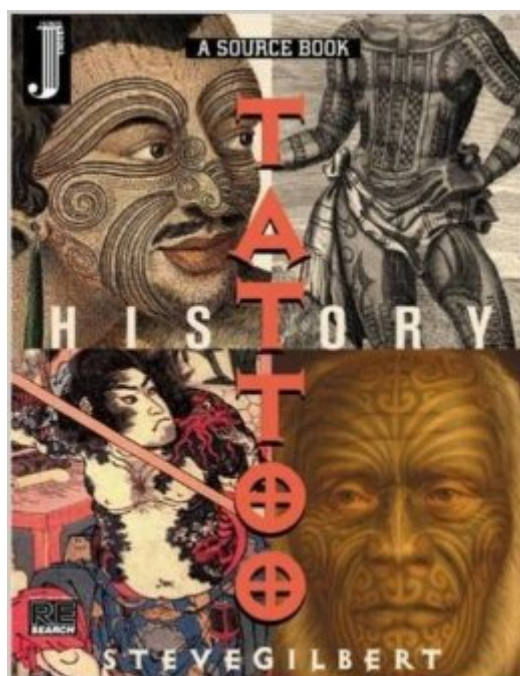


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# The Tattoo History Source Book



## Synopsis

The Tattoo History Source Book is an exhaustingly thorough, lavishly illustrated collection of historical records of tattooing throughout the world, from ancient times to the present. Collected together in one place, for the first time, are texts by explorers, journalists, physicians, psychiatrists, anthropologists, scholars, novelists, criminologists, and tattoo artists. A brief essay by Gilbert sets each chapter in an historical context. Topics covered include the first written records of tattooing by Greek and Roman authors; the dispersal of tattoo designs and techniques throughout Polynesia; the discovery of Polynesian tattooing by European explorers; Japanese tattooing; the first 19th-century European and American tattoo artists; tattooed British royalty; the invention of the tattooing machine; and tattooing in the circus. The anthology concludes with essays by four prominent contemporary tattoo artists: Tricia Allen, Chuck Eldridge, Lyle Tuttle, and Don Ed Hardy. The references at the end of each section will provide an introduction to the extensive literature that has been inspired by the ancient-but-neglected art of tattooing. Because of its broad historical context, The Tattoo History Source Book will be of interest to the general reader as well as art historians, tattoo fans, neurasthenics, hebephrenics, and cyclothemics.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Were you a fan of tattooing who had been stranded on that proverbial desert isle and allowed only half dozen favorite musical discs and but one or two books, it's a good bet that you would want Steve Gilbert's "Tattoo History: A Source Book" to keep you company. A somewhat uneven quality

of writing and of academic documentation mark this book. Even so, "Tattoo History: A Source Book" is an impressive work that reflects serious research, and it is a tour de force in comfortably handling material that ranges widely over time and space. On a subject that is so often dominated by photographs and essays that emphasize above all Japanese-style tattooing, it is a delight to learn as well of the long tradition of tattooing in the Pacific Isles, of the role tattoos played in the ancient Middle East, and of early 20th-century tattooing in the West. Gilbert's extensive use of source material--effectively translated from many languages--lends the book its gravitas and contributes significantly to his success in instilling in the reader an increased sense of respect for the tattoo arts. Finally I should note that even if this book did not open new vistas for the reader, the essays which bookend "Tattoo History" would alone be worth the price of admission. Gilbert's opener, "Confessions of a Tattoo Addict," although but two pages in length, is an evocative essay that relates a fascination with tattoos to his coming of age in the 1940s. Meanwhile, the lengthier closing essay by Don Ed Hardy documents the resurgence of tattooing over the past several decades, the cultural cross-fertilization that has occurred, and the slow but growing acceptance of tattooing as a legitimate art form by the more conventional arts world.

Not just a compendium of illustrations, this collection of essays, interviews, historical accounts and yes, some nice pictures, pulls together a great deal of the cultural history and tradition associated with tattooing. Well written, very wide-reaching and very entertaining. Gilbert is careful to detail where all his information comes from, adding to the work's authority and allowing interested readers to look more deeply into specific topics. This is a winner.

While I can not even come close to the great review that the previous reviewer wrote, I can in fact tell you that this is one of the most interesting books that I have read on the history of tattoos. I myself have 3 tattoos and since I got them, I have been enthralled with the history that surrounds them as well as trying to figure out where the stigma that is currently attached to them came from. I sat down to just leaf through this book and I had to read the entire thing, it was so completely interesting. If you have any interest in tattooing at all, this is a must read!

Tattoo enthusiasts will know Steve Gilbert's "Tattoo History Source Book" from Tattoos.com. Now the online version is available in print, with some additional information and photographs, published by Juno Books, a company founded by one of the former owners that gave us all the fantastic "ReSearch" publications. (Make sure you don't miss out on their "Modern Primitives"!) Gilbert's book

is unique and absolutely fantastic, the most in-depth book I have ever seen on the history of tattooing. It covers an incredible amount of historical and geographical aspects of tattooing (from New Zealand to Siberia and almost anywhere in between; though, unfortunately, the African Continent is completely left out). Here are some of the chapters you'll find: - Origins - Discovery - Islands in the Pacific - Worlds Old & New (North America; South America; England, etc.) - Other Worlds (The Circus; Arabs, Jews & Christians; etc.) - Contemporary Contributions At the very end of the book you'll find a recent interview with tattoo researcher Tricia Allen and an article entitled "Current Events" by none other than Don Ed Hardy, who has done so much for the development of tattooing over the past decades. (Don't miss out on his publications through his company Hardy Marks; incl. all the "Tattootime" issues.) If you're interested in historical aspects of tattooing, this is the source book for you.

You know, I guess I was just looking for a little more current history. Most of what you'll find in this book deals with ancient tribal and oriental histories. It's kind of like that college history class we all took dealing with ancient civilizations. Tough to find relationships to today's world (for me at least). Not a knock on the book itself, it is what it is, just my \$.02.

As a sociologist with strong anthropological interests turned tattoo apprentice, this is exactly the book I was looking for! Much of the tattoo world only goes back a century for its history, then alludes to ancient cultures. Just by flipping through this book upon arrival I can see that this is not the case with this book. If there was ever a college class on the history of tattoos, this should be one of the required texts. The only thing that could make this better is if the book was actually divided into a series focusing on each area/timeframe and included more information. \*hint hint\*

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