

Social zooarchaeology : humans and animals in prehistory

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Abstrak

This is the first book to provide an overview and systematic examination of social zooarchaeology, a new approach that takes a holistic view of human-animal relations in the past. Until very recently, zooarchaeology was heavily focused on diet and subsistence economy, especially for prehistoric periods. This book argues that animals have always played much broader roles in human societies: as wealth, companions, spirit helpers, sacrificial victims, totems, centerpieces of feasts, and objects of taboos, and so on. Exploring the broader significance of ancient animals provides a richer picture of past societies. Even those primarily interested in utilitarian aspects of animal use need to account for that social factors that shaped zooarchaeological assemblages as much as taphonomic processes.