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From ethnographic narratives to cultural Tourism: Integrating intangible heritage into sustainable development in Northern Albania

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Abstract

This study examines the conventional clothing/costumes and decorative accessories from Shkodra and the Northern Highlands, as described by William Le Queux in "An Observer in the Near East" (1907), focusing on their cultural symbolism and potential role in the development of cultural tourism. What is observed reveals a dual dimension of clothing: everyday dressing characterized by elaborately embroidered garments, veils, and urban elements that displayed social status, modesty, and craftsmanship; and festive and ritual clothing, in which costumes and ornaments functioned as public displays of wealth, marital status, and collective identity. Women's clothing featured embroidered fabrics in red and black, complemented by white veils, colorful silk scarves, and heavy belts adorned with silver, iron, or decorative stones. At the same time, men combined local and Ottoman elements such as the silk-ribbon fez, the silk shawl, and weapons, which were used symbolically, in ritual contexts, including during religious ceremonies.

The analysis reveals that colors and ornaments carried specific cultural meanings: red symbolized solemnity and strength, while white represented purity and devotion, and metals (gold, silver, and iron) embodied wealth and social prestige. These cultural codes transformed clothing into a visual language that conveyed identity, faith, and community belonging. In festive contexts, especially during the Festival of Our Lady of Shkodra, clothing and ornaments served as performative instruments combining material and intangible heritage.

This rich heritage unlocks exciting possibilities for sustainable cultural tourism. By reviving traditional festivals, designing special tours that celebrate traditional costumes and ceremonies, empowering local artisans, and incorporating intangible traditions (such as hospitality and meaningful ornamental symbols) into authentic visitor experiences, Shkodra can showcase its unique cultural character and attract discerning international travelers. The findings reveal that historical clothing and decorative arts represent more than symbols of belonging and social structure, and they are powerful instruments for safeguarding, sharing, and celebrating Albania's cultural legacy

Keywords: Shkodra, traditional clothing, jewelry, cultural heritage, cultural tourism.

1. Introduction

The dual nature of cultural heritage, both concrete and abstract, forms an essential foundation for safeguarding cultural identity, bolstering shared historical memory, and achieving sustainable tourism development objectives. UNESCO's (2003) comprehensive approach acknowledges that heritage encompasses more than architectural landmarks and tangible relics, extending to include cultural practices, ritual observances, craft traditions, and symbolic elements that represent community narratives and collective identity. Traditional garments and decorative items exemplify particularly valuable material heritage resources demonstrating complex relationships between historical processes, social stratification, and community organization systems.

Cultural tourism has become one of the fastest-growing sectors of global tourism in recent years, effectively linking heritage preservation with economic development and fostering community involvement (Richards, 2021; Timothy, 2020). The World Tourism Organization reports that over 40% of international travelers now seek out cultural activities during their trips, making local heritage a crucial advantage for tourist destinations. This growth indicates that modern travelers are increasingly seeking authentic cultural experiences and opportunities to learn about local traditions and community life.

Albania boasts an abundant treasury of traditional dress and ornamental artifacts of significant ethnographic importance; however, this cultural wealth has not been fully leveraged to develop authentic visitor experiences. Traditional costumes representing the convergence of material and immaterial cultural inheritance offer exceptional possibilities for cultural tourism expansion. The city of Shkodra and the surrounding areas represent a unique case study extensively documented by foreign travelers and explorers during the 19th and early 20th centuries, including Karl Steinmetz, Georg von Hahn, Franz Nopcsa, Erich Liebert, and William Le Queux (1907), among many others.

Le Queux's book constitutes the central focus of this analysis. Written as a travel chronicle, it follows his path from Western Europe through the Balkan region, stopping at several important cities before entering Albania. He presents Shkodra and its vicinity as a region with a strong cultural character and deep-rooted costume traditions. His detailed accounts of dress patterns, ornamental details, color choices, and symbolic meanings related to social class and ethnic groups provide essential resources for today's cultural tourism investigations. According to Apostolakis (2003), heritage not only embodies the historical and symbolic values of a community but also functions as an economic resource, creating opportunities for tourism development and sustainability. Building on this perspective, traditional costumes represent a crucial component of cultural tourism: they preserve identity, create employment opportunities, and generate income for local communities (Farsani & Jamshidi, 2020). Current studies further stress integrating both tangible and intangible heritage into sustainable development plans. Research shows that the inclusion of authentic

elements of local culture, including traditional clothing, adds value to the tourist experience, builds a differentiated identity for destinations, and contributes to the empowerment of local communities. This study contributes to cultural tourism by suggesting that historical accounts and heritage elements be used to develop themed tours, exhibitions, and cultural reconstructions that promote regional identity and sustainable development.

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2. Literature Review

2.1. Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development

Cultural heritage constitutes one of the most important resources for the creation of authentic tourism products and the promotion of sustainable development. According to UNESCO (2003), cultural heritage encompasses a wide range of elements that represent the history, identity, and values of a community, including material objects such as traditional costumes, ornaments, and crafts, as well as the intangible elements such as rites, customs, mythologies, and social codes.

These interconnected dimensions remain unified, establishing narrative continuity that bridges collective remembrance, cultural essence, and tourist interaction. Le Queux extensively chronicles women's traditional clothing in Shkodra, emphasizing the white head coverings and flower-patterned waist ornaments as representatives of moral purity, household status, and communal identification. His male costume documentation highlights embellished crimson vests and blue-accented belt decorations expressing dignity, social hierarchy, and tribal belonging.

According to tourism research, traditional costumes can be understood as forms of cultural capital offering significant potential for building destination identity and creating differentiation in the competitive global tourism market. They serve as tangible expressions of cultural heritage, communicating historical narratives, reflecting the intersection of social and aesthetic influences, and demonstrating the evolution of intercultural relationships over time. In this context, Timothy (2020) treats material heritage as a fundamental component in the construction of experiential products, where tourists are not just passive observers but active participants in the authentic experience of local culture as well.

Beyond preserving authenticity, contemporary literature also highlights the challenge of the commodification of cultural heritage. Moreover, recent developments have highlighted the role of digitalization and innovation in the promotion of cultural heritage

Ottaviani et al. (2024) highlight that the digital transformation of cultural heritage materials constitutes a key action undertaken within the TExTOUR project scope, functioning as a mechanism for safeguarding, promoting, and improving access for local communities and visitors alike. Following this concept, it can be argued that

in practice, digitization could also include the use of advanced technologies such as augmented reality (AR), 3D models, and interactive platforms, which would create virtual exhibitions and digital itineraries for traditional clothing connecting museums, craftsmanship, and cultural events in an integrated tourist network.

The integration of cultural heritage in the development of experiential tourism products brings multiple benefits, such as economic ones, creating incomes for local communities and empowering local artisans, and social benefits which strengthen cultural identity and promote cultural interaction.

2.2. Traditional costumes as experiential tourism products

Traditional costumes represent one of the most important elements of material cultural heritage and are closely linked to the collective identity, social history, and ethnographic structure of communities. They are not only objects of the past, but they also carry symbolic codes, artistic motifs, and social rites, which take on multiple values as resources for the development of authentic tourism products.

The preservation of tangible and intangible heritage, as Giliberto and Labadi (2022) note, constitutes an essential component of sustainable development strategies at the community level. Understanding the interconnected nature of these two dimensions is crucial for effective preservation strategies. Vecco (2010) argues that cultural heritage brings together both tangible and intangible dimensions. In Albania, traditional costumes clearly reflect this connection: they are not only items of clothing or museum exhibits, but part of important life rituals such as weddings, festivals, and religious celebrations. Their meaning goes beyond fabrics and ornaments, encompassing the social practices and symbolic values connected with them. Given their cultural significance and continued relevance in contemporary Albanian society, traditional costumes also hold considerable potential for sustainable economic development.

Traditional costumes, in addition to functioning as markers of identity, represent a potential source of local sustainable development, as observed by Le, Dang, and Bui (2024), who argue that the utilization of ethnographic motifs in the creative industry strengthens the connections between culture and the local economy.

According to tourism scholarship, cultural heritage elements play a key role in shaping destination identity and differentiating destinations in the global market. In this perspective, traditional costumes can be interpreted as forms of cultural capital, functioning as tangible expressions that communicate historical narratives, merge social and aesthetic influences, and reflect intercultural relations. Similarly, Timothy (2020) highlights material heritage as a fundamental component for the development of experiential tourism products, where tourists are not just passive observers but active participants in authentic expressions of local culture.

These historical descriptions can be linked to the concept of experiential tourism, a contemporary trend that reshapes how visitors engage with heritage. Lee (2019) emphasizes that the act of wearing traditional costumes during cultural festivals enhances tourist satisfaction and fosters a stronger emotional bond with the visited place. In a complementary perspective, Farsani and Jamshidi (2020) introduce the

idea of “traditional fashion tourism,” highlighting how traditional clothing can be integrated into tourism packages that combine cultural fashion, handicrafts, and artistic activities, thereby creating income opportunities for local communities. From this perspective, the importance of co-design models, where local artisans, local stylists, and tourism actors create personalized cultural products incorporating elements and ornaments of traditional clothing into them, giving the traditional heritage a contemporary dimension without losing its authenticity. This approach increases local community participation and empowers the creative industry by promoting traditional values.

Contemporary literature emphasizes the role of digitalization in the development of experiential products. The use of technologies such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and interactive platforms to create digital exhibitions of traditional costumes allows visitors to explore 3D models, color symbolism, and the history of the motifs used. For example, a mobile application for Shkodra could guide tourists through different thematic itineraries presenting virtual models of traditional clothing. In this context, traditional costumes are no longer seen as immobile objects, but as living tourism products, capable of creating unique, personalized, and sustainable experiences. Through the involvement of the local community, the new technologies and digital platforms, they can become key elements for the construction of thematic destinations linking the preservation of cultural heritage with economic development and the reinforcement of cultural authenticity, empowering local communities and improving the authentic experience of foreign or local visitors.

2.3. Digital tools and new technology in sharing cultural heritage

In recent years, digital technology and innovation have completely changed the way we show, manage, and experience cultural heritage. New technologies like augmented reality, virtual reality, 3D models, interactive websites, and online exhibitions have created exciting ways to combine tourist experiences with protecting and explaining heritage, making it easier to access and more interesting for visitors from home and abroad.

According to UNESCO's *Dive into Heritage* project (2022–2024), digital technologies are increasingly used both for the long-term preservation of heritage through the digital archiving of materials, costumes, and artifacts, and for enhancing visitor engagement by providing interactive and immersive experiences. Complementary initiatives such as Google Arts & Culture and Europeana have created open platforms that digitize museum collections, including traditional costumes and historical artifacts, thereby making cultural heritage more globally accessible and allowing for virtual reconstructions of elements otherwise limited by space or time.

In Albania, the digitization of traditional Shkodra costumes and ethnographic ornaments would offer the possibility of creating 3D archives that could be used as promotional materials for thematic itineraries and interactive museums, and which would directly impact the exploration and promotion of our cultural heritage.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research approach

This study is based on a qualitative and interdisciplinary approach, combining elements from cultural anthropology, ethnography, heritage studies, and cultural tourism. The main goal is to understand and interpret the tangible and intangible cultural heritage documented by travelers, ethnographers, and foreign scholars who visited Northern Albania and Shkodra in the early 20th century.

The methodological approach combines textual content analysis with hermeneutic interpretation in order to identify explicit descriptions and decode implicit meanings embedded in the sources. This dual strategy makes it possible not only to extract factual information but also to uncover the authors' perceptions and representations, situating them within the historical, social, and cultural context of their time. Furthermore, the analysis is framed through theoretical concepts drawn from cultural and heritage tourism studies (Richards, 2021; Timothy, 2020), enabling an assessment of how such historical texts may inform the development of contemporary tourism products.

3.2 Data Corpus

The main data corpus consists of primary historical and ethnographic sources that are of particular importance for the study of Shkodra and the Northern Alps include Le Queux, W. (1907). He gives an ethnographic and cultural description of the journey, bringing very valuable details on the traditional clothing, social structure, and cultural rituals of Shkodra and the surrounding areas. Fragments from primary works that describe elements of heritage have been identified, emphasizing:

- Traditional clothing (for men and women);
- Symbolism of colors and ornaments;
- Religious rites and rituals;

In addition to these works, the study uses secondary sources of contemporary literature and UNESCO reports on tangible and intangible cultural heritage, as well as academic literature on cultural tourism and the development of thematic itineraries (Richards, 2021; Timothy, 2020; Vecco, 2010).

4. From ethnographic description to tourist evaluation

4.1. The urban aesthetics of Shkodra according to William Le Queux (1907)

Le Queux (1907), presents one of the earliest and most detailed descriptions of traditional urban clothing in Shkodra. He accurately notes the elements that make the Shkodra men's costume unique:

"The costume of the Scutarine men is distinctly quaint and curious. A short dark red jacket, the front and sleeves of which are so completely braided with narrow black braid as to almost hide the foundation, and edged with dozens of oblong brass buttons; a pair of wide, dark blue baggy breeches reaching to the knee; a round flat fez with a huge blue silk tassel that falls about

the shoulders; a bright, striped silk sash; their legs in white cotton stockings and feet in patent leather dress-shoes. Such is the dress of the average Christian one meets in Shkodra."

This description shows that male urban clothing was a mixture of local elements. This clothing represents civic status with decorative elements (black cord, bronze buttons, multi-colored silk scarf) that link it to the tradition of handicrafts. The fez with a blue ribbon shows Ottoman influence, while leather shoes are a sign of urbanity. This fragment also testifies to a rich aesthetic and social stratification of Shkodra clothing at the beginning of the 20th century. The colors used, the selected materials, and the embroidery details were not simply decorative elements, but they also carried coded social and identity messages, the meaning of which is:

- The dark red color symbolized dignity, authority, and civic pride, distinguishing Shkodra as an urban center with consolidated traditions;
- The fine black embroidery on the jacket indicated the high level of craftsmanship and the social status of the person wearing it;
- The dark blue color of the trousers suggested seriousness, stability, and international trade connections, as such materials were often imported from Vienna or Istanbul;
- The blue silk-fringed fez represented Ottoman cultural affiliation, but in Shkodra it was adapted and recontextualized as a sign of local urban identity;

In this way, the costume described by Le Queux functions as a visual language for communicating identity, indicating the individual's place in society, tribal affiliation, and close connection to tradition and cultural heritage. Another very important aspect of this quote is the traditional costume of Shkodra men, which reflects the combination of local culture with international influences. The materials mentioned, such as silk and basma, were imported from Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian markets, indicating Shkodra's role as a very important trading center. This interaction shows that traditional clothing was not an isolated product, but the result of a rich cultural and economic exchange. This makes it possible to recreate a tourist narrative that connects historical Shkodra with international markets and traditional trade networks.

He then describes the clothing of Shkodra's women as follows:

{.} *"They veil, just as do the Mohammedan women, and only uncover their faces when they go to church... The outdoor dress is generally made of the same dark red cloth as the men's jackets, so completely embroidered as to appear black. Indeed no Scutarine, either man or woman, goes out in a dress unless it is covered with embroidery. In every street you will see a dozen men squatting cross-legged in a little dark shop, busily plying the needle upon the narrow black braid, and applying tiny pieces of green cloth among the braid as additional ornament. Often the braiding is a marvel of needlework and design, and some of the outdoor costumes of the women, though exceedingly ugly, are ornamented in such a manner as to amaze the Western eye."* (Le Queux, 1907)

When women went out, they wore heavy clothes, filled with dense embroidery, where the red color was lost under the decoration with a black cord. The green ornaments added contrast. This description shows the role of the embroidery craft as an element of cultural heritage. Women wore heavy costumes, decorated to the point

of excess and reflecting a culture where clothes represented identity and status. This shows that clothing was also a display of status, reflecting the craftsmanship of the craftsmen of our city. But he also describes the clothing of the Shkodra urban woman, emphasizing several other elements, such as the veil, the scarf, etc.

{.} *"Female outdoor attire is, of course, of the divided skirt order, trousers of thick braided cloth so clumsy that the wearer can only walk with difficulty, a long cape richly embroidered on the shoulders and reaching to the hips. From the bridge of the nose to the knee falls the white veil, like the Moslem women, while from the sash are pinned gaily colored silk handkerchiefs, which... lend additional color to the most unwieldy and ugly of all the dresses of the East..... In the dark. Entries the shuffling Mohammedan women, white-clothed from head to foot and veiled, look ghostly and mysterious; the Mohammedan unmarried girls with the striped red -and- white veil wrapped about them..." (Le Queux, 1907)*

Women's clothing was heavy and ceremonial: embroidered trousers, long robes with high collars, white headscarves covering the face, and brightly colored silk scarves hanging from the waist. This combined elements of religion (covering as for Muslim women) with the richly colored local aesthetic, thus conveying a symbol of Shkodra's status and cultural identity.

The wearing of the veil also distinguished the civil status of the woman. The white color of the veils worn by both Catholic and Muslim women expressed purity, modesty, and religious devotion. This brings Shkodra closer to the universal symbols of Christianity and Islam and the mutual respect that Albanians have for their respective religions. The colorful silk scarves represented wedding gifts, which were not used simply as decoration, but were also a symbol of the marriage rite and new family life. Daily clothing was a cultural code where modesty, religious identity, and rich craftsmanship were combined, building an image of the city as a center of tradition. In the context of the connection with cultural tourism, such a description has great value, as it is related to the promotion of traditional marriage customs as part of the intangible heritage, which must be valued and preserved, as it is part of our identity.

Le Queux (1907) continues with the description of the dress of the village woman:

{.} *Unveiled country women in short, coarse, black homespun skirts, wearing great iron-studded belts and savage ornaments in brass, copper, and gold."*

The clothing of women from the villages was simpler, as it consisted of a thick black woolen skirt, but with heavy iron belts and large metal ornaments. This represented a modest economic status, as this clothing was more suitable for everyday life and the climate, while the heavy iron belts were a symbol of simplicity, but protective, as they were associated with strength and security. The large metal ornaments, on the other hand, although not precious, were very important as a decorative element, and they were also clear indicators of a more modest economic status. This clothing shows the way of dressing in rural areas: practicality over luxury.

4.1.1 Value for heritage and cultural tourism

Le Queux's description of the experience offers three main dimensions that can be used in the development of authentic tourism products:

The museum and exhibition dimension, where the traditional costumes described can be recreated and exhibited in ethnographic museums such as the Historical Museum of Shkodra, using 3D models, augmented reality (AR), and interactive platforms, giving visitors from all over the world the opportunity to engage and experience these exhibitions, thus promoting our cultural heritage.

Experiential tourism allows visitors to participate in workshops and learn about embroidery, the use of colors, and their symbolic meanings. This type of activity increases cultural sensitivity and creates personalized experiences, which are increasingly sought after today to gather as many individual experiences as possible, valued today as people seek to collect diverse individual experiences.

Looking at Le Queux's description in the context of sustainable tourism, traditional Shkodra clothing can be transformed into cultural products with added value, which could increase the attractiveness of the destination through authenticity and unique experiences. They are increasingly sought after in recent years, thus supporting the local economy, and including embroidery masters and various artisans that would also have an impact on strengthening cultural identity by turning heritage into an educational element for foreign or local visitors, as well as in the international promotion of our cultural heritage.

4.2 Clothing of highland women and men during religious rituals

Shkodra and Northern Albania are known throughout the world for religious coexistence and respect. So many travelers, explorers, and foreign diplomats, who in early times visited our country, were amazed by this religious coexistence and respect. Le Queux describes in great detail the clothing of women and men during various religious holidays and rituals. He describes that during the holy month of Ramadan, gunshots were heard, but the companion Paloke explains to Le Queux that gunfire is simply a way of celebrating the arrival of the month of Ramadan, and everyone shoots as a sign of celebration.

{.}" It is only the vigil of the fast of Ramadan. It is our way of celebrating it." By that time, every man in the whole town was firing off his revolver." (Le Queux, 1907)

Precisely such a description - Catholic men did not smoke outdoors out of respect - shows the festive atmosphere throughout the city, regardless of religion.

During his stay in Shkodra, he was amazed by the way the Festival of Our Lady of Shkodra was celebrated, a very important feast for Catholic believers, who respected the way of celebrating and their clothing. Thousands of people from all over the North gathered to celebrate. The Festival of Our Lady of Shkodra is presented as a panorama of costumes and ornaments. The highlander men appeared with characteristic clothing and weapons, while the women exhibited the most precious ornaments:

{.}"The streets are full of Christians from the country, the men tall, thin-legged fellows, with

black-and-white striped trousers and black furry bolero, carrying loaded rifles upon their shoulders; and the women in the various gay costumes of the tribes, each wearing profusions of gold coins strung across their breasts, heavy gold earrings, and the younger married ones with dozens of gaudy silk handkerchiefs suspended round their heavy brass or iron studded girdles, presents to them on their recent marriage.” (Le Queux, 1907)

Metal ornaments (gold coins, earrings, iron, and stone belts) had a dual function: decorative and economic. Here, it is clear that the ornaments (gold coins, large earrings, colorful scarves) served as a public display of marital status and wealth. In traditional society, they were “portable wealth” for women, as they were a form of financial security and a status symbol, indicating the level of wealth of the family. He continues with the description;

{.} *“Around the waist is a heavy hide belt... studded with iron, and with two big polished cornelians to form the buckle. Some are of antique silver of beautiful workmanship, and others, more modern, are gilt.” (Le Queux, 1907)*

The heavy iron belt adorned with decorative stones was a symbol of strength and prestige. The highland women also wore colorful silk scarves and carried embroidered bags of gifts as a sign of hospitality:

{.} *“The gaily-dressed malzore wear a bright silk handkerchief... all carry a small embroidered sack over their shoulder... these little sacks contain humble presents to the hosts.” (Le Queux, 1907)*

This rite reflects the Albanian culture of hospitality as part of the intangible heritage recognized by UNESCO. For tourism, the inclusion of this custom in cultural itineraries would bring an authentic experience to visitors, influencing sustainable tourism.

Men also had a symbolic role during religious rituals through weapons:

“They go to the Catholic Cathedral in Skodra with loaded rifles, which they place before them as they kneel and pray.” (Le Queux, 1907)

Weapons here are a “ritual ornament” and a symbol of faith and protection. In cultural heritage, this element is unique and can be presented as an aspect of highland culture. During religious festivals and rites, clothing and ornaments displayed collective identity, serving as forms of cultural and religious performance, where status, belief, and custom were used as means of visual communication.

The descriptions of clothing and ornaments are very important as they show the close connection with the cultural heritage and tourism, as clothing and ornaments are material heritage, and are preserved in museums and displayed in themed exhibitions, but such “living history” can be created by producing authentic and special experiences. Religious rites, veils, coins, silk scarves, and weapons are intangible heritage because they are related to symbols, customs, and ways of living. For cultural tourism, Shkodra offers a rich mosaic where the visitor can experience costumes, learn their meanings, and participate in traditional festivals that revive these traditions.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of William Le Queux's descriptions of Shkodra and the Northern Highlands clearly shows that clothing and ornaments are not simply practical elements of body covering, but also symbolic forms where identity, faith, social status, and traditions collide. They represent a double heritage: material (costumes, ornaments, weapons) and intangible (meanings of colors, religious rites, marriage customs, culture of hospitality).

The everyday clothes of Shkodra citizens, filled with embroidery and ornaments, show a society closely linked to local crafts. The making of black braids, the combination of red and black colors, and the use of silk in scarves and veils are evidence of the skill of local craftsmen and the way the city built its visual identity. These elements are today associated with craft tourism and the promotion of traditional crafts.

Festive and ritual clothing had a performative function: highland and village women wore gold ornaments, heavy metal belts, colorful silk scarves, and embroidered bags, which were not just decorations but symbols of wealth, marital status, and a culture of giving. These public displays during religious festivals were a way to communicate identity and belonging, both socially and religiously. Today, these traditions constitute a great asset for festive and ethnographic tourism, offering opportunities for the revival of traditional parades and performances.

The men's weapons (the rifles placed in front of the altar in the cathedral) are an extraordinary example of how a practical object becomes a ritual ornament and a symbol of faith. This element shows the combination of the culture of honor and faith with religious ritual, creating a unique form of intangible heritage. For tourism, this aspect can be explained through exhibitions and narratives of mountain life, placing Shkodra as a model of a culture combining materiality and spirituality.

The colors and ornaments were not random, but carried clear cultural messages: red was associated with strength and solemnity; white with purity and modesty; metal (iron, silver, gold) with status and power; while multicolored silk with life and the joy of marriage. These cultural codes constitute a visual language that society uses to transmit values and identity. Today, for cultural tourism, interpreting this "language of clothing" would be a way to offer deeper and more authentic experiences to visitors. The culture of hospitality, linked to the symbolic gifts of highland women (embroidered bags with food or small items), shows that clothing also had a social and ritual function, being closely linked to interpersonal relationships. This element is part of the Albanian intangible heritage, which today is important for building a narrative of sustainable and hospitable tourism.

Overall, the clothing and ornaments described by Le Queux are an ethnographic reflection of the early 20th century, where Shkodra is presented as a vibrant center of material and spiritual culture. They are evidence of a collective identity that used clothing as a means of communication, expression, and preservation of tradition. Through them, Shkodra and the Highlands offer an extraordinary potential for cultural tourism, combining history, crafts, customs, and rituals in a narrative that can attract visitors interested in authenticity and rare cultural experiences.

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