



Shkodra century.19th -20th

SHKODRAN DRESS AND ITS DECORATION FROM THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES: AN ARTIFACT OF ALBANIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE.

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ABSTRACT

My goal is to offer the dress of the day as an artifact and example of the elements of decoration and ornamentation, techniques and technology, social environment, in the stylistic and formal view presented by Gaetano Giordano from his perspective through his book written in 1899, a foreign author of Italian origin in his publication titled "Il villayet di Scutari (Ossie) usi costumi albanesi Gaetano Giordano e suo filio Vittorio Col sussidio dell'opera di M.H.Hecquard sull'Albania".

The use of image and ornamental elements are presented from the perspective of the photographer's camera, from Shkodra, Pjetër Marubi.

The cut and stitching of the costumes and their composition and decoration were easily identified and were to be followed by all. Any deviation would be quickly seen and despised.

Giordano writes "The dress of the city was divided in three religions: Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim, Shkodra clothes are rich in decorative elements but heavy in ornamental elements."

The focus of a detailed view of the composition of the dress and its decoration as an identification feature in Shkodra urban life in the 19th – 20th centuries is an artifact with exceptional value in the Albanian Cultural Heritage.

Studying dress as an artifact, we see a high form of material and spiritual culture being transmitted through the aesthetic, cultural, historical, social, moral, and economic values.

In this study we will see three elements of the artifact, the materials and methods, the decoration and ornamentation, the technique and technology.

Key Words: Artifact, Decoration and Ornamental Elements, Social Environment.

Introduction

The idea for this study was born during a project that I was doing regarding dress produced in Albanian cities during the 19th and 20th centuries, and its decoration. The object of the research topic is the composition of the outfit and its decoration in the 19th – 20th century in the city of Shkodra as an object of exceptional value in Albanian cultural heritage.

My goal has been to study the dress of the people of Shkodra and the influences of the culture of multiple occupiers. The challenge is to identify the origins of this dress not only in the middle class, but also in the higher class people that have been more open to the occupier's influence. This project begins with the perspective of Gaetano Giordano and his son, Vittorio through the written word of his book published in 1899, titled "Il villayet know Scutari (Ossie) usi costumi albanesi Gaetano Giordano e suo filio Vittorio Col sussidio dell'opera di M.H.Hecquard sull'Albania". Giordano's book is a rarity, because his is an Italian author who has lived in Shkodra and served as a teacher and director in the Italian School of that time. He explains for us the very conservative attitude of the people of Shkodra and the scorn they felt toward those who would want to change the composition, decoration, color, stitching, and cut of their dress as an artifact. These they had consider as law, and would point at those from other cities who wanted to change them in scorn. "The dress was divided according to faith: Catholic, Orthodox, and Muslim" he wrote. The Shkodran dress is very rich and heavy with the decorative elements. These images and ornamental elements are presented from the perspective of the photographer's camera, from Shkodra, Pjetër Marubi.

Purpose:

My goal is to offer the dress of the day as an artifact and example of the elements of decoration and ornamentation, techniques and technology, social environment of Shkodrans in the 19th and 20th century. The focus of this detailed view of the composition and decoration of this dress are identifiable characteristics of the Shkodran life in the 19th and 20th century as a extraordinarily valuable piece in Albanian Cultural Material Heritage. Dress as a artifact, from the point of view of style and form, is a exalted expression of spiritual and material culture in the transmission of the aesthetic, cultural, historic, social, moral, and economic values. I want to show the function of the dress for the wearer—to show from external appearance which group to which they belong. The characteristics of the dress shows the specific social position of the wearer and their position in the hierarchy. This position is based on the age, sex, and social group. We see that all these characteristics of the dress show very well, the patriarchal and social organization of the time.

Materials and Methods:

We see these outfits are a perfect synthesis of applied art. They were made by specialized tailors that mastered characteristic sewing for different social classes. These techniques show great

aesthetic attitude in this composite dress and its decoration. Technically these were made by master artisans and a small part by women and girls of the family. These products bear witness to the great abilities to process gorse, flax, wool, and cotton. A great understanding of aesthetics in the stylization of natural motifs, using a wide palette of colors and motifs worked with a refined taste. Aesthetically we see bird motifs, floral motifs, geometric motifs, horizontal lines, vertical lines, crossed lines, that show the great abilities of the people of that day, and their spirit of creativity. The dress, woven by the women and the girls on a loom, and hand stitched by the specialized master tailors, who produced the characteristic designs with skillful hands, were used to distinguish the different social classes. This artifact from a technical-aesthetic point of view, with its composition and decoration is the perfect synthesis of applied art.

Analysis

Clear views that testify dress and its rich decoration which challenged the effects of the invading cultures, representing its authenticity, not only in the middle classes of the population, but also in the higher classes, which have been more open to impacts. Costumes' cutting is respected by all as if it were the law, and who tried to change, would point and become a disdain object.

The muslim men of the city

The outfit of the Muslim men of the city of Shkodra, was composed of:

A pleated skirt: A pleated skirt made white cotton that reaches to the knee, and technically was made a length of material sewn together that is gathered around the waist in 500 to 600 pleats.

Tight legged white pants: Tight legged white pants made of cotton or satin worn under the skirt.

Tights: The tights are long and cover the whole leg leaving the shoe half uncovered because of the side split at the seam. The tights are usually dyed Venetian red, and are embroidered with gold and black satin.

Dolama: Dolama is a Venetian Red cape-like outer garment decorated in the corners. They are heavily decorated with gold and black satin thread. The open sleeves are folded back and then hang free. This is covered at the waist is a wide multi wrapping sash.

Over-coat (Xhamadani): The vest and xhamadani were violet, and over this, they wore a over-coat. This over-coat was a dark colored garment embroidered with black silk and hanging to mid-calf.

Vest: The vest is decorated from corner to corner and the fasteners are made of silver covered cording. It is basically completely covered with embroidery of gold and silk. The amount of decoration showed the wealth of the wearer.

Fez: Young and old people wore straight fez in their head with a long tassel.

Shoes: The shoes are a special production with one piece of leather being wrapped complete around the foot, and stitched and tied in place on top. Another piece of leather was added on the bottom to reinforce the sole of the foot. These were dyed Venetian red and left the ankle uncovered.

Weapons, Sword, and iron rods: The Muslim men wore pistols decorated with silver that hung from a belt made of a piece of thick red leather that also held the sword. The iron rods served to load the weapons. The rich decorated their iron rods with sculpted silver. There were also a kind of pliers that also helped to load the weapons. A sash was also worn, and on it hung a box that held the oil to oil their weapons. The luxury of the urban Muslims of Shkodra consisted of the wealth of their weapons. "Often those parts that were made of wood, on ours"

the author wrote, “on theirs were made of silver or gold and were covered with ornamentation not only on the handles, but also the sheath of the sword.”

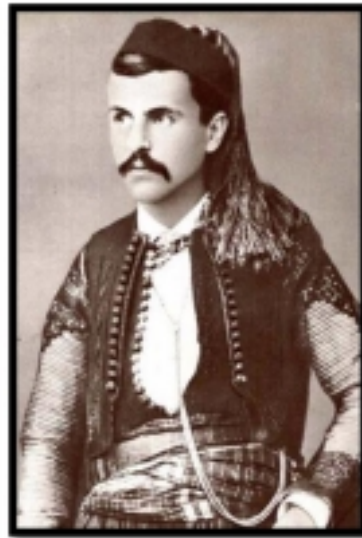
Photos 1a, 2a, and 3a were taken by Shkodran photographer, Pjetër Marubi and illustrate very well the dress of the urban Muslim men of the city of Shkodra.



Ph.1a.



Ph.2a.



Ph.3a.

Urban Christian men of the city:

The urban Christian men of the city wore the same basic style of dress, except that the Venetian red was replaced with darker colors, and all the ornamentation was made of black silk. The dress of the tradesmen wasn't so elegant and included wide-legged pants made of light thin black cotton cloth that fell below the knees, and were decorated with red silk material on the sides.

Over-coat (Xhamadani): The vest and xhamadani were violet, and over this, they wore a over-coat. This over-coat was a dark colored garment embroidered with black silk and hanging to mid-calf.

Socks: The socks were long and white, made of either cotton or wool.

Shoes: The shoes were made of one piece of red leather wrapped around the foot and stitched and tied on the top. A second piece of leather was attached to the sole of the shoe for strength.

Fez: A tassel-less fez completed the Christian dress.

In the winter the Christians were covered with a long hooded coat made of black wool, with long woolen fibers hanging free from the coat. In the summer it is replaced by a white cotton shawl to protect them from the sun. Although there is no law forbidding it, few Christians carried a

weapon in the city, but they usually did have them at home. The garments were mainly produced in the home by the women of the family.

The Photos. 1b, 2b, 3b, 4b, are taken from the photos of Pjetër Marubi and illustrate the Urban Christian men dress of the city of Shkodra.



Ph.1b.



Ph.2b.



Ph.3b.



Ph.4.

The urban Muslim women:

The Urban Muslim women wore a homemade shirts made of silk or of rose colored transparent fabric decorated with gold embroidery on the front, and the sleeves which are very wide and made of the same cloth or white cotton. The first garment worn under the shirt was a velvet corsette pulled tight and decorated with gold turkeys that were held closed with two large silver-plated fasteners. The purpose of the corsette was to display the bust. In the summer, Muslim women dress this way in their houses they use a silk or tyli belt. When they were expecting visitors they put on pantaloons of thin light white cotton which had the sides embroidered with gold, and that fell to the ankle. A light colored belt of silk or cashmire wraps around their waist, and the costume is complete with a kind of silk or velvet vest with sleeves embroidered with gold in the middle and with black silk on the edges. Their black hair was divided into three pieces above their shoulders and two other braids were wrapped around their heads. They wear a red fez decorated with a small bunch of flowers, and with silk scarf with metal threads and delicate pearls partially covering the fez. This type of hair style of was kept in place with a head scarf made of silk. Earlier, Muslim women went barefoot, but today (in the 19th and 20th centuries) they wore embroidered Venetian red socks or the wrapped shoes with yellow soles. Their earrings were very heavy. They were various forms made of gold, but they were built upon a ring which was connected to a triangular tile, from which they hung Venetian coins. Under their hairstyle, the Muslim women used a kind of a crown, made of delicate pearls, that hung on their forehead and temples, they beautified their necks with hanging pearls or coins. Muslims sometimes wear transparent white material made of silk, cotton, or wool that is gathered around

the neck and head so that only their eyes are visible. These women often in long clothes made of thin material embroidered in a way to cover their faces, but to show their beauty and youth.

The Photos in fig. 1c, 2c, 3c, are taken from the photos of Pjetër Marubi and illustrate the Urban Muslim women dress of city of Shkodra.



Ph.1c.



Ph.2c.



Ph.3c.

Urban Christian women of the city:

The urban Christian women's dress was similar to the Muslims except for the jacket and the pants were always violet. In the style of their hair, the Christians cut the sides of their hair to cover their ears. The rest of their hair, they let grow long and they braided it. They gathered their hair together in a headscarf, and over that, they fastened it with a piece of cloth, covered with embroidery with gold, pearls, and coral.

The young girls

The young girls corsettes were replaced by a tight undergarment that wrapped around the trunk of the body. The use of gold, embroidery, silk, or velvet was forbidden for little girls.

The photo in figure 1d. by Pjetër Marubi illustrates the clothing of the little girls.



Ph.1d.

Photos 1e, 2e, and 3e were taken by Shkodran photographer, Pjetër Marubi and illustrate very well the dress of the urban Christian women of the city of Shkodra.



Ph.1e.



Ph.2e.



Ph.3e.

The Social Environment:

The development and creation of these garments were influenced by historic pressures and circumstances that formed and developed the culture of this city. Shkodra is a typical city that developed in one of those important crossroads of the period where Eastern culture was met with that of the West.

Decorations and beautifying elements:

The decorations were most obvious in the costumes for their celebrations. Especially the young women showed off many decorative metal elements imported during that time. The decorative elements and their use shows a rich artistic tradition of the handicrafts and abilities of the popular masters.

The techniques and technology of clothing:

The cut of the clothes has stayed the same through the ages. The fabric has changed a lot from one period to the next with the continuous advances in technology of textiles. Technically they are produced by artisans, but each special element of the garment bears witness to the artisan's talents with gorse, flax, wool, cotton and an understanding of aesthetics like stylization of motifs from nature, using a wide range of motifs and combinations of colors daintily worked by specialized seamstresses. The men preferred red, while the women chose green. As they aged or if they were in mourning, they dressed in brown.

Conclusion

Dress as an artifact is seen as a high form of material and spiritual culture which transmits the aesthetic, cultural, historical, social, moral, and economic values of the time.

Authors of the time, have expressed and have described as challenging the fact that the styles have resisted the influence of the occupying powers, standing with dignity as a representative ceremonial costume, not only in the middle class of the population, but also in the high classes which we know have been more open to these influences because of their higher financial abilities. The cut of the costumes were respected as law, and we held to religiously. Any deviation would be quickly seen and despised. Clothing as an image and object, including the decorative elements and the material that was used, bore witness to the coexistence of the natural products and the human spirit. The image of the clothing is symbolic of the social environment which they lived. It reflects a mode of life of the time. Clothing is an artifact, and as such, represents a symbol of the imagination, creativity, and technology of the time. The clothing of urban Shkodra, in the 19th and 20th centuries is an extraordinarily valuable artifact of Albanian cultural heritage that reflects for today and the future the valuable contribution of the quality and development of the national cultural heritage of Albania.

References

Viewed through the writings of Gaetano Giordano and his son, Vittorio in his book "Il villayet di Scutari (Ossie) usi costumi albanesi Gaetano Giordano e suo filio Vittorio Col sussidio dell'opera di M.H.Hecquard sull'Albania" written in 1899.

And through the photographs of Marubi taken from the Albanian National Archives: Zija Shkodra. “Qyteti Shqiptar Gjatë Rilindjes Kombëtare”

Diskutime mbi origjinën. Kostumi dhe gjendja aktuale e kombit shqiptar. Masci.A.

Kostumet popullore A. Gjergji.

Variantet e veshjeve sipas funksionit A. Gjergji