The damned: Scenes from the Ancient Egyptians Books of the Afterlife

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Abstract

Throughout their history, ancient Egyptians believed that the cosmos is going according to a certain order. This order was represented in Maat who also was the personification of justice and truth. Anyone who opposes such order should be punished. Punishment was practiced through the sentences of the juridical system in real life and the court of Osiris in the afterlife. Those who were found guilty of evildoings were denied immortality, the company of Osiris and the light of Ra, they became damned. In order to guarantee this, the damned suffered several ways of punishment and torture described in the scenes and texts of the books of the afterlife decorating the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings.

The current study seeks to collect punishment scenes from these religious compositions to classify the types of punishment and analyze the purpose of each type in order to clear ancient Egyptian conceptions of punishment in the afterlife.

Accordingly, punishment scenes were categorized into four major types: bounding, decapitation, reversal, burning and cooking. Punishment of the damned took place in the deepest recess of the underworld in the place of destruction or annihilation in order to prevent them from rising again against the gods.

Keywords

The damned, enemies, punishment, bounding, decapitation, reversal, burning.

Full Text:

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