
Meowing Menagerie at the National Museum in Warsaw

Kamila Braulinska*¹ and Wojciech Ejsmond*²

¹Faculty of History, University of Warsaw, Poland (WH, UW) – 26/28 Krakowskie Przedmieście Street
00-927 Warsaw, Pologne

²Antiquity of Southeastern Europe Research Centre, University of Warsaw (ASERC, UW) – 32
Krakowskie Przedmieście Street, 00-927 Warsaw, Pologne

Résumé

In 2015, a complex research project was initiated by the authors of the present paper and their colleague, bioarchaeologist Marzena Ozarek-Szilke. It aims at a comprehensive and innovative analysis of animal and human mummies from the National Museum in Warsaw. The interdisciplinary research program consists of two main areas of investigation. The first one is related to the cultural context and concerns with the analysis of mummification techniques and religious, as well as magical beliefs. The second area is broader, and concerns the studies in health and living conditions of the specimens, and development of the research techniques. Warsaw Mummy Project includes a cooperation with specialists from a variety of fields. The aim of the paper is to present preliminary results of the first stage of the Project. The research on animal assemblage was initiated by examining cat mummies. Their CT and X-ray images were analysed, resulting in interesting observations and verification of the previous assumptions. One of the outcomes was an answer to a puzzling question of a human tooth intrusion. General studies on the cat mummies led to the conclusion that the animals were the product of two mating seasons and were killed once a year, most likely to provide mummies for a single annual festival, during which pilgrims came to the temples and bought animal mummies as votive offerings. The study of cat assemblage from the Museum will be continued in a second stage of the Project, including laboratory analyses.

*Intervenant