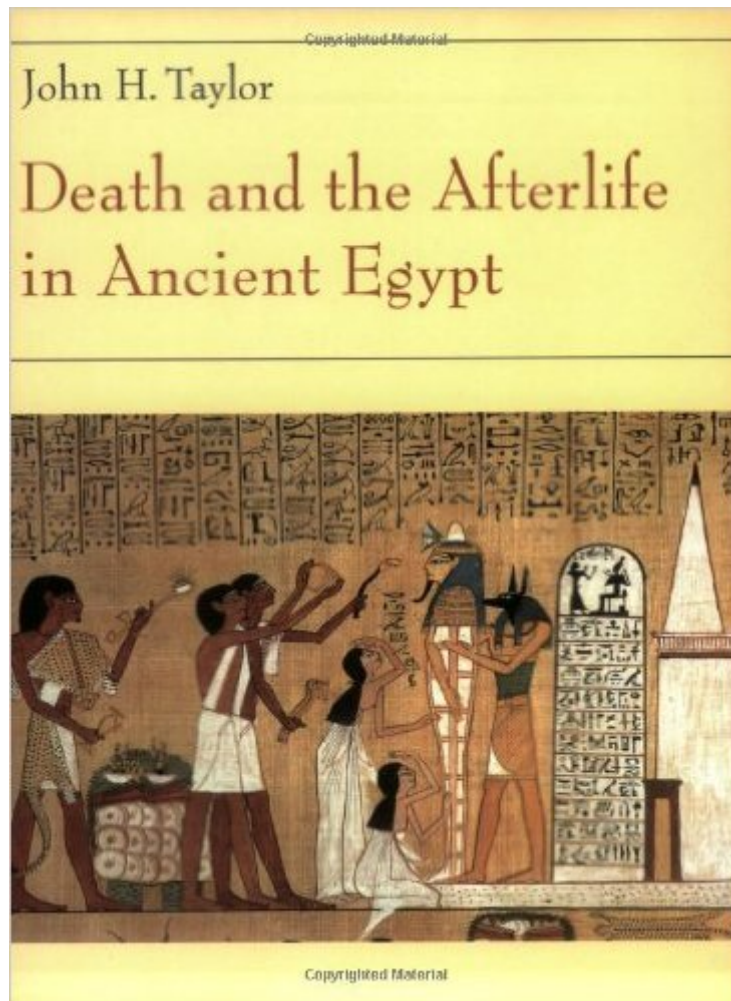


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Death And The Afterlife In Ancient Egypt



Synopsis

Of all the ancient peoples, the Egyptians are perhaps best known for the fascinating ways in which they grappled with the mysteries of death and the afterlife. This beautifully illustrated book draws on the British Museum's world-famous collection of mummies and other funerary evidence to offer an accessible account of Egyptian beliefs in an afterlife and examine the ways in which Egyptian society responded materially to the challenges these beliefs imposed. The author describes in detail the numerous provisions made for the dead and the intricate rituals carried out on their behalf. He considers embalming, coffins and sarcophagi, shabti figures, magic and ritual, and amulets and papyri, as well as the mummification of sacred animals, which were buried by the millions in vast labyrinthine catacombs. The text also reflects recent developments in the interpretation of Egyptian burial practices, and incorporates the results of much new scientific research. Newly acquired information derives from a range of sophisticated applications, such as the use of noninvasive imaging techniques to look inside the wrappings of a mummy, and the chemical analysis of materials used in the embalming process. Authoritative, concise, and lucidly written, *Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt* illuminates aspects of this complex, vibrant culture that still perplex us more than 3,000 years later.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Funerary practices are the best-known and best-documented aspect of ancient Egyptian culture, so there are a lot of books about them—so many that it's difficult to judge which is best. This one is a solid and readable introduction to the topic, with chapters on afterlife beliefs, mummification, burial

goods, funerary figures, tombs and cemeteries, the rituals surrounding death and burial, coffins and sarcophagi, and animal mummies. In some cases it discusses topics that tend to be overlooked in general books on this subject. It discusses the reuse of tombs for later burials, for instance, and it devotes a fair amount of space to mortuary cults, in which people periodically made offerings to the deceased person long after burial. Nevertheless, there are two significant omissions. First, although the book refers to various funerary texts many times, it doesn't discuss them directly very much. Fortunately, another easily readable book, Hieroglyphs and the Afterlife, fills that gap and would make a good companion to this one. Second, like all studies of Egyptian funerary customs, Taylor's book tends to overlook the burials of the poor. Poor burials contain fewer goods than those of the wealthy elite and therefore attract less archaeological attention. Egyptologists are only beginning to address this problem, so there are few books about it.

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