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JOURNAL OF EGYPTIAN HISTORY 17.2 (2024) 155–202

JOURNAL of
EGYPTIAN
HISTORY

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Displaying Tools. On the Named Artists Depicted with a Palette

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Received 14 June 2024 | Accepted 25 September 2024 |

Published online 20 March 2025

Abstract

This paper aims to offer an overview of ancient Egyptian artists' representations with a palette in two-dimensional scenes that occurred in eight tombs during a limited time window, *i.e.*, from mid-Dynasty 18 to the Ramesside Period. By connecting these “(auto)portraits à la palette” via a chronological analysis, the article paves the way for a comprehensive study of this specific iconographic shorthand to signal a *ss-ḥdw.t*'s identity, closely related to an artist's definition of themselves within their own social world. In so doing, they blurred the line of our modern distinction between “scribes” and “draftsmen.”

Keywords

artists – palette – self-presentation – Dynasty 18 – workshop scene – social world – visual identity

1 Introduction

Among our modern expectations regarding the way a premodern artist might self-present, one is the display of the professional tool. This visual rhetoric has been used by artists for centuries, especially in medieval and modern times in Europe; painters, specifically, could place images of their iconic painting