Desert animals in the eastern Sahara breaks new ground in investigating the changing and exceedingly complex relationship between man and wild animals from an interdisciplinary perspective. This volume brings together an international group of experts from diverse fields, including Egyptology, archaeology, biology, archaeozoology, and nature conservation, to explore the animal world of the Sahara, past and present. The chapters cover the distribution, behaviour, and economic significance of desert wildlife in antiquity and today, and highlight the impact of climate change and human activity on species well adapted to some of the harshest conditions on earth. They emphasise cultural perception and the changing roles in hunting, social structure, and religion, as reflected in the bones, rock art, tomb decorations and ancient texts.

This highly illustrated volume originated in an ACACIA workshop held in 2007 at the University of Cologne. Fourteen papers are assembled under the following five topics: An outline of the workshop’s inspiration (based on a new study of pictorial sources from the Pharaonic era); the state-of-the-art of archaeozoology in the Nile Valley and Egypt’s Western Desert from Late Palaeolithic to Pharaonic times; studies in historical and current species distribution, animal behaviour and conservation; the economic and conceptual roles of hunting and keeping wild animals, from prehistoric to dynastic times; and the cultural reflection of desert animals in ancient Egyptian society and religion.

Editors: Heiko Riemer is prehistoric archaeologist at the University of Cologne; Frank Förster and Michael Herb are Egyptologists from the same University; and Nadja Pöllath is archaeozoologist at the University of Munich. As researchers of the Collaborative Research Centre ACACIA at the University of Cologne (1995–2007), the editors have cooperated for many years in fieldwork and interdisciplinary studies of ancient Egypt and its desert environments.

Proceedings of an Interdisciplinary ACACIA Workshop held at the University of Cologne December 14–15, 2007

“The workshop was a wonderful success and these proceedings are a valuable contribution and foundation to further understanding and I hope respect for deserts and their incomparable wildlife.”

John Newby
Sahara Conservation Fund
Desert animals in the eastern Sahara: Status, economic significance, and cultural reflection in antiquity

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