosing. The decorative facial tattooing would not be affected by the boundary of nudity, as the face was bared and naked in both public and private spaces, and the decorative tattoos on the arms of Meroitic period men would similarly be unaffected, as the arms would not be required to be covered in public spaces.
<b>Israel</b>	The tattooing process necessitates nudity in a space outside of the individual's private space, and, as such, is inherently shameful, as Israelite culture deems nudity to be unclean and shameful. This distinguishes the marked body in space from unmarked bodies, because the unmarked bodies are not exposed in this manner against their volition. The fact that the tattooing practice is punitive and preventative means that the nudity of the marked body in space orders the individuals as slaves and criminals who are stripped of status, and restricted in terms of spatial access due to this stripped status, as well as the marks and their associated shame.
<b>Greece and Rome</b>	The tattooing process necessitates nudity, as the naked flesh has to be exposed to the tattooist in order to be inscribed. The naked flesh which is exposed once tattooed is necessary in terms of the social customs which require the identification of marked individuals by the messages which their marks portray. Therefore, tattoos are placed on the faces and hands of individuals, as well as on their legs, and spatial access is granted or rescinded based on the interpretation of these marks.

**Table 41: The Value of Ordering Applied to the Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body in Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	The mark of the soldier assigns him honourable status because of the honour and high status of the military in Assyrian community. The marks of the prisoners of war and of the rebellious slaves assign them minimal social status, and strip them of their previous social status, by virtue of the messages that their tattoos relay about them, marking them as animals, and as criminals.
<b>Egypt</b>	Voluntary tattoos which are not tied to social status do not affect the tattooed individual's place within her family, or her society at large. As such, the tattooed body in space is only limited spatially in terms of its inherited social status, or by its profession. For example, tattooed priestesses have access to the inner sanctums of temples, whereas even unmarked members of society would not have that access because of their inherited status.
<b>Nubia</b>	As Nubian tattoos are not enforced, nor assign status, nor shame, the individual's choice to acquire the tattoos does not affect his or her place within his or her family, or Nubian society at large. As such, the tattooed body in space is only limited spatially in terms of its inherited social status.
<b>Israel</b>	The physical shunning and othering of the tattooed individuals enforce the ordering of their newly stripped status. The fact that unmarked individuals would avoid interpersonal interaction with the tattooed individuals means that the tattooed individuals would be spatially restricted in terms of access to public spaces due to their shame and uncleanness.
<b>Greece and Rome</b>	As the communal honour of the military is transferred to the individual members of the military, and this honour is shown in the high social esteem and status of military personnel. The shameful marks of the fugitive slaves and criminals strip these individuals of social esteem and status, and thus render these individuals othered from society, especially in terms of spatial access in public spaces.



**Table 42: The Value of Prominence Applied to the Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body in Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	The respective honourable or shameful tattoos assign the body wearing them a certain worth, based on the interpretation of the design. This means that the social interaction and spatial inhabitation of the tattooed body in space is based on its tattoos.
<b>Egypt</b>	The tattooed body in space proclaims its honour, shame, and social status through its spatial inhabitation and behaviour based on inherited status, customs, and profession. This behaviour and adherence to social customs is the same behaviour that an unmarked individual would embark upon within public spaces.
<b>Nubia</b>	As the tattoos of Nubian citizens do not assign status or shame, the tattooed Nubian body in space proclaims its honour, shame, and social status through its spatial inhabitation and behaviour based on inherited status, customs, and profession in the same manner as unmarked citizens do.
<b>Israel</b>	Due to the stripping of the marked individual's status, and the enforcement of the social othering of the marked body means that the status of shame, uncleanness, and un-wholeness would be perceived and reinforced whenever the marked body enters a public space. This means that the social enforcement of the stripped status would negatively affect the marked individual in terms of social esteem, as well as personal esteem.
<b>Greece and Rome</b>	The worth that is assigned to Graeco-Roman bodies is based on the honour or the shame of the marks. Military marks are honourable, while punitive and preventative marks are shameful. The honour or shame of the tattoos portray messages of social esteem, status, and worth about the individual who bears the marks, and thus, the social interaction and spatial inhabitation of the tattooed body in space is based on its tattoos and the interpretation of the tattoos by unmarked civilians.

**Table 43: The Value of Social Norms, Customs, and Laws Applied to the Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body in Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	Social norms and Assyrian law dictate the spatial behaviour of tattooed bodies. The soldiers bearing the honourable military marks are granted spatial access based on custom and law, while the shameful bodies bearing marks of criminality are guarded and restricted in terms of their spatial inhabitation of public spaces.
<b>Egypt</b>	As the tattooed body is not proclaiming shame, or assigned a status by virtue of the tattoos it bears, based on proscriptive laws or punitive measures. Therefore, the tattoos are interpreted to be voluntary. The decorative and religious tattoos which are acquired by Egyptian women do not mark their bodies contrary to social custom or law, and, as such, the tattooed body in space is not restricted because of the marks.
<b>Nubia</b>	As with Egyptian tattooing, Nubian tattoos are interpreted as being voluntarily acquired. This means that the tattooed body is not proclaiming shame, or assigned a status by virtue of the tattoos it bears, based on proscriptive laws or punitive measures. The decorative and religious tattoos which are acquired by Nubian do not mark their bodies contrary to social custom or law, and, as such, the tattooed body in space is not restricted because of the marks.
<b>Israel</b>	The social othering and isolation of the marked body in space is necessary based on the communal social belief that exposure to an unclean individual could lead to the unmarked individual becoming unclean by association. The prohibition against the tattooing of Israelites further supports the need to other the marked individuals, both in terms of the restriction of their spatial access to public spaces, as well as restricting their interaction with unmarked Israelites.
<b>Greece and Rome</b>	Graeco-Roman customs and social norms require the marking of the members of the military, as well as the marking of fugitive slaves, and criminals. The tattoos influence the spatial access of the marked individuals, as the honourably marked individuals have spatial access, based on social esteem, while the shamefully marked individuals are othered, and thus restricted in terms of spatial access. The othering of the fugitive slaves and criminals is based on social custom, and is thus necessary in terms of social values.



**Table 44: The Value of Wholeness Applied to the Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body in Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	The body of the soldier, marked with the honourable, military tattoo, is seen to be whole because of its mark. This body is thus allowed to freely move within civilian society, among whole, unmarked civilians. The bodies of prisoners of war and rebellious slaves are rendered to be un-whole because of their shameful marks, restricting their access in terms of movements among whole, unmarked citizens
<b>Egypt</b>	Due to the fact that Egyptian tattoos are not socially labelled as shameful, the tattooed body was not rendered any less whole for being marked. As such, the tattooed body in space was not restricted or othered because of the perception of its wholeness. The tattooed bodies of the priestesses of Hathor, as well as those of dancers and musicians would have been considered more whole for their marks, and would have been granted access into temples, as well to private spaces of high social esteem because of the marks that the bodies bear.
<b>Nubia</b>	The Nubian tattooed body in space is not restricted or othered because of the perception of its wholeness based on its marks because the marks are acquired in honour of the gods and according to social custom. As such the marks contribute to the wholeness of the individual, as opposed to detracting from it as would be the case with a shameful mark, or illness.
<b>Israel</b>	Due to the enforcement of the unclean, impure, un-whole, and shameful nature of the marked body, its lack of wholeness is irredeemable, both based on the permanent nature of the tattooing process, as well as the permanence of the othering, for fear of the unmarked becoming unclean and un-whole by virtue of association with the marked, un-whole body in public spaces. The marked body is therefore restricted in terms of its social and spatial access because of its shameful distinction of not being whole and fit for the presence of God.
<b>Greece and Rome</b>	Honourably marked soldiers and armourers, whose tattoos form part of their uniform, are considered to be whole by virtue of the marks. The honour and status of this mark means that a member of the military is allowed to freely move within civilian society, among whole, unmarked civilians. Punitive marks which shame bodies of fugitive slaves and criminals render these bodies un-whole and othered, restricting their access in terms of movements among whole, unmarked Graeco-Roman citizens.

#### 2.4 The Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body as Space

The following tables represent the solution of the research problem of the ancient Mediterranean tattooed body as space. Each of the following tables represents a comparison of the application of the nine social-scientific values to each of the six cultures in terms of the tattooed body as space.

**Table 45: The Value of Clothing Applied to Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body as Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	The effect of clothing on the body as space is that of exposure, due to the fact that the hands and faces of tattooed individuals cannot be covered by clothing. As such, the exposed tattooed skin is clearly marked and distinguished from the unmarked skin of civilians.
<b>Egypt</b>	The tattooed body as space is not a space of shame by virtue of the marks, and therefore, clothing could be used to further adorn the tattooed body. Tattoos which would be concealed under clothing due to placement on the space of the body were not hidden out of shame.
<b>Nubia</b>	The Nubian tattooed body as space would not have been interpreted as space of shame by virtue of the marks, and therefore, clothing could be used to further adorn the tattooed body. Tattoos which would be concealed under clothing due to placement on the space of the body were not hidden out of shame, but out of adherence to customary dress in public spaces.
<b>Israel</b>	The tattooed body is a space of shame by virtue of the uncleanness and un-wholeness which the tattoo causes. Even though the tattoos on the arms and legs of slaves and criminals could be concealed with clothing, the clothing would not negate the shame of the bodily space. Clothing cannot conceal the shame which the marks impose, nor could clothing redeem the status of the marked body.
<b>Greece and Rome</b>	The necessary exposure of the tattooed skin of the military is an honourable exposure, as the mark is honourable. The punitive tattoos which are necessarily displayed in public spaces render that body to be a shameful space in itself, and, as such, its naked exposure is shameful. This display distinguishes the marked individuals from the unmarked members of Graeco-Roman society.

**Table 46: The Value of Communicativeness Applied to Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body as Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	The body as space loses its identity outside of that which the tattoo communicates it to be – the body of the prisoner of war, or of the slave becomes an object and a space of shame, whereas the soldier's body is a space of honour. This affects the social ordering of the body as space, because it is treated as what the mark declares it to be. This distinguishes the marked bodies from unmarked civilians whose identities are not based on externally assigned meaning, and whose ordering are based on behaviour, rather than interpretation.
<b>Egypt</b>	The placement of the religious tattoos on the torsos, abdomens, and thighs of Egyptian women indicates the importance of the part of the body in relation to the protection and assistance from the relevant deity in terms of fertility and childbirth. This means that the communicativeness of the religiously tattooed body as space was limited to the bodily affiliation with fertility and childbirth. The decorative facial tattoos showed the importance of the appearance of the body in public spaces.
<b>Nubia</b>	The tattooed body of space did not communicate a status or a punitive label upon the faces of the tattooed bodies, and as such, the communicativeness of the tattooed body as space is tied to the category of tattoo inscribed upon it. The facial tattoos of C-Group women, along with the tattoos on the arms and hands of Meroitic Period Nubian men indicate nothing more than decoration. The tattoos on the torsos, abdomens, and thighs indicate religious purposes related to fertility, pregnancy, childbirth, and the afterlife.
<b>Israel</b>	Due to the social values of physical wholeness and cleanness, the marked body becomes a space of shame which communicates its un-wholeness and uncleanness to all those who come across it. This means that the shamed body is othered, and that the othering is permanent, due to the nature of the tattoos which are permanent.
<b>Greece and Rome</b>	The tattooed body is given an identity based on the nature of the tattoo which is inscribed upon it. As such the only identity the marked body has is the identity which its tattoo(s) proclaim in terms of its communicativeness in placement as well as design. The body of a fugitive slave, or of a criminal becomes an object and a space of shame, whereas the body of a member of the military is a space of honour. The communicativeness of marked bodies distinguish them from the unmarked civilians who are identified through behaviour and customary actions.

**Table 47: The Values of Honour and Shame Applied to Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body as Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	The tattooed body becomes a space of honour or of shame, based on the tattoo inscribed on it. This mark others it from unmarked civilians, and dictates how the individual will be treated. The mark of honour others the honoured body from unmarked bodies, almost rendering the unmarked bodies to be less honourable, even less whole, and unable to attain the honour of the mark. Conversely, the shamefully marked body is othered from unmarked bodies because it is no longer whole, and the wholeness of the body cannot be restored because of the permanence of the mark. The shame is therefore permanent.
<b>Egypt</b>	The religious nature of the tattoos would render the body that bears them as honourable, because of the importance of piety and religious practice to Egyptian culture. This honour would apply to the tattooed body of any class, as any class could honour the gods. The tattoos which invoke blessings, assistance, and protection in terms of childbirth honour the process of becoming a mother, as the family unit was of great social importance in terms of honour. The decorative tattoos would also have been perceived as honourable, because of the value that Egyptians placed on appearance and adornment. The unmarked Egyptian men would show their piety and adornment through social customs and behavioural norms, distinguishing them from the marked women.
<b>Nubia</b>	The decorative and religious nature of the tattoos which Nubians acquire would render the body that bears them as honourable, because of the importance of piety and religious practice to Egyptian culture. This honour would apply to the tattooed body of any class, as any class could honour the gods. The tattoos which invoke blessings, assistance, and protection in terms of childbirth honour the process of becoming a mother, as the family unit of was great social importance in terms of honour. The decorative tattoos would also have been perceived as honourable, because of the value that Egyptians placed on appearance and adornment. The unmarked Egyptian men would show their piety and adornment through social customs and behavioural norms, distinguishing them from the marked women.
<b>Israel</b>	The isolation and othering of the marked body enforce its physical shame on a social and mental level. The isolation of the marked body reinforces its perception as a space of shame, and this leads to the marked individual to choose to accept his or her shame, or to choose to rebel against the othering and shame which has been imposed upon it.
<b>Greece and Rome</b>	The nature of the Graeco-Roman tattoo dictates its honour or its shame. The military tattoos are both exclusive and honourable and thus render the military bodies as honourable and esteemed. Punitive and preventative tattoos are shameful and turn the bodies of fugitive slaves and criminals into spaces of shame which have to be othered from society. The honour or shame bestowed by the tattoos are permanent features of the marked bodies, due to the permanent nature of the tattoos, and the effect that the tattoos have on the social and personal esteems of the marked individuals is thus permanently enforced as well.

**Table 48: The Value of Humility Applied to Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body as Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	The honourable tattoo of the soldier elevates his social status because of his military affiliation, and as such, honours his body with the mark. The shameful tattoos of slaves and prisoners strip them of their previous status, and force them into the shameful status declared by the tattoos. They are thus othered from society, while the honourable bodies of soldiers other society because of their lack of marks. The permanence of the marks mean that the newly designated status cannot be physically usurped, without the threat of further marking, further shaming the space of the individual's body.
<b>Egypt</b>	The choice of marking the body is not related to the social status of the individual. Therefore, the tattooed body as space carries the same social status that it had prior to being tattooed. The distinction of the tattooed body as space is not related to its status by virtue of the mark, but rather by virtue of the sex of the body, as tattooing was a feminine practice, and in terms of the choice of religious tattoo inscribed on the body.
<b>Nubia</b>	As is seen in Egyptian tattooing culture, Nubian tattoos did not affect the social status of the individual, and the acquisition of the tattoos is voluntary. Therefore, the tattooed body as space carries the same social status that it had prior to being tattooed. The distinction of the tattooed body as space is not related to its status by virtue of the mark, but rather by virtue of the behaviour of the individual based on social custom and law.
<b>Israel</b>	The marked body as space is assigned the permanent status of shame, and uncleanness, and un-wholeness. This is a permanent distinction from unmarked bodies, and, as such, the shame of the marked body is either to be accepted or to be rebelled against at the risk of further physical

	punishment and othering. This affects the marked individual's esteem, as the individual would have to see himself or herself as a space of shame, in order to comply with societal norms within which he or she has to function.
<b>Greece and Rome</b>	The status and honour of the military as a whole influences the honour and status of the individual military member, who is marked as being part of the honourable and highly esteemed community by means of the military tattoos. Punitive and preventative tattoos mark the bodies of fugitive slaves and criminals as spaces of shame, which others these individuals from Graeco-Roman society. This lack of social esteem is either to be accepted by the individual with humility in terms of acting in accordance with the new status, or the individual could rebel against this imposition of a lack of status, at the risk of further physical punishment.

**Table 49: The Value of Nudity Applied to Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body as Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	The exposure of the tattooed body as space signifies its distinction from unmarked bodies. The marks, being permanent, permanently alter the naked skin of the tattooed individuals, and permanently alter that individual's sense of esteem and self. The alteration of the naked skin alters its wholeness, and alters its essential being, both for the marked individual, and for the civilian who interprets the mark.
<b>Egypt</b>	The voluntary tattoo process necessitates that the body as space be bared in order to be marked at the request and volition of the individual who has chosen to acquire a tattoo. While the tattooing process itself requires the nudity of the individual, general social interaction and activities in public spaces would not – as the process would distinguish the bodily interaction from that of an unmarked man or woman in terms of acquisition, but not in daily life, as the body's marks would be able to be concealed in terms of the religious tattoos. The naked body as space becomes a canvas for the tattooist, and the tattoos may be revealed to those in front of whom the tattooed body would be displayed in its naked form in private space. The decorative facial tattooing would not be affected by the boundary of nudity, as the face was bared and naked in both public and private spaces.
<b>Nubia</b>	Because the tattooing process is voluntary, the bearing of skin in order to acquire a tattoo would be voluntary as well. The display of the tattoos would also be voluntary in terms of the tattoos on the torsos, abdomens, and thighs of Nubian women. As the tattooing process is interpreted as being honourable in terms of social customs, the nudity of the tattooed body as space is not a shameful exposure.
<b>Israel</b>	The enforced exposure of the body which is about to be tattooed is a process which publically shames the individual, and the tattoo which is inscribed onto the bodily space is a permanent reminder of this process of exposure and shame. This shame strips the body of its previous status, and marks it as a space of shame, while distinguishing it from the clothed and unmarked individuals of Israelite society.
<b>Greece and Rome</b>	The actual tattoo marks which have been inscribed upon the exposed flesh of marked individuals are what distinguish the marked individuals from the unmarked Graeco-Roman citizens. The permanent tattoos permanently alter the nature of the naked skin, and thus permanently assign that individual's honour or shame, as well as social status. This alteration has an effect on the wholeness of the marked individual, based on the honour or shame of the mark with which he or she has been inscribed.

**Table 50: The Value of Ordering Applied to Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body as Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	The tattoos of the soldiers, prisoners of war, and rebellious slaves assign their bodies with honour or shame, respectively, and, as such, create physical spaces of individual and social esteem. This physically assigned esteem designates how the individual functions within the public and private spaces of Assyrian territories.
<b>Egypt</b>	The Egyptian body as space would not be assigned social status by virtue of the tattoo marks upon that body. The tattooed body as space is thus ordered in terms of inherited status and honourable actions, as opposed to the assigned status by an imposed tattoo.
<b>Nubia</b>	The Nubian body as space is not marked in order to assign social status by an imposed tattoo. The tattooed body as space is thus ordered in terms of inherited status and honourable actions, not by the tattoos that is bears voluntarily.
<b>Israel</b>	As the social status of the marked body is stripped and replaced with an enforced status of shame, uncleanness, and un-wholeness, the tattooed individual would be expected to behave in such a manner which shows acceptance of this shame and uncleanness. This enforced status as a space

	of shame which would affect the marked body as space distinguishes it from unmarked individuals because the unmarked individuals are not inherently shameful in terms of their bodies, and as such, are not expected to behave within their assigned and enforced status.
<b>Greece and Rome</b>	As the status, honour, shame, social esteem, and personal esteem of the marked body is directly related to the tattoos it bears, the body as space falls within its social status by virtue of the honour assigned to it (as with the members of the military), or the shame assigned to it (as with fugitive slaves and criminals). This assigned status affects how the marked individual perceives himself or herself in terms of the social hierarchy of his or her society, and also how this individual acts in terms of spatial access and interpersonal interactions within the public spaces of Greece and Rome.

**Table 51: The Value of Prominence Applied to Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body as Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	The tattooed body becomes an honourable or a shameful space in accordance with its mark, and, as such, the body's societal status is either elevated because of the mark, or lowered, and even stripped away completely, in the case of the prisoners of war. The newly assigned status is permanent because of the permanence of the marks.
<b>Egypt</b>	The tattooed body as space would not be assigned its social status by virtue of its tattoos, and, as such, the tattooed body would function as unmarked bodies do, in accordance with social customs, values, and laws, in order to act within its inherited social status. The tattoos are voluntarily acquired as part of these actions which honour the gods, and adorn the individual, based on custom.
<b>Nubia</b>	The tattooed Nubian body would be able to have the same social interaction and spatial access as the unmarked Nubian body, in terms of social customs, values, and laws, in order to act within its inherited social status. The tattoos would be acquired as part of these actions which honour the gods, and adorn the individual, based on custom.
<b>Israel</b>	Being assigned the status of an inherently shameful space in terms of having a marked body would affect the individual in terms of his or her personal esteem, as he or she could either choose to accept his or her body as a space of shame, or to rebel against the perceived shame in order to break out of the status which he or she has been assigned.
<b>Greece and Rome</b>	The social esteem and social status of the marked body are assigned through the marks which that body bears. As such, a tattoo can either elevate and enhance the individual's status and esteem, such as the honourable military tattoos; or the tattoos can strip the individual of social status and esteem, as is the case with punitive tattoos of fugitive slaves and criminals. The marked individual cannot return to his or her former status after being marked, as the tattooing process is permanent.

**Table 52: The Value of Social Norms, Customs, and Laws Applied to Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body as Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	Tattoos dictate the body's wholeness, depending upon its application in terms of honour or shame, and, as such, affect the way in which the body as space is interpreted and how it is treated based on social custom and law. Bodies bearing honourable marks which mark them as whole are treated as being worthy of spatial inhabitation. The shameful tattoos which mark bodies as un-whole leave those bodies to be interpreted as spaces of shame, and to be shunned and othered, by custom and by law.
<b>Egypt</b>	The tattooed Egyptian body as space fulfils the social mandates of religious obedience and honouring the gods. The religious tattoos invoke favour from the gods, and, as such, are honourable based on the social customs of the Egyptian people. The decorative tattoos also fall within the ambit of social custom, and therefore also contribute to the tattooed body being an honourable space.
<b>Nubia</b>	The tattooed body of a Nubian citizen interpreted as a space fulfils the social mandates of religious obedience and honouring the gods. The religious tattoos invoke favour from the gods, and, as such, are honourable based on the social customs of the Nubian people, as they have been influenced by the Egyptians. The decorative tattoos also fall within the ambit of social custom, and therefore also contribute to the tattooed body being an honourable space.
<b>Israel</b>	The marked body is treated as a space of shame because it is culturally regarded as unclean, impure, and un-whole. The marked body is a space of shame which is necessarily othered in order for the unmarked Israelites to avoid becoming unclean due to contact with the marked bodies.



<b>Greece and Rome</b>	The tattoos which are customarily inscribed on members of the military, fugitive slaves, and criminals affect the social and personal esteem of the individual who bears the marks, as the social customs honour and shame, as well as the value of wholeness is tied to the honour or shame of the tattoo being inscribed. The honour of the military tattoo is recognised socially and personally, and that individual is perceived to honourable in terms of custom by virtue of the mark that he bears. The punitive and preventative marks strip the individuals of status and mark them as shameful, and, as such, other these bodies from the spaces to which they would have had access for social interaction and customary behaviour.
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**Table 53: The Value of Wholeness Applied to Ancient Mediterranean Tattooed Body as Space**

<b>Assyria</b>	Bearing the honourable mark which affords wholeness to the soldier because of his kinship within the military community allows the soldier to take pride in his mark, and as such, in his body. The shame in having wholeness stripped from the body by the addition of a shameful mark strips the slaves and prisoners of war of their bodily esteem, because their bodies become un-whole, ostracised, othered places of shame. Their status as being less than whole others them from their communities.
<b>Egypt</b>	Because the Egyptian body is tattooed in order to gain protection and assistance from the gods, as well as for decoration, the tattooed body as space would be seen to be more whole because of the tattoos which invoke the gods' blessings. The tattooed body would thus be religiously honourable, as it honours the gods through its invocation. While the tattooed body is distinguished from unmarked bodies, it has a positive effect on the individual's esteem, because of the protective and assistive nature of the tattoos.
<b>Nubia</b>	The Nubian body as space is tattooed in order to gain protection and assistance from the gods, as well as for decoration. This renders the body as space more whole because of the tattoos which invoke the gods' blessings. The tattooed body would thus be religiously honourable, as it honours the gods through its invocation. While the tattooed body is distinguished from unmarked bodies, it has a positive effect on the individual's esteem, because of the protective and assistive nature of the tattoos.
<b>Israel</b>	The tattooing process is designed to mark an individual as a shameful entity which is unclean and lacks wholeness by virtue of the alteration of the body which had not been enacted by God. The practice is prohibited in the book of Leviticus, and is thus an extreme form of physical and social othering which leaves the individual un-whole physically (permanently tattooed), socially (permanently othered), and mentally (permanently stripped of identity and status).
<b>Greece and Rome</b>	As the military tattoo becomes part of the soldier's and armourer's uniform, it marks the individual in terms of his military identity, and is honourable, the military tattoos render those who have earned them as whole, in terms of the purpose these individuals serve within the military, under the command of their ruler. The shame which is assigned to the marked bodies of the fugitive slaves and criminals strips those bodies of their wholeness, and this reinforces the need to other the shamefully marked bodies from Graeco-Roman society. The un-whole bodies are thus isolated from their communities, because they become spaces of shame which are socially recognised as such, and cannot be redeemed because of the permanence of the tattoos which mark them.

### 3. Methodological and Substantive Reflection

These theoretical interpretations are applied by means of the analytical model of boundary relations, developed by Tor Hernes (2004). The model of boundary relations had been originally designed to study organisations, but due to its basis on interpersonal interaction, it has been adapted in order to be applied to ancient Mediterranean societies in terms the following boundaries which are present in both cultural societies and organisations: the structure of authority boundaries, political boundaries, identity boundaries, hierarchical boundaries, inclusionary boundaries, normative boundaries, and behavioural boundaries (Hernes 2004:12).

The analytical model investigates the following for each of the aforementioned cultures:

1. The contextualisation and overview of the tattooing practices of each of the cultures;
2. The mental boundaries (core beliefs) of the culture, comprising the boundary effects of ordering, distinction, and threshold;
3. The social boundaries (social identity) of the culture, comprising the boundary effects of ordering, distinction, and threshold;
4. The physical boundaries (formal rules and physical structures) of the culture, comprising the boundary effects of ordering, distinction, and threshold;
5. Each culture's physical social-scientific boundaries and their cultural application;
6. Each culture's social social-scientific boundaries and their cultural application;
7. Each culture's social-scientific mental boundaries and their cultural application;
8. Answers to the following social-scientific research questions:
  - a. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice differ from the other identified cultures' tattooing practices?
  - b. To what extent does this tattooing practice affect the social bonds within the community?
  - c. To what extent does this culture's tattooing practice regulate the spatial practices of the tattooed individual?
9. Answers to the following critical spatial research questions in terms of Thirthing-as-Othering:
  - a. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on physical boundaries within the culture?
  - b. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on social identity and interpersonal interaction within the culture?
  - c. What are the effects of the tattooing practice on the tattooed individual's perception of his or place within the culture?
10. The boundary relations and boundary effects of the specific culture's tattooed body in space;
11. The boundary relations and boundary effects of the specific culture's tattooed body as space;
12. Either the iconographic interpretation of the pictorial evidence of the culture's tattooing practice, or the representational analysis of the textual evidence of the culture's tattooing practice, comprising answers to the following questions:
  - a. Barthian visual semiotics of the image or the description:
    - i. What/who is depicted? (first layer, denotation)



- ii. What values/ideas are expressed through what is being represented?(second layer, connotation)
  - iii. Which boundary (physical, social, mental) is represented in the depiction or the description?
  - iv. Which boundary effect (ordering, distinction, threshold) is represented in the depiction or description?
- b. Layers of pictorial meaning or the layers of meaning as applied to the descriptions:
- i. What is the representational meaning of the image? (primary or natural subject matter; recognition of what is being represented on the basis of the interpreter's practical experience, taking into account stylistic conventions and the technical transformations involved in the representation);
  - ii. What is the iconographical symbolism of the image? (object-signs denote a particular person, place, or thing and also the ideas and concepts attached to that person, place, or thing; secondary or conventional subject matter);
  - iii. What is the iconological symbolism of the image? (ideological meaning; underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a notion, period, class, religious, or philosophical persuasion);
13. Iconographic or descriptive interpretation of the culture's tattoos, comprising answers to the following questions:
- a. What is the category of tattoo as described (religious, punitive, military, decorative)?
  - b. Which part of the body is described tattooed?
  - c. What is described to be depicted in the tattoo?
  - d. How does this description of the tattoo affect the body in space?
  - e. How does this description of the tattoo affect the body as space?

The tattooing practices of the Assyrians, Egyptians, Nubians, Israelites, Greeks, and Romans have the following four social-scientific criteria in common, and, as such, can be compared in terms of the following four social-scientific questions:

1. Is the tattooing process undergone voluntarily?
2. Is the tattooing process sex specific?
3. Is the tattooing process honourable or shameful?
4. Which categories of tattoos were inscribed (military, punitive, religious, decorative)?

This analytical model and the associated research questions provide the solution to the research problem in terms of the social-scientific analysis of the ancient Mediterranean cultural values of clothing, communicativeness, honour and shame, humility, nudity, ordering, prominence, social norms, customs, and laws, and wholeness. These values form the interpretative basis against which the spatial practice of Thirthing-as-Othering is investigated, in order to ascertain the spatial effects of tattooing on the ancient Mediterranean tattooed body in space, as well as a space in itself.

#### **4. Recommendations for Future Research**

The nine social-scientific values which have been identified in this study as being relevant to ancient tattooing practices may be used as the basis for investigating pre-modern tattooing of other global cultures, in order to show that the ancient Mediterranean cultures may have influenced the global pre-modern practice. Two cultures which may be compared in terms of the bridge between the ancient practice and the pre-modern practice are the Japanese and Polynesian cultures.

The primary evidence of ancient tattooing practices in Japan, predating the year 300 BCE is archaeological, and is presented in ceramic form of clay dogū figurines, produced by the Jōmon-era tribes of hunters and gatherers (Ankirskiy 2014:7). The written documentation of this practice is evidenced in the records dating to the Yayoi period (300 BCE-300 CE), wherein tattooing is related to the “barbarians who adorn their bodies with designs on their skin” (Ankirskiy 2014:7). The reference to the tattooed Japanese as “barbarians” is said to have been made by Chinese dynastic historians; as it is noted that Chinese cultural practices deemed tattooing an uncivilised practice. The three primary sources of written evidence of ancient Japanese tattooing are found in the Book of Wei, and in the oldest extant chronicles of the Japanese civilisation, namely Kojiki, and Nihon Shoki (Ankirskiy 2014:8).

The Ainu people also had a tattooing culture, although it was not punitive, as that of the Yamato people (Ankirskiy 2014:11). The Ainu’s tattooing practices had “mythological origins”; as the ancestral mother was said to have passed the practice to humans, and it remained a “matrilineal custom until 1998 when the last tattooed Ainu woman died” (Ankirskiy 2014:11). The Ainu women’s facial tattoos were believed to stop spirits from entering the body and inducing illness, hence their placement around the mouth, and they showed that the woman who wore them “had reached maturity and was ready for marriage” (Ankirskiy 2014:11). The Ainu women’s lip tattoos were also believed to ensure that the wearer would experience the afterlife with her ancestors (Ankirskiy 2014:11). The Edo period’s punitive tattoos were called “*irezumi*”; ‘*ire*’, or ‘*ireru*’, meaning “to insert [pigment], and ‘*zumi*’ meaning the ink (墨 *sumi*)

itself” (Ankirskiy 2014:11). Bodily modification was employed as punishment in the form of tattooing, and the amputation of noses and ears. However, the practice of amputation was wholly replaced tattooing during the Kyōhō Reforms (1716-1736) (Ankirskiy 2014:11). The seriousness of the perception of the penalty of tattooing was altered during these reforms, as the practice was no longer used as a substitute for the death penalty, and was instead, used as a punishment for minor first offenses (Ankirskiy 2014:11). “Second-time offenders were sentenced to death, as well as thieves and murderers” (Ankirskiy 2014:11). These punitive tattoos were imprinted on the offender’s forehead. First-time offenders were imprinted with a horizontal line, with an added arc for second-time offenders. Third-time offenders received added lines which culminated in the character for dog, *inu*, (犬) (Ankirskiy 2014:11).

Tattooing was also used as adornment during the Edo period, and it is believed that criminals would seek out tattooists to cover the punitive marks with more aesthetically pleasing tattoos (Ankirskiy 2014:12). This was done both to alter the appearance of punitive tattoos for aesthetic reasons, as well as attempts to expunge the criminality proclaimed by the marks.

Another tattooing practice was common among courtesans, known as “*irebokuro*, or love dots” (Ankirskiy 2014:12). These tattoos resembled moles, or beauty spots, and served as “love pledges made by courtesans, which also included the cutting of their fingernails and hair, signing love oaths in their own blood, and these tattoos, to prove their devotion to their lovers” (Ankirskiy 2014:12). These tattoo marks were commonly placed between the base of the thumb and the wrist, in order to enable the lovers to place their thumbs adjacent to the dots while holding hands (Ankirskiy 2014:13). Love dots signified devotion, love, and loyalty. “This practice originated in the pleasure quarters of Osaka and Kyoto, and spread to Edo” (Ankirskiy 2014:13).

Other forms of ancient Japanese tattoos include Samurai tattoos, and religious oath tattoos. Samurai tattoos were not a commonplace occurrence, however, as “if a warrior was to tattoo pledge to cause greater than himself, he would be beyond rebuke” (Ankirskiy 2014:13). That being said, Samurai were known to bear the tattoos of the crests of their clans upon their upper arms, in order to be identified if they were to be disfigured, or killed during battle (Ankirskiy 2014:13). These tattoos sometimes included the date of the battle from which the Samurai expected not to return; and in order to keep the promise that he had made to honour that date, if he were to survive the battle, he would commit suicide (Ankirskiy 2014:14). If a Samurai knew that he would not return after a battle, if he were defeated, he would commit ritual suicide, known as *seppuku*, in order to prove “devotion to Buddha” (Ankirskiy 2014:14) and the Samurai would ensure that he “gains entry to heaven by tattooing himself with his

'posthumous spiritual names' (*kaimyō*), which Samurai bought from Buddhist temples before departing for battle" (Ankirskiy 2014:14).

The tattooing practice of the Polynesian people originated in the second millennium BCE (Ankirskiy 2014:24). The tattoos were originally recorded by Captain James Cook during his travels to Hawaii and Tahiti during the 1700s, during which time it was discovered that the tattoos served to mark genealogy (Ankirskiy 2014:24). A deeper function of the tattoos may be said to have a religious and mythological connection, as the practice is said to have been introduced to the Polynesian people by a pair of deities who are Siamese twins (Ankirskiy 2014:24).

According to the myth, the pair of Samoan deities swam to Fiji, where they received a formula from artists, and were instructed to memorise the formula and then return home. The function of tattooing, as told in the myth, is to "Restore the balance between the sexes" because of the fact that tattooing is a practice that is interpreted to "lie between nature and culture, man and woman, pleasure and pain, and life and death"; and it is this duality that ties the practice to the image of the Siamese twins (Ankirskiy 2014:24). The balance between the sexes is provided through the fact that the pleasure and pain of the tattooing practice serves as the "equivalent to the pain that childbirth gives a woman and the joy that childbirth gives to a man" (Ankirskiy 2014:24).

It has been posited that ancient Polynesian tattooing follows Gell's theory which states that "Tattooing is an expression of social or cosmological derogation (Hage *et al.* 1996:335). This derogation comprises the following characteristics: first, the differences in tattoo designs denote "intrinsic differences in [societal] rank". Second, "where hypergamy led to the superior rank of sisters or brothers and a sacred sister complex, females were either less tattooed or not tattooed than males" (Hage *et al.* 1996:336). Third, "chiefly sanctity was associated with restrictions on tattooing (Hage *et al.* 1996:336). Variations in Polynesian tattooing practices may be due to differences in gender, marriage alliance, and residence (Hage *et al.* 1996:336).

An example of the application of the aforementioned categories is that women who were primed for marriage were tattooed on their buttocks, genitals, and thighs (Hage *et al.* 1996:336). These tattoos were compulsory for the females, but not for their male counterparts. The tattooing was generally done to a woman of higher rank, while she would be accompanied by women and girls of lesser rank so that they may share in her pain (Hage *et al.* 1996:336).

Polynesian tattoos serve decorative, protective, erotic, and social purposes. Tattoos were also used to make their male wearer seem "terrifying" if he was a warrior, as well as to give

him more prestige (Hage *et al.* 1996:341) The tattooing experts are primarily female, and the tattoos inscribed on females were documented as being more detailed and intricate than those inscribed on Polynesian males (Hage *et al.* 1996:339). Tattoos were considered to be the wearer's "greatest ornament", and an untattooed woman was faced with derision (Hage *et al.* 1996:340).

Maori people practised traditional cultural tattooing with a strong religious motivation, as they are a polydeist culture, and they believe in a specific tattoo god or spirit (Scheinfeld 2007:364). The Maori believed that after their death, this spirit would recognise their *moko*, or facial tattoos after they have "passed to the portal of the next world" (Scheinfeld 2007:364). It was thought that this spirit would provide the decedent with the requisite vision and power to navigate the afterlife (Scheinfeld 2007:364).

Another example of the religious application of tattoos in ancient Polynesian tattooing culture is that of the Hawaiian people. The ancient Hawaiian people also believed in a tattoo gods, referred to as '*aumakua*, who would serve as personal and family gods and who would protect certain families if they were appropriately honoured (Scheinfeld 2007:365). These gods could take on animal forms, as well as the forms of inanimate objects, and natural phenomena such as lightning. Hawaiians honour the '*aumakua* through acquiring tattoos.

The mythical origin of the connection between the gods and tattoos is based on the tale of a woman who was bitten by a shark while she was swimming in the ocean. When the shark bit into her leg, it noticed that its teeth were touching her '*aumakua* and it retreated, marking its mistake (Scheinfeld 2007:365). This is the foundation of the invocation of the protection of tattoos on the lower extremities to protect Hawaiians from attacks in the ocean.

Ancient Hawaiian tattooing practices place immense value upon the location of tattoos based on the gods and goddesses that the tattoos are honouring, and each tattoo session is conducted by tattoo priests and practitioners (Scheinfeld 2007:365). The tattooing ritual starts with an invocation to the tattoo gods, asking for the safety of the person undergoing the process, "that the etching of the tattoo will not cause injury, that the surgical sites may heal soon, and that the designs may be pleasing and attractive to the gods" (Scheinfeld 2007:365).

Samoan tattoos were primarily religious and military; as warriors were tattooed for warfare (Scheinfeld 2007:365). Ancient Samoan tattoo artists received entry into the profession through hereditary lines, and the position was seen to be a privilege. Samoan tattooists tattooed young men in groups of between six and eight during a ceremony for the tattooing rites (Scheinfeld 2007:365).

The Japanese and Polynesian tattooing practices may be investigated by the application of the analytical model of boundary relations in order to establish their similarities and differences in terms of the ancient tattooing practices which may have influenced them.

## 5. Conclusion

The study of the ancient tattooed Mediterranean people from Assyria (*circa* 3300 BCE-2100 BCE), Egypt (*circa* 2000 BCE-300 BCE) Nubia (*circa* 2000 BCE-300 BCE), Israel (*circa* 1500 BCE-1200 BCE), Greece (*circa* 510 BCE-323 BCE), and Rome (*circa* 510 BCE-323 BCE) comprises the interpretivist investigation into the social-scientific and critical spatial practices of the cultures in order to establish whether or not the tattooed individuals would have been othered because of their marks. This othering is investigated in terms of the body in space, as well as the body as space.

This study assumes that the tattooed body, which is necessarily different from unmarked bodies, would be othered because of that difference. This othering of the tattooed body would occur because the body has tattoos inscribed upon it, and that the messages embedded within the design of the tattoos could affect their bearers in terms of further othering due to the social interpretation of these tattoo designs. Based on this assumption, and the meaning attributed to the interpretation of tattoos in a social context, the tattooed body is understood to be a social body, and, as such, that the tattooed body can be analysed through social-scientific criticism.

The social-scientific and critical spatial interpretation of the tattooing practices of the ancient Assyrians, Egyptians, Nubians, Israelites, Greeks, and Romans identifies nine social values which are common to these cultures. These values are clothing, communicativeness, honour and shame, humility, nudity, ordering, prominence, social norms, customs, and laws, and wholeness. The analysis of these values as they are applied to each of the aforementioned cultures allows for the establishment of the social body as an entity within social space, as well as a spatial entity in itself. The critical spatial interpretation of the phenomenon of Thirthing-as-Othering is applied in terms of how the tattooed individuals are othered within the social spaces they inhabit. Critical spatiality is further applied in order to analyse the tattooed body in space, based on its social interaction within societal space, as well as body as space which is analysed based on the individual who bears the tattoos, and the meaning, affect, and esteem that are imparted to that individual by virtue of his or her marks.

This study shows that there is a distinction between honourable and shameful tattoos, and that the othering which occurs based on the honour or shame of the tattooed individual either others the marked individual in the case of shameful tattoos, or, in the case of honourable tattoos,

other the unmarked individuals by refusing them access and entry into elite communities, such as those of the military.

This study identifies four factors of the ancient Mediterranean tattooing process which may be compared, namely, whether or not the tattooing process is engaged in under the individual's own volition, whether the tattooing process is only applicable to one or both sexes, whether the tattoos are honourable or shameful, and whether the tattoos are decorative, religious, military, or punitive and preventative. Based on these aforementioned factors, the study yielded the following results:

The honourable tattoos, such as military tattoos (as inscribed by Assyrian, Greek, and Roman cultures) afford military personnel free access to all public spaces within the culture's territories. Honourable religious tattoos (as inscribed by Egyptian and Nubian cultures) do not restrict the individuals who bear them in terms of spatial access. The punitive and preventative tattoos (as inscribed by Assyrian, Israelite, Greek, and Roman cultures) which are used to mark rebellious and fugitive slaves, as well as criminals, and prisoners of war are shameful tattoos, and cause those who bear them to be othered from their respective communities. These shameful tattoos restrict these marked individuals' access to public spaces, as they are treated with suspicion and scorn, and are ostracised by unmarked members of their respective societies. This othering presents the shamefully tattooed individuals with the choice to accept their othered status and to behave with the requisite humility in order to avoid incurring further shame, or to rebel against the othering and to move within the public spaces, at the risk of incurring further physical punishment and increased shame.



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