



Wall Paintings of the Tomb of Nefertari: Scientific Studies for their Conservation

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The tomb of Nefertari is among the most precious and fragile of Egyptian monuments. Depicting Nefertari's journey to immortal life, its wall paintings are exquisite, exhibiting some of the most superb craftsmanship that has survived from the age of the New Kingdom. But from the moment of their discovery in 1904, admiration for the quality of these remarkable paintings was tempered by distress over their precarious condition. Indeed, if the wall paintings had continued to deteriorate, the world would have suffered an incalculable cultural loss. The tomb's history and archaeology as well as previous interventions at the site were presented in that publication, which also included discussions of the geology of the region and of the tomb, information on biological activity & microclimatic conditions within the tomb, the first reports on pigment and plaster analyses, preliminary color measurements, a non destructive testing study, & the initial condition survey. That progress report set the stage for the first major intervention that was about to take place in the tomb: an emergency consolidation of damaged areas. There were, at the time, many pending issues: a clear comprehension of the causes of the damage in the wall paintings, the length and extent of the total conservation effort, and the approaches and treatment methods to be utilized. There was also an accepted understanding that the commitment to save the wall paintings had to be directed toward ensuring their survival to the high standards already established for all of the Getty Conservation Institute's projects.

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