
The Catacombs of Anubis at North Saqqara

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Résumé

The Catacombs of Anubis ('the Dog Catacombs') have been known to science from at least the 19th Century. However, they have never been fully explored and like most animal catacombs little attention has been paid to their construction, the manner of procurement and preparation of the animals they contain or to their subsequent history.

This paper outlines recent work conducted under the direction of the author which has produced a new plan of the larger of the two catacombs, examined the animal remains from it and explored the complete history of the site. It has been possible to conclude that there are at least two phases to the development of the catacomb and that the unexpectedly large number of animals it contains might be related to the expansion of the cult of Anubis. Findings by the faunal team strongly suggest that there must have been a programme of animal breeding especially for the cult and suggests a very different picture of human-animal interaction than that so frequently cited on the basis of Classical accounts.

The question of the current state of the Catacomb and the lack of animal remains in parts of it are addressed as part of the assessment of the use-history of the monument.

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