Tattoo History Fundamentals

Tattoo History · Answer Key · 25 Questions

1. Who is currently recognized as the oldest known tattooed human, dating back to roughly 3370 BCE?

A) Otzi the Iceman
B) The Ice Maiden of Siberia
C) King Tutankhamun
D) The Princess of Ukok

2. In which region did the practice of 'Tatau' originate, giving the English language the word 'tattoo'?

A) Japan
B) Polynesia
C) Scandinavia
D) Egypt

3. Which 18th-century explorer is credited with popularizing the word 'tattow' in the English language after his voyages to the South Pacific?

A) Christopher Columbus
B) Ferdinand Magellan
C) James Cook
D) Marco Polo

4. In ancient Egypt, tattoos were predominantly found on the mummified remains of which group?

A) Pharaohs
B) High Priests
C) Women
D) Soldiers

5. What was the primary purpose of 'markings' on the bodies of ancient Roman and Greek slaves?

A) Decoration
B) Identification of ownership
C) Religious protection
D) Status symbol

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6. Which invention by Samuel O'Reilly in 1891 revolutionized the tattoo industry by increasing speed and consistency?

A) The electric tattoo machine
B) The rotary needle gun
C) The coil-induction pen
D) The steam-powered injector

7. During the Edo period in Japan, what was the primary purpose of 'irezumi' markings on criminals?

A) To identify their crime
B) To beautify the prisoner
C) To act as a spiritual talisman
D) To hide old scars

8. Which U.S. city became the epicenter of American 'Old School' or 'Traditional' tattooing in the early 20th century, specifically near naval bases?

A) New York
B) Honolulu
C) San Francisco
D) New Orleans

9. Which famous tattoo artist, known as 'Sailor Jerry', became synonymous with the development of the American traditional style in Honolulu?

A) Norman Collins
B) Herbert Hoffmann
C) George Burchett
D) Ed Hardy

10. In early Christian history in the Balkans, women of the Catholic community used tattoos for what purpose?

A) To identify as royal
B) To protect against forced conversion
C) To show wealth
D) To mark wedding status

11. Which of the following historical cultures utilized 'tapu' (sacred) tattoos to signify social rank and genealogy?

A) The Maori
B) The Aztecs
C) The Vikings
D) The Spartans

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12. What was the common stigma associated with tattoos in the United States during the mid-20th century?

A) Association with counter-culture and criminality
B) Association with royalty
C) Association with medical professions
D) Association with academic excellence

13. Which ancient culture practiced 'scarification' and tattooing as a form of ritualistic protection in the sub-Saharan region?

A) The Berber people
B) The Khmer Empire
C) The Inca Empire
D) The Ming Dynasty

14. How did the invention of the electric tattoo machine change the perception of tattoos in the early 1900s?

A) They became accessible to the general public
B) They became illegal
C) They became exclusively for the rich
D) They stopped being permanent

15. What does the traditional 'swallow' tattoo, popularized by sailors, traditionally signify?

A) Every 5,000 miles sailed
B) The return home
C) A dangerous storm
D) Membership in a secret club

16. Which famous historical figure is widely cited as having had a tattoo of a Jerusalem cross, contributing to the history of pilgrimage tattoos?

A) Napoleon Bonaparte
B) King Edward VII
C) Winston Churchill
D) Benjamin Franklin

17. In the 19th century, tattooing became a popular trend among European nobility after being influenced by which group?

A) Arctic explorers
B) Pacific Islanders
C) South American royalty
D) Native American diplomats

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18. Which part of the body was traditionally the most common location for 'nautical' tattoos among sailors?

A) The face
B) The legs
C) The forearms
D) The back

19. What is the 'Irezumi' style of Japan famously known for?

A) Small, minimalist symbols
B) Full-body or large-scale motifs
C) Temporary ink
D) Simple line work

20. Which century saw the decline of traditional tattooing in many Pacific cultures due to the influence of Christian missionaries?

A) 15th century
B) 19th century
C) 11th century
D) 21st century

21. What was the primary method of applying tattoos in many ancient cultures before the invention of the electric machine?

A) Chemical burns
B) Hand-tapping needles
C) Paintbrushes
D) Pressing heated stamps

22. Which type of tattoo was commonly used in the 20th century by the military to designate specific units or achievements?

A) Flash art
B) Portraiture
C) Calligraphy
D) Biomechanical

23. In modern history, when did tattooing transition from a fringe activity to a mainstream cultural phenomenon in Western society?

A) 1920s
B) 1970s and 1980s
C) 1940s
D) 1910s

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24. Which group is known for the practice of 'face tattooing' (Moko) that signifies a person's life story and status?

A) The Maori
B) The Inuit
C) The Sami
D) The Zulu

25. The 1970s 'Tattoo Renaissance' was driven by artists who treated tattooing as:

A) A government mandate
B) A fine art form
C) A medical procedure
D) A temporary fashion trend

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