



THE COSTUME IN EGYPT AS INSPIRATION FOR THE REDESIGN OF MEN'S CONTEMPORARY CLOTHES

Professional paper
DOI: 10.5937/CT_ITI24036R

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ABSTRACT: *In this paper, the look at Ancient Egypt culture and fashion in Egypt is given. By way of preface to what will be the subject of interest, a brief review of life in Egypt was made. Fashion, materials and people's culture through a new redesigned model of men's costume are presented. The model is innovative and creative for the modern fashion world through hand painted applications and their contemporary interpretation. The unbreakable connection between the contemporary and ancient fashion is also given.*

Keywords: *fabric, clothing, history, trends, materials.*

NOŠNJA U EGIPTU KAO INSPIRACIJA ZA REDIZAJN MUŠKE SAVREMENE ODEĆE

APSTRAKT: *U ovom radu dat je pogled na staroegipatsku kulturu i modu u Egiptu. Kao uvod u ono što će biti predmet interesovanja, napravljen je kratak osvrt na život u Egiptu. Moda, materijali i kultura ljudi predstavljani su kroz novi redizajniran model muškog kostima. Model je inovativan i kreativan za savremeni modni svet kroz ručno oslikane aplikacije i njihovu savremenu interpretaciju. Takođe je data neraskinljiva veza između savremene i antičke mode.*

Ključne reči: *tkanina, odeća, istorija, trendovi, materijali.*

1. INTRODUCTION



Fashion is a global industry that is invested in expectation what we wear and how we wish to perform to others. Fashion is not just a business, it is also a cultural and social phenomenon, steer by the desire for the new.

Fashion is always dynamic and open to change. Fashion is everywhere. It is now one of the main ways in which people present their selves to others, signaling what they want to communicate about their style, wealth, professionalism, subcultural and political allegiances, social status, even their mood. It is also a global industry with huge economic, political and cultural impact, from the impact of the catwalk on mainstream retail, to sweatshop production and celebrity branding [1].

The apparel industry is a heterogeneous entity where the design, technology and management of fashion activities are geared towards mass production, limited edition, high fashion clothing, crafts, exports and other niche segments. The design process involves multiple creative processes such as research, analysis and decision making. Throughout the entire design process, sources of inspiration play a major role in creating special and unique designs. Inspiration is considered a magical tool for all designers and can be found everywhere.

Designers in the textile and fashion industry are under constant pressure in terms of developing new design ideas where the design should be distinct and striking to keep the customer's attention. Creative ideas are elevated by experience and expertise. It is said that those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it [1,2, 3].

Sources of inspiration, both technically and visually, are crucial in increasing creativity in the process of design. Visualisation can be a source of inspiration. At every level of the marketplace and from every corner of the globe, the ancient costumes are inspiration for designers who can appreciate its beauty and who wish to interpret it for themselves. Designers can take a cue from ancient cultures and explore the degrees of separation that link them and any of their ideas to kindred historical counterparts [3, 4, 5].

1.1. Ancient costume in Egypt as an inspiration

Ancient early civilizations such as Egypt and Mesopotamia are characterized by a rich history, with a huge number of documents from this early period, as much as 5000 years before our era. So, today we have a lot infomations about the clothing of the ancient Egyptians, primarily on the basis of the preserved cultural heritage - numerous statuettes and wall paintings that, thanks to the extremely dry climate, have been preserved in huge numbers. The documentation available is much larger compared to other ancient civilizations, especially in terms of their preservation/good condition. Based on the preserved data, can be state that in a long period of over three thousand years, minimal changes in the costumes can be observed.

The lifestyle of an Ancient Egyptian depended on one's social class. The pharaoh and his vizier with the nobles would devote their time work to administrative tasks to maintain the kingdom. Priests played an active role in society. Religion in Egypt was a vital part of culture, and the gods were believed to take active roles in punishing and promoting the people. Keeping the gods satisfied was extremely important, and it was the role of the priests to perform the necessary rituals. They were also responsible for preparing bodies



VII International scientific conference
„Contemporary trends and innovations in the textile industry“
19-20th September, 2024, Belgrade, Serbia

for burial. The process of mummification gives them an opportunity to learn something more about the human body, knowledge which enabled them to become surgeons. To be a priest required extensive training, so the priests were highly respected in their society. Scribes were responsible for housekeeping, legal matters, trade, military, and for every aspect of Egyptian life. It was very hard to become a scribe, and it required many years of dedicated work. To learn to read and write in hieroglyphics, they had to be familiar with the topics they wrote about, so they get training in religion in particular so that all records of the gods could be kept.

The Egyptian equivalent of paper was Papyrus. Papyrus was made from the reeds of the papyrus plant. The process of making papyrus was expensive and time-consuming process, scribes often take notes on ostraca, which is broken pottery pieces easy to make inexpensive.

When discussing ancient Egyptian fashion It seems most appropriate to use the word “unwrap”, which means unwrap the clothing usually made of linen used during mummification. The act of wrapping and unwrapping cloth was a significant activity in ancient Egypt, and the same item of cloth could be used and reused in numerous ways. Each time a cloth was wrapped, it gave protection in a literal or symbolic/figurative sense.

Egyptian garments were in a form of rectangular pieces of cloth that were used and worn in many different ways. On the first sight, they are simple rectangular shapes, but they look significantly different when draped over the body in a tomb or as depicted in art.

In a broadest sense we can define clothing as everything that is worn on the body, such as various garments, but also headgear, shoes, adornments, and accessories.

This definition can be narrowed and limited to the items that literally cover different parts of the human body. So, in ancient Egypt, those body covers were divided into two major groups:

1. Untailored/wraparound (kilts, skirts, and dresses, shawls and cloaks.)
2. Tailored/cut-to-shape garments (tunics, hip-cloths, loincloths, body-sashes or neck-sashes, etc.).

Additionally, the wardrobe of ancient Egyptians consists of a variety of accessories, such as belts, headbands, socks, mittens and gloves.

One of the most usual cut-to-shape garments was a tunic, a garment that was usually worn by men, women, and children. This garment was made of a rectangular piece of cloth that was folded in half and sewn on both sides. At the top of each side, an armhole was left along with a V-neck opening on top for the head. The basic pattern of tunic was sleeveless. Separate sleeves could if needed be attached to the armholes.

In the period of the so-called Old Kingdom (2700–2200 BC) characteristic clothing was schenti (Figure 1), a piece of cloth that was wrapped around the hips and was tightened at the waist with a belt. For some types of dignitaries this piece of clothing was more wrinkled and stiffer and sometimes decorated. In the period of the Old, Middle and New Kingdom, ancient Egyptian women also wore a long pleated tunic called "Kalasiris" which was transparent and underneath it could be seen the underwear that covered the hips.

Kalasiris (Figure 2) was a thin, form-fitting dress made of nearly transparent linen, and was worn by women in ancient Egypt. It was noticed in the court and among the upper class,

as well as by artisans and farmers. This dress was tight and tube-shaped, sewn together on one side to make a slim skirt that goes from the ankles and up to the chest, continues under the armpits and was held up by two straps on the shoulder, attached behind the neck, meeting in front and exposing the breasts.

The dress evolved into a simple tunic that was also worn by men, usually over the shendot. Children did not wear clothes until the period of maturity, which was around the age of 12, and at this age the boys were circumcised and their heads were shaved. Mothers were responsible for caring for the children, and fathers provided the income for the families[4, 5, 6].

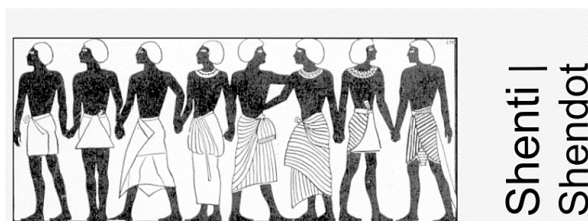


Figure 1: Appearance of Shenti
Source: seekpng.com



Figure 2: Appearance of Kalasiris
Source: <https://malevus.com/kalasiris/>

1.2. Elements of Egyptian clothing

In ancient Egypt, the most common used textile was linen. Because of the high temperature this material helped people to be comfortable in the subtropical heat.

Linen material is made from the flax plant by spinning the fibers from the stem of the plant. Spinning, weaving and sewing were very important techniques for all Egyptian societies. There was possibility for plant dyes to be applied to clothing but this clothing was usually used in its natural color. Wool was also known, but they considered it as impure fiber.

The pharaohs were monarchs of ancient Egypt. They ruled from the First Dynasty (c. 3150 BCE) until the annexation of Egypt by the Roman Republic in 30 BCE. Pharaoh was often



considered to be divine incarnation of Horus, and the unifier of Upper and Lower Egypt. In their appearance they often wear animal skins, usually lion or leopard.

Ornaments were the main decorative part in Egyptian clothing with some symbolic elements. During the Old Kingdom period Egyptians wore different types of amulets, magic pendants which later were turned into ornaments. Round necklaces were woven with gold, jewels and coloured glass beads symbolizing the sun disk. Arm and leg bracelets, rings, pendants, gold diadems, beads, and belts were also widely used.

Wigs were also used, usually made of plant fibre or wool. The elite wore long wigs with slender braids or pipe curls. Small wigs were specific for slaves and peasants and they also wore caps made of linen. Men shaved their beards, but it was also usual to wear artificial beards made of wool varnishing them over and plaiting metal threads into them. The golden beard of the Pharaoh symbolized his power. The sandals of palm leaves, leather and papyrus were worn only by the Pharaoh and his suite. Sandals had simple forms, without side and back and with turned-up sole [7, 8].

2. EXPERIMENTAL

2.1. Design inspired by Ancient Egypt

2.1.1. Inspiration for the Model

The main decorative value in the Egyptian costume consisted of decorations that included symbols as the main element. During the ancient kingdom of the Egyptians, all kinds of charms, magical attachments gradually became decorations. The circular decorations of the neck symbolized the solar disc, so these circular decorations are also used as an inspiration for the collar in the new redesigned model.

The new model is a man costume, inspired by the most common symbols from the ancient Egypt mythology. The symbols used as an inspiration are given below.

The Egyptian eye (Figure 3), commonly known as the eye of Horus, is one of the most common symbols of Egyptian mythology. The eye of Horus plays a big role in the fight between Horus and Set and still has an influence in Egyptian culture today.

The Egyptians wore this eye as a talisman, believing that it had therapeutic capabilities and was able to protect the wearer from all forms of disease.

Many of the people used it as a sort of good-luck charm, and it was like a guardian of its owner's physical and spiritual health. This symbol was also used in funeral rituals, believing that it will offer protection on his journey to the realm of the dead.

The Uraeus is the symbol of the Egyptian snake goddess Wadjet. Wadjet was protector of the Lower Egypt, worshiped as the patroness of the Nile Delta. The term "Uraeus" was known by the Upper Egyptian scholar Horapollo at the end of the 5th century AD in his treatise Hieroglyphica, where he gives an ideographic interpretation of hieroglyphic writing.

The snake (Figure 4) symbol was worn by the pharaohs to symbolize Wadjet's protection of the pharaoh and her approval of his claim of sovereignty.

The snakes and cobra were symbols of resurrection. They were associated with the solar myths depicting the Sun's journey through the sky and the underworld, known as the Duat [9,10].

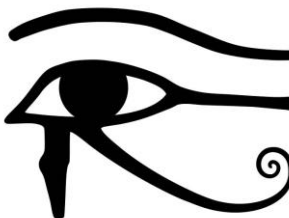


Figure 3: The eye of Horus as an inspiration for the Model (© Jeff Dahl)



Figure 4: The Uraeus as symbol of the Egyptian snake goddess Wadjet
Source: (<https://study.com/academy/lesson/egyptian-uraeus-definition-symbol-meaning.html>)

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1.1. New redesigned model of men's costume

The redesigned model was inspired by a men's costume in Ancient Egypt, with a special emphasis at jewelry color and design. The gold color was applied to the new model in a form of handwork, which gives the model decay and freshness. The model consists of a jacket and trousers with long belt.

The Egyptian shenti was artfully transformed into a modern pattern of trousers with a lowered saddle that shows the freedom of movement and comfort offered by the Egyptian shenti. Minimalist design, with a simple cut, was enriched with hand-drawn segments of Egyptian mythology. The color of the model was deliberately left to be white and natural, so that it can bring the new model closer to Egyptian culture, where the natural color of the linen was the most commonly used color in the ancient Egyptian costume.

The cheerful colors can be seen in the new model around the collar. These colors describe the vibrancy of the Egyptians. The mixing of green, red and blue in a form of triangle as the main construction form of shenti, gives the model more colorful and fresh look. These colors supplemented by the golden tresses, shown the power and nobility of the Egyptian people.

Two gold-colored snakes are drawn by hand on the bottom of the model, representing the power divinity, sovereignty. Through the drawn eye are shown the beauty, protection and moderation. The cobra symbol on the new model is made of rope and is located on the back of the model, as a symbol of protection the vital parts of human body. The model also have a soft belt that contains the same colors as the collar of the shirt complemented the bottom of the design.



Figure 5: The appearance of handwork in the redesigned model



Figure 6: The final appearance of the model (front and rear)

4. CONCLUSION

The Egyptians were a people who liked to dress up and who were involved in fashion. Whether it was men or women, peasants or kings or queens. They were all marked in the colors of life of happiness. They believed in gods, they were showered in gold and luxury. The most used material in Egyptian costume was linen. Children did not wear clothes until



the period of maturity, which was around the age of 12, and at this age the boys were circumcised and their heads were shaved. Mothers were responsible for caring for the children, and fathers provided the income for the families.

The main clothing of the women was the "Kalasiris", which later men began to wear as well. New elements of clothing began to appear over time. One of them was the upper robe. It was a kind of shawl, which gathered gently in folds from above the waistcoat and crossed over the chest to form short sleeves.

The main decorative value in the Egyptian costume is characterized by ornaments that include elements of symbols. During the ancient kingdom of the Egyptians, all kinds of amulets, magical pendants, gradually became decorations.

The circular ornaments on the neck symbolized the solar system. Egyptians enjoyed the modern, that they adored color and decorations.

Egyptian culture is a great treasure trove of ideas and inspirations for fashion designers. Through the analysis of that culture, clothing and fashion accessories, a redesign of a male model that is wearable in the 21st century has been made.

The new model is inspired by men's clothing in Egypt, and the model itself incorporates details that take us back to an ancient civilization. The new redesigned model is representative of a modern age in which traces of ancient civilizations and their perfect artistic creation are still felt.

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