

TATTOOING

It is hard to determine how far back the art of tattooing goes, ^{because ①} ~~as~~ human flesh is almost never preserved in the archaeological record. But rare finds of human corpses with the skin intact, ^{of have ②} ~~has~~ enabled us to glimpse early examples of the tattooists' art. ~~The remarkable "Iceman"~~ ^{in September AD 1991} found melting out of the Similaun glacier, ^{the remarkable "Iceman"} ~~in~~ ~~September 1991,~~ ^{having} died there some 5,300 years ago, was marked with the oldest tattoos ever seen. Consisting of three sets of lines on his back, another group on the right ankle, and a cross on the left knee, the powdered charcoal used to create the blue markings was probably applied with small needles. ③

From Egypt and Sudan, there are occasional finds of female mummies with facial tattoos going back some four thousand years. It seems like these ^{tattoos} had some erotic significance, ^{since} ~~since~~ the mummies are thought to be those of concubines, and some centuries later, ^{dancers and musicians ④} ~~dancers and musicians ⑤~~ would sport tattoos of ^{their ⑥} ~~there~~ patron god, Bes, ^⑦ on their thighs. The tattoos found on the mummies were dark blue and were applied, archaeologists believe, by pricking dye

into the skin with a devise ⁴ made of fish bones ^{and} set into a wooden handle.

In ^{AD} 1948, the most ⁸ remarkable example of ancient tattooing yet found was discovered in the Pazyryk burial mound ^{near} on the borders ⁹ of the USSR, China, and Mongolia. A man aged about sixty ¹⁰, probably the chief of the nomadic tribe ¹¹, had been buried around 400 ^{BC} B.C. in a felt-lined wooden chamber under the mound. Then came the grave robbers ¹². ~~Ransacking the tomb, ice flowed in through their exit hole or fill the chamber,~~ ^{they left an exit hole, causing ice to flow in and} thereby miraculously preserving its contents. The surviving skin of the chief ~~a donkey, a mountain ram, a goat, a fish, and multiple monsters, birds, and deer.~~ ¹³ was covered with elaborate tattoos, including ~~monsters, a donkey, a mountain ram, deer, birds, a goat, and a fish.~~

The Pazyryk find ~~dramatically~~ confirms the statements ^{certain} of classical writers ^{who indicated} that various ¹⁴ Barbarian peoples to the north and east of Greece regarded tattoos as a symbol of nobility. According to Herodotus ¹⁵, ~~whom~~ ^{he} wrote in the lifetime of the Pazyryk chieftain ¹⁶, the Thracians of the Balkans "consider tattooing a mark of high birth, ¹⁷ the lack of it a mark of low birth. Another classical source ¹⁷ indicates that the Thracians learned the art from the widely traveled Scythians, a nomadic tribe from Russia, ^{to} who may well have had cultural ties ~~with~~ the builders of the

Pazyryk tombs.

In ancient times ⁽¹⁸⁾ the art of tattooing flourished worldwide. It has deep roots in the Far East (and is still highly regarded in Japan ⁽¹⁹⁾), but little is known of its earliest days there, ~~accept~~ ^{except} that tattooing was carried out as a punishment on criminals during the Han ~~dynasty~~ of China (202 ~~B.C.~~ ^{BC} - ~~A.D.~~ ^{NAD} 220). By ~~A.D.~~ ^{AD} 297, however, decorative tattooing had began ⁽²¹⁾ in Japan, when Chinese court records note that Japanese men and boys tattooed ~~there~~ ^{their} bodies. ^{And} Judging by ~~its~~ ^{tattooings} representation on terra-cotta figurines, Mayan chiefs in first-millennium ~~B.C.~~ ^{= BC} Central American ~~were~~ frequently tattooed. They, to ⁽²²⁾ saw tattooing as ~~the~~ ^a mark of high status.

According to Roman writers, tattooing was ~~rife~~ ^{common} ⁽²²⁾ in Britain. Julius Caesar ⁽²³⁾ noted during his expeditions that "all the Britons dye their bodies with woad [an herb], which produces a blue color and give ⁽²⁴⁾ them a wild appearance in battle," while the third-century ~~century~~ ^{century = AD} ~~A.D.~~ ^{= AD} author Herodian described the tattoos as "pictures of all kinds of animals."

Following the conquest of Britain in ~~A.D.~~ ^{AD} 43, Roman legionnaires ~~took to~~ ^{adopted} ⁽²⁵⁾ tattooing, and spread the custom throughout the empire. The art flourished until the reign

of Constantine, the ^{empire's} first Christian emperor (A.D. 306-337).
Early Christians marked their faces and arms with the sign
of the cross, but tattooing later came to be seen as a
pagan practice; Constantine banned facial tattoos on the
grounds that they disfigured "that fashioned in God's
image." In ^{Further} A.D. 787 the Church Council held at Calcuth, ^{AD} in
northern England, ⁽²⁷⁾ forbade all tattooing ⁽²⁸⁾ and it then became
rare. ^{Tattooing} It did not die out completely, however, even among
royalty. After Will ^{iam} the Conqueror's momentous ⁽²⁹⁾ victory at
the battle of Hastings in 1066, ^{AD} the ~~body~~ of the fallen
^{Em} English king Harold ^{II} was identified by ^{his body's} tattoos,
^{which included} including the name of his mistress (Edith ^{swan-neck}) over
the heart.

Despite such notable ^{exceptions} ~~acceptations~~, the great revival of
^{tattooing} the art in the West only ^{began in} really came about during the
eighteenth century, ⁽³¹⁾ as a result of encountering
^{with} masterpieces of tattooing in the Far East and the Pacific, ⁽³²⁾
where tattooing had never fallen out of favor. ⁽³³⁾ ⁽³⁴⁾

Notes to the author

“Tattooing” · Yiu-On Li ·  WRIT 151A · Feb. 27, 2023

General

- Chicago style mandates one space after periods, commas, and semicolons (see *Chicago Manual of Style* sections 2.9, 6.7, and 6.62). Consider updating.
- The essay moves the reader forward through time with each example; you might consider clarifying this progression with more transition words.
- For internal consistency, consider adding life spans for all historical figures.
- For verifiability, consider including citations for all facts and quotes.
- I have performed basic fact-checking for this essay, but I am no expert on tattooing. Please double-check all dates, names, facts, and other such details before publishing.

Specific

1. “Because” serves as a stronger subordinating conjunction than “as”: the latter implies time, whereas the former implies only logical connection.
2. Consider clarifying “us” to mean archaeologists, historians, scientists, readers, other groups of people, or some combination of these.
3. This sentence seems to contain a dangling modifier: the clause beginning with “consisting of” and ending with “left knee” modifies “the powdered charcoal,” which implies that the tattoos of the Iceman comprise the powdered charcoal. Consider replacing the clause beginning with “the powdered charcoal” with something like “the blue markings were created using powdered charcoal and were probably applied with small needles.”
4. Readers may find it helpful to get a clearer sense of the time. Consider specifying “some centuries later.”

5. Readers may not know which dancers and musicians are being referred to here. Consider clarifying their origin, their nationality, and their employer.
6. Readers may find the referent for “their” unclear. Consider specifying whether you mean that Bes is the patron god of the mummies, of the concubines, or of the dancers and musicians.
7. As written, Bes is the only patron god of this group of people. If the group had more than one patron god, please delete the two commas around “Bes.”
8. The word “remarkable” here perhaps conflicts with “the remarkable Iceman” earlier in this essay: readers may be confused as to which example is more remarkable. Consider deleting one of the instances of the word or replacing the first instance with a slightly less intense superlative.
9. Consider spelling out: “Soviet Union” or “Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.”
10. After doing some research, I found that while some sources say that the Pazyryk chief was identified as sixty years old, others pin the age as closer to fifty. If multiple equally authoritative sources give different numbers, please make extra sure that the number you use is from a source that you trust.
11. If the Pazyryk burial mound contains the remains of just one tribe, consider making this distinction somewhere in this or an earlier sentence. If the burial mound hosts more than one tribe, consider replacing “the” with “a.”
12. For the sake of temporal continuity, readers may find it helpful to know the approximate year when the grave robbers ransacked the tomb.
13. I have suggested this structure for the list to ensure parallelism for singular and plural items. If you wish to preserve the original list order while ensuring parallelism, consider specifying a quantity before each item.
14. If the clause beginning with “various Barbarian peoples” is a quote, please encase it within quotation marks and attribute it to someone. If the clause is not a quote, please lowercase “Barbarian”; and, instead of “barbarian,” consider naming the specific peoples to the north and east of Greece.
15. Without reading further, readers may find the relationship between the barbarians, the Pazyryk people, and the Thracians to be unclear. Consider adding a sentence or two that links these different peoples together.

16. The presence of the comma in this quote appears to be unwarranted. However, I do not know whether the comma is present in the original quote. To sidestep this issue, I have separated this quote into two quotes and added the coordinating conjunction “and” between them. If you prefer keeping these excerpts as one quote, and the comma is indeed present in the original source, please add “[sic]” after the comma.
17. For verifiability, and for consistency with this paragraph and with the essay, consider specifying who “another classical source” is.
18. It seems that all examples in this essay so far have been from ancient times, so the adverbial phrase that starts this sentence readers may find redundant. Instead, consider specifying the time range that this paragraph deals with.
19. After doing some research, I found that other sources say that tattoos are very taboo in Japan today, and that they have only slowly become more acceptable in society. Consider double-checking this statement.
20. After doing some research, I found that a few other sources say that the Han dynasty was in power 206 BC–AD 9, then AD 25–220. Consider double-checking the years.
21. After doing some research, I found that a few other sources say that records of Japanese tattooing can be traced to 5000 BC. Consider verifying the year.
22. Readers may find the word “rife” to be a somewhat abrupt shift from a formal tone to a casual tone. The word also has a slightly negative connotation. As such, I have suggested the more formal and more neutral word “common.”
23. For the sake of temporal continuity, readers may find it helpful to know the approximate year when Julius Caesar embarked on his expeditions. Additionally, “conquests” or “military campaigns” may more accurately describe Caesar’s activities.
24. Caesar’s quote seems to be missing an “s” in “give.” If this omission is present in the original quote, please add [sic] after “give.” Otherwise, please insert an “s.”
25. Readers may find the phrase “took to” to be a somewhat abrupt shift from a formal tone to a casual tone. As such, I have suggested the more formal word “adopted.”

26. After doing some research, I found that other sources name this gathering as the “Second Council of Nicaea” or the “Seventh Ecumenical Council.” Consider verifying the name.
27. After doing some research, I could not find a location named “Calcuth,” either in the past or in the present. Additionally, other sources seem to say that the council met in Nicaea (present-day İznik, Bursa, Turkey), which would be in southeastern Europe. Consider verifying the location.
28. After doing some research, I found that sources disagree with the history of the council’s ruling on tattoos: some say that there was a ban, while others say that no such ban was decreed. Consider verifying the authenticity of this prohibition.
29. Readers may find it unclear what was momentous about William the Conqueror’s victory. Consider specifying; or, if the details of the victory are irrelevant to the subject of tattooing, consider deleting the word.
30. Readers may find the phrase “really came about” to be a somewhat abrupt shift from a formal tone to a casual tone. As such, I have suggested the more formal word “began.”
31. Readers may be confused as to who did the encountering. Consider specifying.
32. Readers may be confused by where in the Pacific the essay means. For example, both the Far East and the Americas border the Pacific. Consider specifying the locations.
33. After doing some research, I found that some sources contradict the idea that tattooing had never fallen out of favor in the Far East (see note 19). You also mention earlier that the Han dynasty used tattoos to punish prisoners. While one might consider “favor” as a synonym for the more neutral “interest,” readers may instead see “favor” to have a positive connotation, and they may therefore find this clause somewhat confusing. Consider revising this clause for more neutrality or deleting it altogether.
34. Consider adding to the conclusion such that it includes not only the West, the Far East, and the Pacific but also geographical locations and eras mentioned earlier in the essay.