

# **Egyptian animal cult investigated with Synchrotron light: Mummies from the Grenoble Natural History Museum**

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For more than a millennium, between New Kingdom and Roman Periods, ancient Egyptian mummified millions of animals. Nevertheless, only a very small fraction of these mummies reached us and, even less, in reasonably good preservation state. Nowadays, archaeologist studies again old museum's collections with new technologies for a better understanding of this special industry. On this respect, X-ray microtomography, especially when using synchrotron light, can bring a non-destructive and non-invasive direct access to the internal structures of these precious specimens.

Through a large research project, dozens of animal mummies have been scanned at the ESRF, mostly on the BM05 beamline. Among these, we scanned all the specimens conserved at the Natural History Museum of Grenoble, for both research and conservation purposes. As the majority of old collections, the information about provenance and history of these mummies has been lost. Despite its relatively modest number of specimens, the Grenoble collection through its proximity with the ESRF and goodwill of the museum team, brings valuable information about votive animal mummies. Among the most noticeable specimens, we will present mummies made from complete single animals such as cats, dog and ibises. A crocodile mummy that includes only a head and a large bone from two different animals, and a "falcon" mummy that is made with a raptor head, but that does enclose in fact a baby marine bird.

This poster will present an overview of this collection and the preliminary results that were obtained through the collaboration between the museum and the ESRF.