

More The Pets: Dogs In Graeco-Roman Egypt¹

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Abstract:

Aelian's comprehensive work on animals encouraged scholars to address animals in the ancient world (Ael. *NA* I-XVII). Based on textual, pictorial, and zooarchaeological evidence, Patrick Houlihan systematically collected the different species of ancient Egyptian fauna, providing information about their character, environment, and domestication (Houlihan 1996). Dieter Kessler turned attention to animal cult and hypogea at Tuna el-Gebel, the necropolis of Hermopolis Magna (Kessler 1989). Perhaps the most beloved animal to ancient as well as modern inhabitants is the dog (Lazenby 1949, 245-7). Scholars considered the history of dogs in ancient Egypt and the Mediterranean (Brewer et al 2001; Routledge 2004; Gransard-Desmond 2004). Salima Ikram, a passionate of animals, presented valuable studies on animals, with special focus on animal mummification and dogs in the dynastic period (Ikram 2005, 2007a, 2008, 2013). This article deals with dogs in Graeco-Roman Egypt based on literary, archaeological, and papyrological documents. It argues that the dog enjoyed reverence from the Pharaonic to the Roman period mainly through its role in the myth of Isis and Osiris. Dogs' mummies in Egypt symbolised and perpetuated the role of Anubis and the dog in the Osirian legend. Additionally, they served as guardians and companions of the givers/dead in their journey to the underworld. The paper begins with animal cult and the dog's function in the Osirian myth, followed by consideration of dogs in Pharaonic and Graeco-Roman times to highlight continuity in dogs' symbolism. It finally addresses the death and burial rituals, which the owners of dogs performed after the demise of their pets, closely matching those offered to Osiris by Isis and Anubis.

Keywords: animals, dogs, Osirian legend, Anubis, Graeco-Roman Egypt.

Animal Cult in Ancient Egypt:

Animals played a dominant role in ancient Egyptian religion and culture (Arnold 1995; Houlihan 1996) Nearly 176 of the 777 hieroglyphs in Alan Gardiner's Signlist revolve around animals (Gardiner 1957; Te Velde 1980, 67). Ancient Egypt was full of animals (Hdt. 2.65). Not all animals were revered throughout the country, however. While some animals were equally honoured in different nomes of Egypt, others enjoyed supreme rank in some areas and held only a subordinate place elsewhere. However, the bull, the dog, the cat, the hawk, the ibis, the fish lepidotus, and the fish oxyrhynchos were venerated countrywide (Strabo 17.1.40). For classical writers, the transmigration of the soul from human bodies into living creatures, including

¹ For citation of Greek papyri, I adhere to the *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*, which is available at <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html>. For ancient classical works, I follow the conventions of the Oxford Classical Dictionary, 4th edition, which is available at <http://classics.oxfordre.com/staticfiles/images/ORECLA/OCD.ABBREVIATIONS.pdf>.

animals, was a theological reason for animal cult in ancient Egypt. According to Herodotus, 'the Egyptians were the first to teach that the human soul is immortal and, at the death of the body, it enters into some other living thing then coming to birth; and after passing through all creatures of land, sea, and air, it enters once more into a human body at birth' (Hdt. 2.123). Diodorus similarly states that 'Pythagoras learned from Egyptians his teachings about the gods, his geometrical propositions and theory of numbers, as well as the transmigration of the soul into every living thing' (Diod. Sic. 1.98.2).

Diodorus gives three other explanations for animal veneration in ancient Egypt: the first says that the original gods, being few in number, took the shape of animals to escape from the savagery and violence of humankind, and afterwards, when they became masters of the whole world, consecrated these animals to themselves out of gratitude. According to the second, the images of animals were fixed on spears as ensigns to distinguish the corps of the army and prevent confusion, victory followed, and the animals became objects of worship. The third reason is that animals were venerated due to the benefits they make to humans (Dio. Sic. 1.86-7).

The ancient Egyptians venerated many animals. At Kynopolis, the dog-headed Anubis was particularly honoured and a form of worship and sacred feeding was organised for all dogs (Strabo 17.1.40). For Greek and Roman visitors, the use of animals as representatives of deities was an excessive superstition and expression of the Egyptian 'otherness'. Plutarch reports that when the Kynopolites had eaten the fish oxyrhynchos, the Oxyrhynchites took revenge by consuming dogs sacred at Kynopolis. A fight between the two nomes broke out before Roman soldiers intervened and brought the inhabitants apart (Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 72). Juvenal narrates a more brutal fight between the Tentyrites and Ombites, resulting in an act of cannibalism (Juv. *Satire* 15). However, there is no evidence for Egyptian cannibalism at any date (Alston 1996, 101).

Greek and Roman writers, philosophers, and politicians employed the religious practice of animal cult to emphasise their cultural superiority over the Egyptian 'barbarians' (Alston 1996; Feder 2003). Thus, Juvenal writes 'Who knows not what monsters demented Egypt worships? One district adores the crocodile; another venerates the ibis that gorges itself with serpents... In one part cats are worshipped, in another a river fish, in another whole township venerates a dog' (Juv. *Satire* 15.1-3, 5-8). Juvenal denounces the Egyptian custom of regarding animals as incarnations of deities with biting sarcasm (Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984). One encounters the same attitude in Philo's *Dekalogue*: What can be more ridiculous than this cult? The first foreigners who arrived in Egypt were quite worn out with laughing at and ridiculing these superstitions (Philo, *Deka.* 16.80). In line with this criticism is Octavian's speech to his soldiers before the Battle of Actium, 'should we not be acting most disgracefully, if, after surpassing all men everywhere in valour, we should then meekly bear the insults of this throng, who, oh heavens!, are Alexandrians and Egyptians, who worship reptiles and beasts as gods' (Cass. Dio 50.24).

Mummified animals excavated throughout Egypt are classified into four categories: household pets interred with their owners; food offerings; sacred animals; and votive animals (Ikram 2005). In the Teti Cemetery at Saqqara, dogs buried in the Graeco-Roman period with humans have been interpreted as amuletic animal mummies, adding a fifth category (Hartley et al 2011). Yet, as will be shown later, there was no contradiction and/or difference between the use of dogs as votive or amuletic animals. Dogs are confirmed as household pets buried with their owners (Ikram 2007a); sacred animals of Anubis and other related deities; and as votive/guardian mummies (Kessler 1986; Ikram 2005). Yet dogs are not attested as food offerings, because they were never used in Egyptian diet. In most cases, pets lived out their natural lives and when dead, were carefully mummified and interred with their owners. Often these pet mummies were placed in theriomorphic coffins of their own or sometimes even with their owner (Petrie 1902, 39-40, pl. lxxx).

Most dog mummies in ancient Egypt fall in the category of sacred and votive animals. Sacred animals were incarnations of Egyptian deities. The Egyptians worshiped the power that is over all, which each of the gods exhibited, by means of the animals, which shared the same nomes with them (Euseb. *Prae. evang.* 3.4). They are faunal representatives of given deities and are attested from the earliest times of Egyptian history (Dodson 2009). Sacred animals were honoured with temples, religious precincts, sacrifices, solemn assemblies, and public processions (Philo, *Deka.* 16.76-9). They were kept in the sacred precinct of their associated gods' temples, 'which are surrounded with groves and consecrated pastures' (Clem. Al. *Paedag* 3.2), normally covered with grass or other plants suitable for feeding the sacred livestock. Men of distinction gave the sacred animals the most expensive care. The food was placed before them, cakes of fine flour, seethed in milk or smeared with honey, the flesh of ducks, boiled or roasted, and that of birds and fish uncooked for the carnivorous animals. They were bathed in warm water, anointed with costly perfumes, and were furnished with expensive jewellery and clothes (Dio. Sic. 1.84.5-6). Pilgrims and worshippers partly covered this cost: the Egyptians make vows to certain gods on behalf of their children who have been delivered from an illness, in which case they shave off their hair and weigh it against silver or gold, and then give the money to the attendants of sacred animals (Dio. Sic. 1.83.2. Cf. Hdt. 2.65).

A sacred animal was identified by certain defined markings; it was worshipped as an incarnation of god during its lifetime and, after death, was mummified and buried as a divinity (Ikram 2007a, 418). Only one divine creature was selected as the god's physical manifestation (Strabo 17.38). The sacred animal of a god living in the temple was an oracle-giver and dream-interpreter. Examples of Demotic oracular petitions addressed to Thoth were uncovered from the baboon/ibis hypogea at Tuna el-Gebel (Kessler 1986; Kessler 2003, 41, 52; Kessler and Nur el-Din 2005, 136-7; Ikram 2005, 4-14). The Apis bull at Memphis was honoured as an image of the psyche of Osiris (Dio. Sic. 1.85.1-4; Strabo 17.1.31; Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 39; Kessler 2003, 40-1), which was supposed to migrate from one Apis to another in succession (Hdt.

3.28). Death was penalty for intentionally killing a sacred animal, but if someone killed it by mischance, he would pay whatever penalty the priests appoint (Hdt. 2.65). In the late first century BC, when a Roman accidentally killed a cat, the inhabitants rushed to his house and ‘neither the officials sent by the king (Ptolemy Auletes) to beg the man off nor the fear of Rome which all people felt were enough to save the man from punishment’ (Dio. Sic. 1.83.9). This fanatical fury recalls a parallel at Athens, where the people condemned a man to death for killing a sparrow sacred to Asklepios (Ael. *VH* 5.17).

After death, sacred animals were ceremonially buried in special cemeteries near the temple of their associated deity (Dodson 2009). The death of Apis was a season of general mourning; and his interment was accompanied with most costly ceremonies. When the Apis died of old age, the curator of the sacred animal not only spent on his funeral the large sum appropriated to this purpose, but also borrowed fifty talents from king Ptolemy I Soter (Dio. Sic. 1.84.8). The Apis was mummified and buried in a special cemetery at Memphis and another creature with special markings was selected (Hdt. 3.28). The mummification of the dead Apis took place at the ‘Embalming House of the Apis Bull’ of the temple of Apis at Memphis (Jones 1990). The new selected animal was kept in seclusion, except for women, for forty days, during which the people did not cease their mourning over the dead bull (Dio. Sic. 1.85.1-3). Similarly, when the sacred crocodile died in the Arsinoite nome, one creature was selected to replace the dead animal (Strabo 17.38). This selection was apparently accompanied with a spectacular festival called in Greek papyri the *Soucheia* (Perpillou-Thomas 1993, 140).

Other creatures were killed and mummified as votive items offered by pilgrims to deities. Votive animal mummies are only attested from the Late Period onwards (Dodson 2009). They were the most prolific of all animal mummification. The votive animal has no special defined markings; it was embalmed and dedicated to its corresponding deity, who was thought to fulfil the prayers attached to it (Ikram 2005, 10-11). A prayer inscribed on a jar containing an ibis mummy asks Thoth to be benevolent toward the woman who embalmed his sacred bird (Lacovara and Trope-Teasley 2001). Millions of ibises were offered to Thoth at Tuna el-Gebel to bring pilgrims closer to god (Kessler 2003, 42; Kessler and Nur el-Din 2005, 120-63). Since the Ptolemaic period, the ibis-cult was associated with the Serapeum at Oxyrhynchos, where the *ibiboskos* and *ibiotaphos* respectively kept and embalmed ibises (*P.Fouad* I.16.2-4), as was the Serapeum at Tuna el-Gebel (Kessler 2003, 45). There was a quarter named after the *Ibiotaphieion* at Oxyrhynchos (*P.Princ.* II.46). At Saqqara, Buto, Abydos, and Kom Ombo, complexes were dedicated to mummified falcons, representing the manifestation of Horus (Lauer 1976; Morgan and McGovern-Huffman 2008). At Abydos, Asyut, the Kharga oasis, and Saqqara, mummified dogs were buried in special cemeteries as votive animals of Anubis (Ikram 2007a, 418; Hartley et al 2011).

The Dog in the Myth of Isis and Osiris:

The ancient Egyptian word for dog is ‘iw’, which refers to the animal’s barking, while ‘Tsm’ designates the hunting ‘hound’ (Gardiner 1957, Signlist

No. 14, 459). Ancient Egyptian names of dogs in Pharaonic tomb reliefs and stelae included the Brave One, Reliable, Healthy, Grabber, Pleasant One, Good Herdsman, Cook-pot, and even the Useless.² Many of the epithets represent endearment, but others merely convey dogs' abilities. Dogs also acquired theophoric names such as "Amun is Valient" (Phillips 1948, 9; Janssen 1958; Fischer 1961; Simpson 1977).³ There is little evidence for dogs' names after the 26th Dynasty. A Ptolemaic situla in the Cleveland Museum of Art calls the dog beneath the chair of his master "the Beautiful" (figure 1) (Fischer 1978, 174, fig. 1). There are two epitaphs for a hunting dog named Tauron in the Zenon archive (Purola 1994; Pepper 2010). The reason for the rareness of dogs' names in the Graeco-Roman period cannot be determined. The owners perhaps felt it unnecessary to record their pets' names on monuments or, most likely, dogs' names are accidentally lost in the literary and archaeological record.

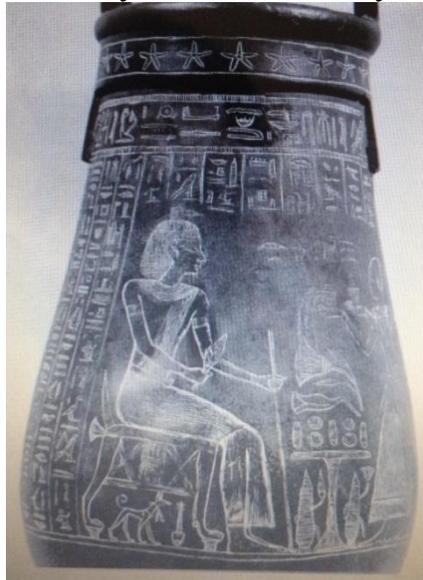


Figure 1: A Ptolemaic situla in the Cleveland Museum of Art calls the dog beneath the chair of his master "the Beautiful" (Fischer 1978, 174, fig. 1)

The mythological background for animal cult in ancient Egypt is rooted in the myth of Isis and Osiris. While Osiris left his Egyptian kingdom to subdue the world by means of peace, Isis governed in his absence. On his return, Seth and his seventy-two fellow conspirators imprisoned him by craft in a chest, which was flung into the Nile (Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 13). On hearing of the murder of Osiris, Isis cut off a lock of her hair and wore mourning clothes. Together, Isis and Nephthys mourned for the lost Osiris for four days (17-20 Athyr) before the chest containing his body was found by Isis near the mouths of the Nile (Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 39). Here it was buried for a while; but Seth, while hunting by night, discovered it and cut the body into fourteen or twenty-six pieces, which he scattered to the winds (Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 87; Dio. Sic. 1.21.2). Then Isis took boat and searched for the pieces, until she had recovered

² On names of animals in the Roman Empire: Toynbee 1948.

³ Dogs were not only given personal names by the Coast Salish peoples in Washington State and British Columbia, but they were also buried ceremonially like humans and were sometimes interred with their owners (Elmendorf 1992, 99; Barsh et al 2006, 1-2).

them all save one, the privates (Dio. Sic. 1.22.6). Isis and Nephthys carefully put the pieces together. Anubis then embalmed the whole body and made the first mummy in the ancient world (Sayce 1903, 142). The rejoining of the limbs of Osiris became the prototype for the overcoming of death and furnished the mythical precedent for mummification (Assmann et al 1989, 138). Isis placed coffins of Osiris beneath the earth in several places, but only one of them, and that unknown to all, contained the body of Osiris. She did this because she wished to hide the body from Seth, fearing that he might find it and cast it out of its tomb (Strabo 17.1.23). Having buried Osiris in different nomes, Isis commanded the inhabitants and priests of Egypt to pay honour to Osiris and consecrate some animal from their district to Osiris; to pay to the animal the same honour as to the god during its life and bestow the same kind of funeral they had given to Osiris after its death (Dio. Sic. 1.21.6).

Dogs function in the Osirian myth in two passages. In the late first century BC, Diodorus states:

Again, the dog is useful both for the hunt and for man's protection, and this is why they represented the god whom they call Anubis with a dog's head, showing in this way that he was the bodyguard of Osiris and Isis. There are some, however, who explain that dogs guided Isis during her search for Osiris and protected her from wild beasts and wayfarers. They also helped her in her search, because of the affection they bore for her, by baying; and this is the reason why at the festival of Isis the procession is led by dogs, those who introduced the rite showing forth in this way the kindly service rendered by this animal of old (Dio. Sic. 1.87.2-4).

In the early second century AD, Plutarch similarly narrates:

They relate also that Isis, learning that Osiris in his love had consorted with her sister Nephthys through ignorance, in the belief that she was Isis, and seeing the proof of this in the garland of melilote, which he had left with Nephthys, sought to find the child for the mother, immediately after its birth, had exposed it because of her fear of Typhon (Seth). When the child had been found, after great toil and trouble, with the help of dogs, which led Isis to it, it was brought up and became her guardian and attendant, receiving the name of Anubis, and it is said to protect the gods just as dogs protect men (Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 14).

The Osirian legend clearly gives the sacerdotal reason for dogs' veneration. Here dogs are associated with the most known chthonic deities: Osiris, Isis, and Anubis. Due to its chthonic nature, the dog was assumed to belong to the upper and the underworld. Dogs helped Isis in her search for Osiris' body and later acted as their bodyguard. They also assisted the goddess in her search for the infant Anubis, who later became the guardian of Isis and the embalmer of Osiris. Anubis was associated with mummification since he was responsible for the wrapping of Osiris, king of the underworld. He was the way-finder who guided the dead from the land of the living to the realm of the dead (Griffiths

and Barb 1959, 367). In Greece, dogs were similarly associated with the chthonic goddesses Artemis and Hekate, who were active at the edge of the upper and the underworld (Karouzou 1972, 66-7). Dogs' chthonic associations also appear in Kerberos, the watchdog of Hades (Hom. *Il.* 7.368, *Od.* 11.623), who stopped living persons from entering the underworld and prevented the souls of the dead from exiting (Scholz 1937, 16-18). The dog was consequently related to the magic sphere of dreams and omens (Scholz 1937, 16-18).

The dog was linked to Anubis, who guided the deceased to the Hall of the Two Truths, where the soul was judged by Osiris. Sculptures of theriomorphic Anubis emphasised the importance of the god of the necropolis (Ischlondsky 1966, 21-4). Dogs were the most common scavengers in ancient Egyptian towns and villages (Dixon 1989, 194). In a passage in the Book of the Dead the deceased appeals to Re, the sun god, for protection from 'this god who carries off souls, who gulps down decayed matter, who lives on carrion, who is attached to darkness and dwells in gloom, of whom the feeble are afraid' (Allen 1974, 21; Dixon 1989, 197). Despite the sentimental attachment to dogs in the description of Argos, Odysseus' faithful dog who recognised his master after 20 years and died happily (Hom. *Od.* 17.292-322), the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* similarly portray dogs as devourers of dead bodies (Scott 1921). Persistent also are the references in Latin literature to dogs' mangling the corpses (Suet. *Dom.* 15.3; Burriss 1935, 37). As canids inhabited the liminal space between the desert and the cultivation and, by extension, the transitional area between the land of the dead and that of the living, they could disturb the body during embalming and disinter burials (Ikram 2007a, 419). This gruesome ability of dogs enabled their veneration to avoid the exhumation of cemeteries and the annihilation of corpses. Dogs were therefore associated with Anubis, who presided over the liminal zone between this life and the hereafter and guided the soul from this life to the next (Assmann 2001, 81-8).⁴

Since wolves, jackals, and dogs are closely related, all species of canids living at the margins of the desert were associated with Anubis (Vilà and Wayne 1999). The canids of the Nile Valley developed from two genetic lines: *canis familiaris Leineri*, known for greyhounds and sight hounds, and *canis familiaris intermedius*, known for smaller house dogs (Bunson 2002, 103; Gransard-Desmond 2004). The classification of Egyptian canids causes problems even for zoologists. Apparently the ancient Egyptians did not distinguish particular canid species in their representation of Anubis, the god of the necropolis; Duamutef, one of the four sons of Horus; or Wepwawet, the god of Asyut (Arnold 1995, 15, no. 10). A jackal or dog head could serve to depict any of these deities. Thus, a canine-headed god in the Tomb of Soldiers at Asyut has been loosely interpreted as Wepwawet or Anubis (El-Khadragy 2006, 152). Millions of canids were offered as votive mummies in different cemeteries throughout Egypt. Canid cult was particularly popular in Abydos

⁴ The North American Indians similarly attached effigies of dogs to the forehead of the dead to guide their souls to heaven (Mangold 1973).

and Asyut, the cult centres of Anubis and Wepwawet (Kahl 2007, 39-58, 2012, 4, 19).

Dogs in the Dynastic Period:

Animals were of paramount importance in ancient Egyptian culture (Phillips 1948). They feature prominently in Egyptian representations, texts, and burials (Houlihan 1996). In the Predynastic Period, the ancient Egyptians regarded wild and domesticated animals with great interest, judging from theriomorphic implements and iconography (zoomorphic palettes, animal figurines, animal graffiti, carvings, depictions, and single signs) (Raffaele 2010, 244). Bones of dogs dating to the fifth millennium BC were uncovered in different parts. The earliest surviving representation of dogs occurs on the Moscow cup from the Badarian culture (4500-4000 BC) (Bunson 2002, 418). An ivory comb of c. 3200 BC in the Metropolitan Museum of New York shows registers of animals, including elephants, antelopes, and dogs (Arnold 1995, 8, no. 1). On a predynastic slate palette from Hierakonpolis (Kom el-Ahmar), a king is shown in a hall littered with decapitated bodies of his foes, while four standards are carried before him. On the first two are the hawks of Horus, on the third the canid of Anubis, on the last a lock of hair, presumably of Isis (Quibell 1898, pls. xii-xiii; Sayce 1903, 96). Clearly, these symbols are derived from the legend of Isis and Osiris.

In the Early Dynastic Period, the Two Dog Palette, now in the Ashmolean Museum of Oxford, dating to Naqada II (3500-3000 BC), was deposited in the cache of votive items in the temple of Horus at Hierakonpolis (Kemp 1989, 80, 94, fig. 31; Bunson 2002, 418). As dogs helped Isis in her search for Osiris and served as her bodyguard, dogs' plaques were deposited in a temple of Horus for apotropaic reasons. The dog of Anubis was also recognised as guardian of equilibrium, which is balanced by the presence of the chaotic Seth at the bottom of the palette. At Abydos, rulers of the Early Dynastic Period were successively buried with their animals, including dogs (Dreyer et al. 1996, 59). During that time, animals apparently had some totemic and cultic significance, as animal processions on ceremonial knives and maces uncovered from temples and burials indicate (Ciałowicz 1992; Dreyer et al 1996, 59; Raffaele 2010).

During the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom, dogs became an increasingly popular motif in tomb reliefs and stelae. The popularity of dogs also appears in the game 'Hounds and Jackals', the canids of Anubis, which comprised a board with ten pins, five with flat-eared dog heads and five with pointed-eared jackal heads (Tooley 1988, 210). Stelae from Gebelein and Asyut, belonging to Nubian archers and spearmen, often depict dogs, presumably used in warfare (Kemp 1989, 27-8, fig. 6). In the Middle Kingdom tombs of Beni Hasan, dogs are often seen in hunting and battle settings. A small wooden coffin from tomb 17 at Beni Hasan bears the Htp-di-nsw formula for its owner, a dog called Ob (Tooley 1988, 207-11). The royal dog Abuwtiyuw received its own tomb at Giza as a reward for being in the bodyguard of Khufu (Reisner 1938, 8). The dog of Amenhotep II or Horemheb, which was buried in tomb 50 in the Valley of the Kings, was royal (Mark 2004,

30-5; Ikram 2013, 301). In contrast, Ob was not a royal dog as Beni Hasan was the necropolis of the monarchs of the sixteenth nome of Upper Egypt. The Htp-di-nsw prayer to Osiris and Anubis is only preserved for humans, but here it is devoted for a dog. Ob was probably a sacred animal of Anubis in one of his temples in the region. The adjacent seventeenth nome was called Inpwt, the 'Anubis Nome', with Kynopolis 'the City of the Dog' as the capital (Gauthier 1925, 84).

Iconographically, dogs are normally faithful companions to humans. Thus, Inyotef II (c. 2069 BC) of the 11th Dynasty appears in a funerary stela with his five dogs (Bunson 2002, 181), and a man is shown in the tomb of Ipy at Thebes (c. 1250 BC) irrigating a garden while his dog appears behind him (Davies 1927, pl. xxix; Kemp 1989, 13, fig. 3). At Abydos Cemetery G in tomb G61 of Hapimen dated to 30th dynasty, a mummified dog was buried at the feet of his master (Petrie 1902, 39-40, pl. lxxx). Dogs, however, are sometimes shown as harmful animals in literature, probably because of their association with chthonic divinities. In the Tale of the Doomed Prince, a king and queen were granted a son after many prayers to gods, while the goddesses of destiny decreed that he would die by crocodile, snake, or dog (Frandsen 2008, 53). This ambivalent nature of dogs also occurs in the Tale of the Two Brothers of the 19th Dynasty. When Bata, a predynastic god, convinced Anup, believed to represent Anubis, that he did not seduce his wife, Anup goes home to kill his wife and throw her body to the dogs (Bunson 2002, 394).

From the Late Period, Saqqara was the arena for mass burials of mummified animals in catacombs.⁵ Next to the Teti pyramid on North Saqqara there is a huge complex called the Anubieion (Jeffreys and Smith 1988). The Anubieion was a temple complex in honour of Anubis with millions of mummified dogs. A processional route once connected the Anubieion with the Serapieion, the cult complex of Osiris-Apis. Based on coins and lamps uncovered from the site, the Ptolemaic settlement within the Anubieion was occupied into the Roman period. The last datable coin belongs to Heraclius (Smith and Jeffreys 1981, 22). There is textual evidence for different social groups and professions in this community (Cannata 2007). In Teti's Cemetery at Saqqara, some Roman-period deposits were not votive as they consisted of human burials with no grave goods, but with dogs placed near the entry as amuletic guardians (Hartley et al 2011).

Gebel Asyut el-Gharbi was also used as an animal necropolis, where mummies of sacred and votive animals were buried (Kahl et al 2009). The so-called Tomb of the Dog housed thousands of mummified animal remains dating from the Late Period to the Roman Period. The most identified animal species was the dog, followed by the cat, the fox, and the jackal, reflecting the supremacy of the canids of Wepwawet and Anubis, the main deities of the district (Kahl 2012, 17-8). The canine burials attest to the popularity of Anubis or more likely a conflation of Khentamentiu, Wepwawet, and Anubis. All these

⁵ Other catacombs in Saqqara included the Bubastieion, the Serapeion, the burials of the Mother and Brother of Apis, the Falcon and Baboon galleries, and the Ibis galleries (Thompson 1988; Ikram 2007a, 429).

divinities are associated with death, cemeteries, and voyages between this world and the next. Khentamentiu, the 'Foremost Among the Westerners'; Wepwawet, the 'Opener of the Ways'; and Anubis, the 'Lord of the Sacred Lands', were all represented as canine creatures (Ikram 2007a, 419).

Although most cemeteries at Abydos contain a variety of mummified animals, some graveyards are devoted only to dogs (Ikram 2007a, 418-21, fig. 1). A dog hypogeum has been found at Abydos in the Middle Cemetery next to the Sacred Well. The cemetery has been dated by pottery lamps found with the dogs to the period between the first century BC and the fourth century AD (Peet 1914, 98-101; Ikram 2007a, 420). As the mythological grave of Osiris' head, Abydos was the seat of the Osirian cult and the gate to the netherworld. Given the absence of cult temples for different gods at Abydos, the connection between Osiris and Abydos encouraged pilgrims to build cemeteries with votive animals associated with gods of the netherworld. As incarnations of Anubis, canids may protect and lead the mummy to the next life, while raptors, shrews, serpents, scarabs, and ibises may assist in re/creation through their association with Re, Sokar, and Thoth (Whittemore 1914; Ikram 2007a, 429).

Dogs in the Graeco-Roman Period:

Anubis/Hermes (Hermanubis):

The Egyptian jackal or dog-headed god Anubis guided souls on their way to the kingdom of Osiris, the judge of the dead. As an icon of Egypt, Anubis occurs in rabbinic texts that refer to the dogs guarding the Egyptian tomb of Joseph in a necropolis (Ulmer 2010, 199-201). Socrates' famous oath, 'by the dog, the god of the Egyptians', is a clear reference to Anubis, who appears as a chief assistant of Osiris in the judgment of the dead as he weighs the heart of the dead against the feather of Maat (Blackwood et al 1962). In the Graeco-Roman period, Anubis was assimilated with the Greek Hermes, the messenger of Zeus, creating the syncretistic god Hermanubis, the psychopompos of the dead (Benaissa 2010; Doxey 2001, 98). In mythology, Anubis and Hermes conducted souls to the underworld. Also at times Anubis is associated with Kerberos, the three-headed watchdog of Hades (Hoerber 1963). As the souls were believed to follow the paths of the planets on their way to paradise, Anubis/Hermes possessed words of power, which enabled him to pass through all the gates and overcome on their behalf the resistance of any opposing spirit. Anubis/Hermes is referred to in Greek papyri as 'the one who holds the key to the netherworld' and is often shown holding a key (*ankh*) in his hand on coffins and shrouds (Griffiths 1970, 61 n. 1, 517; Morenz 1975; Priese 1991, 216-17, no. 132).

The Dog-headed One in Greek Papyri:

Anubis is represented in a theriomorphic shape (Kahl 2007, 153-4) or as canine-headed anthropomorphic figure (Arnold 1995, 15, no. 8, figure in page 14). In the latter, Anubis is depicted with hands raised and performs purification and transfiguration rites over a mummy, as a Ptolemaic statuette in the Metropolitan Museum of New York shows (figure 2) (Arnold 1995, no. 8). During the mummification process, a priest wearing a canine mask plays the role of Anubis, like the terracotta mask in the collection of the Roemer-

Pelizaeus, Hildesheim, Germany (figure 3).⁶ Tomb paintings and Greek papyri affirm that the embalmer of Anubis participated in funeral processions to necropoleis. In the Ptolemaic tomb of Petosiris in Tuna el-Gebel, the embalmer of Anubis holds the mummy of Petosiris outside the tomb while the *sem*-priest performs the ritual of the Opening of the Mouth (Taylor 2010, 8). The eight drachmas ‘for the dog’, which appears in a papyrus, probably refers to the embalmer of Anubis, wearing the mask of the god (*Stud.Pal.* XXII.56.22). The embalmer designated ‘the man of Anubis’ in papyri perhaps took part in the funeral procession to the cemetery (*P.Ashm.* I.17.1).

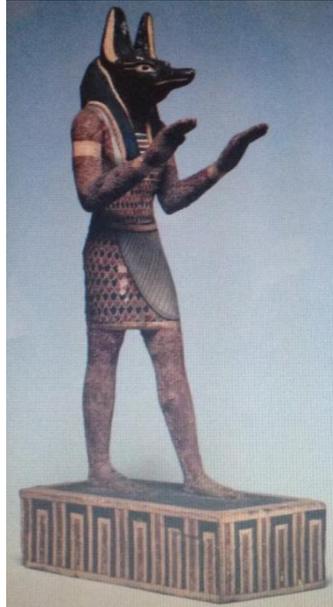


Figure 2: A Ptolemaic statuette of Anubis in the Metropolitan Museum of New York (Arnold 1995, no. 8)

Figure 3: A canine terracotta mask of Anubis in the collection of the Roemer-Pelizaeus, Hildesheim, Germany (Wolinski 1987, 28)

The man of Anubis similarly appears in public processions of the festivals of Isis and Serapis in Egypt and Rome. The ‘dog-headed one’ (*kunw/phj*) is a key player in the procession of Serapis at Oxyrhynchos. A late third-century AD papyrus gives an account of payments to a trumpeter, comedian, dancer, herald, the doorkeeper of the Serapeion, and the ‘dog-headed one’ in return for their duties in the festival of Serapis on 26 Khoiak (*SB* IV.7336.42), which was associated with the Osirian mysteries of Khoiak (Abdelwahed 2016). The festival probably included a public procession through the city since the papyrus mentions gifts to the ‘dog-headed one’, who, since the New Kingdom, referred to ‘the official who took the part of Anubis in the festival’ (Wormald 1929, 242). This masked official of Anubis also appears in the procession of Isis in Rome (*Apul. Met.* XI.11). The role of the dog and Anubis in the legend of Isis and Osiris was the basis for the participation of the priest/official wearing the mask of Anubis in religious processions (Dio. Sic. 1.87.2-4).

⁶ Wolinski 1987, 28. The dog head of St. Christopher in Byzantine iconography is connected with Anubis (Millard 1987).

Anubis and the Lunar Disc of Osiris in Birth-houses (*mammises*) of Egyptian Temples:

In the legend of Isis and Osiris, dogs helped Isis in her search for the infant Anubis. Therefore, dogs were associated with childbirth in ancient Egypt and served as guardians of infants and children. In ancient Greece, dogs were similarly sacrificed in honour of Eileithyia, the goddess who watched over birth (Plut., *Quaest. Rom.* 52; Mazzorin and Minniti 2006, 63). The Gauls equally associated dogs with goddesses of childbirth, such as Sirona, Epona, and Nehallenia (Hondius-Crone 1955; Gourevitch 1968). In Deir el-Banat in the Fayum, the Graeco-Roman cemetery contains the burial of a child accompanied by several mummified dogs (Belova 2016). In Qasr Allam in the Bahariya oasis, dogs were similarly buried with the bodies of children (figure 4) (Ikram 2013, 305, fig. 6. See also Pantalacci and Denoix 2009). At the Bahariya oasis, infants and children were also interred with mummies of dogs. In all cases, dogs probably served as guardians and companions of the deceased in the journey to the underworld.



Figure 4: Dogs buried with the bodies of children in Qasr Allam in the Bahariya oasis (Ikram 2013, 305, fig. 6)

In the Graeco-Roman period, Anubis was associated with *mammises* through the lunar disc of Osiris. As the embalmer of Osiris, Anubis played a central role in the rebirth of the god, which presumably took place at full-moon night.⁷ This episode of the Osirian myth provided the rationale for the representation of Anubis with the lunar disc of Osiris in birth-houses of Egyptian temples, where the divine birth of the child god/king is represented. Representations of Anubis beneath the feet of mummies similarly show the god elevates the newly reborn lunar Osiris into heavens and also the deceased by his own identification with Osiris. Since the lunar disc is equated with Osiris, the god's dismemberment and resurrection symbolised the moon's cycle: the wane/crescent and the wax/full (Ritner 1985, 145).

Mourning Rituals for Dead Dogs in Houses:

Homer emphasised in many instances the strong relationship between the dog, the house, and the master in the *Odyssey* (Beck 1991). Perhaps the most famous instance is the scene of Odysseus approaching his house at Ithaca and

⁷ Dogs are restless in full-moon time, when they are given to howling (Burris 1935, 38).

only recognised by his faithful dog, Argos, which soon died from joy at the return of his master (Scott 1948, 228). This fundamental connection between the canine, the oikos, and the owner is clearly inherent in mourning rituals observed in Graeco-Roman Egypt by the house occupants after the demise of their faithful companion and beloved pet (Diod. Sic. 1.84.2, 1.92.6; Cic. *Tusc.* 1.45.108; Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 3.226; *P.Princ.* III.166.4-7).

It was customary for the Egyptians to keep animals in their houses, a practice that held to be unique by ancient classical authors: The Egyptians are the only people who keep their animals with them in the house (Hdt. 2.36). The house was not only a residential place for humans, but also a home for animals. Anthropological studies suggest that domestic animals are usually given unlimited access to different interior parts of the house (Bourdieu 1973). Yet it is unlikely that they were allowed into domestic shrines. According to Diodorus, 'the Egyptians venerate certain animals exceedingly, not only during their lifetime, but also even after their death, such as cats, ichneumons and dogs, and, again, hawks and the birds which they call ibis' (Diod. Sic. 1.83.1). Animal cult was a widespread practice in Egyptian religion of the Graeco-Roman period. Thus, sacred animals associated with traditional deities were not used in sacrifice (Bell 1948, 82-97).

Certain animals were honoured during their lifetimes and likewise after death. When one of these animals dies, the Egyptians mourn for it deeply as do those who have lost a beloved child, and bury it in a manner not in keeping with their ability but going far beyond the value of their estates (Dio. Sic. 1.84.7). They also wrap it in fine linen and then, wailing and beating their breasts, carry it off to be embalmed (Dio. Sic. 1.83.5). Dwellers in a house where a cat had died a natural death shave their eyebrows and no more; where a dog has so died, the head and the whole body are shaven. Cats which have died are taken to Bubastis, where they are embalmed and buried in sacred receptacles; dogs are buried also in sacred burial places in the towns where they belong (Hdt. 2.66-7).

Upon the death of certain animals, the Egyptians used to perform particular rituals of lamentation in their houses: Whenever a dog is found dead in any house, every resident of it shaves his entire body and goes into mourning. What is more astonishing than this, if any wine or grain or any other thing necessary to life happens to be stored in the building where one of these animals has expired, they would never think of using it thereafter for any purpose (Diod. Sic. 1.84.2). During this period of mourning, which presumably ended with the burial of the dead animal, it was expected that relatives and neighbours would come to the house to console its residents.⁸ Great grief was displayed over the death of a family dog and the family would shave their body as a sign of sorrow. Dogs were highly valued in Egypt as part of the family and, when a dog died, the family, if they could afford to, would have the dog

⁸ It is quite extraordinarily that in contemporary Egypt, especially in villages, whenever a cow dies people sometimes go to the owner of the cow to console him/ her. Of course, this modern custom has nothing to do with Islam or Christianity, but seems to have passed over generations through social tradition.

mummified with as much care as they would pay for a human member of the family.

Mummification and Burial in Sacred Hypogea:

The standard period for the mummification process of all animals was seventy days, like humans. When one of these animals dies, they wrap it in fine linen and then, wailing and beating their breasts, carry it off to be embalmed. After it has been treated with cedar oil and such spices as have the quality of imparting a pleasant odour and of preserving the body for a long time, they lay it away in a consecrated tomb (Dio. Sic. 1.83.5). At home, the animal was first wrapped with linen cloth, before it was sent off to the embalming place. Generally, dogs are not well embalmed for they were merely desiccated with natron or salt, before being wrapped in white linen. In ancient Egypt, mummified dogs guided human spirits into the next world. Thus, Abuwtiyuw, the royal dog of Khufu, was given a coffin from the royal treasury, fine linen in great quantity, incense, and ointment that he might be honoured before the great god Anubis (Reisner 1938, 8). In Greco-Roman Egypt, canid species were continuously mummified as guides for the deceased (Gautier 2007, 279).

Animal mummification was widely practised, and it was customary to use the second procedure described by Herodotus. Like votive animals, household dogs were probably mummified in the embalming houses (Nur el Din 1992; Kessler and Nur el Din 2005; Kessler 2003, 52; Ikram 2007a, 418). Animal mummification closely matched the embalming method used for humans (Vos 1993), presumably imitating the mythological burial rituals offered to Osiris by Isis and Anubis. Both humans and animals were embalmed to preserve the body so that it could host the eternal soul in the hereafter. The most common and plausible method of mummification for animals began with evisceration through the belly, followed by desiccation using natron. This part of the preparation of the body took 40 days (Ikram et al 2013, 54). The massage of the body with resins and oils took a further 30 days. The final stage was wrapping the mummy in linen bandages, ranging from two up to ten layers of bandages (Ikram 2007b, 12). After the 70 days of mummification were completed, the animal mummy was ready for burial in its tomb (Ikram 2007b, 12). It was buried in the catacombs called 'Houses of Rest' (Ray 1976, 140).

The ancient Egyptians mummified a variety of animals and birds for religious and ceremonial reasons (Kessler 2003). The fish oxyrhynchos was believed to have eaten the phallus of the god Osiris, when Seth flung his body into the river. Out of devotion to Osiris, some nomes forbade the consumption of this sacred fish (Bunson 2002, 292). Animals were also mummified as epiphanies of particular deities. At Tune el-Gebel, selected baboons (sacred animals of Thoth) were given individual names and kept in a special pen at the temple of Osiris-Baboon. After death, they were mummified and buried in the catacombs, having been properly deified through the performance of the ritual of the Opening of the Mouth over them (Kemp 1989, 377). This ceremony was originally enacted over human mummies at the entrance of tombs in the day of burial to symbolically bring the dead back to life so that it could reunite with the soul, the *ba* (Lichtheim 1976; Smith 1987).

Literature and archaeology confirm that sacred, votive, and household animals were buried in private tombs (Diod. Sic. 1.83.5-6; Vos 1993). Dead cats were taken away into sacred buildings, where they were embalmed and buried in Bubastis. Shrewmice and hawks were taken away to Buto (Hdt. 2.66), while the ibises were buried at Tuna el-Gebel and Oxyrhynchos (*P.Oxy.* IX.1188.4). Dogs were also buried in several sacred burials (Hdt. 2.66-7). Gebel Asyut el-Gharbi was a necropolis for mummified dogs (Kahl et al 2009). Remains of dog mummies with wrappings have also been found in two cemeteries associated with the temple of El-Deir in the Kharga oasis, probably offered by the inhabitants or the travellers to the god Anubis (Dunand and Lichtenberg 2005). The first/second century AD temple of Ain Dabashiya was also associated with the cult of the canine-headed god Anubis, where the remains of several hundred dogs, ranging from few-week-old puppies to adults, were found near the temple (Ikram 2008, 39). Oxyrhynchos also contained mummified remains of dogs (Bunson 2002, 292). Nearly 8 million mummies of puppies and old dogs were ceremonially buried in the Anubieion of Saqqara for Anubis (Ikram et al 2013, 51), the god responsible for taking the deceased from this world to the next (DuQuesne et al 2007).

The ancient Egyptians associated animals and birds with their own deities (Görg 2004, 433-43). They paid for embalming and keeping the dead animals and birds in hypogea. Demotic documents indicate that certain Egyptian priests journeyed the province to collect dead bodies of animals and birds and brought them for mummification and burial in hypogea at Tuna el-Gebel (Nur el Din 1992, 253-4). Animal cult, mummification, and burial were confirmed in the Pharaonic period (Diod. Sic. 1.69.2), and were maintained in the Graeco-Roman period (Germer 2004, 469). Funerary practices of combining dog and human burials or burying dogs in pits separate from their masters are documented in several cemeteries. These animals were probably intended to act as companions and/or guardians in the journey to the underworld or as beloved household pets.

Household dogs should be distinguished from votive dogs, which were embalmed and presented to gods as offerings and intermediary between men and gods and transmitters of human prayers, desires, and interests (Te Velde 1980, 80-1). Generally, it has been suggested that the niched dogs in hypogea were sacred, while the remainder were votives (Ikram et al 2013, 50). Again, not all non-niched dogs were votive, because they must have included votive as well as family dogs, though it is difficult, if not impossible, to differentiate them in the archaeological record. Food and drink were offered to votive animals to keep them for the slaughter (Philo, *In Flacc.* 178). Mummies of animals were purchased by devout pilgrims and offered to the relevant deity as votive items and then buried in catacombs, en masse, at certain religious festivals. Votive animals were deposited for good omen along with human mummies, like family dogs. Millions of votive mummified dogs were sold to pilgrims by the gods' priests (Nur el Din 1992; Kessler and Nur el Din 2005; Kessler 2003, 52; Ikram 2007a, 418). The popularity of votive animal burials was rooted in the upsurge of personal piety in the Late Period, and continued

into Roman times until Egyptian temples were closed under the Edict of Theodosius in AD 391 (Ikram 2007a, 419).

The high number of votive neonates (75 percent) in the dog catacomb at Saqqara suggests that this was an almost industrial production, with entire litters being killed, perhaps by drowning or exposure immediately after birth, before being given a cursory mummification. Puppy farms and the mummification of animals were important for the economy of temples (Ikram et al 2013, 62). However, votive mummies, such as a bird mummy at Cape Town Museum, sometimes contained only plant material, mud, linen, and small stones (Cornelius et al 2012, 144). Egyptians seem to have identified all dogs with the god Anubis, and at times domestic dogs were also interred in the Anubieion catacombs at Saqqara. The figure of Anubis is prominent in the funerary sphere of Graeco-Roman Egypt. On a second-century AD shroud painting in the Ägyptisches Museum of Berlin, the dog-headed Anubis attends to the deceased, a man in Roman dress representing the mummified Osiris (Cannuyer 2001, 12). Anubis is often depicted in the form of a dog or jackal watching over the dead. The falcon and dog on funerary stelea from Terenouthis (Kom Abu Bellou) definitely represented Horus and Anubis (figure 5) (Hartley et al 2011, 28, fig. 7). At the Alexandrian tomb of Kom el-Shouqafa, Anubis is shown in Roman military garb as guardian of the necropolis, while in the Tigrane tomb the deceased is flanked by two dogs or jackals of Anubis (Venit 2002, 143-44, figs. 123-4, 152-3, fig. 133). The connection between dogs and Anubis finds the basis for mourning rituals for dead family dogs in houses and apparently for their mummification and burial in special cemeteries. While temple priests cared for sacred and votive dogs while alive or dead, family members similarly took charge of domestic dogs.

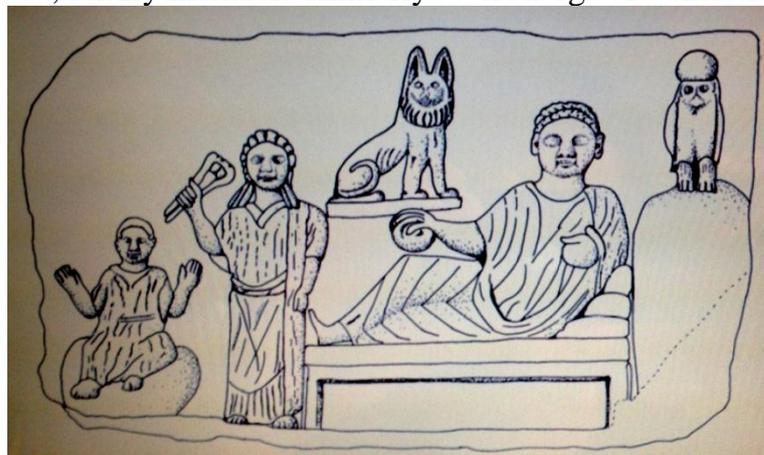


Figure 5: The falcon and dog on a funerary stelea from Terenouthis (Hartley et al 2011, 28, fig. 7).

The mummified animals were thought to be holy and therefore accompanied their owners in the beyond as amuletic guardians (Hartley et al 2011). The dogs buried with humans has also been interpreted as sacrifices to appease and invoke Hekate and Anubis as gods of the underworld, travel, and liminal areas, thus ensuring the safety of the deceased in his travels to the hereafter (Ikram 2013). There was no contradiction between the use of dogs as votive animals or as amuletic guardians (Hartley et al 2011; Ikram 2013, 304).

The problem of modern scholars is typically semantic and typological. The dog was a companion of Isis in her search for Anubis, who later served as a guardian and companion of Isis in her search for Osiris. As the embalmer and guide of Osiris, the dog-headed Anubis analogously guided the common deceased in the hereafter. This episode of the myth tackles dogs' presence in cemeteries with or without human remains. In the Graeco-Roman period, an amulet in the form of Anubis was attached to corpses for apotropaic reasons (Andrews 1994, chapter 5). The Egyptians similarly assigned this capacity to a physical dog, which, like the amulet, served as a theriomorphic manifestation of Anubis, the god of the necropolis (Hartley et al 2011).

Conclusion:

A synthesis of different types of documents allows better understanding of the role of dogs in Graeco-Roman Egypt. Literary sources highlight dogs' position in the myth of Isis and Osiris and their association with chthonic deities, which triggered canine reverence through Pharaonic and Graeco-Roman times. The goddess Isis asked the Egyptian priests and inhabitants to venerate animals and pay to them the same honour they gave to Osiris in lifetime and after death. The dog was primarily divinised because of its outstanding position in the Osirian legend, let alone other exceptional capabilities. The priests took charge of both sacred and votive dogs in temple precincts and hypogea, whereas the inhabitants were responsible for family dogs. Dogs' mummies not only perpetuated the role of the dog and Anubis in the Osirian myth, but also served as guardians and companions of the givers and dead in the journey to the underworld. The connection between the dog/the dog-headed Anubis and Osiris guaranteed the continuity of dog's symbolism in Graeco-Roman Egypt, where the 'dog-headed one' participated in funeral processions to the necropolis as well as public processions of the festivals of Isis and Serapis in Egypt and Rome. House occupants performed certain mourning rituals after the demise of their dogs, strongly matching those offered to Osiris by Isis and Anubis. Dead dogs were ultimately taken to be embalmed and buried in their final destination, the necropolis, where the god Anubis was the master.

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الملخص العربي

أكثر من مجرد حيوانات أليفة: الكلاب في مصر في العصر اليوناني-الروماني

مما لا شك فيه أن الدراسات التي قام بها المؤرخ القديم إيليانوس عن "خصائص الحيوانات" قد مهدت الطريق للعديد من الدراسات الحديثة التي تناولت موضوعات متعددة عن الحيوانات في العالم القديم. وربما لا نبالغ حين نقول بأن حيوان الكلب يعد من أقرب الحيوانات إلى قلب الإنسان في العالم القديم والحديث. ولعل ما قامت به الباحثة سليمة إكرام يعد من أهم الدراسات التي ناقشت تحنيط الحيوانات بصفة عامة وحيوان الكلب بصفة خاصة في مصر القديمة. يتناول هذا البحث حيوان الكلب في مصر في العصرين اليوناني والروماني من خلال دراسة نصوص الكتاب الكلاسيكيين ووثائق البردي والأدلة الأثرية المرتبطة بالموضوع. يهدف البحث إلى إثبات أن التقديس الذي حظى به حيوان الكلب في مصر منذ العصر الفرعوني وحتى العصر الروماني مروراً بالعصر البطلمي يرجع للدور الذي لعبه حيوان الكلب في أسطورة إيزيس وأوزوريس. يبدأ البحث بمناقشة دور الكلب في أسطورة إيزيس وأوزوريس ثم يناقش البحث الأدلة المختلفة على استمرار قدسية وتبجيل حيوان الكلب في العصرين اليوناني والروماني ثم يتناول البحث الطقوس المختلفة المرتبطة بموت حيوان الكلب والتي تماثل بدرجة كبيرة تلك الطقوس التي قامت بها إيزيس وأنوبيس على جسد أوزوريس.