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**SOME REMARKS ON THE EVOLUTION
OF ROYAL TRIUMPHAL DRESS**

Regarding significance of many scenes with the participation of the king, the studies in the field of the royal iconography bear much importance. It is not easy to ascertain which variations of dress were worn by the king in particular scenes. Some years ago I have undertaken the description of some aspects of the royal iconography in the context of relationship between the pharaoh and Horus the Falcon¹. In the present paper, another characteristic royal dress is discussed in association with certain scenes, which had been appearing since the dawn of Egyptian history. The one is here in question to be called in due course a triumphal dress, a magnificent specimen of which comes from the jubilee kiosk of Senuseret I in Karnak (Fig. 4:a). This dress comprises a rather short tailed tunic, reaching well above the knees, hold up by a single shoulder strap and bordered along its uppermost edge with a band bearing the pattern of zigzag lines. Contrary to some views² I believe this dress to have consisted of a single piece of material. The tunic, pleated vertically³, is girdled with a belt decorated like the bordering hem. A flap of beadwork is fastened to the belt, partly covering a meshed overskirt. To the latter, an amulet in the shape of a swallow is attached. This garment, complemented by a necklace and bracelets, is worn by the king in the scene of his leading by Atum.

¹ T. Giza-Podgórski, *Royal plume dress of XVIII Dynasty*, MDAIK 40, 1984, p. 103 ff.

² H. Bonnet, *Die ägyptische Tracht bis zum Ende des Neuen Reiches* (UGAA, Vol. VII), Leipzig 1917, pp. 48—51.

³ R. Hall, *Egyptian Textiles* (Shire Egyptology, 4), Aylesbury 1986, p. 27 ff.

The dress introduced above seems to have been in vogue for a fairly long time already in the Middle Kingdom. Perhaps its archetype can be traced back as early as Narmer Palette (Fig. 1:a) where it is donned by the king clubbing

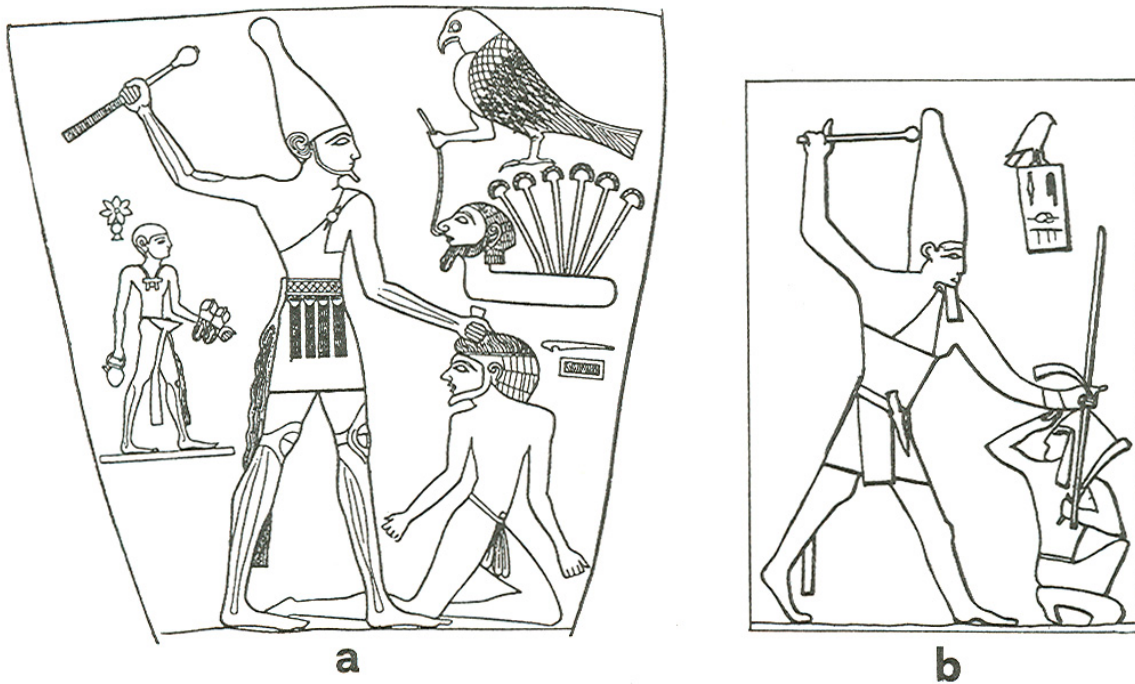


Fig. 1. *a* — king Narmer smiting his foe (reproduced from E. A. Wallis Budge, *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*, London 1934, p. 71); *b* — king Semerkhet in the triumphal scene (drawing after Aldred, *Egypt...*, Fig. 54)

his enemy in the assistance of a falcon. A similar dress, at least in its upper part, has king Scorpion in a scene of hoeing the earth on a mace-head from the Ashmolean Museum⁴. This dress seems also to appear on an ivory tablet of king Den (Pl. 5:f), and on his another tablet this king has a garment resembling in its upper part a schematized *Falkenjackede*, or maybe plain sashes are meant there⁵.

Somewhat later, this dress is worn in its classic form by king Semerkhet in the scene of slaying an enemy in a rock relief from Wadi Maghara (Fig. 1:b). Not always used the king to wear suchlike dress in the scenes of triumph over his foes. At times it happens to be a simple *shendyt*, as on an ivory tablet of Den⁶, in a relief from Wadi Maghara showing Snofru in this ritual scene⁷, in a limestone relief from the temple at Gebelein, where Mentuhotep II wearing

⁴ M. Lurker, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt*, London 1986, p. 64.

⁵ W. M. F. Petrie, *Abydos I. The Royal Tombs of the First Dynasty*, London 1900, Pl. XIV, 9.

⁶ C. Aldred, *Egypt to the End of the Old Kingdom*, London² 1984, Fig. 55.

⁷ M. Saleh, H. Sourouzian, *Das Ägyptische Museum Kairo. Offizieller Katalog*, Mainz 1986, No. 24.

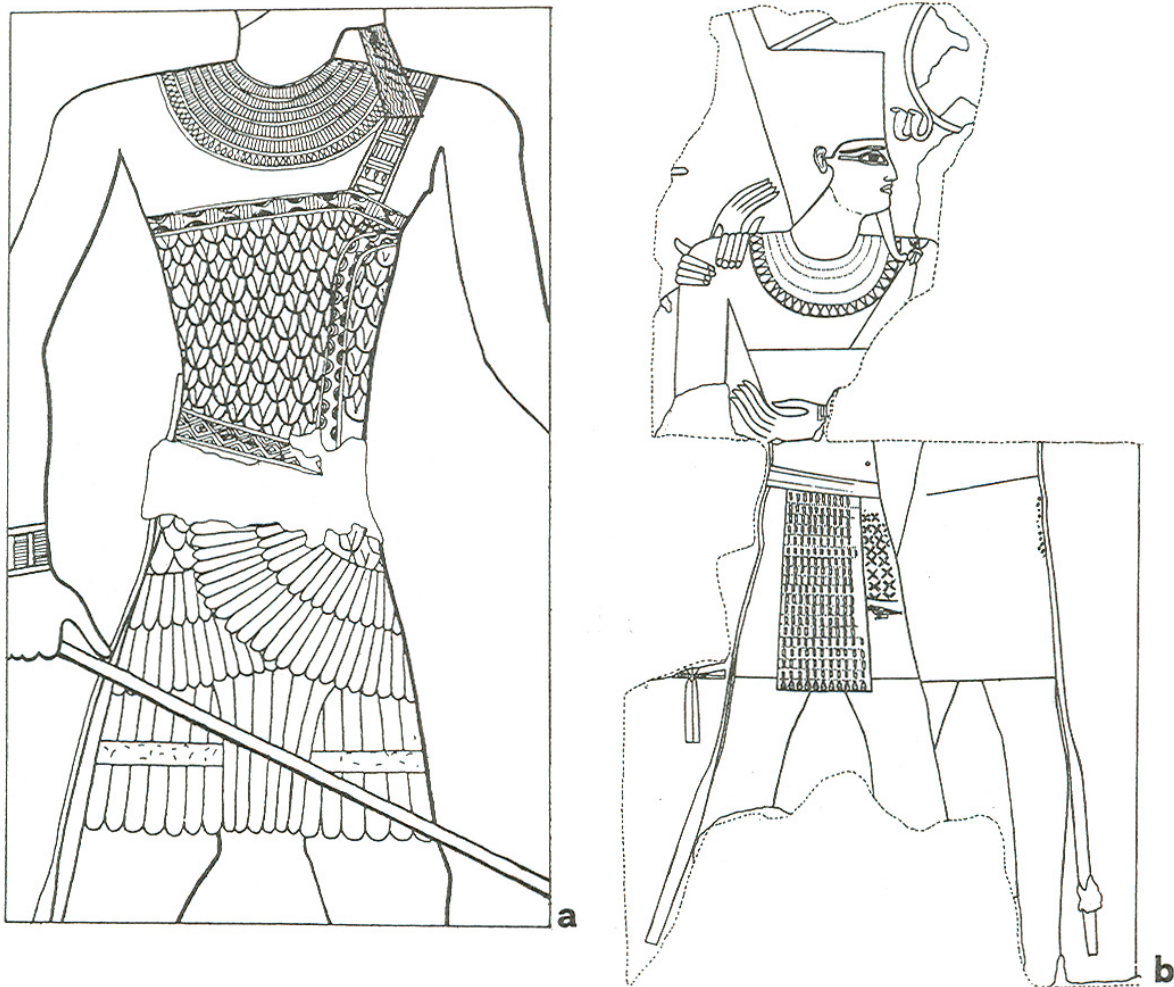


Fig. 2. *a* — Horus dress as worn by king Thotmes I. Alabaster sanctuary of Amenhotep I in Karnak (drawing after the author's photo); *b* — king Mentuhotep embraced by Montu (?). Fragment EA 1397, British Museum (drawing after Arnold, *Der Tempel des Königs Mentuhotep*, Pl. 16, No. 4980, supplemented by the author's photo)

the *shendyt* smites a Libyan⁸, or in numerous instances from Ramesside times, where more refined kinds of royal garment appear besides the *shendyt*⁹.

Another very good example of the considered dress is that worn by the pharaoh in the pectoral of Amenemhat III from Dahshur¹⁰. Here the king has the *khat* as a head-dress.

The very motif of the ritual slaying of the enemy had appeared considerably early in a peculiar form on an ivory tablet from the times of Narmer where the king's sacred animal, a wels, is depicted when striking foes with a stick in the assistance of such protective beings as a falcon and vulture¹¹. In the scenes of triumph, the king usually deals a blow to his foe with a mace, and it is not

⁸ D. Wildung, *Sesostris und Amenemhet. Ägypten im Mittleren Reich*, München 1986, Pl. 33.

⁹ Saleh, Sourouzian, *Das Ägyptische Museum Kairo*, No. 206.

¹⁰ Wildung, *Sesostris und Amenemhet*, Pl. 78.

¹¹ P. Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit*, Vol. I, Wiesbaden 1963, Pl. 5:5.

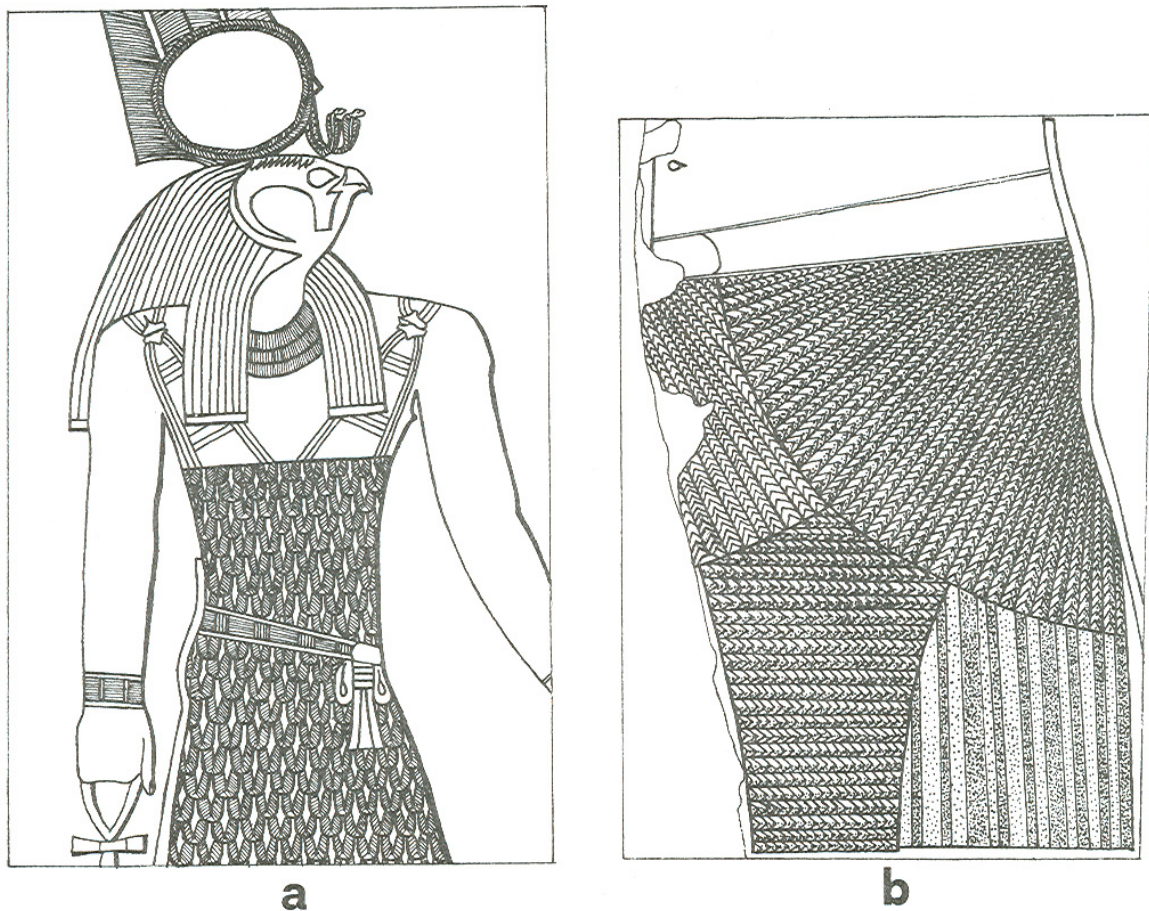


Fig. 3. *a* — Montu in feathered tunic from the jubilee kiosk of Senuseret I in Karnak (drawing after the author's photo); *b* — royal kilt combined with the *shendyt* from the temple of Sahure at Abusir (drawing after Aldred, *Egypt...*, Fig. 133)

before the New Kingdom that he strikes with a different weapon, such as a sickle sword, battle-axe or dagger¹². The dagger, however, not used directly in action, often accompanies the mace, as does a long stick. When the dagger appears, it displaces the overskirt of beads and the swallow-shaped amulet, as in the case of a fragment from the temple of Mentuhotep-Nebhepetre at Deir el-Bahari¹³. The mace itself remains basically unaltered from the earliest times up to the New Kingdom. Later excellent examples of mace-heads come from the temple of Thotmes III at Deir el-Bahari (Fig. 5:a), this one having been made of alabaster, the veining of which was perfectly rendered by a painter. Sometimes the dress is not accompanied by the dagger, even when the mace appears, which is displayed in the scene of embracing Senuseret I by a god from the Amun's temple in Karnak¹⁴.

¹² Saleh, Sourouzian, *Das Ägyptische Museum Kairo*, No. 121 a.

¹³ D. Arnold, *Der Tempel des Königs Mentuhotep von Deir el-Bahari*, Vol. II, Mainz 1974, Pl. 24.

¹⁴ Wildung, *Sesostris und Amenemhet*, Pl. 60.

The triumphal dress achieved its perfect form in the Middle Kingdom which is testified to, apart from the afore mentioned example from the jubilee kiosk of Senuseret I in Karnak, by a painted low relief instance from the temple of Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahari (Fig. 2:b). Here the colour scheme is revealed with a white tunic and green and red beads of the flap. In the considered scene, the king is embraced probably by Montu¹⁵. The god himself wears a garment bearing the pattern borrowed from the plume scheme of a falcon, the closer details of which are shown on a fragment from the same temple (Fig. 5:d). This is a peculiar motif, occurring on the innermost part of the falcon's wing, being of bluish colour against the green background (later evidenced in the similar dress of Atum from the temple of Thotmes III at Deir el-Bahari). The net of a kind displayed in the overskirt is known from an actual instance from the Saite Period shroud, covering a mummy of Hekaemsaf, Admiral of the Royal Fleet¹⁶. This net is composed of gold, lapis-lazuli, fayence and feldspar, which probably were also the materials of the net composing the royal overskirt. The net of suchlike pattern is surprisingly to be encountered in a woman servant's statuette from the tomb of Meketre in combination of red, green and brown¹⁷.

It was not always beads to have appeared in the flap. At times the rosettes occurred there attached to the beads, red and green, as is the case in the temple of Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahari (Fig. 5:e). More often than not, the tunic is supported by a single shoulder strap, but the instances are also known with a pair of shoulder straps¹⁸, which is modelled upon divine feathered garment, having as a rule a pair of shoulder straps (Fig. 3:a). The patterning of this garment's feathers here is similar to that of the feathers of the subsequent Horus dress (Fig. 2:a) and also to the modelling of still later examples of the falcon's feathers (Fig. 5:b, c), both coming from the objects kept in the National Museum in Cracow¹⁹. The Horus dress could have been structurally modelled in some way upon the royal triumphal dress the former, however, having its lower part somewhat different, which was composed of a feathered combination of a simple kilt and the *shendyt*. Such a combination is known in the royal iconography as early as the 5th Dynasty (Fig. 3:b), this example coming from the funerary temple of Sahure at Abusir. The Horus dress seems to have enjoyed a widespread popularity not before the beginning of the New Kingdom, yet there is a certain fragment from the temple of Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahari which may indicate its earlier occurrence²⁰.

Another royal garment proves to be a good example of gradual introduction of the feathered elements into the repertoire of royal attire. The dress is

¹⁵ Arnold, *Der Tempel des Königs Mentuhotep*, p. 43.

¹⁶ Saleh, Sourouzian, *Das Ägyptische Museum Kairo*, No. 249.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, No. 74.

¹⁸ Wildung, *Sesostris und Amenemhet*, Pl. 56.

¹⁹ I wish to express my gratitude to Mrs. Krystyna Moczulska, M. A., for her rendering these objects accessible.

²⁰ Arnold, *Der Tempel des Königs Mentuhotep*, Pls. 44 and 45.

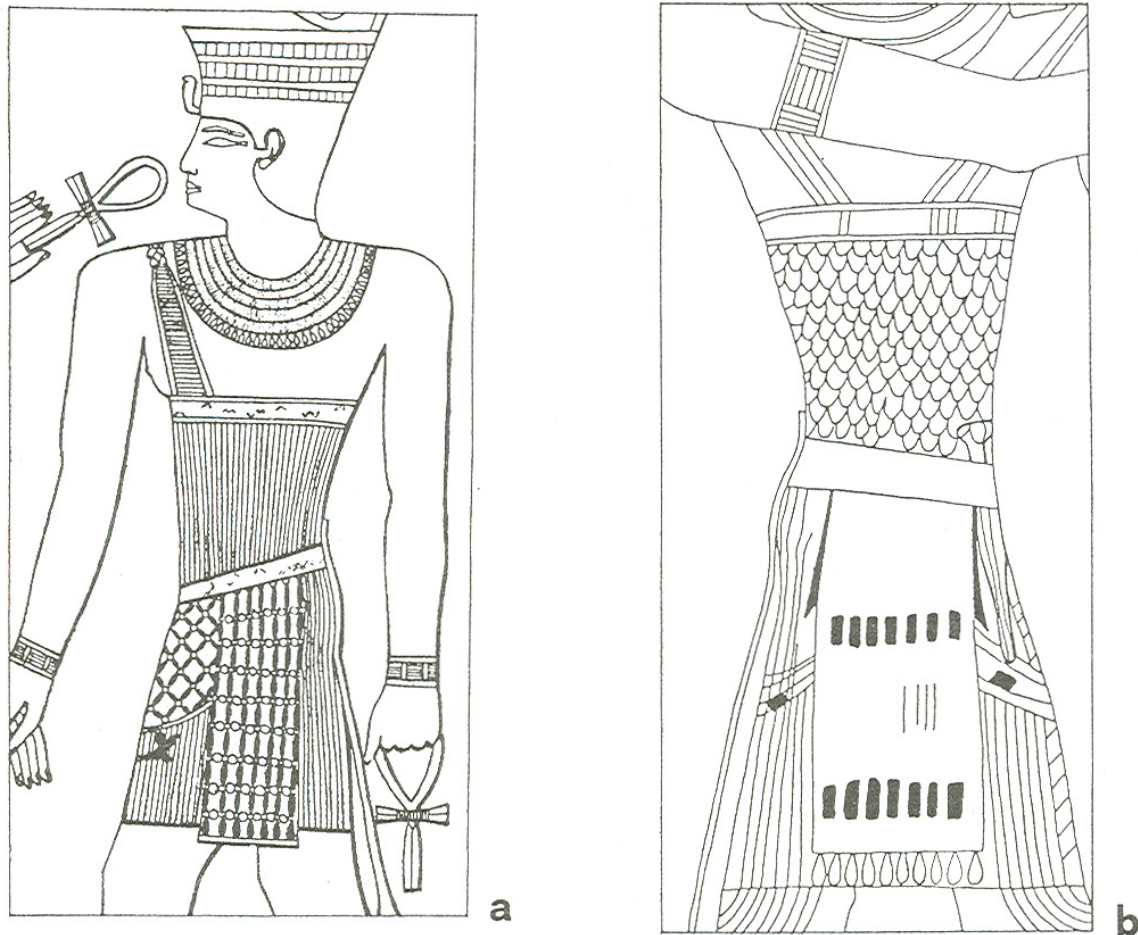


Fig. 4. *a* — king Senuseret I wearing triumphal dress in his jubilee kiosk in Karnak (drawing after the author's photo); *b* — Hatshepsut/Thotmes III on the granite portal in the Hatshepsut temple at Deir el-Bahari (drawing after the author's photo)

here in question which comes from the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari (Fig. 4:b), situated on both sides of the granite portal. The lower part of this dress comprises the kilt and an apron of beadwork, like in the triumphal dress, while the corselet is made of short, scale-shaped feathers, reminiscent of those in the Horus dress. The royal figure has both a stick and mace and these battlefield attributes are supplemented with a dagger.

In earlier times, chiefly before the Middle Kingdom, the classic triumphal dress appeared predominantly in the scenes of smiting the defeated enemies by the king. Its archaic examples display no additional decorative elements, such as necklace or bracelets. The scenes of the ruler's triumph over his foes come to have assumed the rank of a canonical symbol as early as the Old Kingdom and later hit their peak in the New Kingdom²¹. The triumphal dress emphasized the pharaoh's supremacy over his generally poorly clad and grotesquely

²¹ J. Śliwa, *Some remarks concerning victorious ruler representations in Egyptian art*, *Forschungen und Berichte*, Vol. 16, Berlin 1974, pp. 97—117.

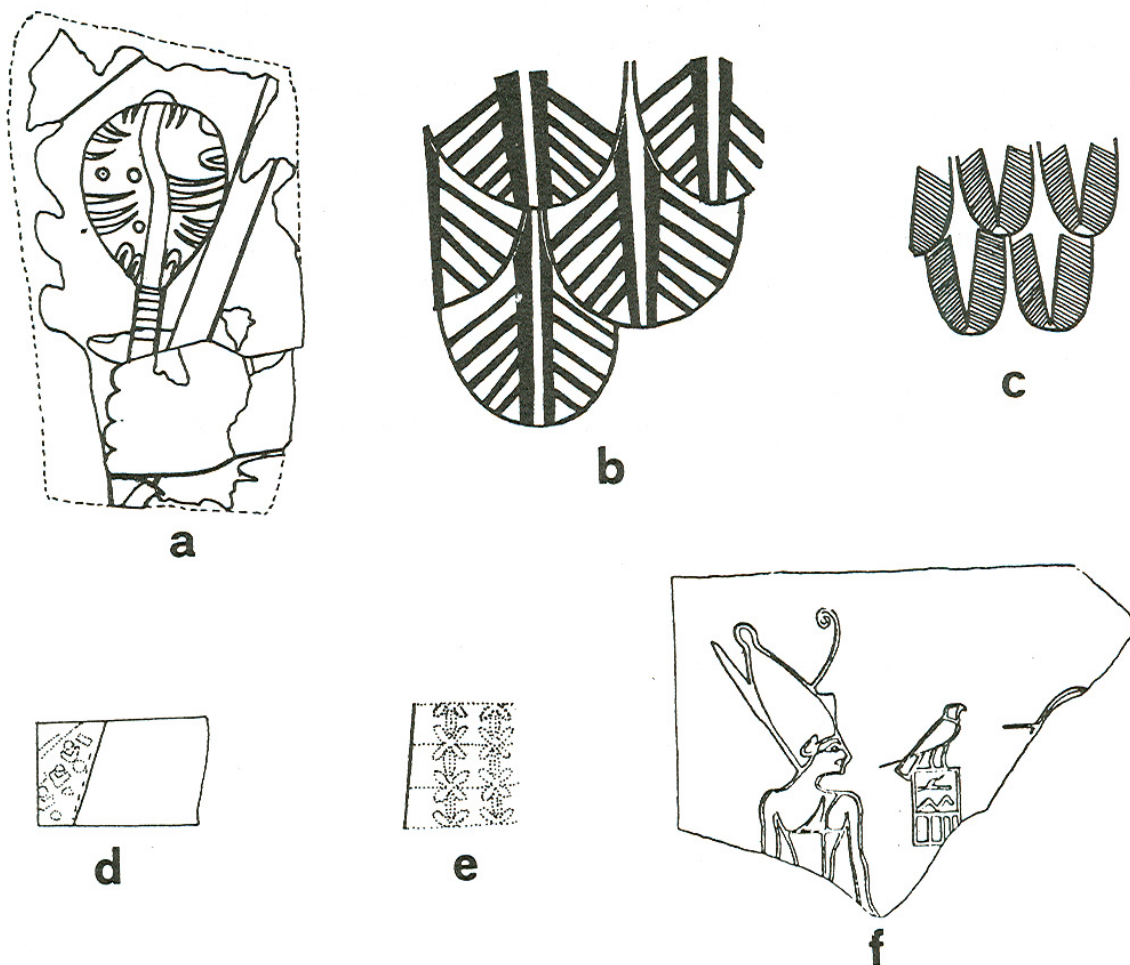


Fig. 5. *a* — mace-head from the temple reliefs of Thomes III at Deir el-Bahari (drawing after the author's photo); *b* — feathered pattern from the wooden falcon-shaped casket for a falcon's mummy from the National Museum in Cracow, Czartoryski collection, Inv. No. MNK XI—486, Late Period (drawing from the original); *c* — feathers of a bronze falcon from the National Museum in Cracow, Czartoryski collection, Inv. No. MNK XI—1176, Saite Period (drawing from the original); *d* — patterning of the god's garment probably from the temple of Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahari (drawing after Arnold, *Der Tempel des Königs Mentuhotep*, Pl. 42, fragment No. 5021); *e* — rosettes from the royal garment (drawing after Arnold, *Der Tempel des Königs Mentuhotep*, Pl. 38, fragment No. 2223); *f* — king Den (after Petrie, *Abydos I*, Pl. XIV, 7)

rendered enemy. Apart from the dynamic scenes of battlefield triumph this dress was employed, particularly from the Middle Kingdom onwards, in more static scenes of leading or embracing the king by the gods. Naturally, it also happens to be used in other scenes, e. g. during the adoring of the god²². The most common head-dress to appear with this dress is a red or white crown, or combination of both, though sporadically the *khat* also occurs. The king always wears this garment in an upright position and remains barefoot.

²² Arnold, *Der Tempel des Königs Mentuhotep*, Pls. 25 and 26.

The basic material for this dress seems to be white linen, pleated vertically. The meshwork overskirt could indicate bead netting with magically protective connotations²³, whereas the flap consisted of multi-coloured beads and pearls. The flap attached to the girdle was also depicted in hieroglyphic writing (*šsm*) and was worn by various gods as well²⁴.

The above described ceremonial dress has had a long track record in the royal iconography. During this period, its fundamental aspect and the most important traits had been remaining basically unaltered, which indicates its time-honoured lasting and tradition.

²³ Hall, *Egyptian Textiles*, p. 25.

²⁴ A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, Oxford³ 1973, p. 506 (Sign-list, S 17*).