

Epicurean Tattoos

Post by “Eikadistes” of June 20, 2024 at 7:59 AM

I thought I might start a thread for this in the event that anyone has any ink to share.

I just got this done yesterday! My first share is **ΛΑΘΕ ΒΙΩΣΑΣ** (*látthe biósas*), a phrase found in *Usener Fragment 551*, an ancient invocation to cultivate a life of philosophical calm, estranged from egotistical ambitions, indifferent to accolades, immune to the allure of approval, unburdened by popular opinion, unimpressed by affluence, uninspired by opulence, and liberated from vain beliefs about fame, a life too blissfully unremarkable to appear on the turbulent pages of history.



ΛΑΘΕ

ΒΙΩΣΑΣ

Post by “Remus” of June 20, 2024 at 8:53 AM

Your post made me curious about tattoos in Ancient Greece. It seems they were taken as a sign of “Otherness.”

<https://greekreporter.com/2023/07/15/tattoos-ancient-greece/>

Post by “Eikadistes” of June 20, 2024 at 9:16 AM

[Quote from Remus](#)

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Indeed, **ΔΕΡΜΑΤΟΣΤΕΙΑ** seems to have been reserved as a punitive measure to identify slaves and criminals, both in ancient Greece as well as Persia (according to Herodotus, who records Greek soldiers as preferring death over being tattooed i.e. *defeated and captured by the Persians*). On the other hand, their geographical neighbors, the Thracians, Scythians, and Celts used the practice as a form of self-expression, as did/do Polynesian peoples, from whom we inherit the word "tattoo."

There are some colorful anecdotes about the battle of Thermopylae:
<https://www.actasdermo.org/es-dermatostik...578219021002456>

Post by “Eikadistes” of June 20, 2024 at 3:10 PM

There **is** an added irony, noting that tattoos in ancient Greece would have been *partially* reserved for slaves given that Epicurus declares that we "**must be the slave of Philosophy**" (U199). 😊

Post by “Joshua” of June 20, 2024 at 3:19 PM

Looks great!

I'm reminded of a guy several years ago on the Stoicism subreddit. He got--or thought he got--a tattoo of Epictetus, but the bust he chose was actually one of Epicurus ☐☐

Post by “Cassius” of June 20, 2024 at 3:29 PM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

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And that is why we have on our "research list" further investigation into those statues from Herculaneum, right Joshua? On deck right after the Dunster thread-starter? 😊😊

Post by “Joshua” of June 20, 2024 at 3:35 PM

Something like that!