The Artistic Features of the Individuals' Cloaks in Ancient Egypt

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Abstract:
Fashion, clothing and also decorations are important elements to determine the rank of people and the social, cultural and political situation of Egypt during its different historical periods. A cloak is one of the famous and ancient types of costume in ancient Egypt that is wearing by all Egyptian categories. It is also used by women and men, kings and privates. This paper focuses on the cloaks of the individuals. This research aims at determine the various kinds and define the different designs and decorations of the individuals' cloaks. Also, know the foreign influence and development of these cloaks. It defines the aim of wearing cloaks and the positions of individuals who wear them. The cloak is a kind of a cloth that was found from the beginning of the ancient Egyptian history, so there are a lot of example of reliefs and statues.

Key words: Cloak, knotted, Wrap-round, individuals, embroidery, weft – fringe

Introduction:
Egyptian clothing was filled with a variety of colors. Adorned with precious gems and jewels, the fashions of the ancient Egyptians were made for not only beauty but also comfort.

The Ancient Egyptians wore clothing made from linen. The Egyptians made linen from the fibers of the flax plant. Workers would spin the fibers into thread to be woven into linen fabric using looms. Wealthy people wore very soft linen clothes made of thin fibers. While, poor people and peasants wore rougher linen clothing made from thicker fibers. Clothing during Ancient Egypt was fairly simple. Very little sewing was done to items as most clothing was wrapped around and then held on with a belt. Also, the styles were generally the same for both the rich and the poor.

The men wore knee-length shirts, loincloths, or kilts made of linen. Kilts were made from a rectangular piece of linen that was folded around the body and tied at the waist by belt. Those garments have certain features as sometimes, they were worn over other clothes for protection and decorative reasons. The priests, viziers and certain officials wore long white robes that had a strap over one shoulder and wore leopard skins garment over. Women typically wore a long wrap-around dress that went down to their ankles. Dresses varied in style that may or may not have sleeves. In different periods, women wore simple sheath dresses, which consisted of a rectangular piece of cloth folded once, sewn
down, and configured in a tube shape. Sometimes beads or feathers were used to decorate dresses.

A Cloak is one of the basic types of garment\(^1\). The cloak is a large rectangular or square piece of cloth that is either wrapped around the body or worn over another garment. It was used for warmth, protection and as on a large scale by the high ranks\(^2\). Usually, the fashion of costumes transferred from kings and queens to the individuals, but individuals' cloaks appeared earlier than the royal ones\(^3\).

During the Old Kingdom men and women largely wore simple white garments. Daily dress was a simple rectangular piece of linen wrapped around the body and tucked in the waste\(^4\). There are two types of cloaks that appeared from the Pre-Dynastic Period until the Late Period.

**Wrap-round cloak**  
This kind of cloaks is a piece of cloth wrapped around the body in different forms. It is the most spread type in ancient Egypt. It may be either worn on both shoulders, over one shoulder or wrapped all the body. The following examples expose the different ways of the wrap-round cloaks:

- The first way is a simple design as the cloak is wrapping the whole body.

There are some examples of pre-dynastic figures of women who are showing wrapped round thick cloaks covering the whole body and arms like the ivory figure of a woman wearing plain cloak (Fig. 1)\(^5\). There is another example of a woman wearing a short cloak with simple ornaments (Fig. 2)\(^6\). It is considered as earliest example of an individual's

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\(^3\) Pedrini, *GM* 87, 1985, p. 63, C.f. fig.1 and note.3


\(^5\) Figure-Hierakonpolis- Ivory- Ashmoulien museum (E. 326); Quibell, *Hierakonpolis* I, p. 7, pl. IX-X(8); Vogelsang–Eastwood, *Pharaonic Egyptian Clothing*, p. 160.

\(^6\) It was found in Hierakonpolis and it is made of Ivory; Quibell, *Hierakonpolis* I, pl. IX-X (11); Vogelsang–Eastwood, *Pharaonic Egyptian Clothing*, p. 160 (note 3).
cloak. That type appeared in the Middle Kingdom in a scene from the tomb of Djhuti-hotep at Bersheh, who is wearing a pleated cloak covered all the body (Fig. 3). 

- In the second way, this kind of cloak is worn over another garment or a kilt covering both shoulders and overlap from the front.

The statue of princess Nofret (Fig. 4) that is represented her wearing long dress with two wide straps on the shoulders and covered by a cloak. This way of wearing spread in the Old Kingdom.

There is another statue of a priest called “Ankh” from the Old Kingdom (Fig. 5) wrapped by a cloak in the same method. He is represented seated on a chair wearing a short cloak of panther covering the both shoulders over a short kilt that appeared from beneath. One of his hands is resting on his thigh and the other on the belly.

- The wrapped–round cloak which covered one shoulder is widespread in the Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom.

This manner of wearing that cloak is clearly shown in the statue of the priest Khunum-Hetep from 13th Dynasty (Fig. 6) who is seated on a chair wearing a cloak covering one shoulder. The right hand is on the legs while the left resting on the chest and it appeared from the cloak.

There is another example of a basalt figure of a seated nobleman from Middle Kingdom (12th or 13th Dynasty), (Circa 1843-1730 B.C). He is wearing shoulder-length sloping wig, his right hand placed downwards on his lap, his left hand placed on his chest emerging from his fringed cloak which drapes over his left shoulder and back (Fig. 7).

9 Linden Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (AKG 1378282, Inv.no, Ast 18), Old Kingdom, Grey granite; E. STAEHELIN, Untersuchungen zur Ägyptischen Tracht im Alten Reich, Berlin, 1966, p. 58, fig. 91; www. Akg-images.com.
11 Christie’s Antiquities (lots 108-150). The property of a European collector provenance: the majority of this collection (lots 108-150) was formed in the late 19th and early 20th century. https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-1894311
This method is also represented in the statue of Djedhot-Iufankh from the Middle Kingdom who is shown seated wearing a cloak cover his right shoulder and his left hand rested on the chest (Fig. 8)\textsuperscript{12}.

- This kind of cloak we're going through, may wrap around the body covered one shoulder but here the surplus of the fabrics thrown back without tucked in.

There is an ostraca from the New kingdom shows the door keeper of the temple Pehoren-Khonsu wearing a pleated cloak wrapped several time around the body covering right shoulder only and the excess of the cloak is fall down the back (Fig. 9)\textsuperscript{13}. There is another example about the same method which is depicted on a scene of a man figure on chariot (Fig. 10)\textsuperscript{14}.

- Also the cloak is wrapped around the body several times covering the whole body and the cloak tip is catching by hand. This style of wearing a cloak spread widely in the Middle kingdom\textsuperscript{15}.

There is an example from the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Intermediate Period wearing a cloak in the same style. This statue representing “Anti-Nakht” seated on a chair wearing wrapped-round cloak in the same way (Fig. 11)\textsuperscript{16}. There is another example of Red-brown quartzite statue of a high official seated with legs folded under him, and wearing long plain cloak clasped in the right hand, the left hand extended against breast, flat (Fig. 12)\textsuperscript{17}.


\textsuperscript{13} Ostra-CAse-Thebes–New kingdom; WINGLOCK H. E., “The Egyptian Expedition 1927-1928 “, BMMA 23, 1928, p. 24, fig. 28; VOGELSANG–EASTWOOD, Pharaonic Egyptian Clothing, p. 163.

\textsuperscript{14} Scene from 18\textsuperscript{th} dynasty now in the Metropolitan museum of Art (MMA 1917.7.194.2297); VOGELSANG–EASTWOOD, Pharaonic Egyptian Clothing, p. 164.


\textsuperscript{16} It was found in Middle Egypt- 13 Dynasty- Quartzite- Geneve Musee (inv.nr.26035); J. L. CHAPPAZ, Ecriture Egyptienne, Geneva, 1986, p. 20, nr. 10; J. L. CHAPPAZ, Pharaonen und Fremde Dynastien im Dunkle, Wien, 1994, p. 87, nr. 4; PM VIII, 1999, p. 376.

\textsuperscript{17} This statue was found at Abydos –Middle kingdom- 13\textsuperscript{th} Dynasty- Brooklyn museum (62.77.1); SIMON CONNOR, Middle Kingdom Studies 1, p. 56; FISCHER, Egyptian Studies III, fig. 15.
Another statue of the high official Nemtyhotep shows all the characteristics of the upper-elite sculpture of the Late Middle Kingdom. He is also represented wearing a cloak in the same way (Fig. 13)\(^{18}\) as well as the statue of a high official (Fig. 14)\(^ {19}\).

In the New Kingdom the wrapped-round cloak became complicated and the way of wrapping around the body became more difficult. It is also characterized by overlapping decorations of several pleats and folds. This kind started in the reign of Amenhotep III and spread in the 19\(^{th}\) and 20\(^{th}\) Dynasties. There is an example of a group of men from the New Kingdom wearing more complicated cloaks that are wrapped around the body several times and left one of the shoulders naked (Fig. 15)\(^{20}\).

During the Late Period, the decorations of the cloaks decreased and their designs imitated those of the Middle Kingdom and some statues were usurped from the Middle Kingdom. The cloaks of panther skin which are used by the priests speared in this time more than any other cloaks. As an example of a priest and his son who are wearing a cloak of panther skin covering one shoulder (Fig. 16)\(^{21}\).

**Knotted cloak**

The knotted-cloak is known from a scene in a tomb of Khafkhufu\(^ {22}\) that has a scene shows groups of men holding three different kinds of cloaks of different sizes with bands at the top to knot (Fig. 17). Concerning the way of wearing the knotted-cloaks, some scholars suggested the steps of using in demonstrative figure (Fig. 18). Eastwood shows three steps of wrapped this cloaks around the body and knotted on one of the shoulders\(^ {23}\). There are a lot of examples showing the knotted cloaks of the individuals and its different designs.

- This cloak was worn in a very simple way covering the body except one shoulder and knotted on the other.

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\(^{18}\)Statue- 13\(^{th}\) dynasty – Quartzite– Berline Museum (ÄM 15700); SIMON CONNOR, *Middle Kingdom Studies* 1, p. 57, fig. 1-2; FISCHER, *Egyptian Studies* III, fig. 16.

\(^ {19}\)Statue of an high official- Cairo Museum (JE 345572)

\(^ {20}\)A scene of tomb of Horemheb-Thebes–New Kingdom
A. BRACK and A. Barak, *Das Grab des Horemheb*. Theben Nr. 78, Mainz and Rhein, 1980, Taf. 63c


\(^ {22}\)Double statue of Montoemhate and his son- late period- 25\(^{th}\) Dynasty- Cairo Museum (CG. 42241).


A scene from the tomb of Mersyankh III; depicted a princess with panther skin cloak with an elaborated knotted on the right shoulder (Fig. 19)\(^{24}\). There is another example represents a scene for a man wearing a stripped cloak with different colours knotted on the right shoulder (Fig. 20)\(^{25}\).

The priests and high officials are often shown wearing the knotted cloaks of panther skin over a kilt during performing rituals. There is a scene showing a priest in a standing attitude wearing a knotted cloak over a kilt. The cloak has a clear knot at the right shoulder with two straps. It is decorated by a head of leopard (Fig. 21)\(^{26}\).

There is a scene from the tomb of Menna at Thebes representing a shepherd wearing simply knotted-cloak simply wrapped around the body tied on the right shoulder. The cloak may be worn over a kilt as there are traces of white cloth around the waist (Fig. 22)\(^{27}\).

During the New Kingdom, a complicated kind of knotted-cloak appeared as the way of wrapping around the body became more difficult\(^{28}\). This is clearly shown in a scene from a tomb Nakhtamun at Thebes that represents a group of men wearing knotted cloak which wrapped the body in a complicated way forming a lot of fold with knot on one of the shoulders (Fig. 23)\(^{29}\).

**The decorations of the cloaks**

The decorations of the individuals’ cloaks varied among embroidery in the fabric, line of inscriptions, and simple drawings or ornaments on the cloak. The embroidery of the individuals’ cloaks mostly concentrated on the edges. There are different styles of decorations appeared:

**Embroidery style:** -

The cloaks are developed from the Middle Kingdom as it became more beautiful and have decorative edges. This style has a decorative band that is made by relief stitches

\(^{26}\) E. STAHELIN, *Untersuchungen zur ägyptischen Tracht im Alten Reich*, Berlin, 1966, fig. 40.
\(^{28}\) Cf. note 17, p. 6
\(^{29}\) Tomb of Nankht Amon-Thebes –New Kingdom; VOGELSANG – EASTWOOD, *Pharaonic Egyptian Clothing*, fig. 9:15.
swing at the edges of the cloaks\textsuperscript{30}. It clearly shown in the statue of a scribe wearing a distinctive knotted cloak in its decoration and the way of wearing. The cloak is covering all the body but the left shoulder is naked and ornamented by a decorative band at the edges (Fig. 24)\textsuperscript{31}. There is another example of statuette from the Middle Kingdom that shows with a cloak has embroidery edges (Fig. 25)\textsuperscript{32}.

**Weft–fringe:**

It is series of compact loop which extended from the selvedge of the cloth. The fringe is created during the weaving of the cloth on a ground loom. The weft–fringe is made during the weaving of the cloak. This style of decoration is located at the end of the cloak taking pointed shape\textsuperscript{33}. This decoration is shown in the statue of one of a mayor called Rehuankh who is represented seated on a chair wearing wrapped-round cloak decorated at the bottom by weft-fringe (Fig. 26)\textsuperscript{34}. There is another example with same decoration. A statue represented high official wearing white wrapped-round cloak covering one shoulder and ornamented by weft-fringe (Fig. 27)\textsuperscript{35}.

**Folded Kerchief:**

It is a decorative style appeared in the Middle and New Kingdom. This style is a band covered the edges of the cloak giving decorative shape around the neck. There is an example presents this style of decoration; the statue of a priest or high official seated on a chair wearing wrapped-round cloak decorated by folded kerchief around the neck (Fig. 28)\textsuperscript{36}.

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\textsuperscript{31}Statue – Middle Kingdom –British museum (36441); M. STEAD, *Egyptian life: British Museum*, 1986, fig. 66.

\textsuperscript{32}Statuette- Middle Kingdom-13\textsuperscript{th} Dynasty -Limestone- Metropolitan Museum (MMA 66.123.1); SIMON CONNOR, *Middle Kingdom Studies* 1, p. 58, fig. 23; FISCHER, *Egyptian Studies* III, p. 112.


\textsuperscript{34}Seated statue- Quartzite- Middle kingdom, British Museum (EA. 1785); N. STRUDWICK, *Masterpieces of Ancient Egypt*, A.U.C, 2006, p. 106.


The inscriptions:
By the New Kingdom, the cloaks are decorated and inscribed by vertical column of inscriptions. There are a lot of examples concerning this regard. The statue of Sennmut that is shown wearing wrap-round cloak covered the body and decorated by a column of inscriptions at the middle of the cloak giving the names and the title of Sennmut and also fringes at the end of the cloak (Fig. 29).  

The pleated cloaks:
They appeared from the Middle Kingdom and continued up to the end of the Egyptian history. The cloak in the Middle Kingdom has simple strips like the scene in the tomb of Aakh-Hetep who is represented standing wearing a long knotted cloak characterized by its decoration as it is ornamented with narrow continued horizontal stripes. The cloak is worn over another garment as its edge appeared below (Fig. 30).

The complicated pleated cloaks either wrapped-round or Knotted are starting to appear from the New Kingdom that was characterized by overlapping decorations of several pleats and folds. By the Late Period, the ornaments of the cloaks were very rare but those made of panther skin were widely spread and used more by the priests. There are some simple motives carving on the cloaks like the head of leopard and simple strips.

Conclusion
The individuals’ cloaks appeared from the Pre-Dynastic Period and continued to the end of the Egyptian history. The cloak was worn by both women and men as it imparts more prestige and dignity but those worn by women are more limited than those worn by the men. The men held more offices than the women; thus there was much variety in the men's wardrobe than in that of the women.


38 Cf. p. 3, fig. 3.


40 Cf. p. 6, fig. 15 and p. 9, fig. 23

41 Cf. p. 7, fig. 16

42 CF. p. 7, fig. 20.
The main function of the individual cloaks was the protection and warmth. The cloaks also indicated the social rank and the jobs of the persons. Throughout the research, it is noticed that the cloaks were worn by all the categories of people but they were widely worn by the elite individuals. So, the cloaks mostly were worn by the priests, scribes, high officials, mayors as well as the princesses.

There are two basic sorts of cloaks wrap-round cloaks and knotted cloak. Every kind is either simple or complicated. They are worn by various manners that are depicted on the scenes and statues. There are numerous ways of wearing cloaks and this depends on the task at hand.

In the Old Kingdom the wrapped-round cloaks are spread more than the knotted. They are worn over another cloth covering both shoulders and they were used by women more than men.

In the Middle Kingdom, the individual's cloaks are spread significantly. The most common cloak draped over the body exposed one as this style of wearing cloaks granted more freedom of movements; so, it was worn mostly by door keeper, hunter, and chariot deriver.

Also the cloak is wrapped around the body several times covering the whole body and the cloak tip is catching by hand. This style is used widely in Middle Kingdom by the scribes and priests and high officials.

In the New Kingdom the wrapped-round and knotted cloak became complicated as it is characterized by overlapping decorations of several pleats and folds. This kind became common from the reign of Amenhotep III and spread in the 19th and 20th Dynasties. This style reflected the foreign influence on Egyptian art. This way of wrapping cloak or garment appeared for the first time in the statues of king Amenhotep III.

In the Late Period, the individual's cloaks lost their artistic charm and their decorations decreased because of the unstable political and economic situation of the country. The priestly cloak which is made of panther skin spread in this period.

The decorations of the individuals cloaks varied among fabric decorations with three different styles (Embroidery style, weft-fringes, folded Kerchiefs), inscriptions carved on the cloaks, simple motifs on the cloak and the pleated cloak that appeared in the New kingdom.
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السمات الفنية لعباءات الأفراد في مصر القديمة

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الملخص: الأزياء والملابس وكذلك الزينة اعتبرت من العناصر المهمة لتحديد مرتبة الناس وكذلك الوضع الاجتماعي والثقافي والسياسي لمصر خلال فترةها التاريخية المختلفة. وتعد العباءة من أشهر أنواع الأزياء في مصر القديمة والتي ترتديها جميع الفئات المصرية، كما أنها تستخدم من قبل النساء والرجال، والملوك والأفراد.

تتركز هذه الورقة البحثية على عباءات الأفراد ويعتبر هذا البحث إلى تحديد الأنواع والتصاميم والزخارف المختلفة لملابس الأفراد. وتتعرف أيضًا على التأثير الأجنبي في تطور هذه العباءات، وتحديد الهدف من ارتداء العباءة ومواعق الأفراد الذين يركبونها. والعباءة هي أحد أنواع الأزياء الذي تم العثور عليها منذ بداية التاريخ المصري القديم، لذلك هناك الكثير من الأمثلة على التأثير والتماثيل.

الكلمات الدالة: عباءة، معقودة، العباءات الملفوفة، أفراد، تطور، اللحمة