

The palette of narmer

[History](#), [Ancient History](#)



The Palette of Narmer: Historical archives or political propaganda The Palette of Narmer The Palette of Namer is an Ancient Egyptian artefact, pre-dating the Early Dynastic period. This clay tablet depicts the legacy of King Namer, but due to its mysterious nature, it is still unknown if these depictions are a historical record or a tool of political propaganda. Based on its size, shape and detailed images it is apparent that this palette was not used for daily purposes or historical archives.

With further inspection of the images on the palette, it is clear that the chief purpose of the piece was not to record the historical ventures of King Narmer but to assert his kingship and dominance over Ancient Egypt. Political propaganda is a form of communication, usually visual, that has a main purpose of influencing people towards a cause or position by showing only one side of the argument. This persuasion technique is used in the detailed depictions on the Palette of Narmer to promote his dominate power over his subjects.

King Narmer is shown as a large, god-like figure who towers over those around him, all other characters on the palette are shown following or being overpowered by Narmer. The other figures on the palette have the appearance of fear as Narmer rules over them with an iron fist. This applies fear and seeks to build support by installing anxieties into his subjects, enemies and all who gaze upon the palette. Through these techniques we can see that the main intension of the artefact was to show Narmer as Egypt's ultimate authority figure.

Throughout the panels of the palette we see Narmer asserting his dominance over many different people. On the top panel of the front side of the pallet, <https://assignbuster.com/the-palette-of-narmer/>

Narmer is depicted inspecting ten decapitated enemies slain in battle, once again in attempt to install fear. He again is drawn much larger than those around him, and is holding a mace in his left hand and a flail in his right, which is a traditional symbol of kingship. In the next panel we see the taming of two wild animals; these mystical creatures have often been interpreted as a metaphor for the unification of Upper and Lower

Egypt under King Narmers command. This unification of Egypt's regions was seen as a major victory for Narmer, which plays another role of propaganda; people naturally desire to be on the winning side, showing Narmer's victory is a technique to convince people that his leadership is effective and again reassures his power. The scene on the bottom panel of the front of the palette portrays a bull conquering his foe and attacking the walls of a city with its horns.

In this image the bull is to be interpreted as King Narmer, showing his strength and power as he defeats and kills his enemy. The wall can be thought of as Lower Egypt as he conquers it and unifies Egypt. The reverse side of the palette is mostly taken up by a large and detailed image of a man, undoubtedly Narmer, striking down upon an enemy. Narmer has his opponent by the hair, bagging for mercy on his knees, showing Narmers pure ferocity and god like stature. These images can be interpreted as Narmers conquest of Lower Egypt. This again plays on the fear associated with propaganda.

On the very bottom panel of the reverse side of the palette, two fallen enemies under the feet of Narmer. These conquered foes are representations of towns that Narmer has vanquished. Each panel on the

palette is a celebration of King Narmer, and his brave conquests; showing him as an almighty and feared leader, successfully using propaganda to build his reputation, gain supporters and strike fear into his enemies. Weaved throughout the palettes details are several subtle symbols that help project King Narmer personal propaganda to help him secure his kingship.

These hieroglyphs can be interpreted to have different meanings, but are very similar and all point to the depiction of the sheer power of Narmer. A reoccurring symbol of the bovine, a sign of strength and force, surround the Kings name (in serekh) on both sides of the palette, referring to his bull-like vigour and power. A falcon is shown on the back side of palette, the falcons head was commonly associated with Narmers name, and represents his rule. These animals are used as representations asserting King Narmers virtue and endowment.

The theme of higher archery is apparent on the palette; the treatment of the others is degrading, making Narmer appear supreme. The enemies are made evident on the palette, all represent with as smaller man, naked, and cowering at the mercy of Narmer. The King is dressed in the traditional short skirt, with an animal's tail and a crown upon his head, demonstrating his royalty. This illustrates the different side of the spectrum, follower and leader; allowing Narmer to again place himself above everyone else.

On both sides of the palette, a man standing behind the king is depicted holding Narmers sandals in his left hand and a basket in his right, the fact that the king is shown barefooted, suggests that this man is a servant to the king; this illustrates the king's superiority. There are two actual images of King Narmer on the palette; on the front side he is shown wearing the Red
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Crown, which is associated to Lower Egypt, while on the reverse side he is shown wearing the White Crown, a representation on Upper Egypt. Having equal representation of both Upper and Lower Egypt by, the association of their unification is made.

Each symbol, large or small, has an effect on the subconscious, making you see the argument in favor of Narmer. These symbols attribute to the appearance of Narmer, helping him gain respect and support through the use of propaganda. The exact details of the palette cannot be fully proven as historical facts, but with the common propaganda techniques present on the tablet, it discredits the validity of the events. It is still unknown if the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt occurred under the control of Narmer.

The Palette of Narmer has created scholarly debate among the historical community, whether it proves the unification of the Egyptian regions or was used only for self-promotion. The answer to the question hinges on the images within the palette inscription, the sheer nature of the depictions suggests that the palette does not prove that King Narmer unified Egypt in the Pre-Dynastic Period. The exact use of the palette is undiscovered to this day, but based on its size and the images on its surface it is apparent that it was used for the sole purpose of personal propaganda through subconscious control by King Narmer.

References: Kinnaer, Jacques, " The Ancient Egypt Site. " The Ancient Egypt Site. 30 June 2011. (8 October 2012) ----- [1].

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