



What's New in Ophthalmology Today?

Horus and Ra's Magical Makeup

“There’s more to the eye makeup that gave Queen Nefertiti and other ancient Egyptian royals those stupendous gazes and legendary beauty than meets the eye,” reports Science Daily. In the January 15 issue of the journal Analytical Chemistry, French scientist Christian Amatore and colleagues analyzed the lead based black substance used in eye makeup. **“Some Egyptians believed that this makeup also has a ‘magical’ role in which the ancient gods Horus and Ra would protect wearers against several illnesses”** including eye infections. Analyzing 52 samples of makeup taken from ancient Egyptian makeup containers they found four lead based substances – two were naturally occurring and two had been custom made by the ancients. These substances increased the production of nitric oxide in human skin cells by 240 percent. Nitric oxide boosts the body’s immune system. **“Eye infections caused by bacteria can be a serious problem in tropical marshy areas such as the Nile . . . therefore, the ancient Egyptians may have deliberately used these lead-based cosmetics to help prevent or treat eye disease”** that could be caused when a drop of this contaminated water reached the eye. The authors conclude: **“These data fully support that Horus’ and Ra’s protection that ancient Egyptians associated with this makeup”**. There really is nothing new under the Sun is there?

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