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Animals in the ancient Ritual Landscape

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Animals in the ancient Ritual Landscape

Maris Schneider

In ancient Egypt, animals held immense cultural significance and embodied religious symbolism, reflecting the Egyptian's spiritual beliefs and deep connection to the natural world. Votive animal mummies, serving as offerings to the gods, were essential in demonstrating devotion and gratitude from pilgrims and the belief in animals' ability to communicate with the divine. My research project aims to identify the species of animals within mummy bundles using non-destructive techniques such as Computed-Tomography, image segmentation, and deep learning. Using these methods from other fields (like computer sciences and biological engineering) allows for a more robust understanding of past human societies. These methods negate the need to unwrap bundles to visualize internal contents and preserve the integrity of these ancient artifacts. My study embraces a social zooarchaeology theoretical framework to recognize the animals' role in ancient societies beyond economic considerations, encompassing their religious importance and intricate relationship with humans and nature.

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