



# The Jirtik

Other names:

Jirtig



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SOCIAL PRACTICES, RITUALS & FESTIVE EVENTS

Traditional Wedding Ceremony

## COMMUNITY GROUPS AND LOCATION

### Community groups

The practice of "Al-Jirtik" was historically limited to the central and northern Nile regions of Sudan, as well as the Nubian region. It has also been observed among the Jaa'liyya group, which includes the Jaa'liyyin, Rabatab, Mirfaba, Manasir, and Shaigiyya tribes.

### Practitioners

The Jirtik is usually carried out by the older women in the family, such as grandmothers.

### Purpose / Use

The royal celebration and coronation ward off the evils of magic and the evil eye, seek good omens, and complete traditional wedding ceremonies.

### Knowledge / Skills

The traditional Jirtik attire includes a set of knowledge related to preparing the necessary materials for it, as mentioned prominently. Additionally, it involves the use of several traditional sub-tools that are crafted and stored in homes, grandmothers' closets, and mothers' closets.

### Transmission

It is transmitted through practice from one generation to another, and you may notice that this ritual has spread widely even outside the groups that used to practice it in the past, and has become a key feature complementing the Sudanese wedding ritual among most communities.

### Tools, Equipment, Services

The tray of the Jirtik contains a wooden vessel known as "Al-Haq" on which some Sudanese perfumes are placed, such as "Al-Dareera," which is a mixture of sandalwood, mahlab, and musk powder. It also contains the "Al-Raba'a" and a censer with sandalwood incense, and another with Taiman incense, as well as chains, bracelets, and rings specific to the Jarteek, including the "Al-Yusr" rosary, a golden crescent, and soft red silk. There is an ancient local belief that certain metals like gold and copper have properties to repel evil spirits, as well as gemstones, beads, and some ancient relics like the "Ja'ranah," which was worshipped in the northern regions of the Nile Sudan and its story can be found in the archaeological site in the Koro area, which is a stone carved in the shape of a beetle or Ja'ranah.

Also notable is the dominant red color in the Jirtik procedures, with red henna, the wearing of the red "Qarmas" cloak, the red silk, Al-Haq, Al-Raba'a, and the bloodstone. It is believed that the red color, being the color of blood, symbolizes the essence of life targeted by evil spirits. The groom wears a special traditional outfit known as "Toub Al-Sirti," adorned with a sword and a shining crescent on his forehead, and a red silk bracelet on his wrist. As for the bride, she wears a red dress adorned with "Jadala" in her hair, which is hair adorned with some gold or silver metals represented by a large earring known as "Al-Qamar Buba" or "Al-Faddo," and she wears a nose ring, large bracelets on both hands, and an anklet known as "Al-Hajal."

## HISTORY

The tradition of "Jirtik" has deep roots in Sudanese history, especially in the ancient Kingdom of Meroe around 350 BC. It is believed that the Jarateq tradition, with its celebratory aspects and exchange of gifts between the bride and groom in anticipation of fertility, directly corresponds to the inscription found on a ring within the jewelry collection of Queen Amanishakheto of Meroe. This tradition reflects the practices observed today, particularly in the Rabatab region in northern Sudan. According to sources studying ancient Sudanese heritage, the Jirtik is linked to Sudanese Pharaonic customs from the Meroitic period, as evidenced by the presence of tools like Jarateq vessels, which are still used today. Additionally, Queen Amanishakheto's hands were found dyed with henna, a practice also depicted in the drawings and inscriptions of the queens of the Kingdom of Meroe. Some argue that these contemporary Jirtik rituals closely resemble the coronation rituals of the Nubian king Aspelta.

## INTRODUCTION

The "Jirtik" ceremony is a traditional Sudanese wedding ritual that follows the official wedding ceremony. The bride and groom wear distinctive attire specific to this ceremony, with the bride wearing a Jallabiya on her head and the groom wearing a Sirti. The ceremony includes the burning of incense and traditional Sudanese perfumes, giving it an authentic touch, along with a complete set of accessories and decorations such as precious gemstone beads. The groom wears a piece of red silk around his wrist and carries a sword while sitting on a low stool with a Jirtik tray in front of him.

The main purpose of this ceremony is to celebrate and bless the marriage in the traditional Sudanese way, preserving the ancient Nile heritage. The Jirtik rituals are often held at the bride's house and have their own special songs, such as "Al Adil and Al Zein" and "Adila Ya Baydaa," among other specific Jirtik songs.

### Cultural Value:

The connection to the historical values associated with weather, perfumes, and symbols used in the implementation of the royal ceremonial ritual that resembles the coronation ritual. It was firmly believed in the past that practicing it brings good luck, fertility, and protects against the evil eye and malevolent spirits.

### Associated Practices:

Singing, dancing, fashion, accessories, weddings, and circumcision.

### Cultural Expressions

A traditional song that is usually sung during the Jirtik ceremony:

"Oh fair one, oh white one, oh angels, walk with him, the groom of honor and deadline, the bride illuminated the path. His forehead adorned with a crescent moon, the scent of henna and incense".

"The bride's dignity has not left her. Tonight, she stood proudly, her lineage admired. The bride, her mother raised her, the goodness today has not left her".

"Congratulations to the good morning, this is our groom, the just one, the kind one. Doesn't say I gave, Doesn't say I did. Thank you, pillar of the house, his elder sister prepared the silk for him and adorned him with goodness. His mother smiled and said, Everything is destined".

## VIABILITY

### Threats:

N/A

### Natural Resources used

Henna

Gold

Image(s) source :

Link(s)