Maat (Egyptian deity)

Definition: Maat from *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Egyptian goddess of truth and justice. The souls of the dead were weighed against the feather of truth (her symbol), or against her statue. The Egyptians believed that all things were governed by Maat; her father, the sun god Ra, ruled the universe by her principles and she was frequently depicted in the prow of his boat. Her headdress was an ostrich feather.

Summary Article: Maat

From *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*

Maat was the goddess of cosmic order or balance, as well as truth. She was the foundation of Egyptian religion (see Religion, Pharaonic Egypt), society, and worldview. Maat was depicted either as an ostrich feather or as a goddess wearing a feather in a fillet. The feather of Maat played a key role in the Judgment of the Dead (see Afterlife, Pharaonic Egypt), as it was weighed against the heart of the deceased in order to see if s/he had lived an ethical life and not violated the laws of Maat or social order.

The major role of the king (see Kingship, Pharaonic Egypt) was to maintain Maat so that Egypt remained safe, fruitful, and peaceful.

References and Suggested Readings


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