

## MICHAEL ARCHANGEL AND BALANCE

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Michael Archangel was first mentioned in the *Old Testament* in the book of Daniel as a helping angel of Israel [1]. In the New Testament in the letter of Judas he appears as a fighter vs. the devil. In the *Apocalypse* during the Last Judgement he is the victorious hero in the struggle with hell's dragon resulting in the downfall of Lucifer [2] and his crew. Widespread reverence he found first in the Orthodox Church. As a patron saint of Kyiv he became a symbol of freedom of the Ukraine. In the Catholic Church Michael is regarded as the standard-bearer of the heavenly hosts and so he was chosen as the protector of the armies of Christian nations. Venerated as 'angel of the people' he became the patron saint of the whole Germany. Michael's day is celebrated in the autumn with the obvious intention to supersede the Germanic Wodan cult. Many churches, in particular chapels of castles are devoted to Michael Archangel. As a defender of the faith he was a symbol of the counter-reformation.



Since the 11<sup>th</sup> century, first in Byzantium, he escorts the deceased to God's throne and acts as a weigher of the soul at the Last Judgement. As the governor of the Paradise he drove out the progenitors, but as a companion of the dead souls he guides them into the Paradise and protects them from the devil [3]. Paintings and statues of the Archangel, equipped with sword and scales, are found everywhere. Since the instrument is often represented in detail we can study the state of the art of that time.

The idea of weighing the soul in a dead tribunal in order to decide whether the dead is worthy to enter into eternity was born in Egypt already during the Old Empire. From the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> Egyptian dynasty (1567–1320 BC) onwards till the end of the Empire many representations on the walls of tombs, on coffins or in the *Book of Death* [2] of the deceased, show the jackal-headed Anubis, the tutelary god of the embalmers weighing the heart against an ostrich feather, which represents Maat, the goddess of truth, justice and harmony [5]. In the *Bible* in the book of Daniel [6] we find the ‘mene tekel’, the tekel of which Daniel interpreted as ‘you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting’. In the Greek mythology the balance of fate exists. The goddess Moira weighs the heroes in order to decide which one will win and survive. Significant as models may have also been the Roman goddess Juno Moneta equipped with scales as the patroness of the mint. The goddess Justitia carries the balance of justice and the sword of execution.

We, enlightened scientists, may have difficulties in believing in angels. It is, however, a consolatory idea to believe that a friendly personality waits for us at our end. It may be a good omen for us, balance specialists, that this personality is equipped with a balance.

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## References

- 1 The Bible, Dan. 10,13.21; 12,1; Judas 9; Apocalypse 12,7.
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- 3 L. Kretzenbacher, *Die Seelenwaage*, Verlag Landesmuseum für Kärnten, Klagenfurt 1965.
- 4 R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, Revised ed. British Museum Publications, London 1985.
- 5 C. Seeber, *Untersuchungen zur Darstellung des Totengerichts im alten Ägypten*, Münchner Ägyptische Studie Heft 35, Deutscher Kunstverlag 1976.
- 6 The Bible, Dan. 5,27.