UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI ROMA TOR VERGATA
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Tracing the history of ancient Egyptian ink with synchrotron and neutron sources

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Abstract

The results obtained using synchrotron and neutron radiation in studying ancient Egyptian black pigments provide exiting new perspectives on a decisive chapter in the history of science: the invention and evolution of ink. Further, the chemical and structural signatures obtained through the analyses reflect the physical properties of the objects and thereby address one of the central challenges facing the Egyptologist: the fact that the majority of ancient Egyptian objects lack a recorded archaeological context. It is expected that the chemical "finger-prints" obtained through synchrotron and neutron analyses in the future will contribute to the mapping of characteristic traits of ink and support, which is of importance for their chronological and geographical distribution.