



Émile Prisse d'Avennes: Egyptian Art

Salima Ikram

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Émile Prisse d'Avennes: Egyptian Art Salima Ikram Symmetry and opulence: Exploring the Valley of the Kings

A lifelong devotee of ancient Egyptian and Oriental culture, the French author, artist, and scholar **Achille-Constant-Théodore-Émile Prisse d'Avennes** (1807–1879) is famed as one of the **most influential Egyptologists**, long before the discipline was even properly established.

Prisse first embarked on his explorations in 1836, documenting sites throughout the Nile Valley, often under his **Egyptian pseudonym, Edris Effendi**. Prisse's first publication of notes, drawings and squeezes (a kind of frottage) came in the form of *Les Monuments égyptiens*, a modest collection of 51 plates, but one met with considerable acclaim in both popular and intellectual circles.

Encouraged by his success, Prisse returned to Egypt in the late 1850s to expand his work. His subsequent, vast oeuvres, *L'Histoire de l'art égyptien* and *L'Art arabe*, offer a **truly complete survey of Egyptian art**. The albums cover **architecture, drawing, sculpture, painting and industrial or minor arts**, with sections, plans, architectural details and surface decoration all documented with utmost sensitivity and accuracy. Even when compared to the products of the great state-sponsored expeditions to Egypt of this period, **Prisse's compendium remains the largest, singlehanded illustrated record of Egyptian art in existence**.

This publication **brings together for the first time the complete collection of Prisse's unsurpassed illustrations in a visual and archaeological feast of symmetry and complexity, mystery and opulence**.

Text in English, French, and German

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