

Chantry Library Bibliographies:
No. 2: Egyptian Tomb Painting by Bianca Madden



Tomb of Menna Conservation Project. Photo Katy Doyle

Tomb of Menna, TT69, Valley of the Nobles. Menna, seated, Broad Hall Near Left, photographed under flat, raking and UV light.

Bianca Madden trained in conservation at the City and Guilds of London Art School, graduating in 1997, before undertaking further training in Italy with a Leonardo da Vinci grant to study in Urbino. In addition, Madden holds an MSc from University College London in Sustainable Heritage, covering conservation issues, methodologies, policies and practice, encompassing sites, built heritage, and collections. Since 1998 she has been working freelance, both independently and in collaboration with highly respected conservation professionals and institutions, on conservation projects for sculpture, wall paintings and polychrome and gilded decorative surfaces. Madden's studio is based in Oxford but she works on conservation projects across the UK and internationally. Bianca has a long-term involvement in the site-based conservation of tomb painting and built heritage in Egypt: running conservation projects for the American Research Center at the tombs of Menna and Neferrenpet; working on the Tombs of Sennefer and Amenemope for the Université libre de Bruxelles' Archaeological Mission to the Theban Necropolis; for the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale at the Deir el Medina; and for the University of Leiden. She is a part of the ICOM CIPEG (International Committee for Egyptology) Expert Group on the Tutankhamen Shrine Project. Bianca is a member of ICON, IIC and ICOM. For further information: see <https://www.biancamadden.com/>

Introduction

The field of the conservation of Egyptian tomb paintings has, until recently, received considerably less attention and research than that of other areas of painting and wall painting conservation – this is partly due to the fact that up until the mid-20th century site-based tomb paintings were valued largely for their information, which was preserved through recording and study, and their material fate was less widely considered. Detailed research in the field and an in-depth approach to the conservation and preservation of paintings within the tombs really began in the 1980s with the conservation project at the tomb of Nefetari. Since then, there has been a growing body of knowledge and research on the paintings, leading to greater understanding, and treatment methodologies have developed in response. This has been aided in particular by the advancement of non-invasive diagnostic techniques, which can now be reliably used on site. The books and articles suggested below cover the basic literature in the field of Egyptian paintings

conservation as well as a little of the Egyptological context of the work. They pay particular attention to research and articles into the materials and techniques of construction. The key for conservation is in understanding the materials and components of the paintings and coatings, and from that to apply conservation practice and processes on a case by case basis.

Specific Tomb Projects

Books

Corzo, M.A. and M. Afshar, eds. *Art and Eternity: The Nefetari Wall Paintings Conservation Project 1986-1992*. Santa Monica, CA; Cairo: Getty Conservation Institute; Egyptian Antiquities Organization, 1993.

The project at the tomb of Nefetari – a collaboration between the legendary wall paintings conservators Paolo and Laura Mora and the Getty Conservation Institute, pioneering in-depth site-based conservation and research projects on an individual Egyptian painted tomb.

Middleton, A. and K. Uprichard, eds. *The Nebamun Wall Paintings: Conservation, Scientific Analysis and Display at the British Museum*. London: Archetype, 2008.

Groundbreaking research into the methods and materials of Egyptian tomb painting. Due to the fact that the fragments of the Nebamun paintings are at the Museum, research allowed for very detailed analysis of pigments, binders, glazes and varnishes as well as plaster.

Hartwig, M.K., ed. *The Tomb Chapel of Menna (TT69): The Art, Culture and Science of Painting in an Egyptian Tomb*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2013.

In-depth study of painting techniques, as well as the first use of portable non-invasive technologies in the analysis of pigments, binders and coatings in an overall approach to an Egyptian tomb on site, coupled with a practical conservation project.

Original Techniques and Materials

Lucas, A., *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries*, 4th ed., rev. by J.R. Harris. London: E. Arnold, 1962. Dating from the 60s but still extremely relevant information and research into materials and techniques.

Nicholson, P.T. and I. Shaw, eds. *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

A study of the procurement and processing of the raw materials used by the ancient Egyptians. Each chapter is written by individual specialists, drawing on Egyptological research as well as the natural sciences as applied to archaeological data.

Pagès-Camagna, S. and S. Colinart, 'The Egyptian Green Pigment: Its Manufacturing Process and Links to Egyptian Blue', *Archaeometry* 45/4 (2003) 637-658.

Focusing on Egyptian blues and greens – pigments developed specifically in Egyptian painting.

Mackay, E. 'The Cutting and Preparation of Tomb-Chapels in the Theban Necropolis', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 7 (1921) 154-168.

An early publication but classic in its addressing of the initial cutting and preparation of tombs for decoration.

Madden, B. and H. Tavler, 'Original Painting Techniques. Methods and Materials in 18th Dynasty Tombs, in the Valley of the Nobles, Egypt' in C. von Rüdén, J. Jungfleisch, J. Becker, eds., *Tracing*

Technoscapes: The Production of Bronze Age Wall Paintings in the Eastern Mediterranean, 119-149.
Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2018.

A technical look into the painting and plastering process – the result of extensive research using experimental archaeology, as well as non-invasive diagnostics.

For a Wider Egyptological Perspective

Andreu-Lanoë, G., S. Labbé-Toutée, P. Rigault, eds. *L' Art du Contour: Le Dessin dans l'Égypte Ancienne.*
Paris: Louvre éditions, 2013.

A work accompanying the exhibition 'L' Art du contour' at the Louvre, 19 Apr to 22 Jul 2013, and Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels, 13 Sep to 19 Jan 2014. An overview of painting practice with particular regard to ostraca, as a special cultural practice.

Beinlich-Seeber, C. and A. Ghaffar Shedid. *Das Grab des Userhat: (TT 56). Part of Archäologische Veröffentlichungen 50.* Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1987.

On the technique and the issue of composition (see pp. 114-139 in particular). Groundbreaking analysis of an 18th-dynasty tomb, with a detailed study of technical issues and the individual practice of the painters.

Davies, W.V., ed. *Colour and Painting in Ancient Egypt.* London: British Museum Press, 2001.

A collection of 23 papers given at the 1996 international colloquium at the British Museum, covering a broad range of expertise – with scientific, technical and symbolic analysis into the character and function of colour and painting. The introduction by Davies reviews and interrelates the collected papers, and relates the work to further studies which have appeared since the conference.