THE CARVED SLATE PALETTES
OF LATE PREDYNASTIC EGYPT

A Thesis

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by

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A discussion of the carved slate palettes of the Late Pre-dynastic Period (c. 3500-3200 B. C.)\(^1\) should not be made without acknowledging the long period of development of the uninscribed slate palettes which led to the creation of these works of art.

The very earliest slate palettes (dating from the Amratian period), were in the shape of rhomboids, and it has been suggested by Petrie that this form was probably suggested by some natural breakage of the rock. Next to appear were palettes shaped to imitate the forms of natural objects. Among these forms were those of antelopes, elephants, hippopotami, turtles, lions, birds and fish. In time, more realism was achieved by lines incised upon these slates. New, purely geometrical forms also developed.\(^2\)

These early palettes have been found in many predynastic cemeteries -- Diospolis Parva, Naqada, El-Amrah and Abydos. They have been found in nearly every grave near the face of the deceased.\(^3\) Petrie states that they are next only to pottery in the number recovered from predynastic graves.\(^4\)

The purpose of these palettes seems quite clear from the circumstances of their discovery. Almost always accompanied by a pebble of
brown-yellow jasper which was highly polished, these slates usually had depressions in them caused by the grinding of the Egyptian green eye paint (malachite) upon their surfaces. Traces of this malachite have been found both on the pebbles and on the palettes.\(^5\) Also used for eye paint were galena (a lead sulfide) and hematite (a red iron ore).\(^6\) The decorative purposes of these eye paints are obvious; but these powders (especially malachite) also had utilitarian uses. Malachite is an excellent germicide for eye sores; a guard against the glare of the desert sun;\(^7\) and "the best protection from flies."\(^8\)

Another use to which these palettes were put is revealed by the small holes bored in many for suspension about the neck, and by the very small size of many of them. The latter characteristic most certainly excludes the use of such palettes as grinding stones, and, at the same time, almost certainly establishes their usage as amulets. In this use they probably were thought to have certain magical qualities.\(^9\)

Finally, towards the end of the predynastic era, palettes appear covered with carved reliefs depicting mainly hunting, animal, battle and victory scenes. These inscribed slates were probably all made for kings who ruled in Upper Egypt; for it would seem that only wealthy and powerful persons could have afforded the support of the craftsmen who created these palettes and only such persons

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\(^5\) Petrie, and Mace, Diospolis Parva, p. 20.
\(^6\) Petrie, Prehistoric Egypt, p. 37.
\(^7\) Jean Capart, Primitive Art in Egypt, 1935, p. 23.
\(^8\) W. M. Flinders Petrie, The Making Of Egypt, 1939, p. 16.
\(^9\) Capart, Primitive Art, p. 85.
would be able to accomplish the feats celebrated by them. Furthermore, as will be seen, they seem to depict the achievements of Upper Egyptian peoples.

Use of the word "palette" in this paper's title implies an assumption that the twenty-one ¹⁰ whole or fragmentary carved slates discussed in the following pages, are a natural development of the earliest forms to the detailed plaques bearing carving in relief. Most (if not all) scholarship on this subject since 1913 has also treated as a fact that these objects are palettes which have assumed purely decorative and commemorative purposes. The articles on the subject during the years 1900 to 1909 differ as to the purpose of these slates. These differences were discussed by Francis Legge in 1900.¹¹

There have been three principle theories on this subject: that of M. Naville; that of Francis Legge; and that of J. E. Quibell, supported by Flinders Petrie. Naville's theory was that these slates were "trays or stands intended to be carried shoulder high" into whose circular depressions a libation vase was inserted. But he cast doubt on this theory by demonstrating that the raised walls of the central depressions are bevelled on the inside. This tends to preclude their use as "trays."¹²

¹⁰The writer is aware of the existence of three other carved palettes which are in Petrie's private collection. See Petrie, Ceremonial Slate Palettes, p. 19.
¹²Ibid., p. 137.
Legge's own position was that these circular depressions (or "rings") were symbolic representations of the sun. He was quite convinced of this, and added that the "ring" was possibly given increased importance by a filling of either gold foil or glass. Furthermore, he noted the presence of similar "disk-like depressions" on Egyptian shields, and compared the shape of some of these slates to that of the shields seen on the Hunters palette (Plate XVII-B). He also suggested their possible use "for ritual reasons" as were the Roman ancilia.13

The third theory, first advanced by J. E. Quibell who discovered the Fantastic Animals palette (Plates IX and X) and the Narmer palette (Plates XXV and XXVI) in 1898, holds that the central depression of the later palettes simply represents the area of the more primitive palettes on which the malachite was ground, and that, therefore, these later slates are useful palettes.14 Flinders Petrie supported this theory in the same year by pointing out that these objects are of exactly the same shapes as the earlier slate palettes and that the central depressions would be able to hold the malachite. By comparison, Petrie mentioned the carved mace heads which were found with these objects and which also exhibit the early Egyptian practice of developing "ceremonial showpieces" out of "ordinary daily objects."15

Since then, scholars have generally supported the interpretation

13 Ibid., p. 138; the ancilia being ritual shields. See paragraph 13 of Plutarch's Life Of Numa Pompilius.
14 J. E. Quibell, Hierakonpolis, I, 1900, p. 10.
of Quibell and Petrie and have suggested further that these palettes were sacred objects used in the temple for the grinding of paint used to adorn the king or image of the gods in certain ceremonies.\textsuperscript{16} It is admitted, as Legge pointed out, that no trace of malachite can be found on these slates as it was on the earlier palettes. Nor can we identify any given temple ceremony in which they were used ceremoniously.\textsuperscript{17} Nonetheless, it seems simpler to look for their explanation in earlier, similarly constructed artifacts, and the late predynastic palettes supply such examples. It is true to be sure, that these slate palettes (so common a possession of the predynastic Egyptian) seem to have "entirely disappeared from Egypt in historic times."\textsuperscript{18} However, this lack of further evidence may well support the theory. These slate palettes ceased to be used as toilet articles, but were "preserved" as stylized "ceremonial showpieces"\textsuperscript{19} on which the newly developed skills in relief sculpture could be utilized. Subsequently, the ceremonial palettes were discarded for the larger and more permanent sculptural projects of the Old Kingdom (3200-2258 B. C.), such as royal statues, colossal figures, and, (especially) the mortuary and valley temple wall reliefs -- of which we have many examples.

There are currently twenty-one either complete or fragmentary inscribed slate palettes. Since it has proven impossible to arrive


\textsuperscript{17} F. Legge, "Another Carved Slate," \textit{P.S.B.A.}, XXII, 1900, pp. 270-271.

\textsuperscript{18} Jean Capart, \textit{Egyptian Art: Introductory Studies}, 1923, p. 54.

at conclusions concerning their proper chronological relationship, it is best to discuss them in terms of their basic motifs and types. Setting up a criterion based upon the amount of surface space occupied by the reliefs, and the types of motifs used, we can arrive at the following arbitrary grouping:

Group 1. (Appendix 1 through 6) These have mostly clear surfaces with relatively few figures; and they also have no carved "ring." They are inscribed only on the obverse.

Group 2. (Appendix 7 through 14) These have figures of animals on nearly all of the available space. Although Appendix numbers 12, 13, and 14 lack "rings," nevertheless these "rings" were probably present on the missing portions of these fragments. Numbers 7 and 13 have considerable plain surface on them; but they have more advanced animal forms to distinguish them from those of group 1.

Group 3. (Appendix 15 through 21) These have figures of men and animals covering most of the available surface.

Group 1

The first palette is probably the earliest (Plate I and Appendix 1). Regarded as the "first example of palettes carved in relief," this palette is in the common predynastic, "double-bird" shape also seen in the Two Birds palette (Plate III) and the Manchester palette (Plate IV). The entire reverse of this palette, as well as the bottom two-thirds of the obverse, is uncarved. But appearing on the top of this palette, in low relief, is a compound sign similar to the emblem of the god, Min, which makes this palette the "ancestor of the famous

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20 Capart, Primitive Art, p. 90.
protodynastic palettes." 21 That it is earlier than the other palettes seems evident in the traces of tool marks, which are also present on the Manchester palette (Plate IV); whereas, in all but the first three palettes, these marks are practically "invisible" — having been smoothed (possibly) by rubbing with a pebble and water. 22

Another very early palette — the Gerzeh palette (Plate II and Appendix 2) — contains holes which seem to have "been bored by hand with a flint [rather] than . . . with a drill;" it also bears the tool marks described as "scratching, often ending in a triangular point." 23 This palette appears to represent the head of a cow decorated with stars at the tips of the horns, on the forehead, and beside the eyes (or on the ears?). This design (Plate II-A) could thus be interpreted as the bucranium-symbol of Hathor. 24 But this simple interpretation of the design has been questioned by Margaret A. Murray, who believes the relief may actually represent the "goddess" seen on painted vases of the predynastic period (Plate II-B). This great goddess is represented with her arms upraised in a manner closely resembling the appearance of cow horns. Margaret Murray notes that the stars could be the hands, the head, and the breasts of the goddess. Furthermore, she declares that the relief "is clearly the form of a

21 D. Randall-MacIver, and A. C. Mace, El-Amrah And Abydos: 1899-1901, 1902, p. 38.
23 Ibid., p. 59.
constellation, possibly part of that known as Orion, and is the earliest example of the celestial cow-goddess -- Hathor or Nut.\textsuperscript{25}

Indeed, as early as 1912, Petrie, Wainwright, and Mackay, whose Labyrinth represents the primary source material on the excavations at Gerzeh, had suggested that although "the design appears to represent a cow's head," it could possibly be representative of Hathor "in an astronomical aspect."\textsuperscript{26} It would appear that the Gerzean Period (which comprised the larger part of the Late Predynastic Period) witnessed the development of religious symbolism; and Henri Frankfort, who also links this palette with Hathor, has gathered evidence proving the existence of a wide-spread cult of Hathor during this period. He further reminds us of an Old Kingdom manner of addressing Hathor as "the Lady of the Stars."\textsuperscript{27} Thus, as a sky goddess, Hathor could very well be the deity represented by the figure from a Gerzean vase shown in Plate II-B. The position of this figure's arms parallels that of the "horns" on the palette; the upper torso of the "deity" conforms to the general shape of the "cow's head;" and the three-pointed hands of the "goddess" are closely related to the stars on the palette. Thus it seems reasonable to say that the Gerzeh palette is a religious palette dedicated to Hathor.


\textsuperscript{26}W. M. Flinders Petrie, G. A. Wainwright, and E. Mackay, The Labyrinth Gerzeh And Mazghuneh, British School of Archaeology In Egypt And Egyptian Research Account, Vol. 21, London, 1912, p. 22.

The Two Bird palette (Plate III and Appendix 3) has an oval shape similar to the Min palette (Plate I), and has more uninscribed space than the latter. The top left of the obverse is destroyed; but it no doubt held a bird facing the bird carved in relief on the right top. The details of the birds are only slightly indicated and their backs conform to the palette's outer edge. Capart notes that this palette is important as a transitional piece between the earlier palettes and the inscribed palettes of the Late Predynastic Period.

A palette which shows the use of a traditional form but with a new decorative technique is the so-called Manchester palette (Plate IV and Appendix 4). Petrie considers this palette to be the most advanced of the palettes without a central ring. The form is that of a double-bird. The first inscribed figure on the left is probably a hunter wearing a mask to conceal his presence from the birds. In the figures' rendering we see that the predynastic artist had learned to carve both high and low reliefs. Although the outlines are "tentative and uncertain" and the surfaces are flat, nevertheless the differentiation between the necks and lower bodies of the ostriches, which was executed by cutting down the base of the necks, evidences skill.

The tool marks, mentioned before, are very evident in this

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28 Capart, Primitive Art, p. 90.
31 William Stevenson Smith, A History Of Egyptian Sculpture And Painting In The Old Kingdom, 1949, p. 110.
palette [especially in Plate IV-B]. All the drilled holes were probably filled in with pieces of shell or stone. It is probably correct to assume that the five projections at the top are meant as stylized wing feathers; for, as has been pointed out, ancient and modern Egyptians alike have normally held two birds together by the wings in one hand which was placed where the wings join the body. This would cause the feathers to rise up between the birds' heads in the manner stylized here. Quibell says of this palette that it forms "a link between the ordinary green slates and the great palette of Hierakonpolis." Likewise this palette contains what is probably the earliest extant representation in Egyptian art of a man with an animal's head.

Mentioned in this group for the sake of completeness is the Trussed Goose (?) palette (Appendix 5 and Plate V). It is fragmentary, scraped, and worn. The design has been interpreted as that of a bird "trussed ready for cooking, laid on its back with the legs neatly folded over the abdomen;" and the wavy line beneath the legs is described as "the outline of the lower part of the body." Its motif is so unusual that one wishes that more of it had been preserved. Apart from its apparent depiction of an aspect of ancient

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33 Ibid., pp. 58-59. As in the first and third palette there can also be seen a hole probably meant for suspension purposes. Here it is between the second and third projections from the right.

34 Ibid., p. 57.

35 Ibid., p. 60. Since the "mask" worn by the man is identical to the ostrich heads, it seems most likely that the man wears an ostrich mask; but Margaret Murray (Ceremonial Slate Palettes, p. 12), thinks of it more in terms of a jackal.

36 Petrie, Ceremonial Slate Palettes, p. 15.
Egyptian culinary art, there is a similarity between its posture and that of the rhyt birds hanging from tribal standards on the mace-head of the Scorpion King.\textsuperscript{37}

Next we come to a fragment of a palette which is placed in this group for convenience. This fragment with a rhyt bird and a boat (Appendix 6 and Plate VI) is not sufficiently preserved to permit any sure conclusions concerning its relationship to the other palettes. The papyrus boat (similar to others represented in predynastic art) is like an early hieroglyph.\textsuperscript{38} The checkered design above the boat is some kind of sign -- interpreted by Hilda Flinders Petrie as the symbol of a walled town.\textsuperscript{39} The bird has been compared with the rhyt bird by Smith,\textsuperscript{40} and Gardiner identifies the rhyt bird as a lapwing (Vanellus cristatus).\textsuperscript{41}

**Group 2**

The Gazelle-Goose fragment, the first palette in this group, is included here because of the "ring" and the more advanced representation of animals (see Appendix 7). Note especially Plate VII-A and VII-B the muscular details and natural position of the legs of the reclining animals. Also noteworthy is the increased detail of the bird form. The use of groups of rectangular forms alternated with square forms is effective in emphasizing feathers in the wings and tail. Unlike the

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\textsuperscript{37}See a drawing of the designs of this mace-head in Smith, The Art And Architecture Of Ancient Egypt, figure 4, p. 17.  
\textsuperscript{38}Capart, Primitive Art, pp. 228-229.  
\textsuperscript{39}Petrie, Ceremonial Slate Palettes, p. 12.  
\textsuperscript{40}Smith, A History Of Egyptian Sculpture, p. 110.  
\textsuperscript{41}Alan Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar: Being An Introduction To The Study Of Hieroglyphs, 1957, p. 470.
previous palettes, both sides bear carvings.

A slate palette (Appendix 8 and Plate VIII), which is apparently the smallest of all those extant, was probably used as a royal amulet. The Horus palace facade of a "Follower of Horus" would indicate that it belonged to or was made for a king; but the facade does not contain any name. Hayes identifies the surrounding animals as lions, antelopes, giraffes (?), and long-necked beasts$^{42}$ (the only one discernable to the writer being directly beneath the serpent-form "ring"). This long-necked beast is a figure seen on more than one of these palettes [Plates IX, X, XI, and XXV]. A motif of equal interest occupies the bottom portion of this palette -- the upper parts of two jackals (?) facing each other, with their forepaws extended, and with the curiously shaped ears to be seen again below.

Paired jackals dominate the next palette [Plates IX and X] by framing the upper two-thirds of the obverse and reverse (Appendix 9). With what has been termed "an instinctive fear of empty spaces,"$^{43}$ every available space is occupied by the animals moving pellmell about the palette. On the obverse (Plate IX), between the jackals' bellies and the twisted necks of the monsters, creep two, dog-like animals with the aforementioned large, round ears. A third may be seen beneath the "ring." Although these ears are similar to those of the jackals, nevertheless the latter are defined by an inner form approaching the shape of an equilateral triangle,$^{44}$ as opposed to the

$^{42}$Hayes, The Scepter, p. 28.
$^{43}$K. Lange, and M. Hirmer, Egypt: Architecture; Sculpture; Painting In Three Thousand Years, 1961, p. 291.
$^{44}$Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hieraconpolis And Elsewhere," p. 132.
inner circular shape of these. Legge termed these beasts as "non-descript."\textsuperscript{45}

Beneath the long-necked monsters, a hunting dog chases three species of antelope. The unfortunate animal, with lyre-shaped horns, which is trapped by two more dogs, is identified as a "hartebeest."\textsuperscript{46} Above, between the heads of the monsters, is an ostrich.

On the obverse (Plate X), beneath the two lions attacking the antelopes, may be seen another long-necked monster biting the foreleg of a long-horned antelope. Below this a spotted leopard chases a ram. Slightly lower is another "nondescript," round-eared animal standing before another hartebeest and above a winged griffon. It is significant that, as early as the third millennium B.C., the griffon was depicted in Egyptian art. Here it has curious comb-shaped wings and pursues a wild bull (\textit{bos africanus}).\textsuperscript{48} Below these, and standing before a giraffe and antelope, is another curious figure. Although Legge calls it a monkey playing a flute,\textsuperscript{49} Winifred Crompton\textsuperscript{50} and Smith\textsuperscript{51} identify it more probably as a man wearing a jackal mask. The

\textsuperscript{46}Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hieraconpolis And Elsewhere," p. 132. The Hartebeest is a large, swift South African antelope.
\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 132.
\textsuperscript{48}Legge, "The Carved Slates And This Season's Discoveries," p. 303.
\textsuperscript{49}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 303. He does suggest in a note, however, that it may be a masked man.
\textsuperscript{50}Crompton, "A Carved Slate Palette In The Manchester Museum," p. 58.
\textsuperscript{51}Smith, A History Of Egyptian Sculpture, p. 111; Margaret Murray, in Ceremonial Slate Palettes, p. 13, not only concurs with this viewpoint, but also describes this figure as "the earliest known instance of the Orpheus motif, the charming of animals by music."
item about this figure's waist seem to resemble a sheath or strap which could be used to hold up an artificial tail such as is worn also by King Narmer on Plates XXV and XXVI.

Legge points out that the eyes of the animals are drilled for inlaying with some substance.⁵² He also conjectures that these animals are symbolically representing various tribes whose battle at some point in history is here commemorated. He also notes the unusual position of the bull among the hunted.⁵³ The bull, as we shall see, is used as a symbol for a conquering king in other palettes.

Legge suggests that the scenes on Plates IX and X took place in the territory of the "Jackals" (see below pp. 25-26). Furthermore, he sees the "Lion" as an ally of the "Jackals" defeating the less warlike tribes represented by antelopes. The fantastic animals may represent other allies called to assist the "Jackals." These allies were perhaps wild desert tribes, "of whom the later Egyptians only preserved the remembrance under the guise of fabulous animals of excessive swiftness and striking power."⁵⁴ Although this interpretation may be too fanciful, it is interesting to note that Petrie maintains the existence of a "regional division between the subjects of the two sides."⁵⁵

Although there are four jackals, rather than two, framing either side of the next palette (see Plates XI and XII and Appendix

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⁵² Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hieraconpolis And Elsewhere," p. 133.
⁵³ Ibid., p. 133.
⁵⁴ Legge, "The Carved Slates And This Season's Discoveries," p. 303.

Legge further conjectures that the Lion represents a stronger tribe coming into the Nile Valley.

⁵⁵ Petrie, Ceremonial Slate Palettes, p. 13.
10), nevertheless it is definitely related to the former, so-called, "Fantastic Animals" palette as well as to the palette on Plate VIII (the latter having the paired jackals at the bottom). This palette -- the so-called, "Giraffe and Palm" palette -- is of special interest because of the motif on the reverse (Plate XII). A nearly identical giraffe and palm scene is seen on the so-called, "Battlefield Palette" (Plate XXI-A and XXI-B). Because of the "awkwardness" of the design's presentation here, Capart dated this palette as earlier than the "Battlefield palette." Legge, who originally considered this palette to be a modern forgery, later stated that it was probably a contemporary copy which was made in a village with less skilled artists than those who created the "Battlefield Palette." Therefore, he considered this palette to be later than the "Battlefield palette"; and he also considered the presence of the giraffes to be "meaningless." They merely serve, he said, as "heraldic supporters" for the palms; they do not feed from the leaves of the palm as do the giraffes (?) on the "Battlefield Palette." The eyes of the animals on this palette were once inlaid.

Of the same type as the last two palettes is the fragment seen on Plate XIII (Appendix 11). Here we see the familiar jackals forming the outer rims of another palette -- a motif which must have been the

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56 Capart, Primitive Art, p. 234.
57 Legge, "The Carved Slates And This Season's Discoveries," p. 304.
59 Legge, "The Carved Slates And This Season's Discoveries," p. 305.
60 Lange and Hirmer, Egypt, p. 291.
only decoration on the palette judging from the manner in which the "ring" is crowded by the jackals. The eyes of the jackals were probably inlaid.61

Probably there were several palettes made with this paired-jackal motif -- all within a certain area where the jackal was a chief deity or standard.

The next palette (Plate XIV) is alluded to as the "Donkey" palette in this paper because of the interpretation of Hilda Flinders Petrie, who bases her conclusions upon the finding of the Royal Zoological Society that these figures (Plate XIV) are equine.62 But there is at least equal evidence that these figures are jackals. The peculiar ears, already discussed above, are quite in evidence here. Furthermore, the heads are shaped the same as those of the animals on the "Jackal" fragment (Plate XIII) and on the "Fantastic Animals" palette (Plates IX and X). Finally, the forepaws have the same outline as those of the jackals on the "Giraffe and Pairs" palette, the "Jackal" fragment, and the "Fantastic Animals" palette. The workmanship appears to be incomplete. There should be a vertical division between the two feet (on Plate XIV). Although in its present condition the outline does resemble equine hooves, the possibility exists that the "fingers" could have (or would have) been indicated. Furthermore, the forelegs are of similar shape to those on the latter mentioned palettes. Thus this so-

61 F. Legge, "A New Carved Slate (Fragmentary)," P.S.B.A., XXVIII, 1906, p. 87. Though he does not say, there is probably a similar reverse (lacking a "ring"). Legge tends to associate all of these "jackals" with the totem of an early invading tribe which worshipped Apuat -- a dog, instead of a jackal.
62 Petrie, Ceremonial Slate Palettes, p. 15.
called, "Donkey" fragment could very well be another Jackal fragment.
At any rate it is the product of the same culture or of a culture related to that which created the previously-mentioned palettes whose motifs are dominated by paired and confronted jackals.

The "White Oryx" fragment (Plate XV and Appendix 13) presents us with another example of a palette whose motif is dominated by paired, facing animals.

The next palette (Plate XVI-A and B) would belong to Group 3 were it complete (Appendix 14), but here it serves as a convenient transitional piece between the palettes showing only animals and those showing men and animals.

The reverse (Plate XVI-B), divided into four registers, depicts what are probably spoils of war from the north since the plants in the lowest register are identified as Libyan.

On the obverse, however (Plate XVI-A), the seven crenellated "town" hieroglyphs are open to much interpretation. First, the figures within the towns -- on the upper row, from left to right -- are the dung beetle (scarabaeus sacer), two naked wrestlers, an ibis, and an owl respectively. Below -- in the same order -- we see what may be the origin of the reed sign, a thatched-domed building, and the ka sign respectively. Petrie believed the upper and lower rows

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63 Men were originally inscribed on the obverse (see Plate XVI-A). Walking feet are visible on the "groundline" in the upper right.
64 Capart, Egyptian Art, p. 65. Capart notes the similarity of the reverse to a bas-relief depicting Libyan spoils in Sahure's temple.
represented towns of Middle and Lower Egypt, respectively. Legge rejected this and maintained that on the basis of present knowledge the towns could not yet be identified.

Sayce may have misunderstood the meaning of the figures atop the cities -- which he interpreted as protective deities. They are more likely to be the signs of tribes besieging, not protecting, the towns. They bear picks similar to that held by the Scorpion King on his mace-head. Perhaps that king is even represented by the scorpion sign over the lower, middle town. The other tribal standards are those of the "Hawk" (above the "owl" town), the "Two Hawks" (above the "reed" town), and the "Lion" (above the "ka" town). Fallen bricks (the result of the picks' action) are shown within the towns. The relationship of these tribes will be discussed below.

The date of this so-called, "Victory" palette is probably very late judging from the use of "groundlines" and hieroglyphs. Both of these characteristics appear upon the very latest palettes.

67 Legge, "The Carved Slates And This Season's Discoveries," p. 205.
69 See note 37; on this mace-head may also be seen the Hawk standard, the same scorpion sign as on this palette, a jackal standard, and the Min emblem. Smith (p. 16) calls the object held by the Scorpion King (and which the tribal totems also hold) a hoe.
71 Petrie, "Note On A Carved Slate," p. 140. For an apparent reversal of opinion concerning these "bricks," see Ceremonial Slate Palettes, p. 15, where, not Petrie, but Margaret Murray considers them as "unexplained" and goes into a discussion of their possible meanings. Until some new evidence proves otherwise, we will adhere to the "brick" theory.
On the reverse (Plate XVI-B) in the lower register and to the right of the plants is a sign read by both Murray and Moret as **Tehenu** (Thn) or Libyans. Moret⁷² believes that it represents a boomerang resting atop the elliptical sign for foreign countries. Murray⁷³ has read the sign as representing a twisted hank of flax, lashed at the top; but she also seems to agree that the elliptical sign is the same as that on the above-mentioned "Battlefield" palette fragment. Since the Delta was, from earliest times, open to the inroads of Libyans⁷⁴, it seems more likely that the "victory," here commemorated, occurred there.

**Group 3**

The first palette in this group is too fragmentary to identify clearly (Appendix 15 and Plate XVII-A). Some order may be seen in that all of the people are marching in two lines in the same direction. But Capart terms it "archaic" and places it with the earliest palettes.⁷⁵ This fragment is of special interest because it was found in Syria.⁷⁶ One can only speculate about the significance of this, but some consideration might well be given to the possibility of Egypto-Syrian social intercourse or commercial connections prior to Dynasty I.

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⁷³Petrie, *Ceremonial Slate Palettes*, p.15. In this work this palette is called the "Tehenu" palette.


⁷⁶Petrie, in *Ceremonial Slate Palettes* (p. 14), argues that this fragment is evidence of prehistoric relationships between Syria and Egypt -- going so far as to intimate the possible existence of related, palette-making peoples in both Syria and Egypt.
Next, is an even more obscure fragment (Appendix 16). It contains, in three registers, male figures facing to the right. This interesting fragment was re-used on its reverse, where the cartouche of Queen Tiy of Dynasty XVIII (1570-1314 B.C.) was placed.\footnote{Smith, A History Of Egyptian Sculpture, p. 113.}

One of the most significant palettes both to the historian and art historian is the so-called, "hunters" palette (Appendix 17, and Plate XVII-B). The "hunters" are depicted in such numbers and details as to provide a study of predynastic weapons, clothing, and physical features. Six figures, taken from this palette, are drawn on Plate XVIII. They apparently wear no helmets; but they have wigs with ostrich feathers attached.\footnote{Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hieraconpolis And Elsewhere," p. 130.} They have long, pointed noses, almond-shaped eyes, pointed beards, long arms and legs, and large, flat feet.\footnote{British Museum, A General Introductory Guide To The Egyptian Collections In The British Museum, 1930, p. 24.} Furthermore they wear kilts similar to Narmer's kilt (Plates XXV and XXVI) from which animal tails hang in back -- also like Narmer.

The weapons are seen on Plates XVIII and XIX. Seven "hunters" are armed with bows and crescent-headed arrows -- surely of flint (of which we have many actual examples)\footnote{Hall, The Ancient History Of The Near East, note, p. 100.} -- like "hunter" no. 4 in Plate XVIII (the bow and arrow are also seen in nos. 6, 7, and 8 of Plate XIX; and their feathered, V-shaped shafts are also seen in nos. 8 and 9). Two men carry a lasso (one is shown as no. 4 on Plate XIX). One has lassoed a hartebeest on the lower right of the palette (Plate XVII-B). Also seen are boomerangs held by four "hunters" across the top of the
palette (Plate XVII-B) and by one on the bottom -- just left of the missing piece. These are seen in nos. 5 and 6 on Plate XVIII and (probably) 13 through 16 on Plate XIX. Four of the hunters across the bottom (Plate XVII-B) carry oval-shaped shields -- seen on "hunter" no. 2 in Plate XVIII, and as no. 5 on Plate XIX. A few carry spears (possibly with bronze heads) which are seen with "hunter" no. 5 on Plate XVIII and as nos. 10, 11, and 12 on Plate XIX. Finally, there are to be seen several maces and axes both with single and double heads. These are shown as nos. 19 through 22 on Plate XIX, and "hunters" no. 1, 3, and 6 carry maces on Plate XVIII.

Of equal interest are the three standards carried on the palette. The second "hunter" on the top right (Plate XVII-B) carries the "Hawk" standard (shown with "hunter" no. 1 on Plate XVIII, and as no. 3 on Plate XIX); the "hunter" above the "ring" carries the so-called, "Standard of the East" (shown as no. 1 on Plate XIX); and the first hunter on the lower right carries the "Ibis" standard (shown with "hunter" no. 2 on Plate XVIII, and as no. 2 on Plate XIX).

On the left center of the palette (Plate XVII-B), and to the right of the lion pierced with six arrows, a dog chases the fugitive animals towards the "ring." The latter include a stag, a hartebeest, an ostrich, and an antelope. A rabbit runs to the right of the "ring." One lion, on the right, followed by a lioness, is still putting up a

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81 Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hieraconpolis And Elsewhere," p. 130.
82 Legge, Ibid., p. 139, argues that these indicate the origin of these hunters as Asia Minor; but this is doubtful.
83 Legge, "The Carved Slates And This Season's Discoveries," p. 305.
fight (despite the two arrows in its head), and chases a "hunter."

Finally, at the far right, a domed building and a monstrous sign containing the foreparts of two bulls may be crude hieroglyphs which signify a place of refuge; but this is uncertain. 84

As these animals were not normally to be found together, and because hunters would not normally use such equipment as shields and standards, Legge is probably correct in interpreting the animals as symbolic of enemy tribes being slain in battle. 85

Although we see here the normal full-front profile of the men, and the full-front eye, nevertheless the drawing here is free and true to nature. 86 The very realistic "hunter" (shown as no. 3 on Plate XVIII) who flees from the lion, and the man pulling on the lasso are in a-typical poses; and the "hunter" shooting his arrow (no. 4 on Plate XVIII) is a further divergence from the later norms, in that we see only his upper right side. These figures are probably good portraits of predynastic features. The knee and leg muscles are shown, and there is an attention to detail in the wigs, kilts, and weapons. A comparison of the animals of this palette with those of the "Fantastic Animals" palette (Plates IX and X), would tend to place both palettes in the same time-period.

A very interesting fragment on Plate XX-A is probably related to the "Hunters" palette (Appendix 18). The warrior here is trans-

84Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hieraconpolis And Elsewhere," p. 305.
85Ibid., p. 131. Legge also notes the new position of the "Lion" tribe as an enemy of the "Hawk." On Plate X-A we saw the two as allies.
86Ibid., p. 131.
fixed by the same type of flint arrow seen as nos. 7 and 8 on Plate XIX. Hayes identifies the arrow as of Upper Egyptian make, and the man's appearance (the round nose, the "shaggy hair falling in horizontal rows of heavy locks and bound with a fillet," the "pointed beard running high up his cheek," and the "leather phallus sheath" with waist cord) as Lower Egyptian. 87

For the details of the "Battlefield palette" (Plates XX-B and XX-C and XXI) consult Appendix 19. On the obverse, the limp, naked men are generally interpreted as fallen warriors left to the devastation of scavengers on the battlefield. Furthermore, though there is some crudity in the manner in which the limbs of the bodies are turned, on a whole the figures are well rendered. 88 The conquered race is depicted with curled hair, large eyes, a "bulbous" nose, and an un-Egyptian beard which comes around the cheek and ends in a long chin beard. A few wear the karnata or sheath and cord. This race is not to be seen on any other Egyptian monument except the "Bull" palette. 89 Legge would place the scene in Upper Egypt or even further south in the Sudan. 90

The lion here probably represents the "Lion" tribe seen in alliance with the "Hawk" and "Ibis" tribes whose standards are shown

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87 Hayes, The Scepter, p. 29. He further points out the realism of the scene -- the literal explanation of the warrior's death.
90 Ibid., p. 300; Petrie, in Ceremonial Slate Palettes, p. 14, also places it in the South.
on the upper left (Plate XX-B). 

The object directly before the bound captive being pushed towards the "ring" by the robed figure on the right (Plate XX-C) is unidentified. It may be a bound pillar of palm stalks. Another interesting theory is that it represents "the elliptical determinative of foreign countries" -- the particular name (rising above the sign) is, according to this theory, partially destroyed. This same point of view supports Asia as the provenance of the defeated foes. 

On the reverse (Plate XXI-A and B), the delicate rendering of the leaves, trunk, and fruit of the palm tree has been highly praised. Peet feels that in Egyptian art there is nothing superior to "the completeness with which it realized these two characteristics, the effective use of line and the perfect adaptation of the design to the space to be filled." Indeed the smooth grace of the giraffes' bodies (if they are giraffes) does show a great sense of artistic skill and observation.

The bird in the upper right corner of the reverse is identified as a hornbill.

Of particular interest here is the recently discovered fragment (see Plate XXII-C) which provides information about part of the upper right portion of the obverse and the upper left portion of the reverse. On the reverse it contains the head of a bird identical to the horn-

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91 Ibid., p. 300.
92 Moret, The Nile, p. 115.
93 Peet, "The Art Of The Predynastic Period," p. 94.
94 See Legge, "The Carved Slates And This Season's Discoveries," p. 298, where it is suggested that the animals are really gerenuk gazelles.
95 Ibid., p. 299.
bill on the upper right, and a line similar to the line above the same
bird. On the obverse a wolf or jackal tramples a prostrate foe.
Furthermore, the fragment shows on this side the lower part of a
hieroglyph. This proves that there is still a large upper portion
missing from this palette. It also suggests that the figure shown
on the obverse of the Ashmolean fragment (Plate XX-A) is either being
trampled by a bull(as Harris suggests) or, more probably, by a
jackal as on the "New" fragment.

In the next palette (Appendix 20 and Plates XXIII and XXIV) we
see the highly stylized head and legs of the conquering bull and the
curled hair and beards of the fallen foes. The bull is most probably
symbolic of a conquering king or chieftain.

The standards, whose anthropomorphised hands grasp the rope (on
the obverse), are identifiable, and (as promised above) will be
analysed at this point (in descending order).

The jackal and palm-leaf have been identified as the standard of
the Cynopolite nome -- the 17th of Upper Egypt (all place names may be
seen on the map on Plate XXIX). The second jackal was the standard of
the Lycopolite nome -- the 13th of Upper Egypt. The Ibis was probably
the standard of the 15th nome, whose capital was Hermopolis. The
Hawk was probably the standard of the Apollinopolite nome -- the 2nd
of Upper Egypt. This last nome standard emphasizes the nature of

96 J. R. Harris, "A New Fragment Of The Battlefield Palette," J.E.A.,
XLVI, 1960, pp. 104-105.
97 Ibid., p. 105. Thus, he believes this palette presented the king
as a victorious jackal, bull, and lion.
98 Capart, Primitive Art, p. 243.
207-209.
all such signs. These signs were originally the totems of individual tribes. As the surrounding areas fell under the control of these tribes, the tribal totem became the patron deity or standard for the entire district. Then, as in the case of the "Horus-Hawk," the standard would become part of the personal nomenclature of the district's (or nome's) chieftain. Thus when Narmer, as head of the "Hawk" nome, united all of Egypt under one rule, the Horus Hawk became part of the Pharaohs' titulary. 100

Finally, the last figure below the standards represents the emblem of the Bolt of Min, whose domain was the Panopolite nome -- the 9th of Upper Egypt. 101

In order to establish the accuracy and historicity of the preceding totem identifications, it is necessary to discuss our historical sources for connecting a given totem with a given nome. Excavations at Coptos in 1912 by Adolphe Reinach and R. Weill uncovered an VIIIth Dynasty decree which lists twenty-two nomes of Upper Egypt. 102 Through such a list and through scattered lists or single nome inscriptions, we are able to identify the ancient nomes of Egypt. The reader is reminded, also, of the nome lists lining the entrance corridor of the Valley Temple of the Bent Pyramid of Sneferu (Dynasty IV) at Dahshur. Thus the totem figures seen on the Bull fragmentary, the Hunters, the Victory, and Narmer's palettes may be compared to

those of Old Kingdom nome standards, and thereby help us in our identifi-
cation of the people whose deeds are commemorated on these palettes.

This evidence seems to prove that all these palettes bearing the
Jackals, the Ibis, the Hawk, and the Bolt of Min, represent the ex-
ploits of Upper Egyptian peoples. As for the event commemorated on
the Bull fragmentary palette, Legge considers it to represent an early
conquest of southern Egypt by Narmer's ancestors. 103

On the reverse (Plate XXIV) the top is dominated by the same
bull and trampled man motif. Below these, in two registers, are two
crenellated towns. The upper and larger town holds a lion standing
before a pot. The lower town contains a lapwing. 104 As yet, no
satisfactory explanation has been given for these.

Although the bull and man motif is more spirited and of higher
quality than that on Narmer's palette (Plate XXV), the crenellated
town and animals within are not nearly as smooth and advanced as the
hieroglyphs on the latter. Thus scholars date it a little earlier than
Narmer's palette. 105

The last palette in this discussion is also probably the most
important (Appendix 21, and Plates XXV and XXVI). Narmer's palette is
the only one for which any definite date can be affixed. Narmer (or
Menes) has been shown to be the man who unified Egypt at about 3200
B. C. 106

104 Ibid., p. 211.
The King's name is thrice repeated -- twice in the palace-facade at the top of the obverse and reverse (Plates XXV and XXVI respectively), and once above the king on the obverse. His name is composed of the catfish and chisel.\textsuperscript{107} The appearance of the Hathor heads at the tops of both sides of the palettes (Plates XXV and XXVI) and on the girdle of the king on the reverse \textsuperscript{[shown in detail in Plate XXVIII-A]} indicates that that deity was the protective deity of Narmer.\textsuperscript{108} Perhaps the rectangle with the hieroglyphic sign, directly above the sandal-bearer, represents the actual name of a temple. The scribe's name is transcribed as "Thet."\textsuperscript{109}

The four standards shown in this upper register of the obverse (Plate XXV) represent, from left to right, the "Khons" emblem, the jackal and palm-leaf, and two hawks respectively\textsuperscript{110} (the last three being traditional allies, as has been shown). The two hieroglyphs

\textsuperscript{107}Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hierakonpolis And Elsewhere," p. 126.
\textsuperscript{108}Petrie, The Making Of Egypt, p. 78. Legge, in the same source as note \textsuperscript{107}, believes the Hathor heads to be similar to boukrania and thus possibly meaning that the scenes on the palette took place in a temple. This is by no means certain.
\textsuperscript{109}Legge, in "The Carved Slates From Hierakonpolis And Elsewhere," (p. 127), states that both he and Naville interpret the figure "Thet" as being Narmer's queen; but Petrie (Ceremonial Slate Palettes, p. 17) translates "Thet" as "scribe;" Petrie further conjectures that "Thet" (because he wears a leopard-skin) is Narmer's son; Budge, (A History Of Egypt, p. 189) merely calls "Thet," a "personage," and declares Naville's theory to be without basis; Quibell and Green (Hieraconpolis, II, p. 42) call "Thet" an "official;" until we can learn more about predynastic costumes we cannot differentiate here between masculine and feminine dress; furthermore, should "Thet" prove to be Narmer's queen, then "she" would be the only woman depicted on these palettes -- a fact not conclusive in itself, but one tending to negate a feminine interpretation of "Thet."
\textsuperscript{110}Smith, A History Of Egyptian Sculpture, p. 113.
immediately before the boat in the same register have been translated as either "the great door"\textsuperscript{111} or "the great port."\textsuperscript{112}

On the upper register (shown on Plate XXVII) the servant and the scribe are both one-half the size of the King -- showing at this early date the typical magnification of the King's importance. The servant has short hair and may wear a skull cap. He wears a triangular apron and an object about his neck similar to the yoke by which slaves were attached to the slave pole.\textsuperscript{113}

King Narmer wears the Red Crown of Lower Egypt (symbolizing his hegemony there); and he carries a flail and mace. He wears a tunic and the tail seen before, and a false beard. The artist emphasizes detail in the King's legs, in the reedwork of his Red Crown, in the strands of hair in the tail, and in the kilt.

Narmer's scribe wears his hair long and ending in four wrapped ringlets. The reader will note the resemblance between the hair style of the scribe and that of the men on the Marching Men fragment (Plate XVII-A). He wears a tight, short sheath and carries what may be papyrus plants. The details of his leg muscles are also shown. All three of these figures have large round ears.

Above the rows of the decapitated bodies is the bark (or boat) which is a hieroglyphic determinant for a festival. Above this, but

\textsuperscript{111}Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hierakonpolis And Elsewhere," p. 127. He compares it to the "great door" mentioned in the Palermo Stone.

\textsuperscript{112}Margaret A. Murray, The Splendour That Was Egypt, 1949, p. 13. She considers this to signify that the sacrifice here depicted took place when Narmer reached the sea.

\textsuperscript{113}Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hieraconpolis And Elsewhere," p. 126.
not shown in Plate XXV, is a pair of hieroglyphs reading "the follower (or attendant) of Horus."\textsuperscript{114}

It has been suggested that the two captive monsters in the middle register (Plate XXV) represent the union of Upper and Lower Egypt,\textsuperscript{115} but they could just as easily be used here for decorative purposes. The unique way their necks form the "ring" is only seen in one other palette in which an identifiable object forms the "ring" (see Plate VIII).

The bull in the lower register represents, no doubt, the king; and the fallen bricks may be seen within the town into which his horns are breaking.

On the reverse (Plate XXVI) King Narmer wears the White Crown of Upper Egypt and, holding the hair of a foe with his left hand, prepares to crush his skull with the mace in his right hand. This motif was used throughout Egyptian history.\textsuperscript{116} The title above the kneeling foe has been read as the "Attendant of the Lake,"\textsuperscript{117} or as the "Place of Harpoons."\textsuperscript{118} The composite sign above this (as seen in Appendix 21) represents the Horus-king's victory over the Delta.\textsuperscript{119}

In the lower register (reverse -- Plate XXVI) are two fallen (or fleeing) foes with hieroglyphs depicting their tribes.

\textsuperscript{114}\textit{Tbid.}, p. 127. These signs are shown on Plate 4 in Lange and Hirmer's \textit{Egypt}.
\textsuperscript{115}Lange and Hirmer, \textit{Egypt}, p. 292.
\textsuperscript{116}\textit{Tbid.}, p. 292.
\textsuperscript{117}Legge, "The Carved Slates From Hieraconpolis And Elsewhere," p. 129. This would, perhaps, imply the capture of the Fayum.
\textsuperscript{118}Lange and Hirmer, \textit{Egypt}, p. 292.
\textsuperscript{119}\textit{Tbid.}, p. 292.
The "Narmer" palette is a true historical document. With it we can actually read the name of the participant in an historical event, which is here depicted as the unification of Egypt -- the first page, so to speak, in the "first chapter of the written history" of Egypt.\(^{120}\)

But Narmer himself is still rather mysterious to historians. It cannot be proven whether he is the last predynastic king of the South or the first king of the First Dynasty \(^{121}\) \(\text{i.e., Menes}\). We have evidence in his palette and his mace-head\(^ {122}\) that he won victories over the North; but there is no conclusive proof that he was the legal ruler over the Delta. Hence, we cannot positively credit Narmer as being the final "Unifier" of Egypt; but we can declare that Narmer is the latest great unifier of Egypt of whom we possess monumental evidence. Until monuments of some later king are uncovered, we shall have to credit Narmer and his people -- "the Followers of Horus" -- with having accomplished the unification of the two Egyptians and with having laid the foundation for the building of the Old Kingdom. It seems that Petrie's discovery of various monuments, inscriptions, and sealings of Narmer at Tarkhan, the great cemetery which served as the burying place for the dynasts at their temporary capital prior to their founding of Memphis, further establishes the late dating of Narmer's reign.\(^ {123}\)

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\(^{120}\) Hayes, The Scepter, p. 31.
\(^{121}\) See Emery, Archaic Egypt, pp. 27-37, in which the reader may find an excellent summary of the "Menes" controversy; here Emery favors Hor-Aha as the first king of the First Dynasty.
\(^{122}\) See Capart, Primitive Art, fig. 187, p. 249.
The identification of these "Followers of Horus" presents another problem in the study of Predynastic Egypt. First of all, the excavations of predynastic Egyptian sites by Petrie, Quibell, and others have supposedly uncovered skeletal evidence which proves the arrival upon Egyptian soil (in the Late Predynastic Age) of a new race -- the so-called "Dynamic Race" -- which effected the unification of Egypt under the First Dynasty.  

The "Dynamic Race" is described as "having a straight bridge to the nose, and a very rigorous and capable type of face." Narmer's nose will be seen to adhere to this description in his sculptor's model (Plate XXVIII-C and D). Once we accept the fact that the dynasts comprised a new race that entered the Nile Valley after 3500 B.C., the next logical step is to identify the origin of this new race. This too is a frustrating inquiry; but scholars generally agree that the invasion must have come from the east, although the point of entry -- whether north or south -- is open to conjecture.

Using the slate palettes as evidence, the south would appear to be the area of Egypt first entered and occupied by the "Dynamic

\[124\] D. E. Derry, "The Dynamic Race in Egypt," J.E.A., 42, 1956, pp. 80-85; here Derry is supported by the imminent Reisner; he presents a comparative study of skull measurements -- the "Dynamic Race" having larger skulls than the aboriginees.

\[125\] W. M. Flinders Petrie, A History Of Egypt: From The Earliest Kings To The XVth Dynasty, 1924, p. 3.

\[126\] See Derry, "The Dynamic Race in Egypt," p. 81, and Emery, Archaic Egypt, p. 40, where the various entry points are discussed (especially the Wadys Tumilat, and Hammamat); Derry does not believe that the invasion could have come through Nubia in the South because of the absence of any negroid elements in the "Dynamic Race;" Hall, The Ancient History Of The Near East, p. 94, argues for the southern entrance.
Race." Both the Narmer and Fantastic Animals palettes were found at Hieraconpolis -- a religious center in Upper Egypt until the VIth Dynasty. All the major palettes which commemorated important victories (numbers 9, 10, 14, 17, 19, 20, and 21 in the Appendix) have been shown to bear the standards of southern tribes. Thus it would seem that the inscribed slate palettes serve as sufficient historical documentation of the prowess and supremacy of the southern tribes in Late Predynastic Egypt.

Through a study of the motifs presented on the palettes in Group 3 we can partially follow the rise of the Egyptian theory of kingship. It has been pointed out by Henri Frankfort\(^{127}\) that no kings or chieftains were depicted on these palettes except Narmer. The victories celebrated on the Victory, Battlefield, Bull, Fantastic Animals, and Hunters palettes clearly show an allied effort. All standards and warriors on these palettes are shown on the same scale and are represented as being of equal importance.\(^{128}\) But with the Narmer palette we find for the first time the rendering of the king as the sole victor -- the various tribes serving merely as his agents or followers and the king himself becoming the embodiment of Horus. Thus, Frankfort


\(^{128}\)Note the size of all warriors on the Hunters palette and the size of the standards of allies on the Victory palette; note also the standards of allies on the Bull fragmentary palette -- the Bull's possible rendering as a king is only conjectural and need not represent one person as it probably does on Narmer's palette; furthermore we are concerned here with the comparative rendering of human figures only.
declares that "the characteristic Egyptian conception of kingship first received pictorial expression under Narmer."\textsuperscript{129} Whereas the figures in the earlier palettes are related and form a coherent scene, the various registers of Narmer's palette seem separate and isolated. However, the emphasis, as shown in the symbols, now is upon the fact that King Narmer has become the sole ruler, victor, and god of all Egypt.\textsuperscript{130} From the cooperative effort of tribes with leaders and near equals which brought about the consolidation and centralization of power there was the rather natural outcome. Along came a supreme ruler, an autocratic, god-king who would assume control of and credit for all of the powers and honors which were (as shown on the earlier palettes) shared and earned by many. When viewed as a precedent for the artistic representation of pharaoh, Narmer's palette gains in historic significance and tends to strengthen the reputation of Narmer as "Unifier" of Egypt.

Thus, as "artistic showpieces," these palettes enable us to study the early development of Egyptian relief sculpture and hieroglyphics. As historical documents they give historians enticing glimpses at some important successes of the aggressive Southern Egyptians. With them we can trace partially the rise of certain tribes in Southern Egypt (like the "Hawks," the "Jackals," and the "Lions") from their early conquests of Upper Egypt (as possibly seen on the "Bull Fragmentary"

\textsuperscript{129}Frankfort, The Birth Of Civilization In The Near East, 1956, p. 93.
\textsuperscript{130}H. A. Groenewegen-Frankfort, Arrest And Movement: An Essay On Space And Time In The Representational Art Of The Ancient Near East, 1951, p. 21; see this source for an excellent analysis of the palettes' place in Egyptian art development.
palette -- Plates XXIII and XXIV), to their complete conquest of all of Egypt (as seen on the "Narmer" palette).

The high level of artistic achievement in these palettes is also of great interest to the historian, and shows a long tradition of cultural development, and a period of reasonable political stability to permit the leisure time necessary to pursue and master the arts. This is further evidence of the level of power and security enjoyed by the allies represented on the map on Plate XXIX.

The palettes' artistic importance is equally great. We can see the development of the human form from the crude man on the "Manchester" palette (Plate IV) through to the good racial studies and portraits of the "Hunters" palette (Plate XVII-B), the "Battlefield" palette (Plate XX-B and C), and the "Narmer" palette. Indeed, Narmer's is most assuredly an actual, individualized portrait, because we possess (as seen in Plate XXVIII-B and C) the actual sculptor's trial piece, or model of Narmer's head. This has been termed our "Oldest portrait figure."\textsuperscript{131}

Of equal artistic significance are the numerous norms and motifs which we see in these palettes and which will be used in the next three thousand years of Egyptian art. Among these are the full-front profile and full-front eye (as seen on the "Narmer" palette), the exaggeration of a king's stature, the use of "groundlines" for division into registers (seen on the "Victory" palette -- Plate XVI and on the "Narmer" palette -- Plates XXV and XXVI, ) the development of

\textsuperscript{131}Petrie, The Making Of Egypt, p. 78.
hieroglyphs (seen on the same two palettes), and such motifs as that of King Narmer holding a victim's hair preparatory to "braining" him.

Furthermore as a unique subject of study in their own right, the slate palettes "beyond all question . . . provide us with the finest examples of evolution of form," and have enabled Petrie to establish the chronological succession of the various forms of palettes.\textsuperscript{132}

As some of the earliest examples of Egyptian relief sculpture and of royal monuments, the inscribed slate palettes form an important chapter in the development of Egyptian art.

\textsuperscript{132}W. M. Flinders Petrie, \textit{Corpus Of Prehistoric Pottery And Palettes}, 1921.
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Appendix: Catalogue Of Palettes

1. PALETTE WITH MIN EMBLEM: found at El-Amrah in tomb B62 by Randall-MacIver c. 1899-1901; it was presented to the British Museum; length: 11\frac{1}{2} inches; oval-shaped slate with a knob on top of each side; inscribed on only one side by 2 symbols with most of the palette uninscribed. (Plate I)

2. GERZEH PALETTE: found by Wainwright and Bushe-Fox at Gerzeh in grave 59/1910-1912. It is inscribed on one side only, and is oval in shape. It is in the Brussels Museum. A discussion of the identification of the object portrayed -- in itself a matter of controversy -- is here reserved for the text. (Plate II-A)

3. PALETTE WITH TWO BIRDS CARVED IN RELIEF: MacGregor Museum, Tamworth, England (No. 1758H); it is probably a little longer than palette no. 1; it is oval-shaped and completely clear except for the 2 carved birds on the top; it is probably only inscribed on one side except for the logical duplication of the birds' heads on the reverse. (Plate III)

4. MANCHESTER PALETTE: presented to the Manchester Museum, Manchester, England by Jesse Havorth in 1912 (Museum No. 5476); height: 16 inches; width: 6 inches; thickness: one-half inch; "bird shaped in outline" the palette is inscribed on one side with 3 ostriches being chased by a man wearing a mask; it has 2 birds carved out of the top and 5 deep, indented, tooth-like projections between (each with a drilled hole). (Plate IV)

5. TRUSSED GOOSE (?) PALETTE: mentioned only by Petrie's Ceremonial Slate Palettes, this obscure fragment is in the Brussels Museum. It is scraped and worn. We have no knowledge of its origin or date. (Plate V)

6. FRAGMENT WITH RHYT BIRD AND A BOAT: when first published in 1900 (by Capart) only the top part was known. Petrie's Ceremonial Slate Palettes published the same fragment in 1953 but with the bottom piece shown. Apparently between 1900 and 1953 the Cairo Museum, which possesses this fragment, either discovered the relationship of these two pieces which were already in the Museum or acquired a new fragment which was thus related. With the latter fragment the slate has the shape of a diamond and contains (from top to bottom) the figures of a plover (or Rhyt bird), a chequered square, a boat, and a rope entangled object. (Plate VI)

7. GAZELLE-GOOSE FRAGMENT: origin is unknown. It is in the British Museum (No. 32074). On the obverse is the central depression above which is the bottom half of a reclining animal (probably a gazelle)

\[1^{\text{Given in the order of their discussion in this paper.}}\]
and below which are 2 ostriches; the reverse is clear except for the reverse of the same reclining animal. Smith, Capart, and Legge mention it briefly. (Plate VII)

8. **PALETTE WITH SERPENT-FORM CENTRAL DEPRESSION AND HORUS-PALACE FACADE:** origin unknown. Metropolitan Museum, New York; height: 3\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches; apparently inscribed on one side only, this tiny palette has its central depression formed by a coiled serpent above which is a Horus-palace facade, and around which are crowded animals both real and fantastic. (Plate VIII)

9. "**FANTASTIC ANIMALS**" **PALETTE:** found in the temple at Hierakonpolis by Quibell in the 1890's, it is now no. 35715 in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; it is from 15 to 17 inches high; it is inscribed on both sides; on the obverse is the central depression flanked by the long, twisted necks of 2 fantastic monsters who are licking an antelope above the circle; 2 jackals, whose paws interlock form the outer-upper edges and a series of running animals are on the bottom; on the reverse (the outer-upper edges again formed by 2 jackals) are lions, goats, a griffon, a man (?) dressed as a jackal playing the flute, a giraffe, etc. Quibell and Green (Hierakonpolis, II) note that the head of the one jackal which is lost bears signs which indicate that it has been broken in antiquity and repaired and then broken again. (Plate IX and X)

10. "**GIRAFFE AND PALM**" **PALETTE:** bought at Damanhur, Egypt, this palette was obtained by the Louvre c. 1900; height: 12\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches; inscribed on both sides: obverse -- 2 jackals, toe-to-toe, form the outeredge of each side, while an ibis and lion are above the central depression and a long-necked monster below; reverse -- jackals form the border (as on the obverse), and 2 giraffes flank a palm tree. (Plates XI and XII)

11. "**JACKAL**" **FRAGMENT:** this fragment is in the MacGregor Museum in Tamworth; the fragment shows the upper half of the body of a jackal which forms the outer edge as in nos. 8 and 9, and the nose of a second jackal facing the other one. (Plate XIII)

12. "**DONKEY (?)**" **FRAGMENT:** this fragment is in the Brussels Museum; two creatures confront each other with their paws extended and touching; it is either quite worn, or else an unfinished work; and it is carved on both sides. (Plate XIV)

13. "**WHITE ORYX**" **FRAGMENT:** its provenance unknown, this fragment is in the Cairo Museum; its two sides are carved with two antelopes facing each other; because their curved horns lie flat along their necks, Petrie's Ceremonial Slate Palettes (p. 15) declares that these antelopes "can only belong to the species called White Oryx;" the beasts are standing on their hind-legs and their fore-legs are raised and bent; their shoulder muscles are indicated by lines; the figures on this fragment are rubbed and worn down. (Plate XV)
14. "VICTORY" PALETTE FRAGMENT: its origin unknown, this palette is in the Cairo Museum; height: 11 inches; inscribed on both sides: obverse -- a series of 7 "town" hieroglyphs is represented, each town being besieged; reverse -- 4 rows in bands or registers divided by "groundlines" containing bulls, donkeys, rams, and plants respectively from top to bottom. (Plate XVI)

15. "MARCHING MEN" FRAGMENT: bought at Beirut by Ary Renan, it is now in the Louvre; evidently inscribed on one side only, the scene is that of 2 rows of marching men; they wear double girdles with loose flaps in front and are armed with hooked sticks. (Plate XVII-A)

16. CAIRO FRAGMENT: depicted only by Smith, whose description is cited on p. 20.

17. "HUNTERS" PALETTE: probably from Abydos, it is composed of 3 fragments which form an almost complete palette: 2 fragments in the British Museum form the upper part, and 1 fragment in the Louvre forms the bottom; it was originally over 2 feet long; inscribed on only one side, a procession of "hunters" bearing weapons and standards march on either side of the central depression and "hunt" lions, ostriches, deer, wolves, etc. (Plate XVII-B)

18. "TRANSFIXED WARRIOR" FRAGMENT: its origin unknown, it is in the Metropolitan Museum; height: 2 inches; shows a warrior pierced by an arrow whose tip resembles that of the arrows on palette no. 17. (Plate XX-A)

19. "BATTLEFIELD" PALETTE: composed of 3 fragments; the bottom and larger piece (measuring 12 by 10 inches) is in the British Museum; the upper left fragment (measuring 5 inches at its greatest width and varying from 4 to 3 inches in height) is in the Ashmolean Museum; the upper right fragment (measuring c. 3.11 inches in length) is in a private collection not named by my only available source; it is inscribed on both sides: obverse -- above, 2 naked prisoners are pushed towards the central depression by 2 anthropomorphised standards (on the left); below, a robed figure thrusts another bound prisoner from the right side; further down, a lion devours a fallen foe, and vultures feed on the fallen bodies of dead foes; reverse -- two graceful giraffes (?) flank a palm tree. (Plates XX-B and XXI)

20. "BULL FRAGMENTARY" PALETTE: of unknown origin, this palette is in the Louvre; inscribed on both sides: obverse -- at the top, a bull tramples a man; a rope (to which 5 hands attached to rods leading to standards are connected) encircles 2 men at the bottom (a leg of one and the head and arm of another being shown); reverse -- a bull tramples a man at the top, and below are 2 crenellated towns containing emblems. The top of the missing part of this palette was probably composed of a bull trampling a fallen foe -- symmetrically balancing the present piece. (Plate XXIII)
21. PALETTE OF NARMER: found in the lower levels of the temple at Hierakonpolis by Quibell in the 1890's, it is now no. 3055 in the Cairo Museum; it is 25 inches long; inscribed on both sides, the obverse is topped by 2 Hathor heads followed in descending order by 3 registers (the upper band containing a procession of KING NARMER wearing the red crown, followed by a sandal-bearing servant and preceded by an official and 4 standard bearers who march towards the decapitated bodies of 10 men; the middle band containing 2 serpent-necked monsters, whose necks form the central depression; and the lower band containing a bull breaking down the walls of a crenellated town and trampling a foe); the reverse, also topped by 2 Hathor heads, bears 2 registers (the upper showing Narmer, wearing the white crown and about to "brain" a foe, while a hawk holds a hieroglyph representing 6000 prisoners of the Delta; the lower showing 2 fleeing foes and their accompanying names). (Plates XXV and XXVI)
Plate I. Palette with Min emblem.
(A) Gerzeh palette.

(B) Gerzean goddess from vase.

Plate II.
Plate III. Two birds palette.
Plate IV. Manchester palette.
Plate V. "Trussed goose" palette.
Plate VI. Fragment with rhyt bird and a boat.
Plate VII. "Gazelle-goose" fragment.
Plate VIII. Palette with serpent-form central depression and Horus-palace-facade.
Plate IX. Obverse: "Fantastic animals" palette.
Plate X. Reverse: "Fantastic animals" palette.
Plate XI. Obverse: "Giraffe and palm" palette.
Plate XII. Reverse: "Giraffe and palm" palette.
Plate XIII. "Jackal" fragment.
Plate XIV. "Donkey (?)" fragment.
Plate XV. "White oryx" fragment.
Plate XVI. "Victory" palette.
(A) "Marching Men" fragment.

(B) "Hunters" palette.

Plate XVII.
Plate XVIII. "Hunters" from palette no. 17 (Plate XVII-B).
Plate XIX. Details of weapons, etc., from palette no. 17 (Plate XVII-B).
(A) "Transfixed warrior" fragment.

(B) Obverse:
Ashmolean fragment.

("Battlefield Palette")

(C) Obverse:
British Museum fragment.

Plate XX.
Plate XXI. "Battlefield" palette: Reverse.
Plate XXII. Line drawing showing relative positions of "Battlefield" palette fragments.
Plate XXIII.

Obverse: "Bull fragmentary" palette.
Plate XXIV. Reverse: "Bull fragmentary" palette.
Plate XXV. Obverse: Palette of Narmer.
Plate XXVI. Reverse: Palette of Narmer.
Plate XXVII. Blowup of King Narmer on obverse of his palette.
(A) Hathor girdle of king on Narmer palette.

(B) Front view of sculptor's model of Narmer.

(C) Side view of sculptor's model of Narmer.

Plate XXVIII.
Plate XXIX. Map of Upper Egypt at the time of palette seen in Plate XXIII.