
EES Divisions: Animal mummies in British museum collections excavated by W. Bryan Emery from the Sacred Animal Necropolis at North Saqqara, 1964-1971

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Résumé

The excavations led by the Egypt Exploration Society under W. Bryan Emery "re-discovered" animal mummies at Saqqara, although they were not the primary research target of the field director. Early Dynastic tombs, including the quest for that of Imhotep, and the architecture of the underground catacombs were of much more interest to Emery than the animal mummies that filled them in their millions. As such, some of the finest examples were disseminated to museums as compensation for funding the excavation, which is often where the research ends.

The Ancient Egyptian Animal Bio Bank at the University of Manchester was set up in 2010 to address this and to collectively study animal mummies in museum collections around the world employing a multi-disciplinary approach (McKnight et al. 2011). As a result, the animal mummies from the Sacred Animal Necropolis at North Saqqara have begun to be re-contextualised by way of a study protocol including photographic and radiographic methods, supported by archival and oral histories, as well as published archaeological reports.

This paper will focus on the results of Manchester based research on the animal mummies from the South Ibis Galleries and South Shaft of Tomb 3508 and the Falcon Catacombs; the first holistic study of its kind on this group of objects.

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