

Name of collection

Maintaining social order with gruesome images of Hell

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[VOCALIZING]

About 100 churches on Crete depict images of hell, banishments of the sinners, and various other details. Most of them are situated in the area of Cellino in the southwestern part of Crete. One of these scenes, one of the most famous scenes, comes from the Church of Agia Paraskevi in the village of [? Kittitas, ?] in the province of Cellino, southwestern Crete.

What we have here is one of the most used and well-known images where sinners are depicted being punished in hell. On the top left, we have the person who plows his neighbor's land. And what could only be described as sadistic punishments are inflicted to him.

What you see underneath is the person who has-- the thieving tailor. And it's a very, very interesting image because the tailor is actually depicted split, just like the scissors of his trade. In the lower row, you see to the left the woman who refused to breastfeed her children. And accordingly, snakes, the snakes of hell-- a symbol of the devil, as we know from the Old Testament-- bites her breasts.

One of the most interesting sinners in this frescoes is the gold thief. You can see him carrying a goat tied around his neck. The important bit here is that this seems specifically like the man who plows his neighbor's land are very typical of Cretan society, very big problems of the Cretan society to the day, especially the goat thief, and also shows how much importance the society placed on such scenes, and made sure that the thieves or the people who did not obey the rules and the law will not go unpunished.

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Another important thing here is that this scene, specifically is situated on the West wall. Now the West wall of the Cretan churches is usually where the entrance is situated. When the liturgy is over, and you turn and you walk away, this is the last scene you see.

And basically it's is a visual warning, be aware. If you do these things, this is where you're going to end, and this is what's going to happen to you. So it's a very powerful visual meaning. Think of it as modern advertising where we're blasted with images that stay with us. It's exactly the same function.

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