



## **Save Ancient Studies Alliance**

### **Winter 2025 Teaching Ancient Studies: Continuing Education Reading Group**

# **Uncovering Secrets of Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt**

**Led by Heba ElmostaeenBellah Ibrahim Khalil**

#### **Introduction to Reading Group:**

This course aims to equip educators with modern skills and methods to teach students about the historical significance of animal mummies in ancient Egypt. It focuses on uncovering the religious purposes of animal mummification and providing specific learning strategies for teachers. The course covers topics such as the sacred practice of animal mummification, animals as deities and symbols, types of animal mummies, pets for the afterlife, famous animal necropolises, animal behaviors, mass production for religious trade, and the mummification process. Furthermore, it emphasizes the role of animals in ancient Egyptian life and how to simplify the concept of animal symbolism in Egyptian art for young students. Educators will gain valuable insights into incorporating rich examples of animals in daily life and eternal life within art and architecture into their classroom teachings. Participants will explore topics related to animals in the Egyptian environment, including mummies, coffins, and offering food. Instructors will be able to learn and practice using online resources and exploring animal burials at archaeological sites. The course welcomes those curious about unraveling the mysterious secrets of the animal world in the past. A variety of tools will be used, such as images, video clips, virtual tours, articles, books, and specialized websites. The course offers a passionate journey through time to delve deeply into the mysterious world of animals.

## Reading Group Objectives:

- To equip the educators with the wide knowledge and various resources to present the role of animals in ancient Egyptian art, and in the afterlife.
- To develop the skills and tools of teaching the real symbolism of animals in ancient Egypt, and animal behaviors in art inside the classrooms in order to promote important use of topics that connect the past to the present.
- To gain understanding the types of animals' mummies: votive mummies, sacred mummies, offering animals as food, and interpreting all the data they should present.
- To estimate the critical thinking of the evolution of how the ancient Egyptians were influenced by secrets of animal role in religion theories.
- To simplify the mythology of rescuing god Osiris by the crocodile Sobek, and how it was incorporated into historical narratives in the religion myth.

## Your SASA Educational Ambassadors:

Heba ElmostaeenBellah Ibrahim Khalil  
PhD candidate, Ludwig Maximilian  
University of Munich

## Google Classroom:

During our weekly Zoom meetings, we'll come together to discuss our readings and delve into the topic. We will also use Google Classroom to provide easy access to reading materials, resources, and facilitate ongoing discussions through open forums.

This platform will also be where participants submit their assignments.



## Dates:

Fridays @ 10:00 am EST (GMT-5)

- Session 1: January 17
- Session 2: January 24
- Session 3: January 31
- Session 4: February 7
- Session 5: February 14

## Week 1: Recognizing the surrounding Egyptian environment of animals in art.

### Objectives:

- Exploring Ancient Egyptian Natural Environment and Animal/human Connections, The Role of Animals in Ancient Egyptian Life
- The study explores the natural landscape and environment of ancient Egypt It highlights the connection between wild and pet animals, plants, and food
- Specifically, it focuses on the Nile Valley culture from predynastic period to new kingdom period
- Examples such as the Ancient Zoo at Hierakonpolis are provided
- Animals like cats, dogs, monkeys, oxen, donkeys, horses, cattle, sheep, goats, fish, and fowl played crucial roles in various aspects of ancient Egyptian daily life.

### Reading/watching:

- Patrick F. Houlihan, The Animal World of the Pharaohs, AUC, 1996. [Chapter 2](#).
- Billie Jean Collins, A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East, Brill, 2002. Douglas Brewer Reading book online. "Hunting, animal husbandry, and diet in ancient Egypt" pp. 427 to 452  
[https://www.google.com/books/edition/A\\_History\\_of\\_the\\_Animal\\_World\\_in\\_the\\_Anc/2-t5DwAAQBAJ?hl=ar&gbpv=1&dq=ancient+Egyptian+environment+of+animals&pg=PA44&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_History_of_the_Animal_World_in_the_Anc/2-t5DwAAQBAJ?hl=ar&gbpv=1&dq=ancient+Egyptian+environment+of+animals&pg=PA44&printsec=frontcover)
- Landscape of Egypt: <https://carnegiemnh.org/egypt-and-the-nile/>
- Riemer, H., F. Förster, M. Herb & N. Pöllath (eds.) (2009), Desert animals in the eastern Sahara: Status, economic significance, and cultural reflection in antiquity. Proceedings of an Interdisciplinary ACACIA Workshop held at the University of Cologne December 14–15, 2007. [p. 47-49](#).
- Animal types: <https://africame.factsanddetails.com/article/entry-1207.html>  
[Domesticated Animals in Ancient Egypt: Cattle, Donkeys, Horses, Birds | Middle East And North Africa](#)
- To explore the animal's environment in ancient Egypt:  
[▶ Extinct Animals The Ancient Egyptians Saw](#)

## Week 2: Animals in religious concept in ancient Egypt

### Objectives:

- Be able to understand the concept of divine embodiments: Many Egyptian deities were depicted with animal heads, symbolizing their divine powers and attributes.
- Divine Creatures: Certain animals were revered as sacred and were often mummified and buried in elaborate tombs.
- Symbolism and Mythology: Animals played a crucial role in Egyptian mythology.

### Reading/watching:

- [Ancient Egyptian Animals | Ely Museum](#)
- [Ancient Egypt's Sacred Animal Symbolism: Exploring Divine Connections | Egyptian Streets](#)
- [Ancient Egyptian Animals](#)
- [\(PDF\) Egyptian beliefs about animals | Venice | S Attia - Academia.edu](#)

- SYMBOLS OF ANIMALS WORSHIPPING: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/gNguhDaW5Dw>
- SYMBOLS OF ANCIENT GODS: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/xTg0UGq15jk>

### Week 3: Animal Mummies: A Sacred Practice in Ancient Egypt

The focus is on leading students to have serious discussions about the purposes and eternal life of mummies, the mummification process, and famous necropolises of animal mummies in a specific context, the participants will be able to identify the different tools of how to present data of animals' mummies to the adults and kids in classrooms, and also the types of animals' mummies, and the purposes behind worshiping the animal's power in afterlife.

The ancient Egyptians had a deep reverence for animals, often associating them with specific deities or using them as symbols in their religious beliefs. This reverence extended to the afterlife, leading to the practice of mummifying animals.

#### Ancient Egyptian Animal Mummification

- Animals were mummified as offerings to gods and as votive offerings
- Beloved pets were mummified to accompany their owners into the afterlife
- A mass production industry emerged for animal mummies as religious offerings
- The mummification process for animals was similar to humans, but often simpler
- Famous animal necropolises include Saqqara and Tuna el-Gebel

#### Reading/watching:

- Types of mummified animals:
  - [Evidence of diet, deification, and death within ancient Egyptian mummified animals | Scientific Reports](#)
  - [Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt | Ancient Egyptian Animals Mummies](#)
- Mummification process/ & some examples:
  - [Scientists 'Digitally Unwrap' Ancient Egyptian Animal Mummies | Smithsonian](#)
- Religious purposes of animals mummies:
  - [Animal mummies were a message direct to the gods | Science News](#)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5iwQZc2PEM>
- [Cat Mummies Were a Big Thing in Ancient Egypt 🐈 | Smithsonian Channel](#)
- [Animals in Ancient Egypt: Animal Mummies](#)

#### Recommended Reading:

- Salima Ikram, divine creatures: animal mummies in ancient Egypt, AUC, Cairo, 2005.
  - Animals' necropolis:
    - [https://books.google.com.eg/books?id=zz5oNwmdaTcC&newbks=0&printsec=frontcover&dq=animals+mummies&hl=ar&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=animals%20mummies&f=false](https://books.google.com.eg/books?id=zz5oNwmdaTcC&newbks=0&printsec=frontcover&dq=animals+mummies&hl=ar&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=animals%20mummies&f=false)

#### Week 4: Animals in ancient Egyptian art. & ancient Egyptian language

Participants will understand a range wide of animals representations in art, & architecture scenes, all the activities and discussion points that identified the animals functions in Zodiac, minor art, and ancient Egyptian language such as signlist of Gardiner, will shed light on how the

Egyptians the transliterations/phonetics/ & determinatives in the scripts.

- Animals were significant in Egyptian society, reflected in hieroglyphs
- Animals were frequently depicted in Egyptian art and used in decorative motifs
- Animal-related activities were depicted in tomb paintings and reliefs.
- Some hieroglyphs were based on animal forms.
- Animals were used in personal names and were linked to occupations and social status.
- Practical use of animals included professions like hunters and herders.

#### **Reading:**

- [12 Animal Hieroglyphs and How the Ancient Egyptians Used Them](#)
- [Ancient Egyptian Animals](#)
- [Animals in Human Situations in Ancient Egyptian Ostraca and Papyri](#)
- [Gardiner's Sign List of Egyptian Hieroglyphs](#)
- [Domesticated Animals in Ancient Egypt: Cattle, Donkeys, Horses, Birds | Middle East And North Africa](#)
- [Understanding the Significance of Animals in Ancient Egyptian Threat-Formulae](#)
- [Egyptian Astrology Signs and Their Meanings | Below The Stars](#)

#### **Discussions/activity materials:**

- ▶ [The Dendera Zodiac of Egypt: An Ancient Babylonian Copy? | Ancient Architects](#)
- ▶ [Ancient Egyptian Animals](#)

#### Week 5: Learning virtual tours of the animal mummies. & artifacts in Egyptian museum.

Objectives:

- Exploring Animal Mummies and Artefacts in Museum Tours
- Participants will learn to illustrate the animal mummies gallery
- Customized museum tours for classroom learning
- Virtual gallery tours and label activities for minor arts objects
- Engaging video games on the role of animal mummies and animal representations
- Workshops designed for all ages - kids, adults, teenagers, and older individuals

#### **Culminating Assignment:**

Instructions for this assignment can be found in your Google Classroom under Coursework.

#### **Certificates of Completion:**

The following criteria must be met by participants in order to receive a certificate of completion:

- Complete culminating assignment
- Attended all 5 live class discussions

\* If you are seeking continuing education/professional development credits SASA recommends that you check with your school district, continuing education committee, or other relevant authority in advance to ensure you receive the proper credit and advancement for your coursework. Save Ancient Studies Alliance does not guarantee acceptance by your school, district, or licensing authority.