

Credits

This book, authored by Antonio Lauria, Valbona Flora and Kamela Guza, is based on reports and related documents produced during the Analysis Phase and the Model Phase of the “The Diaspora as a Resource for the Knowledge, Preservation and Enhancement of the Lesser Known Cultural Sites in Albania” research project.

Unless otherwise stated, pictures included in the book were taken during the Analysis phase of this research project by the members of the working group (professors, research fellows and students).

The contribution of all those who took part in the book is shown below.

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Acronym Key

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|----------------|---|
| CELIM, Albania | Centro Laici Italiani per le Missioni NGO, Vlorë |
| CESVI, Albania | Cooperazione e Sviluppo (Cooperation and Development) NGO, Përmet. |
| DiDA-Unifi | Department of Architecture, University of Florence. |
| DSPS-Unifi | Department of Social and Political Sciences, University of Florence. |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration. |
| LG | Lauria, A. Agaj, E., Cala, M, Flora V., Guza K., Kapo, D., Misseri, G., Toçila, A. & Vessella, L. (2020), <i>Linee Guida per la valorizzazione del patrimonio culturale dei piccoli borghi albanesi</i> . Research report, Firenze: Department of Architecture, University of Florence. |
| NICH | National Institute of Cultural Heritage, Tirana. |
| RP | “The Diaspora as a Resource for the Knowledge, Preservation and Enhancement of the Lesser Known Cultural Sites in Albania” research project. |
| UniZKM | Catholic University “Our Lady of Good Counsel” of Tirana. |
| VIS, Albania | Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo (International Volunteering for Development) NGO, Shkodër. |

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- Francesco Tioli and Monica Bercigli of the *Architectural Survey Lab* of the Department of Architecture of the University of Florence, coordinated and edited the digital architectural survey and the related graphical outputs of three architectural assets analysed in this book: the Katiu Bridge in Bënjë, the Church of the Dormition of Mary in Kosinë and the Church of the Dormition of Mary in Leusë;
- Anissa Alushi, Sezai Celolaj, Judriva Davidhi, Faire Dervishi, Kristi Kokëdhima, Anisa Lagji, Elda Meta, Tracy Qehajaj and Jessy Shehu (undergraduate students from the University of Florence), together with Kristiana Kumi, Joana Lamaj, Elisa Miho and Joni Zajmi, (undergraduate students from the Catholic University “Our Lady of Good Counsel” of Tirana), attended to the “Albania dei piccoli borghi” Thematic Workshop performing, with passion and motivation, the digital architectural survey and the related graphical outputs of the above mentioned architectural assets.

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Foreword

The assessment that we are products of the past is an invitation, rather than a rule. Knowing yourself and the history that surrounds you is of great importance to the future, and not only for Albanians.

If you travel through Albania, you begin to understand that time has passed even more than the books that have been written about it. Albanian spiritual riches are often associated with the appearance of the old and the vintage, which could be a house, bridge or religious object. Considering the importance of the universal values they carry, some of them are monuments of cultural heritage and part of UNESCO.

Today, some Albanians have left their homeland and reside in different places around the world. For various reasons, they are looking for ways to be more present in their country of origin, or to retain fragments and pieces of their cultural heritage to present to future generations. In the process, national identity and coexistence with other nations are naturally harmonized.

As human evidence of this commitment, five impressive villages in Albania are highly appreciated by the people familiar with the distance from the country of origin. This makes their keen sense of appreciation as special as it is human. The five selected villages are as different from each other as the coordinates of a homeland you await to discover with each passing day. They are separated by great distances, but in the space between them, they carry culture, identity and history.

Engaging the diaspora in their homeland is a government priority but also a human objective that links the desire to migrate with that of maintaining ties with the homeland. It is an energy which, with concrete examples like this project of five villages, demonstrates the contribution stemming from a desirable relationship with homeland. Government policies that strive for sustainable social and economic development of Albania are measurable with votes, whereas love for the homeland is less imaginable for the energy it can offer the country.

The project of five villages modestly 'translates' the invisible into an act evaluating the need for the contribution of the diaspora as a form of communication and assess-

ment of the quality of life in Albania. It is harmonized to the human aspect where the Italian culture learned in migration serves to 'illuminate' the originality of Albanian cultural values.

Albania is striving to offer its own tourist and cultural attractions. State policies would be poor if they did not include, as part of human and professional engagement, such projects which treat cultural heritage as opportunity for development.

Albania has recognized the necessity and contribution of the diaspora as an integral factor for improving economic life. This project of five villages revealed expected qualities for the substance of the Albanian-Italian relationship. It interconnects cultures and recreates the homeland from the distance of migration. Naturally, the five villages return to the 'coordinates' of a homeland where the known unknown is rediscovered.

To view the homeland through the diaspora eyes is more than just tourism. This is Love. As such, this project has surpassed itself.

Thank you!

Pandeli Majko

Albanian Government Minister of State for Diaspora

Preface

The book *Five Albanian Villages. Guidelines for sustainable tourism development through the enhancement of the cultural heritage* is the key product of the research project “The Diaspora as a Resource for the Knowledge, Preservation and Enhancement of the Lesser-Known Cultural Sites in Albania”. The research took place under the International Organization for Migration (IOM) programme “Engage the Albanian Diaspora to the Social and Economic Development of Albania”, funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and implemented in partnership with the Albanian Government.

What makes this complex research unique is that it was conducted by Albanian Diaspora undergraduate students and young researchers of the School of Architecture at the University of Florence, Italy. They worked under the professional guidance of Prof. Antonio Lauria on five selected case study villages: Bënjë, Kosinë and Leusë, in the Municipality of Përmet; Zvërnec, a coastal village in the Municipality of Vlorë and Razëm, a mountain village at the foothills of the Albanian Alps in the Municipality of Malësi e Madhe, to analyze the opportunities that these villages have for sustainable and inclusive social territorial development processes using their tangible and intangible cultural heritage as leverage.

In the three villages of Përmet, a detailed study of three cultural sites (the Katiu Bridge and the thermal area in the Valley of the Lengarica River in Bënjë, the open space surrounding the Church of the Dormition of Mary in Kosinë and the Church of the Dormition of Mary in Leusë) was made. An innovative approach to the architectural survey of these cultural sites, based on laser scanner and photogrammetry, was introduced in the Albanian context.

This book is both a research study from an interdisciplinary perspective and a unique social experience for the young Albanian Diaspora researchers involved in the research process who went through three different phases (analysis, modeling and pilot) in the three different areas of Albania.

The young Albanian Diaspora researchers have been able to provide a comprehensive study of the five villages highlighting their traditions, cultural heritage, current

transformation, changes from the past, as well as the opportunities to build their expectations and hopes towards the future.

I am sure that all the readers of this book will have a clear picture of how the valuable methodology utilized can be replicated and how precious the Albanian Diaspora is for its potential to contribute to the development of Albania.

This project is a clear example of how, through engagement, the transfer of knowledge and skills of Albanian Diaspora individuals can bring an added value to the development of Albania. The special bond that these persons cultivate in themselves with Albanian places, people and history, was a key element of the research and, at the same time, an opportunity for them to enhance their awareness about their roots and to reinforce their identity.

Moreover, this book value lies in its proposals for actions to local authorities, showing that Albanian cultural heritage and cultural tourism can drive a sustainable socio-economic development process that includes the environment along with the local communities, their traditions and resources.

Manoela Lussi

*Manager of the "Engage the Albanian Diaspora
to the Social and Economic Development of Albania" IOM programme*

Background

Antonio Lauria

“Five Albanian Villages. Guidelines for a sustainable tourism development through the enhancement of the cultural heritage” is one of the products of the “The Diaspora as a Resource for the Knowledge, Preservation and Enhancement of the Lesser Known Cultural Sites in Albania” research project.

This research project was designed at the Department of Architecture, University of Florence.

It took place under the “Engage the Albanian Diaspora to the Social and Economic Development of Albania” programme, funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) of Tirana and agreed with the Albanian Government to support it in furthering the involvement of the members of Albanian Diaspora in the development of the country.

This programme is implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Albania (the UN Migration Agency) in coordination with the State Minister for the Diaspora, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finances and the Economy and other line ministries as relevant, and in close relationship with the Italian Embassy in Tirana and the AICS of Tirana.

In order to better understand the cultural background of these Guidelines, a brief description of the research project is provided as follows.

“The Diaspora as a Resource for the Knowledge, Preservation and Enhancement of the Lesser Known Cultural Sites in Albania” project¹ is both an experience of *research training* and an *action research*. It aims at providing food for thought and concrete pro-

¹ The research project that won the call launched by IOM (RFP No.: AL 10/18/338 on the “Design and implementation of a Fellowship Scheme for Integrated Territorial/Local Development”). It was designed and submitted by Prof. Antonio Lauria (Department of Architecture of Florence) and other professors of the University of Florence who work for *Florence Accessibility Lab*, an Interdepartmental Research Unit that deals with issues of Accessibility to the Cultural Heritage as a resource for Human Development.

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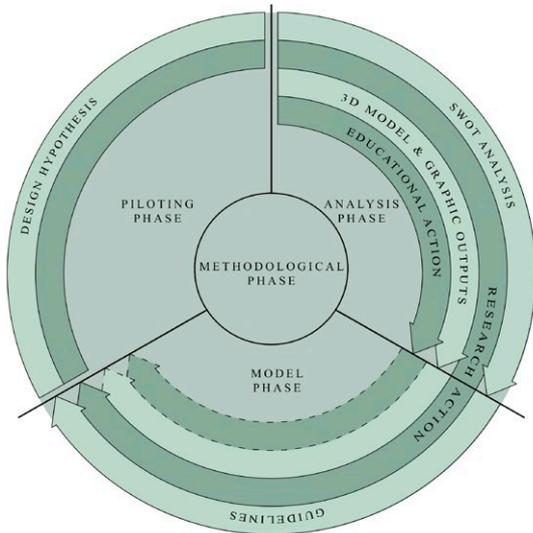


Figure 0-1 – General framework of the research project: Phases, Actions and Research findings. [Concept by Antonio Lauria; drawing by Luigi Vessella]

posals for generating sustainable and socially inclusive territorial development processes in five Albanian villages, using the tangible and intangible cultural heritage as leverage. These processes are oriented towards the improvement of the quality of life of the inhabitants and the strengthening of local identity and social networks.

This hard challenge has been addressed mainly through the transfer of knowledge and competencies in the field of the cultural heritage by members of the Albanian Diaspora in Italy (university students, young architects and researchers) to their home country. This is a key element of the research project that allowed the motivational element to be combined with the direct access to scientific literature (mostly in Albanian) and to gather valuable field data directly from the villagers, as well as to transfer this information to the non-native members of the working group.

The research lasted 18 months (from May 1st, 2019 to July 31st, 2020) and developed through 4 closely interrelated phases (Fig. 0-1).

The first phase – the *Methodological Phase* – describes the methodological design, the work plan and the operational tools of the research. At this stage, the five case study villages were identified: Bënjë, Kosinë e Leusë, in the Municipality of Përmet, Zvërnec, a coastal village in the municipality of Vlorë, and Razëm, a mountain village at the foot of the Albanian Alps in the Municipality of Malësi e Madhe² (Fig. 0-2).

In the following phase – the *Analysis Phase* – these villages were studied, through field research, from different point of views with an approach that starts from the evaluation of the general aspects to the knowledge of the specific features that distinguish them. Such features reveal different angles from which a community can be seen and certain aspects of the cultural heritage that it has developed throughout its history.

The Analysis phase nourishes both the *Model Phase* and the *Piloting Phase* of the research. In the former, the collected information is processed and organised inside the *Linee Guida per la valorizzazione del patrimonio culturale dei piccoli borghi albanesi* (Guidelines for the development of the cultural heritage of smaller Albanian



Figure 0-2 – Map of Albania with the location of the five case study villages. [Drawing by Samuela Hidri]

² The selected villages were proposed by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) in Tirana. They are all targeted areas where Italian Cooperation has been working for many years. The NGOs CESVI in Përmet, VIS in Razëm and CELIM in Zvërnec, have been available for constant collaboration in support of the research group, especially regarding organisational matters of the field research in the villages.

villages) that underpin this book. In the latter, the information is used for designing hypotheses related to three architectural assets in the three mentioned villages of the Municipality of Përmet.

Two types of actions implement the goals of the research: (1) *Educational Action*, and (2) *Research Action*.

The *Educational Action* was developed as part of the Analysis Phase of the research; it consisted of a Thematic Workshop – *Albania dei piccoli borghi* (Albanian Smaller Villages) – held at the University of Florence’s School of Architecture³ and reserved for Albanian students enrolled at the University of Florence. A number

of students from the Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning of the Polytechnic University of Tirana and the Faculty of Architecture at “Our Lady of Good Counsel” Catholic University of Tirana were also invited to participate.

The Workshop aimed to encourage the exchange and sharing of ideas among students and their peers who have grown up and/or live in Albania. The above institutions have established international cooperation agreements with the University of Florence involving the Department of Architecture. In the end, 9 students from the University of Florence and 4 students from University “Our Lady of Good Counsel” enrolled in the Thematic Workshop⁴.

The Thematic Workshop was presented on March 27th, 2019 at the premises of Palazzo Vegni in Florence (Fig. 0-3). During the presentation, the Albanian anthropologist Fatos Dingo gave a lecture entitled: *Albanian Identities*.

The focus of the Thematic Workshop was the cultural heritage of Albanian villages; more specifically, the architectural survey, through laser scanner and photogrammetry, and the detailed study of three architectural assets located in three villages of Përmet: (1) the Katiu Bridge and the thermal area in the Valley of the Lengarica River in Bënjë, (2) the area surrounding the Church of the Dormition of Mary in Kosinë, and (3) the Church of the Dormition of Mary in Leusë⁵.



Figure 0-3
The presentation of *Albania dei piccoli borghi* Thematic Workshop. A moment from the lecture of Dr. Fatos Dingo, Firenze, Palazzo Vegni, 23.3.2019.

³ The teaching staff from the Department of Architecture of the University of Florence was composed of professors and researchers belonging to different scientific sectors. They were: prof. Antonio Lauria (coordinator), prof. Pietro Matracchi, Dr. Francesco Tioli and prof. Ugo Tonietti.

⁴ The students were: Anissa Alushi, Sezai Celoalaj, Judriva Davidhi, Faire Dervishi, Kristi Kokëdhima, Anisa Lagji, Elda Meta, Tracy Qehajaj, and Jessy Shehu (an Erasmus student from the School of Education, Architecture and Arts of the University of Siegen – Germany) from the University of Florence, and Kristiana Kumi, Joana Lamaj, Elisa Miho e Joni Zajmi from the University “Our Lady of Good Counsel” of Tirana.

⁵ These architectural assets were chosen together with the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) in Tirana.



Figure 0-4
 Left: The laser scanner running in the interior of the Church of Dormition of Mary in Leusë.
 Right, above: During the survey.
 Right, below: Digital survey data processing at the Multifunctional Centre in Përmet.

The Thematic Workshop included class activities (held in Florence) and field activities (held in Albania). After a first phase of training at the Department of Architecture in Florence, students and professors moved to Përmet from May 26th to June 2nd to survey the aforementioned architectural assets. The processing of digitally acquired data (point cloud) began in Përmet's Multifunctional Centre and was further developed in Florence at the School of Architecture⁶ (Fig. 0-4).

The product of the Educational Action consists of 3D models and 2D drawings (plans, sections, elevations and perspective views in dwg format) of the three aforementioned monuments located in the villages of Bënjë, Kosinë and Leusë (Figs. 0-5-0-7).

The *Research Action* widens the research field and, together with the three above-mentioned villages, also covers the mountain village of Razëm and the coastal village of Zvërnec.

The Research Action develops along the Analysis Phase, the Model Phase and the Piloting Phase of the research project.

⁶ The collection of architectural survey data took place through a phase-based laser scanner Z+F IMAGER 5016 equipped with an integrated HDR camera (80 Mpixel) for the survey of colorimetric data, LED spotlights for dark spaces and an integrated positioning system. Digital reflex cameras were used for photogrammetric survey so as to ensure high quality and definition of the images. These images were processed following a SfM (Shape from Motion) technique so as to produce 3D models and bi-dimensional graphic materials (in particular, photomaps). In carrying out these activities, the students were able to count on the support of two experts from the Architectural Survey Lab of the Department of Architecture of the University of Florence: Dr. Monica Bercigli and Dr. Francesco Tioli.



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Figure 0-5 – A 3D model of the Katiu Bridge in Bënjë.

Figure 0-6 – A 3D model of the interior of the Church of the Dormition of Mary in Kosinë.

Figure 0-7 – A 3D model of the interior of the Church of the Dormition of Mary in Leusë.

The Analysis Phase of the Research Action was carried out in Albania, from May 1st to July 31st, 2019, by a working group consisting of 6 fellows from the Albanian Diaspora, each with specific skills⁷. The work of these fellows has been coordinated by Prof. Antonio Lauria, assisted by professors of the School of Architecture of the University of Florence⁸ and other scientific advisors.

After an exploratory survey on the five selected villages that aimed at collecting preliminary information on the places, establishing contacts with local civil and religious authorities, as well as with informal representatives of the communities, and collecting useful documentation (books, maps, photographs, regulations, etc.), the fellows undertook thorough and comprehensive field research.

This field research started with three activities carried out in parallel: the first aimed at understanding the needs of the inhabitants through semi-structured interviews; the second focused on knowledge of the features of traditional buildings through an architectural survey data sheet; the third analysed a monument representing the architectural, landscape and identity values of each village.

The semi-structured interview explored the following topics: (1) the profile of the interviewee, (2) daily life in the village, (3) places of social life, (4) traditions and rituals of the community, (5) relationship with local authorities and opinions on public services, (6) current transformations and differences from the past, (7) expectations and hopes (See Annex 1). For the five villages, 80 people were interviewed for a total of about 2,300 minutes of interviews⁹ (Fig. 0-8). Italian NGOs operating in the villages facilitated the selection of the interviewees¹⁰. This activity helped us to understand the dynamics that characterise the studied villages from the point of view of the inhabitants, and to analyse the relationship between village life and physical space at different scales (housing, settlement, region).

The architectural survey data sheet was designed according to the following fields: (1) master data and general framing, (2) typological features, (3) technological features, (4) state of conservation, (5) seismic vulnerability, (6) survey drawings (Fig. 0-9) accompanied by photos, and (7) notes (See Annex 2). A total of 38 residential buildings were analysed (on average 6 for each village)¹¹. Of these, 15 (3 for each village among those most representative of the building tradition) were reported in the analysis reports. Through this activity, a first concrete approach to local building cultures was possible.

Concerning the monuments, the values that these buildings represent for the inhabitants and surrounding communities were described and a historical-typological analysis was carried out.

⁷ They were: Ar. Enis Agaj, MSc Migena Cala, Dr. Valbona Flora, Dr. Kamela Guza, Ar. Dritan Kapo and Ar. Arget Toçila. They were granted a 9-month fellowship at the Department of Architecture of the University of Florence in spring 2019.

⁸ They were: Prof. Leonardo Chiesi (for urban sociology), Prof. Pietro Matracchi (for architectural conservation), and Prof. Ugo Tonietti (for safeguard and structural safety of built heritage).

⁹ More specifically, in Bënjë 14 people were interviewed for a total of about 250 minutes of interview; in Kosinë 16 people for about 290 minutes; in Leusë 12 people for about 260 minutes; in Razëm 20 people for about 800 minutes; in Zvërnec 18 people for about 670 minutes.

¹⁰ See note 2.

¹¹ Many sketches were made, accompanied by observation notes; more than 6,000 digital pictures were taken and 12 Full HD videos were filmed. The average duration of each architectural survey was about 2 hours.



Figure 0-8
An old woman of
Leusë showing her
memories during
an interview break.

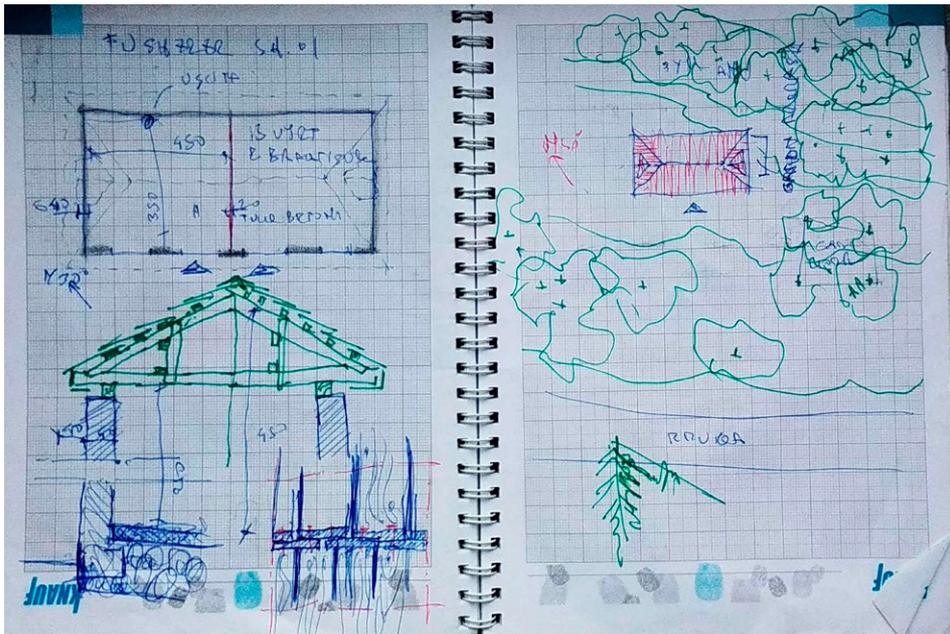


Figure 0-9
Sketches and notes
of the survey of
a building in the
village of Razëm.

Meanwhile, using an architectural survey sheet specifically designed for this research, a set of data regarding the different materials and construction elements of the monuments was collected. A careful analysis of causes of decay and failure of every construction element (retaining walls, foundations, load bearing walls, partitions, floors, roofs, and so on) was carried out below. Finally, the reports of the restoration projects made available by the National Institute of Cultural Heritage (Instituti Kombëtar i Trashëgimisë Kulturore), the former Institute of Cultural Monuments, were analysed.



Figure 0-10
Razëm. The 'red'
villa.



Figure 0-11
Zvërnec. The
Church of the
Dormition of Mary.

In addition to the already mentioned architectural assets located in the villages of the Municipality of Përmet, a historical residential complex in Razëm and the Church of the Dormition of Mary in Zvërnec have been studied (Figs. 0-10 and 0-11).

More information has been added to these data: part of it has been collected on the field; the rest through the consultation of heterogeneous documents (see section *Sources* in the Introduction).

The information that was collected during the Analysis Phase has been finalised with three reports (one for the three villages in the Municipality of Përmet and one each for Razëm and Zvërnec). Each of these reports begins with a general overview whose purpose is to offer preliminary knowledge of the village in its local context. It describes the historical, landscape, urban and social aspects of each village, the history of the settlement and its social and economic structure. This is followed by an analysis based on a series of ‘determinants’ (a total of 17) associated with specific research questions. Determinants are a flexible tool for understanding reality. They aim to explore the main aspects of life in the villages and are the backbone that supports and directs the flow of information collected through scientific literature, privileged witnesses and on-site visits (Tab. 0-1). This is followed by information gained from the semi-structured interviews and the survey sheets relating to buildings and monuments.

Table 0-1 – Determinants and Research Questions identified for the description of each village.

| NO. | DETERMINANTS | RESEARCH QUESTIONS |
|-----|--|--|
| 1. | History of the village | How and when did the village form? What are the most important events in its history? |
| 2. | Demography | How many people live permanently in the village? How many people left the village in recent years? Where did they emigrate to? |
| 3. | Information resources | Is there any available information or documentation about the village (books, cartography, pictures, projects, etc.)? |
| 4. | Road usability and Accessibility | Is the village easy to reach from the main communication routes? What are the conditions of the roads inside the village? How accessible are the main assets, places and services? |
| 5. | Relationships with neighbouring villages and towns | What are the relationships of the villagers with the surrounding communities? When (on what occasion) are these relationships activated? |
| 6. | Identity and Social structure | What is the social structure of the community? Is the local identity fragmented or cohesive? Does <i>in-group bonding</i> prevail over <i>out-group bridging</i> ? What is the relationship of the locals with their past? Is there a shared vision of the future? Are there any emerging trends within the younger generations? How is social solidarity expressed among the locals? Is there any form of informal social solidarity network? |
| 7. | Local traditions | Are there festivities and specific folk traditions in the village? Is the community capable of preserving local values and traditions? Which are the typical products and traditional dishes of the village? What types of traditional knowledge have been lost? |
| 8. | Craftsmanship | What are the main typical products of local craftsmanship? Are there local artists and/or craftsmen (potters, carpenters, smiths, etc.)? |
| 9. | Landscape and Soft mobility | What are the specific features and the structure of the landscape? Are there landscape assets and areas of considerable tourist interest? What are the main modifications that the landscape has undergone over time? Are there any threats and critical issues? Are there paths that can be used by hikers and itineraries that can be used by cyclists? Are these trails signposted / equipped? |

| NO. | DETERMINANTS | RESEARCH QUESTIONS |
|-----|--|---|
| 10. | Public space | What kind of public space is present in the village? What are the distinctive features of the public space? Which public spaces in the village are usually used by the inhabitants? How and when do inhabitants use public spaces? What is the state of conservation of the public space? |
| 11. | Cultural heritage | What are the main cultural assets? Is there any historical information about them? What is their role in the life of the community? What is their general conservation status? What are the main features of the local building culture? |
| 12. | Community institutions | What are the local civil and religious institutions oriented towards the public good? What are their main activities? What is the relationship of the villagers with the local and central institutions? |
| 13. | Infrastructure endowments | Are water and electricity supply adequate? Is there a sewerage system? Is there a waste collection service? Which are the main problems related to these issues? |
| 14. | Public services | What kind of public services (educational, health, social-care, leisure, etc.) are present in the village or in its immediate neighbourhood? Is public transport available? |
| 15. | Tourist services and facilities | Are there services available to tourists? Is tourist accommodation available in the village or in its immediate neighborhood? What type? How many beds are available? |
| 16. | Access to technological infrastructures and Social media use | Is Internet access available in the village? Do villagers use social networks? What is the level and quality of network coverage of the mobile operators? |
| 17. | Ongoing and planned projects | Are there ongoing or future enhancement / redevelopment projects concerning the village? Who are these projects funded by? |

The Analysis Phase ends with a SWOT analysis, which aims to outline, as much as possible, problems and potential of each village. For the specific role that it plays in the research, the SWOT analysis is not going to be considered only as a product of the Analysis Phase of the research, but also a metaphorical bridge between it and the next Model Phase (Fig. 0-12).

The Model Phase was carried out from August 1st, 2019 to January 31st, 2020 by the same fellows of the Albanian Diaspora who attended the Analysis Phase of the research, assisted by one other fellow with specific skills in the drafting of guiding tools for planning, designing and managing architectural works¹².

As mentioned above, this phase of the research aimed at drafting the “Linee Guida per la valorizzazione del patrimonio culturale dei piccoli borghi albanesi”. The overall goal was to develop a tool that, despite the fact it was focused on five case study villages, can be transferred and replicated in other Albanian villages, with the necessary changes and adaptations¹³.

The *Piloting Phase* took place from February 1st to July 31st, 2020. It was carried out by 4 fellows¹⁴ of the Albanian Diaspora in Italy and by one other fellow with expertise in the safeguard and structural safety of built heritage¹⁵.

¹² He was Dr. Luigi Vessella.

¹³ Purpose, features, and structure of the Guidelines are described in the Introduction to this book.

¹⁴ They were: Dr. Valbona Flora, Dr. Kamela Guza, Ar. Dritan Kapo and Ar. Samuela Hidri. They were granted a 6-month fellowship at the Department of Architecture of the University of Florence in January 2020.

¹⁵ She was Dr. Giulia Misseri.

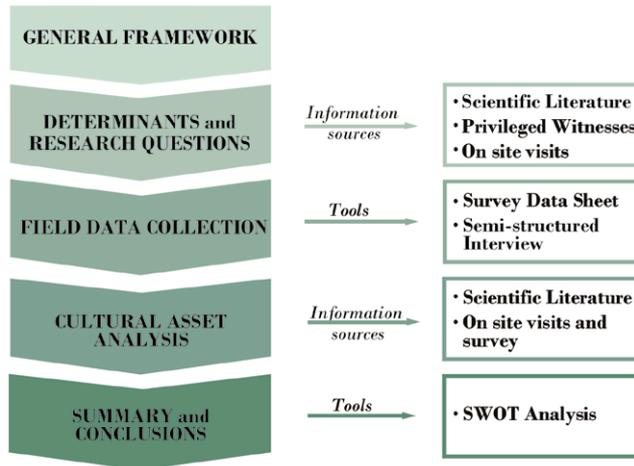


Figure 0-12
Structure, sources and tools of the Analysis Phase report. [Concept by Antonio Lauria; drawing by Samuela Hidri]

The product of this phase consists in the development of design hypotheses relating to the 3 architectural assets of the villages of Bënjë, Leusë, and Kosinë defined and analysed during the Thematic Workshop, namely: the Katiu Bridge and the thermal area on the Lengarica River in Bënjë, the area surrounding the Church of the Dormition of Mary in Kosinë and the Church of the Dormition of Mary in Leusë.

These design hypotheses are based on *Intervention Strategies* drafted in this book and on the following goals: (1) a willingness to promote local resources both in terms of human resources (e.g. artists, potters, carpenters, smiths, etc.) and available building materials, (2) respect for the principles of social inclusion, (3) consistency with the most up-to-date criteria on the conservation and restoration of the cultural heritage, and (4) attention to the environmental dimension of the project (i.e. the use of renewable energy and sustainable eco-friendly solutions).

As far as the area surrounding the church of Kosinë and the thermal area next to the Katiu Bridge are concerned, two projects were designed. These projects start from a regional scale framework and come to define new ways of using spaces through original architectural ideas and solutions consistent with the *genius loci*¹⁶ (Norberg-Schulz, 1980; 1985) (see Figs. I-3.18 and I-3.19; Fig. I-5.2.8).

Regarding the church of Leusë, having acknowledged its state of structural weakness, as well as the state of decay of its wall paintings, we decided to start a multi-disciplinary research process (grounded on crossed analyses and on a series of diagnostic tools) aimed at supporting future consolidation and restoration works. The information gained and the many critical issues that emerged (all of which would require a specific in-depth analysis as well as the implementation of diagnostic on-site testing with the indispensable cooperation of local institutions), would have made the drafting of a restoration project naively unrealistic. Nonetheless, the results of the analyses carried out (which indicate a pressing need for safeguard work) provide a clear picture of the methodological and diagnostic basis needed as a valid support for any future conservation projects¹⁷ (see Figs. I-5.3.12 and I-5.3.13).

¹⁶ Dritan Kapo and Samuela Hidri drafted these projects under the supervision of Antonio Lauria and with the collaboration of Valbona Flora and Kamela Guza.

¹⁷ Giulia Misseri edited this report under the supervision of Antonio Lauria, Pietro Matracchi and Ugo Tonietti and with the collaboration of Monica Bercigli, Faire Dervishi, Kamela Guza and Arget Toçila.

Introduction

Antonio Lauria

This Introduction describes the pivotal elements of the Guidelines illustrated in the following chapters. The Guidelines can be seen as a contribution of ideas that provide a broad schedule of concrete proposals, recommendations and suggestions (some of which need further verification and analysis before their implementation) for the sustainable development of the five selected villages.

The Guidelines are a part of the *Strategic Planning*.

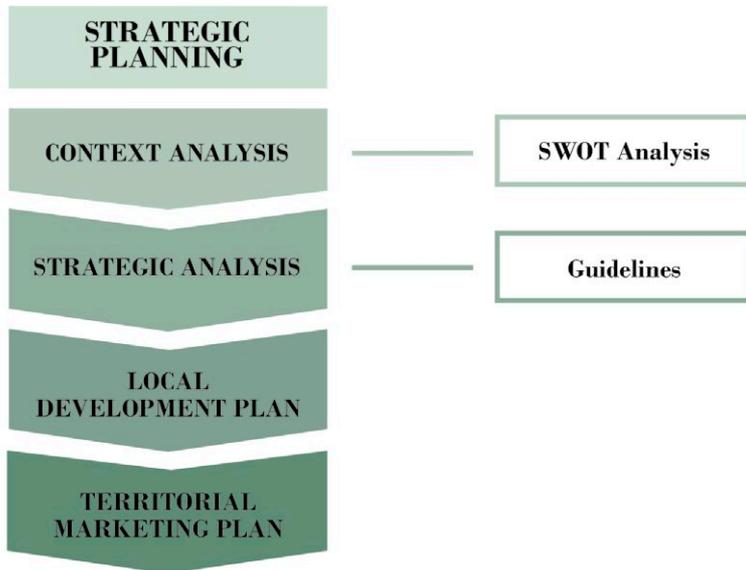


Figure 0-13
The Guidelines
as a phase of the
Strategic Planning.
[Concept by
Antonio Lauria;
drawing by
Samuela Hidri]

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Antonio Lauria, Valbona Flora, Kamela Guza, *Five Albanian Villages. Guidelines for a Sustainable Tourism Development through the Enhancement of the Cultural Heritage*, © 2020 Author(s), content CC BY 4.0 International, metadata CC0 1.0 Universal, published by Firenze University Press (www.fupress.com), ISSN 2704-5919 (online), ISBN 978-88-5518-175-4 (PDF), DOI 10.36253/978-88-5518-175-4

The Strategic Planning starts from the *Context Analysis* (carried out mostly through SWOT Analysis in the “The Diaspora as a Resource for the Knowledge, Preservation and Enhancement of the Lesser Known Cultural Sites in Albania” research project (see Background) and, through these Guidelines, faces the *Strategic Analysis* phase.

For each of the analysed villages, the actions proposed in the Guidelines can be examined on the basis of the resources available and used to create the *Local Development Plan*.

This, in turn, is the basis of the *Territorial Marketing Plan*, with which the Strategic planning ends (Fig. 0-13).

Context

As in all European countries, also in Albania the small villages scattered throughout the territory have always been a cohesive force of cultural identity. Although often they still preserve ancient traditions and a remarkable cultural heritage, their role was weakened over time. Due to emigration of the younger and more active inhabitants, often villages cease to be a living and productive world and slip into a state of abandonment: the forest advances and takes the place of agricultural land that is no longer cultivated; the transfer of social traditions and practices from one generation to another is in serious danger of being cut short.

In the Albanian villages, however, the general living conditions are often more difficult than anywhere else. Among factors that exacerbate the situation may be mentioned: the intense phenomenon of migration (an endemic evil in Albania), resumed with virulent intensity after the fall of the Communist regime¹, the faintness of the social, entrepreneurial and economic fabric, the low level of education of the inhabitants, the lack of adequate infrastructure and public services, the lack of organised forms of cooperation and solidarity, the submissive role of women, the lack of awareness regarding the value of the preserved cultural heritage, the difficulty for the inhabitants to play an ‘active’ role in protecting their land against external threats.

Reversing this situation, facing these issues is not easy and needs time, forward-looking policies, a vision of sustainable development and human, community, information, regulatory and financial resources. Such conditions do not seem to be available today.

In many Albanian villages – like those studied in this book – there is, however, a promising development potential related to the rich (tangible and intangible) cultural heritage upon which is possible to count in order to imagine a better future that needs to be written together with the local communities.

Consistently with the Analysis Phase of the research, this book focuses on five villages: Bënjë, Leusë, and Kosinë in the Municipality of Përmet, Razëm in the Municipality of Malësi e Madhe, and Zvërnec, in the Municipality of Vlorë (see Fig. 0-2).

These five villages are situated around the country from north to south. Each of them expresses specific features, problems, potential and significance. Despite the variety of local situations, however, they also have some common features. For this reason, inevitably, some proposed actions are going to be similar or even identical in the different contexts being studied.

¹ According to World Bank figures, from 1990 to 2010, 1,438,300 people left the country, equivalent to 45.4% of the population residing in Albania (World Bank, 2011). See also King & Gëdeshi (2019).

Purposes

These Guidelines aim to provide ideas for the regeneration of the studied Albanian villages and to create socio-economic value for their communities. In a structured form, they provide strategies and actions to activate sustainable development processes focused on the touristic enhancement of the cultural heritage.

In these Guidelines, the cultural heritage is seen as a centuries-old human construction where the tangible and intangible values of a community are concentrated. As a whole, the cultural heritage is a complex matter within which the identity of a place is established and a specific urban consistency featuring historical, social and cultural elements of unique value takes shape (see ICOMOS, 2002; Fusco Girard, 2007).

The Guidelines aspire on one side to trigger *bonding processes*, which aim at strengthening the internal bonds of social cohesion, cooperation, solidarity, reciprocity, etc., and on the other side, to foster *bridging processes*, which aim at creating the abilities for establishing relationships that go beyond the material and cultural boundaries of a community. This allows every village to be considered not as an isolated spatial and social entity, but, on the contrary, as an entity in a strong and constant relationship with its context.

The specific objectives of the Guidelines can be summarised as follows:

1. Preserve cultural diversity and advocate principles of social inclusion and gender equality;
2. Promote local identity and the social capital of the villages;
3. Provide insights to help contrast processes of depopulation and abandonment of villages;
4. Promote the enhancement of cultural, architectural, and environmental resources;
5. Propose replicable actions regarding the conservation and tourist enhancement of the cultural heritage of the villages in a perspective of environmental, cultural, social and economic sustainability;
6. Show that the cultural heritage is a particularly effective factor in triggering and consolidating consistent, long-lasting and sustainable processes of human development (Sen, 1987; UNDP, 2010; Nussbaum, 2011);
7. Inspire urban policies and provide guidance to implement urban and landscape planning.

Structure of the Guidelines

These Guidelines are divided into 3 Parts: the first Part concerns the 3 villages of the Municipality of Përmet (Bënjë, Leusë, and Kosinë); the second Part deals with the village of Razëm; the third Part is dedicated to the village of Zvërnec.

Each of these Parts opens with a General Overview that briefly describes the geographical and administrative context of the village, some demographic aspects, the needs and expectations of the inhabitants, the production activities, and the territorial vocations. In what follows, some chapters systematically addresses topics regarding two sectors: (1) *intangible cultural heritage* and (2) *tangible cultural heritage*.

These two connotations of the cultural heritage are inextricably linked and are the community's expression of knowledge. The intangible heritage is related to the legacy

and permanence of traditions, cultures, and experiences in a given context². The tangible heritage is seen in terms of landscape and built space (the latter intended as a set of 'full' and 'empty' units, of built structures connected by open-air public and private spaces)³.

The contents of the Guidelines are divided into 4 informative levels:

Level 1: Topic

Level 2: General description

Level 3: Intervention Strategies

Level 4: Actions.

Each *Topic* (informative level 1.) expresses a particular aspect of the cultural heritage.

As far as the intangible cultural heritage is concerned, the following topics have been developed:

- Food Heritage;
- Traditions, Social Practices and Local Craftsmanship.

As far as the tangible cultural heritage is concerned, the Guidelines are based on the relation of the Topics to the "scale of intervention" (Fitch, 1982): from the territorial scale to the settlement scale and then to the building scale. More specifically the following topics will be analysed:

- Landscape;
- Settlements and Buildings;
- Architectural Assets.

The territorial scale considers the development possibilities related to natural and man-made landscape as well as the challenges dealing with mobility and accessibility (roads, paths, signs, rest and refreshment areas, etc.).

The settlement scale explores the urban features that are to be emphasised in order to raise the quality of life in the villages and the tourism supply: public space, infrastructure and public services to be improved or implemented, specific activities or social catalysts capable of improving social life. While as far as the building scale is concerned, bearing in mind especially tourism support services, the possibilities of *functional restructuring* (new uses replacing the former ones), *functional regeneration* (optimizing existing uses) and *functional diversification* (introduction of new uses while keeping existing ones) have been assessed (Tiesdell *et al.* 1996).

Finally, specific attention is given to the five chosen architectural assets (one for each village). Each of them encloses the identity and memory of the village. The Albanian Government has recognised four out of five of these architectural assets as category I Cultural

² Albania ratified the Convention for the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2003) in 2006. Currently only iso-polyphonic music is enlisted in the UNESCO protected items and there is an ongoing nomination for the National Folk Festival of Gjirokastër.

³ Albania ratified the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO, 1972) in 1989. Currently, there are four Albanian sites inscribed on the list: the ancient city of Butrint, the Historic Centres of Berat and Gjirokastër, the Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe, and the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region. On the tentative list, there are a further four other sites: the Amphitheatre of Durrës, the Royal Tombs of Selca e Poshtme, the Ancient City of Apollonia, and the Castle of Vile Bashtova.

Monuments⁴. They are, therefore, masterpieces of historical, architectural and cultural value. The goal is to emphasise the meanings they express (from an architectural point of view and from a community point of view), to underline the problems they present regarding their conservation and to develop their unexpressed potential to attract visitors and produce culture.

In all three Parts of the book, some Topics (Food Heritage, Traditions, Social Practices and Local Craftsmanship and Landscape) are analysed starting from a wider territorial context than the single village. The first Part, because of the presence of three villages in the same territorial and cultural context (Përmet), presents a different structure from the second and the third Part.

For each of the Topics there is a *General Description* (informative level 2.) where the current situation in terms of critical issues (weaknesses and threats) and perspectives (strengths, opportunities), as well as available resources (human, heritage, community, informative⁵, regulatory and financial) is briefly described in a narrative form.

Further on, proceeding Topic by Topic, the *Intervention Strategies* (informative level 3.) are identified and described.

The proposed *Intervention Strategies* are of different types:

- S.1. *Education and Training Strategies*, to create skills, (in order to revive old crafts and create new ones) directly or indirectly linked to cultural and natural tourism and to consolidate in young people the awareness of the value of the cultural heritage as a means to connect the past with their present-day life;
- S.2. *Planning Strategies*, to create urban and landscape planning tools or to suggest recommendations aimed to enhance local landscape and encourage urban and environmental redevelopment;
- S.3. *Social Cohesion Strategies*, to strengthen social networks and a sense of identity in the community, to achieve gender equality and appreciate cultural diversity, to strengthen the relationship between the community and its history and values and develop mutual respect and understanding;
- S.4. *Living Quality Strategies*, to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants and the quality of hospitality for visitors by strengthening city services and infrastructure networks;
- S.5. *Knowledge and Safeguarding Strategies*, to provide documentation regarding the cultural heritage, to safeguard it from current and potential threats for the purpose of transmitting its value to future generations as a vector of knowledge and experience that have been stratified over time;

⁴ In Albania, the expression “Cultural Monument” refers to all buildings of historical and cultural value subject to State protection. It is a concept that not only has a classifying purpose of cultural heritage, but also aims at regulating potential conservation and restoration works. Depending on the historic value of the building, two categories of cultural monuments can be: (1) “category I”, whose architectural and technical features must all (both exterior and interior) be preserved, and whose changes of form can only be reversible; (2) “category II”, where protection is limited to the exterior architectural features. See Law 27/2018 “Për trashëgiminë kulturore dhe muzetë” (About cultural heritage and museums) and previous laws. See also Pompejano, 2020.

⁵ In the Analysis Phase of the research, the serious lack of information resources in terms of standards, cartography, scientific literature, etc., was, as far as possible, compensated through an accurate field analysis that allowed the researchers to understand the needs and expectations of the inhabitants of the villages and to observe *de visu* potential and critical issues. Useful information was also obtained through the interviews with authoritative Albanian scholars: Prof. Pirro Thomo, Prof. Aleksandër Meksi (former Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania) and Prof. Luljeta Bozo. For further information on this matter, please refer to the paragraph Sources.

- S.6. *Enhancement Strategies*, to define conditions for actions aimed at creating socio-economic value for communities through: the recovery and sustainable use of cultural heritage, the activation or strengthening of production chains linked to the region together with the promotion and the development of experiential tourism and eco-tourism;
- S.7. *Management Strategies*, for the maintenance over time of the (tangible and intangible) values of the cultural heritage related to social and cultural dynamics.

Each Strategy is achieved through one or more specific *Actions* (informative level 4.). With Actions, Guidelines move from a theoretical, general and abstract level (Intervention Strategies) to an operational level, through the description of concrete measures aimed at raising the well-being of the communities.

The Actions are based on the information (from field analysis, scientific literature, regulations) gathered during the research and, more particularly, on the SWOT analysis of each village (knowledge of the places regarding their components, the threats and the problems that afflict them, the specific emergencies to be solved, the particular conflicts between different needs to be addressed, the potential to enhance, etc.).

For each Intervention Strategy, the Actions are listed according to a principle of priority based on their urgency/impact.

When deemed useful, the *actors of local development* are indicated. They can be public entities (supranational bodies; State or local bodies or their territorial branches; national agencies for development cooperation, etc.) or private entities (inhabitants, associations of inhabitants, social cooperatives, community businesses, entrepreneurs, NGOs, etc.) who could play a role in the implementation of the Action, who could take advantage of it or who could be called to manage it over time⁶.

In the various contexts, the Actions express practical options related to available (or foreseeable) resources. They propose tools, suggestions, activities, intervention methods, working hypotheses whose feasibility will be suitably assessed in the economic-financial and administrative survey. The Actions, therefore, must be understood as a source of ideas, suggestions and cultural and operational stimuli to be critically filtered and developed.

Some Actions are quite simple to implement; others require demanding resources over a sustained time and strong cooperation between public institutions, development cooperation agencies, NGOs and inhabitants. The Actions are numbered from 1 to n for each of the Topics addressed.

The parts of the Actions that are not consistent with current urban planning regulations are indicated by an underline.

The different Topics, illustrated in the four information levels in sequential and analytical form, are, in fact, closely connected to each other. They are poles of a single network of relationships that tells the story of each village, its peculiarities and its perspectives. This leads to inevitable overlaps that, however, were reduced through the cross-referencing method (Fig. 0-14).

⁶ Sometimes these entities are not common in the Albanian context such as the case of “community businesses”, essentially private organisations focused on benefiting a specific local geographic area that arise on an initiative from below and act independently from the public sphere, possibly developing a collaboration with it (Mori & Sforzi, 2018). In the Albanian rural areas, it can be assumed that in the starting of community businesses an important role could be played by NGOs.

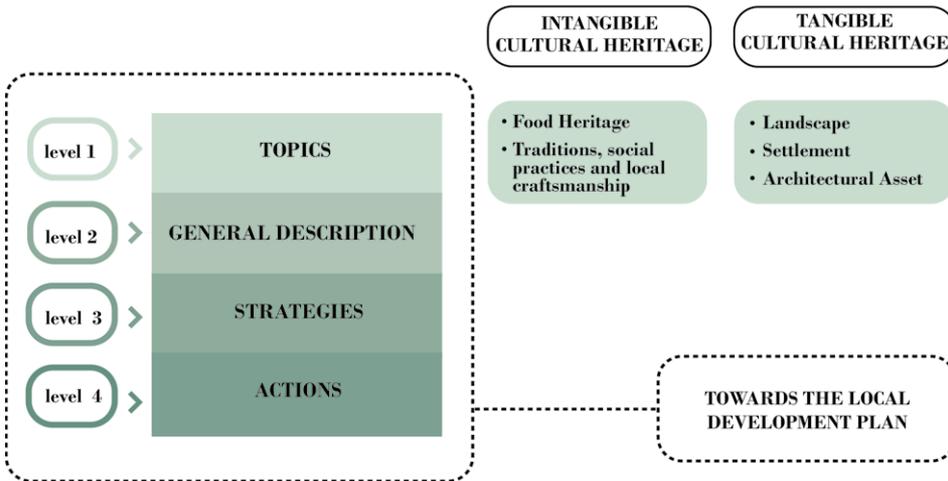


Figure 0-14
Informative levels
and topics of
the Guidelines.
[Concept by
Antonio Lauria;
drawing by
Samuela Hidri]

Target of the Guidelines

In general, the Guidelines are designed for all those who are concerned about the issues of enhancing the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Albanian villages as a driver of sustainable development.

More specifically, they constitute a methodological and knowledge base available to villagers, decision makers (central institutions, local administrations), associations, NGOs, economic operators, designers, planners and researchers.

Replicability of the Guidelines

Although focused on specific territorial areas (the five villages of Bënjë, Kosinë, Leusë, Razëm and Zvërnec), the Guidelines aim at proposing a theoretical model to guide enhancement and development processes also in different contexts from the ones analysed. The purpose is, therefore, to develop a guiding tool that can be transferred and replicated in other minor Albanian centres, following the necessary changes and adaptations. The five selected villages, therefore, can be considered as “pilot models”.

Sources⁷

The lack of information resources that emerged during the Analysis Phase (see note 5) is obviously also reflected in the drafting of the Guidelines. Scientific literature is limited. There is an almost complete lack of specific studies on the villages analysed and the few texts available are often characterised by an amateur approach.

When bibliographic sources are available, they are not always easily accessible. The National Library of Tirana – one of few Albanian libraries with a digital catalogue – offers the possibility of consulting only one text per day at its premises. The other library that the research team has been able to access is the Library of the Na-

⁷ This section was written by Kamela Guza and Valbona Flora.

tional Institute of Cultural Heritage, which, unfortunately, does not even have a paper catalogue⁸.

The National Institute of Cultural Heritage has made available the files dedicated to each of the cultural monuments studied⁹. These, in most cases, simply report extracts of what has already been published in the history of architecture textbooks or in the articles of the journal *Monumentet*.

The archival documentation related to the cultural monuments studied (limited to a repertoire of photos taken in the 1960s and 1970s) have proved very useful in understanding the changes that have taken place in recent decades. The construction history of the buildings, however, remains unexplored from an archival point of view. In most cases, it would be necessary to consult the archives of the Orthodox Church and part of the Ottoman archives (the former are not accessible; the latter are mostly in Turkey). This type of research would also require specific paleographic skills concerning the writing and understanding of Greek (at least from the 12th century) and Turkish (from the 18th century), which the members of the research group do not possess.

The reports on the restoration projects have been very helpful in reconstructing the history of the works and the structural issues of the monuments, especially regarding the parts of the buildings that are not accessible with a direct survey. Professionals who oversaw the restoration projects provided other useful information¹⁰.

Several obstacles were also encountered with cartographic documentation. First of all, historical cartography is almost completely lacking in Albania. The historical documentation available on the website of the State Authority for Geospatial Information (ASIG) is limited to what has been produced by the Italian Military Geographical Institute (between 1928 and 1944) and the Geographical and Military Infrastructure Institute of Tirana (between 1959 and 1988) and is not sufficient for a territorial interpretation stratified over time¹¹. Even in the current cartography developed during the drafting of the new PPVs – Planet e Përgjithshme Vendore (General Town Plans), there is a lack of information that makes it difficult to properly read and understand the places.

The landscape is another topic that suffers from a scarcity of written sources and cartography. The planning system in Albania does not explicitly take account of landscape. The current regulations are limited to the protection of certain assets of landscape interest. The lack of a comprehensive view of “landscape planning” and of adequate support tools (like the Landscape Plan, for example), is a difficult issue for those who approach this topic. There is also a lack of historical and thematic maps on land use for reconstructing the evolutionary process of the landscape, especially the natural and agrarian one. For the case study villages, the landscape reading was carried out through an analysis of the field data gathered and through the reading of the basic cartography provided by ASIG, cross-referenced with the data from the PPVs.

⁸ The consultation of the texts was made easier only thanks to the kindness and helpfulness of the librarian – Mrs. Mimoza Zereci – who guided and oriented our bibliographic research.

⁹ This was possible thanks to the helpfulness of Mrs. Daniel Pirushi and her work team.

¹⁰ In particular: professors Luljeta Bozo, Aleksandër Meksi and Pirro Thomo.

¹¹ Cartographic documentation has also been sought at the Technical Archive of Construction (TAC). No information was found regarding the area where the five case-study villages are situated. That is because the TAC deals mostly with data on specific buildings rather than the bigger territorial scale.

As far as the intangible cultural heritage is concerned, it has been possible to verify the presence of folklore, ethnology and material culture archives belonging to the Academy of Albanological Studies and also the presence of several significant documents conserved at the Central State Archive of Albania¹². Unfortunately, due to logistical reasons (see Research Limits section), it has been possible to carry out only a remote research through their official websites.

Historical information is also insufficient in terms of demographic development. The official data from the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) are available starting from 2001. For the previous data, it is necessary to address the Administrative Units, the new items in the Albanian administrative hierarchy (since 2015) that include in a purely formal and artificial way a series of neighbouring villages. The Administrative Units do not have a Statistics Office and the only way to obtain information is to contact the Registry Offices, which are reluctant to release detailed census data. In addition to this, Administrative Units do not possess data on the population of each single village (there are only aggregated data per Administrative Unit) and it is only thanks to the personal helpfulness of the employees that it was possible to reconstruct a general (though partial) quantitative framework.

Research Limits

Apart from the lack of information sources previously illustrated, there are other limitations regarding this work that ought to be declared.

First of all, these Guidelines deal with a particularly wide range of issues that spread across multiple study fields and produce a complexity of knowledge especially challenging to address.

It should also be considered that for some of the fellows of the Albanian Diaspora in Italy, the participation in “The Diaspora as a Resource for the Knowledge, Preservation and Enhancement of the Lesser Known Cultural Sites in Albania” research project was the first real research experience. In any case, they did their best to compensate their lack of experience with a high sense of motivation, commitment and enthusiasm.

The field research in the five villages lasted only three months. It was conducted with deep care and methodological rigour, but there are still some issues that would have needed further investigations and confirmation. These doubts, at least in part, might have been cleared during a research trip to Albania scheduled for spring 2020, which was not possible to carry out because of the restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

For all these reasons, despite the strenuous effort to check and supervise the contents of the book and the related sources, there is a possibility that errors and omissions may have occurred.

For any inaccuracies that may appear in this book, the authors wish to apologize to the readers.

¹² Ethnographic research in Albania can be divided in two parts from a chronological point of view: during and after Hoxha’s regime. The works published during the regime were fundamental for recognising traditions, social practices and local craftsmanship items. However, they are characterised by a general tendency to celebrate national values avoiding any critical attitude or any comparisons with other cultural contexts (such as the Balkan Peninsula, for example). This approach has started to change thanks to the studies and publications by Albanian and foreign scholars, mostly starting from the 2000s (see, *inter alia*, Tirta, 2003, 2004; Hysa, 2010; Doja, 2015; Doja & Abazi, 2016; De Rapper, 2017). The Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Art Studies (Instituti i Antropologjisë Kulturorë dhe i Studimit të Artit – IAKSA) is currently making a great contribution in this field of study.

Authors, Working Group and External Collaborators

This book, authored by Antonio Lauria, Valbona Flora and Kamela Guza, is the result of a thorough process of review, update and integration of reports and related documents produced during the “The Diaspora as a Resource for the Knowledge, Preservation and Enhancement of the Lesser Known Cultural Sites in Albania” research project.

This working group, coordinated by Antonio Lauria, consisted of professors (Leonardo Chiesi, Pietro Matracchi and Ugo Tonietti), digital architectural survey experts (Francesco Tioli and Monica Bercigli), research fellows (Enis Agaj, Migena Cala, Valbona Flora, Kamela Guza, Samuela Hidri, Dritan Kapo, Giulia Misseri, Arget Toçila and Luigi Vessella), as well as students from the University of Florence (Anissa Alushi, Sezai Celolaj, Judriva Davidhi, Faire Dervishi, Kristi Kokëdhima, Anisa Lagji, Elda Meta, Tracy Qehajaj, and Jessy Shehu) and from the Catholic University “Our Lady of Good Counsel” of Tirana (Kristiana Kumi, Joana Lamaj, Elisa Miho e Joni Zajmi) (Fig. 0-15).

Specific issues also included the friendly cooperation of Mario Biggeri, Luljeta Bozo, Sandro Danesi, Fatos Dingo, Aleksandër Mexsi, Kreshnik Merxhani, Pier Angelo Mori, Alessandro Rinaldi, Pirro Thomo, Mimoza Zereci.

Ça va sans dire, the authors are solely responsible for the contents of the book.



Figure 0-15 – Palazzo Vegni, Florence. A part of the University of Florence staff who worked on “The Diaspora as a Resource for the Knowledge, Preservation and Enhancement of the Lesser Known Cultural Sites in Albania” research project. Standing from the left: Enis Agaj, Migena Cala, Luigi Vessella, Giulia Misseri, Ugo Tonietti, Antonio Lauria, Pietro Matracchi, Arget Toçila. Kneeling from the left: Dritan Kapo, Kamela Guza and Valbona Flora.