



## *i3dt* Female Garments in Middle Kingdom<sup>1</sup>

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### Keywords

*i3dt* Garment, Middle Kingdom, Female Offering Bearers, Lozenges Pattern Beads

### Abstract

A variety of garments appeared in ancient Egypt, *i3dt* garment is one of elegant garments which was worn by Egyptian females and males. It was represented on the walls of the Egyptian tombs, coffins, statues, stelae. It was also found among artifacts buried with the royals and elite individuals. *i3dt* garment appeared from Early Dynastic period to Roman era. Female offering bearers of the Middle Kingdom wore different types of *i3dt* garment as a long tight fitted beaded netted dress with one or two straps and beaded netted skirt above a long white dress. *i3dt* garment had a variety of purposes from the basic purpose of covering and adorning the wearer to the symbolic purpose of protecting the body. This paper depends on a descriptive- analytical methodology to identify the term of *i3dt* garment, clarify the types of *i3dt* garment, investigate particular models of *i3dt* garments from the Middle Kingdom and discuss the reasons behind wearing *i3dt* garment on certain occasions in ancient Egypt. This paper would conclude that *i3dt* beaded garment was worn during the festivals by females to stimulate the senses through movement, sound, and scents.

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## Introduction

A dress is defined as a piece of clothing worn exclusively by women; dresses were the most common type of clothing for the ancient Egyptian women. Among the most common types of female garments in ancient Egypt; the wrapped dresses, V-necked dresses, and beaded netted dresses.<sup>2</sup>

Clothing in ancient Egypt served a variety of purposes from the basic purpose of covering and adorning the wearer to the symbolic and apotropaic purpose of protecting the body. Beaded netted garment had a symbolic and possibly decorative meaning.<sup>3</sup>

It has been suggested that these nets were utilized as a magical defense against evil and they were used in later periods either as a net covered the mummy or as a representation on shroud or cartonnage.<sup>4</sup>

This paper depends on a descriptive- analytical methodology to identify the term of *i3dt* garment, clarify the types of *i3dt* garment, investigate particular models of *i3dt* garments from the Middle Kingdom and discuss the reasons beyond wearing *i3dt* garment on certain occasions in ancient Egypt.

## Results and Discussion

Beaded netted dresses did not seem to be exclusive to one gender. The Old Kingdom dresses appear to be limited to females. Yet, it could be that only female examples have survived from this period.<sup>5</sup>

The earliest known female netted dress dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty in the reign of king Khufu. It was discovered at Giza, Tomb G 7440 Z in 1927 by the Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts Expedition<sup>6</sup>. It is displayed at Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, NO. 27.1548.1.<sup>7</sup>

The earliest known male netted dress dated to the Archaic period, it was discovered at Abydos, and it is displayed in British Museum NO. EA37996.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> G. V. Eastwood, *Studies in Textile and Costume History: Pharaonic Egyptian Clothing Vol II*, J.E. Brill, London, 1993, 95.

<sup>3</sup> A. Hallmann, "Clothing (non-royal), Pharaonic Egypt", in *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, 2017,1.

<sup>4</sup> E. Riefstahl, *Patterned textiles in Pharaonic Egypt*, Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, New York, 1944,11.

<sup>5</sup> D. Spizzichino, "Biography in Ancient Egypt: Bead-Nets", in *Birmingham Egyptology Journal* 9,2022,8.

<sup>6</sup> R. Janssen, "An Ancient Egyptian Erotic Fashion: Fishnet Dresses", in *KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* 6.4,1996,45.

<sup>7</sup> R. K. Soleman, "The Central Role of White Linen in Ancient Egyptian Women's Dresses & Fashion", in *MKAF* 7.7,2020,18.

<sup>8</sup> D. Spizzichino, "Biography in Ancient Egypt: Bead-Nets",2022, 17.

The beaded netted garment was worn by the goddesses<sup>9</sup> and queens<sup>10</sup> in the New Kingdom and disappeared from the garments of the elites. It appeared again during the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty's stelae.<sup>11</sup>

Remarkably, the Late Period beaded netted clothing appeared shortly after the introduction of a real beaded net covering an embalmed mummy.<sup>12</sup>

### Definition of netted garments

The word *i3dt* was written in Egyptian language as ,

 *i3dt*<sup>14</sup> means net or trap.

There is no specific definition of netted garments, Egyptologists focused on the definition of one type of netted garments which was a beaded netted garment.

The beaded netted dress was made of beads tied together in geometric patterns, usually diamonds. It was worn by two ways either sewn onto a linen dress or made as a separate netted dress worn over the linen.<sup>15</sup>

The researcher proposes the netted garment according to the different types of garments which were found in ancient Egypt. Netted garment was “a garment in the shape of geometric pattern such as squares, lozenges, or diamond pattern to imitate the shape of the net”. It was worn by two ways either above a linen garment or without any garment.

<sup>9</sup> Beaded netted garment were worn by Egyptian goddess such as goddess Neith, Serqet and Isis. They represented on the walls of Nefertari's tomb. D. Spizzichino, “Biography in Ancient Egypt: Bead-Nets”, 2022, 18. J. K. McDonald, *House of Eternity: The Tomb of Nefertari*, Getty Publications, Los Angeles, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> Queen Ahmose represented wearing beaded netted garment on the north wall (eastern side) of Userhet's tomb. N.G. Davis, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Two Ramesside Tombs at Thebes*, Vol V, New York, 1927,7.

<sup>11</sup> A. Hallmann, “Clothing (non-royal), Pharaonic Egypt”, 2017,8.

<sup>12</sup> A. Hallmann, “Clothing (non-royal), Pharaonic Egypt”, 2017,8.

<sup>13</sup> FCD;10.1.

<sup>14</sup> WB.I. 36.

<sup>15</sup> R. K. Soleman, “The Central Role of White Linen in Ancient Egyptian Women's Dresses & Fashion”, in *MKAF* 7.7,2020,12-13; G. V. Eastwood, *Studies in Textile and Costume History*, 1993,96; S. D'Auria & P. Lacovara & C. H. Roehrig, *Mummies \$ Magic: The Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1988, 79.

The most common type was the diamond and lozenges patterns, but the square pattern appeared in a scene from the tomb of Nesutnefer<sup>16</sup>. The scene represented on the north wall and represented two registers with four men (Figure 1). The first man of the upper register is standing, reading from unfolded scroll and behind him a man who is standing and wearing a kilt with spots of blue and red on straps. This kilt suggested to be a netted kilt with square pattern. This man called ḥꜥꜣ ji-twꜣi, the chief Iytwai.

The first man of the lower register is standing, pouring a water into a basin. He is followed by a man who is ḥꜥꜣ mr-ib, the chief Merib and he is wearing a square pattern garment.<sup>17</sup> Kanawati suggested that this type of both kilts is a beaded netted pattern kilt.<sup>18</sup> It was suggested that the netted kilt was woven, whether of grass or reed or ramie-fiber or linen. It represents the first appearance of a weaved pattern whatever how simple.<sup>19</sup>



Figure 1: Two registers are representing four men from the tomb of Nesutnefer, two of them are wearing beaded netted garment. Source: N.Kanawati, *Tombs of Giza II*, Seshathetep/Heti (G5150), Nesutnefer (G4970) and Seshemnefer II (G5080), Aris and Phillips, England, 2002, PL.2.

<sup>16</sup>The tomb of Nesutnefer dated back to Old Kingdom (4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty). Nesutnefer was a high official during the reign of King Khafra, he had many titles such as the overseer of the royal palace, overseer of the houses of the royal children, administrator of a settlement and acquaintance of the king. His tomb NO. G4970 at Giza. N.Kanawati, *Tombs of Giza II*, Seshathetep/Heti (G5150), Nesutnefer (G4970) and Seshemnefer II (G5080), Aris and Phillips, England, 2002, 31.

<sup>17</sup>N. Kanawati, *Tombs of Giza II: Seshathetep/Heti (G5150), Nesutnefer (G4970) and Seshemnefer II (G5080)*, Aris and Phillips, England, 2002, 46.

<sup>18</sup> N. Kanawati, *Tombs of Giza II*, 2002, 46.

<sup>19</sup> E. Riefstahl, *Patterned Textiles in Pharaonic Egypt*, 1944, 7.

## Types of netted garments

There are two types of netted garments in ancient Egypt, the first type is a linen netted garment, and the second type is a beaded netted garment.

The earliest record of the netted dress is in Westcar's papyrus<sup>20</sup>, where king Sneferu brought twenty women from his harem to amuse him and rowing in the king's lake. The king gave them twenty nets instead of their garments.<sup>21</sup> Blackman translated the text as "have brought to me twenty women such as are beautiful of body, such as have (shapely) breasts and braided tresses and give these nets to these women, whose garments have been laid aside, but, and give these nets to these women, their garments having been laid aside".<sup>22</sup>

Spizzichino mentioned the translation of the story as "I shall go boating! [...] Let there be brought to me twenty women (10) with the shapeliest bodies, breasts, and braids, who have not yet given birth. Also let there be brought to me twenty nets and give these nets to these women in place of their clothes! [...] They rowed up and down, and his majesty's heart was happy (15) seeing them row".<sup>23</sup>

The vizier devised a therapeutic regimen for the king to maintain his physical and mental health that involved escaping to the royal lake and taking in all of nature's beauty including its plants and animals, while being rowed by twenty virgin priestesses who worn unique net dresses.<sup>24</sup>

Scholars had a different suggestion about the type of dress mentioned in Westcar papyrus, either made of linen or beads. Hall mentioned in his article that the dress mentioned in Westcar papyrus probably made of linen and explained his opinion saying that the linen was more transparent and clinging when wet. He showed the beaded

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<sup>20</sup> Westcar papyrus was written in the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. It takes its name from the British collector Henry Westcar. It is displayed in Berlin Museum. It is a mythological text narrates the Old Kingdom's magic tales such as Khufu and the magicians. W. M. F. Petrie, *Egyptian tales: Translated from the Papyri*, Methuen, London, 1918, 46.

<sup>21</sup> R. M. Hall, "Garments in the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology", in *Textile History* 13.1, 1982,38.

<sup>22</sup> A. B. Blackman, "Some Notes on the Story of Senuhe and Other Egyptian Texts", in *JEA* 22, 1936,41-42.

<sup>23</sup> D. Spizzichino, "Biography in Ancient Egypt: Bead-Nets",2022,5.

<sup>24</sup> G. U. Torres, "Princess Nefertibet and Her Bead Net Dress", Academia, 2020, available at: [https://www.academia.edu/44848916/PRINCESS\\_NEFERTIBET\\_AND\\_HER\\_BEAD\\_NET\\_DRESS](https://www.academia.edu/44848916/PRINCESS_NEFERTIBET_AND_HER_BEAD_NET_DRESS). Accessed on (5/2/2024),17.

dresses seems to be a dancer's dress not a rowing dress because it was impractical during the rowing's movement.<sup>25</sup>

On the contrary Spizzichino claimed those garments made of beads arranged in a net-like design such as those discovered in Old Kingdom tombs, were too fragile to be worn by Egyptian dancers for any length of time.<sup>26</sup>

Janssen agreed with Hall in his suggestion, and he supposed that the netted garment considered to be an erotic garment in ancient Egypt and became more sexually when it was worn without a linen dress beneath it. These garments seem to be unerotic when they depicted on female statues.<sup>27</sup>

Janssen supposed his opinion according to two fragments of linen garments were discovered in ancient Egypt; a fragment linen was discovered at Thebes. It thought to be the earliest example of knotted netted linen fragment from ancient Egypt. It is displayed in Boston Museum of fine art NO. 57.152. Janssen suggested that it dated to early pre-dynastic or early dynastic period. It consists of a lozenges pattern knotted together. The flowers hanging at the bottom of the fragment similar to the dress of Boston Museum<sup>28</sup>, so it is suggested that it is a fragment of a garment<sup>29</sup> (Figure 2).

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<sup>25</sup> R. M. Hall, "Garments in the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology", 1982,39.

<sup>26</sup> D. Spizzichino, "Biography in Ancient Egypt: Bead-Nets",2022,6.

<sup>27</sup> R. Janssen, "An Ancient Egyptian Erotic Fashion: Fishnet Dresses",1996, 42-45.

<sup>28</sup> The dress of Boston Museum is the earliest female netted dress came from the Old Kingdom. It is displayed at Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, NO. 27.1548.1.

<sup>29</sup> R. Janssen, "An Ancient Egyptian Erotic Fashion: Fishnet Dresses",1996,47.

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Figure 2: A fragment of linen is in Boston Museum of fine art. Source:

<https://collections.mfa.org/download/164892;jsessionid=AFFEF9A77A212DC29225BB00B5D181DD> (Accessed on 2/8/2024).

The second fragment came from Deshasheh<sup>30</sup>, it was discovered from tomb 99, it dated back to the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, and it is displayed in Petrie Museum in London. This is similar to that of Westcar papyrus (Figure 3).<sup>31</sup>



Figure 3: A fragment of linen is in Petrie Museum. Source: R. Janssen, “An Ancient Egyptian Erotic Fashion: Fishnet Dresses”, in *KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* 6.4, 1996, 46.

<sup>30</sup> It is located in Beni Suef governorate, 12 km south of Ahnasia, it contains a cemetery from the Old Kingdom and tombs date back to 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. This site was reused during the Roman period.

عبد الحليم نور الدين، مواقع الآثار المصرية القديمة منذ أقدم العصور وحتى نهاية عصر الأسرات المصرية القديمة، الجزء الثاني، مواقع مصر العليا، القاهرة، 2009، 10.

<sup>31</sup> R. Janssen, “An Ancient Egyptian Erotic Fashion: Fishnet Dresses”, 1996, 47.

The earliest netted garment appeared in the unknown Archaic royal statuette, it was found in Abydos and now it is displayed in British Museum NO. EA37996. The statuette is made of ivory, showing the king wearing the white crown of Upper Egypt and a netted overlapped dress looking like the traditional *ḥb sd* garment.<sup>32</sup> The garment with an all-over pattern of lozenges surrounded by a basic guilloche, or twist. Riefstahl stated that it was difficult to identify that this garment was woven, embroidered, or painted.<sup>33</sup> Petrie supposed that the garment was quilted with embroidery<sup>34</sup>, but Glanville assumed that the garment was woven and made of wool (Figure 4).<sup>35</sup>



Figure 4: Statuette of unknown king from Abydos. Source:

[https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y\\_EA37996](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA37996) (Accessed on 13/1/2024).

Other example of similar netted pattern from Hierakonpolis<sup>36</sup>, an ivory statuette represented a woman wearing a simple design as a cloak wrapping her body<sup>37</sup> and

<sup>32</sup> D. Spizzichino, "Biography in Ancient Egypt: Bead-Nets", 2022, 17.

<sup>33</sup> E. Riefstahl, *Patterned Textiles in Pharaonic Egypt*, 1944, 6.

<sup>34</sup> W. M. F. Petrie, *Abydos*, Vol II, Gilbert and Rivington, London, 1903, 24.

<sup>35</sup> S. R. K. Glanville, "An Archaic Statuette from Abydos", in *JEA* 17, 1931, 65.

<sup>36</sup> It is the old city of Nekhen, it is located south of El Kab city in Aswan governorate. It was known as Kom El Ahmar because of the large number of red ostraca found in the site. The city contains tombs from the Old and New Kingdoms.

عبد الحلیم نور الدین، مواقع الآثار المصرية القديمة منذ أقدم العصور وحتى نهاية عصر الأسرات المصرية القديمة، الجزء الثاني مواقع مصر العليا، القاهرة، 2009، 291.

<sup>37</sup> N. M. Ahmed & M. H. Mohamed, "The Artistic Features of the Individuals' Cloaks in Ancient Egypt", in *MFTH* 5.1, 2021, 206.



decorated with geometric patterns as lozenges (Figure 5) such as the statuette of the unknown king from Abydos.<sup>38</sup>

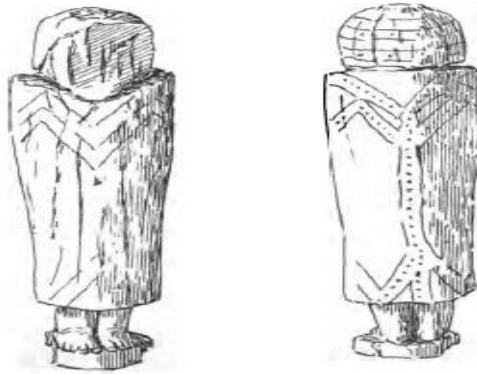


Figure 5: Statuette of a woman is wearing a cloak with lozenges pattern. Source: J.E. Quibell, *Hierakonpolis*, Wiliam Clowes and sons, London, 1900, Pl. IX.

The beaded netted garment became more common during the Middle Kingdom, especially in the wooden statues of offering bearers.<sup>39</sup> Hall thought in his article that the beaded netted dress was worn over another dress to give the effect of a patterned fabric with the using of various colored semi-precious stones.<sup>40</sup>

There are three statues of female offering bearers wearing beaded netted garments and some artifacts represent female figures wearing netted garments, which date to the Middle Kingdom and will be examined in this paper.

### **Netted Garments in the Middle Kingdom**

The first female statue represented wearing the netted dress in the Middle Kingdom. It is displayed in the Egyptian Museum JE 46725. It was discovered at the tomb of royal chief steward Meketra at Deir El-Bahari. The statue dated back to the late of 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty or early of 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. It represents a female offering bearer carrying a wicker basket with four containers of a wine over her head and holding a duck in her right hand.<sup>41</sup> She is wearing a lozenge pattern dress in polychrome beadwork (beaded

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<sup>38</sup> E. Riefstahl, *Patterned Textiles in Pharaonic Egypt*,1944,6.

<sup>39</sup> E. Riefstahl, *Patterned Textiles in Pharaonic Egypt*,1944,11.

<sup>40</sup> R. M. Hall, “Garments in the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology”,1982,38-39.

<sup>41</sup> A. Bongioanni & M. s. Croce, *The Illustrated Guide to The Egyptian Museum in Cairo*, The American University in Cairo, Egypt, 2001, 453.

netted dress) with two shoulder straps, it is one of several examples of beaded netted garments discovered in figurative art from ancient Egypt (Figure 6).<sup>42</sup>



Figure 6: A statue of female offering bearer. Source:

<https://www.globalegyptianmuseum.org/large.aspx?img=images/EMC/658-2-EM-3-449-800x800%5B1%5D.jpg> (Accessed on 15/8/2023).

Another female offering bearer statue is displayed in the Louvre Museum NO. E 12029. It dated back to the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. It was discovered in the tomb of Nakht<sup>43</sup> at Asyut<sup>44</sup>. The female offering bearer stands with her left leg advanced. She holds a basket over her head with her left hand while the other hand holds a goose (Figure 7).

She wears a long tight white fitted dress with one strap<sup>45</sup> wrapped several times around her body<sup>46</sup>, exposed her breasts and short netted skirt of red, blue, and black beads over her dress.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> D. Spizzichino, "Biography in Ancient Egypt: Bead-Nets", 2022, 18.

<sup>43</sup> The tomb of Nakht NO.7 is situated in the necropolis of Asyut in its western mountain. This site was known from the Old Kingdom to the Roman period. M. E. Chassinat & C. Palanque, *Une Campagne de Fouilles dans la Nécropole d'Assiout*, in *MIFAO 24*, 1911.

<sup>44</sup> G. V. Eastwood, *Studies in Textile and Costume History*, 1993, 91.

<sup>45</sup> J. E. Breasted, *Egyptian Servants Statues*, Pantheon books, USA, 1948, 64.

<sup>46</sup> G. V. Eastwood, *Studies in Textile and Costume History*, 1993, 91.

<sup>47</sup> E. Riefstahl, *Patterned textiles in Pharaonic Egypt*, 1944, 11; J.H. Breasted, *Egyptian servants*, Pantheon books, USA, 1984, 64; M. E. Chassinat & C. Palanque, *Une Campagne de Fouilles dans la Nécropole d'Assiout*, in *MIFAO 24*, 1911, 30.

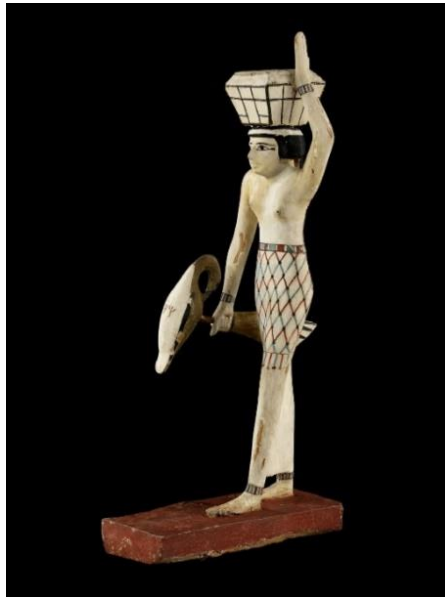


Figure 7: A female offering bearer is wearing a beaded netted garment. Source <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010010183> (Accessed on 10/8/2023).

This third statue was discovered in the tomb Nakht (NO.7) at Asyut<sup>48</sup>. It dated back to the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. It is displayed in Egyptian Museum J.E 36290<sup>49</sup>. It represents a female offering bearer standing with her left leg advanced and holding a box above her head with her left hand while the other hand carrying a goose. She wears a long tight fitted robe with one shoulder strap exposed her breast. She wears a net skirt of red, blue, and black beads above her dress as a draped overskirt<sup>50</sup>. It is covered the left side of her hip leaving the other hip covered only by the tonic. It is fixed on the hips by a belt decorated with squares in the same alternating colors as the netted garment (Figure 8).<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> J. E. Breasted, *Egyptian Servants Statues*, 1948, 63.

<sup>49</sup> B. Porter & R. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Relief and Painting*, Vol IV, Griffith Institute, Oxford, 1968, 266.

<sup>50</sup> J. E. Breasted, *Egyptian Servants Statues*, 1948, 63.

<sup>51</sup>E. Riefstahl, *Patterned textiles in Pharaonic Egypt*,1944,11; M. E. Chassinat & C. Palanque, *Une Campagne de Fouilles dans la Nécropole d'Assiout*,1911,33-34.



Figure 8: A female offering bearer is wearing a beaded netted garment. Source: M. E. Chassinat, C. Palanque, *Une Campagne de Fouilles dans la Nécropole d'Assiout*, in *MIFAO 24*, 1911, Pl. IX.

A stela of Nit-Ptah, it is displayed in the Egyptian Museum JE 45625. It dated back to the end of the Middle Kingdom. It was discovered at the Theban necropolis of Assasif.<sup>52</sup> This stela depicted members of the family; two men and two women (Figure 9).<sup>53</sup>

The woman in the middle, between the two men, who named Seni is wearing a lozenges netted dress decorated with colored beads in the shape of the net with two straps.<sup>54</sup>

Spizzichino claimed that the netted garment was only made for funerary functions or used during daily life by Egyptian woman.<sup>55</sup>

The type of this stela is a funerary stela, so the researcher agrees with Spizzichino, it seemed that the beaded netted garment was worn during funerary rituals such as the processional offering parades.

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<sup>52</sup> A. Bongioanni & M. s. Croce, *The Illustrated Guide to The Egyptian Museum in Cairo*, 2001,107.

<sup>53</sup> D. Spizzichino, "Biography in Ancient Egypt: Bead-Nets",2022,18.

<sup>54</sup> A. Bongioanni & M. s. Croce, *The illustrated Guide to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo*,2001, 107.

<sup>55</sup> D. Spizzichino, "Biography in Ancient Egypt: Bead-Nets",2022, 20.

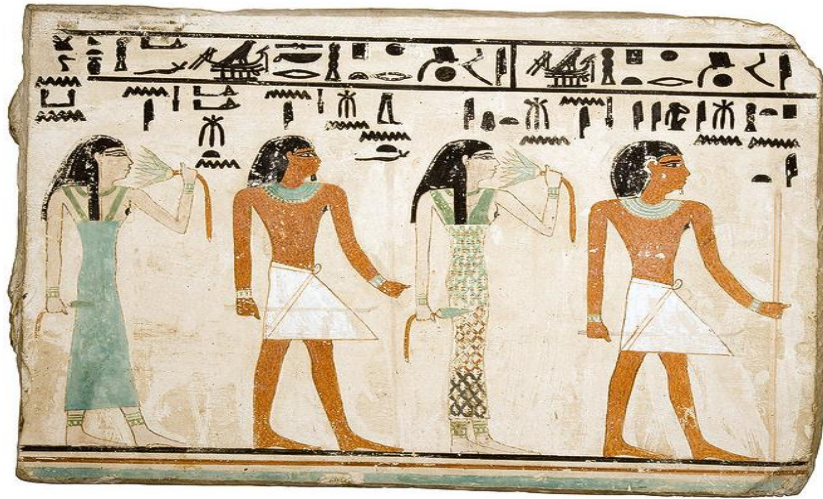


Figure 9: A stela of Nit-Ptah

Source: <https://www.globalegyptianmuseum.org/large.aspx?img=images/EMC/EM-S3-0114-9823-800x800.jpg> (Accessed on 15/8/2023).

A netted garment is depicted in a scene on the southern wall in the tomb of Amenemhat (NO.2) at Beni Hassan. The scene is showing the wife of Amenemhat seated on a chair in front of an offering table. She is represented wearing a beaded netted garment with one shoulder strap (Figure 10).

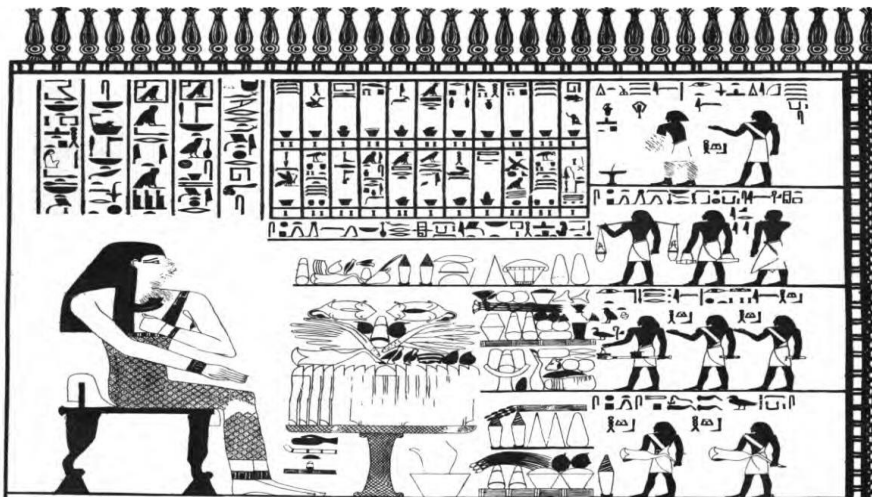


Figure 10: A scene from the tomb of Amenemhat. Source: P. E. Newperry, *Beni Hassan I*, Egypt Exploration Fund, London, 1893, pl XVIII.

Paddle dolls<sup>56</sup> found in the tombs dating from the late 6<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, but it flourished during the Middle Kingdom from the late of 11<sup>th</sup> to early of 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.<sup>57</sup> They wear beadwork dresses with patterns in red, yellow, and black with hair clearly made of strings of mud-beads and faience on surviving examples.<sup>58</sup> These patterns feature checks, lozenges, and stripes (plain or decorated with diagonal lines).<sup>59</sup>

The origin of the paddle dolls probably from Nubia and Winlock suggested that they represented dancing girls and indeed Nubia was a popular source of these performers.<sup>60</sup> They are like the modern Nubian dolls as well as how their hair resembles that of women in certain regions of modern-day Nubia.<sup>61</sup>

Paddle dolls were made by craftsmen associated with Deir El-Bahari and they distributed to persons who wanted to associate themselves with the khener dancers.<sup>62</sup>

The following paddle doll (Figure 11) was discovered in tomb MMA 813<sup>63</sup>. It is displayed in the Metropolitan Museum NO.31.3.38 and dated back to the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The body of the paddle doll is decorated with a lozenges pattern as a dress with cross bands depicted on the back of the paddle as basic strings of beads.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Winlock described Paddle dolls as "They are barbarous looking things, whittled out of thin paddles of wood, gaudily painted, and with great made of strings of little beads of black mud ending in elongated globs". Paddle dolls probably symbolized fertility and rebirth in ancient Egypt. H.E. Winlock, *Excavations at Deir El Bahri: 1911: 1931*, The Macmillan Company, London,1942, 207.

<sup>57</sup> C. Rose, *Change and Continuity: Birth Practices from The Middle Kingdom through The New Kingdom*, PhD Thesis published, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Pennsylvania, 2020,125; E.F. Morris, "Paddle Dolls and Performance", in *JARCE* 47,2011,72.

<sup>58</sup> C. Rose, *Change and Continuity*, 2020,125.

<sup>59</sup> E. Riefstahl, *Patterned textiles in Pharaonic Egypt*, 1944,12.

<sup>60</sup> H.E. Winlock, *Excavations at Deir El Bahri: 1911: 1931*, The Macmillan Company, London,1942, 207.

<sup>61</sup> E. Riefstahl, *Patterned textiles in Pharaonic Egypt*, 1944,12.

<sup>62</sup> E.F. Morris, "Paddle Dolls and Performance", in *JARCE* 47,2011,73.

<sup>63</sup> This tomb is located in Thebes at Assasif, the abbreviation MMA refers to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The tomb was given this abbreviation because this work was a part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's excavation.

<sup>64</sup> C. Rose, *Change and Continuity*,2020,125.

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Figure 11: A paddle doll with lozenges netted dress. Source:

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/556667>

(Accessed on 17/8/2023).

### **The Significance of Wearing Netted Garments in Ancient Egypt**

Spizzichino suggested that the netted garments were a celebratory clothing during the occasions as the Feast of the Valley or the Festival of Osiris to stimulate the senses through movement, sound, and scents. Women wearing netted dresses may have stimulated sight by their bodies, which would be seen if there was no textile beneath the net, and hearing by the alleged rattling sound they generated when moving.<sup>65</sup>

The festival of Osiris which was recorded on the Middle Kingdom monuments and texts, occurred on the fourth month of inundation, from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> day, when the Nile drained, and crops began to appear.<sup>66</sup>

One of the rituals of this festival was dancing, many references to dancing indicate that a ritual dance of some kind was performed, probably to commemorate the victories of Horus and Thoth.<sup>67</sup>

It seemed that the beaded netted garment used as a musical instrument because it composed of several beads that give a percussion rhythm when the wearer moved or

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<sup>65</sup> D. Spizzichino, "Biography in Ancient Egypt: Bead-Nets", 2022, 8.

<sup>66</sup> E. Teeter, *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt*, Cambridge University Press, USA, 2011, 180-181.

<sup>67</sup> E. Teeter, *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt*, 2011, 180-181.

danced.<sup>68</sup> It's probable that women only wore the beaded netted dress for a short time and on specific occasions throughout the year.<sup>69</sup>

The beautiful feast of the valley was celebrated only in Thebes, it was associated with funerary rituals. The Egyptians thought that the cliffs on the west bank of the Nile contained enormous underground realms inhabited by deceased people and guarded by goddess Hathor, who was the necropolis's guardian.<sup>70</sup>

The beautiful feast of the valley occurred on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of summer and lasted for two weeks.<sup>71</sup> The first record of this festival dated back to the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and became more popular in the New Kingdom specially in the Ramesside period.<sup>72</sup>

The festival started from the east bank of the Nile at Karnak temples, the statue of god Amun left his sanctuary, placed in its portable bark and carried on the shoulders of the priests to visit the temples of deceased kings in the west bank of Thebes<sup>73</sup>. The passage from east to west symbolized the transition from life to the land of the dead.<sup>74</sup>

It was believed that Amun, in his ithyphallic form, spent the night with Hathor, a union indicating re-creation and rejuvenation. The sexual union between the couple was symbolized the renewal. Therefore, the audience participate in this festival, and they wished the rebirth of their deceased and the same pleasant destiny for themselves.<sup>75</sup>

The Egyptians believed that these celebrations transcended the line separating the worlds of the living and the dead<sup>76</sup> through the senses of taste, smell, and music to reach the deceased and bring him or her to participate in the festivals. The stimulation of the scents was happened by large quantities of wine and beer resulting in a euphoric state that brought the living closer to the dead.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>G. U. Torres, "Princess Nefertibet and Her Bead Net Dress", Academia, 2020, available at: [https://www.academia.edu/44848916/PRINCESS\\_NEFERTIBET\\_AND\\_HER\\_BEAD\\_NET\\_DRESS](https://www.academia.edu/44848916/PRINCESS_NEFERTIBET_AND_HER_BEAD_NET_DRESS). Accessed on (5/2/2024),17.

<sup>69</sup> D. Spizzichino, "Biography in Ancient Egypt: Bead-Nets",2022,6.

<sup>70</sup> E. Teeter, *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt*, 2011, 199.

<sup>71</sup>E. Teeter, *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt*, 2011, 199.

<sup>72</sup>H. E. Anwar, "The Religious Festivals in Ancient Egypt", in *EHTH* 26. 2 (1), 2019, 14.

<sup>73</sup> H. E. Anwar, "The Religious Festivals in Ancient Egypt", 2019,14.

<sup>74</sup> E. Teeter, *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt*, 2011, 200-202.

<sup>75</sup> E. Teeter, *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt*, 2011,206,207.

<sup>76</sup> D. Spizzichino, "Biography in Ancient Egypt: Bead-Nets",2022,6.

<sup>77</sup> E. Teeter, *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt*, 2011, 209.



The souls of the deceased were summoned through the joyous noise of the procession and by Amun's presence. The dead were physically represented by statues that could be taken out of the tomb and placed among the living participants.<sup>78</sup>

During the festival the musical bands spread out in the necropolis visiting the tombs of individuals, one of the rituals of this festival women shook their beaded necklaces *mnzt* and clanged their metallic rattles. While male musicians clapped and chanted, a mesmerizing rhythm reverberated in the tombs.<sup>79</sup>

The netted dresses were worn probably in this festival by females, it related to goddess Hathor because of the sound of beads rattling that is similar to the sound of Hathor's sistrum.<sup>80</sup>

Spizzichino mentioned that the beaded netted dresses embodied the physical means that was used by the ancient Egyptian to communicate with the world of the god, the purpose was to fill the gap between the human and the supernatural sphere.<sup>81</sup>

## Conclusion

*i3dt* was a garment in the shape of geometric pattern such as squares, lozenges, or diamond pattern to imitate the shape of the net. It was worn by two ways either above a linen garment or without any garment.

*i3dt* garment has two types, linen netted garment and beaded netted garment. Netted garment was known from the Early Dynastic period to Roman era. It was worn by females, males and some deities such as Osiris, Isis and Nephtys.

The earliest mention of *i3dt* garment was in Westcar's papyrus, king Sneferu brought twenty women and ordered them to wear the netted garment to amuse him and rowing in the king's lake.

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<sup>78</sup> E. Teeter, *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt*, 2011, 208.

<sup>79</sup> E. Teeter, *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt*, 2011, 210.

<sup>80</sup>G. U. Torres, "Princess Nefertibet and Her Bead Net Dress", *Academia*, 2020, available at: [https://www.academia.edu/44848916/PRINCESS\\_NEFERTIBET\\_AND\\_HER\\_BEAD\\_NET\\_DRESS](https://www.academia.edu/44848916/PRINCESS_NEFERTIBET_AND_HER_BEAD_NET_DRESS). Accessed on (5/2/2024),3.

<sup>81</sup>D. Spizzichino, "Biography in Ancient Egypt: Bead-Nets",2022, 26.

The researcher assumed that the dress of Westcar papyrus was a linen dress because it was transparent, clinging on the body and consequently, it became more attractive and reflect its symbolism of seduction.

This paper investigates certain models of female offering bearers during the Middle Kingdom, they wear beaded *i3dt* garments such as the statue is displayed in the Egyptian Museum JE 46725, the statue is displayed in Louvre Museum NO. E 12029 and the statue was discovered in the tomb Nakht (NO.7) at Assuit.

*i3dt* garment appeared on some artifacts as the stela of Nit-Ptah which is displayed in the Egyptian Museum JE 45625 and paddle dolls such as the one is displayed in the Metropolitan Museum NO. 31.3.38.

The linen netted dress was worn by both males and females and used during daily life in ancient Egypt. The Majority of beaded netted dress was worn by women at specific occasions due to its fragility to be worn daily.

The beaded netted garment was worn for funerary functions specially during the processional offering parades. It was represented in Middle Kingdom female offering bearers statues and in the stela of Nit-Ptah. Receiving offerings was a part of this procession consequently, the wife of Amenemhat in (tomb NO.2 at Beni Hassan) was represented wearing the same dress.

The netted garments were worn by women from different classes, the low class women were represented as female offering bearers while elite woman as Seni in Nit-Ptah's stela and the wife of Amenemhat (tomb NO.2 at Beni Hassan).

*i3dt* beaded garment was worn during the festivals by females to stimulate the senses through movement, sound, and scents. The research mentioned two festivals, the festival of Osiris and the feast of the valley.

The netted garments were worn probably in the festival of Osiris by dancers because the festival consisted of a dancing ritual to commemorate the victories of Horus and Thoth. It was used as a musical instrument in the festival.

On the other hand, the feast of the valley had certain rituals which started with the sexual union between god Amun and goddess Hathor. The feast of the valley was connected to goddess Hathor for many reasons, firstly goddess Hathor was the guardian

of the necropolis of the west bank of Thebes, and she had some scenes represented her in the cow form emerged from the hills. Secondly the visitors used the sistrum of Hathor and mn3t collars to rattle during their songs. Finally, the women participants were wearing probably the beaded netted garment during their songs and dancing.

The researcher suggested that the beaded netted garments were worn in the feast of the valley because of the sound of beads rattling such as the rythm of Hathor's sistrum.

*i3dt* garment was referred to fertility and seduction in ancient Egypt. The idea of seduction is obvious in the story of Sneferu with the twenty women. *i3dt* garment is related to goddess Hathor who was the goddess of fertility and music in ancient Egypt.

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## أردية النساء *i3dt* في الدولة الوسطى

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الكلمات الدالة	الملخص العربي
الرداء <i>i3dt</i>	ظهرت العديد من الملابس في مصر القديمة ومنها الرداء <i>i3dt</i> وهو أحد
الدولة الوسطى	الملابس الأنيقة التي تم ارتداؤه من قبل السيدات والرجال. مُثل الرداء <i>i3dt</i>
حاملات القرابين	على حوائط المقابر والتوابيت والتماثيل واللوحات وايضا وُجد كقطع أثرية
نمط المعينات	دفنت مع الملوك أو كبار الموظفين. ظهر الرداء <i>i3dt</i> منذ بداية عصر
الخرز	الأسرات حتى العصر الروماني. ارتدت حاملات قرابين الدولة الوسطى
	الرداء <i>i3dt</i> بأشكال مختلفة كفستان ضيق طويل شبكي من الخرز بحمالة
	واحدة او حمالتين وايضا على شكل تتورة قصيرة شبكية من الخرز فوق
	فستان ابيض طويل. الرداء <i>i3dt</i> له العديد من الأغراض بداية من الوظيفة
	الأساسية وهو غطاء وتزيين الجسم إلى الوظيفة الرمزية وهو حماية الجسم.
	تعتمد هذه الورقة البحثية على المنهج التحليلي الوصفي لتحديد التعريف
	الخاص بالرداء <i>i3dt</i> وتصنيف أنواع الرداء <i>i3dt</i> وفحص نماذج من
	الأردية <i>i3dt</i> من عصر الدولة الوسطى ومناقشة أسباب ارتداء الرداء
	<i>i3dt</i> خلال مناسبات معينة في مصر القديمة. توصلت الورقة البحثية إلى
	نتيجة وهي أن الرداء <i>i3dt</i> تم ارتداؤه من قبل السيدات في بعض
	الاحتفالات لتحفيز الحواس من خلال الحركة والصوت والروائح.