

Examples of Use-wear on Predynastic Palettes

Zoom Lecture (Registration Required)

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A Lecture Presented by the American Research Center in Egypt – Northwest Chapter
Co-sponsors: American Research Center in Egypt – Oregon Chapter
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Middle East Studies Center – Portland State University

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Free and open to the public

Discussions on Predynastic palette use-wear are often based in the 19th and early 20th Century assertions made upon their initial rediscovery. This presentation will instead study possible use-wear using experimental archaeology, reflectance transformation imaging (RTI), statistical data captured as a part of the Predynastic Palette Database (PPDB) project, and investigate the possibility of previously unstudied surface pitting as a new form of use-wear.

This investigation will demonstrate how misunderstood the use of Predynastic palettes has been, and how much more complicated their usage actually appears to be – implying that their role in society is likely not something as simple as a cosmetic receptacle and that they are much more likely to be a high status object owned by the elites of the Predynastic civilizations with deep ritual and symbolic meaning.



Matt Szafran is an independent researcher, specializing in the study of ancient tools and technologies. His current research focuses on the manufacture and use of stone palettes in Predynastic Egypt, using experimental archaeology and advanced imaging technologies, such as microscopy and Reflectance Transmission Imaging (RTI) to compliment textual studies.

Matt has lectured on Predynastic palettes and assisted in teaching RTI workshops. He has published in peer-reviewed journals and magazines and is currently writing a book discussing the possible uses of Predynastic palettes.

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