

Anthropomorphism is the name for the human tendency to attribute **human characteristics to nonhuman** things; defined in the Oxford dictionary as “the representation of Gods, or nature, or non-human animals, as having human form, or as having human thoughts and intentions.”

Infographic on Anthropomorphism in Ancient Egypt



A mummified crocodile, possibly to honour the crocodile God, Sobek.

Animal mummification in Ancient Egypt can first be seen during the Predynastic era, with the mummified bodies of donkeys being found at was the ancient city of Tarkhan (31 miles south of Cairo). Excavations done at the necropolis found at Hierakonpolis, a variety of animals remains which showed evidence of attempted mummification, including elephants (one of which dates back to the Naqada II period, beginning around 3500.BC), hippos and baboons. First dynasty Pharaohs would often be buried with lions and donkeys.

Animal mummification:

- To **allow pet to pass** onto the afterlife.
- To **provide food** for people passing onto the afterlife.
- An **offering** to a particular God.
- Seen as **representations of a God** and worshipped in their name.

November, 2018: several tombs located at Saqqara were found to have collections of mummified **cats and scarabs**, with the tombs contents being able to be traced back to the **5th and 6th Pharaonic Dynasties**.

Ancient Egypt saw religion and worship as **polytheist**, they worshipped **more than one God**, many of which were depicted and worshipped in the **form of animals**.

In 2011, a cache of approximately **8 million mummified animals** (a majority of which being **dogs**) were discovered, buried near to a temple dedicated to **Anubis**, at Saqqara.



Saqqara

The necropolis of Ancient Egypt's former Capital, **Memphis**, Saqqara has been the site of thousands of discoveries of mummified corpses, of a **variety of animals**.

Cats were among the **most discovered** animal at Saqqara, as **offerings** to the Goddess, Bastet. Many Egyptian families had cats in the home, to bring them the **protection of Bastet**; the pets would be mummified and buried upon their deaths and treated with respect throughout their lives.

An excavation, conducted in **2019**, made a **rare** find of **mummified lion cubs** in a discovered cache of mummified animals. Many Egyptian Gods were seen to take the form of a lion, including **Sekhmet** and **Maahes**.

The **Sphinx**, among one of the most recognisable monuments of Ancient Egypt, depicts the body of a lion and the head of a man. Though debated, it is thought to date back to the reign of Pharaoh Khafre, c. 2575.BC - 2465.BC, (with the face of the man being thought to be Khafre's own) during the Old Kingdom.

Anubis: God of the Dead, Embalming and Mummification. Often depicted as bearing the head of a **jackal**.



Bastet: Goddess of Cats, Fertility, Protection, etc. Artificats depict her as a slender woman with the head of a cat, or personified as a **cat**.



Sekhmet: Goddess of War and Healing. Traditionally seen as a **lioness**.



Sobek: A God of the Nile, Crocodiles and Controlled waters. **Crocodiles** were worshipped in his name.



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