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ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

In-situ imaging, elemental and molecular spectroscopy for the analysis of the construction and painting of a late period coffin at the Egyptian Museum of Cairo

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1. Introduction

Painting materials from ancient Egyptian artworks have received much interest; for their study various destructive and non-invasive measurement techniques have been applied¹⁻⁴. Contributions by conservators, conservation scientists and art historians have aimed at identifying pigments and binding media enriching the knowledge of ancient Egyptian color palettes⁵⁻¹⁰. One of the main concerns in Egyptian museums today is the conservation and preservation of the stored Egyptian archaeological heritage and the need for preventive conservation measures; it is noted that proper conservation requires knowledge of original materials and the careful analysis of artifacts. Often sampling is limited and non-invasive analytical techniques are preferred, but not widely available. The limited access to instrumentation and training are critical.

This work describes a measurement protocol focused on both working conditions and analytical procedures applied for the in-situ analysis of a Coffin stored in the Egyptian Museum Cairo using entirely transportable instrumentation, with a particular focus on the measurement conditions and practical considerations adopted during analysis. The study of cultural heritage is of wide interest to the scientific community, with dedicated publications focused on instrumental development and applications of non-invasive instrumentation to the analysis of easel paintings, but has not been extensive in developing countries without access to instrumentation and expertise.¹¹⁻¹² Due to its high sensitivity and applicability to a wide range of pigments, X-ray fluorescence (XRF) is one of the most commonly used portable non-invasive techniques, often combined with complementary molecular analysis, even if it is noted that stringent regulations in many countries are in place regarding health and safety for the operation of instrumentation in situ.^{14,15} In this work elemental data provided by XRF are complemented by molecular data provided by Raman spectroscopy which is considered an effective non-invasive approach for the identification of the palette of paintings, as long as fluorescence does not mask the weak Raman signal

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