

Men Folk Costumes in the Folk Songs of the Seacoast



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Abstract

Albanians as people are known for their songs which are for as special as original. Songs have accompanied Albanian people in every aspect of life, war and labor. Albanian folk songs are as varied and individual as their wardrobe. The combination of folk songs with the traditional clothing has not been sufficiently studied, and in general is little known. Residents of all ethnographic surrounding sea, although relatively with difficult conditions and in the constant struggle to ensure minimum living requirements, have loved the beauty and fought to materialize it in their wardrobe. Gradually in the process of development of human society were created clothes appropriate for the season, sex, with cases when to be used, age, profession and social strata. All these have created the great wealth of for the variety of clothing.

*With a shirt and kilt,
With songs, dances and bouquets,
All colors that life has got,
Spread throughout Albania.¹¹⁵*

Introduction

Like all peoples of the world, Albanians, too, although small in number, have this cultural wealth. By the time, there were also created the types of ethnic Albanian folk costumes. Aesthetic tastes used for decoration, but also the way of style are those that reflect to the particular ethnicity. The whole development of the clothing is closely linked with the history of the development of this population, consequently also with the history of the Albanian people.

Over Albanian traditions and musical folklore in general, in the first decades of the twentieth century foreign film companies have shown interest and implemented many documentaries which explore the ethnographic and ethnomusic wealth of Albanians.¹¹⁶

Even areas of the south coast, like many other regions of the country have a wide range of characteristic garments for both men and women. In the whole area of the sea these dresses have had common characteristics, with insignificant regional nuances stemming from social stratification. They were noticed in the finery of dresses, in the quality and color of the material from which they were designed. Changes did not affect cutting, morphology and naming of these coatings, which were the same for all the villages of the south coast area. Men's wearing of the

¹¹⁵ Kënga "Kalaja e Festivalit" me kompozim të Tish Daias, kënduar nga Liljana Kondakçi në Festivalin e 17-të të Këngës në RTV. Marrë nga adresa http://www.teksteshqip.com/liliana-kondak-i/teksti_1858384 në datë 25 maj 2013.

¹¹⁶ Xhatufa, Osman, "Dy vepra me vlera shkencore për etnomuzikologjinë shqiptare", gazeta "Drita", f. 9, 11, i datës 10 mars 1996.

South Coast is metered with other areas of the country. It varied according to the season, the economic situation of families and profession. Men generally have these clothes: dress with long shirt short woolen jacket felt (dolman), wearing kilt, wearing pants and dress with bloomers. Wardrobes of the South Coast area had variety and richness. They are created as a result of differences in age, sex, cases of when they are used, different social classes, professions, different seasons, etc.

Kilts, a men's clothing is a white skirt, wrought with fine wool or flax on loom. Kilts can be made with cotton threads and have more wrinkles. The full kilts were sown with 40 sheets (layers). Furthermore, the amount of sheets that had Kilts was indicative of prosperity and welfare of the individual who wore. Kilts were worn for holidays and for joy. In various studies it was evidenced that in the area of the coast, until the beginning of our century, wearing kilts was with high layers and during the major holidays.¹¹⁷.



Kilts were used as the groom's dress. It was accompanied with short white knee down pants. On the waist they've put a long woolen broadband, and on it they've put another leather and decorated belt on which were put and fastened hanging arms. Shoes of the kilts were only from leather, mostly red with a black tassel on top. When the color of these shoes skin changed, it was changed and the color of the tassel, but always between white and black colors.¹¹⁸. In the cold season, part of this dress was the woolen flokata. Although on the head was worn a white spot with a stud in between. By the beginning of the XX century this dress is held in all Albanian lands from Kosovo to Çamëria. Then it was limited in villages of southern Albania.

Kilt was dressed also by the young men. In a bravery song in an area of Piluri that was sung to the fallen in war against the Ottoman invaders, young men were wearing kilts. Here are popular verses:

*I will wear like our men,
With Kilt and with paddle,
With the pistol drew sabers*¹¹⁹.

Kilt was a clothing that was widely worn in other areas of the country, as in the south of the country, including the neighboring areas of Kurveleshi, Labëria, Tepelena, Gjirokastra, etc. The similarity of the southwestern area of the coast in songs as well as in clothing was the same with

¹¹⁷ Gjergji, Andromaqi, Shkurti, Spiro, et al. "Veshje Popullore Shqiptare", Instituti i Kulturës Popullore, Tiranë, 1999, f. 20.

¹¹⁸ Bixhili, Foto. "Jipet e Iperit – Himariotët, Shtëpia Botuese Toena, Tiranë, 2004, f. 117.

¹¹⁹ Këngë popullore e Pilurit, marrë nga adresa <http://pilurjotet.blogspot.com/p/kenge-bejte-pilurjote.html> në datë 25 maj 2013.

the surrounding areas. A wedding song of the River shore Vjosë highlights the characteristic clothing of the region of Tepelena that are similar to those of the coast:

*Arise fiance son, daughter violates eye,
she with the white dress, you with the kilt ¹²⁰.*

In fact, kilt is one of the Albanian wardrobe that has captivated all foreign travelers in Albania in the past centuries. Here's how it expresses Lord Byron in his poem "Childe Harold."

*Paved in gravel the night fires were on,
dinner was over, and the red wine was spinned;
And what happens there without expecting anything,
Fainted from all that view;
Right after the midnight hour was gone,
His followers began their songs;
Each Palikar threw away his sword
Hand jumped up one after another,
With songs and weeping shook their kilts.*



Photo 1: Kilts, characteristic of the south coast area. (Photo from personal archive of popular poet of the south coast, Lefter Çipa)

The use of the kilt dress also had other changes determined by profession, but this happened very rarely. Usually, kilt color was white, but in certain professions and circumstances that changed. Delvina city Karvanaxhinjtë used to wear black kilts. Such kilts wore kaçakët, too. In both cases the color of the kilts was determined by the need of practical character.

Shirts. Kilts as main gear were completed with long and wide sleeved shirt with white color. Pieces with which were sewn shirts and the wide sleeves was calico or cambric or imported fabric. All this gear was made within the household. The woman raised and processed raw material itself to her clothing and to other family members. She did the work on the loom herself, cut it and sew it herself. Fabrics was put in loom with thread or thin linen knit. The elderly remember that this shirt has also been worked with wool yarn, especially in those households where the main economic base were livestock.¹²¹ With broom fiber, linen fiber, later with cotton yarn was also prepared the headscarf. Other parts of the clothing, as cibuni, futat, socks and waist were made from cotton fibres. So, almost all parts of the coating were prepared within the household, which indicates that this dressing has been characteristic for that period of social and economic development, when relations with the market were still weak.

The day has yet a forehead sweat,

¹²⁰ Këngë "Hidhe Nuse Vallen" nga Grupi Folklorik 'Djemtë e Vjosës', marrë nga adresa http://www.teksteshqip.com/djemte-e-vjoses/teksti_1876113 në datë 25 maj 2013)

¹²¹ Spiro Shkurti: "Kontribut për hartën kostumologjike të rrethit të Sarandës", nga Revista "Etnografia Shqiptare" XI, Tiranë 1982.

*The shirt of work was buttoned up,
As with laziness uninvited friend,
Descending from the peaks, the gray twilight.*

Poture. Poture are pants that have the wide form and are knee lengthed. They covered the body from the middle to the knee cup. As traditional dress, such pants of the South Coast area did not differ greatly from other areas of Kurvelesh and Labëria. For livestock jobs, genuine farmers have been largely Dhrimatët, Iljati, Piluri and Kudhësi. For this traditional occupation, part of the dressing have been pants with woolen long belt to the cup of the knee. They were accompanied by white silken or cambric shirt with lon sleeves. Poture usually had black color and rarely brown. Unlike other garments poture (pants) have enough impact (in the form of cut) from the same clothing used in other areas.



Photo 2. Original photot from the Çipa family. The father and the son-in-law dressed with black poture.

Poture were made of wool and were worn as tight. They have replaced the kilt dress by the end of the XIX century. In popular poetry they were characterized for the fortitude or courage of men. In the following songs, a popular poet expresses it with a thin humor enough to connect that with these pants.

*I will not say nothing about Kobure,
Because we are filled with these Poture¹²².*

*Behind the house of figs,
O man, someone took us the goats!*

*- The ugly man, why didn't you catch it?
- my desert pants fell,
From the unfastened belt.!*

Poture (Pants) were working clothes and were used from poor families. They were mostly black, because at night people wearing black pants (especially robbers) couldn't be detected from not going to their filthy work. Here's how this process is expressed in a popular song, which during the communist regime it was forbidden to be sung.

*Do you still remember my dear host,
when we came together with goats,
you came for kondoperre,*

¹²² [http://www.forumishqiptar.com/threads/140781-Poezi-kushtuar-an%C3%ABtar%C3%ABve-t%C3%AB-Forumit-Shqiptar/page; \(marrë më 9 qershor 2013\)](http://www.forumishqiptar.com/threads/140781-Poezi-kushtuar-an%C3%ABtar%C3%ABve-t%C3%AB-Forumit-Shqiptar/page; (marrë më 9 qershor 2013))

I came for theft.

*I was wearing pants,
you çitjane and peshli,
We went to sleep together,
On dungs and droppings¹²³.*

In the years after World War I, coating with bloomers (qillota) began to spread, which had a rapid and massive spread in all layers of the population, as to which it replaced clothing with pants. At the beginning the new coating came into use as everyday working clothes which then took the ceremonial character. Also, all the elements of dress pants were not replaced at a time, leaving the other elements unchanged and which covered the upper part of the body.

Vest

Unlike Laberia where its color was almost the same with the pants, in the South Coast area the vest had a black color and rarely brown in terms of its front part.

Whereas its back part was white or gray. Usually the vest was sown short that reached up to the waist. It was decorated on the chest with golden threads, with geometric figures and motifs.

*I'll take you to the cattle home,
To feel myself more blue.
To sew my vest,
With golden threads¹²⁴.*

In fact, men were wearing black vests. Women, on the other hand, wore the red vest, which is often intertwined with the bright colors of their dresses. Here is how it is expressed a maid wearing in a love song of the Ionian Sea:

*You were coming downhill on the shore,
Wearing the red vest,
You were screaming like a partridge,
Wearing the red vest.*

Regional nuances that the wearing with the waistcoats kept, the color of the vest (or as called peshliut in Labëria and Coastal villages) was undoubtedly the most important element. On the outside, the color of the sleeve, can be roughly determined from which part was the holder of a dress and whether he was a Muslim or Orthodox. Thus, in villages of Labëria and Çamëria the sleeve was worked with soutane white wool, woven in the loom, while in other villages with

¹²³ [http://www.forumishqiptar.com/threads/2064-Tekste-t%C3%AB-k%C3%ABng%C3%ABve-polifonike-\(marrë-më-10-qershor-2013\)](http://www.forumishqiptar.com/threads/2064-Tekste-t%C3%AB-k%C3%ABng%C3%ABve-polifonike-(marrë-më-10-qershor-2013))

¹²⁴ Gjoni, Minella: “Këngë folkorike – Rrëfenja Toponimi: Shën Vasili, fshat i dëgjuar”, Milosao, Sarandë, 2006, f. 173.

Orthodox faith (Muzinë, Mesopotam, Vurg, Theollogo, Mursi, Coast) the color of the sleeve was deep blue with the black color nuances¹²⁵.

Jacket. Jacket (or *xhoka* as it is known in the coastal zone) is upper and thick garment for women and men, sleeveless or half sleeved or long-sleeved cast back (according to the regions), that goes up to the waist and that usually there is a part of it which is thrown over the head. It was used mainly by shepherds, who used this dress as bedding in breaks.

*Wash and comb those quiffs,
Wield your jacket wield*¹²⁶.

Fez. In Orthodox villages, especially in the south coast area since the beginning of our century until the liberation of the country the fez has changed twice. Until the years that matched with the declaration of Independence red color fez was used in a holiday with a slightly long tassel hanging up above the shoulders. Apparently, this kind of fez was an official cover for the head in the Turkish Empire, it was imposed by conquerors to the population “*raja*”. In the years that followed the declaration of independence of the country began to be used more and more a boat-shaped head cover, without shelter. This was worked with a kind of industrial nappy cloth, velvet like, but with the black color. It is this kind of fez used in the South Coast area, especially in the villages of Christian faith. Fez were worked by women, mainly from the sheep wool. In the popular songs of the South coast, fez occupies a special place. Here are the two of them:



Photo 3: Fez and man's shirt from the south coast area.

*O you bunch of Stilleshe,
Knit with needles and make a fyz*¹²⁷.

*The crying of the sister-in-law for Çeço
Çeço when going out from the cattle house,
With cutlery as a shephard,
With the woolen sheepskin as devishjani*¹²⁸.

¹²⁵ Spiro Shkurti: “Kontribut për hartën kostumologjike të rrethit të Sarandës”, nga Revista “Etnografia Shqiptare” XI, Tiranë 1982, f. 84.

¹²⁶ <http://www.forum-al.com/archive/index.php/t-15606.html> (marrë në 8 qershor 2013)

¹²⁷ Gjoni, Minella: “Këngë folkorike – Rrëfenja Toponimi: Shën Vasili, fshat i dëgjuar”, Milosao, Sarandë, 2006, f. 51.

¹²⁸ <http://www.forumshqiptar.com/threads/2064-Tekste-t%C3%AB-k%C3%ABng%C3%ABve-polifonike> (marrë më 10 qershor 2013)

Moccasins. Mocassins were leather shoes mainly with red or brown color with a black tassel on top. In a few years after marriage were worn mocassins with red tassel, particularly by women, in middle age were worn mocassins with mixed tassel (red and black), while in the broken ages were worn mocassins with black tassel.



Photo 4: Men shoes (left) and a coastal area woman along.

*I will throw a happy dance,
with mocassins from the leather,
Pair-pair kilts,
as those previous men*¹²⁹.

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¹²⁹ <http://arkivi.peshkupauje.com/2009/01/pyetje/tekste-kengesh-folklorike-te.html> (marrë në 7 qershor 2013)