

## Rare Ancient Egyptian Lion Mummies Found

### What are ancient Egyptian mummies?

- Ancient Egyptians believed that after they died, they would go to the afterlife.
- It was important to preserve their bodies because they were important in the afterlife.

When you think of ancient Egyptian mummies, you probably don't think of lions or crocodiles! However, that's just what a team of **archaeologists** have found.

Archaeologists have found a huge collection of statues and **mummified** animals in an ancient Egyptian site.

Around 75 wooden and bronze statues of cats were found and the mummies of different animals, including cats, snakes and even crocodiles!

The ancient Egyptian objects are nearly 3000 years old. They were found last year in a place called Saqqara. This is an area with many pyramids and is just south of Cairo.

It's a huge find. Dr Khaled El-Enany, the Egyptian Minister of **Antiquities**, said that the large number of objects discovered could be "a museum by itself."

However, one of the finds has got archaeologists very excited — the discovery of two rare lion mummies!

Three other big cats were also found but the team aren't sure what they are yet. The mummies could be cheetahs, leopards or more lions.

Finding lion mummies is very rare. In fact, only one has ever been found before, back in 2004.

Cats were incredibly important to ancient Egyptians. As part of their religion, cats

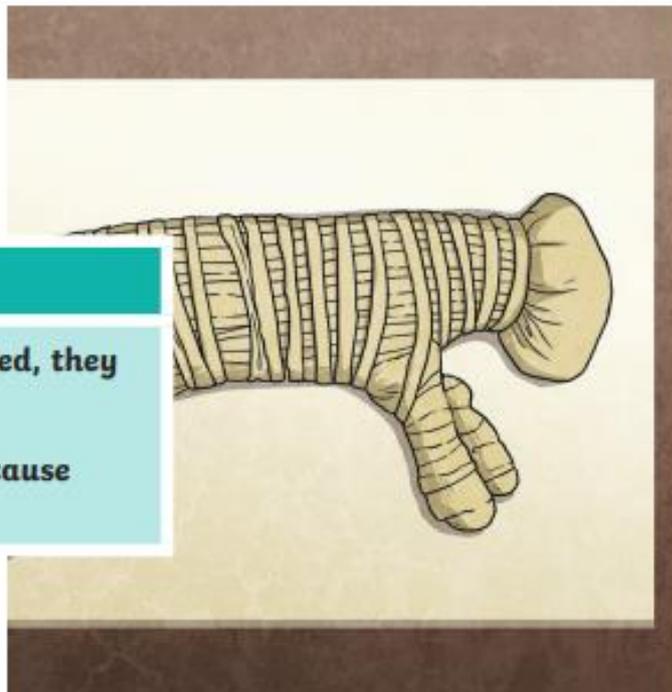


Illustration: The mummified lion found at Saqqara.

were believed to be **sacred**. They were also kept as pets.

Historians believe that lions were also important. They were a symbol of royalty. Pharaohs, such as Ramesses II, supposedly had lions as pets!

Historians think animals were mummified so a pet and its owner would meet again in the afterlife.

Hopefully, this find will help them understand more about ancient Egyptians and their attitude towards animals.

### Glossary

<b>archaeologists</b>	People who study history by looking at ancient objects and sites.
<b>mummified</b>	Preserve a body to stop it decaying or rotting.
<b>antiquities</b>	Objects, buildings or artwork from the ancient past.
<b>sacred</b>	Something connected to a god or a religious purpose.

# Questions

1. 'It was important to preserve the bodies because the bodies were important in the afterlife.'  
Tick the word which is closest in meaning to 'preserve' in this sentence.

- bury
- offer
- protect
- stop

2. Find a phrase the author uses in the first paragraph to show that mummified lions or crocodiles are unusual.

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3. Find three animal mummies which were found at the Saqqara site.

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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4. 'A king might have been buried at Saqqara.'  
Find evidence from the news story which supports this statement.

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5. Summarise this news story in 20 words or fewer.

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6. Do you think archaeologists will find more mummified lions in the future? Explain your answer.

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