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August 7th 2020

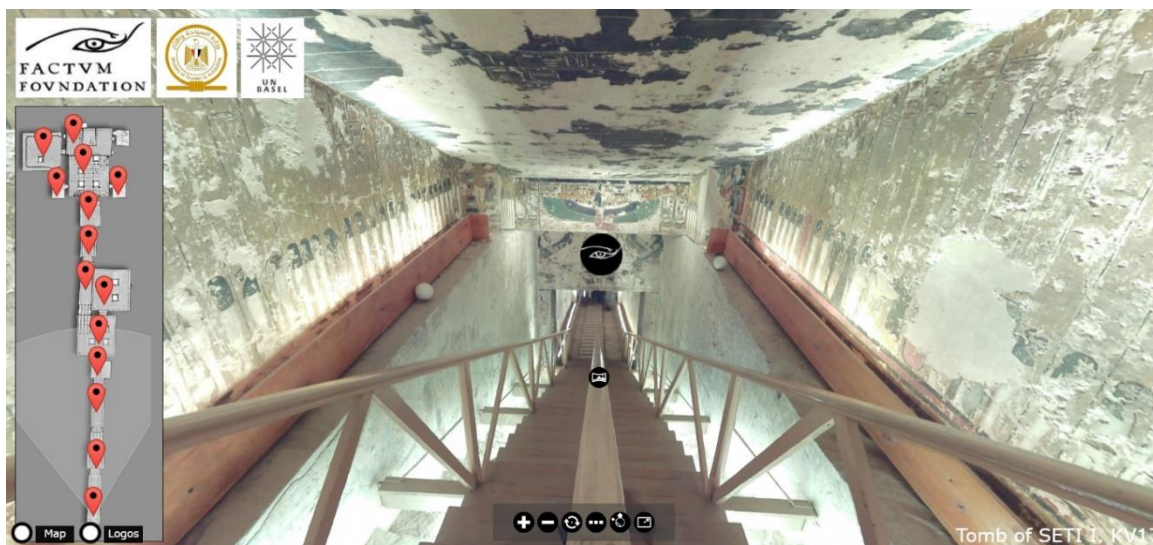
THE 3D VIRTUAL MODEL OF THE TOMB OF SETI I

Launched by Factum Foundation, the Theban Necropolis Preservation Initiative and the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities

Over the past 5 years, a fully local Egyptian team has carried out the high-resolution recording in 3D and colour of the tombs of Seti in the Valley of the Kings. The team, from the Theban Necropolis Preservation Initiative (TNPI), is led by Factum Foundation's Aliaa Ismail and operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Antiquities in Egypt.

After completing the recording of the burial chamber in the tomb of Tutankhamun in 2009, the TNPI has applied its high-level scanning methods to the tomb of Seti I (KV17), with the aim of recording one of the most important tombs in the Valley of the Kings in its entirety.

In July 2020, Factum Foundation, the TNPI and the Ministry of Antiquities in Egypt are delighted to have launched the 3D virtual model of the tomb of Seti I. More than a simple digital walk-through, the 3D virtual model uses new technologies to communicate the importance of the tombs in the Valley of the Kings. Moreover, in line with the core principles of Factum Foundation and the TNPI, this data is now publicly accessible for preservation, dissemination, condition monitoring and research purposes.



Screen capture from the 3D virtual model of the tomb of Seti I
© Factum Foundation and TNPI for the Ministry of Antiquities, Egypt

About the Theban Necropolis Preservation Initiative

The Theban Necropolis Preservation Initiative (TNPI) is a collaboration between the Madrid-based Factum Foundation for Digital Technology in Conservation, the University of Basel and the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities. The main goals of the initiative are the preservation and sustainability of the Egyptian cultural heritage, using non-contact digital technology and employing Egyptian staff in charge of all operations on the ground, and external involvement focused on capacity development, training, support and technology transfer.



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This project is one of the most ambitious, coherent, and advanced examples of digital preservation currently being undertaken. The work that is being carried out is of importance both to heritage management in general and to the people of the West bank in Luxor. In 2019, UNESCO gave its patronage to the TNPI through the Egyptian National Commission for UNESCO and is regularly updated about its progress.

The Theban Necropolis Preservation Initiative is making a real difference to the way cultural heritage is recorded and demonstrates what can be achieved when heritage managers work with technical specialists to provide the highest quality of data for conservation, condition monitoring, in-depth analysis, dissemination and replication. The aim is to develop a sustainable structure that will help the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities to preserve the Valley of the Kings for future generations.

Factum's involvement began in 2001 with the approval of a research project by Dr. Gaballa to develop the techniques needed to scan the tombs. Work began in the tomb of Seti I in 2001 but soon focused on the facsimile of the Tomb of Thutmose III. This facsimile was produced by Factum Arte, Factum Foundation's sister company, for the touring exhibition 'The Quest for Immortality: Treasures of Ancient Egypt' (National Gallery of Art, Washington 2002). This was followed by the facsimile of the burial chamber of Tutankhamun in 2009, that was installed in Carter's House and the Replica of the Tomb of Tutankhamun Visitor Centre in 2014.

The facsimile of the tomb of Seti I's Hall of Beauties, Room J and the East Wall of Room I have already been created and were on display in 2017 at the Antikenmuseum, Basel, in an exhibition ('Scanning Seti. The regeneration of a Pharaonic Tomb') that examined the 200 years in the life of the tomb since its discovery by Belzoni on 16th October 1817.



Facsimile of the Pillared Hall J during 'Scanning Seti. The regeneration of a Pharaonic Tomb', Antikenmuseum, Basel, 2017

© Oak Taylor Smith for Factum Foundation



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When the facsimile of the entire tomb is complete, it will form the largest and most detailed facsimile ever made. It will not only show the tomb in its current state of preservation, but will also reintegrate all fragments removed in the 19th century - focusing attention on the dynamic nature of originality. The facsimile will also incorporate all the fragments discovered by the University of Basel that are currently stored in the tomb of Ramesses X.

The result will be a physical facsimile that is more complete than the original, an aim shared by the 3D virtual model launched in July 2020.

The 3D virtual tour of the tomb of Seti I

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE 3D VIRTUAL MODEL](#)

The 3D virtual model is based on a LiDAR recording of the whole tomb made in 2016, but it also includes high-resolution information that will continue to be fed into the platform as the work progresses. Factum Foundation is not only recording all the walls, pillars and ceilings, but also all the elements that were removed from the tomb and are now scattered around the world in museums, storerooms and private collections.

The platform works like a dynamic archive of the tomb that can allow closer study than is possible during a visit. The walls can be seen at high levels of magnification, focusing on surface data, colour, or both, and the spectacular ceiling in the Sarcophagus Room can be studied as if observed on a scaffolding in front of the painting.

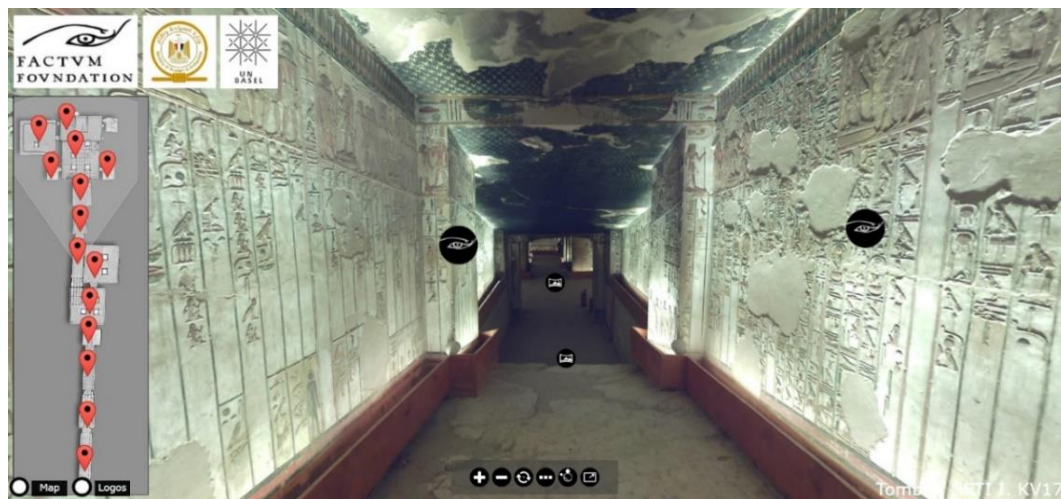
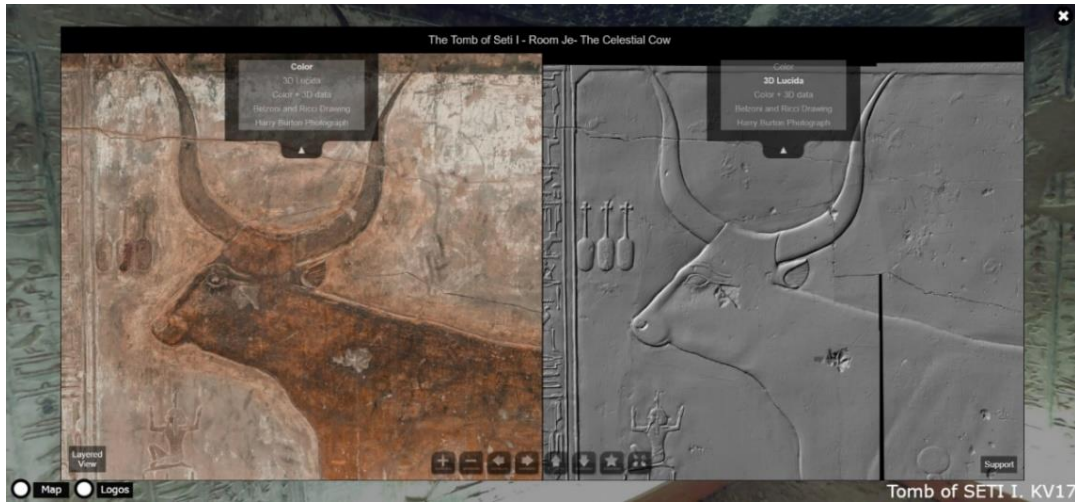
But Factum Foundation is going further: the aim is to incorporate into the platform the watercolours made by Giovanni Battista Belzoni, the Egyptologist who discovered the tomb in 1817 and Alessandro Ricci (now in Bristol City Museum), Harry Burton's black and white photographs from the 1920s (commissioned by the Metropolitan Museum in New York) and approximately 8,000 fragments from the tomb of Seti I, collected by the University of Basel, that are now stored in the tomb of Ramesses X and being analysed by Florence Mauric Barberio. Factum Foundation has also incorporated the 3D recordings made by Factum Arte in the Sarcophagus Room in 2001, clearly establishing the importance of this approach for condition monitoring.



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Screen captures from the 3D virtual model of the tomb of Seti I
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July 2020 and post-Covid19 lockdown: the TNPI is the first mission to have resumed work in the Valley of Kings



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The fully Egyptian team from TNPI, back to work in the tomb of Seti I © TNPI and Factum Foundation

The Theban Necropolis Preservation Initiative's team and Factum Foundation are glad to announce that work has restarted in the Valley of the Kings, after the shutdown imposed by the COVID-19 crisis. After more than 100 days of interruption, the TNPI team is the first mission to resume work and will pursue the high-resolution recording in 3D and colour of the entire tomb of Seti I. The Burial Chamber and Corridor G will be the main points of focus for the next days. This was made possible with permission from the Ministry of Antiquities.

In line with the Ministry of Antiquities' COVID-19 safety measures, the team returns at a 25% of workforce: Aliaa Ismail, Abdo Ghaba, Mosa El-Sayed and the appointed inspector Mohamed Wahba are back working to record the entire tomb. We would like to thank the following individuals and entities for their constant support: Dr. Khaled Anany, his Excellency the Minister of Antiquities; Dr. Mostafa Waziri, General Secretary of the Supreme Council of Antiquities; Dr. Mohamed Abd El-Badee, Former Permanent Committee Director, and the Permanent Committees of the Ministry of Antiquities; Dr. Nashwa Gaber, General Director of Foreign Missions Affairs & P. Committees; Dr. Mohamed Yehia, Director of Upper Egyptian Antiquity; Dr. Fathy Yassin, Director of West Bank Antiquity; Bahaa Gaber, Director of Qourna Antiquity; Dr. Ramadan, Director of West Bank Missions; Mr. Aly Reda, Director of the Valley of Kings. Furthermore, the TNPI team wants to thank the staff and the guards, who have welcomed and encouraged their return on-site. Factum Foundation is also grateful to Fayza Haikal and Salima Ikram from the American University in Cairo for their support over 20 years.



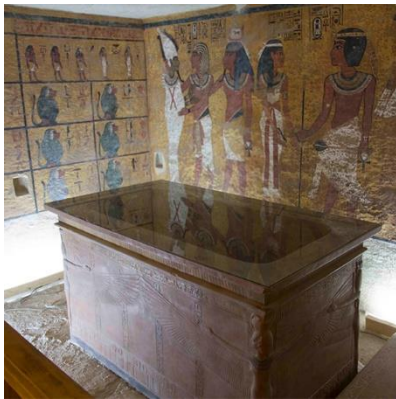
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The recording of the tomb of Seti I and all the known fragments scattered around the world is the current main goal of the Theban Necropolis Preservation Initiative. It is currently funded by the Factum Foundation with the help of individual donations.

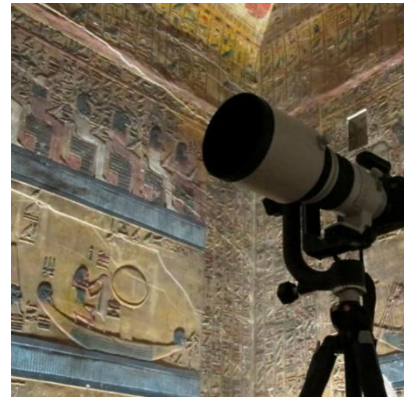
All you need to know about the TNPI, its past and present activities in the Valley of the Kings and its 3D Scanning, Archiving and Training Centre at Stoppelaëre House:



[More on Factum's work in the tomb of Tutankhamun and its facsimile](#)



[More on the exhibition *Scanning Seti: The Regeneration of a Pharaonic Tomb*](#)



[More about the work in Egypt \(from p. 363\)](#)

The TNPI needs support

The development of local skills and the creation of a vibrant new economy is vital for the successful recording and preservation of cultural heritage. Factum Foundation needs financial support to demonstrate the impact that this approach has in practice. Factum's mission is to help safeguard the tombs of the Theban Necropolis through the application of new digital technologies, and the creation of exact facsimiles of tombs that are now either closed to the public for conservation or in need of closure to preserve them for future generations.

[Support the Theban Necropolis Preservation Initiative's mission](#)

Notes to the editors

Factum Foundation

The Factum Foundation for Digital Technology in Conservation is a not-for-profit organisation, founded in 2009 in Madrid. The Foundation is dedicated to the preservation of cultural heritage through the promotion of digital documentation, the production of facsimiles and sharing/archiving high-resolution files. Through research and collaborations, the Foundation is committed to the development of new technologies for heritage recording and re-materialization. Factum Foundation trains technicians across the world in digital



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documentation. It is currently running projects in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Daghestan, Italy, US, Spain, UK, Nigeria and Brazil. It has worked with institutions such as the National Gallery of Art (Washington DC), the National Gallery (London), the Museo del Prado (Madrid) and the Musée du Louvre (Paris). The Factum Foundation has designed and produced exhibitions for the Royal Academy (London), the Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Venice), Waddesdon Manor, Museo Arqueológico Nacional de Madrid, the Antikenmuseum Basel and Palazzo Fava (Bologna).

University of Basel

Factum Foundation has been working with the University of Basel as its academic partner since 2009. Originally with Erik Hornung, the Professor emeritus of Egyptology and from 2015 - 2017 Professor Dr Antonio Loprieno and Professor Dr Susanne Bickel. Since 2017 the main contact has been with Susanne Bickel. In March 2019 we received permission from the Ministry to scan about 8000 fragments found by the University of Basel team in and around the Tomb of Seti I. This collaboration will be a major addition to the scholarship relating to the tomb.

Communication and press – Factum Foundation

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