

RETHINKING GJIROKASTRA



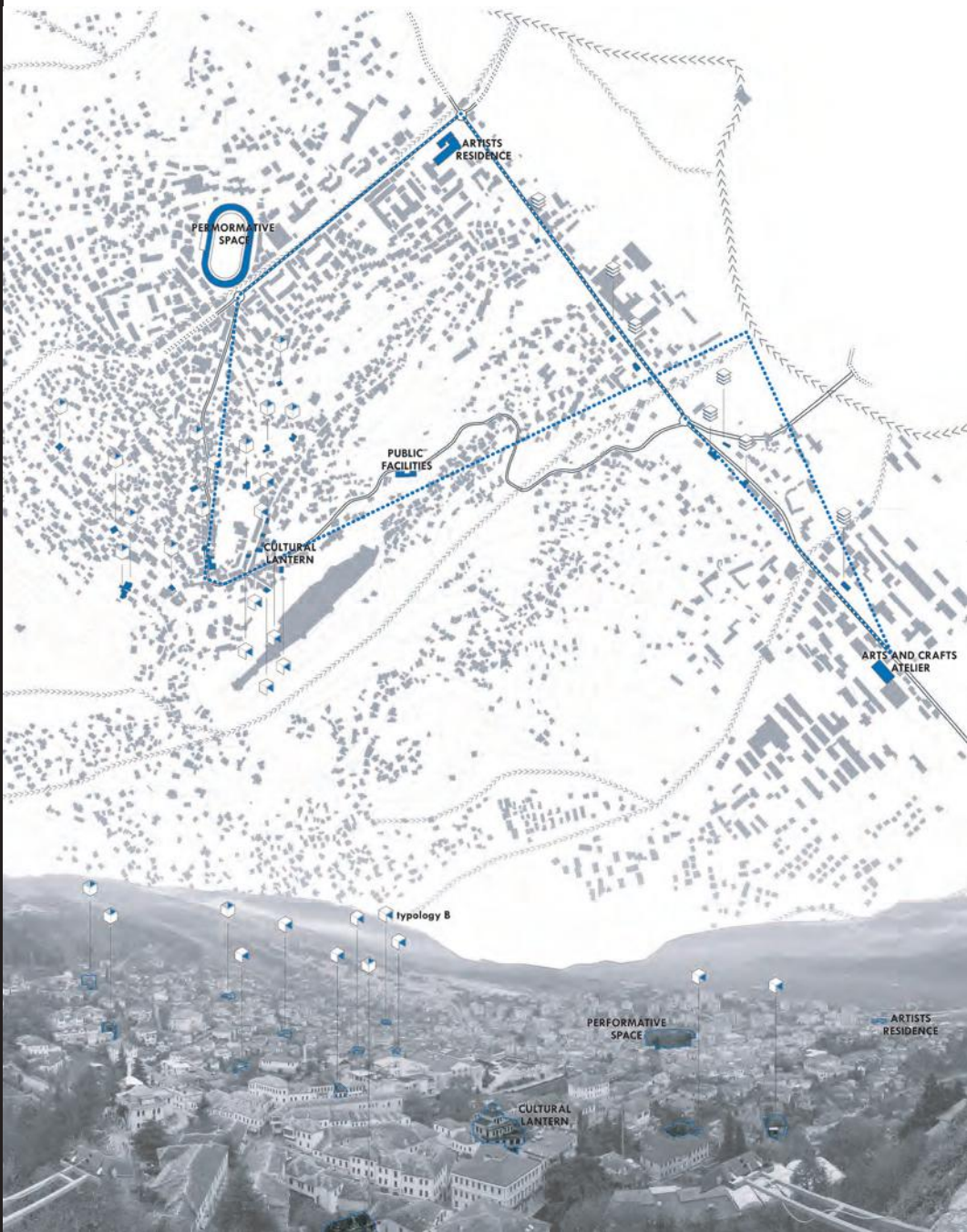
Observatory of the Mediterranean Basin
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RETHINKING GJIROKASTRA

Can architecture and city planning stimulate hope and growth for shrinking cities?

A Project of the
Joint International PhD Program IDAUP

POLIS University Albania / University of Ferrara Italy





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Can architecture and city planning stimulate hope and growth for shrinking cities?

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International Doctorate in Architecture and Urban Planning IDAUP
POLIS University, Albania / University of Ferrara, Italy

This publication is about a critical analysis of certain local situations which you can find also in other countries: the shrinking cities phenomenon. POLIS and their Italian partners, UNIFE, go through a sequence of "geography, place, history and culture" approaches. This publication scrutinizes a variety of issues, including established techniques and methodologies, when it comes to the reading of space and place, under specific social, economic, and political contexts. At the same time, they are opening up a spectrum of possibilities provided by all available sketches, drawings, etc., aiming at mapping and documenting regional realities and investigating the municipal potential. Top-down, centrally imposed planning schemes have long now shown their limitations and essential limited ends. The collapse of the centralized economy and planning brought new opportunities and new problems as well. Nowadays, some regions as capital cities grow fast and beyond their limits. Some other cities and regions are shrinking in terms of demography, urban importance, and economy. How to deal with it in a situation like South Albania? The publication of this case is systematic, rich in a body of scholarly, scientific work that leads to a direction of articulated public spaces, functions, and infrastructures that surpass the built environment and all obvious structural connotations. It is a promising work investing in systems and collaborative networks that bind the area to policies of cohabitation and sustainable choices, allow bottom-up, grassroots approach to bloom, and secure a resilient, inclusive vision for the area than in short term low-capacity assignments.

Dr. Fabrizio Aimar
Polytechnic University of Torino, ITALY

POLIS University is a pioneering institution in the fields of higher education, innovation and research. It is unique both in the Albanian and European contexts. Its joint International PhD Program with UNIFE - Ferrara University, Italy, has been for years and still is, an original scientific program in the international panorama. During the last decades, POLIS and its planning institute, Co-PLAN, have been developing a national vision and a methodology of spatial planning translated into two important documents: "Albania 2030 Manifesto" and "Regionalization of Albania". Since then, POLIS and UNIFE are further elaborating "regional puzzles" (<https://ombresearchseries.org/>). Saying this as a background, it can be said that their last publication on "Gjirokastra", is one of the latest elaborated pieces of the above-mentioned puzzles. The text represents good documentation of an alternative planning process and scientific speculation under the circumstances of the "shrinking cities" phenomena whilst showing - at the same time - how a university cannot be merely a theoretical institution but also have a clear social responsibility and mission. A team of city scientists, professors and students of POLIS University and Ferrara University has been mobilized during the last years in the region of Gjirokastra, aiming to assist bottom-up processes of municipal envisioning and territorial planning, as well as strategies and instruments to cope with demographic and economic depression. Accepting the existence of such a problem and dealing with it, is the first positive action to inspire serious improvements for the future. The experience shown here demonstrates how municipal and city planning cannot be treated simply as a developmental and governance instrument, by 'simply obeying' to the existing standard legislation, but it can also be transformed creatively into a smart tool for a local "developmental leap", and promote further regional coordination as well as local improvements.

Dr. Valerio Perna
University of "La Sapienza" Rome, ITALY



Preface

Gjirokastra.

Between the "UNESCO City" status and the phenomenon of "Shrinking Cities".

Gjirokastra is one of the most beloved cities in Albania and beyond in the region. The city with extraordinary historical values, and with unique traditions and landscape, is rightly included in the UNESCO list. Gjirokastra has always been, and continues to be, among the main settlements that serve as a reference for the development of southern Albania, and the cross-border area of northwestern Greece.

After the 90s the city has entered a demographic and economic recession that is typical for those inhabited centers that face the global phenomenon of 'shrinking cities'. Often this has been considered a local shortcoming, typical of this city. In fact, the phenomenon occurs everywhere in the world, where there are dramatic social, economic, and political changes, such as those in Albania after the fall of the 'Berlin Wall'.

Meanwhile, the phenomenon is typical for developed countries in terms of market economy, especially when a certain city, region, or country goes through the process of 'de-industrialization'; the transition from industrial development to services and other sectors.

The opening of Albania's borders in 1991, the introduction of free movement and market economy, the closure and privatization without criteria of local factories and manufacturing industries, the fact that they did not go through a technological transformation in accordance with the new economic-political conditions, etc., - all these together stimulated a depressive atmosphere in the city. As a result of this situation: i) many families and individuals emigrated to Greece, Europe, and the USA; ii) many others moved to the metropolitan area of Tirana; iii) mountain villages were almost emptied both by the emigration abroad, and by the migration to big cities or the capital; iv) departure especially of the youth.

Beyond that, local, regional and central authorities and certain international partners have tried to curb the phenomenon as much as possible. The inclusion of Gjirokastra in the UNESCO list was a turning point. Already investments in infrastructure, agriculture and tourism have increased.

Today it can be said that Gjirokastra is a tourist destination, but suffers from a lack of human resources, especially young people. Institutions such as the County, Prefecture, courts, university, hospital, or other regional services, are one more reason to give more importance and a regional and cross-border development function to this municipality. The project of



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transforming the historical-museum center into a "business district" has given hope that things can be different and better.

It is now clear that the Municipality should be better acquainted with the phenomenon of "shrinking cities" and learn from other cases in Europe and in the world: how other settlements have been gradually transformed and turned for the better? How investments, enterprises and residents have been gradually assimilated? It is evident today that Gjirokastra from a municipality with an "industrial-agricultural" character, should make a "shift" towards a services center with an "administrative-touristic-transitory" character. The villages need to be reactivated to bring life to the whole territory where there is real potential, authentic churches, and natural resources, to revive tourism and the agriculture with unique products.

The purpose of this publication is to demystify the phenomenon of "shrinking cities" in the context of Gjirokastra, and to identify strategies and instruments that will help the city out of this transitional state. The publication in question is part of a series of visions developed over the years within the International Doctoral Program (PhD) between POLIS University, Tirana (Albania) and the University of Ferrara (Italy).

For more see:

<https://ombresearchseries.org/>

This series which is also documented by the Library of Congress in USA, has first built a territorial development vision for the country and a proposal for its regionalization in the framework of European integration. Furthermore, each year a region has been selected and detailed with projects and specific development instruments to each region. The most recent region to date is Gjirokastra. Previously, development programs have been drafted for the regions: Durrës-Tirana metropolis, the southern Riviera region, the Seman watershed area, the cross-bordering municipalities of Shkodra (north) and Dropull (south), the regions of Prishtina (Kosovo) and Tetovo (Northern Macedonia), etc.

We hope you will find this study valuable both for communities and local authorities in the processes of local regional development, but will also it can hopefully serve as a reference for academic, student and research communities in their daily scientific work.

Prof. Dr. Besnik Aliaj
Rector of POLIS University, Tirana

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Demystifying the concepts of "shrinking cities & urban depopulation".

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introduction

Demystifying the concepts of “shrinking cities & urban depopulation”.

A theoretical review that could be useful to the case of Gjirokastra, Albania.

Prof. Dr. Besnik Aliaj

Dr. Sotir Dharmo

Polis University / Tirana, Albania

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The shrinking of living settlements in general is a concept that refers to the cities and towns that experience a sharp loss of population. Such loss could come because of depressing social, economic and political contexts in a given region or country, or because of massive (e)migration towards capital city or other and neighboring countries. As infrastructure and services in such living settlements were planned and invested to support bigger population, its own maintenance becomes a serious problem and very expensive exercise.

When talking on “shrinking cities” in Europe, often are used concepts like: urban decay, or urban flight, or counter-urbanization. The origin of the phenomenon usually refers to the dense and urbanized areas that face problems of population loss within a short time. This is often defined as de-concentration or as the contrary effect of urbanization. The theory gained ground especially in the Eastern Europe countries during the “post - Berlin Wall fall” decades, especially within industrial regions and cities that went under harsh shock-therapy economic treatment, and fast privatization policies towards the newly established market economy.

Shrinking cities concept in the USA became more evident during 2006-2008 because of the global economic recession that hit also the country. The main target for such negative effect have been dense urban centers. As result of that, external suburban areas continued to grow. The main factors that encourage shrinking of the cities in the U.S. might be considered: sub-urbanization, de-industrialization and the related human migration. Nowadays,

statistical data show that 1 in 4-6 cities worldwide are shrinking. This is more typical for countries with economic growth or in the phase of de-industrialization. Other factors might include: aging population, shifting industries, shrinking by purpose - aiming to increase quality of life, etc.

There are many **theoretical references** for the phenomena of shrinking city.

Hollander (1 & 2) and Glazer (6) mention suburbanization as one of the reasons behind the reverse-urbanization. Another factor for them might be lack of appreciation on national infrastructure, such as highways, while there is an increase of interests on the cities with railroads and ports.

From the other side - Pallagst (3) - thinks that shrinkage is a reaction against de-industrialization. In other words this means that more jobs move from city center toward periphery with cheaper land and properties. In Detroit, for example, most of employment opportunities of the automobile industry reallocated toward suburban areas because room for expansion was less costly.

Bontje (5) also proposes four main factors contributing to the shrinking cities effect:

i) Urban development model – which refers to the Ford-ist model of industrialization in US. It suggests that “urbanization” is a cyclical process, and urban and regional decline will allow for increased growth;

ii) One-company town or Mono-structure model – which refers to the idea that cities that specialize on certain branch

of economic growth, instead make themselves weak to the radical process of quick declines (such as the case of automobile industry in USA, etc.);

iii) **Shock therapy model** – that are typical for Eastern European post-communist countries, where state-owned companies did not survive privatization. This leads to the closure of most factories and industries, and generates as result massive unemployment;

iv) **Smart decline** – that is a term used by city planners and local authorities, to intentionally encourage the decline of population or “freeze it from any growth tendencies” (for example: the case of historic-touristic city of Florence, Italy). This aims a pragmatic political philosophy of “planning for less – less people, less buildings, less land uses – in order to maintain or increase the standard of living”. However, such strategy is often criticized for neglecting local residents’ needs, resulting in pushing more people out of the city center.

Main **effects** of the “shrinking cities” phenomena could be summarized as below:

- **Economic effects** – The shrink of urban population demonstrates the change of economic and planning conditions in certain living settlement. Cities, indeed shrink because of social-political changes, conflicts or war situations, etc. Such conditions result in economic decline, increase of debts, lack of production, and of course loss of labor force. The decline in population affects many communities, including those that are far removed

in periphery, or those enclaved within the large urban centers. The shrink of population lowers production potential and quality of life in those neighborhoods, thus forcing the decline in employment and productivity aspects.

- **Social and infrastructural effects** – The living settlements that are losing population experience nowadays dramatic social-demographic trends, because of several aspects, including: aging of population, transformation of household structure, changes in life expectancy, as well as lowering fertility rates. Such shift in population is often pushed further by job-driven migration. This imposes new household demands, as well as the creation of new housing markets. The up-mentioned trends stimulate further new land markets and new urban planning demand, associated by the sprawling effects. In few words, the loss of population in certain living settlement, damages the trust over the city in itself, and deteriorates the quality and interest of local governance. When economy goes down, than the city, public spaces and its own infrastructure, also deteriorates, as local population losses their own interest.

- **Political effects** – Cities with loss of population are always a political taboo. Local authorities often ignore the existence of the “shrinking” problem. They almost refuse to deal with it! Local population and entrepreneurs also start to believe that the problem does not exist! We like it or not, the “shrinking cities” phenomena is a reality and fully acknowledged. Instead, most of urban planning consultancies, are nowadays strategizing how to fight

the 'shrink' implications, which affect the daily life of people, businesses and communities.

Cities of the **Eastern Europe and Central Asia** regions are the most impacted living settlements as regarding de-industrialization and population decline. East European cities (especially in Germany where contrast between east and west after unification was so sharp), former Yugoslav countries and Soviet countries (including countries like Albania), have been heavily affected because of their weak economic situation and social-political turmoil after the fall of communism. Even the unification of countries within EU resulted with benefits in some cases, but also in problems in some other ones.

With the unification of Germany, cities such as Leipzig or Dresden, faced dramatic population decline. Meantime, many people immigrated towards western cities, such as the capital Berlin. Hamburg also experienced population growth by early 90-s. And this is exactly the reason why Leipzig or Dresden parallel suffered by the 'shrinkage' effects. This was visualized to people by the ruining of economy and worsening of infrastructure. Nowadays such cities are growing back again, but mainly via peripheral smaller towns and rural areas.

In the case of **USA**, the shrinking cities face different problems. Most of migrating population there, moved out of their origin cities to other states and cities for reasons of better safety and higher economic opportunities. In countries of big population and advanced economy, such shift have not been a big issue. Indeed, USA historically showed more political willingness to rehabilitate cities of population decline. They still invest in the revitalization programs. San Francisco and Los Angeles, for example, often face population dynamics because of earthquakes, which are addressed with quick and specific recovery plans by local authorities.

This is not the case of **East European cities**, where the shrinkage effect does not take the same attention, while city planning processes take longer time to draft, approve and implement. The European attitude is somehow different, and could be summarized in two point: i) first stabilize population; ii) then work on attracting population back into the city. In short, "**de-industrialization**" in the West, and "**fall of the political-economic**

system" in the East, seems to be the determining factors encouraging the "shrinking cities" effect.

It is because of dramatic and instable demographic trends, and lack of investments in infrastructure and services, that it also stimulated academic research into the reasons of urban decline and "shrinking cities" effects. However, other issues such as: racism, justice, economic and health unfairness, etc., are also additional factors of the phenomena.

Academic sources today identify as main causes of urban decline three historical influences: *i) de-industrialization, ii) suburbanization, iii) and globalization:*

- The theory of **de-industrialization** means in few words the process of investment-reduction from main industrial-urban centers. For example, because of war damages in Europe, during post- 'World War II' times, Western Europe declined in manufacturing while United States grew. This caused shift of global economic power to the United States. Western European industrialization in meantime diminished and stopped, while new and alternative industries were also born. UK for example grew thanks to the economy of service sector. The decline of industry, reduced job opportunities and encouraged further urban-population decline. As result of that massive demographic movement happened from industrial-urban cities -towards- rural and suburban living settlements.

Post-war policies stimulated rapid privatization, thanks to the economic-aid policies of the "Marshall Plan" and "Lend-Lease Program" financed by USA, in order to ensure the establishment of the market-economy across the Western European economic landscape. The direct result of such actions caused the shift of capital from Western European industrial-urban centers -into- US manufacturing and financial markets. This somehow undermined Soviet-allied Eastern communist countries. The logic of "Cold War" economic power-structure continued the inertia even latter (during 90-s and further on), up to the present-time trends of European urban decline. Examples of post-war "deindustrialization" cases include London (UK), Leipzig (Germany), Detroit, Michigan (USA), etc.

Detroit, Michigan in USA for example is clear proof of the correlation between the "deindustrialization" and the "shrinking cities" phenomenon. Known as the "Motor City" thanks to its own famous automobile industry sector, it reached its population

peak during 50s. But the American automobile industry could not maintain its global monopoly status, as European and Japanese industries recovered from the WWII damages. Because of the introduction of the new global market competition, Detroit also lost its privileged position of "global Mo-Town". By losing its own production demand, production rates also dropped, while investments shifted to other locations outside Detroit. This encouraged a process of de-industrialization as well as demographic and urban shrinkage.

- **Globalization** – The sciences of political economy and demography pay special attention to the global flows of capital and investment, seen this in relation to population stability. Bretton Woods Conference prepared the world for a new globalized age of trade and investment. The latter establishment of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank (WB), in addition to the US economic aid programs, made Bretton Woods a turning point for the global economy and respective relations. This momentum pushed the birth of concepts such as: i) the developed; ii) and the developing nations. Therefore, the trends of capital investment flows and urban population densities followed the global financial reorganization.

The "**product life-cycle**" theory developed further as "**urban decline**" theory, dealing with economy, demography and political elites, accepting the premise of the "shrinking cities" as a direct result of the economic decline and urban (e)migration. Therefore the root cause of "shrinking cities" nowadays is seen at the lack of industrial diversification within certain urban area facing the problem. The situation indeed, increases unfairly the political and economic power of few big companies, while reducing the ability of local population to react against the lack of investments and de-industrialization process in the city. Further on, lack of urban economic diversity, kills the growth of industrial center and empowerment of local population. This allows few old-industrial elite cities (in the so called "developed" countries) to re-invest in less-regulated and less-cost industries of the "third world".

The theory of "shrinking cities" however, focuses also on the effects of globalization on urban decline through the critique of neoliberalism. Such contextualization highlights globalization and internationalization of the production

processes as a main cause for the "shrinking cities" and other "destructive development policies". Today, could be used as a case study of such argument the economic relationship between USA and China. The neoliberal critique of globalization argues that the main reason of the shrinking cities in the "developed countries" is because of the outflow of capital toward developing countries. The outflow happens because of the inability of cities of the "wealthy" nations to find productive "corners" in the international economic system. Therefore, as capital flows outward almost all cities eventually shrink.

- **Suburbanization** – The migration of wealthier families from the industrial city centers into the surrounding suburban areas, is a dominant trend nowadays especially in the USA. The two prevalent cultural phenomenon are: i) the "**white flight**"; ii) and the "**car culture**".

"**White flight**" generally refers to the movement of large percentages of "Caucasian" Americans out of racially-mixed US city centers toward "homogenous" suburban areas. The result of such migration has been the loss of money and infrastructure from urban centers. This is because wealthier and politically powerful population flee from cities. The funding and government interests also followed them. As result of that, a collapse of urban health service happened all over USA. The main outcome of such trend was the stratification of wealth among the poorest (usually minority) groups in the city-centers and the richest (and mostly white) outside the city in suburban locations. As suburbanization began to increase during 20th century urban health and infrastructure quality dropped, and urban areas in US started to decline.

"**Car culture and urban sprawl**" – The American "car culture" also pushed for further suburbanization and urban sprawl. The car culture became a key cultural aspect of "American-ness", thus making the suburban context an "ideal landscape" to live during the 20-th century. As result of that urban decline only worsened. The phenomenon of urban sprawl in American cities, such as across Los Angeles, happened under the pressure of a "car culture". There are three main impacts because of such situations: i) the sprawl in the declining cities has been more rapid than in growing cities. ii) there have been no differences of suburban areas, among the declining and the growing

living settlements. iii) there have been similar intervention strategies to control sprawl from the perspective city planning. Therefore authorities in USA tried to adapt to the needs of the existing population of the cities, rather than promoting economic incentives to the supposed newcomers.

Other aspects of dealing with the phenomena of "shrinking cities" include:

- **Green retirement city** – The concept is used in Europe as a strategy to deal with the shrinking city strategy. The idea means that abandoned or vacant properties could be transformed in green spaces for the retired people migrating from other cities or countries within EU. The newcomers bring their own savings and knowledge in favor of the city revitalization, so they must be encouraged to participate in the community life. Such approach could also have benefits on social inclusion of people and provoke "a process of urban renewal in shrinking conditions", by stimulating upgrading of parks, housing, urban and health care community facilities, etc. Mixing their accommodation with other social and age groups, it is also important to avoid the creation of the "forgotten enclaves" or "high criminality areas".

- **Right-sizing** – The idea is to adjust the amount of land available for development, in order to stabilize the deformed/non-functioning markets, and reduce stress over the neighborhoods by considering more the needs of existing populations. Instead of revitalizing of the whole city, residents are stimulated to relocate toward denser neighborhoods, which are followed by the presence of more private services, businesses, and public amenities. The abandoned buildings and areas are often cleaned and developed or reserved for future green infrastructure. The city of Detroit, USA, for example, adopted right-sizing approaches via its "Detroit Work Project" plan, which included: reallocation and prioritizing public safety, providing reliable transportation and demolition plans for vacant structures, etc. In this cases special attention must be paid to the risk of segregation for low income groups, because exclusion contributes to the so called "psycho-social stress level" in the shrinking cities, adding more problems to living environments of such communities.

- **Smart shrinkage** – The idea for local authorities is to be initially realistic that the city can hardly return to previous population levels. It takes time otherwise to rebuild qualities and trust among people. In this case local government must accept the shrinkage as a reality, and have a smaller population in the city. This

allows authorities to focus on diversifying local economy and prioritizing budget over relocating people and neighborhoods towards most sustainable neighborhoods. From other side, "tax incentive" programs can assist the existing population, and encourage retaining investment all over the city to promote a vibrant destination. Again it is important to avoid creation of the so called "forgotten enclaves", especially when new investments in the city do not respect the environmental rights of local and poor people.

- **Land bank** – This are municipal structures or semi-public authorities that manage the inventory of vacant lands, and the profit generated by the redevelopment. They easy, facilitate and allow local authorities to sell, demolish and rehabilitate abandoned properties. The easier and faster redevelopment procedures, the more they discourage speculation with the newly developed properties. A good example is the case of Flint, Michigan, USA. The shrinking of the industrial city of "General Motors" led to the reduction of the city's labor force. To avoid negative effects of property foreclosure system, Land Bank there provided a series of programs aiming to revitalize the shrinking cities, including: i) "Brownfield Redevelopment" type for polluted lands via tax increment financing; ii) A "greening" strategy to use abandonment as an opportunity for isolated communities, and to involve them in the maintenance and improvement of vacant plots. However, careful analysis must be undertaken to avoid: the increase of land prices and taxes; income disparities among residents; loss of authority of local governments to stop projects, when they fall out of their objectives; etc. A good approach of dealing with vacant land is to work with non-profit local community groups in order to construct more open and green spaces within the shrinking neighborhoods; to reduce vacant plots; and create stronger community commitments.

- **Wächterhäuser or 'guardian houses'** – This technique is used in East Germany, where temporary so called "guardian houses" are built within the shrinking areas and neighborhoods, aiming to provide temporary rental-free accommodation/leases. Therefore in such cases it is encouraged the temporary use of private property as public spaces. Partnership with civil society organization is also used for the integration of immigrants. Another type of intervention is the revitalization of vacant plots and abandoned properties for art-performances, art-development purposes, and artists' interactions, as well.

▪ **Environmental justice** – Rapidly shrinking cities, clearly promote misbalanced socio-environmental impacts on the excluded ones, resulting often in critical aspects of the “environmental injustices”. Such paradigm in the USA has to do mainly with the problems of income and race, which are critical in understanding the formation of suburbs and the phenomena of shrinking cities there. Therefore it is impossible to avoid interventions responding to the shrinking city phenomenon without confronting the social and environmental justice aspects. This is not usually the case for Europe, where suburbanization has been less extreme, and main factors pushing for the shrinking cities phenomena, are also more closely linked to the aging demographics, de-industrialization (in the West), and the collapse of the communist regime (in the East).

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2.1

A bottom-up visioning process of "Gjirokastra 2030"

Besnik Aliaj

2.2

Demographic profile of Gjirokastra region

Godiva Rëmbeci

2.3

Relations between cities
The importance of relations between cities and their effects on urban development

Sabine Bauer, Aglaée Deegros

2.4

Aesthetic quality of the historic urban landscape.
Historic city image and Townscape tradition

Dorina Papa

2.5

Punctuating Gjirokastra's modernism

Skënder Luarasi

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Sustainable Tourism as enhancer for Branding Gjirokastra

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Seeking production footprints on behalf of innovation, City of Gjirokastra.

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The case of Gjirokastra city and rural region.

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Driverless transition: the value of autonomous mobility for sustainable urban development

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Dynamic Heritage: the case of Havana

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interdisciplinary exchanges

A bottom-up visioning process of "Gjirokastra 2030"

Prof. Dr. Besnik Aliaj
Polis University / Tirana, Albania

22

The City and the Municipality of Gjirokastra have historically been the most important center of socio-economic-administrative gravity for the whole region in particular, and for the Southern part of Albania in general. Gjirokastra Region has given a multi-dimensional contribution to the country, which is highly appreciated by all at the national level. But at this moment the city suffers from serious demographic depletion, and mass migration of the population (particularly the young generation) toward Tirana the Capital, or emigration abroad, especially to the bordering Greece. However, Gjirokastra is a municipality with great potentials too, particularly for the fact that its historic center is recognized by UNESCO as part of the global heritage. The municipality has a regional university, a regional hospital and many other regional services. The administrative reform of the territory in 2015, although it did not have the expected effects, it served for the overall consolidation of the territory and its population (Fig.1). As result of this reform, the newly established Municipality faces a 50% increase in population and a 15 times higher increase in its surface area, while it integrates 7 previous smaller administrative units (communes and old municipalities) into a new single unit. During the envisioning processes of some local development plans of the Gjirokastra region, as well as during planning exercises and research-oriented visits of POLIS University, several interviews were conducted with strategic actors and institutions, as well as focused group. The meetings provided many comments

and ideas on how the development of the Municipality of Gjirokastra can take place, including possible pillars of approaches, as presented as below (Fig.2).

As mentioned earlier, Gjirokastra is the gravitational center of the southern region of the country, and has a clear interaction with the city of Ioannina as the gravitational center of the region of North-western Greece. In this regard, the development priorities of the two sides of the cross-border regions need to be coordinated, especially in the context of Albania's efforts towards European integration. This means that the main infrastructural trunks of the Gjirokastra region have a potential for fast and direct connection with the main European infrastructure corridors, thanks to the quick access to Greece. The concept is further explained below (Fig. 3), which is detached from the vision document "Albania 2030" developed by the research units of POLIS University. The municipality of Gjirokastra itself is then proposed to be developed according to five priorities.

Priority 1:

Development of infrastructure and public transport in the Municipality of Gjirokastra.

Priority 1 aims to materialize these action plans required by the community:

- Creation of a single identity for the new Municipality with the motto "One Municipality, One City, One Community". This means that the representation in the municipal administration should better respect the historical legacy of the previous administrative division, with more efficient community-based structures in the form

of liaison offices in each administrative unit (mini-municipality unit), and through the establishment of mobile/wireless service units according to needs or ad-hock priorities.

- The main axis of the municipal infrastructural development remains the national highway: Tepelene-Lazarat-Kakavije, as well as the historic inter-urban branch (Dropull-Sarande), and the new one (Ura e Kardhiqit - Sarande). But other axes of Municipal and Inter-Municipal importance will be the main rural axes and historical itineraries: ii) ii) Gjirokastra-Poliçan-Zagori-Çajup-Gjirokastra and the connecting road of the villages of iii) Lunxheri-Libohove-Dropull, or the historical itineraries: iv) Paleokaster-Golem-FusheBardhe-Mashkullore-Gjirokastra.
- This is accompanied by the design and implementation of the project for the construction of the Bus Terminal Station of the new Municipality at the location of "Ura e Lumit" in order to make the connection of International and Inter-Urban lines with the re-conceptualized municipal public transport to connect each settlement and suburb within the territory of the new Municipality with the core city of Gjirokastra.
- The development and modernization of the Gjirokastra Regional Airport that will serve to the local needs of the entire South of Albania, including the Ionian Riviera region, through a fast connection via Kardhiq-Saranda and Kardhiq-Borsh new roads. The regional airport has also an important role for the needs of the post-offices, army, civil emergencies, tourism,

air sports, other local functions in order to access the UNESCO city with the global market of tourism.

Other measures to be taken, which are identified in the meetings with communities and strategic actors are:

- The identification and reconstruction of historical paths and recreation of the "historical itinerary" such as Ali Pasha itinerary, or Çerçiz Topulli itinerary - as part of the "Natural Orbital" of Gjirokastra. This would connect the entire territory of the new municipality, as an integral part of the road system with 'off roads' and/or pedestrian paths, in the function of mountain tourism, 'hiking' and horseback riding, caravans, etc.
- The establishment of a restricted traffic time in the historic area of "Qafë e Pazari" at certain times. Creating a strategy for car parking along the entire perimeter of the historic area, limiting business supply hours and the turnover of cleaning cars, limiting the traffic of residential and official vehicles, etc.
- Providing low cost public-transport from perimeter parking lots within the historic center and castle through the use of earmarked and quality mini-buses/mini-vans.
- The expansion of "Çerçiz Topulli Square" by creating a "vertical parking" next to it, and reconceptualization of the square to respond to the current and prospective developments in support of the historic center. Restoration, expansion and construction where possible of new sidewalks for a greater safety of pedestrians and bikers.



BASHKIA E VJETËR GJIROKASTËR
 POPULLSIA: 19,836 banorë
 SIPERFAQJA: 15,89 km²
 DENDËSIA: 667,07 banorë / km²

BASHKIA E RE GJIROKASTËR
 POPULLSIA: 28,673 banorë
 SIPERFAQJA: 244,54 km²
 DENDËSIA: 35 banorë / km²

LEGJENDA

- KUFIRI ADMINISTRATIV I BASHKISË SË RE DORRËS
- KUFIRI I NIVËSIVE QË BËHEN PËSË E BASHKISË SË RE
- BASHKIA E VJETËR GJIROKASTËR



Fig. 1 / Consolidation of the territory and population in the Municipality of Gjirokastra as per the territorial reform 2015. Graphics from E. Janku.

- The cleaning of existing sidewalks from parasitic vegetation, cleaning of the informal constructions that hinder the movement of citizens, as well as the reorganization of aesthetic urban furniture with traditional construction materials and quality greenery in the historic center.
- The maintenance of a continuous sidewalk along "Postblloku" location and "Çerçiz Topulli Square" so that pedestrians have alternatives for walking safely from their vehicles. Same could be carried out around Gjirokastra football stadium
- The consolidation of specialized teams of craftsmen for the maintenance of cobblestones, for the preservation of

- historical values in the pavements and urban furniture of public streets and squares, and restoration of buildings.
- The establishment of a building management system for public space and vertical parking in the '18-Shtatori' neighborhood and where there is a high population density.
- The construction of green gardens and playgrounds within the urban blocks in front of the "Sport Palace", at the "Pedagogical school", etc., and avoid traffic and parking in them.
- The reconstruction with priority of the national road "Postbllok-Dervişan", with side corridors for bicycles, with greenery



Fig. 2 / Main principles and potential development pillars for the Municipality of Gjirokastra according to U-POLIS. Graphics from E. Janku.

and lighting.

- The construction of the Rings: i) Palorto-Granice-Gerhot-18 Shtatori; and ii) Zinxhira-Manalat-Dunavat; in order to enable alternative traffic restrictions in the historic center.
- Several road rehabilitation: i) Sfaka neighborhood; ii) River Bridge-Topullaraj-Valare with pedestrian and biking corridor; iii) the highway in the Cepo area; iv) roads in Zhulat and Fushe-Bardhe; v) Picar-Kolonje-Golem; vi) internal roads in Lazarat; vii) roads in Karjan Lunxheri, etc., including maintenance and connections, etc.

Priority 2:

Urban and Environmental Development in the Municipality of Gjirokastra.

This priority aims to materialize with these action plans required by the community:

- Review of the Strategic Development Document of the new Municipality, and adaptation / implementation of the General Local Plan (GPP) with priority projects and action plans.
- Any development is done in respect of urban / environmental legislation and urban / territorial plan. This helps the revitalization of historic centers, as well as orients sustainable and contemporary



Fig. 3 / Fragment taken from the national vision "Albania 2030 Manifesto" for the southern region of the country and for the cross-border area with Greece, by U-POLIS (Aliqj, Janku, Allkja, Dhamo).

development with services, norms and standards at the level of UNESCO and the European Union.

- The coordination of the development priorities of the inhabited urban centers with agricultural, mountainous, rural and landscape territory, giving special values to the squares and centers of the villages and communities, as an integral part of a tourist network of the Natural-Historical Orbital of Gjirokastra, adding to them new strategic elements of urban / territorial "acupuncture" type, in favor of economic activities, public services, and traditions.
- The establishment of a Development Office with qualified local and foreign specialists for the design and absorption of projects for Greater Gjirokastra, identifying the resources of Gjirokastra, Lunxheria, Cepo, Picar and Lazarat, etc., as well as complementary neighboring local units as: Saranda, Himara, Tepelena, Dropull, Zagori, Delvine, or the neighboring country Greece, etc.

Other measures for improving and extending services:

- The establishment of a "Task Force" Unit for consulting and assisting citizens to facilitate the procedures for issuing reconstruction or construction permits, especially in the UNESCO historic area and the 'buffer' area, to avoid citizens bothering and wandering the offices of the Institute of Monuments of Culture in Tirana.
- The establishment of a "Fire Brigades" with specialized small vehicles capable of entering even the narrowest streets

of the historic area and neighborhoods and the strengthening of the Municipal Construction Police.

- The constant and reactive monitoring of the World Heritage to assess the general state of conservation of cultural assets, its development and management.
- The monitoring of the construction activities in the new municipality, by identifying, controlling and prohibiting illegal activities. The design and implementation of a plan of measures for the modification of existing illegal constructions, elimination of red tiles, and the use local stone roofs in the museum area.

Other environmental specific measures:

- Dry and steep slopes at risk of landslides should be included in the program for planting ornamental shrubs and trees, in accordance with the climatic conditions of the area.
- Planting vegetation with the system of root propagation on all slopes, especially around the castle area, Kerculla and Granica area, etc., to strengthen earth surface and avoid erosion, as well as to provide shading without interrupting the visual-landscape view of the city.
- Decorative and panoramic greenery, for all city streets, and afforestation especially along the Drino riverbed.
- The development of a communal forest with recreational and sports facilities.
- The creation of an itinerary for pedestrians and bickers along the river from Kordhoca to Virua locations.

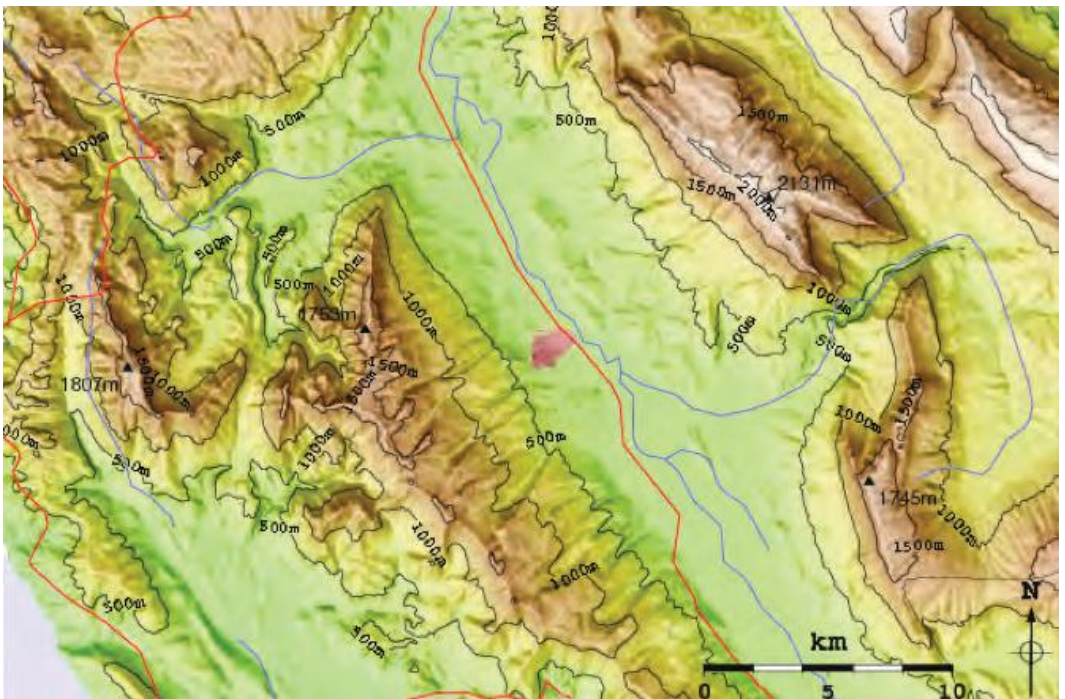


Fig. 4 / Topographic context of the Drino valley, and identification of the regional priority road axes.

- The construction of a wastewater treatment plant that flows clean waters into the Drino River.
- Finding a new position for the urban waste collection plant.
- Repositioning and increasing the number of bins for household waste as well as increasing the number of small bins throughout the city.
- Reorganization of schedules and the increase in the number of waste collection machines and cleaning workers.
- Cleaning of streams near inhabited centers that have not been cleaned for many years.

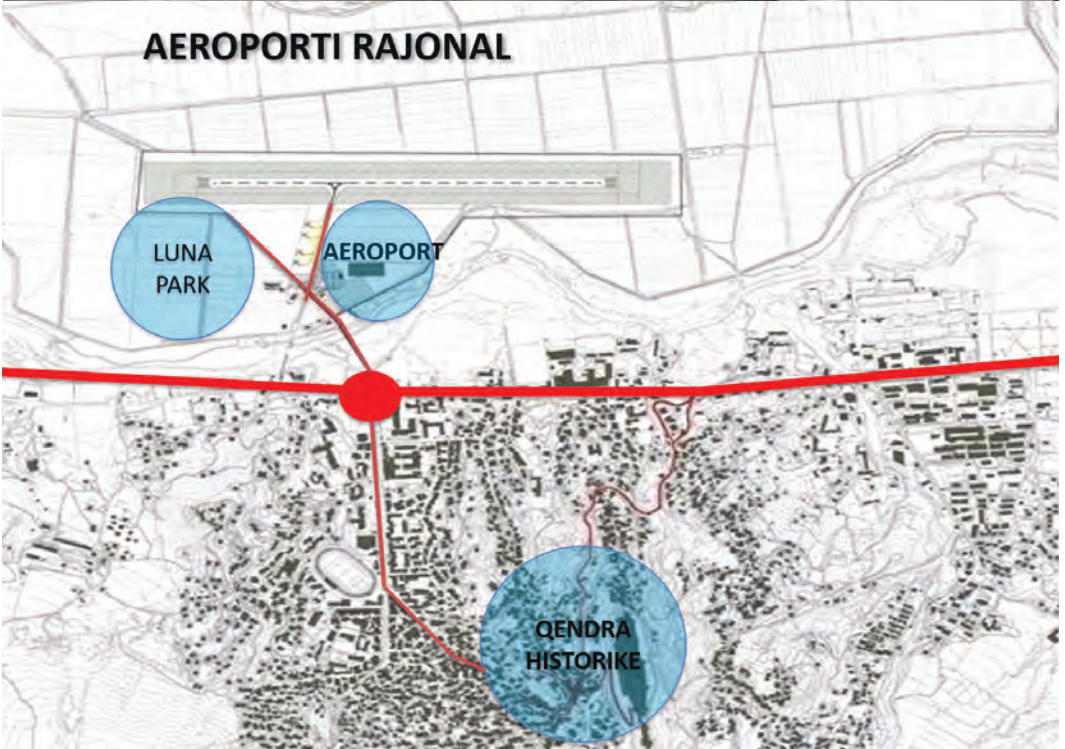
- Putting into operation public toilets in the city, especially in the historic areas with dense flows.

Priority 3:

Tourism, Landscape, History and Development Resources in Gjirokastra.

These priorities aim to materialize with these action plans required by the community:

- The restoration and commissioning of cultural monuments of Gjirokastra, Lunxheria, Cepo, Picari, Antigonea, Odria, etc., to promote the development of



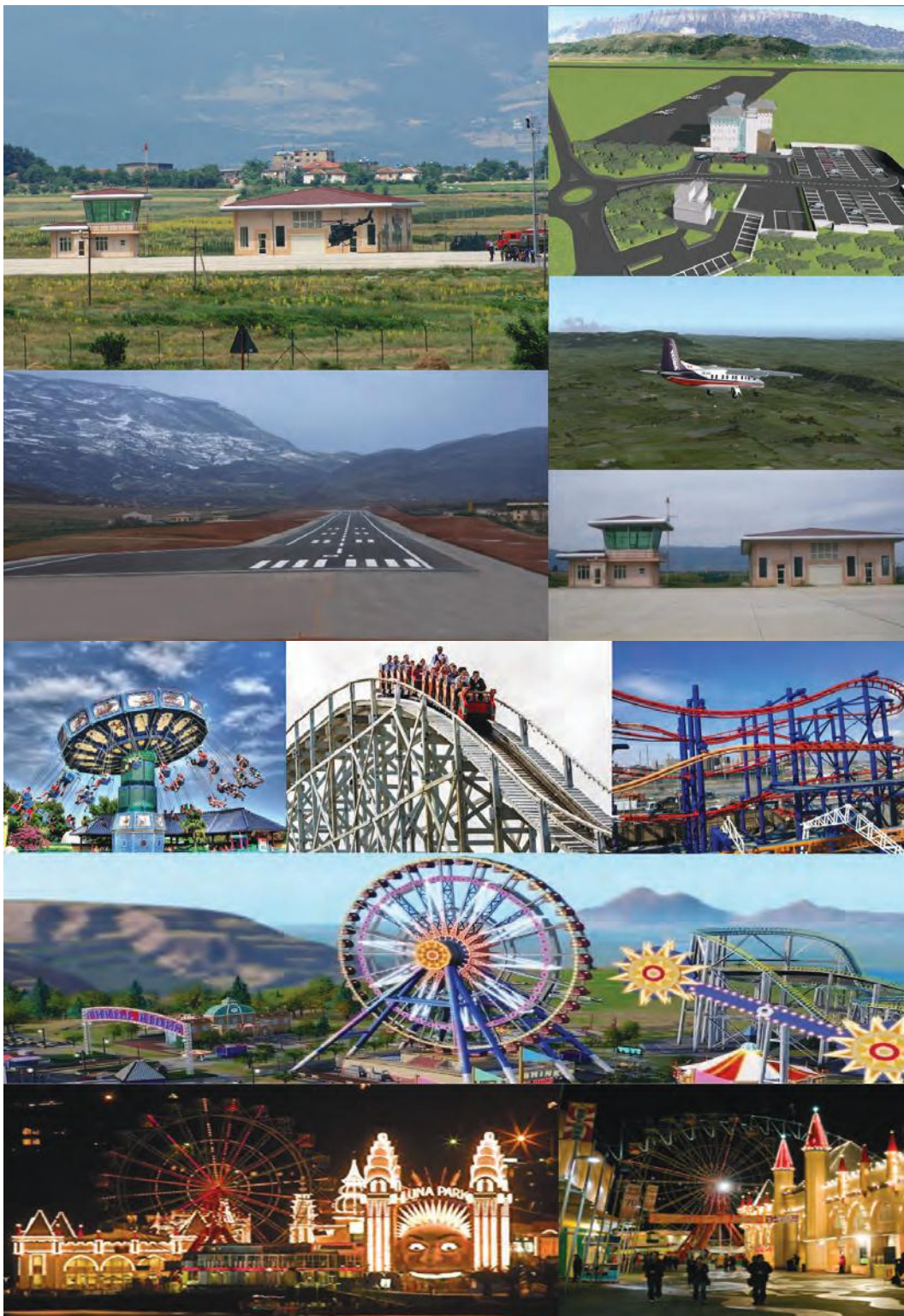


Fig. 5 / Images of the "Progress Valley" corridor along with Tepelena-Kakavija axis, the bus terminal station, the regional airport, the regional "Luna Park" complex and the connection with the city of Gjirokastra.

tourism economy.

- Better marketing of the city.
- The orientation of tourists with signs in the territory and especially in the museum area, including: hotels in the characteristic houses, museums, traditional restaurants, as well as special stands in the city to explain its history.
- The placing the logo of the municipality and the sign of the autochthonous production on every local handicraft product sold to locals and tourists.
- The Tourist Information Center must

stay open seven days a week, to provide uninterrupted tourist information, including the provision of maps, brochures, and good city orientation. The Information Center should also serve as a point for data collection and survey.

- The qualification of the "local tourist guides" and the unification of the scientific information on the tourist publications not only for the knowledge they provide in different languages, but mainly for the quality of information they transmit to visitors. Every tourist agency that

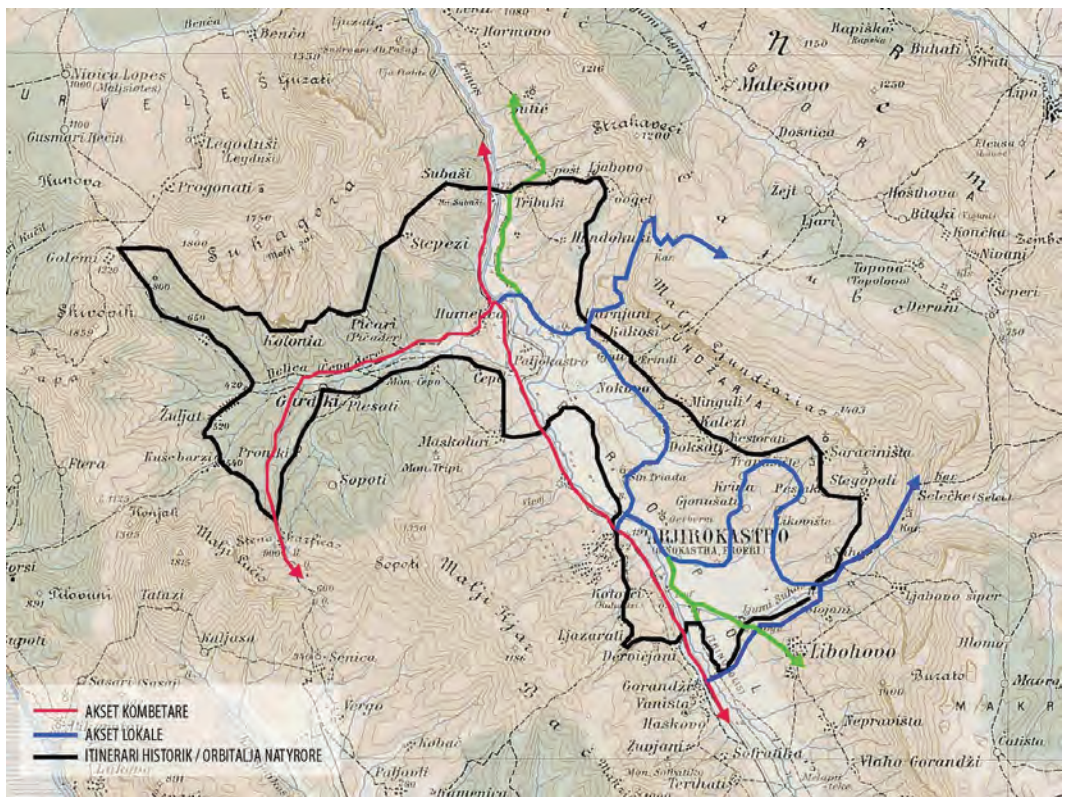
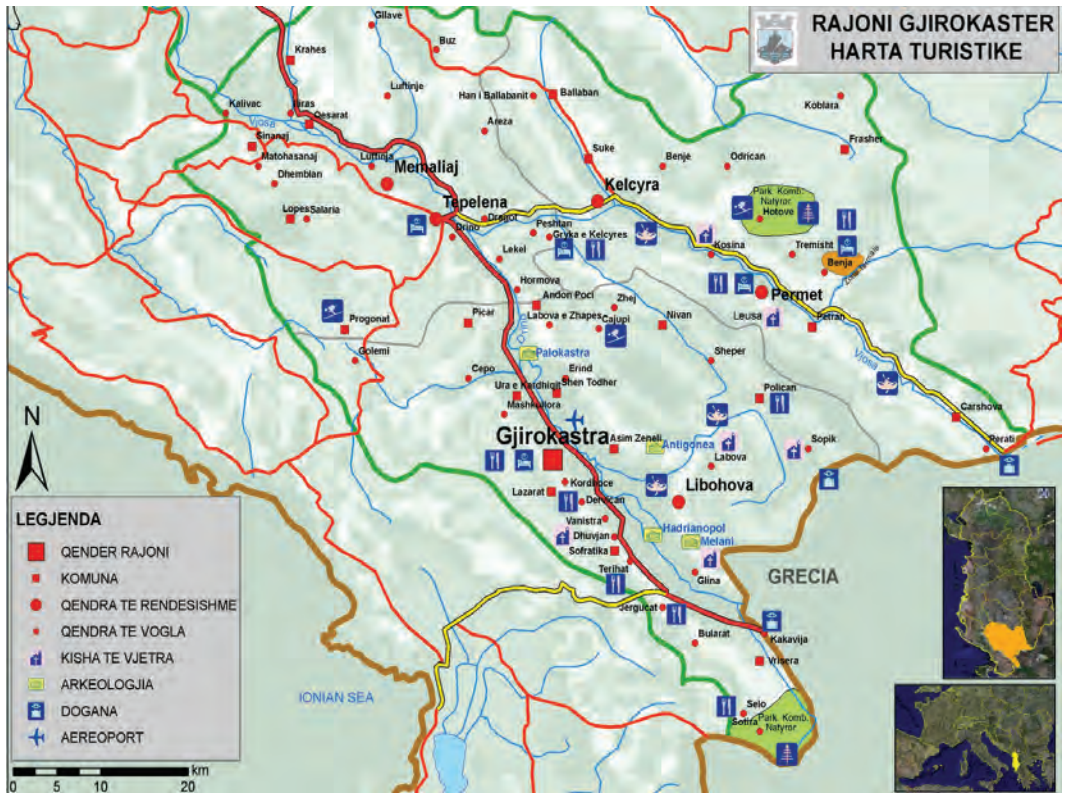


Fig. 6 / Historical-tourist attraction in Gjirokastra region, and Historical Itinerary of Ali Pasha and Cerciz Topulli, as well as the Natural-Historical Orbital of Gjirokastra.

operates within the territory of the new Municipality must be subsidized by the local guide to guarantee this quality of information, image and marketing. This creates employment opportunities, mitigate informality, and increase the development of tourism quality.

- The reconstruction and periodic updating of the museums, as well as the creation of daily tickets for all/combined local chain of museums at Gjirokastra (Museum

of Education, Ethnographic Museum, National Museum of the Liberation War, Museum of Armaments, Archaeological Gallery-Zekat, Art Gallery, etc.).

- The promotion of local production and traditional handicraft or agricultural products of the area, the support of such production with assistance and development projects, as well as selling them in authorized and controlled shops.
- The monitoring of cultural monuments



Fig. 7 / Examples of rehabilitation of urban and rural squares, as well as natural-historical itineraries.

through digital signaling systems, cameras, etc.

- The establishment of an annual municipal fund where the owners of museum dwellings with economic shortcomings, based on pre-designed projects, which can be stimulated with soft loans and basic co-financing referred to the law of cultural heritage. This is implemented by specialized technicians and local builders, and re-qualified or organized by the municipality.
- The creation of public areas and squares with free internet, especially within the historic area and the castle.
- The Functional reconceptualization of the interaction of "Viroi Park" with the "Historic Center", with the "itinerary along main road and the river Drino", as well as other parts of the city or the surrounding provinces.
- The rehabilitation of the original castle clock and bells as both a visual and acoustic reference to the old city.

Priority 4:

Consolidation of Gjirokastra as a regional center of Education, Culture and Sports.

These priorities aim to materialize with the required action plans by the community:

- Education transforms society! Indeed Gjirokastra is the main educational pole of Southern Albania. For this reason, the improvement of public space and physical infrastructure at the university campus area by the municipality and the Ministry

of Education should be combined with the reform of higher education and its objectives, by turning the University of Gjirokastra into a research center for regional development. This includes investing in the qualification of its lecturers, researchers and students, in order to generate the needs of the municipality for human resources.

- The construction of new schools (middle and high school) as a result of population growth and urbanization in specific neighborhoods: 18-Shtatori, Kodra e Shtufit, Zinxhira, etc., as well as the reuse of the existing abandoned educational facilities according to the needs of the communities/municipalities/region, etc. This is accompanied by the reconstruction and recombination of the University infrastructure with a central building, and other decentralized branches of the city/settlements, according to their specifics and profiles (example: programs on tourism can be in the historic center, vocational schools in the economic zone), etc.

- The development of sports and related facilities, especially in the area of Gerhot, but also in each neighborhood, can be an impetus for the revitalization of the life and health of the communities, and the activation of the suburbs. Further on, the reconceptualization of the sports centers in specific areas / settlements with a population of over 2,000 inhabitants, such as: 18 September, Old Sports Field, Gerhoti, Historic Center (Bashteja e

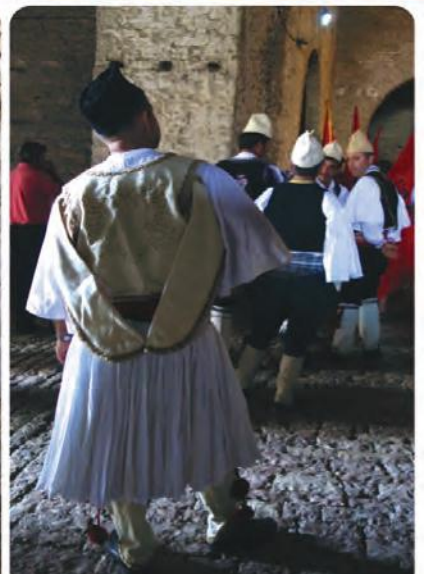


Fig. 8 / Activation of cultural, sports, educational life, by the improvement of infrastructure and services.

tekkes), Zinxhira, Lunxheria, Kardhiq, Picari, Topullaraj, Cepo, Kordhoca, Lazarati, Antigonea, Odria, etc., where sport becomes an instrument for social activation and community participation.

- The reconstruction of the Palace of Sports, and its return to a focal sport—social—cultural center.
- The Reconceptualization of the stadium with European safety standards and

services, for regional and international events.

- The Remodeling of the old sports field, and athletics track as an alternative for athletic sports, etc.

Priority 5:

Public Services - Water Supply, Urban Waste, Lighting and Electricity Network.



Public services aim to improve living conditions for the community and visitors. This priority aims to materialize with the action plans required by the community:

- The reconstruction of the lighting network for the city of Gjirokastra but also other territorial gravity centers, as well as other axes of importance in the territory, according to international parameters. The municipality might stimulate solar panels

lighting, which have economic profitability in the climatic conditions of Gjirokastra.

- The reconceptualization of the castle lighting and other monuments of the first category that are not evinced enough and properly in the historical-landscape context for the city.
- Build a new lighting system for public roads in the entire territory of the municipality of Gjirokastra, which are



Fig. 9 / Activation of plants and basic services of urban waste, lighting and electricity network

currently not lighted at all or poorly lit. Increase the efficiency of the existing and new lighting systems. The latter should avoid color dominance, while neutral tones must avoid the situation of light pollution.

- Study the possibility of relocating the existing electrical substation and merging it with the new substation. This should be accompanied by the drafting of a master plan for the development of energy resources of the new municipality by combining together solar, wind, and water lighting. The lighting of all communes and villages should be further improved and modernized.

Other action plans for this priority are:

- The establishment of a water supply company for the new Municipality with a modern water management.
- The upgrade of all water sources within the area of the new Municipality, starting with: Gurra e Picarit, Tranoshishta Springs and many other sources. Meanwhile, this must be accompanied by solving the water supply problems for all neighborhoods and villages in the territory of the municipality
- The installation of water consumption meters that will create an opportunity for a more effective management of the potable water, especially for the city of Gjirokastra and the neighboring villages.
- Free water billing for all those who affect the environmental protection and quality increase, including those that plant trees of public-private interest, on the basis of a previous agreement with authorities.
- Support donor projects for the rehabilitation-maintenance of Gjirokastra water supply system. Efficient tracking of investments and complete solution of the entire water supply network for the city of Gjirokastra and all surrounding areas, as

well as for those villages/settlements that demand autonomous systems.

The final objective:

The use of planning as a legal instrument for development.

This means that:

- The new municipality will stop illegal construction activities. This era is over. All constructions, development and restoration activities are carried on the basis of the regulatory plan, and of the urban, heritage and environmental laws.
- The strategic document for the municipal-regional development is periodically reviewed in the municipal-regional council, paving the way for the ambitious implementation of the urban-territorial plans (PPV).
- The PPV plan for the entire territory of the municipality, and all other strategic documents for the region, should serve as a kind of developmental "constitution" for the municipal and regional governance of Gjirokastra.
- This finally paves the way for drafting, approving and implementing the detailed and partial plans, including legal development permits of the new municipality.

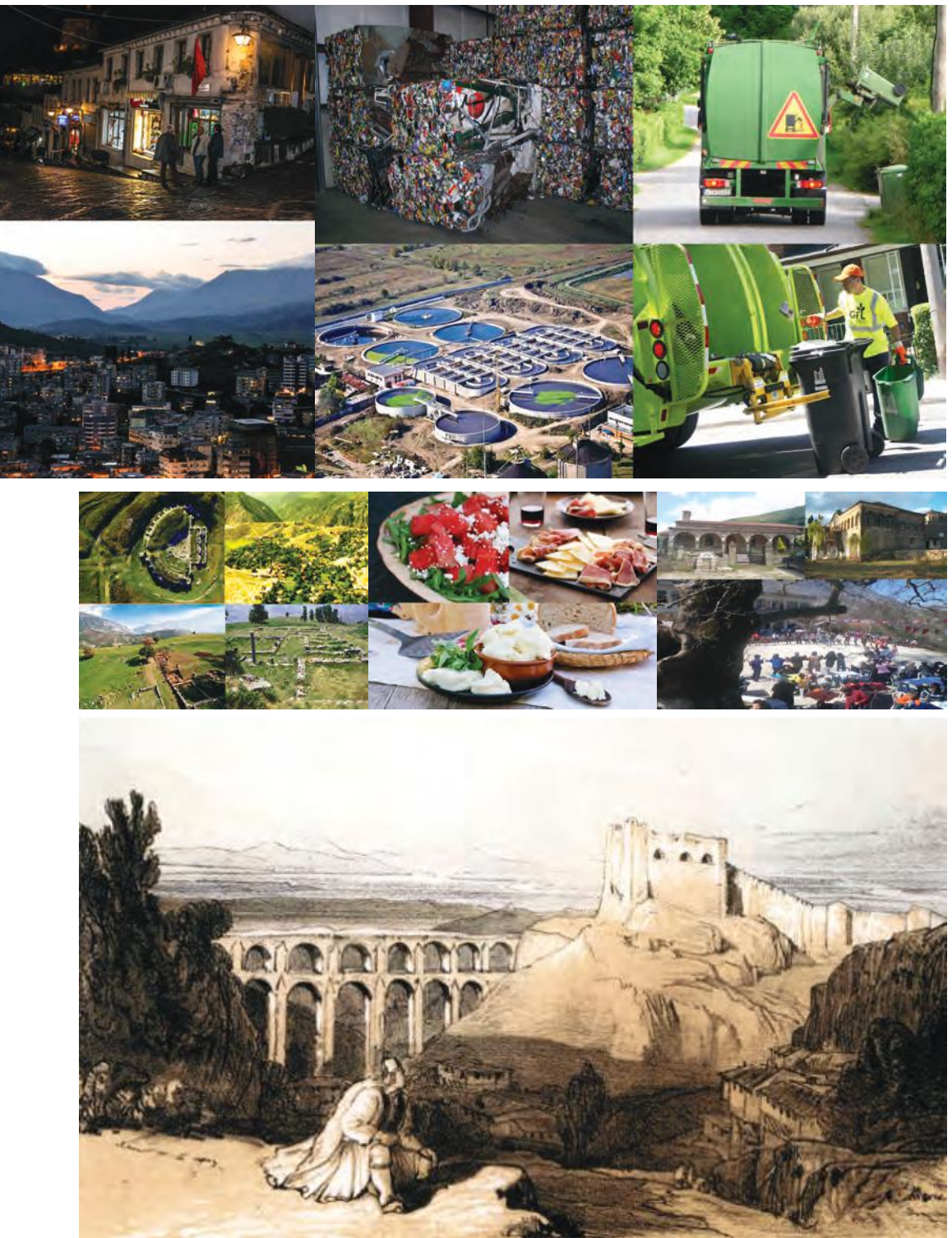


Fig. 10 / Reactivation of a scientifically-based "story-telling" line for Gjirokastra based on:
1) own rich and complex history; 2) annual programmed with concrete activities.

Demographic profile of Gjirokastra region

Dr. Godiva Rëmbeci

Polis University / Tirana, Albania

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Nowadays, demographic change is one of the key challenges for local development, without forgetting, climate change, development of the green economy, inclusiveness and poverty. Strategic solutions cannot be based on addressing one of these factors alone but must take into account the interplay of these elements within a particular local area of development, urban or rural. (Cristina Martinez&al,2012). According to the latest administrative-territorial reform of local government, the number of municipalities in Albania, has been reduced from 370 to 61 municipalities, while the number of regions still remained unchanged at 12. The reform does not imply changes in the number of population at the region level, but has brought drastic changes at the municipality level. While the population at the national and regional level has been declined, the population in the new administrative units has been "increased" almost doubled, due to the merger of the former municipalities with rural areas, "bringing" in the same-time multiplication of problems related to the need of implementing efficient management of natural and human resources of new administrative units. More specifically in January 1,2021, the Albanian resident population has reached about 2.82 million inhabitants or a decrease compared to last year for about 0,6% and compared to year 2001 for about 8.3%. The only exception during this period is the year 2017 in which a positive population growth rate was recorded for about 0.03%. The highest annual rate decline of the national population for the same

period, was recorded in 2020, estimated for about -0,58 %. The greatest positive contribution to the annual growth rate of national population is "offered" by Tirana and Durrës municipalities, meanwhile the rest of municipalities have contributed negatively to the annual growth rate of population. Despite the systematic increase of the population at Tirana, Durrës, Vlora municipalities, mainly due to internal migration factor, the positive increase of the population in these municipalities does not compensate the decrease of the population from other municipalities (due to migration and emigration) resulting in a reduction of the total population stock at the national level. The continuous process of large-scale emigration, as well as the decline in fertility rate and increased of mortality rate, high flows of internal migration have an enormous impact on the demographic structure of the regional population. From the point of view of the demographic process, the population of Gjirokastra region follows the same model of demographic development as the population at the national level, which means that demographic challenges at the county level are the same as the demographic challenges at regional level, such as high emigration, low fertility rate and high mortality rate. In addition, the demographic model of the population change at the country level is very similar to the model of internal migration (INSTAT, 2014), showing that internal migration is a process of great significance in population change in the regions of Albania. Gjirokastra region is the smallest region in the country in terms of population, representing about

Municipalities of Gjirokaštër region	2011	2015	2016	2017	2018	2020
Gjirokaštër municipality	28,673	27,633	27,022	26,195	25,009	23,590
Libohovë municipality	3,667	3,534	3,456	3,350	3,198	3,017
Tepelenë municipality	8,949	8,624	8,434	8,176	7,805	7,363
Memaliaj municipality	10,657	10,270	10,043	9,736	9,295	8,768
Përmet municipality	10,614	10,229	10,003	9,697	9,258	8,732
Këlcyrë municipality	6,113	5,891	5,761	5,585	5,332	5,029
Dropull municipality	3,503	3,376	3,301	3,200.01	3,055	2,882
Region of Gjirokaštër	72,176	69,557	68,020	65,939	62,952	59,381
Albania	2,907,368	2,885,796	2,875,592	2,876,591	2,870,324	2,845,955

Table 1. / Resident population by municipalities and years. Source / INSTAT at region level, author's estimation at municipalities level



2% of the total population. The region is composed by 7 municipalities where Gjirokastra municipality represent about 40% of the region's population.

The population of the region, over the years has experienced a huge decline compared to year 2001, for about (-41.5%), while the average annual population decline, after 2001, is estimated to be around (-3.3 %). It is also worth noting that during the period 2008-2012, are recorded the highest rates of population decline, and in the last

decade the region has "lost" about 22% of its total population. The highest negative annual growth rate has been recorded in year 2018 for about 4,5%. The negative growth rates of Gjirokastra region's population are considered as the highest rates in the country, compared not only with the national average growth rate but also with the growth rates of other regions in the country.

Demographic indicator regarding the ratio of urban / rural distribution of the population at the region level, looks to have the similar tendency as the indicator at the national level, showing after year 2008, the predominance of the urban population over the rural one. In case of Gjirokastra's region this indicator is estimated to be in favor of urban population starting from the year 2011 and actually is estimated to be 53%: 47% in favor of the urban population. It is important to note that at the municipality level, in addition to the

Region	Inflow in the region	Outflow from the region	Balance of migration flows	Resident population in 2001	Resident population in 2020	Changes 2001-2020	Impact of migration to the stock of population
Gjirokastra	5,112	20,139	(15,027)	112,726	58,031	(54,695)	27.4%

Table2. / Impact of internal migration to the stock of region population.

Source / INSTAT at region level, author's estimation at municipalities level

Years	Gjirokastrë region	Albania
1/1/2001	101.6	99.5
1/1/2005	101.4	99.6
1/1/2011	102.3	100.3
1/1/2015	103.8	102.1
1/1/2016	103.6	102.6
1/1/2017	101.4	102.5
1/1/2018	98	100
1/1/2019	96	100
1/1/2020	95	100
1/1/2021	94	99

Table 3. Gender coefficient of Gjirokastra region

factors such as massive emigration and demographic events (low fertility rate, high mortality rate, natural increase of the population), another very significant factor in determining the size of stock of the resident population of the regions is also the internal migration of the population, so-called movements of the population from one municipality to another. In case of Gjirokastra region, based on data produced from population census, the analysis of the migration movements on the region, clearly demonstrate that the net balance of the movements is a negative one, which shows that the outflows from the region are 3 times higher than the inflows of the population in the region.

The impact of migration movement to the stock of resident population is estimated to be about 27,4%, so only for the effect of internal migration, the population of Gjirokastra region has been decreased by about 27%, during the period 2001-2020. The evolution of the gender ratio over the years (males to 100 females) proves that during the period (1990-2000), international migration was dominated by males, creating a lower gender ratio, or in favor of the female population. Because migration is a gender-related process, it affects men and women in different ways. But although emigration began as a typical phenomenon for men, it has turned into a gender-balanced process in the last decade resulting in a slightly higher gender ratio in 2011. In addition to international emigration, internal migration is another important factor that plays a role in determining the gender ratio. The analysis

of this phenomenon showed that internal migration has a significant impact on gender differences between regions, the ratio of internal migrants is quite different for men and women highlighting the fact that women tend to migrate within the country more than men. The reasons for the qualitative change of the gender ratio in recent years, in a gender ratio with gender balanced according to demographic studies, turn out to be family reunifications, as well as the increase in emigration of women for study and employment, thus "compensating" the excess of men in the age group 20-29 emigrated in the first decade after the 90s. The demographic indicator related to the gender ratio of the population for Gjirokastra region, is presented with a high value than the average value of this coefficient at the national level, thus demonstrating a slight advantage of the male population over that of females. The analysis of this indicator over the years, especially comparing it with the gender coefficient at the national level, shows not only a systematic predominance of the male population over the female population, but also an increase of this indicator for the entire period 2001-2017. The reasons for the predominance of the male population over women in addition to the above factors, are also related to the still significant weight of the rural population in the total population, as well as the presence of the phenomenon of selective abortion by gender, preferring male children born. (UNFPA 2012). This indicator has started to be declined starting from the year 2018 and actually during the last three years is estimated to be 5 points lower than the national average. Further studies are needed to be undertaken to find out the reasons behind this situation. The continuous process of large-scale emigration as well as the decline in fertility and mortality had a very great impact on the demographic structure of the population in Albania and by regions. The analysis of the group-age structure of the Albanian population as well as its average age, show that currently the Albanian population continues to be still a young population. The results show that data on the region differs from the data at

Municipalities of Gjirokastra region	Structure of resident population by group-age			
	Total/ as % to the region	(0-14)	(15-64)	(65+)
Gjirokastra municipality	40%	17%	69%	14%
Libohove municipality	5%	16%	65%	19%
Tepelene municipality	12%	19%	67%	14%
Memaliaj municipality	15%	19%	67%	14%
Permet municipality	15%	16%	66%	18%
Kelcyre municipality	8%	17%	67%	16%
Dropull municipality	5%	8%	59%	34%
Region of Gjirokastra	100%	17%	67%	16%
Albania		18%	69%	13%
Dependency indicators				
	Total dependency	Youth dependency	Elder dependency	Index of elder population /total population
Region of Gjirokastra	49	25	24	0.16
Albania	44	26	18	0.1

Table 4. Structure of resident population by group-age and municipalities. Source / INSTAT at region level, author's estimation at municipalities level

the national level.

So at regional level, structure changes are more evident in population groups of youth and elder respectively 1% lower and 3% higher as the average structure at national level. Also in reference to the time series data analyses of the population by group-age, due to the decrease of the young population (0-14 years) and the increase of the elder population (+ 65 years), the population of the region as well as the Albanian population has entered to the path of "aging". The group- age data on the population can be used to calculate other indicators such as total dependency ratio, (ratio of age groups (0-14) + (+65)/ (15-65) the youth dependency ratio (ratio of age group (0-14) / (15-65) and elderly dependency ratio (ratio of age group (+65) / (15-65). The analysis of these indicators are very important because based on them it's possible to assess human resources capacities that can be potentially participating in the labor market and consequently affect the improvement of economic performance of the country as a well as the region. From these analyses for the period 1979-2011, it's identified that Albania in year 2011 has reached its lowest level of the total dependence indicator for about 47 percent, which means that for every 100 persons at working age, there are 47 persons at non-working age. Furthermore the value of this indicator (total dependence) in time series shows that the country has enter in the so-called episode of "demographic dividend" due to high number of economic active population (15-65) versus a low number of young population (0 -14) and

the elderly (+65). The phenomenon of "demographic dividend" is also present in Gjirokastra region with value slightly different from the average values at the national level, more concretely 49 or 5 points higher than national level. Whether Albania and the region will benefit from this "demographic dividend" depends on the effectiveness of socio-economic policies undertaken by policy makers, including education and sufficient training of the labor force to enable its integration into productive work which then will affect not only the improvement of economic performance but also the increase of the welfare of the population. While the coefficient of total dependence at the national and region level speaks of the existence of a "demographic dividend", the analysis of other indicators of dependency over time (1979-2011) shows a significant increase in the number of elder people 65 years and older, (from 9% to 17%) and a decline in the young population (from 60% to 30%) clearly demonstrating the "entry" into a new demographic phase of the population, in that path of "aging" population. Another important aspect in demographic studies is the preparation of population projections, for at least 2 decades. Population projections provide information about the future number, demographic structure and territorial distribution of inhabitants according to the most likely hypotheses of trends in demographic behavior, and serve as a basis for planning the socio-economic development of the country or region, including also market research.

Municipalities of Gjirokaštër region	2011	2015	2016	2017	2018	2020
Gjirokaštër municipality	25,009	25,479	23,231	21,257	25,009	23,590
Libohovë municipality	3,198	3,259	2,971	2,719	3,198	3,017
Tepelenë municipality	7,805	7,952	7,251	6,634	7,805	7,363
Memaliaj municipality	9,295	9,470	8,634	7,901	9,295	8,768
Përmet municipality	9,258	9,432	8,600	7,869	9,258	8,732
Këlcyrë municipality	5,332	5,432	4,953	4,532	5,332	5,029
Dropull municipality	3,301	3,363	3,066	2,805	3,055	2,882
Region of Gjirokaštër	62,952	64,136	58,478	53,508	62,952	59,381

Table 5. Projection of population by municipalities. source: INSTAT at region level, author's estimation at municipalities level

It is also worth noting that the population projections for the case of regions, have been calculated using the scenario of medium growth, in periods of 5 years, while there is no calculation of projection population data at the municipal level and local units. According also to population projections, the population stock is foreseen to decline with yearly average rate for about 0.3%. Similar to national population, the population of Gjirokastra region is projected to decline and the average rate of negative growth is estimated to be about (-2%). One of the factors predicted to influence the size of the stock of the resident population in the coming years, is the migration factor, which for the period 2015-2031, is justified with continuous departure of young people from the agricultural sector, student's migrations that are transformed into a long-term attitude beyond studies, as well as the importance of patriarchal norms in starting a family, which will maintain a high migration of women at a young age. (INSTAT,2014)

As conclusions, the declining of population and its structural changes at the municipal level, continues to be strongly influenced by migration movements, low fertility rate, high mortality rate, and negative natural increase, following the same profile of demographic development as national population. Furthermore, population projections at the municipal level "speak" also for a progressively declining of the population again due to migratory movement, as an essential factor.

As recommendations, there is an urgent need to set up, administrative and statistical databases at the municipal level, together with the building of human capacities and the necessary infrastructure for data sources management. The connection of data with the territory has become a necessity for decision-making at the local and central level. Current and

future expected demographic changes, such as population decline, structural changes of population, increase of life expectancy and population aging, should be taken into account in the design of territorial development policies, along with other challenges such as: rising rates urbanization, increasing demand for housing, "emptying" of the rural areas, etc.

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...edhe sot më e

KORÇA
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Relations between cities

The importance of relations between cities and their effects on urban development

Sabine Bauer, Aglaée Deegros

With the collaboration of: Anna Bagarić, Jennifer Fauster

4,4

Small towns all throughout Europe are facing severe challenges. Many are shrinking in terms of population size, losing particularly the younger generation (Eurostat, 2017). This often results in a close-down of infrastructures that are necessary for local supply, education, medical care and public transport. This causes the well-known negative consequences on the quality of life of these places' inhabitants. Experts in the fields of urbanism, traffic planning and administration are actively engaged with studying these towns to find reasons for and possible ways out of this development. Often overlooked is the fact, that not only the conurbations themselves are changing, but that their transformation is linked closely to the surroundings. They are part of a territory that exists and functions as a unit - or not. The transformation processes of relations within a territory are directly related to the development of individual conurbations. In fact, territorial relations and, with them, everyday realities, and mobilities in and between European cities have changed at least as much as the situation within these cities themselves. While a classification of areas that no longer applies is still utilized.

What we witness is a hybridization and transformation in these categories, as one can be "rural through our residential and urban through our social practices...". In "Nouvelles rélegations territoriales" Daniel Béhar argues that in order to meet contemporary urbanistic challenges it is necessary to shift from the common static typology (the urban, the rural, the small and the big cities) to a typology of

relations. (Béhar, 2017: 17-26) Examining these relations holds the potential of depicting why some small cities are more successful in their development than others.

Following Béhar's line of argument, within the small towns a distinction needs to be made among those that remain under the influence of a dominant city (Urban Dependent), those that operate in a network of cities without true hierarchy (Network City) and those that are embedded in a local basin organized with strong internal relations (Local Basin). This is the first step to develop strategies on how to develop small cities in a future-oriented way and thereby improve access to opportunities depending on territorial conditions.

The analysis and comparison of Austrian examples for these three categories depicts three different strategies for the development and valorization of small cities, in order to strengthen their structure and thus helping them to become future-proof.

Wiener Neustadt – a small city dependent on the dominant metropole Vienna
Early evidence of the strong connection between Wiener Neustadt and Vienna are the shipping canal and the railway line, both built in the nineteenth century to connect the two cities. The latter turned Wiener Neustadt's main station into a railway junction. To this day, Wiener Neustadt's main station is the most frequented railway station in the province of Lower Austria. Wiener Neustadt is considered an important center in the

industrial quarter south of Vienna and provides lots of jobs. It is also known for hosting educational facilities of national importance (such as the University of Applied Sciences and the European Storm Research Institute) and a center for ion and proton therapy ("MedAustron"). There are about 11,000 people that commute to work from Wiener Neustadt and even 20,500 who commute to Wiener Neustadt (Land Niederösterreich, 2017) every day. The majority of the (work and educational) commuters shuttle between Vienna and Wiener Neustadt.

According to Wiener Neustadt's urban development plan "STEP WN 2030" problems are mainly seen in the lack of connection of some residential areas to their neighborhood, the fact that commercial centers on the outskirts of the city are difficult to reach without a car and despite good public transport connections to Vienna and good conditions for cycling, motorized private transport is still dominant. In view of this, the aim of "STEP WN 2030" is to valorize existing housing estates, to link them more effectively via attractive public spaces and to improve the accessibility and quality of public space (Wiener Neustadt, 2018).

The analysis of Wiener Neustadt's urban development plan also shows that the qualities of local connections must not be neglected under any circumstances. Only in this way the development of an attractive residential environment with a contribution to social equality of opportunity and the completion of the traffic turnaround can succeed. The ongoing trend towards suburbanization,

which has been further enhanced in the recent past by the experience of the pandemic (Redl, 2020), favors and facilitates the development of "urban dependents." This is expressed in the Wiener Neustadt's residential population number, that has been growing constantly since the 1950s and has even picked up further since the turn of the millennium (Statistik Austria, 2021). The attractive connection to the nearby metropolis is considered as a success factor for this development.

Leoben, Bruck an der Mur and Trofaiach – small towns that operate in a network The region of Obersteiermark Ost, where Leoben, Bruck an der Mur and Trofaiach are located, is one of the strongest industrial and at the same time research and development regions in Austria. The three investigated municipalities are part of the region's network. The (commuter) relations within the network are by far more intense than those with the next major conurbation, Graz (KDZ, 2017). Although there is a certain competitive attitude, it is limited due to the different positions in the network.

The region of Obersteiermark Ost is shaped, structured and supplied by the central, urban Mur-Mürz axis. In fact, supra-regional services for bus, train and bicycle transport are oriented along the main axis only. There, the population density as well as the number of supply and educational institutions is high. Simultaneously the population figures are relatively stable, and the mobility supply is strong (Institute of Urbanism TU Graz, Kampus, 2019).

Leoben - the largest city in the region - as well as Bruck an der Mur are located at the region's central urban axis. They are both industrial areas offering numerous jobs, excellent connections to the regional and national railway network and educational facilities of regional importance. The University of Mining in Leoben is even of national significance.

Trofaiach is located about 10 km northwest of Leoben on the side arm of the region's urban axis. It occupies a special position in the system, as it does not have regional center functions and is located off the main axis. Trofaiach is a residential community with an almost stagnant population (Statistik Austria, 2021). It offers a public transport system that enables connections to the sub regional train station of Leoben every 15 minutes. The town center is continuously being strengthened through creating high quality public spaces and improving opportunities for start-ups.

The example of this region, which lost its economic basis with the end of mining in the sixties and eighties, and in particular of the municipality of Trofaiach, shows the potential and relevance of mobility connections as a basis for greater cooperation, dependence and regional profitability in the network of cities.

Wolfsberg – a small town embedded in a local basin

The municipality of Wolfsberg plays a central role as supply, education, economic and transport center for all nine communities within its district. The municipality itself can be roughly divided into two areas: the main settlement area on the valley basin and the villages in the hilly surroundings. There are considerable commuter flows (work and educational commuters) to and from the city of Wolfsberg, most of which have their destination/starting point within the district (Statistik Austria, 2021).

In the city of Wolfsberg, vacancy is a growing problem. While the surrounding areas (above all the periurban directly bordering the city) are expanding. At the same time, a total population decline of 10 percent by 2040 is forecasted for the district of Wolfsberg compared to 2018 (ÖROK/Statistik Austria, 2019). While the supra-regional bus and train connections with the two conurbations of Graz and Klagenfurt are very attractive, the public transport connection within the surrounding communities is mainly dedicated to school transport. As a result, existing mobility patterns are dominated by motorized individual transport

(Monsberger, 2019; 111).

Initial efforts to make the center more attractive for businesses and more accessible for active forms of mobility (vacancy management and design of the main square) are the first steps towards an organized development of a more compact urban structure, which goes hand in hand with an increase in the quality of life in the municipality. Regardless of the predicted population decline, mobility between the surrounding villages and the center of Wolfsberg, as well as the upgrading of the center are seen as the greatest challenges for the development of the (in terms of area) large municipality.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the different categories of connections between small towns and communities require different strategies for their successful development.

As for "urban dependents," the relation to the nearby metropolis is the key element in their development, and it needs to be readable as a connection in the city's structure. The valorization of inner-city connections to the municipality's mobility node expresses the relation to and dependence on the metropolis. In order to pursue this goal Mario Stefan's master thesis "Potential einer kleinen Stadt – räumliche Gerechtigkeit in Wiener Neustadt" (Institute of Urbanism TU Graz, 2021) proposes a strengthening of the axial connections between the city center and the train station of Wiener Neustadt focusing especially on the improvement of the connection for active forms of mobility (bicycle and pedestrian traffic).

Small cities operating in a network need to establish a regular stable connection between them and work towards a fair distribution of the different amenities in order to consolidate themselves as a territorial unit. Trofaiach has taken a significant step in this direction by establishing an efficient public transport connection to Leoben every 15 minutes.

For the third category, the small town as the center of the "local basin," it is crucial to rediscover the proximity relationship with the surroundings. A shift of traffic mobility patterns towards active forms of mobility, exploits the potentials of the proximity relations and thus helps to reshape them. The central function of the Basin's centre is strengthened by increasing its accessibility for bicycle and pedestrian traffic. This makes meeting daily needs there more attractive, compared to doing so in larger agglomerations at greater distance or in peripheral shopping centers. Markus Monsberger's master's thesis

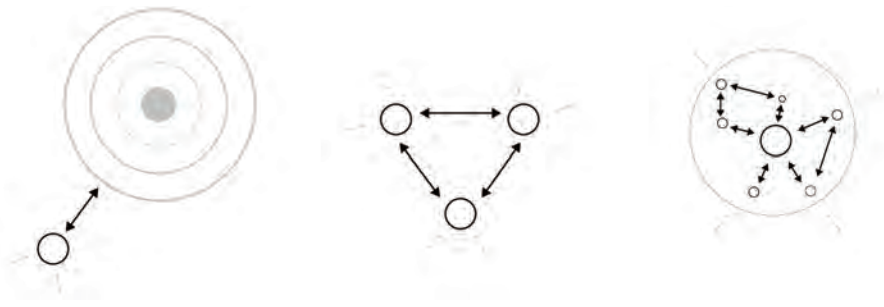


Fig1. / Schematic representation of the three categories. Source / Institute of Urbanism TU Graz 2020)

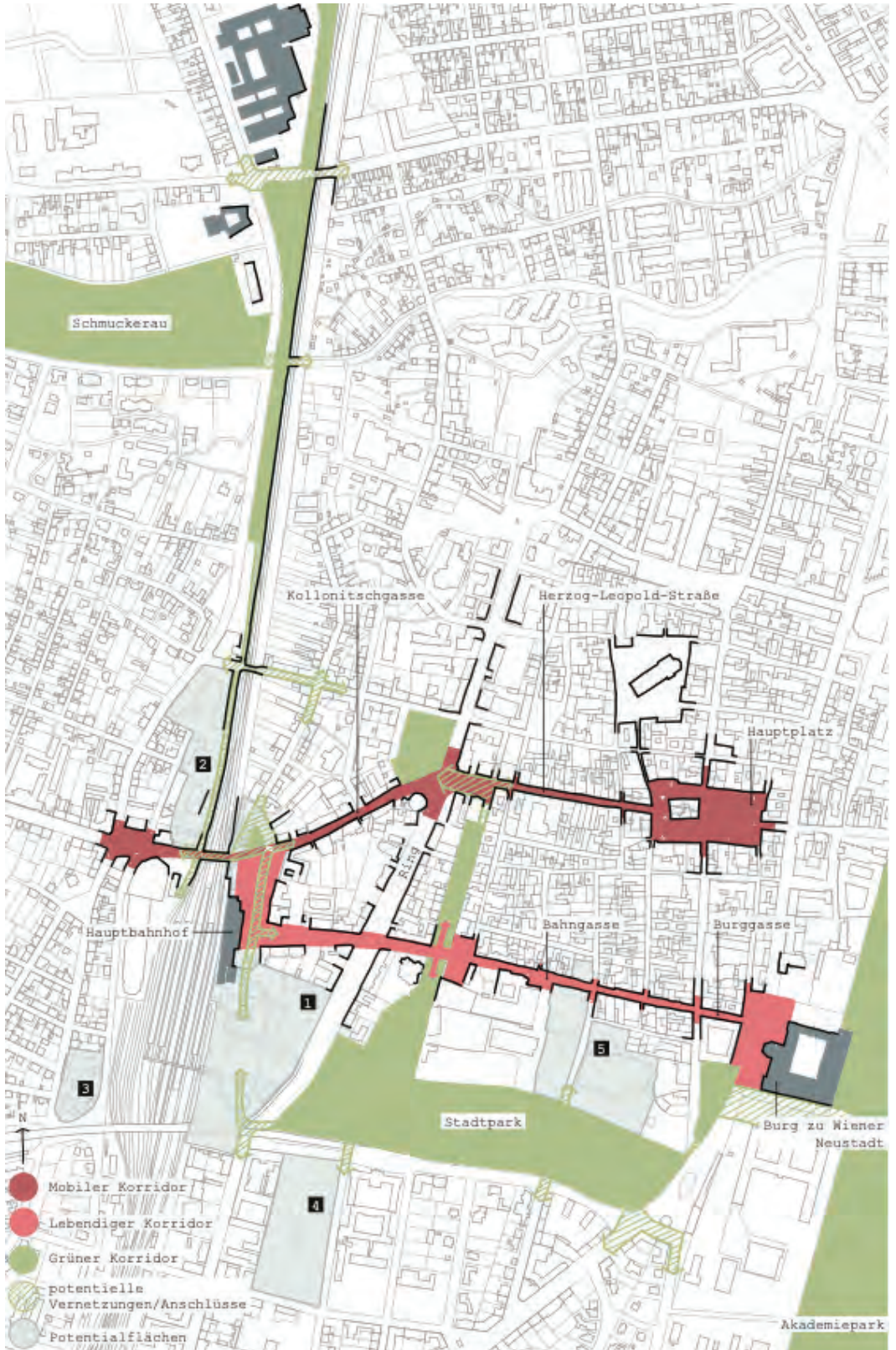


Fig2. / Spatial linkage of the station with the city center by means of three thematic corridors. Source / Mario Stefan, 2021)



Fig3. / Trofaiach Bus Terminal, stingl enge architekten 2018. Source / <https://oe1.orf.at/i/intro/f8/51/f851936034211850b978ad99e4e0b75b0a17d8ca.jpg>, © Foto Freisinger



Fig4. / Vision of the new meeting place in the municipality of Auen near Wolfsberg. Source / Markus Monsberger, 2019 .

“Vademekum einer Kleinstadt | Raum+Rad für Wolfsberg” (Institute of Urbanism TU Graz, 2019) elaborated a manual for the design of public spaces in line with this very shift towards an increase of active mobility in Wolfsberg.

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Aesthetic quality of the historic urban landscape

Historic city image and Townscape tradition

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A pleasing experience related to the city perception is one of the most important qualities of the urban environment. Since antiquity, this element of appeal and appreciation of the city was considered as crucial in city and architecture treatises. Aristotle sustained that the city should be built in a way to transmit happiness. This atmosphere is evident in the traditional cities, in which monuments, residential buildings, squares and roads make up together a harmonious whole.

Referring to the visual quality of traditional cities, in his influential book *"The Art of Building Cities"* (1889, 1945) Camillo Sitte states that they transmit a sense of nostalgia that remind us of happy times and argues that this feeling of nostalgia is perceived due to the artistic harmony of the city image. The art of building discussed by Sitte includes the idea of the city as an arrangement of its parts into a harmonious whole. This design unity that characterizes traditional ensembles is the key element of visual appeal. Unity happens at different scales. Elements composing the urban structure must be interrelated visually and contribute to reliving the overall image as a whole.

In his study, Sitte was focused mostly on the small-scale urban elements in order to understand the complexity of the city by analyzing its core parts and the way that are connected to the urban fabric. By analyzing the spatial characteristics of the most successful medieval plazas, he put into evidence the principles that rule their form and create a whole with the buildings that limit this space. The building

on the other hand, was not conceived as a sculptural architectural object, but one with a façade that contributed to the definition of the inside space of the urban square – a building that should be conceived in relation to the logic of public space formation. In this regard, urbanism for Sitte was considered as a science of relationships (Kostof 1991) and was determined by what people visually perceive walking in the streets.

In the beginning of the XIX century, Benedetto Croce in his essay *"Folk Poetry and art poetry"* (1929, 1952) compared popular architecture to architecture as in *"prose to poetry"*, separating it from ordinary constructions. He used the terms *"vibrant"* and *"lively"* to define the character of vitality and exiting rhythm which enabled them to transmit life.

Despite these first isolated attempts to draw interest on traditional architecture, the first important, influential event was the Bernard Rudofsky's *"Architecture without Architects"* exhibition at MoMA, in 1964 and the landscape illustration book *"Architecture without Architects"* (Rudofsky 1964). In this occasion, Rudofsky openly declared his interest on the "primitive", or the so called popular, rural, anonymous, non-pedigreed architecture and urban settlements formed as a result of aggregation with an accent to the urban landscape. As a result, these ensembles present a perfect expression of the cultural level of the community which makes the best use of context constrains and potentials responding to social needs and reflects an ecological approach to urban development. In fact, even their

growth and transformation over time is incremental and organic and embodies the genetic code of the existing pieces. This unitary morphological code of the historical cities was also noted by Marco Romano (1993), who referred to European cities by emphasizing the role of the "collective themes" in the perception of an aesthetic quality, including both the system of buildings and the sequences of public space or squares. In fact, the beauty of the European historic city according to Romano (1993) relates to the beauty of the façade of its houses, its public buildings and the way they are interconnected, forming coherent spatial visual sequences. This exhibition intended to point out exactly the aesthetic values of the traditional/popular/vernacular ensembles, which suggested an integrated approach to urban design. Architectural objects do not work independently as separate entities, but are conceived as parts which contribute in the construction of the city as a major work of art.

The most significant critics on the indifference to 'minor' architecture were declared by Bruno Zevi. Revisiting popular architecture in his *"Controstoria dell'architettura moderna. Dialetti architettonici"*, Bruno Zevi (1996) highlighted their expressive voltage as well as vitality: "...medieval towns are *"organic, alive, modulated by the needs of users, capable to expand; free from any formalistic taboo as well as symmetry, alignment, and perspective's rules"* (Zevi 1993, p.29). Here Zevi tried to objectively define the aesthetic qualities of the historical urban landscape by using concepts such as

symmetry, alignment and capacity of organic growth. In fact, analyzing the architecture of traditional historic centers Zevi noted that the apparent formal simplicity, instead of being regular and ordered as in the "classical" architecture, was a blend of surprise and adventure of an apparent disorder: from this marriage emerges the unique character, the identity of every single street, and altogether the symphonic complex as a whole.

Here it is important to understand the visual complexity of the historic city in relation to the aesthetic qualities and to identify series of parameters base on observed constants that contribute to its aesthetic qualities and can be further used as tools in design.

Visual complexity and aesthetics of the historical urban landscape.

The attempt to explain the aesthetic features of the historical city is based on the understanding of its visual complexity. The latter has to do with the way its components and single entities relate to each other and constitute a whole. Vitruvius defined the visual harmonic composition of the urban parts which fit with each other through numeric relationship as Eurythmia (Vitruvius 2005). L.B.Alberti reinforced the idea of harmony and concord of all the parts to form a suitable whole based on the mutual relation between them and the relation as a whole, so that "*nothing could be added or taken away or altered except for the worse*" (Alberti 1986, p.131).

Christopher Alexander was one of the first modern theoreticians who tried

to understand the principles of the city structure in relation to the visual quality of the urban landscape. He intuitively realized that there were some structural laws in artifacts such as buildings or urban landscapes that attributed them with a "quality of life" which makes them more pleasing to the view than others (Alexander 2002). Based on a cognitive approach, Alexander tried to objectively define the aesthetic visual quality of artifacts that characterizes living structures and constitutes the source of the coherence embodied in these objects. In fact, according to Alexander (Alexander 2002b), human building activity creates a physical order in the world. This order is reflected in the visual quality of the built environment. Thus, the most pleasing buildings or urban environments present "a high degree of life" and a deep quality of order, which means a particular kind of geometry or a structure that creates a quality of life in the object, which consequently makes it more pleasing to human sight. In fact, he appreciated traditional cities, having a high degree of life embodied in their urban structure.

This assertion is quite similar to the definition of Leon Battista Alberti on beauty as concinnitas or "the harmony and concord of all the parts achieved in such a manner that nothing could be added or taken away or altered except for the worse" (Alberti, 1485). The high level of interaction between the parts makes them, in fact, part of the whole since every single entity influences the image as a whole.

Ch. Alexander (1965) in his seminal paper published in 1964, "*The city is not a tree*" used two mental structures to describe the complexity of urban morphology by analyzing the city as a structure made of sets: one based on a high level of organization and a rigid hierarchical relationship between parts which was described as tree structure, and the other presenting a high level of interaction between the single parts which was called semi-lattice structure. These structures that represent different models of generation of the city can have a great influence on the city image, and the "degree of life" it transmits. The metaphor of the tree structure describes the zoning restrictive approach in modern planning with a high level of hierarchical organization among the urban parts. In contrast, semi lattice, as in mathematics, constitutes an open structure, where the single parts can have multiple interconnections at

different scales, by creating overlapped systems of a relationship between the parts, which enable an organic growth, piece by piece or transformation of the urban fabric, guaranteeing a continuous whole. The semi-lattice structure, in fact, holds a quality of adaptability and is able to support heterogeneity, variations and a variety of combinations which attributes a vital character to the traditional urban environment.

Understanding the organized complexity of traditional urban landscape can help bring new insights to the objective aesthetic quality that exists in natural cities as organic complex structures, in contrast to planned cities that ignore the role of complexity in the city image. With regard to the organized complexities, Ch. Alexander introduced the theory of "wholeness" and "centers", which provided a method in analyzing and describing objectively the beauty of a complex structures. Based on this theory, the beauty of a living structure relates to the idea that its parts are working as a whole, and it contains many wholes within. This means that an object, a building or built environment is not perceived as an isolated fragment but is part of a wider context, a world which includes the garden, trees, streets, natural landscape and territory, and so on, at different scales: "*The whole is unbroken and undivided, and its parts work in a holistic way*" (Alexander 2002).

In fact, wholeness is seen as closely related to other living qualities like beauty, eloquence, good health, well-being and—most integrally—vitality and life, which characterize living structures and represent the necessary criteria for urban visual quality. Living structures are complex networks made up of numerous centers at different levels, which, because of their position, shape, dimension, and visual strength in relation to the context, exhibit centeredness along with their area of influence. They represent focal points within the visual composition.

In Pattern Language (1977), Christopher Alexander proposes a language that explains the organized complexity of the city by displaying the structural relations between elements that are related to the form but are more flexible and adaptable to different situations. Hence, they can be repeatable and usable in urban design. The common properties of geometric (form) or structural patterns that sustain wholeness are tools that help define the visual harmony and coherence of the whole and guide designers achieve an increased

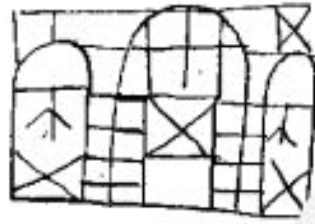
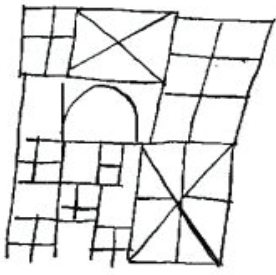


Fig. 1 / Paul Klee, Study on structures in elevation. Source / Klee, P. and Spiller, J. (1969). *The thinking eye*. London: Lund Humphries, p.236) and "Castle" landscape painting



Fig. 2 / Distinct cultural built environments and their visual character given by the housing typology
 Fig. 2.a Cobh, Ireland. Source / <http://citywallpaperhd.com/fr/photo/374-fond-decran-irlande.html>), Fig. 2b. Casares Andalusia, Spain. Source / http://www.greekarchitects.gr/site_parts/doc_files/238.15.11.pdf); Fig. 2c A view of Vatheia, in the Peloponnesus. Source / Rudofsky 1964, p.62)
 Fig. 2d. Image of historical urban landscape of Gjirokastra. Source / Photo by Lav Lutalica (flickr)

coherence. In his attempt to decode the physical idea of life in living structures Ch. Alexander identified a set of geometrical proprieties characterizing all things which have life or objects which present a wholeness quality. The geometrical features he defined are: Levels of scale; Strong centers; Boundaries; Alternating repetition; Positive space; Good shape; Local symmetry; Deep interlock

and ambiguity; Contrast; Gradients; Roughness; Echoes; The void, Simplicity and inner calm; Not separateness-connectives. Each of them does not work separately but can help strengthen the character of the others (Alexander 2002). This can be easily verified in traditional historic cities and is valid also in the case of Gjirokastra.



Fig. 3 / The role of color in the integral image of the historic city: Ostuni, Italy.
 Source / <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ostuni>.

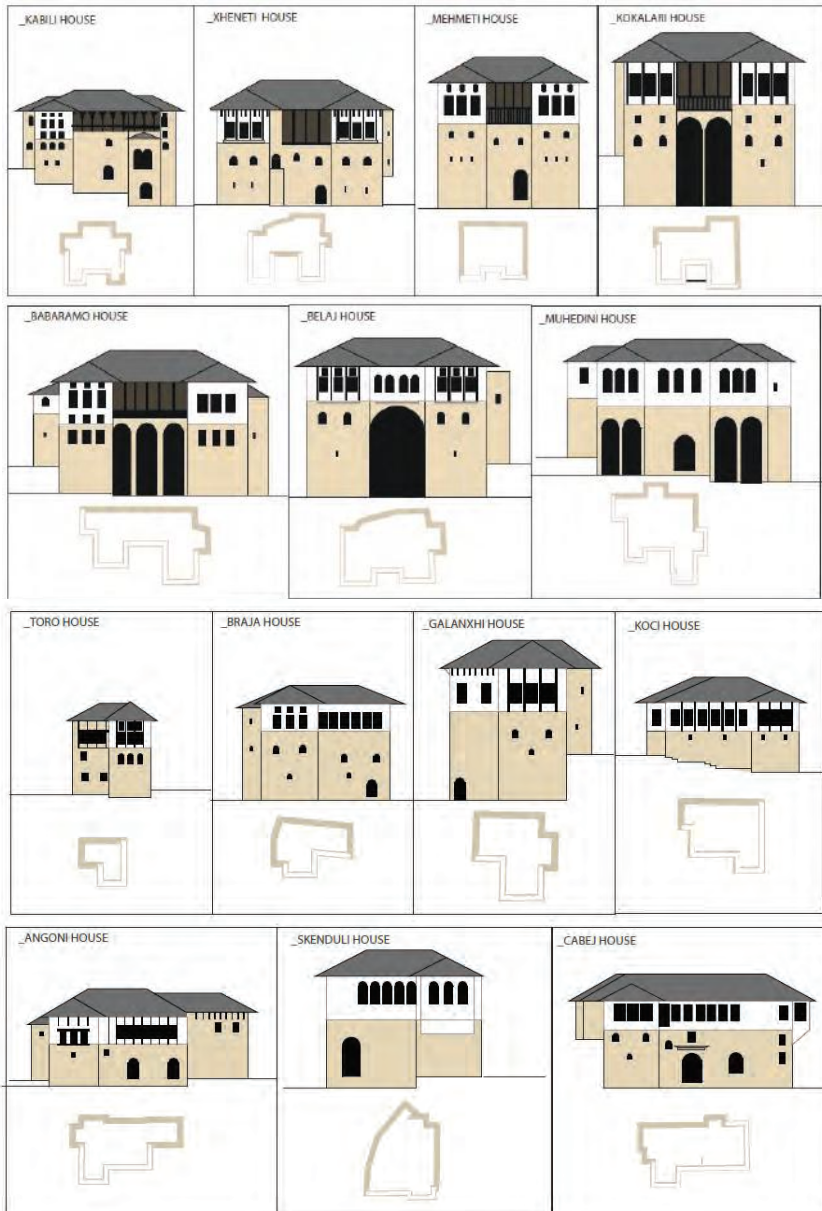


Fig. 4 / Analyses of color and texture perception in Gjirokastra house.
 Source / Papa, 2020.



Fig. 5 / The buildings voids in the urban landscape of Goreme Valley, Cappadocia, Turkey.
Source / <http://www.art-et-loisirs.com>

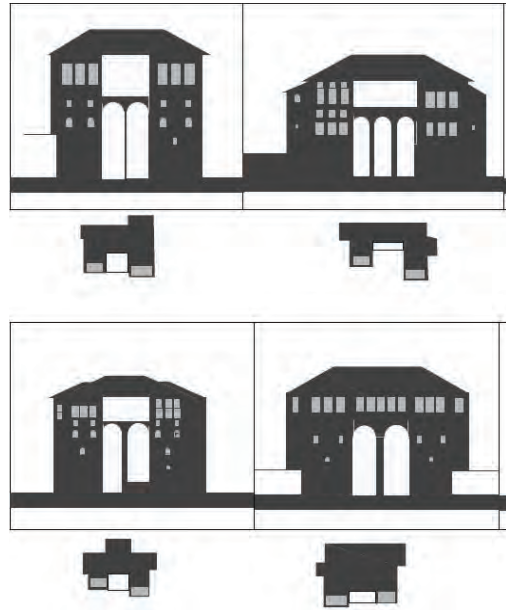


Fig. 6 / Analyses of significant voids in house facades according to the typology.
Source / Papa, 2020)

TYPES OF OPENINGS AGREGATION

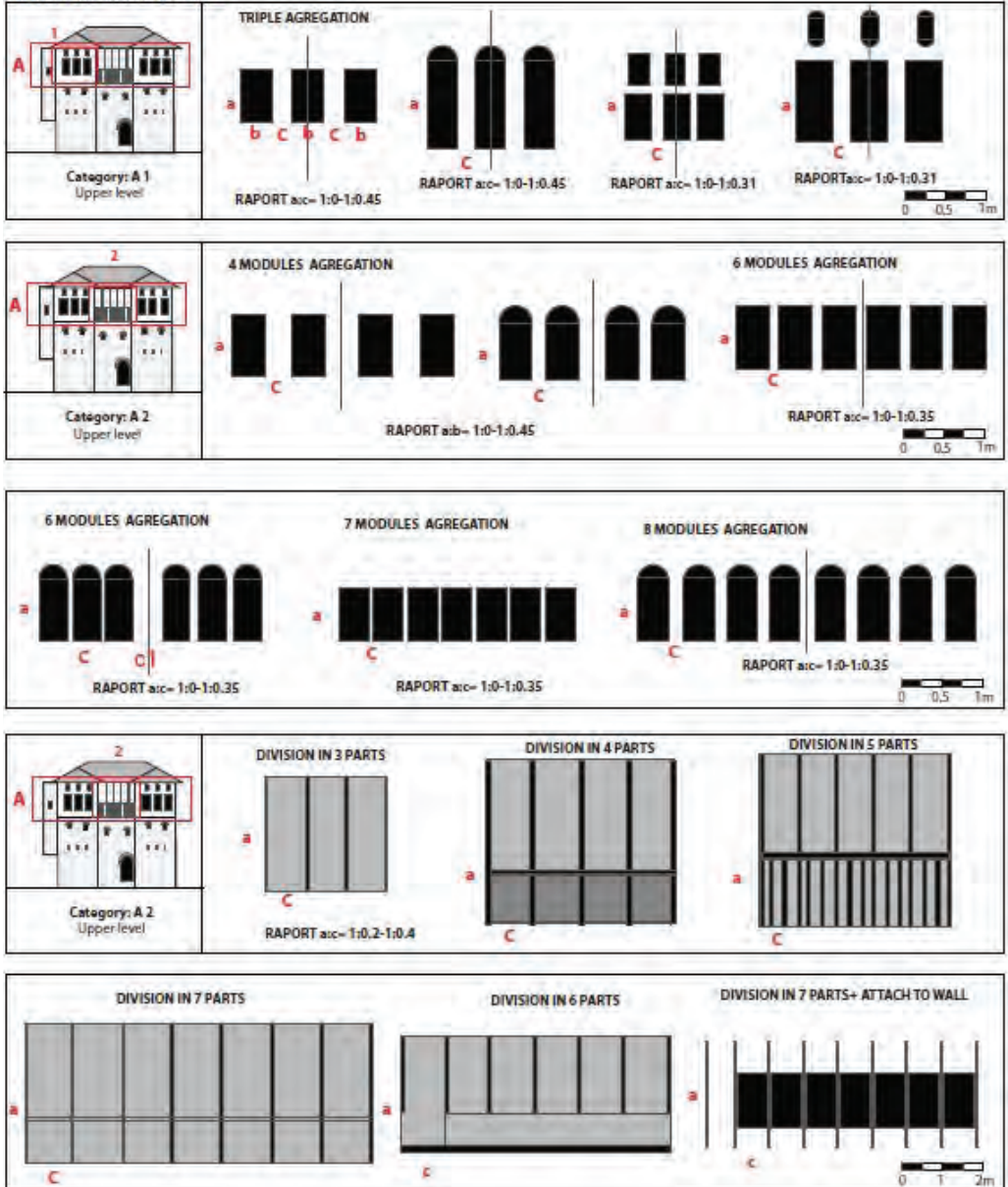


Fig. 7 / Geometry and proportion constants of openings in upper part of the facade of traditional house of Gjirokastra. Source / Papa, 2020.

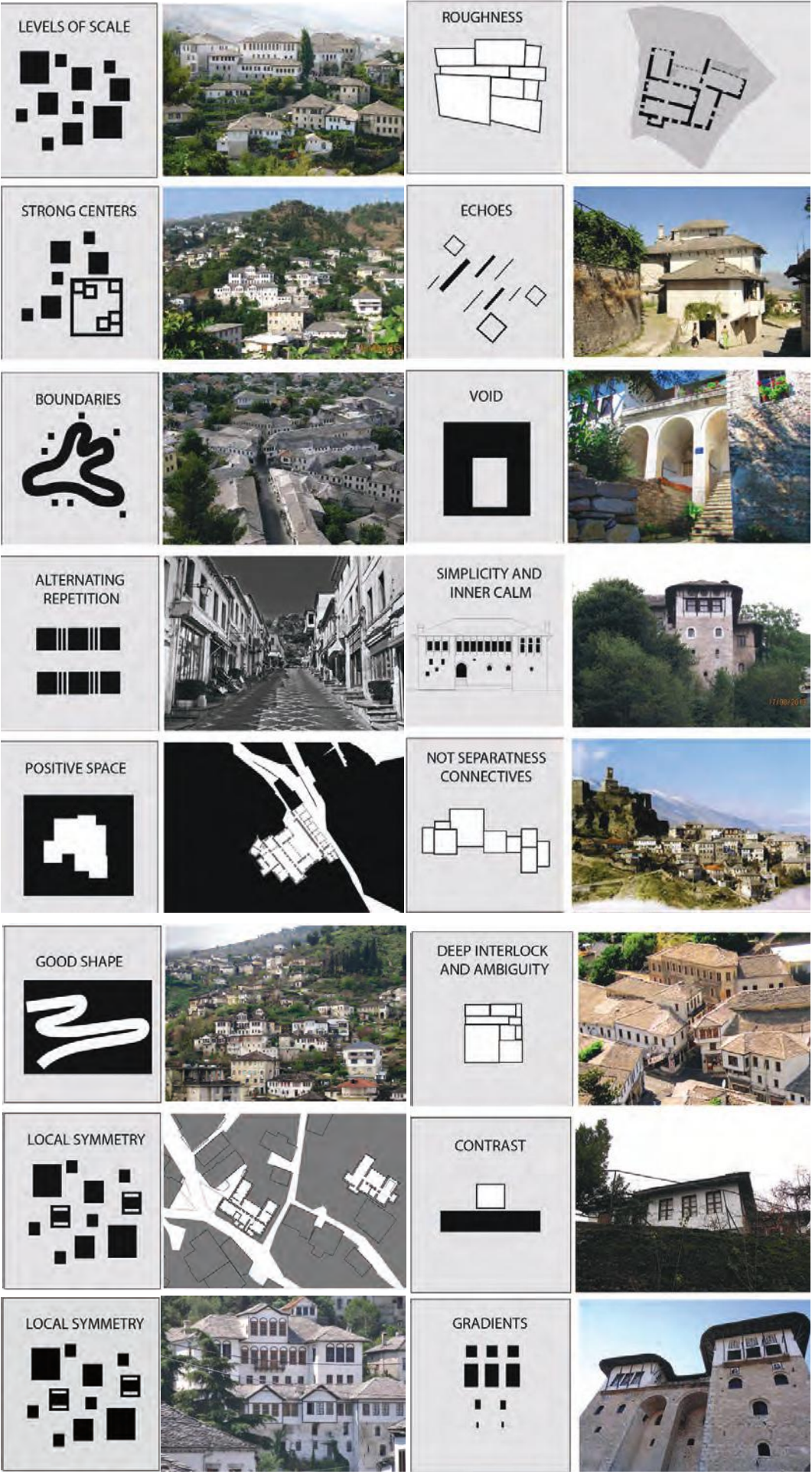


Fig. 8 / Diagram of Ch. Alexander geometrical proprieties and representative photo from Gjirokastra context explaining them in urban and architectural context (source: author's elaboration based on Ch. Alexander geometrical proprieties (2002).

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Punctuating Gjirokastra's Modernism

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Polis University / Tirana, Albania

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In one of the most poetic passages of Ismail Kadare's *Chronicle in Stone*, the youngster – the main character of the novel – sends a handful of sky to the water cistern of the house through a mirror, only to receive a pale, fleeting reflection. Or he would send a sound – 'AUU', only to receive a muffled echo (and sometimes nothing, when the cistern was full of water...). The interaction with the cistern is a metonymic figure, which stands for the way the youngster communicates with his home, his homely environment, his very own town which he knows very well; that sloped town which looked like "prehistoric creature stuck to the face the mountain;" a town, where, if a drunkard "were to fall on the side street, he would fall on the roof of tall house, instead of a ditch;"¹ The youngster's communication with his home takes place in a familiar way, through gestures, looks, and feelings, rather than with words, not unlike those signals exchanged with the dark cistern. His home in an expanded sense – the old city, the castle with its labyrinthian tunnels (real or imagined), the houses with stone 'scales', the steep streets, the supercilious neighbors, the old women that never slept..., drinking coffee and looking at other people's houses with binoculars – often feel rather strange and opaque, not unlike the dark void of the cistern beneath the house. This is not simply a feeling of the uncanny or unheimlich bound to arise by the proximity

of the too familiar; it is also triggered as a result of the youngster's (and through him, our) encounter of an irresistible wave: that of modernity.

The book is, indeed, formed by the resonance between the youngster's coming of age and the arrival of modernity. A certain structural proportionality is discerned: the youngster's home is to his coming of age what the old town is to the modern times. The youngster is the link between the old and modern world. The latter, however, revealed its cruelest face: the war. The airport, the planes, the bombing, the foreign languages of soldiers entering and leaving town, and of course the brothel in 'support' of the war effort – they all trouble the imagination of the youngster. An exceptional town under a state of exception: on the one hand, the old, impenetrable stone city, on the other hand, the sweeping and eroding wave of modernity, without boundary or form. Such rupture is reenacted in peace time: while the old city is frozen into an historical monument protected under UNESCO, the rest of the city is left to unbridled urban sprawl. If urbanization were the "instrument in which life is to be spent"² – that sprawling life that clings to the earth like a "disease...,"³ then the historic city would be a shell drained of life.

Is such shell a utopian island, a non-place of history to be consumed as a commodity? Or is it a place both within

¹ / Ismail Kadare, *Kronikë në Gur*, (Tiranë: 1978),

² / Arturo Soria Y Puig, Ed., *Cerdà: The Five Bases of the General Theory of Urbanization*, Trans. Bernard Miller & Mary Fons I Fleming, (Madrid: Electa, 1999), 86

³ / "The Earth (he said) has a skin; and this skin has diseases. One of these diseases, for example, is called 'Man.'" Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, (London: Penguin Books, 1969), 153.

and yet not a part of urbanization, a kind of extra-urban heterotopia? Foucault defined heterotopia as “places that are written into the institution of society itself, and that are a sort of counter-emplacements, a sort of effectively realized utopias in which the real emplacements that can be found within culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted; a kind of places that are outside all places, even though they are actually localizable.”⁴ If Gjirokastra were heterotopic, then how and what would it represent, contest, invert?

One of the things Gjirokastra contests, inverts and destabilizes is precisely the myth of being an old, ‘traditional’ town, a monument of a past destined to remain frozen, reminiscent of a time that no longer exists, before modernity. Walking in the very heart of the historical town of Gjirokastra, one finds a distinct and varied modern texture, which consists of modern buildings of different periods, from the early twentieth century to the late 60-s and 70-s. The ‘Varosh’ neighborhood, particularly ‘Doktor Vasil Laboviti’ Street, is an open-air museum of different modern houses (Fig. 1, 2 & 3). Their style ranges from an early eclectic modernist style to a more rationalist modernism like that of the old Radio Station, which consists of a distinct cubic volume articulated with thin reinforced concrete balcony slabs (Fig 1). Preliminary research, which is still in its

nascent phases, indicates that these early modernist buildings were built by master builders and architects both from the local and surrounding regions, in Albania and from nearby Ioannina, as well as Italy. What is particularly striking is how distinct these modern structures are from the older architecture of the town. Their volume is rather cubic and contained, unlike the vernacular structures that often have one or two wings coming out from the basic unit of what is termed as the “perpendicular style.”⁵ The modern buildings often have a shallow cantilevered balcony (built with reinforced concrete) instead of the traditional loggia or the ‘çardak’ of the vernacular style. The roof of the former is made of clay tiles rather than stone slates; it does not project as much as that of the latter and does not have the traditional collar beams. The volumes and façades of the modern structures are either distinctly articulated with pilasters, or are simply left as plain, finished with stucco. What is even more striking, is the ‘naturalness’ with which the modern ‘fits’ into the old, so much so that it is easily missed. Yet such ‘fitness’ is not a synthesis but rather a juxtaposition of two different things.

What makes Gjirokastra heterotopic is the proximity and combination of a vernacular, about which a lot has been written in the official historiography, with a disavowed

⁴ / Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” in *Michel Deheane, Lieven De Cauter Ed., Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society*, (New York & London: Routledge, 2008), p. 14, quoted in *Christophe Van Gerrewey, Choosing Architecture: Criticism, History and Theory since the 19th Century*, (Lausanne: EPFL Press, 2019), 232-233

⁵ / Isuf Sukaj, *Vera Bushati dhe Pirro Thomo, Historia e Arkitekturës Shqiptare, 1912 – 1944, 1987*

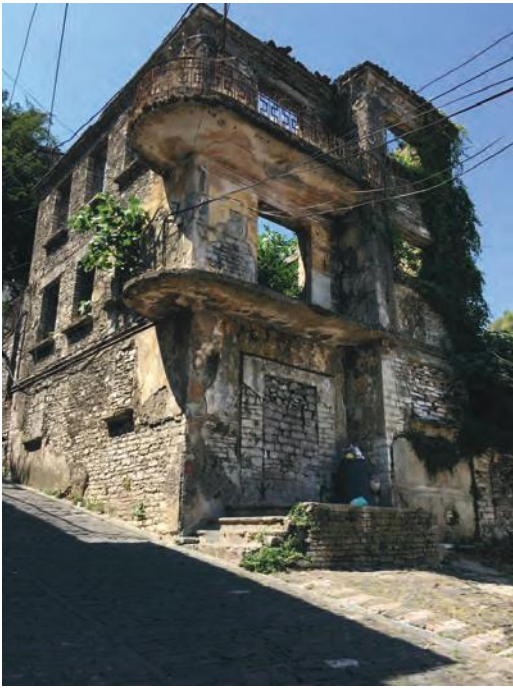


Fig. 1 / The old Radio Building.



Fig. 2 / House in "Doktor Vasil Laboviti" Street



Fig. 3 / House between "Doktor Vasil Laboviti" Street and "Ismail Kadare" Street

modernism, about which nothing is written yet. What makes Gjirokastra heterotopic is the juxtaposition of the vernacular and the modern, which are neither opposed nor synthesized. They take place in under the same castle, in the same neighborhoods, across the same slope, more often than not adjacent, juxtaposed, and intertwined with one another. We often think of modernity as monolithic and as a rupture with the past. A closer look reveals, however, that modernity is characterized by a stylistic multiplicity, which is structurally connected to economic, social and cultural distributions that go well beyond the physical and imaginary confines of the old town.

One of the most distinct modern structures in Gjirokastra is the Zigai's House, right behind the "Çajup" Square (Fig. 4, 5 & 6). Preliminary research suggests that it was probably built in the late twenties and early thirties, while its architect remains to be found and researched. The house has a strange shape: a stepping or terraced tower that culminates with a sort of roof gazebo at the top. It is quite unlike any other house or structure in Gjirokastra. It is like a lighthouse from another place and another time that, from certain viewpoints, seems to cryptically communicate only with the tower of the castle. The whole structure is built with reinforced concrete. This fact alone is



Fig. 4 / Zigai's House, View from Çajupi's Sqaure



Fig. 5 / Zigai's House, Exterior "I. Kadare" Street



Fig. 6 / Zigai's House, Interior view of the fenestration and the concrete structure.

sufficient for the house to be qualified and classified as a first-class monument to be restored and preserved. One should keep in mind that at this time, even in developed countries, it is very hard to find houses built completely with a columns system in reinforced concrete. Yet the formal and stylistic attributes of the house are as significant as the structure. The latter is shown both in the interior and exterior in terms of a series of pillars and pilasters stripped of any ornament. The windows of the first-floor span between the pillars, while in the upper floor the windows are narrower and alternate with plain wall surfaces, while pillars alternate with pilasters. The first floor is a double height

space, which is reflected in the façade with taller openings below and a sort of clear story above. Throughout the width of the façade the floors are clearly marked and demarcated by shallow, cantilevered balconies. The façade is reminiscent of the modern architecture of the 20-s and 30-s and particularly the work of Auguste Perret, both in its structural and formal sensibility.

Past Zigai's house in "Ismail Kadare" Street is "Asim Zeneli" High School, a rather long building visible from different peaks in the city (Fig. 8, 9, 10 & 11). This building was designed by Italian Architects in the mid 20-s (Fig. 7). It was restored and partially rebuilt, after a fire, in the late thirties. The

rebuilding and restoration project was designed in 1939-1940 by the architect Skënder Kristo Luarasi (1908-1976). While the new building is rebuilt on the same foundations and keeps more or less the same walls, important differences between the two can be identified by referring to photographs of the former building. The side projections of the façade of former building have three windows, while the current one has only two, thus contributing to the perception of a more solid corner. In the former building, the central façade projection runs through the whole height of the building, culminating with a hip roof, which, together with the hip roofs of the side projections of the façade, forming a rather classical tripartite motif. In the actual building the middle hip roof is eliminated, thus emphasizing the horizontality of the main roof, and contrasting with the verticality of the side projections and that of the houses of the city. The central portico, on the other hand, goes only up to the second floor and ends, quite in an unorthodox way, with a flat architrave.

The lower floor and the central façade projection are finished with a granulated concrete, which creates a connection with the materiality of the castle, while the contrast between the granulated concrete and the stucco of the rest of the façade evokes the vernacular architecture of the town. The cornice is articulated with what seems like an exaggerated or scaled up dentil, which creates a dialogue with the battlements of the castle.

Skënder Kristo Luarasi's work on Gjirokastra is a unique case of modernist interventions within (what later would be categorized as) an historical city⁶. The buildings designed by Luarasi in Gjirokastra anticipate what, in the mid-seventies, would be called a critical regionalism⁷. His buildings frame and punctuate the vernacular town across different locations of the topography and from different viewpoints. They also furnish the old city with a different scale and texture, which does not negate or oppose but rather contrasts and enriches the old city. Let's take the 'Çajupi' Hotel as an example. If we stand on the hill of the City Court and look in the direction of the hill of the Castle, we encounter a vertical panoramic narrative

that consists of three elements, the Castle on top of the hill, the hill and the "Çajupi" Hotel at the edge of the hill. There is a clear and explicit relationship between the volume of the Castle and the volume of the Hotel (Fig. 13). The façade of the hotel is articulated into twelve shades or values through a stratified shift of façade plans, openings and distribution of materials (Fig. 12 & 13). The volume of the hotel rests on a stone plinth.

This plinth does not have the same height along the facade of the hotel; small steps reciprocate with the slope of the square in which the hotel is located. The horizontality of the plinth is broken by the volume of the main entrance with a stone ark. The façade above the plinth is articulated through the loggias, the balcony on the second floor with wide glass openings, the entrance shallow volume or portico, and three parts with punched openings in the wall. The façade articulations have a triple role: they create a reciprocity with the Castle, the hill and the tower-texture structure of the city. The castle is not just a large volumetric block that stands on the hill. Its volume is marked through slight fractal planes corresponding to the topography of the hill. The vertical articulations of the hotel's façade create a dialogue with the Castle's fractals.

At the same time the façade articulations reciprocate to the scale and proportion of the houses of Gjirokastra. These reciprocities are re-experienced differently as one approaches the hotel and stands or walks on the sidewalk along the façade. The building is transformed into a textural sequence that alternately directs our attention sometimes towards the interior of the hotel, sometimes towards the external context that surrounds it. Also, since the building is organized asymmetrically, one is predisposed not to remain in one place but rather walk along the façade and across the sloped plaza. During this walk, one is drawn by with the eastern part of the façade together with the cantilevered cornice of the roof, which are slightly bent to point to the clock tower of the Castle (Figs. 15 & 16). The hotel creates the impression that it has inevitably always been there, silently and slowly 'dialoging' with the Stone City.

⁶ What follows is a revision and translation into English of a part of my former article at Forum A+P: Skender Luarasi, "Empathizing Sisyphus: A Moment from the Oeuvre of Skënder Kristo Luarasi," Forum A+P No. 13, (Tirana: Polis Press, 2013), pp. 174-188

⁷ For a theoretical and historical account of the concept of 'Critical Regionalism', see Kenneth Frampton, "Towards a critical regionalism, six points of an architecture of resistance," in Hal Foster Ed. *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), pp. 16-31. Also see Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, Fifth Edition, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2020).



Fig. 7 / Gjirokastra's High School, before the fire, probably circa 1930



Fig. 8 / Photo of Gjirokastra's High School today



Fig. 9 / Skënder Kristo Luarasi, Perspective rendering of Gjirokastra's High School, 1939



Fig. 10 / View toward the Castle

The Hospital of Gjirokastra is another important building designed by Skënder Kristo Luarasi (Fig. 17, 18, 19, 20 & 21). Built before the "Çajupi" Hotel, in the late 40-s, it stands on what used to be the edge of town. Not having the urban



Fig. 11 / Entrance Detail



Fig. 12 / Skënder Kristo Luarasi, Elevation Drawing of the "Çajupi" Hotel, 1961



Fig. 13 / Panoramic View of the "Çajupi" Hotel from the Court's Hill (Photo by author).

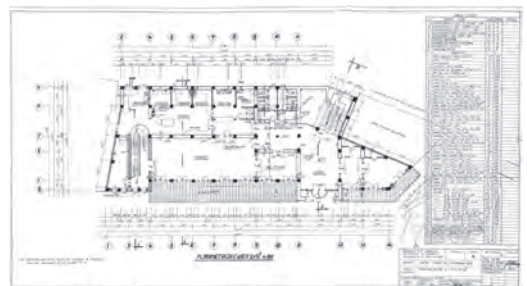


Fig. 14 / Skënder Kristo Luarasi, Elevation Drawing of the "Çajupi" Hotel, 1961

and topographical restrictions of the Hotel, the Hospital building has a more dynamic L-shaped volume. The hospital rooms are arranged linearly through a partially one-sided L-shaped corridor, which allows lighting on both sides of the



Fig. 15 / View of the "Çajupi" Hotel and the Castle Source / the author.



Fig. 16 / View of the "Çajupi" Hotel, Entrance Detail. Source / the author.

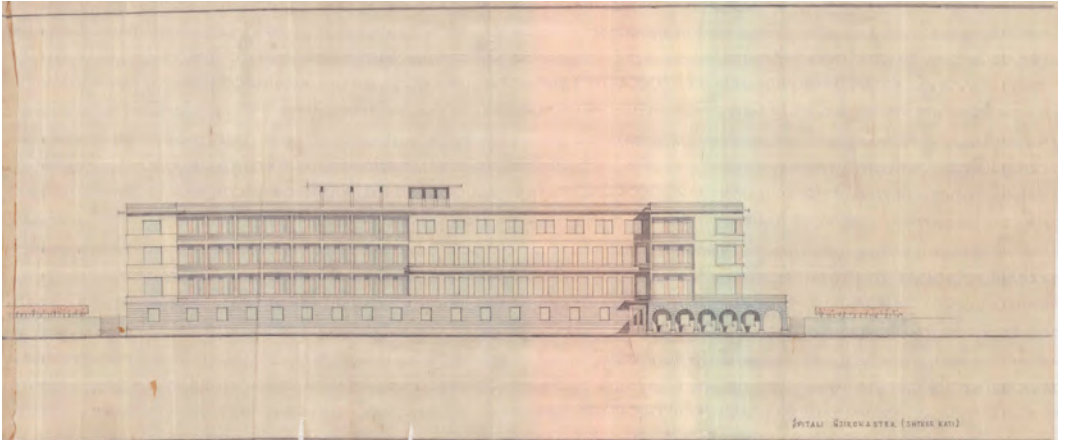


Fig. 17 / Skënder Kristo Luarasi, Elevation Drawing of the Hospital of Gjirokastra, 1949

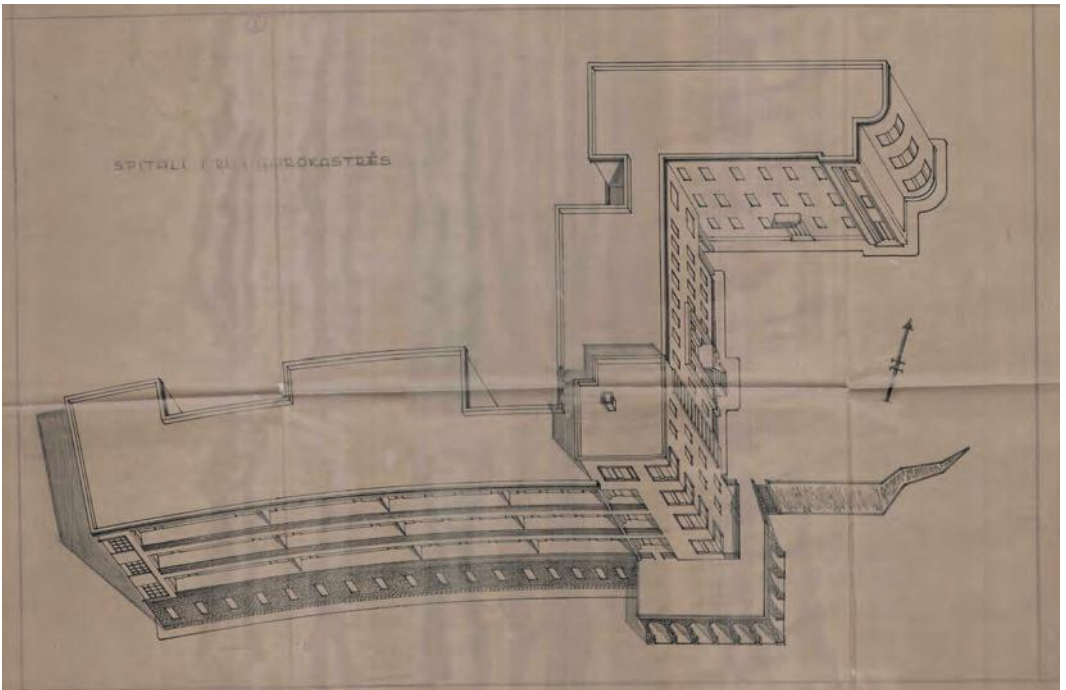


Fig. 18 / Skënder Kristo Luarasi, Axonometric Drawing, Hospital of Gjirokastra, First Version, 1949

building as well as transverse ventilation. This functional solution is treated as an aesthetic advantage in designing a long and dynamic volume and façade. (Fig. 17, 20 & 21). The three corners of the L-shaped volume are highlighted and emphasized volumetrically as 'offsets' of the volume's corner.

These fractures define a connection to the context by referring to the scale of

the vernacular architecture. The first floor of the corner volume is redefined as an arcade similar to those of De Chirico's paintings, or like stone arches that have 'descended' from the city. This arcade then returns to the plan of the façade of the building and continues along the entire length of the building as a plinth.

Between these corner volumes, the

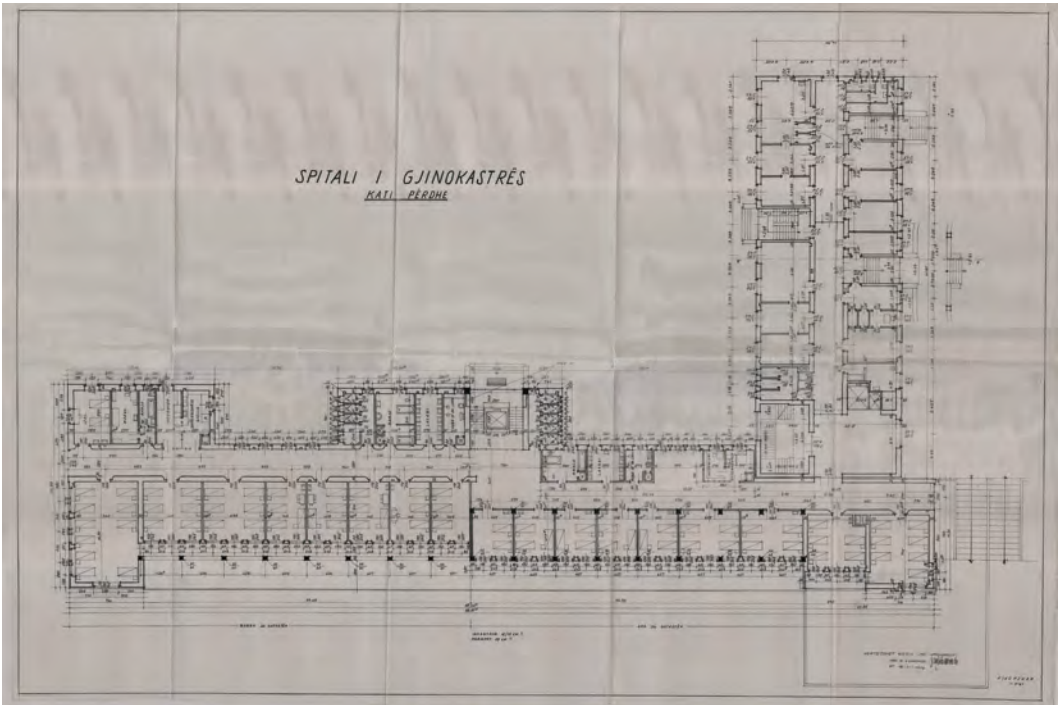


Fig. 19 / Skënder Kristo Luarasi, Ground Floor Plan of the Hospital of Gjirokastra, Final Version, 1949



Fig. 20 / The Hospital of Gjirokastra, 1950



Fig. 21 / The Hospital of Gjirokastra, today

façade is articulated with loggias, windows, balconies, plinth and cornice, creating a layered and sculptural effect that materializes from the play of light and shadow. The orientation of the volume and the façade direct our attention toward the city on the hill. This reference is reinforced by a series of horizontal reveals of the façade that turn the corners of the volume and thus continue the horizontal motif of the loggias.

The whole building can be imagined as a series of house-towers assembled into a single volume and then wrapped in a modern dress, articulated calmly and with variation, I would even say, in a cheerful way. This cheerful quality stands out at the level of details and finishes, where ceramic tiles are combined with plaster and stone, and window frames intersect the horizontal ornaments of the façade.

Gjirokastra is a unique city where the vernacular is combined with the modern. Research on the latter is still in its initial stages. Different archives need to be

consulted and explored. The genealogy of different structures – their form, style, and history need to be traced and investigated. The specificity of the city of Gjirokastra begs new ways to read both history and modernity and their complex relationships and intersections, in their aesthetic, social, political and institutional dimensions. Finding facts and objects that would help us discover such dimensions would not be unlike catching a glimpse of the dark cistern...

Sustainable Tourism as enhancer for Branding Gjirokastra

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Sustainable Tourism as enhancer for Branding Gjirokastra

Creative Tourism and Tourism for All as enhancer of Cultural Tourism in achieving sustainable development of the region.

As reviewed in the literature of branding cities and regions, cultural and natural heritage, the build environment, hallmark events, and famous personalities with the uniqueness of the place, are seen as potential tools in branding. However, in places and cities where the local economy, environment, and social development lacks in supporting the bases for creating a brand, sustainable tourism in this research is seen as an introductory tool in fostering furthermore the branded image of a city or region in Albania. Although sustainable tourism is a very wide subject affecting many areas of implementation, also based on the outcomes of the SWOT analysis and questionnaires, the research focused on Branding Gjirokastra focused on the Sustainable tourism categories of a) fostering Cultural Tourism through the use of Cultural Routes; b) Creative tourism; c) Accessible tourism for all. These categories of sustainable tourism are seen as part of the branding methodology that should be applied in cases like Gjirokastra which, differently from other destinations in Albania and the Western Balkans, points to a more selective tourism approach.

Based on the literature review on branding, research focuses primarily on highlighting case studies of well-known attractions

of bigger European cities, known as destinations for attracting mass tourism categories. All of the branding examples belong to economically, politically and socially well-developed countries facing and hosting mass tourism, such as the case of Barcelona, Venice etc. So, in terms of the expected result for the case of Gjirokastra, the branding strategies reviewed in accordance with the above-mentioned sustainable tourism trends approach a more selective tourism trend. Hence, the Built Environment¹ (Keying Lynch), Hallmark event (OCED), and Famous personalities (Asworth), and inhabitants, are certainly the "Genius Loci"² of every place, city or town. However, in terms of branding, each region, city or town, specific requirements are needed. Thus, fundamentals of branding literature for destination, region, and cities were taken in consideration to create the bases of what branding for destination, places, cities stand for, however specific methodologies in achieving branding were illustrated by the above case studies.

In the case of Albania, and Gjirokastra in particular, which is not a case of mass tourism, rather than striving to attract tourism in accordance with the actual possibilities of building the tourism sector, selective tourism is seen as the appropriate solution, through the implementation of cultural routes, creative tourism, and tourism for all. Selective tourism is based on the concept of fostering regional

¹ / In the book "Image of the City", Kevin Lynch notes that individuals perceive a city predominantly based on a set of built objects.

² / "Genius Loci" usually refers to a location's distinctive atmosphere, or a "spirit of place". John Urry

development by making possible that the touristic product focuses on smaller groups, which diversifies the touristic product from the other ones and shapes the overall outcome of the product related to the place. Thus, selective tourism disperses the application of tourist demand by ensuring sustainable regional development where the local community benefits from an increasingly diversified demand. In accordance with the branding methodologies for regions, cities etc., selective tourism, in contrast to the mass tourism, is defined as a shift towards sustainable approaches to the tourism sector, which takes into consideration the social and natural values of the local communities of a place, thus allowing its host and guests to create from both parties a positive and memorable experience.

Cultural routes, creative tourism, and tourism for all are seen as complementary parts of forming a unifying image of what sustainable tourism should be for the county of Gjirokastra. The strategy of how each of these tourism trends complements each other (Fig.1) will be based on the cultural routes as the main driving force of the touristic product with the two other components (creative tourism, and tourism for all) as complementary ingredients to potentially achieve sustainable tourism.

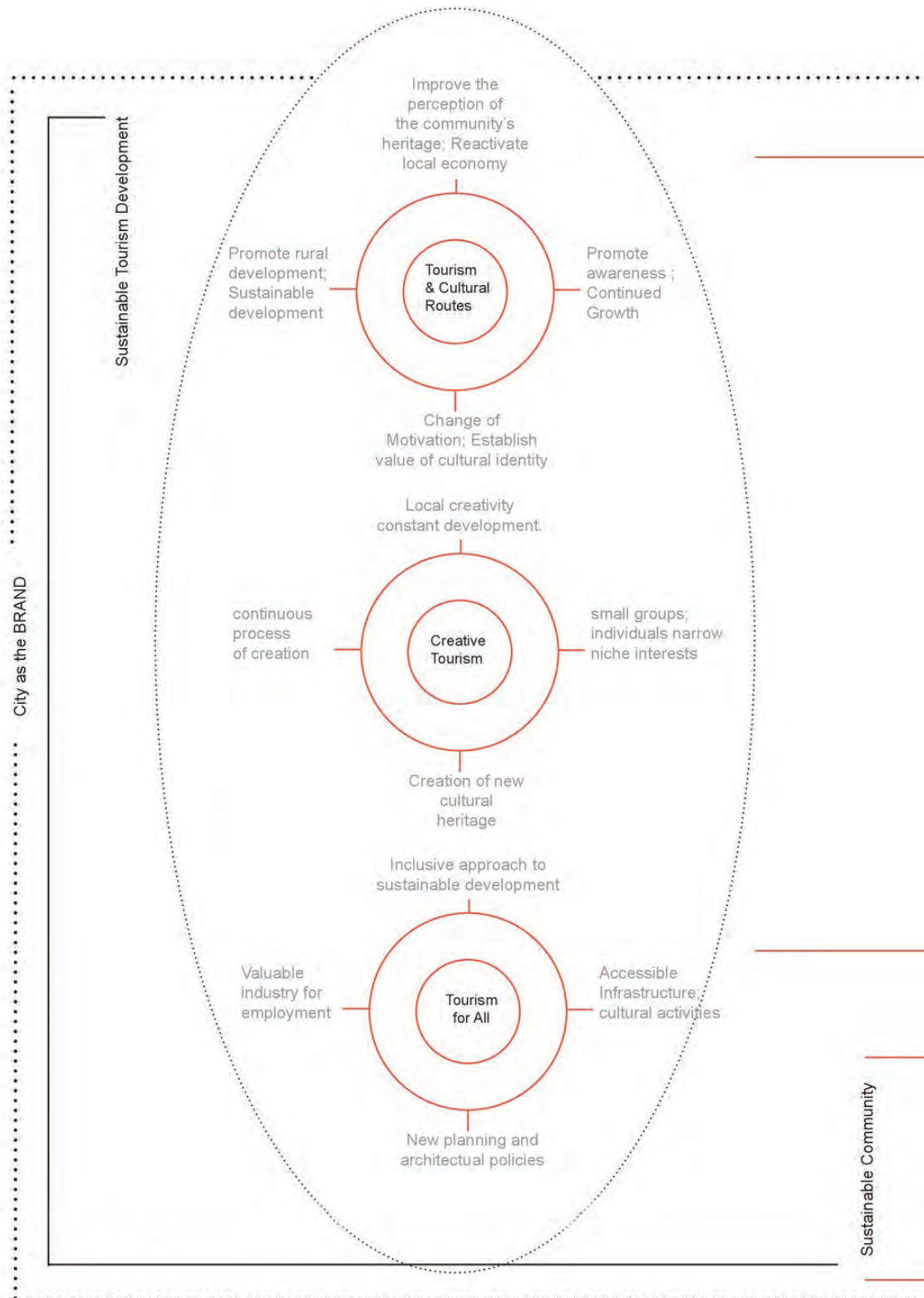
Potential cultural routes based on their theme.

The second classification of cultural routes

in accordance with UNWED is based on two main groups: Cultural routes³ joined around one main theme and cultural routes joined around several themes, which are linked, however, to the main route as the essential theme. So, the first classification under the main theme can focus on the natural and historical heritage located near the main points of the route, or cultural itineraries based on one theme, (architecture, music, art) (UNVWTO, 2015). a) Cultural Routes. In the case of Gjirokastra, branding the county and the city of Gjirokastra through cultural route is seen as the main driving force of creating sustainable tourism. The implementation of cultural routes would reactivate the local economy, promote and foster rural development, improve the perception of the heritage by the community, and sustain continued growth. All of the cultural routes proposed for the county of Gjirokastra are based on historical and cultural facts, also involving famous personalities as part of the branding methodology. Thus, the main cultural routes proposed for the county of Gjirokastra take into account the city of Gjirokastra and the surrounding villages with potential points of interest. The main themes identified were based on the a) Historical route, b) Cultural routes, and c) Naturalist routes. Additional themes were also identified for each main theme of the cultural routes. In the case of the historical route (Fig. 2 - Fig. 2.1), additional themes were based on the a) religious route; b) archeological route; and c) Ali Pashe

³ / a cultural, educational, archeological; or naturalistic heritage and tourism cooperation project aiming at the development and promotion of an itinerary or a series.

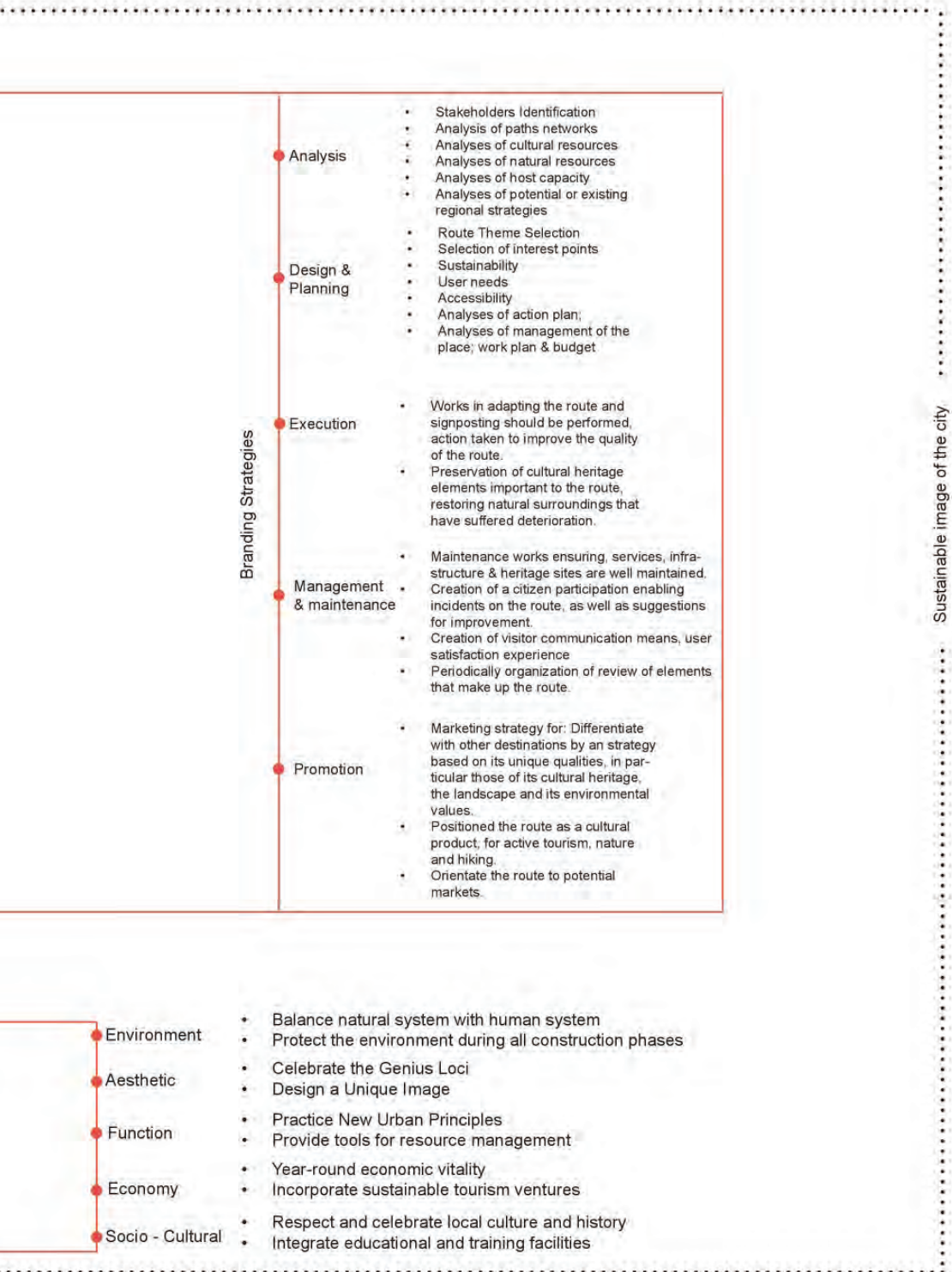
City as the BRAND



Tepelena Route. The county of Gjirokastra is historically rich, full of medieval castles and unexplored Byzantine Churches, Tekkes, ruins of an ancient aqueduct, and different archeological sites. In the case of the Cultural Routes (Fig. 3 - Fig. 3.1), additional themes were developed based on a) Lord Byron route; b) Edward Lear route; c) Culinary route, d) Artistic route, and e) Architectural Route. This takes into account the local and international poetry and literature as inspiration from the landscape. A set of cultural practices found in the city of Gjirokastra and in the

region villages also fall under the category of the cultural: Traditional celebrations, which are also influenced by the Greek minority of this county, National fairs and folkloric concerts, Ottoman architecture, Agrotourism and the traditional dishes of the area. The Naturalistic Routes (Fig. 4 - Fig.4.1) highlight the potential of the natural heritage of the county of Gjirokastra, which is rich in natural parks, free flowing rivers, mountain landscape, canyons and waterfalls. Sustainable tourism is seen as a beneficiary of the preservation of not only the natural

Fig. 1 / Conceptual Scheme of Sustainable Tourism Development as a Branding Methodology.
Source / the author.



heritage but also the historical and cultural one. The additional categories highlighted for the Naturalistic routes consist of the a) Scenic route; b) Blue route; c) Cycling Route.

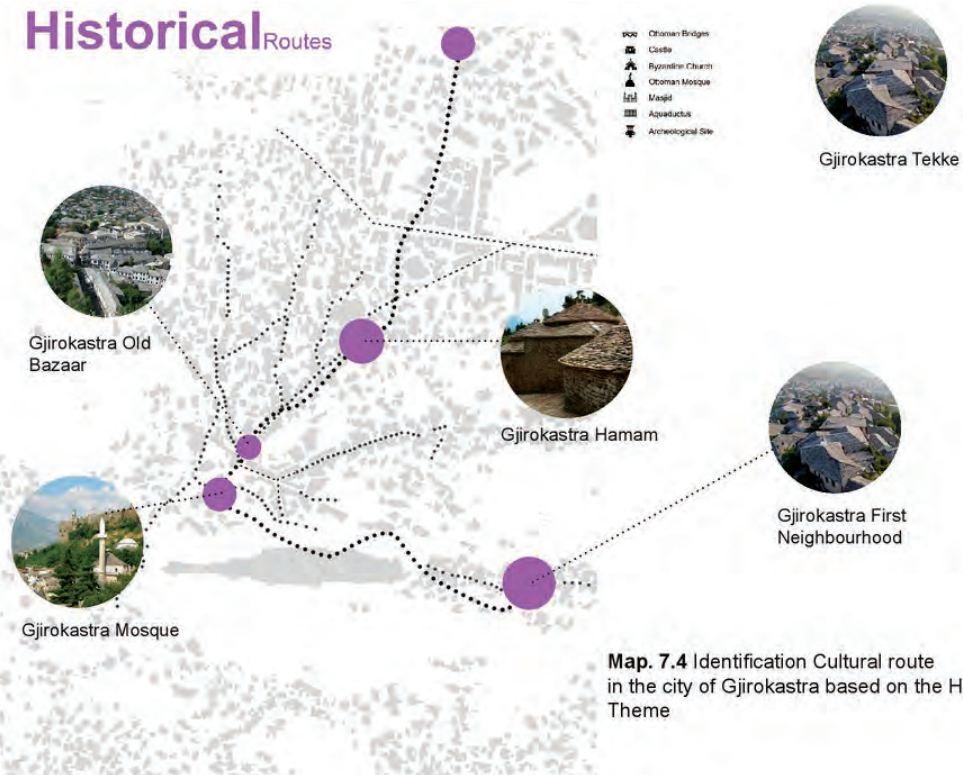
Creative Tourism

Regarding the concept of 'creative tourism', a conceptual scheme was obtained by highlighting the five principles (Paths, Nodes, Landmark, Edge, Districts) of Kevin

Lynch's theory based on his empirical research of the built environment of how individuals perceive a city. Nevertheless, OECD (2005) and Ashworth (2009) base their theory of "Touristic Gaze"⁴ with regard to hallmark events, and famous personalities. Thus, the concept of the built environment, famous personalities, and hallmark events were taken as bases for developing acupuncture points in the county for the future development of

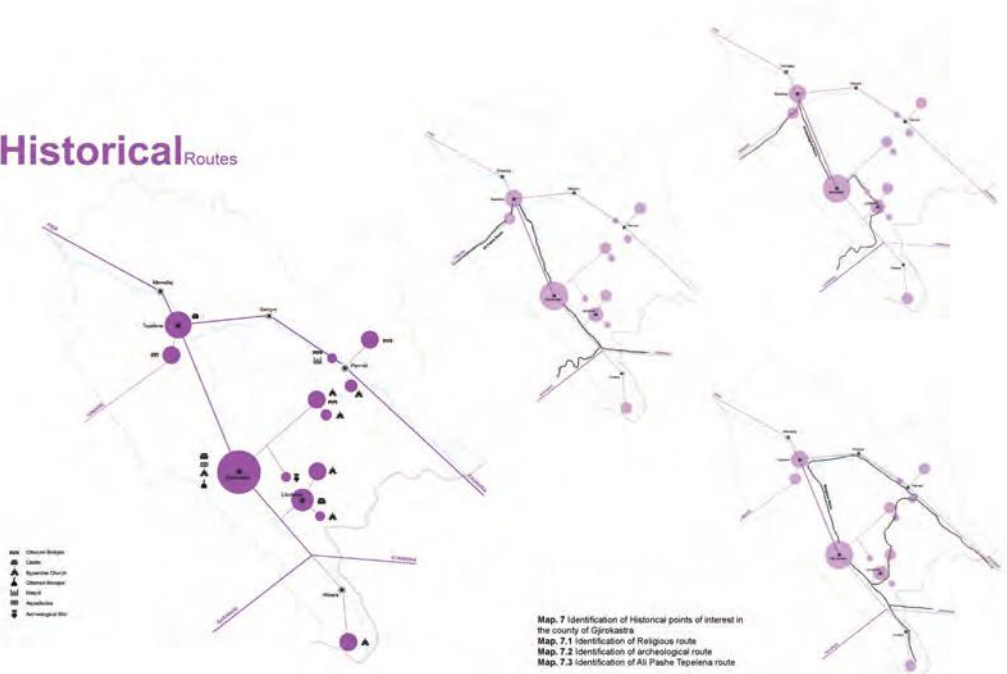
⁴ / "Tourist Gaze" a theory developed by John Urry, based on the concept why people are attracted in pursuing visual experiences of other places that people regularly do not experience in their everyday life.

Historical Routes



Map. 7.4 Identification Cultural route in the city of Gjirokastra based on the Historic Theme

Historical Routes

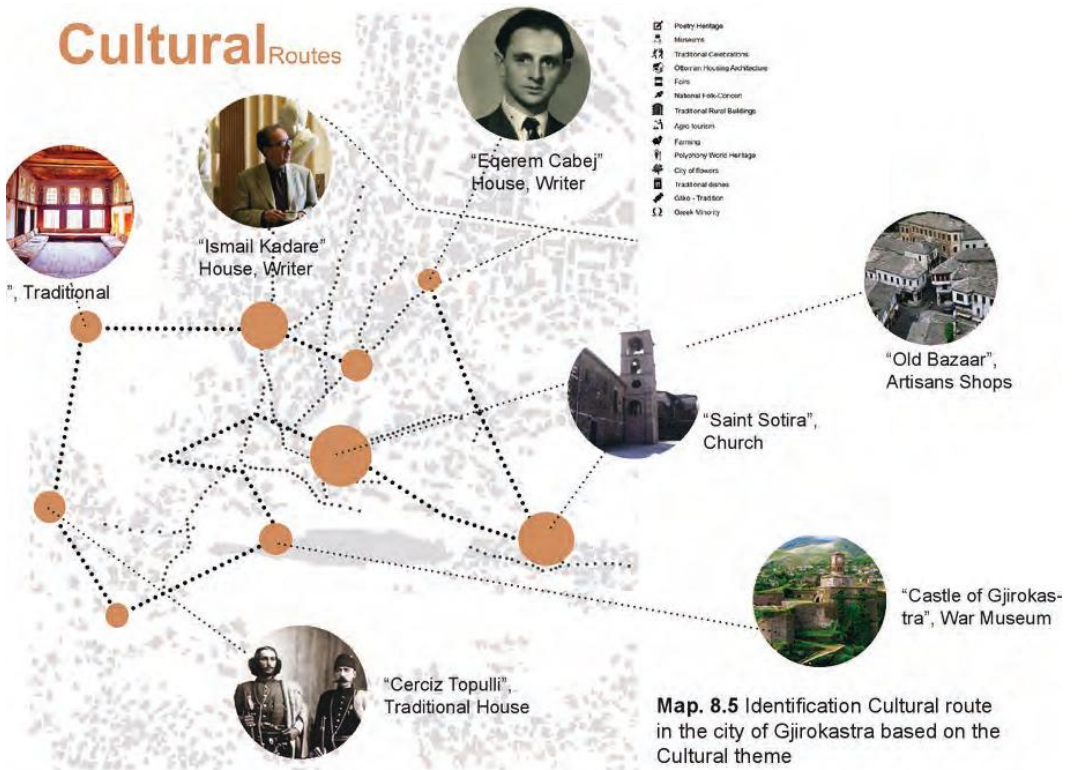


Map. 7 Identification of Historical points of interest in the county of Gjirokastra
Map. 7.1 Identification of Religious route
Map. 7.2 Identification of archeological route
Map. 7.3 Identification of Ali Pasha Tepelena route

Fig. 2.1 / "Identification of Cultural Route points in the City of Gjirokastra based on the Historic Route main theme". Source / the author.

creative tourism. During the time frame of this research many visits have been conducted in the city of Gjirokastra and county, where current analyses of touristic destinations have been developed. Based on site visits in the area and their analysis, the potential of various forms of cultural activities supports the concept of creative tourism. However, most forms of cultural activities are not framed and coordinated as creative tourism and are not included in a platform of the planning organization and tourism policy.

The rural communities embody rich cultural practices, traditional customs, and folklore, which are transmitted from generation to generation, symbolizing a strong local identity. Most of the villages are currently inhabited with only 20- 40% of their capacity (Albania. Government of Albania. PAP/RACSOGREAH Consortium, 2005). Due to migration and emmigration of the younger generation, most of the elderlies reside and live from remittance from the younger generation working abroad. Most of the families that have



Map. 8.5 Identification Cultural route in the city of Gjirokastra based on the Cultural theme

Fig. 3 / "Main Map identification of Cultural Route emphasizing subcultural routes focused on famous personalities; Artistic; Literature; Architectural; Culinary". Source / the author.

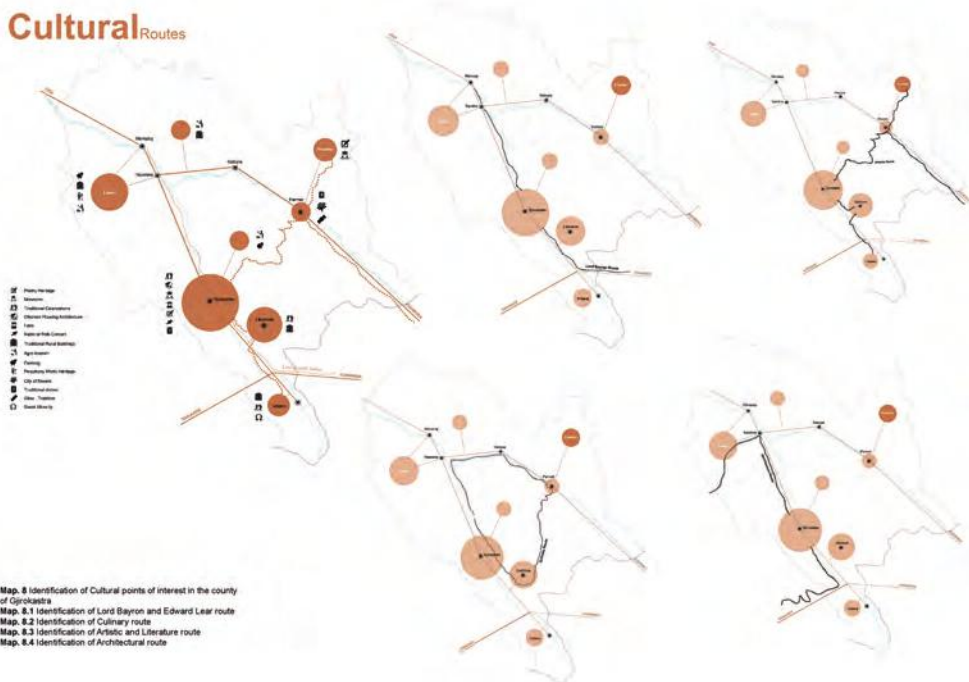


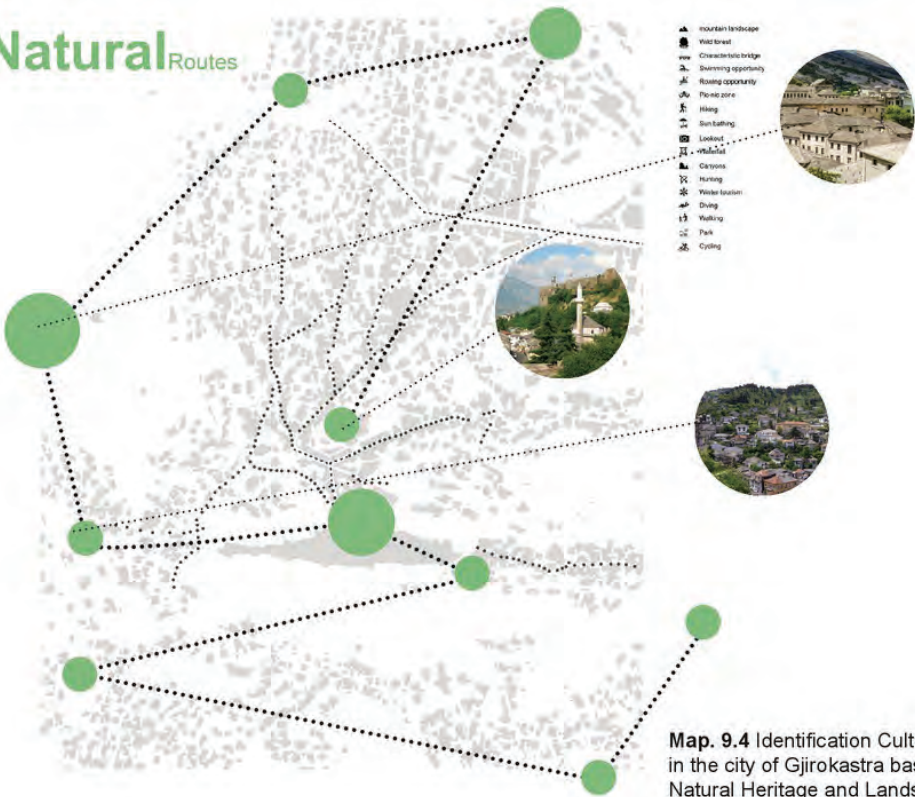
Fig. 3.1 / "Identification of Cultural Route points in the City of Gjirokastra based on the Cultural Route main theme". Source / the author.

emigrated tend to return during the summer season, also encouraged by many Orthodox religious festivals and village festivals. The county of Gjirokastra and the city, with its potential in cultural, historic and natural heritage should aim to develop creative tourism in order to foster economic and social benefits. This can trigger and encourage branding of cultural heritage and destinations and

local community products, thus attracting not only national and international tourists with specific interest in creative tourism⁵, but also future investments for sustainable development and management. These investments will serve as a powerful network in bringing people and new ideas as well as fostering cultural, business and educational relations. Apart from the acupuncture points highlighted in Fig. 5, a

⁵ / "tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken"

NaturalRoutes



Map. 9.4 Identification Cultural route in the city of Gjirokastra based on the Natural Heritage and Landscape theme

Fig. 4 / Main Map identification of Naturalistic Route emphasizing subcultural routes focused on famous Scenic; Blue free flowing river; Cycling. Source / the author.

NaturalRoutes



Fig. 4.1 / Identification of Cultural Route points in the City of Gjirokastra based on the Natural Heritage and Landscape main theme. Source / the author.

strategic calendar of creative tourism was developed in accordance with the cultural route themes highlighted in Fig. 6, thus aiming in ex-tending the summer season phenomenon into a yearly calendar of activities for the area. Amongst the proposed activities and events that should be fostered by creative tourism, are those of a) Arts and crafts traditions.

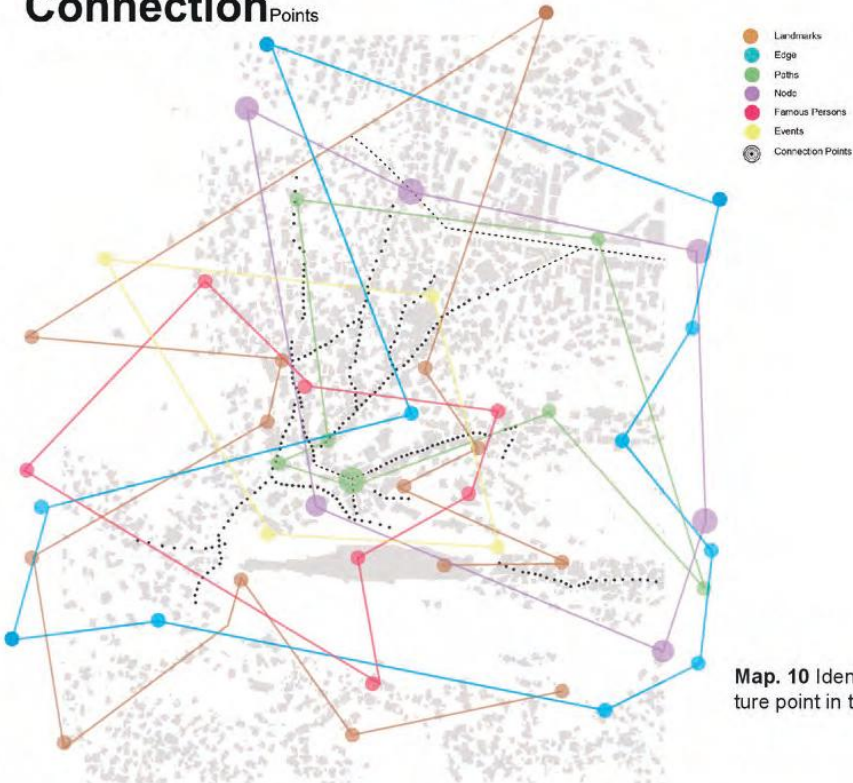
b) Literature events; c) History, culture and architecture of the region; d) Gastronomy and agricultural events; e) National fairs and folkloric events; f) Religious events. g) cultural activities related to the cultural route themes.

Tourism for All

"Tourism for All"⁶ in the county of

⁶ / "Tourism for All" aims in creating accessible and barrier-free tourism. This means ensuring tourist destinations, products and services are accessible to all people, regardless of their physical limitations, disabilities or age. It aims to allow tourism destinations to be enjoyed equally by everyone.

ConnectionPoints



Map. 10 Identification of acupuncture point in the city of Gjirokastra

ConnectionPoints

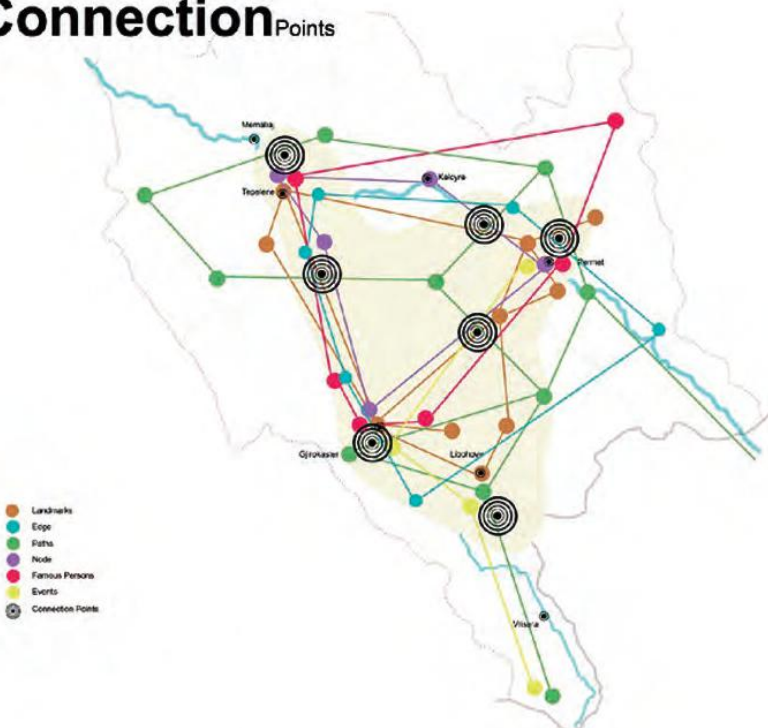


Fig. 5 / Identification of Acupuncture Points throughout the county of Gjirokastra. Source / the author.

Gjirokastra should focus on:

- Increasing competitiveness in tourism destinations by developing tourism products which take in consideration services and their accessibility.
- Incorporating accessibility, in naturally developing sustainable tourism policies and strategies.
- Regions and destinations should further develop forward-thinking tourism policies and practical measures, taking into account the heterogeneity of human

conditions.

- Destination managers but even governmental entities trying to develop new sustainable tourism products should take into consideration socially inclusive policies, which have to be applied, with the use and implementation of new technologies related to information of the place or service, (UNWTO, 2016). Nevertheless, environmental and social barriers should be treated by developing guidelines as applicable not only for the city

but for the surrounding areas as well. As stated by the "World Health Organization" (2015), 15% of world population lives with a disability" (WHO, 2015), and with many ongoing trends in the World and Albania, populations will face a rapid ageing, where the number of persons experiencing obstacles will only rise (WHO. 2015). In Gjirokastra, the number of ageing people and those with disabilities is high, accompanied by a population decline of 43%. In this research project, tourism for all is seen as part cultural routes. The following principles should be used as guidelines into achieving tourism for all concepts. The following guidelines are relevant to other places and destinations in the Albanian territory. Beneficiaries of the "Tourism for All" are:

- Persons with disabilities
- Elderly People
- Local residents of a certain destination
- Foreigners
- Other (Persons with injuries; people accompanying persons with disabilities; Children; people with temporary disability etc).

Hence, the first point of how tourism for all should be developed relates to the destination management approaches. Governmental Entities should develop and implement strategies concerning accessible tourism strategy laying out a key set of guidelines on the necessity of accessibility in the tourism sector, identify the services related to it, and point out if there is a need for changes. Nevertheless, the concept of accessibility should be provided with the necessary accessible facilities, infrastructure and transport in the designated destination. The second step in developing Tourism for all in the county of Gjirokastra has to do with the preparation of the adequate information on the touristic product and its advertising, which also relates to the information-booking process.

A unified set of international symbols of the accessibility or other promotional materials related to accessible services need to be included in a common strategy of developing tourism not only in Gjirokastra but in the entire nation. This will enhance the concept of accessibility in support services as part of a complete tourism product in order to facilitate the appropriate booking procedures (Website for the County of Gjirokastra). On the other hand, prior information of the level of accessibility of the site or other components of the built environment still do not exist in Albania, which means that it needs to be implemented. The urban

and architectural environments are also important in developing tourism for all. Basic means of communication should be fostered such as sign language and braille texts or alternative technological infrastructure in order to make all visitors be part of the place. Special parking spaces should be built and become available to all people suffering from a disability. This approach should be implemented in the entire county and city of Gjirokastra. Vertical and horizontal movement should be provided in order to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to move with the greatest possible independence. If possible, tourism service providers should offer appropriate infrastructure and services for visitors with disabilities. Another important element of tourism for all is the implementation of the modes of transport. Here, the National Tourism Agencies and directories in accordance with municipalities should provide means of transport for people with disabilities, special private or public vehicles. By implementing cultural routes as the main catalysator of promoting a place and destination, creative tourism should host people with disabilities, without the need for assistance. Entities responsible for carrying out and promoting cultural activities (museums, cultural heritage sites, natural heritage sites, religious sites) in every region should develop new means of including people with disabilities in their daily cultural activities. Other tourism activities and events should be taken into consideration measures that enable people with disabilities to have equal right of participation. All the assigned entities should ensure that people with disabilities have the same right to access the recreational and tourism facilities – the cultural routes, museums, and natural environments in the particular case of Gjirokastra. The highlighting the main categories and themes of the cultural routes, identifying the acupuncture points of developing creative tourism hubs based on the built environment, the famous personalities, the hallmark events, and the specific ideas of how to foster tourism for all are given in the diagrams below. Two diagrams in (Fig. 7; Fig. 8) show the potentials of the identification of the cultural route theme, and the actual perceived path and its distribution. For each of the cultural routes, creative tourism acupuncture points are highlighted, which suggest the most adaptable period of time to be visited and the potential events and activities which could take part in accordance with the cultural route theme. As far as the application of tourism for

all acupuncture points, specific proposals are put forward within time period. To further validate the concept of sustainable tourism in this region, two main categories of target groups were identified: the local residents and visitors (Family, Group; Individuals), the foreign tourists (Family Group, Individuals), with a commonality consisting of persons of disabilities, elderly people, and others (Persons with injuries, people accompanying persons with disabilities, children, and people with temporary disability).

All of the suggested requirements for each cultural route and potential project development are based on creative tourism, where people with disabilities are taken into account first. The main benefits of merging cultural routes with creative tourism of tourism for all enhances the possibility of developing sustainable decision-making at local and national scale by raising cultural heritage accessibility. This approach increases the capacities to manage and preserve cultural heritage and the environmental landscape in the regions. Employment is also taken into consideration with culture-related employment opportunities, by developing artist and artisan incubators related to cultural heritage of the region and Gjirokastra. Stakeholders like the Ministry of Economy and Tourism, together with the Ministry of Urban Development, Education and Sciences could be actively engaged. However, the Municipalities of Gjirokastra, Permet, Tepelena are seen as key facilitators for future development. The Institute of Cultural Monuments, National Tourism Agency and the University of Gjirokastra are involved too. The development of sustainable tourism in accordance with the specific trends taken into account will foster and encourage the involvement of private organization and business.

Concluding Remarks

The cultural routes, creative tourism and tourism for all are branding strategies in creating a sustainable tourism in Gjirokastra. Such strategies are seen as potential tools in enhancing Gjirokastra as a tourist destination and revitalizing its economic and demographic aspects. Branding is associated primarily with economic value. Yet, through sustainable tourism, branding also holds symbolic value, since it constitutes a strategy to provide places, cities, towns, with image and cultural meaning. Thus, the integration of the three pillars of sustainable tourism suggested in this work, indicates the

need for individuality and emotional connection with the environment in the contexts of globalization, thus giving cities and regions depth, originality, and a distinctive character. The Image of the city' is an important factor in persuading native people to return to their city, and the tourists with different means to visit the city. However, authorities should be more than responsible in giving proper consideration to a strong brand that will trigger the urban development of the city and the strengthening of its identity.

In the case of Gjirokastra, City Branding is seen as the process of distinction and diversification, where the potential local tourism organizations, cultural and arts facilities, and many other institutional or individual actors should join to develop images of the place. This will to attract potential consumers and investors to particular local areas, involving the component of place making (the process which makes a specific place more attractive) and city branding (the process of promoting a place). Thus the promotion of such places through Creative Tourism and Tourism for All as enhancers of Cultural Tourism can promote city branding, and reshape the city image. This will help develop the city's image and improve its economy.

Previously published research regarding "city branding" originates from the disciplines of "marketing" and "urban studies", following parallel directions rather than interdisciplinary paths. The close parallelism drawn between city branding and corporate branding has gained the attention of many scholars in terms of their complexity and range of stakeholders. Thus, the complexity of the 'city brands' is determined from their accountability in relation to the needs accompanying a wide spectrum of different target groups. One of the key challenges for branding cities revolves around the issue of developing a strong subcategory of the brand, coherent in relation to different areas of activity with different target audiences. Moreover, target audiences are as diverse as a city's residents, potential investors, tourists and stakeholders.

Moreover, with the growing demand for tourism, the tourism industry in many historic cities or places has been shifting towards mass tourism. Many issues have emerged with regard to the cultural heritage of the place and its image identity. On the other hand, experts agree that countries, regions and cities should shift towards sustainable tourism development and management practices, focusing in every category of tourism depending on

the types of destinations. Noted by many authors (Maffesoli, 1994; Matarosso & Landry, 1999; Timothy, 2011; Calvo et al., 2014 Richards, 2011; R. J.S Beeter, 2002), and organizations (UNWTO, 2016; UNESCO, 2011), principles of sustainability relate to different issues and aspects of touristic product development, hence trying to establish a balance between these dimensions and foster long-term sustainable products. As noted by UNEP and UNWTO, (2005). 'A Guide for Policy Makers', sustainable tourism should regard:

1) "optimal use of environmental resources prioritizing key elements in tourism development, helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity' 2) 'Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to intercultural understanding and tolerance' 3) 'Ensure long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities. and contributing to poverty alleviation" (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005)

However, in terms of the development towards sustainable tourism, it is required that participants of all proper stakeholders, along with the proper entities, have to arrange a wide spectrum of participation and consensus in building this capacity, by constantly monitoring its impacts and introducing the necessary measures. The 12 aims identified by UNEP and UNWTO, 2005, regarding sustainable tourism focus on:

ECONOMIC VIABILITY: To ensure the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations and enterprises, so that they are able to continue to prosper and deliver benefits in the long term. **LOCAL PROSPERITY-** To maximize the contribution of tourism to the prosperity of the host destination, including the proportion of visitor spending that is retained locally' **EMPLOYMENT QUALITY:** To strengthen the number and quality of local jobs created and supported by tourism, including the level of pay, conditions of service and availability to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways. **SOCIAL EQUITY:** To seek a wide-spread distribution of economic and social benefits from tourism through-out the recipient community, including improving opportunities, income and services available to the poor. **VISITOR FULFILMENT** to provide a safe, satisfying

and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all with-out discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways. **LOCAL CONTROL:** 'To engage and empower local communities in planning and decision making about the management and future development of tourism in their area. in consultation with other stakeholders. **COMMUNITY WELLBEING:** 'To maintain and strengthen the quality of life in local communities, including social structures and access to resources, amenities and life support systems, avoiding any form of social degradation or exploitation. **CULTURAL RICHNESS:** To respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of host communities. **PHYSICAL INTEGRITY** To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes, both urban and rural, and avoid the physical and visual degradation of the environment. **BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY:** To support the conservation of natural areas, habitats and wildlife, and minimize damage to them. **RESOURCE EFFICIENCY:** To minimize the use of scarce and non-renewable resources in the development and operation of tourism facilities and services. **ENVIRONMENTAL PURITY-** To minimize the pollution of air water and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors' (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005)

Nevertheless, the European Commission in accordance with UNWTO foresee the need to develop a guidebook concerning the development of sustainable tourism, in terms of enhancing a common understanding and future commitment to Sustainable Tourism. Some of the new trends highlighted were focused on a) cultural routes as a product of cultural tourism; b) creative tourism; and c) tourism for all (UNWTO, 2012).

On the other hand, as in the case of the involvement of World Heritage sites in Tourism, UNESCO itself has recognized the need for a sustainable approach for planning and managing these sites in accordance with the sites' capacity, visitor needs and the local population's needs (UNESCO, 2016). The main mission of UNESCO is the increase of awareness, capacity and participation, creating a balance between conservation and visitor experience in:

- The principles of sustainable tourism should be in line with the World Heritage Convention
- Developing new strategies to protect and manage Cultural and natural heritage through new policies and frameworks in support of sustainable tourism.
- Engage different stakeholders in the

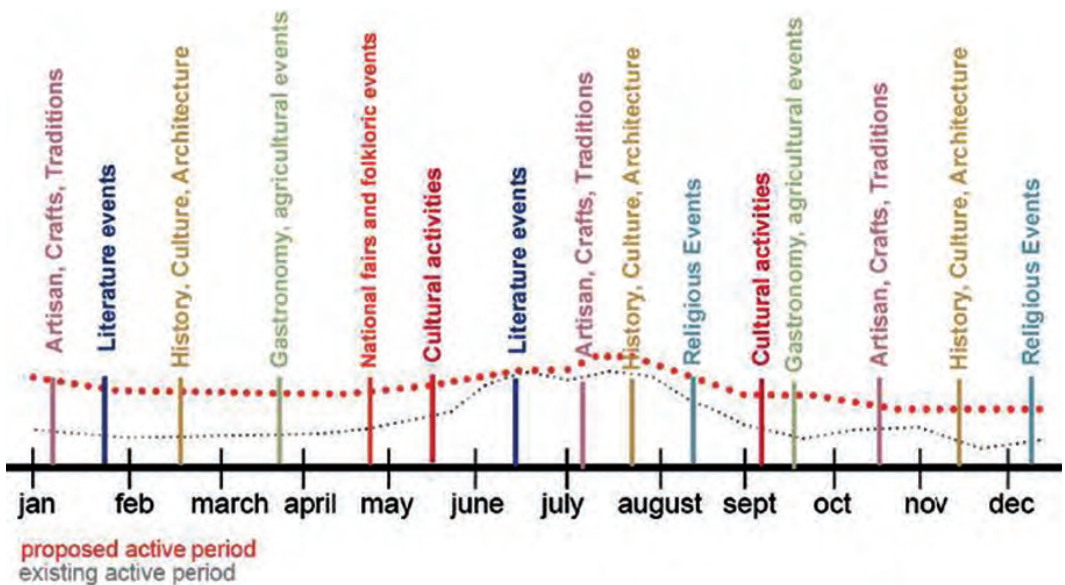


Fig. 6 / Identification of Creative Tourism resources and activities throughout the year.
Source / the author

planning process, involved with the development and management of the sustainable tourism with regards to certain destinations that are prone to heritage conservation and boosting local communities

- Based on the local needs and contexts, the stakeholders for World Heritage Sites should be provided with adaptable tools in order to manage the tourism product more efficiently.
- Understanding and appreciation of the World Heritage site should be promoted among stakeholders in order to obtain quality in tourism products and services, (UNESCO, 2016).

Thus, sustainable tourism should be applied in terms of new proactive trends, maintaining a satisfactory level both from the perspective of the resident and the tourist. Both parties should be furnished with a meaningful experience in order to raise the awareness of sustainability issues, enhance and foster best practices for tourism, and implement and adapt them to World Heritage sites.

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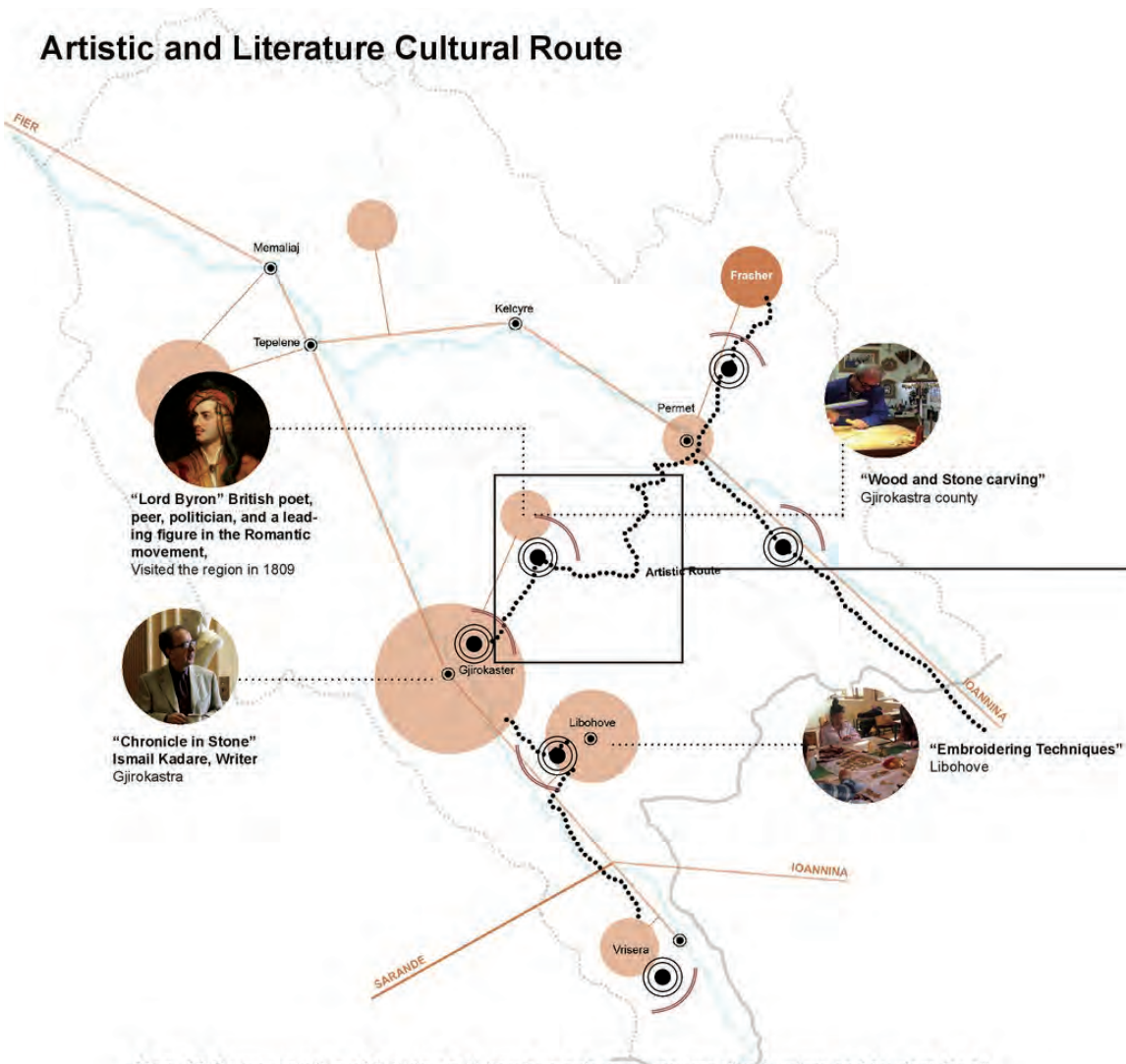
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Artistic and Literature Cultural Route



Map. 13 Representation of Artistic and Literature cultural route, creative tourism and tourism for all acupuncture point; Target Groups; Requirements; Potential Project development

Cultural Route Criteria	Based on				
	Design and Structure	Theme	Territory	Origin	Overnight Stay
Artistic and Literature Route	Archipelago of points	Historic; Art&Crafts; Literature	Regional	Historic	Several overnight stays

Type of Route: "Artistic and Literature"; is based on the artistic and literature heritage of the county, rich diverse and creative ways of valorising the folklore and traditions of the region. The design and Structure of the route should be based on Archipelago of point due to the diverse theme of the route. Due to the potential number of activities to be experienced the cultural route oversees several overnight stays.

Creative Tourism : If referring to the notion of creative tourism as an enhancer of the chosen cultural route, potential activities regarding this route could possibly be towards: 1. Artisans arts&crafts 2. Local Traditions of the villages involved in this route; 3. Review of the regions Literature; 4. Cultural Activities ;

Fig. 7 / "Representation of Artistic and Literature Cultural Route identified in the county of Gjirokastra, emphasizing creative tourism and tourism for all acupuncture points; target groups; requirements; potential project development". Source / the author.

Elements / Sources	Richards & Raymond 2000	Richards 2000	UNESCO 2006	Raymond 2007	Volic 2010	Rudan 2012
Active participation	X	X	X	X		X
Activities connected to destination	X	X	X			X
Opportunity to develop creativity	X				X	X
Develop new skill/ learning	X	X	X			X
Meaningful contact to hosts and guest		X	X	X		
Arts / Crafts / Heritage			X			X
Self-development		X				
Revenue for Communities		X				
Sustainable				X		
Individual Creation of experience					X	
Nature						X

most of the events taking part in this route could potentially be thought the entire ear

Acupuncture points: The acupuncture point highlighted in the Map.13 can be potential solutions towards small SME regarding Art - Crafts and Heritage, Culinary, Literature of the region.

Referring at Table. 12 “Key elements of creative tourism based on definition in academic literature”, the benefits that this pillar of creating sustainability in Gjirokastras County could potentially enhance:

Active Participation and meaningful contact between the host and guest

Activities connected to the destination

Develop new skills and learning of the History, Culture, Arts and Crafts; Literature of the region.

Enhancing SME of local arts-crafts and heritage

All of the above listed elements of creative tourism directly and indirectly impact in the:

Self Development of tourist (local or foreign)

Create revenue for the hosting communities

Build up the concept of sustainability for the host and for the visitor economically; socially; and environmentally

Create individual experience towards selective tourism rather than the concept of mass tourism

Serve as a model to be followed in developing further more the image of the brand place/city/region impacting the territory and sustainability of Gjirokastra county in relation to its local products.

Tourism for All Requirements: Regarding Tourism for all model to develop along this cultural route some of the requirement needed as additive are focused on: Adaptable prior information of the route; Adaptable requirement of urban and architectural environments to be visited (not harming the integrity of the place); adaptable modes of transport; access to nature along the route, adaptable resources focusing on the theme of the route

Target Groups: Target group could be divided in Local residents/visitors and foreign visitors. Common indicator that this two target groups could have in common are as such Persons with disabilities

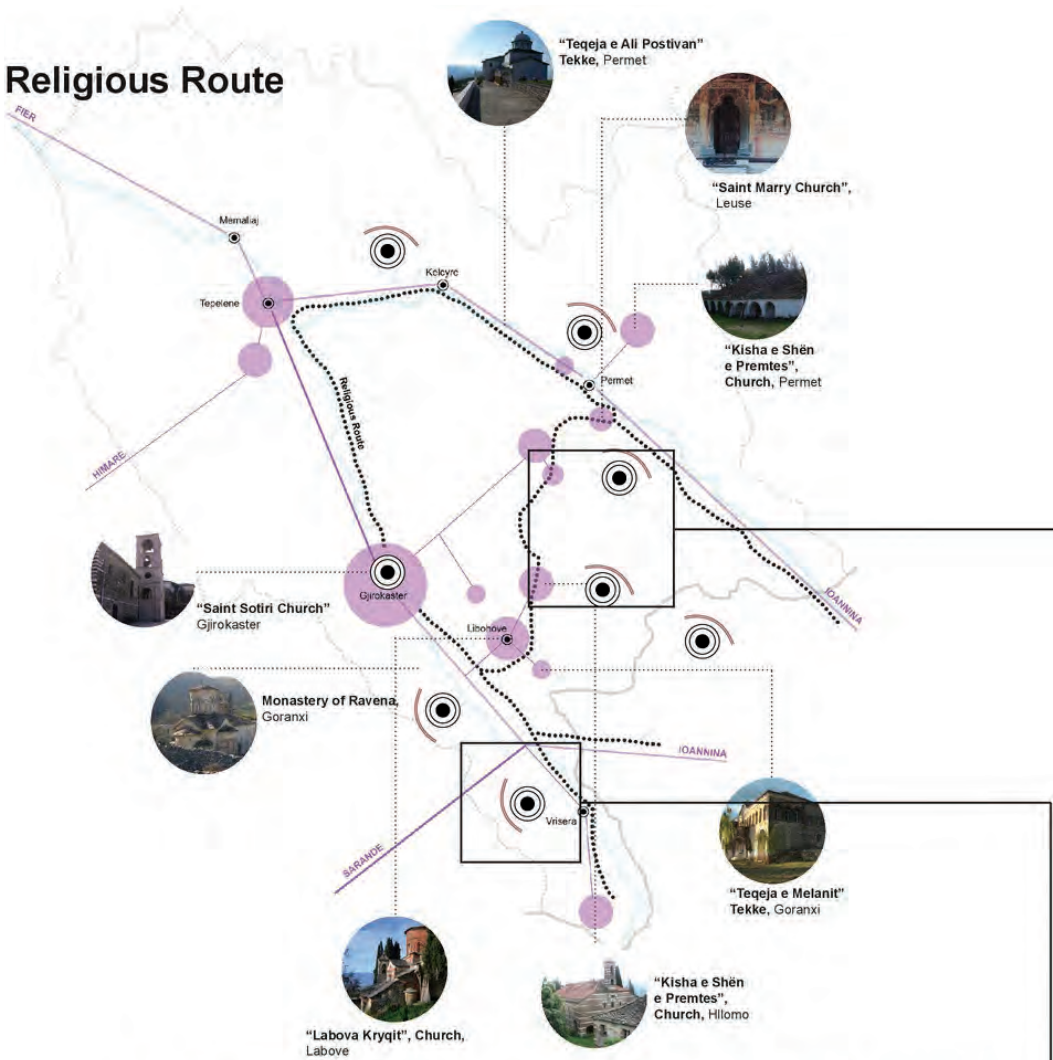
Elderly People; Other (Persons with injuries; people accompanying persons with disabilities; Children; people with temporary disability etc)

Activities: Some of the activities could be the same as visitors experiencing creative tourism means, or it can focus in trips for tourists and their families.

Project development: 1. Museum in a suitcase; 2. Potential audio guides explaining the methodology of artisans; 3. Touch and feel artisan object; 4. Braille texts for literature of the region; 5. Interpretation of literature for people with disabilities; 6. Accessibility to the sight through mobility modes and accessibility inside the site, 7. Signage and braille text; 6. Qualified tourist guides focusing in offering better services for a broader public; 8. Travel Online Project aiming to add information gap and informing people with a disability and their carriers, 9. Appropriate environmental lighting of the site and route.



Religious Route



Map. 14 Representation of Religious cultural route, creative tourism and tourism for all acupuncture point; Target Groups; Requirements; Potential Project development

Cultural Route Criteria	Design and Structure	Based on			
		Theme	Territory	Origin	Overnight Stay
Religious Cohesion	Archipelago of points	Historic; Religious	Regional	Historic	Several overnight stays

Type of Route: "Religious Cultural Route"; applied on the religious heritage of the county, rich in Byzantine Churches and Tekke's and Religious unity coexisting. The design and Structure of the route should be based on Archipelago of point due to the high number of religious sources in the county. Due to the high number of religious sources do the visited the cultural route oversees several overnight stays.

Creative Tourism : If referring to the notion of creative tourism as an enhancer of the chosen cultural route, potential activities regarding this route could possibly be towards: 1. History of each religious subject; 2. Culture of the villages involved in this route; 3. Architecture located in this route; 4. Related religious

Fig. 8 / "Religious Cultural Route identified in the county of Gjirokastra, emphasizing creative tourism and tourism for all acupuncture points; target groups; requirements; potential project development". Source / the author.

Elements / Sources	Richards & Raymond 2000	Richards 2000	UNESCO 2006	Raymond 2007	Volic 2010	Rudan 2012
Active participation	X	X	X	X		X
Activities connected to destination	X	X	X			X
Opportunity to develop creativity	X				X	X
Develop new skill/ learning	X	X	X			X
Meaningful contact to hosts and guest		X	X	X		
Arts / Crafts / Heritage			X			X
Self-development		X				
Revenue for Communities		X				
Sustainable				X		
Individual Creation of experience					X	
Nature						X

events taking part in the villages during Feb - March; August; Oct-Nov

Acupuncture points: The acupuncture point highlighted in the Map.14 can be potential solutions towards small SME regarding Art - Crafts and Heritage, and Culinary.

Referring at Table. 12 "Key elements of creative tourism based on definition in academic literature", the benefits that this pillar of creating sustainability in Gjirokastras County could potentially enhance:

Active Participation and meaningful contact between the host and guest

Activities connected to the destination

Develop new skills, learning of the History, Culture, Architecture and Religion of the area.

Enhancing SME of local arts-crafts and heritage

All of the above listed elements of creative tourism directly and indirectly impact in the:

Self Development of tourist (local or foreign)

Create revenue for the hosting communities

Build up the concept of sustainability for the host and for the visitor economically; socially; and environmentally

Create individual experience towards selective tourism rather than the concept of mass tourism

Serve as a model to be followed in developing further more the image of the brand place/city/region impacting the territory and sustainability of Gjirokastra county.

Tourism for All Requirements: Regarding Tourism for all model to develop along this cultural route some of the requirement needed as additive are focused on: Adaptable prior information of the route; Adaptable requirement of urban and architectural environments to be visited (not harming the integrity of the place); adaptable modes of transport; access to nature along the route.

Target Groups: Target group could be divided in Local residents/visitors and foreign visitors. Common indicator that this two target groups could have in common are as such Persons with disabilities Elderly People; Other (Persons with injuries; people accompanying persons with disabilities; Children; people with temporary disability etc)

Activities: Some of the activities could be the same as visitors experiencing creative tourism means, or it can focus in sightseeing trips.

Project development: 1. Potential audio guides explaining the religious assets; 2. 3D printed models of the religious building and other assets; 3. Touch and feel the nature; 4. Accessibility to the sight through mobility modes and accessibility inside the site, 5. Signage and braille text; 6. Qualified tourist guides focusing in offering better services for a broader public; 7. Travel Online Project aiming to add information gap and informing people with a disability and their carriers, 8. Appropriate environmental lighting of the site and route.



Seeking production footprints on behalf of innovation, city of Gjirokastra.

Keywords / Industrial Heritage, Gjirokastra, Industrial Design

PhD. Erida Curraj

Abstract

One of the main findings of my PhD dissertation¹ is the emergent awareness for protecting the Albanian Industrial Heritage. The Industrial Heritage in Albania is under-researched, and few actions have been taken to preserve it. Each day is costing a huge loss to the Albanian Heritage and the preservation of the historic sites. This paper identifies the industrial landscape of Gjirokastra during the years 1950 - 90. The main challenge has been the documentation and gathering evidence on this topic, since there is a lack of previous research about Industrial Heritage in Gjirokastra in particular and Albania in general. No previous studies have focused on the industrial infrastructure of this city. In this regard, this paper aims to foster a political, institutional, and civic awareness on preserving the industrial heritage. Through an active understanding of its production capacity, Gjirokastra will be the next destination of the investment on the preservation of industrial heritage. Gjirokastra's case study could be a good practice for the preservation of the industrial heritage of the other cities in Albania.

The Importance of Industrial Heritage

Industrial Heritage evinces the industrialization process of a country. Its impact is tangible and indisputable and continues to affect all cultural, social, technological, and economic dynamics of life. It explains not only the past but also the present and relates to the future (Alfrey and Putnam, 1992). Tiesdell et al. (1996), argue that the rational economic and commercial choice starts with the desire to conserve historic landscapes. Heritage industries may provide the basis for economic regeneration of historic urban landscapes by filling the gap left by vanished factories and warehouses and creating a new image that would make them more attractive to mobile capital (Hall, 1998). According to Rypkema (1992; 2008), conservation primarily involves buildings; historic buildings are real estate, and real estate is a commodity. Nizhny Tagil Charter for Industrial Heritage (TICCIH, 2003) posits that industrial heritage

consists of "universal values" as they evince activities with profound historical consequences; "social values" that provide sense of identity; "technological and scientific values" in the history of manufacturing, engineering, construction; "aesthetic values" for architectural quality, design or planning; "intrinsic values" contained in human memories and customs; and "scarcity", in terms of the survival of particular processes or landscapes.

The Industrial Heritage in Britain is a well-discussed topic internationally since 1973 (Falconer & Keith, 2006). Such discourse was instrumental in promoting industrial landscapes as World Heritage Sites and in the creation of TICCIH (The International Committee for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage). In addition, EU strategies as an important driver of change (European Parliament DG IP 2013) focus on the culture and values of the Industrial Heritage. European Union

² / Curraj, E. (2017) *Reinventing Furniture Design in the Post-communist Era in Albania: Towards the Mass-cus-tomization Paradigm*. PhD Dissertation Joint programme, Polis University and Ferrara University.

has funded projects with a wide objective in the regeneration of historic industrial sites in Europe. The significant part of present day heritage management and urban development strategies is reusing the industrial buildings and factories, especially in Western countries.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH) are the main institutions in charge of (industrial) heritage management and conservation. Their focus has been on institutions and experts professionally engaged with heritage, aiming to develop criteria that reinforce the industrial heritage preservation policies and practice. Hence, a list of principles for the preservation of industrial heritage - jointly developed by ICOMOS and TICCIH and adopted by the 17th ICOMOS General Assembly on 28 November 2011, and UNESCO in 1972 - adopted the implementation of international recommendations and instruments such as the World Heritage Convention.

During the years 2000, the UNESCO World Heritage started to have a special focus on Industrial Heritage (Falser, M. (2001). Though the UNESCO World Heritage Centre was set up in 1992 by the Director General, in 1994, several expert meetings on "Global Strategy" were held, and thematic studies for a representative World Heritage List were started. According to this report (Falser, M. (2001), in Global Strategy's 24th session,

in December 2000, several decisions were taken concerning the Harmonization of the World Heritage List. Hence, in the report it is highlighted that the category of "Industrial Heritage", as an under-represented category, has increased not nearly as rapidly. In this report, the division in cultural (including industrial), natural and mixed sites show a large majority of cultural sites in all regions.

The process of Industrial Heritage has two main steps that need to be fulfilled, first to increase the awareness of the importance of industrial history in understanding heritage in recent years, and second, to foster the tendency in using industrial heritage. Both steps are very important in emphasizing the importance of sustaining industrial buildings, its production culture, and any remaining industrial processes and uses, by attracting new investment. Shanghai M52 (warehouses), Beijing Shougang No. 3 Blast Furnace Museum, Moscow's Red Chocolate Gallery (chocolate factory), London Tate Modern Museum (electric plant) and so many worthy to be mentioned, are important examples throughout the world that build the awareness in restoring and reusing existing industrial heritage stock in order to stimulate cultural and economic regeneration. There is an invaluable economic value in the revitalization of the industrial sites and in the conservation of the industrial areas. According to English Heritage (2005)", Birmingham has turned out to be one of the most important tourist nodes, creating 1500 businesses and 6000 jobs.

Another benefit is the environmental



Fig.1 / Existing situation of Metal Plant, Gjirokastra, . Source / the author.

sustainability. Reusing existing buildings is also a simple way of achieving sustainability by saving waste and reducing the need for new building materials (English Heritage, 2005).

According to the Dublin Principles (2011, p.2) the industrial heritage consists of sites, structures, complexes, areas and landscapes as well as the related machinery, objects or documents that provide evidence of past or ongoing industrial processes of production,

the extraction of raw materials, their transformation into goods, and the related energy and transport infrastructures. In identifying the importance of reusing the industrial areas and by defining the criteria of the industrial Heritage, we can start to evaluate Albanian Industrial Heritage.

Archiving Industrial Heritage, A Prompt Need in Albania

After the fall of communism in Albania in 1991, as in former communist countries,



Fig.2 / Leather and Footwear Factory, Gjirokastër. Source / the author

there were large demographic movements in both directions, from the rural to urban areas and from Albania to abroad. The production slowed down in all industries, and the latter soon became almost inexistent. Parangoni (2010) states that the industrial sector was beyond any competitive technological standard in a free market economy. Promptly, during 1992, economic reforms were undertaken, and the former state properties shifted to private properties, a process that is

still a problem, especially for the former industrial areas. Both ownerships (private and state owned) are still not successful. The industrial zones in Albania, normally covering a huge surface, are located in high-priced land (except for the petroleum wells or building material factories). After the 90-s, most of them are given back to the old owners, and some of them are still state properties. Both ownerships are not yet successful to start documenting and revitalizing the former industrial areas.

The former industrial sites in Albania are in very deteriorated conditions and sometimes even dangerous due to the lack of maintenance. Due to the interruption of the production process and demographic movement the conservation methods have mostly been limited to the surroundings of industrial heritage sites and have not considered the actual industrial sites. The latter are either abandoned, or have been assimilated by massive economic projects since they are located in favorable places of towns and possess vast spaces.

In Albania, it is still missing a mapping process of the Industrial Buildings, their capacities, and their production process. There are few studies with the main focus on engineering and planning but mostly focused on the main cities such as Durres, Tirane, Elbasan, and Industrial buildings such as the Wood Production Plant "Misto Mame", Tirane; the Wood Production Plant "Nako Spiro", Elbasan; the Metallurgical Plant of Elbasan, the Textile Factory "Mao Ce Dun", Berat, and a few others.

The Albanian Industrial Heritage has been outside the focus of much research in this field. The only research dedicated on this topic in Albania is the PhD dissertation of Luca, E (2017)² and the report of Albanian Heritage Foundation (2010). Luca's dissertation makes the case that the Albanian Industrial Heritage should be recognized and preserved "as part of social, architectural, cultural, and economic values." In her research Luca proclaimed that at least 30% of the Industrial buildings in Albania fulfilled the engineering requirements. According to three case studies, she concludes that a partial intervention in the building structure is needed in order to make them functional again. The second document found on this topic is the report of Albanian Heritage Foundation report (2010). The report attempts to better understand the signification of industrial heritage, but it includes just Durres, Tirana and Elbasan and not all the cities and industrial categories. Yet it remains one of the more in-depth studies on this topic.

Albania is in the focus of many international heritage organizations. Europa Nostra, the leading heritage organization in Europe, and the European Investment Bank Institute have identified the most threatened heritage sites in Europe for 2018, part of which are two Albanian Byzantine churches. According to it, "These gems of Europe's cultural heritage

are in grave danger, some due to neglect or inadequate development, others due to a lack of expertise or resources." (europanostra.org 2018)

The joint program of IRPP/SAAH (from 2003 to 2010), in South-Eastern European countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia), aimed to sustain local communities through heritage conservation, by reinforcing local identity and practices, but also by bringing economic benefits through well-managed tourism.

Albanian industrial heritage is in a state of high emergency because of a lack of archiving and documentation of the industrial sites and structures in the period 1950-90. On the other hand, In Albania, there is still a lack of awareness on the part of the Government agencies, about the protection of the industrial areas. Despite such lack, worthy to be mention is the scheme of the Ministry of Infrastructure on the revitalization of the industrial building of the city of Elbasan, and how it can attract investments. Bylaws are designed and approved, and standards and criteria are already specified. In this regard, we encourage the Ministry of Infrastructure to enlarge this scheme for the other industrial sites in Albania. (Link MI, 2017)

Industrialization in Gjirokastra

Gjirokastra City has been under UNESCO's attention since 2000, but only on 2005 it became a UNESCO Site. Gjirokastra was declared a museum city in 1961 during the communist regime, with the special emphasis on maintaining and restoring its Museums, Castles, mosaics, Bazar and old houses. During the political and economic crisis of 1997, Gjirokastra was seriously damaged. The call to safeguard and protect this city was "crowned with the victory" in 2005.

As Ismail Kadare points out in his novel *Kronikë në Gur* (Chronical in stone), Gjirokastra's Castle and stone houses are some of the key words that every new visitor learns before visiting Gjirokastra. Indeed the first traces of its history date since the 14th century, in the Bizantine chronicals of 1336, accounting for the civic resilience of Argjilos (Argyropolihne) City (Encyclopedia Sh. 1985). Gjirokastra is mentioned again in the history in the Despotate of Epirus, and later became the

² / Luca, E (2017), *The reuse of Albanian Industrial Archeology as an approach to sustainability and conservation. Research on the new evidences of expression of the former industrial buildings with the implication of 3R; Retrofit, Re-Use, Revitalize. Joint International PhD Programme, Polis University and Ferrara University.*

center of what the Albanian feudal lords of the 14th century called Zenebisht. The characteristic stone houses date to the 1830-s. According to archeological studies, the Gjirokastra Castle was inhabited since the 4th-5th century, and there is evidence of a long history of very early productive traditions of stone working. Palorto e Manalat neighborhoods, located on a slope, create a monumental ensemble of stone construction. During the 19th century, Gjirokastra was an Administrative and Commercial Exchange center (E.SH 1985 pg. 343). The main production during this time was, dairy, silk, embroidery and Shajak (thick woolen cloth).

After the World War II, Gjirokastra became the a center of economic, cultural, and educational importance for the whole district. The main industries were the textiles (35%), food industry (42%), shoe industry, tobacco and cigarette industry, and metal working, among others. The National Folkloric Concert is organized every 5 years, since 1968, in Gjirokastra (E.SH 1985 pg 345).

After the World War II, Albania was an agrarian country and lacked industries. The Ottoman rule and the intervention of foreign capital in our country were the main factors that determined this situation. The history of the industry in Albania begins in 1870-1880. In 1912 there were 33 small production enterprises that had a small number of workers and very limited production skills. The main production enterprises were in Shkodra, Korça, Prishtina, Elbasan, Durrës, Vlora, and Gjirokastra. In 1928 there were 151 industrial enterprises with Albanian capital that processed mainly the raw agricultural material produced in the country. 10 mineral enterprises had foreign capital. The main factories were flour mills, mechanical saws, oil and soap factories, printing houses, tobacco factories, and power plants (E.SH 1985 pg 399 and 400).

Gjirokastra Metal Plant

It produced mainly household goods. It was built in 1955 and produced spoons, forks, scissors, umbrellas, knives, chains, kerosene stoves, washing machines, fittings, and faucets, some of which were exported. Cold stamping technology predominated the production processes. (E.SH., 1983 pg1146)

The Leather and Shoe Factory

It was a branch of light Industry that dealt with the processing of leather and the production of shoes, furs and other leather items. Leather processing in Albania is an

old tradition since the 14th century. Well-known leather workshops were those in Shkodra, Berat, Korça, Gjirokastra, Peja, and Prizren.

Gjirokastra's Shoes Factory was built since 1897, and it was formerly a steam engine factory. It produced mainly wool and leather which were exported semi-processed. After the liberation, it was concentrated in 4 factories - in Gjirokastra, Korça, Shkodra and Vlora. Between 1949 and 1963 new factories were built in Gjirokastra, Korça and Shkodra, producing footwears in natural and artificial leather (E.Sh 1985 pg404).

The Textile Industry

After the Liberation, this industry had spread to several cities like: Gjirokastra (Textile factory "Bule Naipi"), Shkoder, Vlora, Pogradec etc. This industry produced knitwear for underwear and outerwear, sportswear, socks, curtains, thread for embroidery and sewing, and synthetic artistic thread. (E.Sh 1985 pg409).

The Furniture Industry

In the 80-s, the Albanian Furniture Industry counted in total 500 models of furniture for the house, kitchen, living room, reception and sleeping rooms for social, cultural, health and sports institutions. During the years, the production of multi-functional furniture with the combination of wood tiles, metal parts, plastics and imitations increased, and some of the products, particularly chairs, were exported. Furniture Factory in Gjirokastra had a major role in a national level. The wood industry started from processing the raw material in the mills (Sharrat), which was then supplied the wood plant that prepared the furniture material such as mdf planks, plywood, wood slats. These were then ordered by the furniture factory as such the Gjirokastra one (E.Sh 1985 pg405-406).

The Beverage Industry

After the liberation, this industry occupied old and new buildings. One of them was in Gjirokastra, which was known for the wine industry. In the 70-s the production of liqueurs of different types, such as Brandy and Uzo began (E.Sh 1985 pg405).

Construction Materials Industry

It a branch of Heavy Industry, and the one in Gjirokastra supplied metal frames. However, the city was always important for stone supplies (E.Sh 1985 pg495). Most of the goods produced in Gjirokastra were very important for exports. Imports



Fig. 3 / Bazaar of Gjirokastra, Textile and Embroidery. Source / the author

in the Socialist Popular Republic of Albania were carried out by specialized enterprises under the conditions of the State monopoly in foreign trade. It was part of the general state plan for the development of the economy and culture in the Socialist Popular Republic of Albania and was in direct relation with the export. (E.Sh 1985 pg 399).

Recommendation

The preservation of the Industrial Heritage in Albania will not be an easy process, but of course it will not be impossible. To achieve it, two main steps need to be taken: first to increase the awareness of the importance of industrial history in understanding heritage, and second to harness the tendency to use industrial heritage. Generally, in Albania there is still a misunderstanding and a lack of communal and political awareness on the value of industrial heritage.

The latter may provide opportunity spaces to increase the competitive advantage of cities through the deployment of tourism investments and the branding of space. The paper has demonstrated that there were important investments during the first 4 decades in the industrialization of the city of Gjirokastra. A production culture was created, and craftsmanship was enriched. To prevent the loss of this knowledge it is important to highlight and preserve industrial heritage. There are several lessons to be learned from all over the world that highlight the importance of

preserving Industrial areas, sites, culture, and environment suitability. In this light, Albania should immediately initiate a conservation and preservation process of industrial heritage, which has been almost inexistent during the last two decades. Although the central government or the institutions responsible for the preservation of heritage may still hesitate on the new initiative in this direction, there are some hopes, through grants like Europe for Citizens, Europa Nostra, European Investment Bank Institute, which allow the citizens and institution to apply for projects that deal with the topic of "Heritage".

"Not all of Us can do great things, but we can do small things with Love"
Mother Theresa.

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Fig. 4 / Tobacco Factory and Beverage Warehouse, Gjirokastra. Source / the author

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Transport Network Impact in Shrinking Cities

The case of Gjirokastra city and rural region

Keywords / Transport network, transport corridors, infrastructure, city connection

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Introduction

Shrinking cities are cities that are experiencing acute population losses. Deindustrialization and emigration abroad are some of the common cities shrink reasons.

A shrinking city is a densely populated urban area with a minimum population of 10,000 that has faced large population losses for more than two years and is undergoing economic transformations with some symptoms of a structural crisis (Wiechmann 2007). **International Network of Shrinking Cities (SCIRN)*.

Academic research shows among other things that the problem of shrinking areas is more than just a problem of low population density.

- Distance is what characterizes low-density areas, which are likely to face location disadvantages, leading to low socio-economic development.
- The demographics of remote and low-density areas are characterized by specific phenomena such as emigration, low birth rates and an aging population.
- Low density areas are likely to present special geographical features (proximity to the border, presence of mountains, isolation, geographical distance) which may imply specific development challenges, also in terms of accessibility.

The form of urban transport changes with the growth phase of the city or with its decrease, and transport also changes according to the life cycle of the city.

Infrastructure connections at regional level

The case of the city of Gjirokastra and the

region it consists of has had a population contraction which has experienced a decline of -2.3% from 2020 to 2021 (Instat, 2021), being the region with the lowest population in place and its highest decline.

These phenomena of population change have been shown to affect the development of various economic sectors of the country and especially of the settlement, such as agriculture, tourism, infrastructure, transport, etc.

Gjirokastra Region is one of the areas in which passes one of the important infrastructure projects at the national level such as the North-South corridor (blue corridor), which starts from Trieste (Italy) and passes first through Slovenia to Rijeka in Croatia. Most in Croatia consists of the A1 motorway. Near Dubrovnik, the Adriatic-Ionian Highway runs through Bosnia and Herzegovina in Trebinje to Montenegro. There it continues through Podgorica in the northern part of Shkodra to Albania and further to Durres in the direction of Greece. In Greece this highway passes through Ioannina and Patras ending at Kalamata.

This corridor within the Albanian border reaches a length of 374 km (extending from Hani i Hotit to Gjirokastra), along the district of Gjirokastra crosses the axis Tepelena-Gjirokastra (30 km) and Kakavija-Gjirokastra (23 km).

The use of the term 'corridor' is related to the fact that the construction of transport infrastructure includes not only the road network, but also the railway, air, port and control, and navigation systems.

The Adriatic-Ionian Highway is a highway under construction, along the west coast of the Adriatic and the Ionian Sea. The Kalter Corridor runs through the western part of the Balkan Peninsula. The Blue Highway, or Adriatic-Ionian Coastal Highway, is an idea that logically connects the Dalmatian road with the Greek coastal axis.

Albania is included in the European network TEN-T, through the Adriatic - Ionian highways (which for the most part in the Albanian territory coincides with the road axis North - South) and which is the Mediterranean Corridor, starting from Spain (Almeria) and passing through six European countries (Spain, France, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia and Hungary) in a length of 6,000 km. The Adriatic-Ionian Highway connects the Mediterranean TEN-T corridor, which crosses the Croatian coast, with the roads along the Montenegro coast and crosses Albania from Muriqani to Lezha-Tirana-Fier-Tepelena-Gjirokastra and ends in Kakavija.

Five years ago, the European Union took a decision of strategic importance to the Balkans. By 2030, the region where we live will be connected to the nine most important European road corridors via the Adriatic - Ionian highway.

With the aim of bringing the countries of the continent closer as these corridors already aim, the Pan-European Transport Conference was born, under the support

and coordination of the European Commission. First convened in Prague (1991), it outlined the outline of the pan-European transport network development project. While the second meeting, held three years later in Crete (1994), defined the general strategic lines of the projects, the so-called 'Pan-European Corridors', which are ten. Considering that the defined network of corridors was very schematic, the third meeting held in Helsinki (1997) expanded the scheme of transport corridors, adding the connection of road corridors (called 'main line') with several connecting lines (called 'branches') to those regions that were economically most backward.

Results

These actions that have already been approved and are being implemented should be exploited by local economies of municipalities or settlements with potentials and untapped resources. The concrete case of Gjirokastra, being one of the countries with special historical values and part of UNESCO, should establish a better connection with the national network and expand its interaction with other settlements.

It should increase the connection with the neighboring country Greece through joint projects by creating points of interest for investments in its primary sectors to support the importance of the city which is part of UNESCO.

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Population	68,020	65,939	62,952	61,423	59,381	58,031

Character/ indicators/area of shrinkage	Time perspective		fluctuating/periodical/ episodic
	constant/permanent/continuous long-term (e.g. 10 years and more)	short-term (e.g. less than 10 years)	
population loss + socio-economic decline (city + city region)	permanent, long-term multidimensional shrinkage		
population loss (city + city region)	serious symptoms of shrinkage		
population loss (city only → effect of suburbanization)		selected evidence of shrinkage	

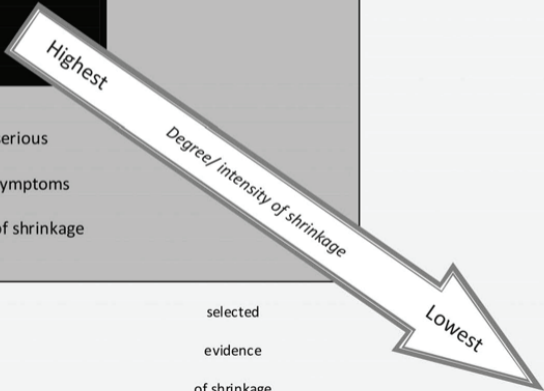


Fig. 1 / Typology of shrinking cities – ‘graduation’ of shrinkage. Source: Strykiewicz (2013: 127).

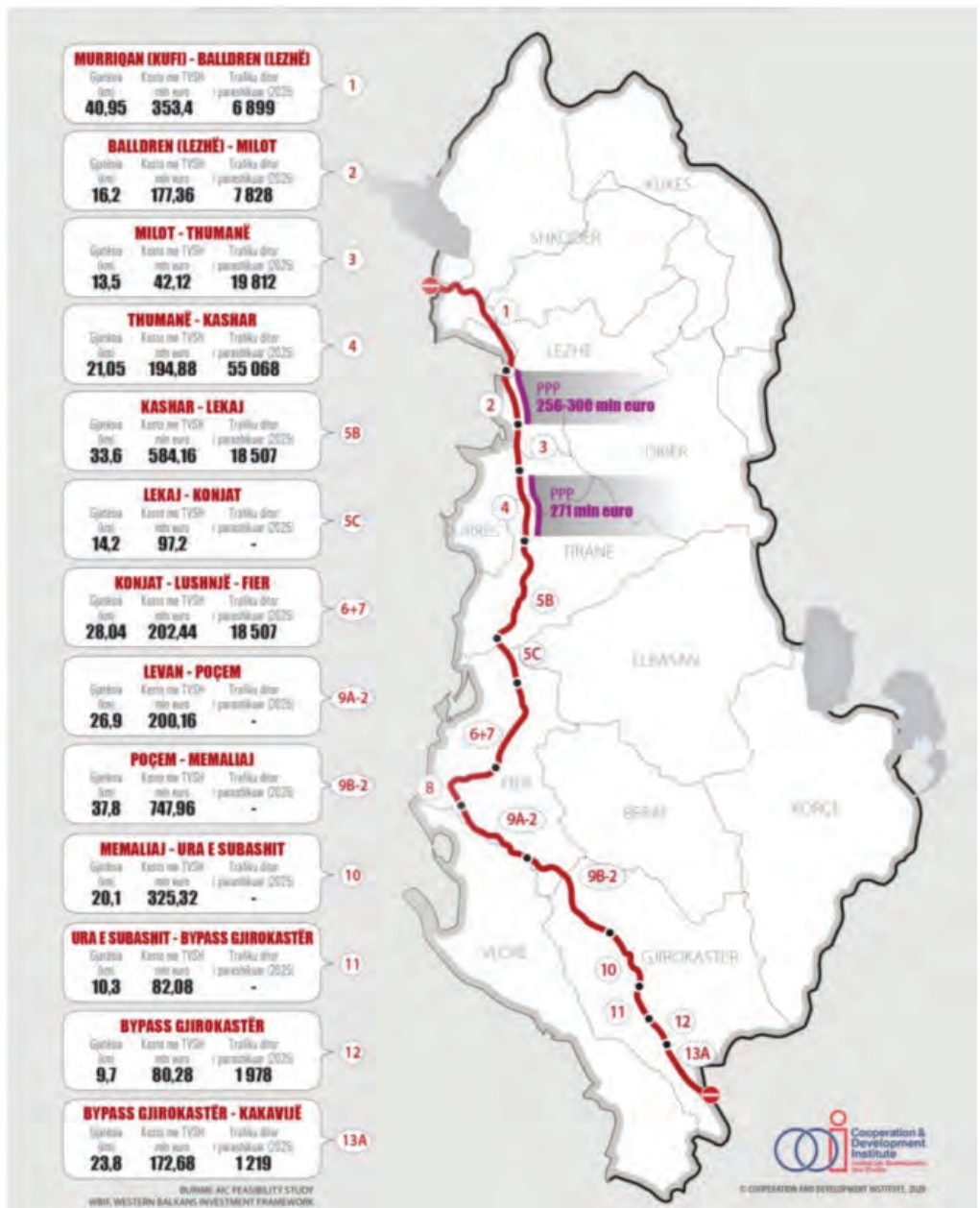


Fig. 2 / North-South corridor crossing trail. Source / Cooperation and Development Institute, 2021

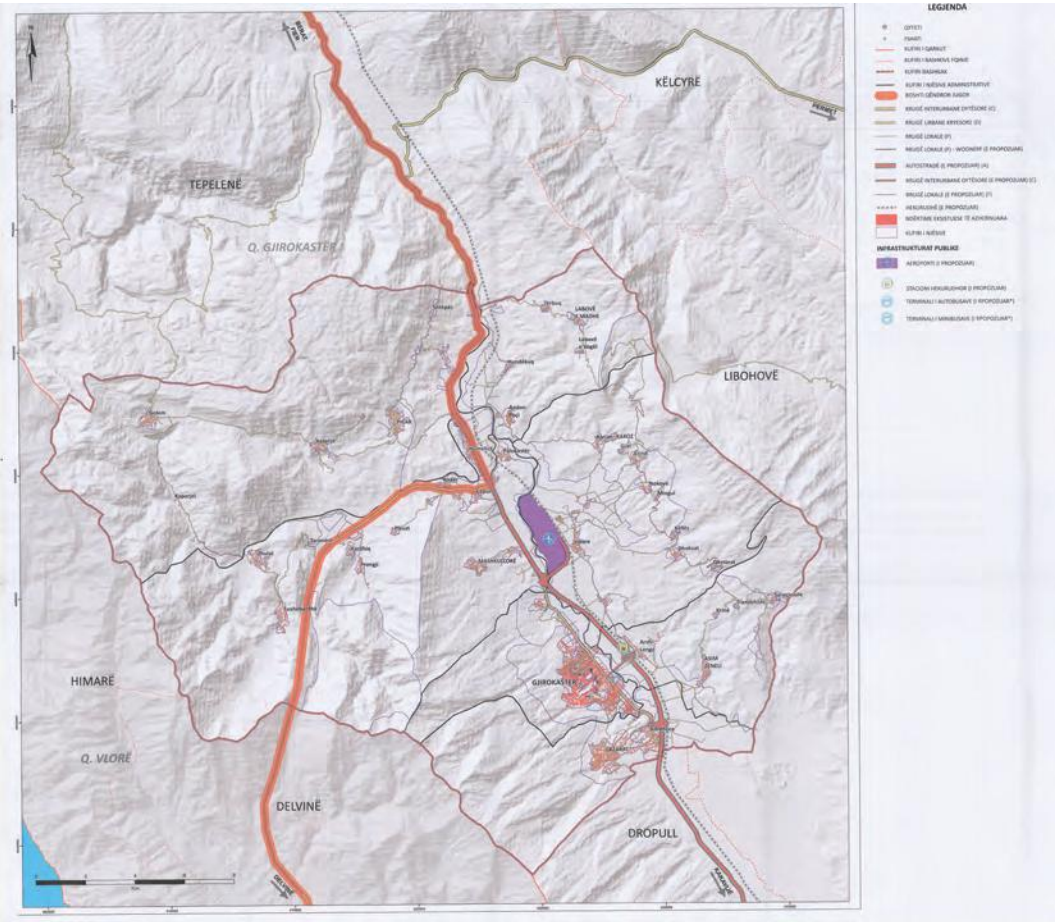


Fig. 3 / Road infrastructure, General Local Plan. / Source / Akpt, 2021.

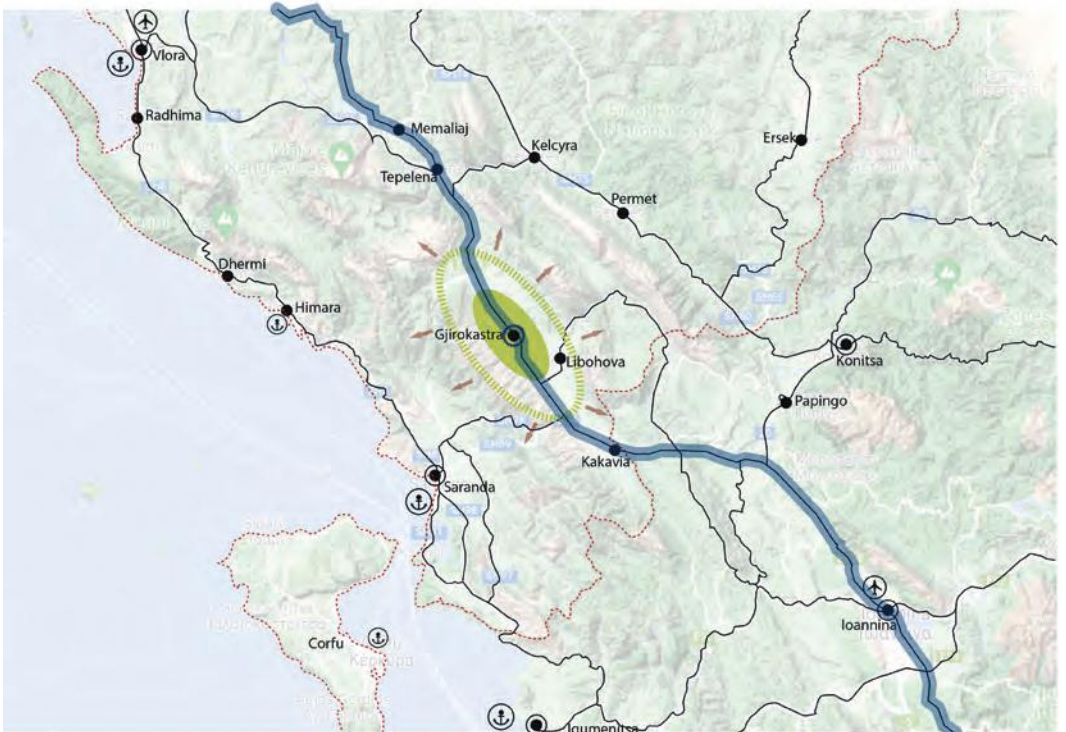


Fig. 4 / The blue corridor trace. / Source / the author, 2021

Conclusions

For the improvement of the settlements that have had this historical development, there must certainly be incentives which include the social and economic aspect to bring back the inhabitants and the investments in these settlements. These can be achieved through a series of

measures starting from:

- Reducing unemployment by stimulating entrepreneurship;
- urban renewal programs (renovation of central parts of the city, protection of industrial (craft) / cultural heritage, revitalization of various facilities for cultural / educational purposes.

- Reactivation of local actors, cities, enterprises, business environment institutions, non-governmental organizations.

- Based on the cooperation with other more advanced spatial units, to achieve the adaptation of successful strategies for the return of residents and their subsidization.

- Improving the secondary and tertiary road network to create a network more connected to the main access corridor such as the blue corridor.

- Improving the transport network to start a new life cycle for the city and its

settlements.

As recommended above, they aim to improve the performance of settlements in relation to living conditions and not leaving to other countries, valuing local resources and promoting the country.

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Driverless transition: the value of autonomous mobility for sustainable urban development

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Abstract

In the last two centuries, contemporary cities have been progressively changing their urban landscapes according to the functional necessities of the auto-centered transport system but, over the years, that model of consumption has contributed negatively to the environmental degradation of public spaces. Nevertheless, with the advent of autonomous vehicles, urban planners have new opportunities of rethinking urban mobility in a new and sustainable way by completely reshaping transport infrastructures and reorganizing land uses for the future development of more accessible and livable cities. In fact, autonomous vehicles are expected to transform the use and experience of the vehicle itself but also change the overall infrastructure design, which, in turn, will have a great impact on urban planning, location choices, and land use organization. For these reasons, this contribution sheds lights on the urban transition to autonomous transport by reporting the main advantages – in terms of safety, social and economic inclusion, freeing of public space and sustainability of the urban environment – that the new technology is able to offer to urban planners for improving the quality of the existing mobility systems. Moreover, the paper highlights the benefits of autonomous vehicles by describing briefly an ongoing research experiment that is testing the use of driverless cars in the real world. Considering this, the manuscript gives urban planners a new perspective capable of adapting spatial planning and land-use organization to future and uncertain challenges related to the implementation of autonomous vehicles in the existing urban context. In particular, the opportunity of assessing the impact of those vehicles on the existing cities will prepare urban planners to play a strategic role in defining a common urban development policy framework for helping European cities to evolve in perfect symbiosis with the new and disruptive driverless technology.

Since the nineteenth century, the history of everyday urban transportation is clearly represented by the auto-centered transport system. The automobile and its supporting infrastructures have dominated the landscape of our contemporary cities, shaping, at the same time, every aspect of urban development according to the functional needs of vehicle transport (Freund and Martin, 1993). Over the years, the auto-centered phenomenon has offered to people great advantages in terms of privacy and freedom, though its individualized mode of consumption has contributed to a progressive environmental degradation in the urban public space, such as smog, vehicle

accidents and traffic congestion (Sheller and Urry, 2000). However, during the last twenty years, the automotive industry has created new opportunities in redefining the existing auto-centered transport model in order to conceive and develop a safer and more sustainable urban infrastructure, capable of ending the negative effects caused by the existing transport system (Riggs, Appleyard and Johnson, 2020). Nowadays, the automotive industry has initiated many research studies that rethink the use of the auto-centered system by developing a new vehicle typology equipped with sophisticated technological features – named Advanced Driving Assistant Systems (ADAS). This



technology transforms conventional cars into autonomous vehicles (AVs), also called automated or self-driving vehicles (Fregnant and Kockelman, 2015). This new technology allows the AVs both to drive themselves in the existing roads with high driving precision and to navigate many types of roadways and environmental contexts with almost no direct human input (Lipson and Kurman, 2016) (Fig. 1). The upcoming advent of this disruptive technology has made it clear that AVs will become increasingly prevalent and more integrated into our urban society, and they will significantly affect urban mobility conditions in the future contemporary cities (Milakis, van Arem and van Wee, 2017). In particular, most of the changes are expected to transform the use and the experience of the vehicle itself but also to modify the entire infrastructure design, which, in turn, will have a great impact on urban development, location choices, and land-use organization (Gavanas, 2019). For this reason, in order to consider the possible impacts of AVs in the near future, urban planners have to start thinking about transportation infrastructure in a different way, because spatial planning and the organization of land use will need to adapt to new and uncertain challenges related to the implementation of AVs in our urban spaces. Reflecting on the importance of this change, the European Commission has also started to consider AVs as an important implementation that promotes an intelligent transport system. Their innovative technology could contribute to the improvement of the overall quality of the current urban transport system in

terms of safety, congestion and emissions (Papa and Ferreira, 2018), which were dictated by the previous auto-centered system. In fact, AVs present many potential advantages that can help the European Commission to strengthen its efforts to achieve specific targets for sustainable development by fostering smart, accessible and inclusive urban mobility in all the European cities (Gavanas, 2019). In this context, urban planners will have the chance to evaluate the potential contribution of these new vehicles to the economic, social and environmental pillars of urban sustainability (Purvis, Mao and Robinson, 2019) and play a strategic role to plan a common policy framework of urban planning for helping European cities evolve in perfect symbiosis with the new technology. An important advantage of AVs is primarily related to road safety. The ADAS technology is able to reconfigure tasks and responsibilities of the drivers because they can prevent human error (Giacobone, 2018) – usually related to the brain's cognitive limitations in attention (Drive, 2001) – and consequently reduce road accidents, including protecting the lives of vulnerable categories such as pedestrians or cyclists. The advantages of ADAS technology are also addressed in changing the availability and quality of transportation experience because the automation of skill-based control makes urban travelling more comfortable and efficient than human guidance through smoother braking and finer speed adjustment (Cummings, 2014). This can affect both the value of time and the perceived cost for the travelers because



Fig.1 / Waymo's self-driving car operating without human oversight. The interface is designed to build trust with passengers. Source / Waymo, website



Fig.2 / Ringspeed's vision of the future of driverless cars as a living space on wheels. Source / Ringspeed, website.

they can easily replace the task of driving with other activities (Meyer et al., 2017), transforming the vehicle itself into a third living space conceived for conviviality and socialization (Lewin, 2017) (Fig.2). Considering this, another benefit of AVs is associated with inclusion because it makes the vehicle accessible for everyone, including the fragile people who cannot drive conventional vehicles, such as people with permanent or temporary disabilities, the elderly and underage travelers. In economic terms, AVs also promote the inclusion of people who cannot afford the costs of car ownership and use Mobility as a Service (MaaS) by enhancing shared mobility, new public mobility services (Pickford and Chung, 2019) (Fig.3) and, hence, reducing the overall cost of personal and public transportation (Heinrichs, 2016). From an urban planning perspective, inclusion enables mobility

infrastructure to better service the less accessible urban areas around a country, facilitating, at the same time, the everyday commuting without forcing people to abandon small towns for reaching more dense and lively cities (Zhong et al., 2020). These aspects become very important for urbanization because they enable people to have more options where to live or work (Lipson and Kurman, 2016), and, hence, they can reduce the phenomenon of urban depopulation in those cities located in the too-distant surrounding countryside and currently seem isolated and segregated from the available transport infrastructure of a given country. Again, another advantage of AV for urban planning lies in the precision of driving because it increases the efficiency of urban transportation in many aspects. The energy-saving strategy, called platooning, can save fuel and reduce both emissions



Fig.3 / Renault's concept of an autonomous vehicle specifically designed for the future of shared mobility. Source / Renault, website.



Fig.4 / Voyage's autonomous vehicle testing a shared mobility service in public roads involving a retirement community in Florida. Source: Voyage, website.

and air pollution (Davila, 2013), while efficient driving can significantly reduce urban congestion due to the ability of AVs to coordinate travel behaviors and operate with relatively higher occupancy rates than traditional vehicles (Hawkins and Nurul Habib, 2018). This phenomenon inevitably leads to the freeing of public space, giving new opportunities for urban planners to restore the degradation of the urban environment. Indeed, the latter may be dedicated to increasing green areas and open-air recreational spaces to enrich the pedestrian environment, especially in the historical centers of European cities, which were designed before the widespread use of auto-centered transport. The same effect can also be achieved by the AVs' ability to reduce the hidden cost of searching for on-street parking, as the activity itself negatively impact the sustainability of the

urban environment through congestions, accidents, fuel consumption, air pollution and human livability degradation (Soup, 2006). Moreover, the capacity of AVs to drive themselves even after dropping off their passengers can change the approach for the parking space management, because, in a context where the AVs are shared or integrated into public service, the parking lots of conventional vehicles can be drastically reduced and even eliminated in high dense districts due to the flexibility of AVs in the use of urban space. In this case, urban planners have the opportunity to use free space to regenerate urban spaces and reorganize land use, especially dedicated to the pedestrian environment, and to decrease the auto-centered system in favor of more sustainable and walkable urban spaces that can foster the use of the body, promote physical activity and hence contribute to making a city

healthier, livable and safe (Dorato, 2020). One significant example that highlights the benefits of the AVs is the public experiment conducted by Voyage, a software company that aims to create a shared transport service for people who cannot drive because of the limitations of old age (Cameron, 2018) (Fig.4). The company is testing its fleet of AVs in the real world, specifically involving a retirement community in Florida.

The AVs' service allows the elderly to remain connected to other areas of the city in a completely safe condition and without owning a private car. In this case, the vehicles' density and traffic congestion can be controlled and reduced at a minimum, giving the parking areas the chance of being transformed into other walkable spaces by creating a calmer and safer neighborhood for all the community. Moreover, since people maintain their freedom, they cannot feel isolated from other urban places anymore. On the contrary, they are stimulated to move more frequently, and at the same time, increasing the social relations without abandoning their living places. The experiment is still in progress. It presents many opportunities for urban planners to collect and assess data for future planning strategies addressed to improving the efficiency and sustainability of the existing cities and their mobility infrastructures.

To conclude, the complex phenomenon of driverless mobility expects to come up with new opportunities capable of changing both the use of conventional vehicles and the current transportation system. The new concept also is expected to change the accessibility of many urban areas of future cities. This is because driverless technology can have a great impact on urban development due to its ability to innovate the efficiency and the quality of transport infrastructures and to reorganize land use for fostering sustainability, livability in future human-scale cities. Considering this, in the coming years, urban planners should focus on understanding the impact of AVs in the urban space and take advantage of the potential benefits offered by the autonomous system to prepare themselves for new urban challenges, finding, at the same time, innovative solutions to arrest the negative effects of the auto-centered system, in favor of a more sustainable and smart urban development.

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Fig.5 / Examples of ear-market public transportation busses that could be used to brand Gjirokastra

Dynamic heritage: the case of Havana

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Abstract

This text discusses some practices and theories related to urban planning and architectural design in a UNESCO listed city, promoting a shared approach on the theme of Urban regeneration in Historical contexts. The practices and theories derive from researches and didactic experiences that I have developed with other professors and students in Havana, Cuba.

The first one with CUJAE Instituto Superior Politécnico José Antonio Echeverría was the international cooperation program PatrIndArch on Water Heritage (2013-15), in which CUJAE Cuba, University of Alicante Spain, University of Padova and University of Ferrara were involved.

From this pedagogical experience came the opportunity to program an international Seminar dedicated to "Water, Architecture and Landscape in Europe", held in November 2014 in Instituto Universitario del Agua y de las Ciencias Ambientales, Universidad de Alicante, where I participated with professors and researchers from the Universities of Ferrara, Padova, Alicante, Coimbra, Bucarest, Valenciennes et Hainaut-Cambrésis, with proceedings published in 2015.

This text is mainly derived from the PRIA research program "URB_HE Urban Heritage Conservation as vector of social equity", in which I participated (2015-17), and which was financed as an "Interdisciplinary research project" by the University of Ferrara under a call for proposals dedicated to defining new international fields of research. This research and pedagogical activity was related to the concepts of rehabilitation, regeneration, heritage conservation, which were considered like "moving concepts". The emblem of this dynamic is the evolution of the concept of heritage: from tangible to intangible, from monuments to cultural landscape. Havana and its territory represent a privileged case study from which to observe not only influences of European and North American culture on the Global South cities, but also original hybridizations deriving from the intertwining of different practices related to urban planning and architectural design in UNESCO cities.

The prevailing polycentric structure of the city of Havana, outlined in the phases of its development and in the plans preceding the Revolution, is radicalized through policies implemented in the decade of consolidation (1965-1975) and in the following so-called Five Year's Plan. According to the concept that '... the city is a territorial collectivity, a human

community, both considered in its totality and at the level of each of the parts that compose it' (Segre R. and Lopez Rangel R., 1982: 217)¹, there is the possibility to observe how some of the most complex transformation actions of the modern city are articulated.

First of all, actions linked to a first phase of demolition and thinning of historic centers

¹ / Institute for Physical Planning, "El esquema del Plan Director de La Habana", Habana 2, in *Arquitectura/Cuba*, 34 1/2, 1973: 30; in Segre R. and Lopez Rangel R. (1982) *Architettura e territorio nell'America Latina*, Milano: Electa.

that evolve towards opposing policies of conservation and reconstruction of the built heritage, partly result in the relocation of inhabitants and gentrification. Secondly, the permanence of the urban plans for Havana – from those preceding the Revolution to the most recent ones – and in contemporary regeneration projects environmental systems along the waterfronts play a strategic role, tend to infiltrate the urban fabric in sectors relevant for the development of the city. Thirdly, the flexible hierarchy of the urban structure favored by the existing sensitive orthogonal grid in some parts of the city of Havana – in particular in the Vedado district – allows different conditions and situations to coexist, both from a morphological and settlement point of view, and they are recognized over time as heritage values by communities and institutions.

From demolition to reconstruction to displacement

The theories of the avant-garde developed in the CIAM, which in the 1920s and 1930s proposed the demolition of ancient and obsolete areas in the historic centers of European cities, reverberate in some plans and transformation projects of the central areas of Havana² starting from the late 1940s. In those years the area of La Habana Vieja was considered unhealthy, and the concept of rehabilitation was used to justify demolition projects and thinning plans. In 1955 the Junta Nacional de Planificación de Cuba was established

with the main objective of drawing up a master plan capable of guiding the urban development of the city. The development of the Master Plan was carried out under the direction of José Luis Sert and his studio TPA Town Planning Associates, in which Paul Lester Weiner and Paul Schultz also worked³. Settled in the United States, Sert was at the time president of the CIAM and this plan, while evidently affected by some of the theories that had been developed in previous congresses, presents interesting innovations in the ways in which it defines, for example, the relationship between city and water.

Starting from a zoning by social classes and functions, this plan takes into consideration the tendencies that different parts of the city had shown, including tourism in particular. This plan, while providing some radical replacement interventions at the heart of the historic city and in the Centro Habana area, it modifies the road layout and also the number and size of the urban blocks (*manzana*) in the historic center much less than what was foreseen through the application of CIAM's principles. After the 1959 Revolution, the plan was not carried out and some of the demolition interventions that had been proposed in parts of the historic city were not followed up.

In the last decades another practice was developed which, starting from the competences of the Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana directed by

² / Zardoya Loureda, 2012: 16-18.

³ / Lester Weiner, P., Sert, J.L. and Schultz, P. 1959.



Fig. 1 / Focsa building and public market, Vedado, Avana, Cuba. Source / Massarente, 2014.

Eusebio Leal⁴, established instruments of action through the availability of a real estate fund and by declaring the historical center, i.e. the area of La Habana Vieja, as an "Area of priority interest for Conservation" in 1993, following its registration in the UNESCO list in 1982. Then an urban renewal process started and this was based on new types of planning tools⁵ in addition to the conservation and reconstruction interventions of the buildings in the historic center. This process, while intending to favor business initiatives that adhere to the principles of social and solidarity economies and cooperative forms of associations, inevitably produced phenomena of gentrification and relocation of inhabitants to other areas of the city⁶. The transition from projects of radical transformation of the historical center to plans for the reconstruction and conservation of the UNESCO area of La Habana Vieja leads, therefore, to the phenomena of temporal relocation, displacement and progressive replacement of original inhabitants with international tourists.

Environmental systems infiltrate the city

The areas along the waterfront of La Habana Vieja that face the Puerto and the Bahía to the east form a continuation of the system formed by the Malecón

tradicional, which represents the front of the city towards the sea from the Vedado and the estuary of the Almendares river to the west. The possibility of considering this urban front towards the water as a single complex system allows the intertwining of infrastructural and environmental issues of particular importance for a city like Havana. After the plan of Jean-Claude Nicolas Forestier (1925-1930), which articulates a network of open spaces inspired by the model of parks and avenues of Paris and on which the structure of today's city hinges, the plan directed by Sert identifies a sequence of public parks and pedestrian areas on a metropolitan and urban scale, which infiltrates the urban fabric of the neighborhoods of this part of the city, aimed at strengthening the role of this Malecón / Puerto system towards the waterfront. The idea of the landscape tinfiltrating the city is developed and radicalized in the "Plan Director de La Habana" (1965-1970) developed by the architects of the Institute of Physical Planning, directed by Sergio Baroni.

The plan intends to strengthen the polycentric structure of the city, through the '... succession and alternation between urban landscape and natural landscape ...' 'Metropolitan-level green areas will become a green thorn of the metropolitan structure. [...] The green

⁴ / Leal Spengler, E. 2017: 34-41

⁵ / For example, PEDI Plan Especial de Desarrollo Integral, starting from the first edition in 1998.

⁶ / These phenomena were particularly deepen in Alietti, A. 2018: 45-55.



Fig. 2 / Walking through Linea, Vedado, Avana, Cuba. Source / Massarente, 2014.

will be a structuring element of the urban design that will strengthen the unitary image of the space' (Vaquero, M., Garnier, J.P., Asquez, E., Gonzales, M. and Garatti V. 2017: 72-73).

The recent "Plan Maestro para la revitalización integral de La Habana Vieja" confirms a unitary vision of the internal waterfront, assuming that the recreational vocation of port equipment, already started with the new cruise terminal, the market and other commercial activities within the pre-existing piers, becomes predominant in the new regeneration scenarios. Considering the eastern part of Havana as a suitable place for the development of the contemporary city and the Bahía as a new 'center without

a center' (Castillo del la Cruz, C. 2013), according to these studies it is possible to convert the Bahía into a large park capable of infiltrating the urban fabric from the edges of its own waterfront. The urban front of the city towards the water, whether rivers or sea, can therefore assume strategic importance for the future of cities where it is possible to intertwine settlements, infrastructural networks and environmental corridors.

Formal variety and flexible hierarchy

The Vedado district of Havana, developed through the model of the garden city for the bourgeois social classes, is characterized by a wide formal variety, a sort of catalogue of buildings that refer to



Fig. 3 / Through Calle K towards la Rampa, Vedado, Avana, Cuba. Source: Massarente, 2014.

different architectural styles - neoclassical, Neo-Romanesque, Neo-Gothic, Art Deco, Modern Movement - which coexist thanks to an urban structure based on the orthogonal grid.

This particular character of the Vedado is confirmed by being recognized as "Zona de Protección" of the area of 5ta Avenida by the Comisión Nacional de Monumentos" in 1999. However, the gap between the values recognized in the central urban areas of Habana Vieja remains important, including all the phenomena of gentrification that ensued, as well as the role that other areas such as Vedado have played in the history of the city. In recent years, a series of interventions and investments have tended to enhance individual episodes of the Vedado (as in the case of the Fabrika de Arte Cubano) and have begun to consider, albeit sometimes with questionable results, the global value of this part of the city, as well as other areas such as Habana Vieja.

Along these margins between the city and water, it will be necessary to consider with the necessary attention settlements, infrastructural and environmental issues deriving from this evolving framework, if we want to explore possible sustainable scenarios for the city of Havana in the coming decades, at different scales and between local development and social roots.

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3.1

Gjirokastra CHwB
To restore a world heritage.

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3.2

Architectural proposal:
Reconstruction of the High School
"Asim Zeneli" and the surrounding
area

Metropolis Studio

3.3

An example for the rural area of
Gjirokastra
The case of Zagorie territorial and
tourism plan

Polis University work group

3.4

Gjirokastra, new innovative
strategies for a traditional city.

Llazar Kumaraku

3

Gjirokastra Restauration



Gjirokastra CHwB

To restore a world heritage

CHwB – Royal College University of Fine Arts

Dep. Of Architectural Conservation 2008/2009 – Stockholm, Sweden

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Questions

For professionals from abroad it is not an easy task to evaluate how to handle internal questions in a foreign town. We don't know how our opinion differs from that of the inhabitants in Gjirokastra.

However, we have tried to find possible levels for our proposals, but also suggested things which may be regarded as unrealistic. Which consequences will arise for Gjiro-kastra being a World Heritage And what kind of knowledge is necessary for the local handling of it?

What is important to save and to what extent can buildings be demolished? What is most important for the town, revitalisation and modernization or preserving the cultural heritage? But of course, one must make this work together and create a well-functioning unity.

To Restore a World Heritage

This exhibition is the result of the 2008/2009 Course in Architectural Conservation at the Royal University College of Fine Arts in Stockholm, Sweden.

Royal University College of Fine Arts

The Royal University College of Fine Arts in Stockholm is one of the oldest architecture school in Europe, dating back to the XVIII century. It offers post-graduate courses in contemporary architecture and in building conservation.

The Department of Building Conservation provides a one-year, advanced course in building conservation. The students are all trained professionals within the conservation field, architects, art

historians, engineers etc, wanting to deepen their knowledge and broaden their experience.

Conservation Without Borders

This year we have chosen to work with the World Heritage town of Gjirokastra in the southern, part of Albania, a unique and beautiful place, struggling with a number of problems. Our Course started in September 2008, with a two week stay in Gjirokastra. This first phase of the course was performed in cooperation with the Swedish foundation Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB), with financial support from the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency (SIDA). In Gjirokastra our students worked together with a group of colleagues from Albania and neighbouring Balkan countries, invited by CHwB.

First, we made an inventory of the Old Town as a whole, then we documented - by thorough investigation and measuring - three typical, badly damaged Girokastran town houses, two of them residential and one commercial.

Back home in Sweden, our students have continued to work according to the established curriculum of the course, presenting and analysing the results of the field work in Gjirokastra, and preparing their own project proposals. The result of their efforts is to be seen in this exhibition. Quite naturally, a number of proposals are devoted to the individual buildings, suggesting ways to restore and reuse them. But in order to revitalize the town,



The Old Town of Gjirokastra – the World Heritage, in 2008

you also need to widen the perspective and to suggest broader solutions for the town and its surrounding region. Therefore, we also have proposals dealing with the old buildings in general, with the town and even with the region.

Gjirokastra and its friendly and hospitable citizens have for ever won a place in our hearts, and we sincerely wish it a bright future among the World's foremost Heritages. We are very happy to have got the opportunity to work here, and

we would like to thank everybody who has contributed to making our Course possible; the Swedish foundation Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB) our co-organizer and guide in Albania, the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency (SIDA) who has sponsored our visits to Gjirokastra, the Albanian Institute of Cultural Monuments and our collaborators in Gjirokastra, the Gjirokastra Conservation and Development Organisation (GCDO) and many other local organizations and individuals.



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Professor in Architectural Conservation

Fredric Bedoire,
Professor in History of Architecture

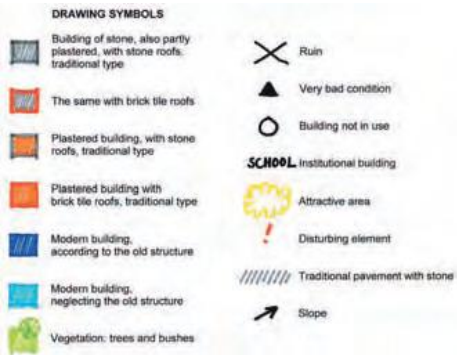
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Cecilia Stromer, Gustaf Wizen,
Linda Veiby, Ida Westergren,
Linda Wangdahl, Torkel Wachter



Two of the Swedish architects at work



Inventory of the environment, regarding building materials, pavements, green areas as well as the decay of the buildings – a starting point for our work with Gjirokastra. The map was executed together with the restoration headed by Cultural Heritage without Borders.



The modern town of Gjirokastra, in 2008

Gjirokastra City Analysis

Lotta Günther
Monica Rydberg

World Heritage motivation: "... The historic town of Gjirokastra is a rare example of a well-preserved Ottoman town, built by farmers of large estates, around the 13th century citadel. The architecture is characterized by the construction of a type of tower house of which Gjirokastra represents a series of outstanding examples". Since the construction of the New City in the 60s and the transition of the 90s, the Historic City has fallen into deep decline.

Rich History

Ever since the Antique, the Gjirokastra region has been crossed by trade routes. The actual development of the town dates back to the latter half of the 13th century, with the building of the Kalaja Castle. In the 15th century Albania was incorporated in the Ottoman Empire and Gjirokastra became a regional Capital. The expansion of the Old Town of today and the bazaar was initiated during the 17th century, and its still prevailing building pattern was established.

The characteristics Gjirokastrian residential buildings were erected during the 18th and early 19th centuries, probably on much older foundations. Albania was declared independent in 1912. In 1946 Albania became a People's Republic led by Enver Hoxha. This was the start of the most genuine Communistic regime in history. Communism fell in the 1990s and the consequent transition has been dramatic, both to its citizens and its cultural heritage.

Qualities

The Albanian people historically consists

of various ethnic groups and cultures with different languages. The coexistence of these rich cultures has led to a very specific national, secular culture, and may be the ground reason for the hospital and generous Albanian mood that we, ourselves, have had the opportunity to experience on site in Gjirokastra. The surrounding landscape is dramatic, providing rich natural and cultural experiences, with many archaeological artefacts from the Antique era. The culture has made rich impressions in handicraft, literature, and music, where the particular Polyphonic music also is a part of the World Heritage.

The architectural cultural heritage in Gjirokastra emanates mainly from the Ottoman period, where Muslim culture still is fully discernable in the actual Bazaar quarters, and in their relation to the only remaining Mosque in the town centre. Gjirokastra's importance as an administrate, feudal centre under the Ottoman Empire is reflected by the monumental residential buildings along the mountain slopes on the very edge of the central city. Gjirokastra was declared a Museum City in 1961, and it was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2005.

Decay

The Old Town of Gjirokastra suffers under heavy decay due to a range of structural adversities. In the 1960s the Old Town was declared a Museum City. It is meant protection and restoration of the valuable houses. But in the prolongation, this has been devastating for the city which in

many ways has become an un-economic exhibit. Planning and heritage legislation restricts the use of the old building. This also has resulted in people, especially the young ones, abandoning the Old Town in favour of the New City. Under the communist era most of the private estates were nationalized and often expropriated. After the fall of Communism, the houses were resituated to its former owners, in some cases more than 60 persons, many of them not even living in Albania.

The consequences in Gjirokastra are that many of the most culturally valuable houses have fallen into decay due to this uncertain ownership. There are no functioning laws efficient to solve this. Expropriation is a very sensitive act due to historical reasons.

Communism and transition

Enver Hoxha and the Communist regime shaped the history of modern Albania. For almost 50 years the country was ruled by one of the harshest communist regimes in Eastern Europe. Albania was the most isolated country in Europe and, when the dictatorship was dissolving, also one of the most rural and poorest.

A great wave of refugees followed after 1990. Albanians moved from the countryside into the cities, or abroad in search for work and a better life. In 1997 Albania suffered a national collapse, when the so called pyramid schemes, investments funds built in the way of chain letters, collapsed. Most Albanians had been lured to invest their owning in such funds, and when everything fell, these already poor people were ruined.

Violent disturbances spread all over the country, weapon deposits were plundered in a state of complete lawlessness. Many of the houses in the Old Town were destroyed in the riots.

Note / In later years Gjirokastra has seen some economic development. This has generated a higher standard of living but also an increase in traffic and garbage that the town can't handle. Public transportation system and waste management system is poorly developed. Gjirokastra, as well as its infrastructure, has to be conserved and developed in a sustainable way to assure its future value both to its inhabitants and the potentially growing tourist sector.



Old Town of Gjirokastra from above, studied area marked with frame.



Gjirokastrian residential building



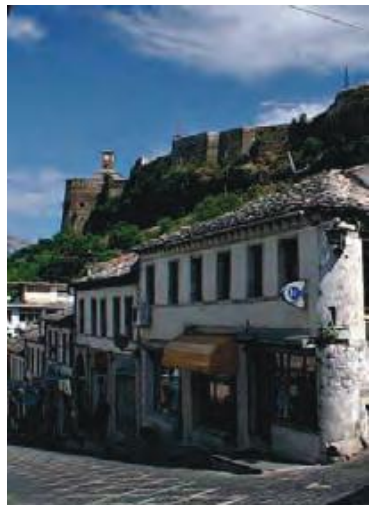
Gjirokastrian hospitality



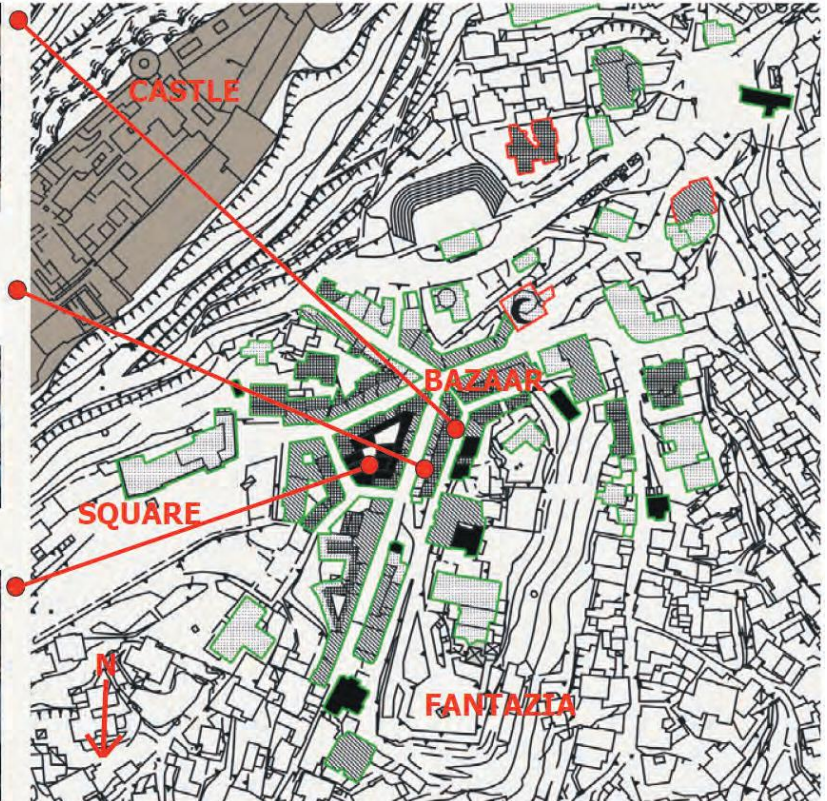
Stone roof of the Hamam



Stone roof detail



Bazaar and Castle



- GOOD
- MEDIocre
- BAD
- RUIN

EXTERIOR & INTERIOR PROTECTION

EXTERIOR PROTECTION

Old Town of Gjirokastra



More than 600 000 bunkers were built in Albania during the Communist era

Decayed Gjirokastrian residential building



Traffic jam in Bazaar area



Photo: Leif Engberg
Weapon store being plundered in 1997



Market street in the New City



Ruin filled with garbage

Gjirokastra City Revitalization

*Lotta Günther
Monica Rydberg*

The main objective for this project has been to emphasize Social, Cultural and Democratic Development. The proposal is based on certain concepts:

- * RECONCILIATION
- * EQUALITY
- * COMMUNITY
- * CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

All concepts have below been concretized to physical projects in the Old Town. By sustainable adjustments to the needs of today, the maintenance of the cultural heritage can hopefully be ensured in a better way by its local owners and users. They can also benefit economically from the existing and potential value of the heritage.

Reconciliation - Documentation Centre
Every society's assault on its people needs to be documented and analyzed in order to give its citizens an ability to Understand, Interpret and hopefully Reconcile with its own history.

The Bunker

Dug deep into the rock under the 13th century Castle, lies a gigantic bunker - built by the Communist rulers as late as in the 1980s. The accommodations consist of hundreds of rooms, planned for the evacuation of all party officials and to maintain their functions in case of crisis or invasion.

To Understand and Interpret 20th Century History

The Communist era and the violations

committed under its banners, still consist a collective trauma that is not preferably put under subject of discussion.

A Documentation Centre could be placed in the bunker, with the purpose of gathering, working at, and archiving testimonies, documents and pictures, regarding the entire contemporary history of Albania, i.e. the World Wars and its occupations, the Communist era, the Transition, and the close to Civil War situation of 1997. Further on the Centre may serve as a meeting place for education, exhibitions, seminars, showing of films and for research.

Democracy, Tolerance and Human Rights
The Centre could form a place for discussions concerning Democracy, Tolerance and Human Rights. An active and open work on those issues also consist a necessary step on Albania's long journey towards its desired membership of the European Union.

Equality - Centre for women

One basic qualification for a democratic society is that all citizens are able to take part in shaping their society on equal terms. Albania suffers from high unemployment rates, the economic gap between women and men is widening, female representation in higher education and politics is low and women are in large numbers engaged in domestic activities. One of the most vulnerable groups consists of Romani women.

The Centre

A centre could enhance the importance of women in Albanian society, and above all their possibility to engage themselves for the future of Gjirokastra. This particular building could usefully be adjusted for activities with the main purpose of strengthening women. Courses, studies and activities within different organizations would be ways to take care of the Gjirokastrian women's knowledge about local traditions of handicraft and to trade it to younger generations.

Combined with courses in economics, modern design and business knowledge, this could eventually result in successful entrepreneurship and the activity could become an important part of the continuous process towards social, political and economic equality.

Community – Public Parks

There is a lack of public places, especially for women and children in Gjirokastra. Common spheres are essential for creating local identity and affinity between people. An addition of a number of public places could vitalize the Old Town and make the city more attractive for inhabitants and tourists. We have identified two places in the central Old Town suitable for alteration.

Fantazia City Park

A City Park, with shading trees, outdoor furniture, and boulevards, could be arranged on the lower level of the Fantazia Area, reachable by a new flight of stairs. Restaurant Fantazia remains, with its outdoor facilities on the higher level, directly adjacent to the common park.

Youth Center and Park

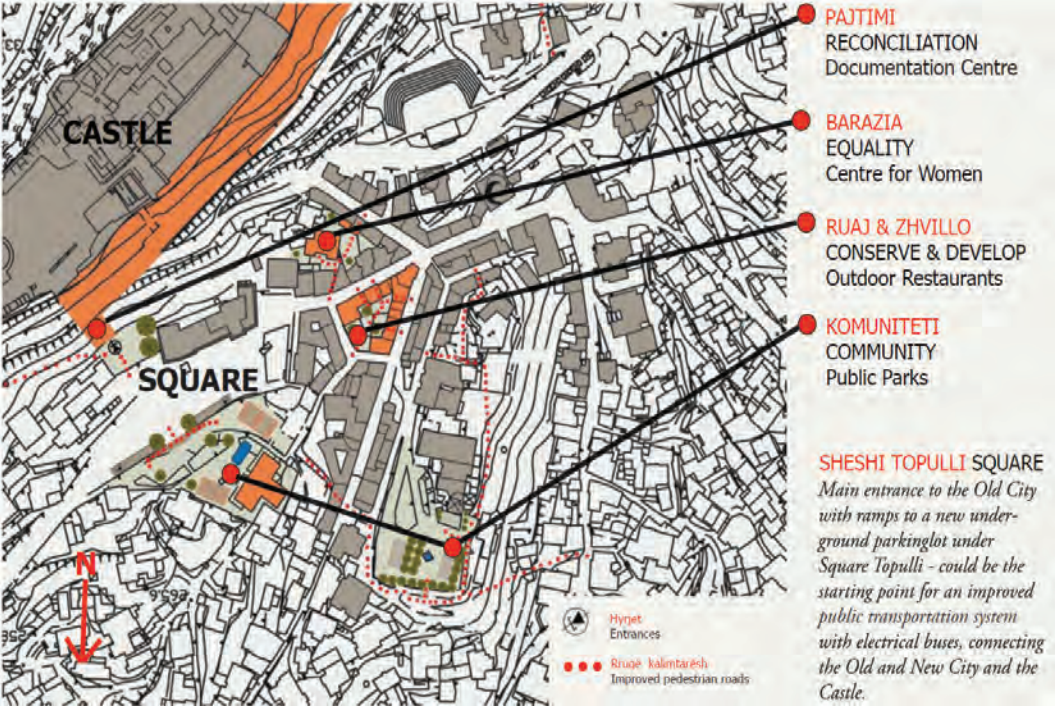
Below the central square of Cerciz Topulli is a green area with a worn out playground. The building in place houses a cultural school for youngsters. Due to the lack of places for children and young people it would be valuable to develop this site. The park could contain activities. To link the place with the town we suggest a new flight of stairs to the square above.

Conserve and Develop

A revitalization of the Bazaar and the Gjirokastrian houses is necessary for the city's survival. Legislative and attitudinal change is crucial in the efforts to revitalize the economy of the Old Town. Gentle development and adjustments to modern needs and payment capacities must be allowed in order to secure the buildings of high cultural value.

In respect to the heavy devastation in this Bazaar block, we propose a somewhat new shaping, and an adaptation of the buildings, to modern day requirements. By not reconstructing the building that only remains as ruins, we want to create an inner courtyard suitable as outdoor space for the surrounding restaurants.

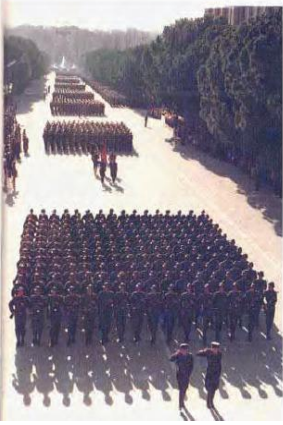
This could become a very attractive place, for tourists as well as Gjirokastrians, a peaceful oasis for relaxation, away from the car jammed streets of the Bazaar. The block is well visible from the Castle, so it is of a great importance for the roofs to be renovated in order to retain the characteristic roofline of Gjirokastra.



The bunker could be directly connected with the castle by an elevator. A pedagogic linking between the Centre's presentation of Albanian 20th century history and the Castle's exhibition of its older history would strengthen both projects, and also become a strong attraction for tourists, whose main reason to visit Albania could be their interest in and fascination with its 20th century History.



Exhibition at Documentation Centre of Cambodia



Military parade, Tirana 1984



Archiving testimonies in Cambodia



Photo: Merja Louka

In the backyard of one of the Bazaar quarters, this building stands empty and relatively worn down. The building has spacious rooms in two storeys. In front of the building is a courtyard, declined but with quite a potential to become a handsome and pleasant meeting place. The inner parts of the block, are that in a state of decay, could serve as a passage way between the building with its activities and a shop in the Bazaar



Photo: Merja Louka



The concrete deck of Fantazia Area can usefully be demolished.



Gjirokastrians playing domino



Painting by Birgitta Angleryd

City Park with boule in the future?



Poorly used area next to central square



Boys playing football in the streets



Skateboard park in the future?



A great part of the Old City of Gjirokastra was destroyed in the 1997 riots. Some of the buildings are next to totally ruined. Today this block houses weakly functioning activities, with a few shops and restaurants, but could be a beautiful yard with outdoor restaurants in the future.

Gjirokastra

Ottoman Town

Jörgen Renström

Gjirokastra has a well preserved ancient urban landscape. Its structure is mainly influenced by Ottoman intensions but also by local bourgeoisie and the regional ruler Ali Pasha under the years around 1800. Social common buildings as schools, mosques, monasteries and fountains are as important structures as the central bazaar buildings. Thought the central Istanbul government didn't take responsibility over more than military buildings and main infrastructure its influence is profound and still able to read in the town of today.

Center of a region

In Gjirokastra you most likely find the best preserved ancient urban landscape of the Balkan. The city structure that developed during the Ottoman period is still possible to trace in the environment of today. After the Ottoman conquest in 1417, a stringent strategy to build a military stronghold and an efficient administration followed. Its main task was to collect taxes for the government Gjirokastra was one of many small cities or fortified castles that developed into commercial and cultural centers during the relatively peaceful time that followed the Ottoman conquest. Among the around 200 cities in Balkan at that time, Gjirokastra was nominated as one of 30 region capitals

(a sanac). That function involved the court of the region —a mekheme, and the important Baillie of the judge. A mosque and a minaret were erected, signaling changed power structure and a remembrance of the Muslim sovereignty

over the Dropull valley. Later, with feudal families rolling the local administration, ending up in Ali Pasha regime, as anarchy and bloodfeuds came to influence town structure as well as the Ottoman administration.

Building institutions

The Ottoman government took responsibility for city walls, defense constructions, bridges and roads and the courthouse, but left remaining town building facilities to local forces Many of the institutions were erected by the rich who by Quran were challenged to give doles.

By a fundation, free from taxes — a Vakf, it was possible to build and run schools, mosques, soup kitchen, monasteries or a fountain for the benefit of the inhabitants. Those private institutions, whose management often was connected to incomes from business of the bazaar, into a high degree contributed to the character of the cities.

The public bath was an important institution. The Hamam was always built close to praying grounds or mosques to facilitate the necessary ritual ablutions for washing. The steamy rooms and the private boxes, where the customers were placed on hot stones, was also a place for social interaction in a city with few public meeting places for the inhabitants. School education was given by different religious institutions and therefore not unifying by culture. This gave a diverging situation between social classes. In Gjirokastra a craftsmen union founded a school near

the bazaar 1756. In the Islamic Madrasas Islamic laws were explained and traditions and the Quran interpreted. This wasn't enough for the bourgeoisie merchants who sent their children to trading schools outside the country in e.g. Vienna and Venice.

Trade

Trade followed the Ottoman expansion and was an important element in the development of many cities. What products dominated in Gjirokastra is unclear, but the region as a whole produced mutton and wool and we know that the vineyards embodied the valley of Drina. Leather production for internal use and exportation to western countries, seem to have increased over time and by the end of 19th century the town had a leading position in leather, as well as in cheese production and trade, in the south of Albania.

The marketplaces always had central positions in the cities and in connection with the Friday mosque and other collective facilities. Besides the covered buildings as Bedestens (big enclosed shops often made by stone and limited to one or two in a city) and a lot of small shops, there were open air markets in the outskirts of the cities functioning as places for selling agricultural products. In the Bazaars there was no religious separation, and here socialization between different religious and ethnic groups was able to flourish.

Town structure

The dwelling blocks were ethnically divided, and sometimes segregated by

different professions. The inhabitants established congregations around a church or a mosque. The street grid wasn't kept in order by the authorities, why there grew a throng of intersecting roads and walkways to support transportation to the private buildings. In comparison with Western European cities the structure of the roads, the absence of city walls, the ethnic segregation, the physical closeness between trade and places of religious practice made distinct differences.

Generally trees in the streets were not accepted in Islamic cities. Still there was no lack of greenery, and visitors in Gjirokastra today are fascinated by the many small gardens covered with vine.

This is an old tradition and the walled gardens with greeneries could plausibly be interpreted as the symbol of the oasis in the Quran transformed to a paradise of flowing water, good smells and fruit trees for airy shadow. In the 1700th century the inhabitants of Gjirokastra assembled in a loggia in the castle to enjoy the sight of gorgeous gardens of the valley where the wineries spread wide.



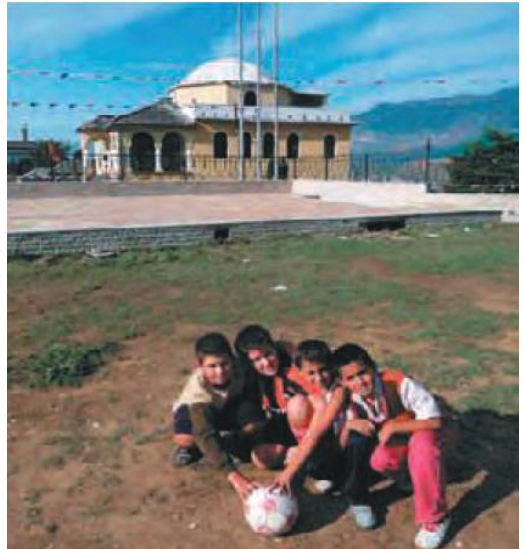
Immediately after the Ottoman conquest a mosque and a minaret were erected. This was the normal procedure and should signalling changed power structure as a remembrance of the Muslim sovereignty. The reconstruction shows the castle with the mosque and minaret could have looked.



Just as fountains could have their origin in the Vakf the mosques and madrasas could. To the left, a now disappeared, beautiful mosque in the Manal-at block.



In the middle of the 17th century there were 5 public fountains in Gjirokastra with good water. In the castle they kept a water tank in every house but also a big cistern at the foot of the minaret. The inhabitants also had the possibility to get water from Dropull with the help of Donkeys and horses. Later the water tank in the houses became a part of the siege protection family vendettas. To the left a water fountain in Gjirokastra.



To the right four young Gjirokastrian boys, playing on the ground of the amphitheatre, in front of a madrasa building.



Bazaars have been built in many different structures, selling more valuable goods the closer the Central mosque they stood. The picture to the left shows part of a caravanserai in Isfahan (Iran), from the middle of the 17th century with its foundation reminds of that of the buildings in the new bazaar in Gjirokastra built in the 1670 's. The model in the middle shows buildings according to the same pattern in the autumn 2008. The third photo shows a customer passing a shop in Gjirokastra evaluating fruit and vegetables.



Gjirokastra grew out of an outpost of an old Roman trade route. Those routes had made great influence on the possibilities of advanced trade at least until the beginning of 17th century. On the map, to the right showing old Roman routes, the position of Gjirokastra is pointed out as a red spot. The famous Via Ignitia connects Thessaloniki with Durrhachium north of the lake of Ohrid.



In the cities there was no specific social authority responsible for the order of the town. This gave the sultan's governor the choice to keep order considering fire wardens, waste management and other sanitation. Police work was done by irregulars hired by tradesmen and locals. The housekeeper paid to get the litter transported away and was responsible that the paving was in order in front of his house. Guilds often took responsibility for fire watch. A "Muhtesib" did weekly controls in the bazaars to check weights and measures. The picture, below to the right, shows Albanian irregulars hired to keep order in Thessaloniki in the end of 19th century.



Water was, and still is, essential for a town's possibilities to live and grow. The fountains have always been meeting points for its inhabitants. The picture below shows women fetching water at a fountain in Thessaloniki in the end of 19th century. Note the woman who turns away from the photographer.

Gjirokastra

A Walk in History

*Maria Sahlstrand
Staffan Read*

Seeking history

The history of the World Heritage city of Gjirokastra is yet not written. We have tried to visualize the history of the town and its development. We have been obliged to collect information from different sources, mostly from travellers of the past, travellers that have been visiting the city and shared their impressions in their journals. Our sources are mainly the famous Turkish traveller Evliya Celebi from 1667, two englishmen E. Lear and H. Holland and the french F. Pouqueville that travelled in Albania in the early 19-th century. We have also read interesting reports about the Albanien National Renaissance by Z. Shkodra and the Italian report called " Alla scoperta della citta di pietra".

Are the houses from 1667

When we arrived to Gjirokastra we were told that the old houses we saw mostly were houses built in the early 19-th century. Now, when we have studied our sources, we strongly believe that the old historic town we see today is older. In 1431 Gjirokastra had 121 houtholds, all Christians, in 1583 the number had risen to 434 and at the time when the famous traveller Celebi visits the town in 1667 it consits of 2000 houtholds.

An explosive development had happened in 80 years! The Italians writes that some houses of today have construction traces from the 17-th century, probably some of the buildings are even older. To quote Celebi: " The walls and the houses are all centuries old, dating from the time of the infidels".

The early settlements

The first indication of settlements in Gjirokastra is some fragments from the 5th-century BC inside the castle. Traces has also been found, in the quarters of Mecite, Dunavat and at the Nanxa bridge that tells us that the Romans inhabited the area. For example the place with the beautiful name the "Seven Fountains" in the area of Mecite and a trace in the Manalat-quarter shows us fragments of Roman baths. The explanation of why the place became the settlement for the town of Gjirokastra is that the major routs went here from the north and the Ionian sea in the west.

Protected by high hills was a perfect place for a fortress. In the 10-th centur the Albanian princedoms was found and the Gjirokastra was erected. The place called the" Bishops Palace" shows us traces of a church from this early time. In 1336 a Byzantine chronicle tells us that Gjirokastra was called Argyroprohline and the Prince Gjin Zenebishi used it s a center for his power. The town started to grow.

Gjirokastra in 1700-th century

At this time the town was a very lively place. It was under the Turkish dominion since 1417, and had extended in size and it was an important trading-place with its 200 shops. A bazaar was newly built by Memi Beg on the ground where the bazaar of today is situated. The bazaar had 80 modern two-story shops with strong gates at both ends. Close to the trading-places you could find the khans (guesthouses). Since the Muslims had taken over the town, the administration

of the Ottoman state and the religious activities took an important place in the town while the Christians were mostly merchants and craftsmen. You could also find public buildings as a courthouse, a tollhouse, schools and so on.

Gjirokastra had eight main "quarters" or districts with 2000 households, each quarter with their own mosques, churches and fountains. The Christians had their own district north of the center, called Pazari Vjeter. It had its own character with 3 churches and 200 households. The big public hamam was situated at the old place "Seven Fountains" (where traces of a Roman bath have been found) together with the mosque of Hadji Murad.

The fountain was known to have excellent water. Celebi writes that all Gjirokastras fountains have excellent water that makes the people look beautiful and healthy! One of the big public praying grounds were situated in the Tekke quarter. It had a big congregational mosque but with no minaret. This place was full of various kinds of tall trees. There was also a mosque courtyard, a tekke with many cells for monks around, graves for saints and notables. On this place we find today an open theatre.

The city of clan feuds

The traveller F Pouqueville describes Gjirokastra in 1799 as a city with an atmosphere of warfare. The people lived in a state of emergency, always ready to evacuate! To quote him; "If I had not known about the absence of laws, I would have asked myself how could people ever built their houses on burnt ground, stripped

of any vegetation, parched of the heat of the sun and exposed to the winds fury".....

" Solidly built of stone, the dwellings are pierced with loopholes, and, according to the wealth of the masters, inclosed within embattled walls flanked by towers. The more difficult of access, the more a house is valued". Thus the architecture of the city was influenced by the hostilities between people.

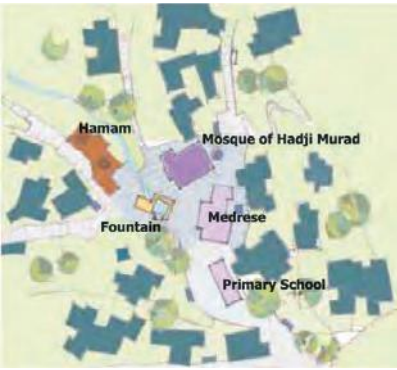
The neighbourhoods connected by high bridges, sometimes with guards protecting some of the buildings. The feudal aristocracy houses had large stone-towers, weighty portals and high walls around the courtyard and they were located a rifle-bullet away from other houses.

The courtyards had different doors where the host could "inspect" the guests before they were allowed to enter the inner yard. The groundfloors had almost no windows and it was only at the topfloor they could glaze out on the beautiful valley.

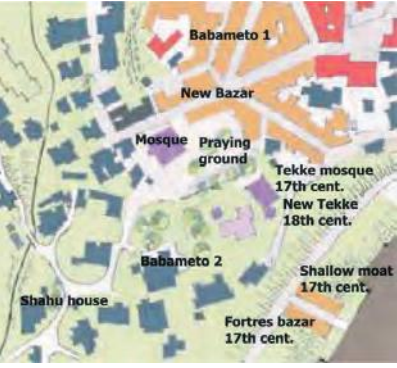
The Gjirokastra house

In 1667, Celebi writes that the outer walls of all the buildings were constructed in a way that had no parallel in all the world. The walls were 15 m high, made of red sandstone with no mud, lime or plaster. White stonewalls surrounded the house and the vineyards. He also says that they were hundreds of years. It sounds like he describes a kind of Kula-building and we believe that at least the lower parts of many of the buildings we see today have very old remains from that period.

It is likely that the houses then got their



Seven Fountains and the Hadji Murad mosque. How the place "Seven Fountains" could have looked like in the 17-th century with the Mosque, Hamam, Medrese surrounded with houses and gardens. Still to day the beautiful place gives you a very special sense.



The praying-ground Celebi: The public praying ground. The Tekke mosque had a large congregation, but no minaret. This mosque was reached by a stairway. It is a place of worship built in old style. The courtyard is full of various kind of all trees and the sun cannot penetrate at all. It has a well with excellent tasting water. Around the courtyard are cells of the Halveti Tekke. The fortress Bazaar had wooden gates at both ends. Once the gates are closed there is no way of getting up to the fortress on this side.



The Map shows what E. Lear wrote in 1848: "The whole town is built on three distinct ridges, or spurs of rock, springing from the hill at a considerable height, and widening - separated by deep ravines or channels of torrents - as they stretch out into the plain".

The history of the castle

The castle has early traces that tells us that Gjirokastra has been fortified since the 5-th century BC and we know for sure that it was fortified in the 10-th century. In that time the fortress functioned as a military centre, a residence, a trade and religious centre but not as a town. It says that the initial founder was the son of Philip, a greek king. In 1336 the castle was furnished with residences, a church in the north east, a market and a tunnel in the southwest and with a bakery in the middle. Later under the Turks domain we can read from Celebi in 1667, that the castle had a length of 450 meter and a width of 75 and it was still an important settlement in Gjirokastra. Inside there was one main street, from east to west, with 200 two-story stoneworks houses situated on top of a rampart. They had alcoves and bay windows overlooking the town, entirely roofed with slate. At this time the church was replaced with a large mosque of the sultan Bayezid II the Saint. Water were collected in a huge cistern at the foot of the minaret like each house had its own cistern. The fortress had two strong gates each with three strong iron doorways. The eastern gate was approached by a stone staircase. From here you could reach a loggia pavilion where you could look out over the whole district. Here came all important citizens and landlords when they wanted to feast their eyes on the vineyards and the wide plane below. The north gate, in front of the public praying grounds, had a shallow moat to protect the castle. Outside this moat, on the path into the castle, the old bazar was located. Celebi writes that it had the shape of a bedestan, a basilika. In the year of 1812 when the Ottoman regional ruler Ali Pasha of Tepelena ruled in Gjirokastra, the traveller H. Holland tells us that building activities had an extreme rapidity when he built a new castle over the old one. He extended the castle to the southwest, highens the walls and also connected the castle with a majestic aqueduct, supported on high arches. 2000 labourers were working with the project. In the castle he builds a big "Seraglio" for himself and his harem, to visit when he visited Gjirokastra.



Celebi writes that many buildings in Gjirokastra appear to have been built by the Venetian infidels because you can see portraits of Saint Mark on them. Today we can see lions on some buildings. Are they portraits of St Mark or Ali Pasha - the lion of Ioaninna.

Kikino, drawing by E Riza. The Italians writes that some houses of today have construction-traces from the 17-th century

The Ottoman Interiors of Gjirokastra

Karin Aringer

Ottoman dwellings are built for seasonal living and the rooms are slightly different furnished according to summer or winter use. Traditional Islamic faith separates men and women, even in the home, which has affected the use of space. The area of the rooms in an ottoman house is divided by horizontal and vertical imaginary lines, such as shelves and pillars. The entrance of the room is separated from the actual domicile part; this is made by a floor elevation. The Ottoman interior style is characterized by a quest for light and air. All furniture is built-in or wall fixed. Textiles have always been of a great importance in these interiors, and they still are. The classic Islamic patterns are abstract and geometrical and take its inspiration from the Koran. These patterns can be seen on wooden decorations and ornamented ceilings in Gjirokastra.

Seasonal living and social life

In regions where the temperature differs a lot over the year, it's often necessary to separate the use of the rooms. In addition to the utility areas and other rooms used continuously, there are also special rooms for summer and winter use. The winter room is usually located in the southern part of the house. It has smaller windows, better insulation, lower ceiling and a more efficient fi-replace. The summer room has larger windows and thinner walls. It has often been given a prominent corner location, so that it can be likened to an enclosed balcony or a glass veranda. Traditional islamic faith separates men and women, even in the home, which has affected the layout of the dwellings. All

houses, even those which only consisted of two rooms, where divided into the selamlık (men's rooms) and the harem (women's spaces). Men and women received visits and socialized in their own separate rooms. The interior was the same in all rooms, flexible and arranged in such a way that the usage of the rooms could vary between living room, dining room and bedroom. The finest and most lavish room in the house was usually the room where the family's male members received their visits.

Horizontal and vertical lines

The walls of the room are divided by horizontal lines between floor and ceiling, which is underscored by the various materials and workmanship on the interior. Finer rooms are characterized by its lowered decorative wooden ceiling. Its ornamentation shows that the roof is a replacement for the open sky and have thus a religious significance. The floor level in some parts of the room has often been raised, such an elevation is called sedir. Divan and sedir together functions as seating furniture. The rooms can also be divided by using vertical lines which comprise trellis, gallery balustrade or similar arrangement of wood. The room is horizontally divided into two parts - an upper and a lower part, which also could be called a useful and a no useful space. The imaginary horizontal lines which divide the room in this way consist of wall shelving, wood paneling and cupboards. The usable space has a fairly simple design, unlike the upper part of the room, which has no other function than decorative eyecatchers.

The windows also follow this horizontal structure. In the Ottoman rooms the entrance location affects the decor of the room. The room is divided into two areas, the entrance and the actual abode room, where the latter is marked by an elevated floor level.

Built-in furniture

The Ottoman style is characterized by a quest for light and air. All furniture is built-in or wall fixed. The floor and ceiling can be decorated and becomes a kind of horizontal framework for the room, the volume in between is perceived to be spacious and kept clean of disruptive elements. The Western way of furnishing did not affect the Ottoman Empire until the end of the 1800s, and then primarily in the major cities. Tables has traditionally not been used in the interior, instead candleholders and decorative objects have been placed on solid niches in the walls. When the room served as a dining-room a large pot or plate of metal was placed on the floor or on a low folding table. Everyone sat on cushions on the floor and ate from the same tray or pot.

Decorating with textiles

For a people who lives a nomadic life textile are very important when creating a home, since they can't bring solid furniture. Nomad women wove textiles and carpets in wool, which they used to cover the ground and as tent walls. When they became settled, they continued to use textiles when furnishing their homes. Textiles were used both to isolate against the cold but also to give the

room a softer impression. Textiles were used on both floors and walls in the form of rugs, cushions, pillows and curtains. Cushions were used to provide comfort on the divan as well as seating furniture at meals. Carpets were woven on narrow looms and sewn together to the desired width. Tie rugs was put out on the floor in an asymmetric criss-cross pattern. more carpets the richer family. Tie carpets importance for the Islamic culture can still be seen in the mosques.

Textile designs as well as Islamic art in general are abstract and geometric. Symmetry, arabesques (stylized organic ornament), calligraphic ornaments and bright colours represent its characteristics. These patterns are usually inspired by the Koran where the worldly and spiritual life is reflected in the abstract decorations, for example geometric stellar forms symbolizes God's creation. There were large regional differences in the Ottoman art, in terms of material and expression. Since Albania was a province on the outskirts of the vast Ottoman Empire the craftsmanship is of a more provincial character. In the area where Albania is located, wood and textile were dominant in terms of arts and crafts. The geometric patterns are therefore primarily seen on interior fittings of wood.

Contemporary interiors

The insights that we got from today's way of furnishing in Gjirokastra mainly comes from the few visits we made in private homes. It is important to emphasize that the houses we visited were older buildings

located in the old town. These homes were still furnished in the ottoman way, but some western furniture, such as coffee tables, storage furniture and separate chairs and couches, had been added to the fixed fittings. Textiles are still a big and important part of the interior, but today it

is also made in modern artificial materials. Furnishing is affected by technological developments and the rapid change of a country's social structure and culture. Thus, interior design is a field that will evolve and change due to a more stable economy in Albania.



Dual windows were common features in ottoman dwellings. The lower half do not have a glass pane, but instead a kind of wooden shutter, wholly or partially covered. The upper half, which can not be opened, have small bar panes. It is said that the windows are designed so that the women can be completely protected from view when they stay in rooms facing the street. They are able to look out from the window but not being seen.



The fireplace is the only permanent interior element that is allowed to steal space in the room – other interior fittings such as cupboards and shelves are embedded in the walls.



Skenduli House, a traditionally furnished ottoman palace, 2008.



Interior, 1960's or 70's taken from the book Gjirokastra – museum city.



Dwelling in the eastern part of the old town.

Three last pictures showing traditional Ottoman dwellings in Gjirokastra. As you can see some western furniture, such as a table, storage furniture and a separate bed has been added to the fixed fittings. Textiles are still a big and important part of the interior, but today it is also made in modern artificial materials, which for example shows in the bedspread and curtains.



Square or star patterns appears to have been extra popular in Gjirokastra. You find this in ceilings, cupboard doors and windows. Traditional ornamented ceilingings can also be seen in modern buildings such as the hotel where we stayed during our visit in Gjirokastra. Those ceilings are made in different materials and different colours but in a similar style.



The entrance is usually located on the short side of the room, near a corner, and connected with built-in lockers and sometimes also space for latrines. You left your shoes at the entrance hall, given that the floor of the domicile room was covered with carpets. The custom of switching from shoes to slippers in the mosque was also practiced in the home. Usually, the women were not allowed in the men's guest-room at all but sometimes they had access to the gallery on top of the wall cabinets by the entrance, from which they could look down on the men.

Gjirokastra

The Everyday Heritage

Linda Lovise Veiby

Everyday cultural heritage means any cultural heritage that is associated with daily life and has become a part of the society. The protection of cultural heritage has a tradition of focusing on the story of the beautiful. The abundance, the special. Although the heritage that represents the everyday are just as important maybe even more so. The Babameto house represent an example.

The story of the walls

The family groupings in Albania are referred to as strong. In Gjirokastra we see an obvious division between public and private spaces, something that perhaps occur to an even greater degree than in many other world heritage towns. Albanian houses are often described as Kullas fortified stone houses without windows looking onto the road. It is said that the design originally was a result of fortification purposes.

In Gjirokastra the dwelling houses of the 19th century have the same height and structure, but always a significant front facade, where large windows, and often decorations, show off the erector's wealth and status. Each house is surrounded by walls, often by two metres high, preventing passers-by from observing family life in the court-yards behind. The windows on the ground floor are not more than small openings in the wall, often with iron bars and the rooms within contain stables and economy rooms. The upper floors contain living rooms and guestroom.

Private space

The buildings tell a story on many levels:

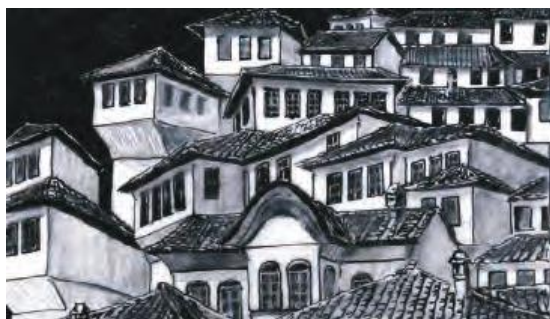
About access to building materials, craftsmen, cultural influences, changes in fashions and social structure. The Babameto house was a house for a large family where each nuclear unit, husband, wife and children, contribute to the common welfare. The employment of servants was rare, and it is likely to believe that the women of the house shared

the housework between them on unequal terms. The book "Living architecture: Ottoman" says that one of the main factors of the design of the Turkish house was the distinction between men and women. Berit Backer is implying the same in her book "Behind stone walls". Literature tells that women could move all over the house, but when guests arrived, they stayed in the kitchen area or in their room.

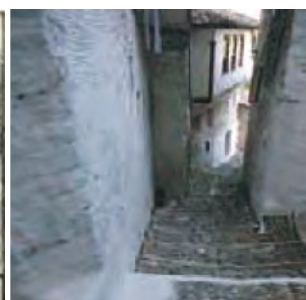
The guestroom was mainly a place for men and the separation of the sexes seems to have been an important tool for keeping the system of the household work as a unit. At the same time there is a description of a custom of providing separate entrances, staircases and quarters for men and women.

This strongly indicates that the two entrances that we see in Babameto were intended for the female and male part of the household.

The book "Behind stone walls" describes how "new houses" often were symmetrically built with one half being a mirror reflection of the other. This is said to be done in order to facilitate a future spilt in the family.



Gjirokastra sweeps out the tourist by its majestic towering buildings in a dramatic landscape and narrow picturesque streets with a rich and expressive architecture. From a cultural heritage point of view Gjirokastra's centre is particularly special because it remains, to a large extent, unchanged. It tells us not only about the city itself but about Albanian and Ottoman values as a whole.



The buildings tell a story on many levels: Access to building materials, crafts-men, cultural influences, changes in fashions and social structure.

Division between public and private spaces. Around the houses there were high walls protecting from insight.

BABAMETO HOUSE



The Babameto house, north façade. The two entrances in Babameto, similar in shape can be a result of family precautions in case of future family needs, but it can also have functioned as a separation between staircases to avoid any outsider's intrusion in the daily life.

Gjirokastra Babameto House in the Tekke Area

*Carl Von Essen,
Martin Mirelius,
Linda Veiby,
Ida Westergren,
Linda Wangdahl.*

The house is named "Babameto house" after its owners, the wealthy Babameto family. Above the two entrance vaults of the house stone slabs are placed with the dates 1885 and 1887 engraved. This is said to be the time of the construction, but possibly the house is a great deal older. It is visible that both the facades and the interior have gone through several changes. The house shows the typical features of a residential dwelling of the city even if the building has the character of a semidetached house. The house is adapted to the terrain in the traditional manner with three floors where each floor is larger than the one beneath.

The building is mainly of stone but with some parts of the upper floor in wood (laths) and plaster. The tent-like roof is covered with stone slabs, as most of the buildings of the historic town. The building has for many years been empty, but is still owned by the Babameto family. As an A-class building it is rebuilt several times, still the interior of the house is above all to be reckoned as a ruin.

Privacy within the walls

The facades of the building give a closed impression towards West, South and East, but open up with large windows towards the city. On the west and east walls, we see small arched windows piercing the rather massive walls. Like other Gjirokastra dwelling houses, the Babameto house is little elaborated. Care is mainly taken of the front façade. This has large windows, carved stone entrances and a plastered façade that once seemed to have been

painted light blue. The house has once been surrounded by a high wall. Today only some traces are still preserved. The wall was important for the safety of the family as well as the visual access to the privacy within the walls. Nowadays the entrance to the yard is through a gate in the west wall of the building.

This was originally an arched loggia at the height of two floors. The gate to the property must at this time have been in the outer wall. The arches have later been transformed to walls and included the extension of the room above. From the yard there are two separate entrance doors.

Groundfloor, dim and dark

In the ground floor light flows into the halls from two small grid windows on the northern side. Still the rooms must have been fairly dark, and the niches above the stairs, for placing candles, much needed. The halls seem to have mirrored one another and where the one on the east side is almost intact the one to the west is in ruin.

Samples of paint on the plastered wall shows reminiscences of light blue with a reddish - brown colour on the lower part framed by a black line. The floor is made of large, square cut stone slabs and the ceiling of wooden beams. The other rooms on the ground floor do not share the halls richness. They were mainly used as storage rooms and stables.

Kitchen - where was it?

From the stories of the life in the 19th century Gjirokastra there is often described

that the cooking took place in the lower floors and for outdoors. But there are also descriptions of Albanian houses where a summer kitchen was placed on the second floor. These drawings newer shows a kitchen in the lower part of the house. The food was distributed and coffee prepared in the guestroom. In the Babameto house there are few traces of a place to prepare the food apart from traces of a stove in the back of the building on the second floor.

There are however many questions about this particularly area of the building. The room has a particular shape and the stone pillar in the middle of the room stands out in relation to the building tradition of the area. Is it possible that this was the place for the summer kitchen? Connected with a yard or the back?

Sofa, often a covered veranda

When guests entered the house and went up to the "oda e mire" they first passed an area called sofa/divani. This is often described as a covered veranda and something between a room and an extended open stairway. The room is open towards the stairway, but its outlining is defined by the level of the floor. On the front facade of the house there is a row of windows with lattices which makes it possible to see out, but impossible to see in.

Guest rooms, the finest parts

In the litterateur of the Gjirokastra dwelling houses the first and second floors are often referred to as winter and summer rooms. The finest of these rooms

were reserved for guests and are referred to as "oda e mire". The Babameto house seems to have had two "ode e mire". One in the west and one in the east wing on the second floor.

However, the structure on the west side has been changed and since the west part of the house also is the most destroyed one, there are no traces of how this side of the house looked before the rebuilding. In the guest room on the east side there are beautifully carved ceiling panels, where the main ornaments are painted in bright red, yellow and blue. There are traces of the same bright paint or the boards framing the windows.

The back of the shutters and the door there are more freely painted with rough strokes in the same bright colours on a white base. The walls are covered with white washed plaster, but traces of different shades of blue and some green paint in one of the niches indicates that the walls also has been coloured. The biggest change in the room is that a fireplace on the east wall now is gone.

The room is bright and dominated by a row of windows in the northern part. On the opposite wall there is finely carpented closet that consists of several cupboards framed by heart-shaped niches of plaster. The closet in the lower part of the south wall can only be reached from the backside of the wall. Here there is a little room, where people could prepare the serving without being seen. From this small room there is a ladder up to the "musandara", a ledge for storing bedding.



Photo of the historical town of Gjirokastra and The Babameto house.



North elevation Scale 1:200



Ground floor plan Scale 1:200



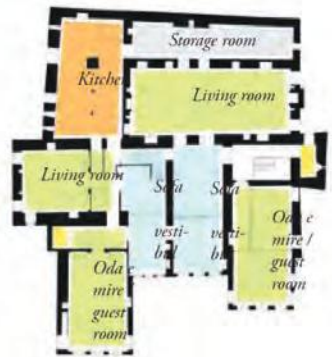
West elevation Scale 1:200



First floor plan Scale 1:200



East elevation Scale 1:200



Second floor plan Scale 1:200

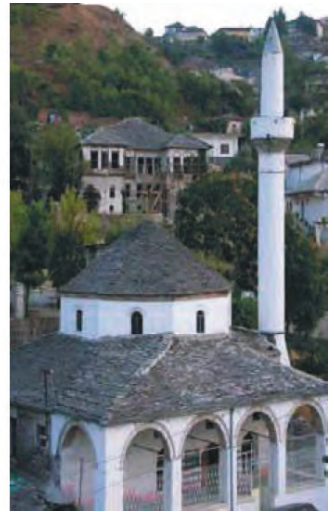
Season rooms

The division between summer and winter rooms is not very visible. Both floors have large windows facing north and windowless rooms on the south side. It might be so that parts of the facades have

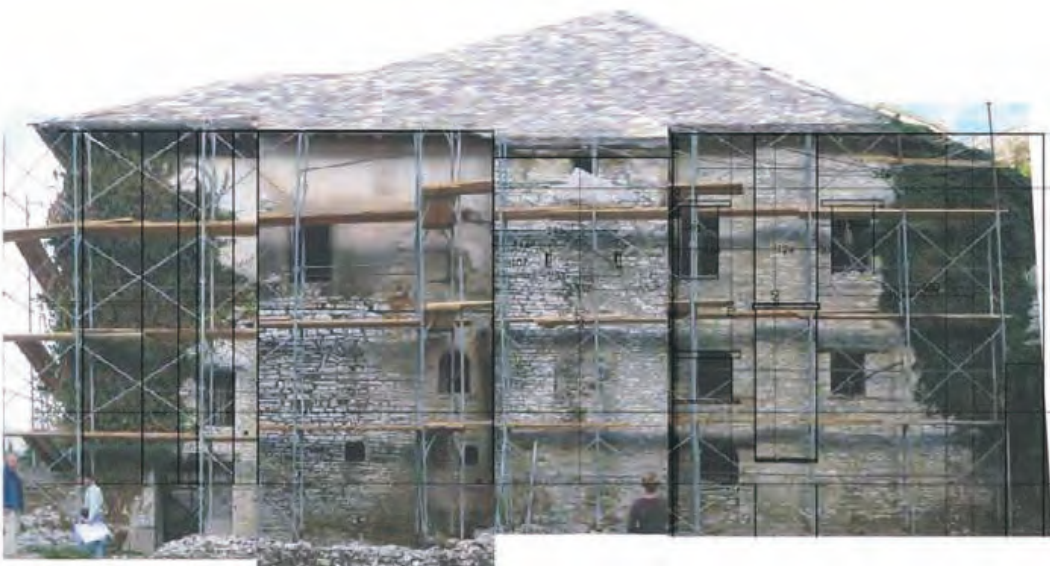
been rebuilt later, and then been given larger windows. So maybe it was a clearer division between the two floors than what is visible today?



Reconstruction of Babameto house



Mosque with Babameto house in the background



The western wall which shows that the building has passed many alternations during the years with windows and vaults that have been closed



If we open a window for the future - what will the coming years bring to this heritage?



An "Oda e mire" / guest room. With typical carved wooden roof and wall cabinets

Participants at the second restoration camp:

Elena Nasto, Aleksander Pesha, architects, Albania Todor Mihaylov, architect, Bulgaria Svetlana Asiku, Nevena Jovanovic, students of architecture, Serbia Linda Veiby, art historian, Norway Carl von Essen, project manager, Linda Wångdahl, antiquarian, Martin Mirelius, Sta-an Read, Ida Westergren, architects, Sweden

Gjirokastra Accommodating Knowledge – Babameto

Linda Wångdahl

Throughout the years, the rooms of the Babameto building have been animated by the lives of its inhabitants, from the modest rooms where everyday activities were carried out to the beautiful reception rooms used for special occasions. Today, the Historic town of Gjirokastra, a World Heritage site, has been depopulated. The once bustling city life has almost disappeared and the Babameto house is left deserted. The aim of my proposal is to restore the living function of the building by turning it into a residence for researchers. It is my belief that a University and student life would be the best way of bringing life back in to the city.

Ottoman lifestyle in the beautiful rooms of Babameto

My proposal aims are to preserve the material elements of the Ottoman heritage, through the conservation of carpentry, wall surfaces and room structure, as well as to revive some features of the Ottoman lifestyle related to the functions of the different rooms. The most beautiful room of the house was the "Oda", furnished with wall-mounted divans and primarily used for receptions. Here food was served on tray-tables and pillows and mattresses were stored in cabinets built into the walls.

The "Oda" traditionally decorated with red textile, can be used by the researchers for literary seminars and as a conversation area. Still furnished with wall mounted couches and decorated with red textiles adhering to the Ottoman tradition. In the adjoining room there is a small loft

called "Musandra", a nest-like space from where the activities of the "Oda" could be observed through a discreet aperture in the back wall, where the women of the house used to sit and observe the discussions of the men in "Oda".

These tiny lofts will now function as cosy little hideaways where you can lie down and read a book or overhear the discussions going on in the "new Oda". Next to these rooms are two large hallways where there will be books and couches and where you can sit and read or just enjoy the beautiful view of the city. These rooms were called "Chardak".

Everyday life now and then

I also wish to revive some of the more basic features of everyday life in the building, since believe they have an equally important story to tell. The ground floor was used as stables the "Katoji", (stable for domestic animals) and the food was prepared in the modest back rooms. I seek to maintain the traditional character of the rooms as well as some of their original functions, in an updated version.

The former stables will be equipped with a punching bag and dumbbells to serve as a gym Which will preserve the simplicity and coarseness of the space, while substituting horse-power for manpower.

The kitchen will be equipped to modern standards, still located in the same part of the building. In order to avoid interfering with the original body of the building I have chosen to place the kitchen and the wet rooms in the back section that was reconstructed in 2005.



Siteplan: Babameto with garden for herbs and a pergola to provide shade. The ground will be paved with stones and equipped with suitable outdoor furniture. There is also room for a possible new construction on the premises.

Ground floor: The ground floor is fitted with two spacious bedrooms equipped with study areas and closets. On this floor there is also a simple gym in the old stables, as well as toilets, showers, storage space for clothes, and a cleaning cabinet.

First floor: Here there are three bedrooms and a large family bedroom with one double and one single bed, each room equipped with a study area and a private bathroom. This floor also contains the communal launch, room and two large hallways furnished with bookshelves.

Second floor: The top floor, which is also the largest, contains three bedrooms, each equipped with study areas and closets. Two wide hallways functioning as libraries. A large kitchen with pantry and a dining hall for all the residents of the house. Also located on this floor is the "red room" furnished with divans according to tradition and functioning as a communal seminary room, with the adjoining loft furnished as a cosy reading space.

Accommodating knowledge

The house will hold ten bedrooms to provide accommodation for ten to nineteen young researchers. It will be equipped with a library, a conversation room, kitchen, dining hall, laundry room, toilets, showers and a private gym in the basement. Showers and toilets will be

placed in the back section of the house to allow for the water installations to run vertically through the building. The floors will be tiled and the walls will be replastered. The ceiling will be insulated with wool to prevent heat loss and absorb sound. So that the researchers will have a nice place to stay.



Cross-section illustrates Gym: Seeking to maintain the rough character of the room that was once the stables, I furnish it with a punching bag, a bench and some dumbbells. Bedroom: Here we see the back wall with a desk and closets. On the first floor we see two of the bedrooms. On the top floor, the "red room" furnished with divans, pillows and carpets with oriental patterns. Ceiling and wall-mounted furniture has been restored. Next to the "red room" is the loft-space called the "Musandra" that has been turned into a cosy reading space with pillows on the floor. On the top floor we also see the back wall of a bedroom and the refurbished kitchen on its original location.



Interior from one of the bedrooms. Detail of the roof. Detail of the wall. Traytable.



Interior from one of the bedrooms



View from Babameto's.

Gjirokastra

Room for Hospitality

Ida Westergren

In a prominent position overlooking the beautiful landscape of the Drino valley the Babameto house stands empty. The building is left in a state of transition between its past and its future, simply waiting to be discovered as the treasure it is and to once again become a part of Gjirokastra, filled with people, movement, sounds, and smells.

Having been abandoned for years, only traces of the life the building once entailed are left. In trying to understand these traces what I found most important to preserve in a future use was the spatial relationships and the use of multifunctional rooms, the flexibility and movement. Adapting a once perfectly adapted house to new conditions and enabling it to once again be a place where the famous Albanian hospitality can thrive.

Understanding Babameto

Trying to understand the building's past was essential to me in developing an idea for its future. When I discovered the strong traditions of hospitality in the Albanian culture, it became clear how this played an important part in the layout of and relationship between spaces in the Babameto house. In this home the interaction between the family and their guests played a central role.

Two main types of spaces were derived through this way of living; the decorated multifunctional living / eating / sleeping spaces and the more modest spaces used for cooking, storage and animals. These served the functions of the main spaces and were mainly located on the ground floor. Two central circulation halls connect

all the rooms with each other. The living spaces are designed to maximize their flexibility, using built-in storage in the walls to easily facilitate switching between activities. The location and use of spaces create two main circulation routes in the building, one public in the front part of the first and second floor and a private one in the back of the building and on the ground floor. On the ground floor the only rooms accessed by guests are the entrance halls, from where they are taken straight up to the upper floors

Traces of the past

The condition of the rooms varies greatly, from being relatively well preserved or having been altered many times throughout the years, to being simply a shell without either floor or ceiling. As the multifunctional rooms were the most decorated rooms, they have more traces of interiors preserved and their function is easier to understand. The servant spaces on the other hand consists of bare stone walls with none or very few traces of any interiors.

Adapting to the future

To revitalize the building and move on from being a monument of the past to a part of the future, I believe the focus should be on finding a function for the house through which the flexible use of space and the relationship between served and servant spaces can be preserved, reintroducing movement and life in the building. As the essence of the house is its flexibility, I have looked at a general plan of what is needed to adapt the building to a modern

function, where the plans are based on the building serving a public function and being used during the day/evening. Avoiding nighttime use as this would require too great alterations of the rooms.

The proposal includes both reconstruction and new additions, depending on the condition of the rooms. Where enough traces are left, a reconstruction is recommended, while in the back rooms, whose walls were recently reconstructed, I propose a modern interior based on the traditional interiors of the multifunctional rooms. In the part of the building that has undergone most changes throughout the years, some reconstruction and new additions are needed to enable the addition of a lift, making the building accessible for everyone.

Other additions are toilets on both the first and the second floor and a kitchen on the second floor. In the kitchen I also propose that part of the recently reconstructed wall could be opened up to let more light into this dark room and give this otherwise north facing house a link to the south with a space for a private terrace.

With the aim to adapt the building to modern needs with as few intrusions as possible, all new additions are placed according to the Albanian tradition of walls with functions. The toilets are simply an extended wall, replacing a wall of closets that can be seen on earlier drawings but is missing today. The rooms next to the toilets on both floors have no original interiors and here I suggest a new

approach to the multifunctional room: instead of divans traditionally fixed to the walls, they are here divided into smaller segments, that can be moved around the room and combined in different ways according to the desired function.

A sustainable future

In adapting to the future, the building also needs to prepare for a world in need of rapid change to address global environmental problems. I suggest that here too the Babameto house can look to the past and how these buildings adapted to and used their local resources efficiently. An updated version of the water cistern for the collection of rainwater, using composting toilets to reduce water consumption, and improving the buildings insulation are a few things that would reduce the building's impact on the environment.



- Good condition. Restore/reconstruct to a traditional Albanian multifunctional room.
- Fair condition. Combine new additions with restoring traces of original interiors.
- Bad condition (living spaces). Modern version of Albanian interiors, preserve sizes of rooms.
- Bad condition (serving spaces). Keep the rooms serving function through new additions.
- Serving spaces, a private circulation route is formed through the movement between rooms on the ground floor and the back rooms of the upper floors.
- Served spaces, a public circulation route is formed between the front rooms on the upper floors where guests are entertained.



Highly decorated multifunctional guest room.



Plain decorations in a private multifunctional room.



Undecorated room with a serving function.



Ground floor plan Scale 1:200



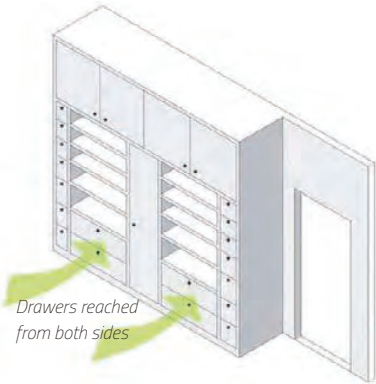
First floor plan Scale 1:200



Second floor plan Scale 1:200



Reference for the reconstruction of the rooms in good condition, photo from the book "Gjirokastra museum city".

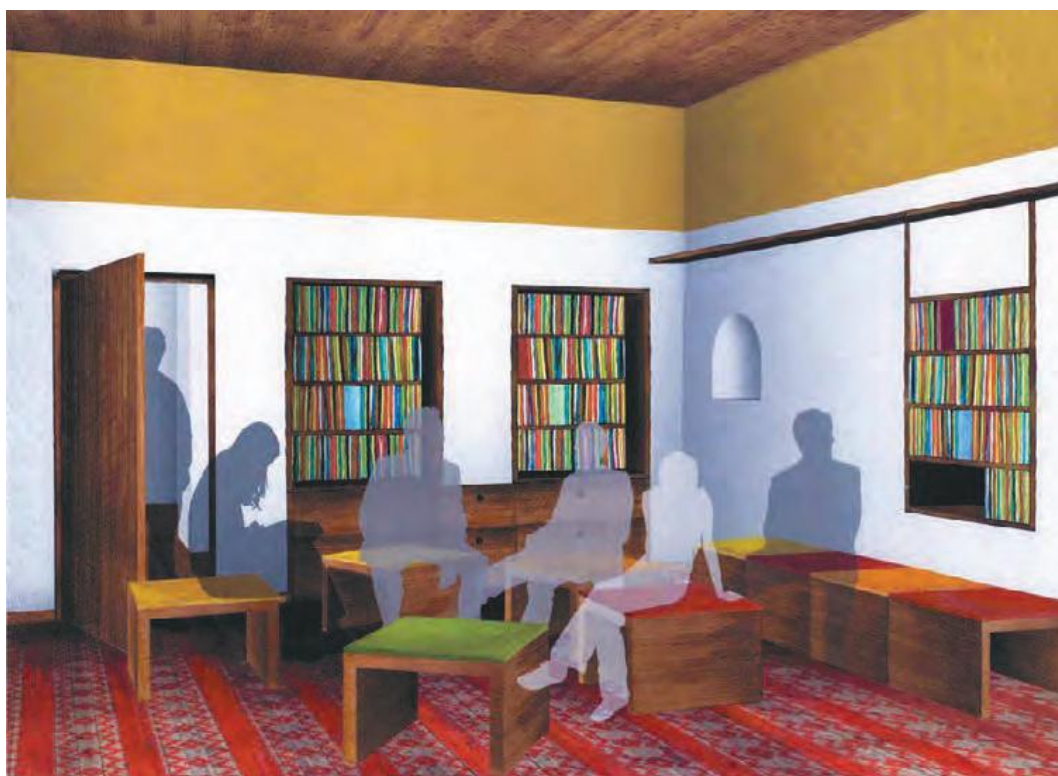


Drawers reached from both sides

An updated wall of storage, shelves of varying size, some can be reached from both the hallway and from inside the room.



View of the restored house seen from the street



An updated version of the traditional Albanian interiors proposed for the multifunctional rooms without any existing interiors, by dividing the divan into smaller segments that can be moved around the room and used both as tables and chairs, this becomes a flexible space easily adapted to different functions.

Gjirokastra Additions for Access

Martin Mirelius

The aim of this project is to show how additional functions can develop with respect for the historical values and specific characteristics in the World Heritage City of Gjirokastra. The idea is to facilitate transport to the Old Town to make it easier accessible for both local people and visitors. By a new monorail transport, it will be possible to reach the Castle and the old centre quickly and quietly. In the nearby area a hamam and ice-skating arena will adjoin to a new hostelry in the restored Babameto dwelling house. The program for the restorations, constructions and new transportation system is designed with regards to future demands for resource effectiveness and an environmental friendly approach.

Access to the Old Town

Pict. 1 — This is what a future Epoch of Change can be like in the World Heritage! Demand for new environmental friendly transportation Possibilities to integrate/connect the modern and the historic town
Pict. 2 New accessibility will help the historic part to survive and develop the new way of transport is designed with respect for the World Heritage by reaching the Old Town from the south.

Pict. 3 A new means of transport in a historic context — the Stone Town. The proposed solution is to make the monorail discretely pass through the green valley in the south and reach the Old Town from two Stops inside the Castle hill. Small cabins are moving fast and quietly on the monorail up and down the hills. Adjustment to the existing town and dramatic landscape is

made by varying heights of thin vaulted steel beams.

Alternative systems that have been considered are:

Aerialway, mountain railway, electrical vehicles, biogas buses, PRT - Personal Rapid Transit, small cabins that moves fast on a monorail to the Stops requested from its passengers.

The project with the proposed monorail is aiming to: A transport system that can connect many different parts of the town A flexible transport system with small units that come/go on demand A transport system that can easily be extended

The image of the monorail transport in the Gjirokastra context:

An environmental friendly way of transport that makes the Old Town easier accessible for both local inhabitants and tourists. From the route you can enjoy the beautiful green valley in the south and meet the breathtaking view of the Old Town by surprise from the two underground Castle Stops.

The monorail stops Most important positions of the stops is the connection point to the future European high speed rail network station, situated in Gjirokastra modern town. From here the monorail continues to the Castle where it turns and goes back to the modern town. It is also possible to have intermediate stops in the southern part of the town.

Pict. 4

The trip to the Castle Stops from the southern part through the mountain provides an astonishing view of the Old

Town from above. At the same place the view is beautiful to the south part of Gjirokastra.

Pict. 5 This is to where we Easily can go to from the Stops. The First Castle Stop is connected to the Topulli Main Square. By elevator it is easy to directly reach the Castle Musuem. The Second Castle Stop is near the main entrance of the Castle. From here it is close to visit sites in the Historic Stone Town with a partly modernized content. A new recreational area to visit close by the Second castlestop is the Babameto house with sorroundings.

Access to the Babameto house

Possibilities for modern life to fit in to the historical, ottoman context.

Pict. 6 The Babameto house — An Example of How to Revitalize a Place:

These new functions can make Tie Babameto building survive and develop while respecting the World Heritage regulations.

The Program and the design of Babameto House: To present what will be restored, reconstructed, modernized and new additions to the building and its surroundings. To show how the slope and the wall to the street can be developed in an innovative way.

Pict. 7-9 Program for the Building and its Surroundings.

Excavating of a new basement (street level) to serve as a Hamam and a hostelry reception. Turning the ground floor to restaurant, the first and second floor to hostelry guest rooms and public spaces. A direct connection from the

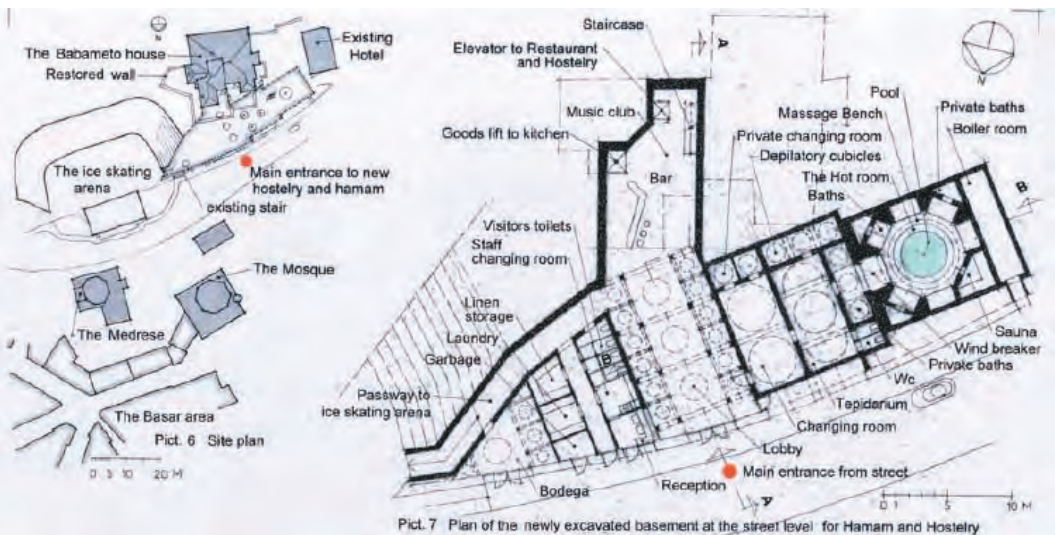
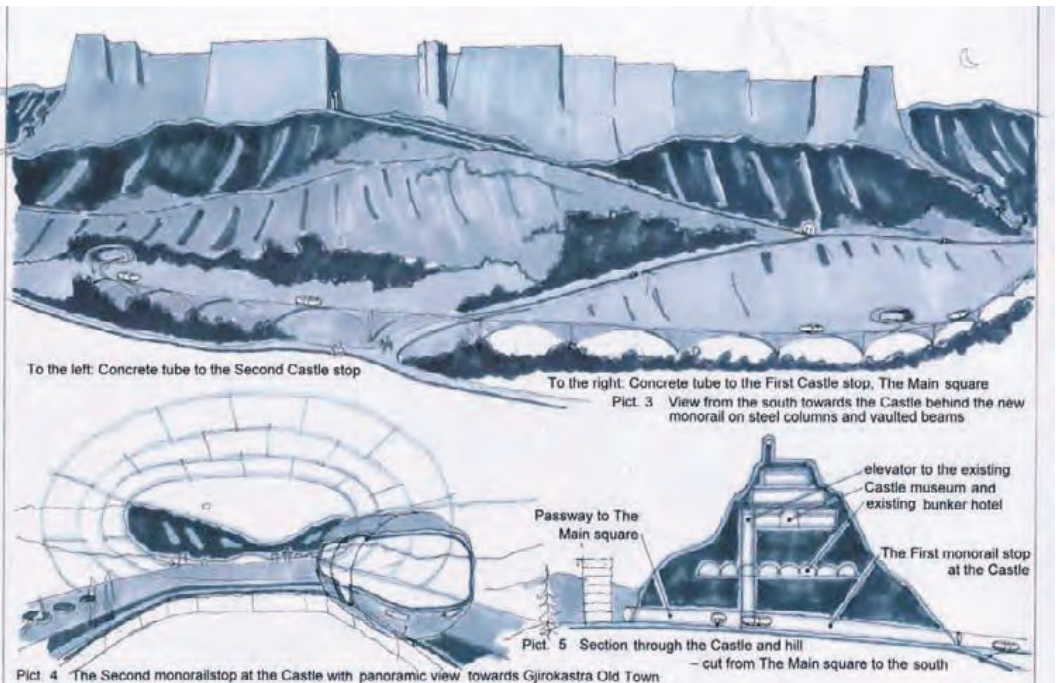
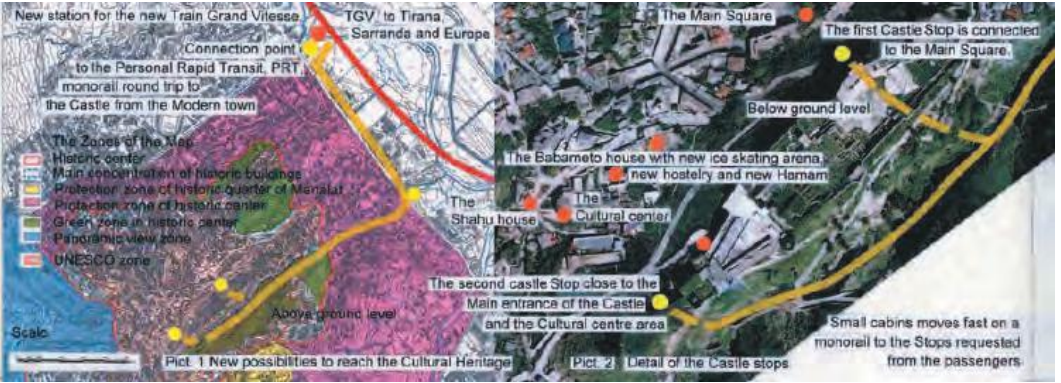
hostelry reception area to the existing amphitheatre which can provide among other things sports activities like ice-skating on artificial ice.

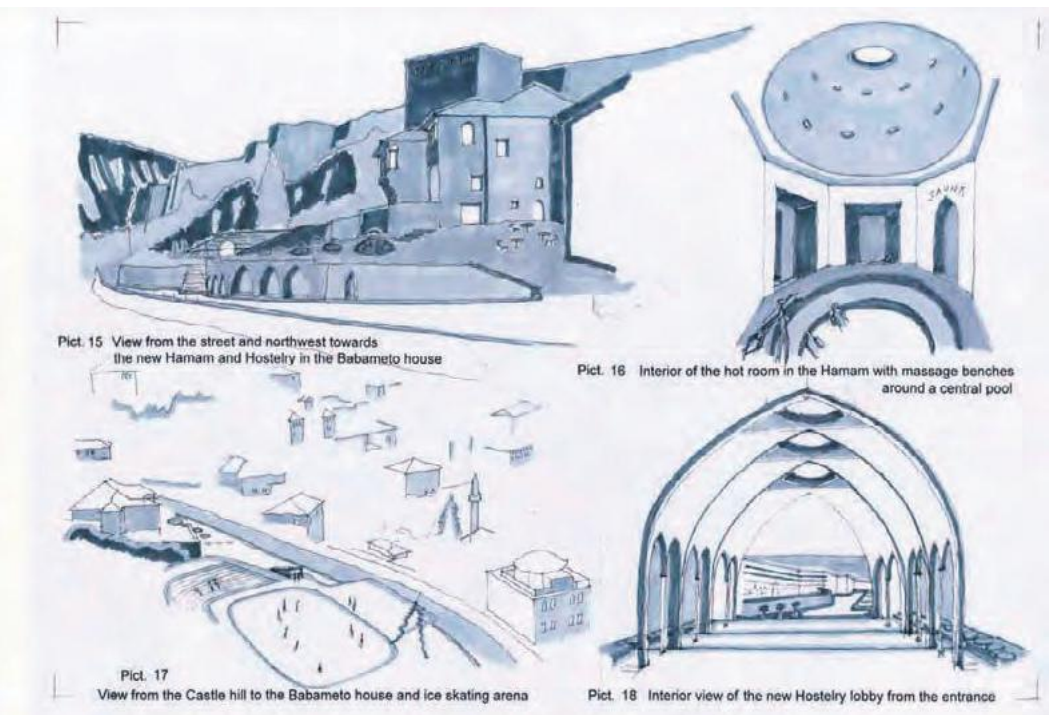
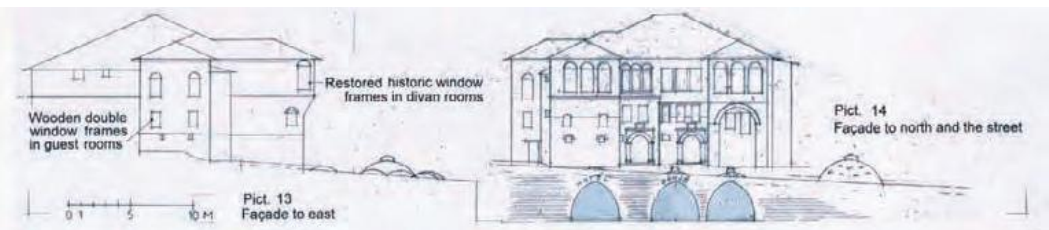
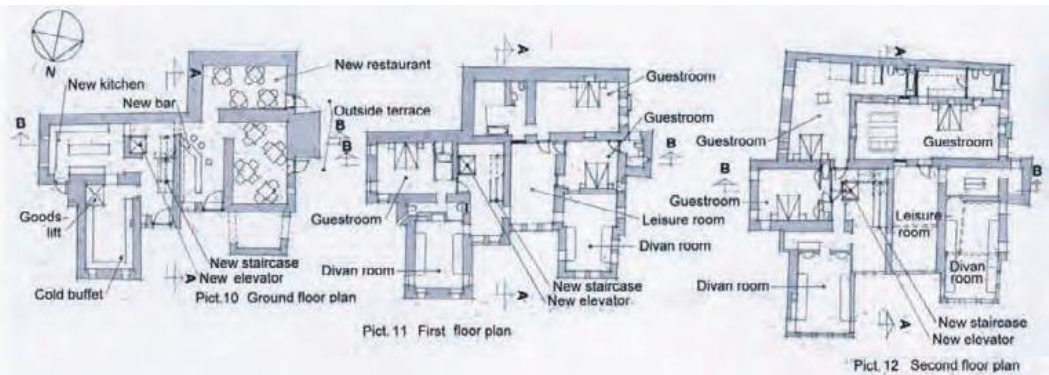
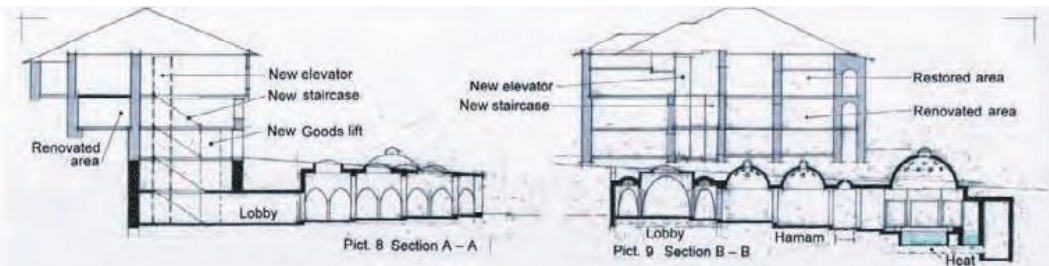
Pict. 15 The contributions of this proposal for the Babameto House and its Surroundings are, the building can regain its existing and inherent qualities and also improve its surroundings with the new additions. The new entrance from the street level will leave the Babameto House in a more peaceful atmosphere, still like a private villa.

Pict. 10-12 Tie Design of the Proposal The specific Ottoman characteristics of the Babameto House will be preserved in the first and second story rooms that are public. Historical reconstructions will be made of the specific details in this part. The new additions are designed with regards to raise the quality of the characteristic values of The Babameto House.

Resource Effectiveness in Planning and Construction:

Pict. 8-9 New installations are limited to the back, south part; sanitary, bathrooms, heat/ventilation system. Reduction of construction transports by using local material and suppliers as much as possible. Reduction of transports for garbage and wastewater by local use as a source of energy for electricity and heating systems. For example, by locally produced biogas.





Gjirokastra

Babameto Bazaar Building – Today

*Michelle Culjat Longo
Gustaf Wiren*

This Bazaar building was originally used for trade and crafts activities. Today it is vacant and in very bad condition. Protection from rain and humidity is urgently needed to prevent further decay. It is possible to reconstruct its original appearance with a new roof, windows and doors. A strategy for the revitalization of the whole block is also needed to fill the building and its surroundings with people and activities again.

The Building

The building is located on a parallel street to the main Bazaar street, in the middle of a block of five houses. The building is one of the few 3-storey buildings in the area, which gives it a certain prominence. It is a second category monument (of a total of 560), which means that conservation and restoration works are allowed for the exterior and that the interior may be altered as long as it does not affect the exterior. The ground floor served as shops, the first floor as storage space, and the second floor was probably a workshop, showroom, or office. Today the house is owned by several members of the Babameto family.

History of the Bazaar

In the middle of the 17th century a new Bazaar was established at the current location, in the neighbourhood of the Bazaar mosque, where four main streets connect the different parts of the old town. Its structure is much denser than the rest of old Gjirokastra. The buildings were originally of stone with vaulted constructions, which still can be seen in

some buildings. However, we know that the building methods and the design changed at the middle of the 19th century, after a violent fire. When rebuilt, the Bazaar got its classicistic, more westernized facade patterns. These characteristics were strengthened by renovations around the turn of the century 1900, when the shop windows were enlarged with the use of steel girders. The Bazaar of today consists of white plastered houses of two and three stories, where the ground floor is clad with stone. The area has a very coherent look, with similar facades and detailing. Inscriptions on nearby buildings show construction years between 1897 and 1902 (Islamic year 1317 and 1321), suggesting that all facade renovations were done during a brief period of time. Today most craftsmen, trade and production have left the Bazaar and most buildings are vacant and some of them are in a state of severe decay. Revitalizing the area will be a great challenge.

Our Investigations

During two weeks, eight people of three nationalities documented the building and some of its surroundings. Although there was no available documentation of the building, we could, from our investigations at the site, infer that the building had had at least two different designs: Initially the building had two storeys with a timber floor construction and a ceiling height of c. 2.7 metres at the ground level. The shop had a mezzanine level under the barrelled vaults, used for storage.

The building was probably covered with a gable roof, which structurally would

have been the simplest solution. The neighbouring houses are built in this way and the roof levels would match well. The houses along this street used to have an internal communication with doors in between. Today these are closed off.

The second design was achieved when the current top floor was added. Most likely this coincided with the addition of the current façade in the early 20th century. The top floor was connected with the first floor through an internal staircase which today is closed off. The top floor area is 63 square metres in a single room. We could not see remains or traces of partition walls neither on the floor nor on the walls. Whether the first floor was connected to the street entrance is not clear, and if there ever was a staircase, it must have been very steep.

We also know that the surroundings — including the yard — have changed radically since the 1930's. On an old photo there is a thin building parallel and very close to the Babameto building, where the backyard is today. The yard probably got its current look in 1978 when the Obelisk was erected. There are doorways in the back, closed off today, suggesting that the yard was earlier at a lower level.

Another significant change occurred when the original wooden floor beams were replaced by a reinforced concrete slab. This happened in the 1970's, according to a local source, when the whole Bazaar area was refurbished for fire protection reasons. The cement plaster on the walls on the ground floor was probably added to secure the walls when the concrete was cast. Since the concrete most likely was

cast in situ on the existing floor, the room heights changed and gave the house its peculiar design with a room height of 3.5 metres at the ground level, and windows directly above the floor on the first floor.

Technical Assessment

The building is severely damaged, due to lack of maintenance as well as lack of a roof, windows and doors. When it rains water enters on all floors. All surfaces are in bad condition. There are visible damages to walls and ceilings: for example, loose plaster and cracks in the vaults. Most plaster, mortar and cement are severely damaged.

How to Reconstruct

To reconstruct the outer appearance is possible. Even if drawings are missing there are photos showing the original roof and fenestration of the street facade. To reproduce windows after the original design is possible since demounted sashes and frames were found on the first floor. Structurally it may be a bit trickier. To be able to use the first floor, its level has to be lowered back to its original position. The concrete slab could be replaced by a wooden floor beam construction with necessary modifications to secure the building from earthquakes. Indoor structures can be added without changing the facade. There is a problem with humidity, how much is contributed from the yard needs to be assessed after having constructed a roof. Technical installations have to be added: heating, electricity, sewage and water supply. All surfaces have to be remade.

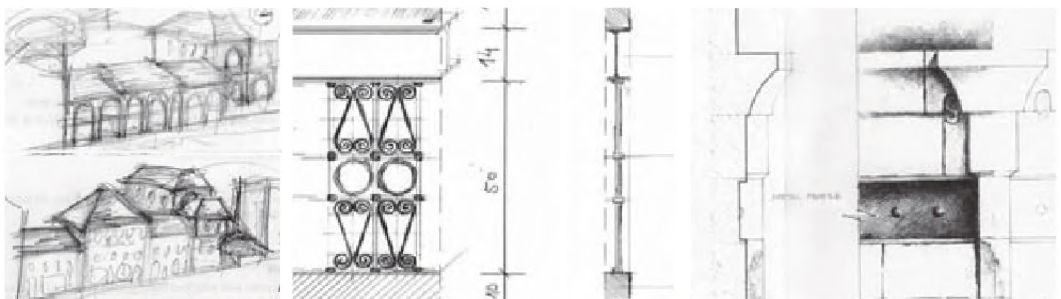


Photo collage used for documentation of the street facades.

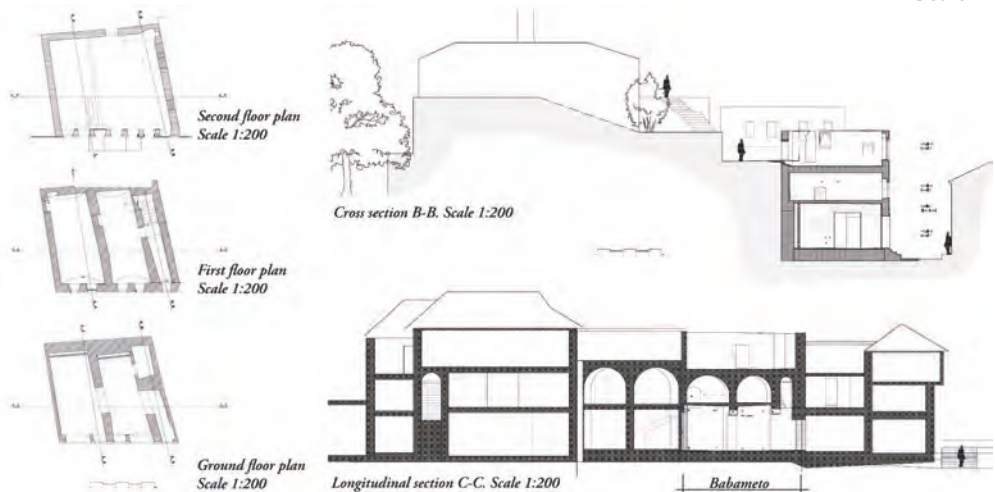


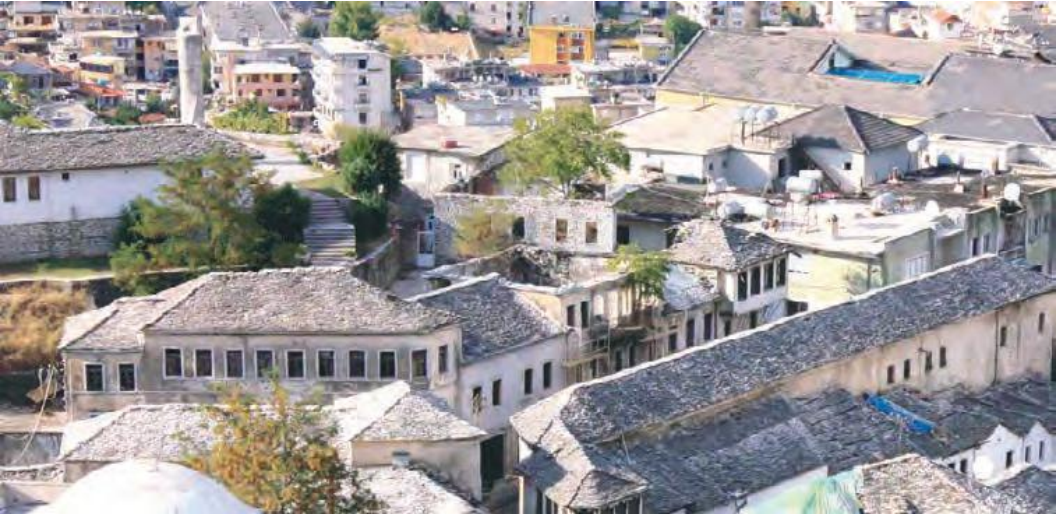
Site plan. Scale 1:500

The ground floor consists of two large shops connected with a large opening, a narrow hall, and a storage space. The ground floor is not connected to the first floor. The first floor has two vaulted storage rooms, which are separated by the middle wall and are currently not connected. The hall has a staircase leading up to the second floor. The second floor consists of one single out-door space, since there is no longer a roof. The second floor is connected with the backyard through a door opening.



Reconstruction sketches Façade details from the Babameto building – typical for all of the Bazaar. Scale 1:10





The site: Photograph taken in September 2008



The site: Undated photograph prior to the decay of the Babamenti building (The Obelisk was erected in 1978)



The site: Photograph taken by Italian soldiers in the 1930's

Participants from the Second Restoration
Camp:
Lamija Abdijevi ,Bosnia, Architect
Michelle Culjat Longo, Sweden, Interior
architect
Damir Hadzic ,Bosnia, Architect

Edvin Lamfe, Albania, Archeologist
Kristina Lindstrom, Sweden, Architect
Kreshnik Merxhani, Albania, Architect
Robert Stergar, Bosnia, Architect
GustafWiren, Sweden, Architect

Gjirokastra

New Uses in the Bazaar

Michelle Culjat Longo

The Bazaar area, with its small shops, was once the economic centre and heart of Gjirokastra. Today, the merchants have moved elsewhere and the buildings are partly abandoned. This characteristic and culturally significant environment is a great asset to Gjirokastra. Conservation and development are both necessary for this area to be revitalized. It is possible to adapt the Bazaar buildings to new uses in a way that is respectful to the buildings, to the streetscape, and to the urban structure. This proposal illustrates one way to convert the buildings so that new uses can be facilitated within the old city structure. Hopefully it will give inspiration and ideas for how to address issues regarding the restoration, development, and future use of the buildings in the Bazaar.

Restore and Maintain

The overall goal of this proposal is to produce ideas about how the Bazaar area can be revitalized, thus making it attractive to local businesses and institutions as well as to tourists. The intention is to restore and maintain the character of the Bazaar while introducing those amenities that modern city life requires.

Integrate the Location

The location of the Babameto building in the Bazaar is very attractive, which should be taken advantage of. The mound behind the Babameto building, with its beautiful views of the town of Gjirokastra and with its obelisk, needs to integrate better with the city. In this proposal the entire row of buildings, of which Babameto is a part, and

the back yard and mound behind them, have been studied as a whole.

For Whom?

The Babameto building in the Bazaar has been chosen to undergo a restoration and has been documented and analyzed, as a part of this study. Some of the questions that have come up during this work are: Why this building? Who will use the restored building and what will it be used for? Who will take care of it? There are so many buildings in the Bazaar of the same size and shape and many are abandoned. There is little demand for this building type today. What will make this particular building attractive to use? What will give it life again, and can this restoration help infuse life in the entire area?

Conservation and Development

The city needs development in order to flourish. But what happens when a large business, a school, or institution wishes to find accommodation to Gjirokastra? Many spaces in the old city center are too small for larger offices, hotels etc. instead of directing these potential businesses to the new part of the town, or proposing new buildings in or around the old city centre, the existing Bazaar should be utilized whenever possible.

This means that the Bazaar area needs to transform itself in order to accommodate new businesses. Small spaces need to become larger spaces. Old buildings need to be modernized. This should be an attractive option for businesses that recognize the economic potential of

being associate this this World Heritage location. However, it is important that the development and modernization is carried out with great care and understanding of what constitutes the value of the built heritage.

Future Use - Flexibility

This proposal investigates the potential for various uses, all of them possible with minor modification to the proposed scheme. By showing both what the possibilities and consequences are, the proposal will hopefully inspire owners, local decision makers and businesses to see new possibilities for the area. Possible uses of new trade/retail, office and public administration, education / conference, hospitality (hostel/ student residence, restaurant / café) and handicrafts workshops and exhibition.

The flexibility of the proposal enables combinations of the uses, as well as a mix of large and small businesses. It means that the row of the buildings can be used as one connected space or can be divided into smaller units opening or demand. Anyway, the future use of these buildings should be used of a public nature, if possible, as this would benefit the entire area.

Suggestions

Restore the buildings, the street and "square" in order to maintain the character and the world heritage values. Important elements to maintain are:

The characteristic roofscape with its stone cladding.

The Babameto roof should be reconstructed in its old style and traditional manner.

Elements in the Babameto building, most likely from the mid-17th century, should be shown.

The internal doors that have once connected the space can be utilized again. The "square" at the north end of the block and the streetscape should be restored by replacing the destroyed buildings in their original location and to their original size.

Make a way for modern uses by gaining flexibility and larger spaces to encourage a revitalization of the Bazaar.

This should be done maintaining above mentioned elements kept as intact as possible. This means that all new additions should be done within the existing structure of the built environment.



Distribution of space Estimated useable area in existing buildings: Largest building in the block is approximately 175 sq.m. (net area) including circulation space. Total net area today (damaged buildings included) is approximately 500 sq. m. Estimated area distribution in proposal: Total net area: 880 sq. m (including circulation and technical areas).



Perspective view: Street façade and small square with new built elements



Longitudinal section A-A: scale 1:200

Cross section / elevation B-B scale 1:200



Site plan: Scale 1:500



Cross section C-C

The Proposal

New additions are proposed here in order to gain flexibility and efficient circulation spaces, to connect small spaces into larger ones, to replace what has been there, and to give all the buildings in the row access to the back yard and the mound. The mound is made more accessible by the addition of a passage in the new building. Possible sites for new buildings are hatched. The new additions are placed within an existing structure but use modern detailing to clearly show what is new and what is old.

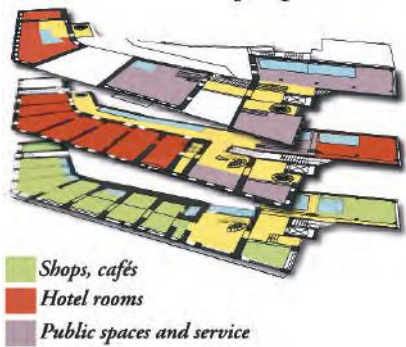
The additions are inserted into the site in places where large interventions are necessary and where they will not appear un-natural in the context. Such as under the back yard where digging will be required to dry out the buildings and around the "square" where existing buildings have recently become ruins.

The new "corridor" under the yard provides a way to connect spaces and to create greater access between the yard, the buildings, and the street.

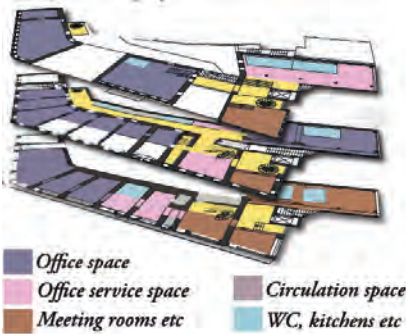
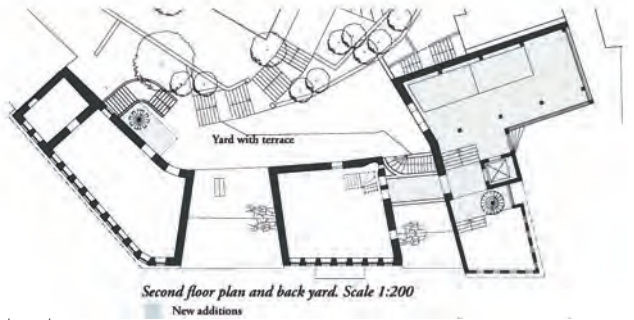
Required technical installations are concentrated in the "corridor" and in the new built additions.



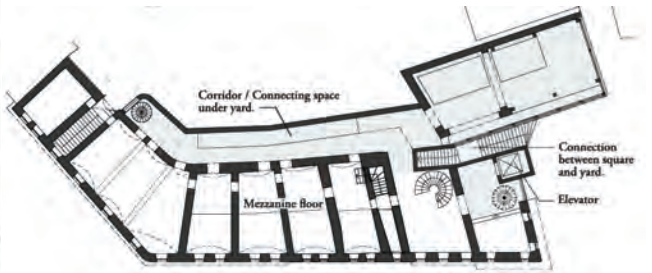
Perspective views of back yard showing the reconstructed roof of the Babameto building, the view of the castle, and the new addition linking Babameto with the elevator.



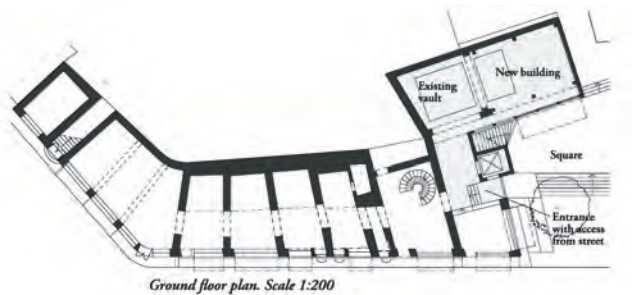
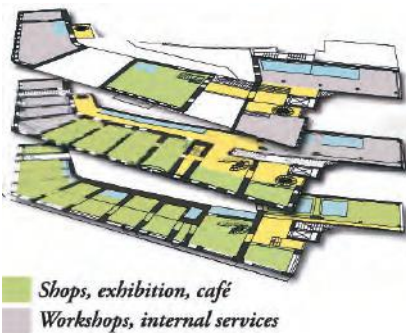
Hotel w. 10-12 rooms + shops at ground level



Office for 55-60 people



First floor plan. Scale 1:200



Ground floor plan. Scale 1:200

Gjirokastra A University in the Bazaar

Gustaf Wirén

In order to revitalize this Bazaar block, including the Babameto building, it will be converted into a university department dedicated to teaching and research. Hence the empty buildings will be refilled with new activities and new people. The student facilities are located around the yard, converting this space into an important public space. The aim is to conserve and restore as much as possible of the existing buildings and at the same time to improve their energy efficiency.

Vacancy

The whole block, where the Babameto building is located, is vacant today. The buildings have the disadvantage of having low technical standard and small, inflexible floor plans. It also takes some effort to reach the area through a steep climb of 100 metres from the modern city centre in the valley. Hence the trade and crafts activities have moved elsewhere.

Today the buildings are in urgent need of new content and new users to prevent them from turning into ruins. Restoring the Bazaar buildings is not enough — an idea of usage is equally important. A nearby block was restored recently but even if the facades shine, it is still vacant.

The concept of this proposal is to convert this Bazaar block into a university department, dedicated to teaching and research. Today the University of Gjirokastra is situated in the new part of the city. There are plans to relocate parts of it to the old town.

A department is a sovereign unit in a university organization. Its staff consists of professors, assistant professors, doctoral candidates and administrative personnel. These want good workspaces, closeness to colleagues and service functions. Their students on the other hand want well-functioning lecture halls, group rooms, spaces for reading and spaces for social interaction. Geographical proximity to other departments is an advantage but not a necessity, thus it is possible to relocate a single department. I suggest a department for the subject of History.

To place a university department in the Bazaar area is an excellent solution from an urban perspective. The picturesque and central — but still a bit off-location is a perfect match. Most importantly students bring life to the streets the whole day, something which all citizens benefit from. The students are not big spenders but can generate a need for various local businesses in the Bazaar.

The tricky accessibility is of less importance for a university department than for a business.

From a conservation perspective, compromises have to be made to achieve flexibility when the buildings are refurbished. Ownership issues have not been taken into consideration in this proposal.

If the concept should turn out well, there are several more blocks to convert nearby.

The Concept

The concept for the layout is to locate all

student activities on the second-floor level around the yard: lecture halls, library and meeting rooms. Together with the Obelisk plaza — where the old school is transformed into a Student Council building- this will create a large important public space.

The first floor is rebuilt for administrative functions with a corridor in the back and office spaces facing the street. The ground floor level is kept mainly for shops and businesses.

It is fairly simple to convert the existing storage spaces into office spaces. The challenges are the larger lecture halls that are required, since such spaces don't exist. However, we can see on photos and maps that the block is less dense today than 70 years ago. Hence, I have chosen to insert a new building in the south, where large lecture halls are created.

The Exterior

The existing exterior is restored; the new functions only manifest themselves in the new buildings. The northern and southern extensions are clad with local stone while

the detailing and fenestration is modern. Their roofs however are traditional stone hip roofs, since the plastic monolithic roofscape is such an important feature of the city.

Improved Technology

Energy efficiency in buildings is becoming more crucial since the world's reserves of oil, natural gas and coal are being depleted rapidly. This will mean higher energy prices in a near future and making reduced energy needs of buildings a top priority.

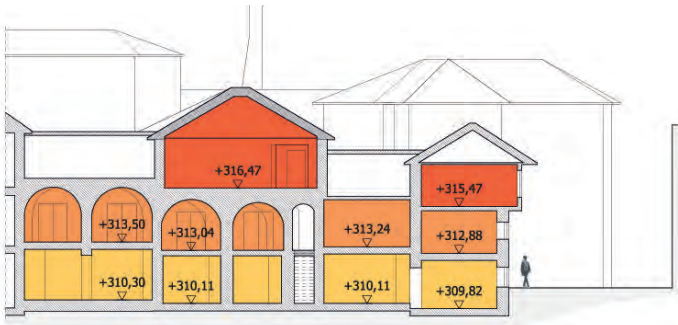
Since the appearance of the buildings also is a top priority there are conflicts between the two. Putting photovoltaic panels - to produce environmentally friendly solar electricity - on a stone roof in Gjirokastra, for example, would totally ruin the character of the building.

Other techniques do not cause such problems:

- New double sash wooden frame windows, which lose less energy
- Geothermal heat pumps
- Roof constructions with more insulation
- Usage of natural ventilation



Photo collage of the block



Cross section B-B scale 1:200



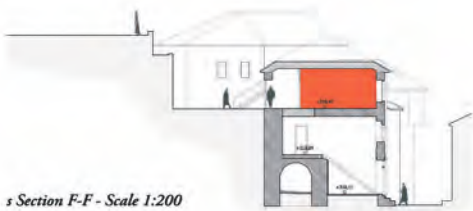
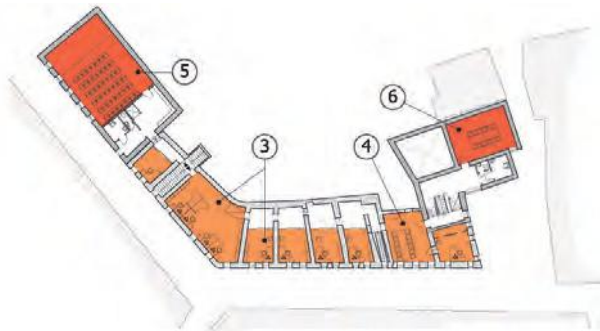
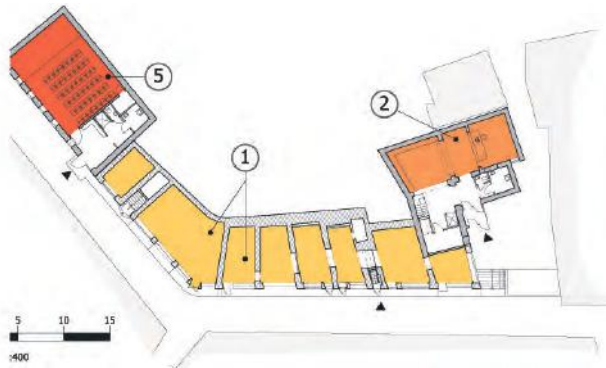
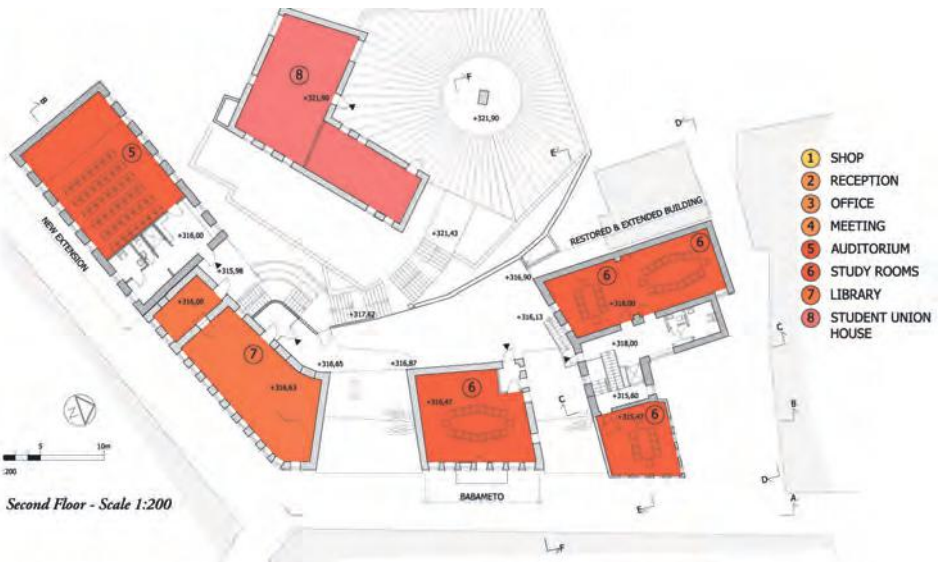
Façade East- Elevation C-C
Scale 1:200

Façade North Elevation D-D

Cross section E-E



Street façade South East Elevation A-A – scale 1:200



Gjirokastra Shahu House the Ruin

*Elsa Notstrand
Cecilia Strömer*

164 What to do with the ruins? Many of the stone houses in Gjirokastra are in a precarious state. The old palaces are the first to be taken care of but what should be done about the humbler houses? Gjirokastra is "the city of stones". Even the smallest stone house is a part of the massive impression of stone. If we give up the houses that do not seem to have a great aspect there will, after many such decisions, only be a few ancient palaces left. The rest will be mere empty sites or new, modern houses. Gjirokastra will be drained of its treasure. We would like to show that the Shahu house has an interesting history, is a good representative of the Gjirokastrian stonehouse, has a strategic location and a very good potential to become useful as well as attractive again.

Our meeting with the ruin

-What an interesting ruin! is our first reaction. How old is it? Who lived here? What did it look like? The Shahu house has recently been abandoned (sometime during the 1990's). It has quickly fallen into a miserable state. Half the house is in ruin and the rest is full of fallen stone and garbage. Moulding walls and broken stairs add to the picture of destruction. It is easy to find this a hopeless case. Pull it down and be rid of the problem! Little by little we answer some of the questions by measuring the walls, paying attention to straight joints and filled openings. Layers of paint, niches and stoves give a picture of the former life. We look at old photos and we meet a former inhabitant, Mr Lohan Shahu, who can tell us much about the period before world war II. Our

enthusiasms come back. There must be a future for this interesting house!

History and reconstruction

The Shahu house was very probably built in the year 1785 as was painted in arabic scripture on the portico. We do not know much about the house from 1785 to 1930 but it has been owned by the shahufamily for long. Our reconstruction is based on traces in the walls like the different types of stone walls and straight joints that show that one of the walls is a later addition. Layers of plaster and paint have given clues as to which part is the oldest. Of course, the reconstruction is only an educated guess. Our group consisted of Goran Pachev and Vesna Kocankovska from Macedonia, Adi Ćorović from Bosnia, Cecilia Boman, Elsa Notstrand, Maria Sahlstrand, Lisa Skanser, Cecilia Strömer and Torkel Wächter from Sweden.

1785-1800

The house has the typical form of the two-winged Gjirokastrian house. These walls have no straight joints in the walls here and must have been built as a whole. We make a guess that the vaults had another vault on each side making a sheltered patio (there are only very uncertain signs of this on one side). There were round stained-glass windows in the guestroom on the second floor. This room had mural paintings. The garden was bigger than today with cultivation of vegetables and grapes. A portal leads from the street to the house. The portal is not next to the street but has a path leading up to it. This manner is quite common in Gjirokastra. As

the house is situated close to the castle, the mosque and the bazaar the site must have been considered most advantageous.

1930-1945

This period is described by Mr Lohan Shahu who was born in the house 1930. He grew up with three sisters and a brother, mother and father. They all lived in one room while the uncle's family of four lived in another. The aunt lived in two rooms under the guestroom. Two rooms on the second floor were let to another family.

The Shahu family lived on the production of raki and olive oil. There was a veranda (a cerdat) between the wings. The water cistern was in operation as such until world war two, when it was emptied and used as a bomb shelter. Mr Shahu tells us that a bomb hit the house while the families hid in the cistern, but this bomb did not explode. Later in the war another bomb hit the house and caused great damage to the east wing.

1950-1996

The house was reconstructed after being hit by a bomb during the war. The reconstruction was done with a new type of roof-rack and a concrete beam over the windows in the east wing, but apart from that traditional methods and materials were used. The Shahu family moved to Tirana in 1946 and the house was rented or taken over by other families. The house was divided into four apartments with new stairs, kitchens and toilets. Some small extensions were made with brick walls and concrete roofs.



Shahu house today. Photo today from the small piazza between the house and the cinema. The other houses up the hill provide a beautiful background of traditional Gjirokastrian houses. The parts near the street is in ruin. About half the house is still standing but the roof is greatly damaged. Some work to clean out fallen stone and wood has started. What should be done?



Photo from "Gjirokastra Museum City" by Emin Riza. The foto is taken when the house has been rebuilt after being hit by a bomb in the end of the second world war. Both wings of the house are visible and we can see the portal that led from the street to the house and garden.



Mr Lohan Shahu was born in the house in 1930. He tells us what the house and garden looked like when he was a boy. There was a guestroom on the se-cond fl oor. It had mural paintings and round stained glass windows. In front of the house there was a portal with a sign where the year 1785 was painted in blue arabic scripture.



For what purpose? The niche looks rather like an old fashioned coffee grinder. Why was it put in the wall and covered?



What is this? This stone niche in the wall was partly covered by many layers of plaster.



Photo today from the west hill in the Partisani quarter, showing the back of the house, the ravine, the cinema, and further on the castle. The Shahu house is very strategically situated at one of the roads from the bazaar to the castle.



The site in 2008



Reconstruction of the site in 1785

Reconstruction of the original building 1785



The home of Mr Loban Shahu 1930 - 1945



After the war 1946 -1990



Layers of plaster and paint give clues to which part of the house is the oldest. A light blue color appears on many walls.



We know very little about the families that lived here recently. Only some furniture and an amount of shoes are left of them. Did they leave in a hurry?



Stained glass windows. Example from another house.



Reconstruction of the first aspect of the house in 1785. The windows, the portal and the extension of the garden as you can see in the picture are details from Mr Shahu's description.

These details are common in old part of Gjirokastra and therefore we believe they are original. The vaults in front of the east wing might have been open to the outside and flanked with side vaults.

Gjirokastra Shahu House Businesscenter

*Elsa Notstrand
Cecilia Strömer*

168 The Shahu house could become a family house again, but we have chosen to give the Shahu house a public use as a part of an analysis of the local needs. If the Shahu house becomes a little of all that we think Gjirokastra needs it would at the same time be: - A local business centre for local businesses and associations. - A summer café to attract visitors and tourists. - A showroom for stone products as we believe there is a great potential in the local stone - A place to meet and to have a party. - A public area where people can sit and have a rest. - A nice and tidy area where people can sort their garbage. - A place available for the handicapped. We would like to show that the ruin can become useful again.

A possible future

There are a number of possible uses for the house: family house, small hotel, shop etc. Much depends on the economy and the wishes of the owner. We have tried to find a middle way economically where the ruined half of the house is only partly reconstructed as walls of garden. This makes it possible to see the former appearance of the house without making a total reconstruction. The roof of the rest is mended and reconstructed. The later additions after the war are removed to recreate a multi-purpose structure. Floors and inner walls are mended.

Small business centre and café

It is most important to involve the Gjirokastrians in the revitalisation of the town. The local people need a place to meet, develop business ideas and

associations. In the ground floor we suggest an information office and cafe, maybe a secretary working for all the different firms, a meeting room, a kitchen and a party room that can be rented by various associations. The old water cistern is turned into a wine cellar. In the ruin garden there can be a summer cafe that attracts other people to the house. The public area in front of the Shahu house is turned into stairs for sitting and walking people. A problem that also must be solved most urgently is the management of garbage. In many countries the garbage is a big business that generates work and income for many people. The north part of the site is suggested to become a garbage sorting area with a keeper in his/her own cabin at certain opening hours.

Turn stone into money

The world heritage city of Gjirokastra is made of limestone that has kept the inhabitants dry and sheltered for many generations. The roofs, the walls and the streets form a very striking aspect of solidity and secluded beauty. Stone gives an impression of durability that holds a special attraction in these times of rapid changes.

The yellowish limestone of Gjirokastra has a high quality. It is dense and hard and does not seem to be easily weathered. As products from other countries in the European market (Italy, Portugal etc.) become too expensive there might be a great opportunity for Albanian stone. Apart from wall and roofing material for the renovation of its own houses Gjirokastra

could produce garden products, floor tiles, kitchen worktops, stairs etc. for the European market. The stone is available but modern methods and machines have to be acquired and investments have to be made.

We suggest that a stone firm has its showroom for tiles and out-door furniture in the ruin garden of the Shahu house. It is an advantage to be close to a business center and a frequented road for local tourists and foreigners.

Obstacles

A general problem for some of the Gjirokastrian houses is the uncertain ownership and sometimes the large number of owners. Even if one owner wants to renovate there might be a large number of passive owners that have no interest in the investments that are so urgently needed. Gjirokastrian society cannot provide tax funds for all the necessary renovation. There is also a lack of laws connecting responsibility for the up-keep of the house is connected to the ownership.

These two obstacles make projects hard to start and make nobody responsible for the danger of the ruins where children might play and some poor people even live.

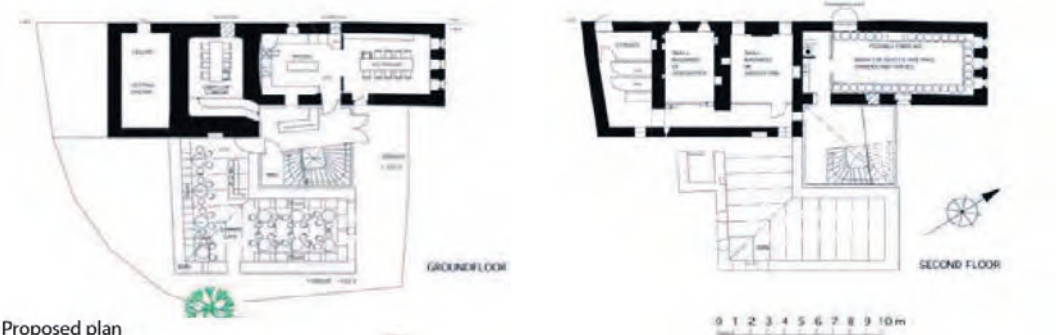
We hope that this legislative gap can be remedied in the not-too-distant future. This would benefit the safety of the local people and the owners that must be able to act, to renovate, to make their beautiful Gjirokastrian houses useful again.



Shahu house with the public ara in the front. The arrangement of today that is hard to make any use of is changed into a number of stairs for both passing and sitting people. As this is just outside the cinema and one of the roads from the bazaar to the castle this will be a good place to take a rest. A tree is planted at the top of the stairs to give some shade. The ruined part of the house is only partly reconstructed and turned into a garden with a summer café. Levels are added to make the house reachable for the hand-capped. A new part is added with entrance, stairs, elevator and wc.



All the suggested activities going on at the same time! (outside the wc, small o-ffice, small tailor business, party, heating, wine cellar, kitchen and meeting)



Proposed plan
Proposed plan



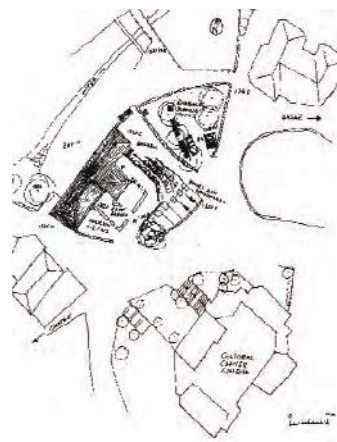
Tomorrow. A gypsum model of the ruin garden, the stairs and the garbage sorting area



The stonemasonry tradition must be kept alive to be able to take care of the houses of Gjirokastra.



View from above, gypsum model



Suggestion 2009. The e public area is turned into stairs that offer an easier path to the castle and some rest in the shade of a big fig tree.



Limestone floor tiles in two colours. Photo Cecilia Strömer.



Stone-cutting workshop near Permet, Albania



Wooden table with limestone plate. Design Kerstin Olby Sweden

Gjirokastra

Armour of Stone

Lisa Skanser

Walls of steep, barren mountains surround the town and create a visual balance from the townscape point of view. It is from the local stratified calcareous rock that the building material has been taken. Limestone roofs are fundamental to the distinctive character of the vernacular buildings in Gjirokastra. With the building itself constructed of limestone, a roof of limestone adds the crowning touch of harmony in colour and texture.

A peculiar roofscape of stone seem to have grown organically from one house to another. The same roof changes it's direction several times and in the bazaar area the roofs completely besiege the whole block. Even if the form of the roof is given by the circumstances, it's stretched, projecting, tent-like shapes also are the expressions of the craftsman's artistry.

Craftmanship

Both the water resistance and the aesthetical result on the roof are dependent on the methods to quarry the limestone and the skill of the craftsmen, who have to check each stone to judge were and how it should be laid. It is important to select stones carefully and choose the best side for upper side. A low pitch makes it easier for water to be led sideways into the roof by the unevenness on the upper side of the stones. In general, when it comes to stone roofing, the pitch of the roof decides the overlap. Head lap needs to be larger for lower pitch roofs.

One starts with larger slabs at the eave, reducing to smaller ones towards the ridge. Smaller flakes of stone are used as

wedges and to fill up gaps. It is important to prevent uneven slabs from rocking and to ensure that every slab has enough support in the front.

Visible change

Judging from looking at photos and comparing old roofs to recently reconstructed ones, the appearance has changed. Older roofs show a more distinct system, despite larger variation in sizes of the stones. The length of the visible part of the slabs differed more previously. Traditionally they preferred larger and more irregular stones for their economy of labor and superior weather-proofing ability.

This was also a way to maximize the output from the quarried rock. Quarrying and taking out slabs from a block of stone was made by hand earlier. Today it seems that all slabs have more or less the same size. The visible parts of the stones are seen as straight rows. This might be explained by changing working conditions in the quarries. Stone blocks quarried mechanically, give standard sized slabs.

Stone

Limestone suitable for roofing has to be even and without large fossils, which can easily shatter. The limestone slabs are randomsized and the thickness varies, but is generally 2,5 – 4 cm. As a consequence of the stone's sizes and thickness, every slab lay with much less inclination than the pitch of the roof.

A stone roof weight approximately 200 kilo/m². If it's timber construction and the weights of snow are added, the weight

can be doubled. It's the sheer weight of the stone and the low pitch in which they are laid out, that keep them in place. No nails, hooks or wooden pegs are used.

Roof construction

In general, the timber consists of straight bark stripped spruce trunks. Details of the wood construction are carried out with simple joints and nailed bindings. Over purlins rafters are placed with a distance depending on the roof angle. Due to thin timber dimension, the bearing capacity is low on long distances. If the distance between the supporting walls is larger than 5 meters, angled braces and a vertical king post, in the center, support the purlins. In that way the weight is transferred through the braces and the post to the tie beam and down to inner supporting walls. If there is no such bearing wall this is compensated by vertical stanchions to the floor in the room underneath.

Braces from the roof construction can also be fixed into an inner wall. Roughly generalized - bearing elements are supported, or 'stacked' upon each other. With support the roof can be made broad and long. Eaves can project 1,5 meters and the primary idea with such broad eaves is to protect the facade from rain, snow and sun. The outer walls of the upper floors often consist of a timber frame construction with several windows and plastered walls, in some cases even decorated with paintings.

Roof leakage

The roofs of the residential houses recently reconstructed, but they leak

water on rainy days. Possible causes for leakage might be:

- With passing time, the tradition, knowledge and skills of laying these roofs have been reduced, and craftsmen without these skills may be unable to "read" the stone slab with its uneven surface and to calculate the consequences.

- Wedges, made of smaller pieces, can cause problems when the craftsman walks on the slabs causing them to lift in the back end and move slabs around.

- Limestone weathers unevenly and old slabs get furrowed on the surface and can lead water in wrong direction.

- Unsuitable stone might be used. A variety of colours, which range from white, pale yellow to red and grey appear and confirm different geology of limestone. Maybe the types traditionally used have been replaced with stones that don't qualify as roof material. The best thing to do is to only use stone from old quarries where the stone is suitable and long lasting.

Insulation?

It is important to preserve the traditional craftsmanship, and not only the buildings. Lack of confidence in traditional techniques can lead to application of modern insulation materials. One problem is solved but others arise.

An open construction makes maintenance possible, which is an important aspect since the lifespan of the stone and the underlayment differs very much. Insulation can cause problems in old buildings, since they were built on the expectation that there would be a lot of ventilation through

the roof. Apart from rain and snow, the roof also has to cope with moisture coming from the inside. An open construction can air out and dry up some moisture. The

use of a building is a factor one has to take into consideration when deciding if modern techniques and materials should be applied.

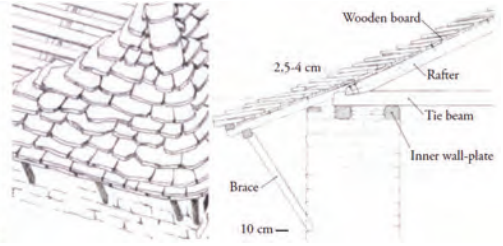
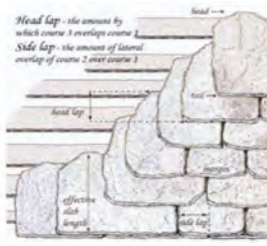


The roofs in Gjirokastra are unique compared to stone roofs in many other countries because of the shaping of hips, ridges, valleys and eaves. Ridges and hips are covered with piled up slabs. In the valleys of the roof slabs are laid out creating a curved shape. Eaves can be differently shaped on different sides of the same building. They can be divided in two varieties - open and closed. Long or short wooden braces support the open ones. For longer braces naturally curved timber were traditionally used. The tension helps to hold up the broad eave. Closed eaves are supported by cantilevers in the upper part of the stone walls and they occur foremost in the bazaar area. With time many of the formerly open eaves have been replaced by closed.

Randomly sized stone slabs give a lively and beautiful roof surface. The projecting shadowing eaves are held up by thin braces, which make the heavy roof seem light. Roofs used to have an important function in gathering rainwater, which was led by pipes to the cisterns in the cellars. The appearance of the roof depends on the plan layout. Depending on the size of the building, large spans sometimes have to be over-bridged. The result, of these often-irregular layouts, is that the roofs have numerous levels of ridges and hips, with in itself creates an eye-catching effect and a distinctive architectural expression.

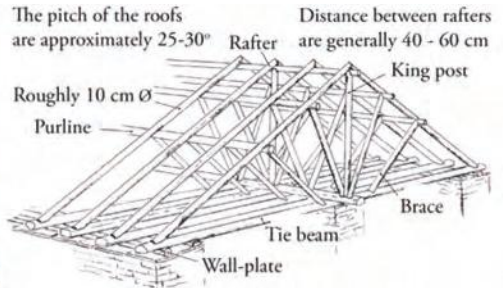
Advantages of Stone Roofs:

- An essential part of the cultural heritage and craft traditions in Gjirokastra and Albania
- Aesthetically pleasing - a rustic and rural look Individual pieces are heavy - so the roof is suitable for areas of high winds
- A thick stone roof has the ability to store heat and regulate the interior temperature differences between days and nights
- Environmentally friendly roofing material Can be reused - long term economic benefit
- Long lasting
- Naturally waterproof surface and good fire protection
- Material in itself is not given to rot or insect problems
- Disadvantages of Stone Roofs: Expensive - in terms of today's labour costs
- Regular maintenance is needed
- Due to the weight, extra support is sometimes needed
- The lifespan of the stone is longer than that of the substructure



The roofing technique shows resemblances to dry-wall masonry. Approximately each stone overlap the two below and have an exposed margin of 10-15 cm. Water resistance is achieved by having a large enough head lap and choosing wide slates and positioning them to have enough side lap. The aim is to make sure the vertical joint is roughly central on the stone below. If the side lap is too small the roof will leak.

Slabs are laid in courses from the eave to the ridge on wooden boards, which is nailed to the rafters. At the eave the edges of the stones are cut straight to fit closely together. If the roof has projecting, curved eaves at the corners of the house, stones are also laid with a curved shape. Braces are generally placed every 50 cm.



Well-preserved 100-150 years old timber roof constructions have been recorded in Gjirokastra. In spite of the heavy stone covering the timber construction is weak. To compensate this weakness a tight grid of rafters, tie beams, braces and purlins together to carry the load and transfer it to the bearing walls. Timber consists of bark stripped spruce trunks. The distance between the rafters depend on the roof angle.



Pictures from the roof on Zekate house. Many slabs seem to break in to a lot of smaller pieces and are scattered all over the roof surface. The breaking up could be caused by frost but could also be because the stone is put on the roof too soon after it was quarried. In England they have had problems with stones that cracked when they were put on the roof immediately after being quarried. The best thing is to let the stone stand for one year under cover. There are also stone slabs missing.

The picture with red markers shows where the stones have been badly positioned even though they are wide enough to provide good side lap.



Roof archaeology Each of the many features of the roofs must be carefully recorded before restoration work begins. The stone should be analyzed geologically. The different stone sizes and the methods used must be documented. The traditional techniques and styles should be applied in the restoration. Modern techniques and materials should only be substituted where there is a sound technical reason.

Roofscape in the bazaar area. The roofs are joined together and form a wide and rough relief against the milky sky.

Gjirokastra

Improved Insulation for Better Comfort

Carl Von Essen

If the 2000 old beautiful buildings in Gjirokastra shall survive in the future they need some adaptation for moderns' standards, but with respect for original details. Houses built with thick solid stone walls can last for many hundred years if maintained well. Stone walls are also good in thermal aspects as they can store energy, which means that they can reduce differences between day and night temperatures but also store heat from summer to winter and opposite store cold from winter to summer.

But many of the old buildings in Gjirokastra have weaknesses in letting the outside air easily passing into the houses through windows, doors, floors and ceilings. Beside from giving a bad indoor climate — cold in winter and warm in summer — it also increases the cost of energy for the inhabitants as well as adding to the global green-house effects by unnecessary energy losses.

Here are some suggestions for reducing energy losses and improving indoor climate. They can be done more or less costly, depending on the economical means of the owners but all house-owners in Gjirokastra can do something.

Historical and aesthetical values

It is important to be aware of the values of old buildings - both the historical and aesthetical and therefore reduce the interventions as much as possible and also to make them reversible. Not only in the main structure, but especially in details like doors, windows etc, as they are very visible. Traditional crafts use a

lot of efforts on making things beautiful, even for small details. In fact, most of the traditional materials, which usually were taken locally, are also more ecological and environmentally friendly than modern materials. They are often also easier to repair and maintain, especially compared to modern materials which are claimed to be "maintenance free" as PVC and other plastic materials. Some of the modern materials can even destroy the old ones. Therefore, is it preferable to use traditional materials where possible.

Technical aspects

Heat or cold can be transported by convection (movements in the air), radiation (emission) and thermal conductivity. In a homogenous stone or brick wall transport of heat/cold is performed only by thermal conductivity. The thicker the stone wall, the better is its resistance to thermal conductivity.

Energy losses by thermal conductivity are not a problem for the Gjirokastra buildings with their thick stone walls and they need no actions for improving the insulation. The greatest losses are through convection when air passes through slots round doors and windows allowing energy easily to pass. The same problem is for many of the framing of joists/raftered ceilings. Other big losses are in radiation through the single glassed windows. By improving thermal insulation usually also the sound insulation gets better.

Reducing draft

The easiest and cheapest is to fill out

gaps in the frames around windows and doors. Bigger gaps should be filled with wooden fillets. For smaller gaps you can use traditional strings made from hemp, wool or other natural fibres or modern ones made by silicone or plastic.

The modern ones made from silicone have the advantage that they can cover bigger differences in the gaps. It is important that there are thresholds under the entrance doors and even on interior doors to prevent unwanted movements of the air. If they are missing new should be made to reduce draft.

Improving window insulation

There are solutions that make old wooden windows as energy efficient as new ones made by plastic or aluminium. Besides being more beautiful and saving the history, this can also be cheaper.

One way is to make a double-glazed window thus creating a hermetic space with air, which is a good thermal insulator. You can put a new thin framed glass behind the original or on the inner wall, thus creating a very large volume with still standing air.

Another way is to replace the ordinary glass in the window sash by a modern energy saving glass. But this glass is quite expensive and it gives a more glossy and "dead" impression than old glass.

Improving door insulation

The entrance doors are very solid, made of thick wooden boards and with great

esthetical values. They can be improved thermally by putting a layer of an insulation material on the back, preferably a natural material like wool or modern ones like polystyrene or Rockwool, covered by a new layer of thin boards. A disadvantage is that the historical appearance will be changed and that there might be problems with the original lock.

A better solution if there is space enough in the hall is to put a new door behind the original to create an air sluice. Even interior doors could be insulated to separate warm rooms from cold ones, but with a thinner layer of insulation.

Improving floor insulation

Some of the floors only have a single layer of thin floorboards, not even tongued, easily allowing heat/cold to pass through. Beneath these floor beams a ceiling can be mounted. Either directly on the existing beams or if there is height enough on a new lower row of beams to enable a thicker layer for insulation. In this case the old upper row of beams can also be stabilized with supporting beams of bigger dimensions as the traditional ones are quite thin.

The framing of joists up to the attic is important for keeping the temperature in the floors below and gives very good effect in energy saving if the insulation is improved. The thickness should be at least 30-40cm and it should be protected from water leakages. Natural insulation materials that are available are cheap and easy to spread but perhaps need some fire-resisting additives.



The solid stone structure of the Gjirokastra houses gives good protection for weather conditions as well as for enemies. But they have weak parts regarding climate control. Windows and doors often let the outside air easily pass into the building and the floors also often let unwanted cold or hot air pass through the building.



Old wooden window with nice details.



Old window and iron grid in Gjirokastra



Modern windows are simpler executed



Old handmade window glass gives life to images

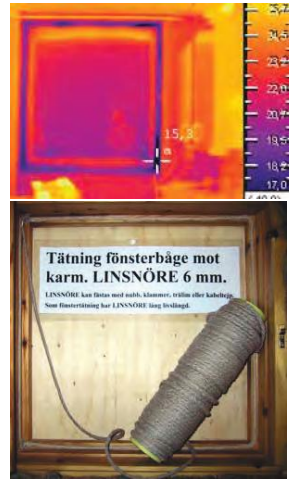


Poor wood quality makes the windows bend



Veranda with modern glass construction with no regard to aesthetics in Ohrid, Macedonia.

Modern building components like windows and doors, are usually just made in regard of technical aspects being as simple as possible to produce. Aestetical values are often forgotten, contrary to old building traditions. For instance, profiles and other details were carefully designed in wood- and ironworks. Old hand made glass is now rare, but giving very special images when reflected or being looked through. Therefore, is it important to retain as much as possible of the old parts when restoring and/or improving the insulation in a building. They are not only more beautiful but should be treated as antiquities which will become rarer and more valuable the older, they get.



The advantage with traditional materials like this old wooden door is that they are possible to repair.

Gaps that allow air to pass freely are easy and cheap to fix. On the thermal photo to the right the dark colour shows where cold air is passing round a window in winter time. Simply by using a string in natural fibres or modern silicone you can reduce the draft a lot. Many of the windows that have replaced the old ones since the 1950's and later in Gjirokastra are poor in craftsman-ship and wood quality and made with very simple profiles. If they are in such a bad condition as the sash to the left (where the whole sash is bending!) is it better to replace them with new ones made by wood of good quality and with old profiles.



Replacing the old glass in the original sash with a new low energy glass might be expensive and will change the image



Putting a new sash with standard glass on the interior wall doesn't change the exterior or original position of the shutters.



Putting a new sash with standard glass on the previous position of the shutters reduces the energy losses without changing the exterior.



For entrance doors a wooden frame with bolts can be made of the same thickness as the original bolts on the backside of the door (for instance 40mm). The empty space should be filled with some insulation material, perhaps local natural one like lamb wool. It has good protection against fire but should perhaps be completed with something against vermin. Traditional lavender or a modern harmless chemical as ammoniumpolyphosphat could be used. The backside can be covered with planed tongued boards. For interior doors, which should be thinner, it will probably be easier to use modern insulation materials as Polystyrene and then to cover them with planed boards. If it is a simpler door the backside can be covered with plywood if it is painted. This will make the construction lighter. If there are no thresholds new should be made to reduce the draft.



Saw dust is a simple and good insulation material but some chemical can be added for fire resistance.



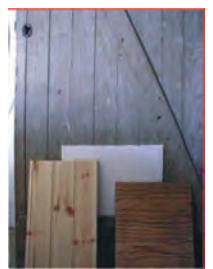
In UK now ecological insulation is made by sheep wool, even used for modern buildings.



Some of the framing objects of joists in Gjirokastra only have a single floor without any insulation.



Vernacular and traditional building techniques usually used local materials with good qualities regarding durability and maintenance. For example, in Gjirokastra the natural abundance of slate limestone has led to its use for both walls and roofs. Today many new ecological insulation products are made using natural materials like sheep wool, hemp fibres, re-used newspapers etc. You can also use wooden leftovers from a sawmill or a carpentry workshop (sawdust or dust from a planer).



Materials that can be used for improving an interior door insulation.

Gjirokastra

Education of Craftsmen

Cecilia Boman

The World Heritage city of Gjirokastra has a massive limestone architecture which is characterised by heavy stone slab roofs with elegant eaves, rendered facades combined with visible dry-stone walls and beautiful wooden details. The buildings have high historical values, that are important to preserve! In order to repair and maintain the buildings special knowledge is needed. Modern material and methods are not compatible with old buildings. Instead, repair is best done with the same traditional techniques and materials used when the houses once were built. Specially trained craftsmen are required for this work, who master the traditional building crafts, conservation repairs and also have an understanding for the aims of preservation. Here we present three examples from countries that have been struggling with the problem how to maintain knowledge and pass it on to new generations.

Possibilities for Gjirokastra

To maintain and secure the great cultural values of the town of Gjirokastra for future generations, dedicated craftsmen with special skills and knowledge in both conservation and traditional craft techniques are required. Three different ways of training and development of knowledge are described below, which could function as inspiration for initiatives in Gjirokastra. The Swedish model; craftsman training project, might be the most inexpensive and easily organised way of training, with instant effects on local conservation practices; all training efforts invested will show immediate results in

all following conservation activities in the municipality, when working craftsmen participate. A project like Transylvania Trust or Scottish Lime Centre Trust will have a more widespread and long term effect in the region and the nation, but demands a solid financial base and a long-term commitment from the funders.

Scotland; Scottish Lime Centre Trust

The Scottish Lime Centre Trust was established in 1994 as a non-profit organization, registered as a charity in Scotland. Its aim is to promote the appropriate repair of lime mortars on outside renders and inside plasters of Scotland's traditional and historic buildings. The main business is to do research, to do advanced examinations, offer consultancy services and to give professionals training in the use and repair of historic lime mortars.

The centre gives up to six courses each, two or three days long every month, focusing on the craftsmanship for use of lime. The participants are craftsmen working in large or small companies, who want to specialize on historic buildings. Each course has a specialized subject; like repairs in traditional masonry, making and using traditional mortars, internal and external plasterworks et cetera. The instructors have a great knowledge and skills in the use of lime and take on consultant assignments besides teaching. The Scottish Lime Centre Trust also contributes to a distribution of knowledge within Scotland by producing Technical Advice Notes for the Historic Scotland, helping architects and other

professionals to define the proper repair and use of lime mortars. (Artis-Young, R. 2009. www.scotlime.org)

Romania; Transylvania Trust

The Transylvania Trust is a charity, which was set up by professionals and volunteers in conservation in 1996. Its principal aim is to conserve and promote the rich cultural heritage of Transylvania and to encourage the local society to be receptive towards the built environment. The Trust is active in many fields of conservation: one of them is training in building conservation called "Built Heritage Conservation Training Project". The aim of the training is to promote high-quality in-built heritage conservation and to teach traditional building craft skills needed for historic building conservation. The training is given as courses for two weeks. Building companies that need skills in certain areas of conservation and traditional crafts, can send their employees on a course.

The students participate in both theoretical and practical training. Transylvania Trust offers training in masonry consolidation, rendering, carpentry, stonemasonry. The theory is taught by teachers from British and Romanian universities and other experts and the practical workshops are implemented under the guidance of Romanian and British craftsmen. During the workshops the students participate in practical conservation works directly on the buildings of the Banffy castle in the village of Bontida. The project has been running since 1996 and is now established as a permanent centre of built

heritage conservation training in Romania. (Baxter, D. Hegedus, C. 2003. www.herita-getraining-banffycasdeso, www.transylvaniatrust.ro)

Sweden; Craftsmen Training Program

In the 1980-ies Sweden, like many other industrial countries, faced a lack of craftsmen, skilled in traditional crafts. This caused a problem in conservation of historical buildings. There was no-body who had knowledge about traditional methods and materials. To improve the situation many different activities were initiated. Craftsmen training schools were established, but also simpler forms of supplementary training of craftsmen was organised on a local basis. One of these were at Gotland, a small island in Sweden. The County Administrative Board arranged short courses for craftsmen, with a great interest in traditional techniques and building conservation. The main thing was to secure the personal interest among the participants. All panes involved had to contribute. The courses were arranged on Fridays - Saturdays.

The company where the craftsmen worked had to pay salary for the Friday. The craftsman had to contribute with his time on Saturday and the County Administrative Board paid for the teachers and other expences. The courses were given during one year, with one meeting every month, two days each. Each occasion focused on a subject relevant for the conservation work in the region; for example, repair of stone slab roofs, window restoration, traditional lime plaster, traditional paints, conservation of

wooden constructions et cetera. For each course, a specialized craftsman was invited as a instructor. The instructor introduced the course with a short theoretical part and then the craftsmen worked together under supervision on a building with real damages. By working practically, they achieved hands-on experience. After

having completed the training program, in a short time these specially trained craftsmen were available in the region. Now the County Administrative Board could demand special competence for work on listed buildings or on buildings with high cultural values.



A common view in Gjirokastra, the impressive walls of cut limestone with symmetrical windows and heavy stone roof. Photographer: Elsa Notstrand



Scottish craftsmen mixing mortar together in the Scottish Lime Centre. Photographer: Roz Artis Young.



Romanian craftsmen working at the Built Heritage Conservation Training Centre at Ban-y castle, Bontida. director@heritagetraining-ban-ycastle.org



Swedish craftsmen working together with a timber construction; learning the special technique and sharing experiences. Photographer: Henrik Larsson

Gjirokastra

The Drino Wine Region of the Future

Torkel Svärdson Wächter

This narrative takes us to a juncture in time when the patrimony of the region has been restored, the world heritage buildings as well as the cultural landscape. Gjirokastra has the historical facts and the background supporting a development that can place it as the centre of a flourishing wine region. Here is the Drino Valley of vineyards that could be welcoming a future visitor.

Kantina Labova

is considered to be the first winery in the region of the modern era and the catalyst to the re-establishment of the wine industry in the Drino Valley. It all started in the autumn of 2009 when the city of Gjirokastra had invited a group of prominent Albanian expatriates to discuss the future of the city. Among the invited were Agim Tabaku, a well-known restaurateur in New York. Touring the old castle, the group looked across the Drino Valley and somebody suggested that grapes should be planted on the hillside. Fortified by a good lunch Mr Tabaku thought: "why not?" In 2010 he acquired some land and planted the first cuttings around Labova, a small picturesque village dating back to the time of the Despots of Epirus. The initial planting comprised the principal autochthonous varieties Shesh, Vlosh and Serine that are now inscribed in Albania's national cultural heritage. It was not long after this that some other 21st century pioneers, each with their own passion, began planting vine on the slopes of the Drino Valley.

Partizani Raki

has a history that goes back to the late

18th century when the Shahu family started commercial production of raki at their town house located in the Partizani area in the old town of Gjirokastra. The trade was passed on from father to son for generations. The best barrels of each vintage were always put aside for family use and stored in two caves on the Shahu premises.

This practice was continued up until 1939 when the caves were sealed and the raki hidden behind a brick wall so that it would not fall into the hands of the Italian occupiers. Luan Shahu was in line to take over the business when he joined the partisans. After the war he was sent to Tirana and then to Moscow to study at the university.

The family business fell into neglect and the caves were forgotten until the early years of this millennia when Luan Shahu told a group of visiting architects that he remembered playing in the caves as a child. The brick walls were taken down and the now almost mythical collection of vintage raki was found by Luan's grandchild who restored the town house and recommenced the family business that had been lying dormant for more than seventy years.

Pyrrhic Estate

was established in 2012 on a property in the heart of what in ancient times used to be the kingdom of Epirus ruled by king Pyrrhus (319-272 BCE), from whom the phrase a Pyrrhic victory derives. The vineyard is set in a natural amphitheatre,

over-looking the archaeological remains of the city of Antigoneia, with south and southeast facing slopes providing excellent drainage and exposure to sunlight. The focus in the vineyard is to produce the highest quality fruit. This is achieved through low yields, hand picking and strict canopy management. Pyrrhic Estate is considered one of the world's leading producers of the red grape varieties Debine and Serine, both protected by Albanian law as part of the national patrimony. Pyrrhic Estate is also the main sponsor and host of the annual opera festival taking place in the Gjirokastra Castle and other locations in the Drino Valley, including the Pyrrhic Estate premises where each summer the opera Antigone is staged in the vineyard.

The Emperor's Vineyard

In 2015, emboldened by boundless enthusiasm, and conviction that Albania could produce wines that would belong in the company of the world's finest, a group of young Albanian businessmen and -women established The Emperor's Vineyard in the Drino valley, adjacent to the remains of the ancient roman city of Hadrianopolis. With the release of The Emperor's New Clothes — Merlot in 2019 the world's eyes were opened to the potential of the Drino Valley as a producer of premium wines. Numerous gold medals have since then further supported this revelation. The Emperor's Vineyard is dedicated to organic winegrowing, working in harmony with nature to protect the health of people and the earth while producing the finest quality wine. Environmentally friendly practices

include conserving soils and water, managing pests, and recycling water and materials. Great care is taken to assure the protection of the rich archaeological heritage surrounding the vineyards. The olive grove Hadrian's Backyard is part of The Emperor's Vine-yard.

Kantina Doina

The Koto family has a long tradition of wine making. When the communist regime was established in 1945, the family enterprise ceased to exist. Fortunately, the tradition was kept alive through stories told by the elders of the Koto clan. When democracy and civil liberties were re-established in the early 1990's Liukan Koto resumed wine production and started Kantina Doina, named after his daughter.

Already in the beginning of this millennium Kantina Doina exported wine to a handful of countries in the European Union. In 2019 Doina Koto returned from studies in Paris and Bordeaux, she succeeded her father as manager of the family winery. Ms Koto has undertaken the modernization of the production facilities and introduced the wine range Old Europe made of grapes grown on un-grafted vitis vinifera vines found in a remote vineyard on the slopes of the Vjose Valley.

Tepelene

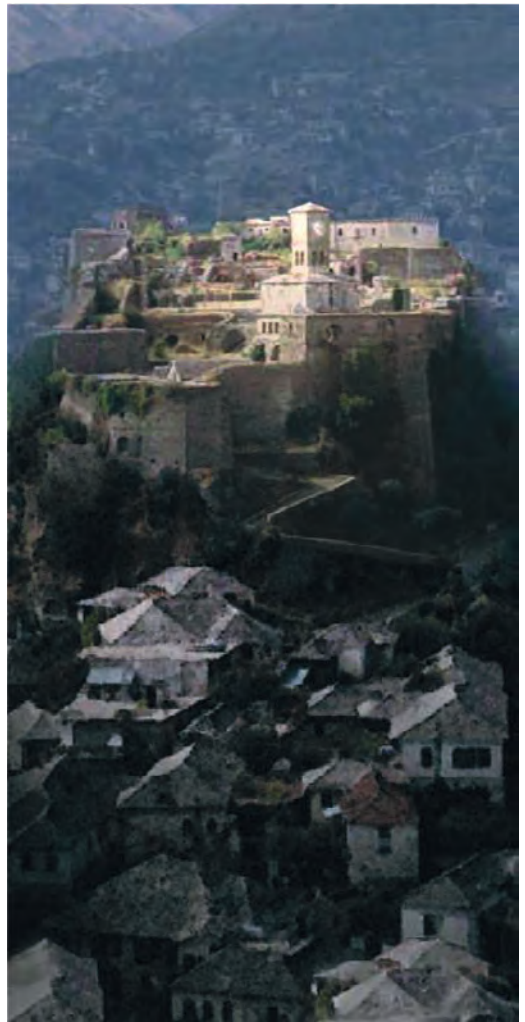
The Tepelene spring has been in existence for three centuries, it is located in a nature reserve in the mountains of the district of Tepelene. Lord Byron drank this outstanding water already in 1809 when he visited Ali Pasha in Tepelene.



It is impossible to mention the Drino Valley without mentioning Gjirokastra and its castle. And to speak for the castle is to speak of wine, since the castle literally is standing on a wine cellar. During the communist era the regime enlarged the already existing catacomb system and built an extensive underground complex to protect important party members against nuclear attack. This unique underground heritage is today a gigantic wine cellar and storage place for the wineries for the Drino region.



The Gjirokastra Castle Wine Cellar is accessible to visitors during the harvest festival. A good place to sample the wine of the Drino region is at the internationally renowned hotel inside the walled castle, where also the "Written in Stone"-prize is awarded bi-annually in honour of Albania's first Nobel laureate in literature, Ismail Kadare.



Gjirokastra Castle, the crown jewel of the Drino Valley

The Drino wine-jury hold their meetings at their Gjirokastra Castle.

BABAMETO I



Gjirokastra's Gastronomic Academy, is internationally known as "The bad" since it is located in a mansion that was formerly owned by the Babameto Family. The academy offers world-class education in gastronomy, oenology and hospitality. Great emphasis is put on practical skills and hands on experience in close cooperation with local enterprise, aiming to combine these skills with a rigorous focus. Each year 40 young men and women graduate from the Gjirokastra Gastronomic Academy and start a career in the world's fastest growing industry. Graduates are found in well run establishments all over the world.



Saint Mary's Church Labova.



Kantina Labova



Oak barrels at Kantina Doina.



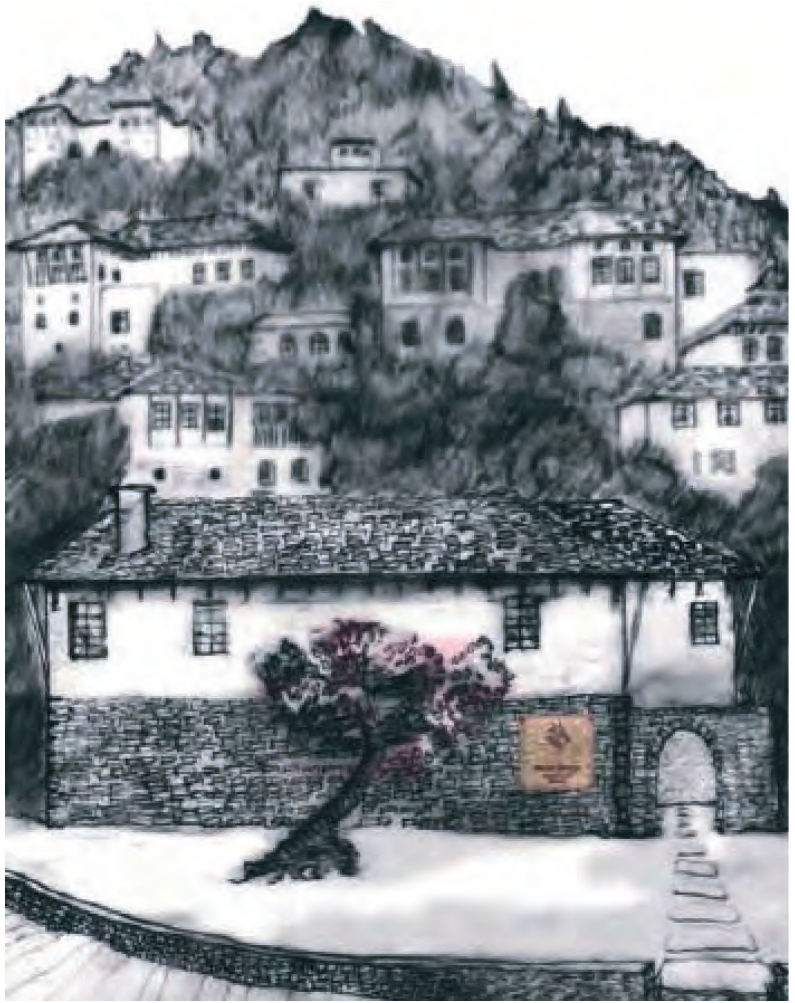
The stuff dreams are made of.



Tending the reboiler at Partizani Raki.



The emperors Amphitheatre



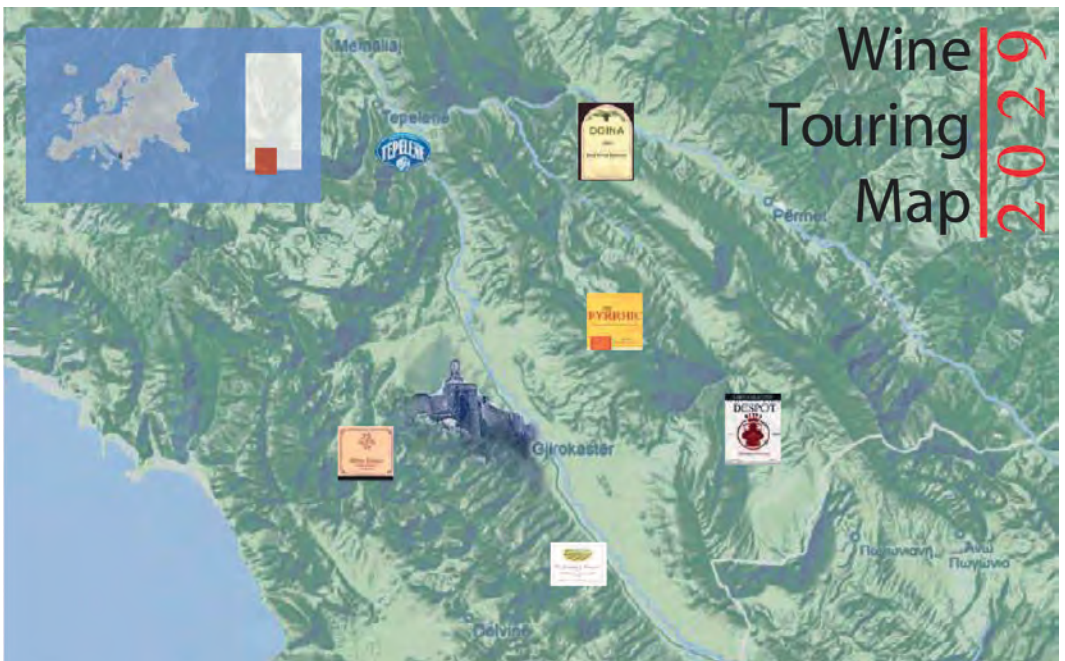
The hand crafted raki "Enver 1908-Bitter drops" is distilled at the Partizani town house owned by the Shahu family.



The opera Antigone staged in the vineyards of Pyrrhic Estate.



Coin found at Pyrrhic Estate.



Wine Touring Map 2020

Gjirokastra Regional Restoration Camps

Lejla Hadzic

A bit of the Background

Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB) is an independent organization, currently working in Western Balkans towards rescuing and preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage touched by conflict, neglect or human and natural disasters. We see our work as a vital contribution to building democracy and supporting human rights. In view of the above, CHwB has started its work in Albania in 2007, by launching its first regional restoration camp in Gjirokastra. Smelling, touching and feeling the authentic wood, mortar or stone is necessary for understanding cultural heritage in order to familiarize oneself with the tangible value of a building. When elaborating on those values and when sensitivity for authentic material is fully integrated into professional hands and minds, only then can the need to safeguard what remains be recognized and work towards restoring what has crumbled and collapsed begin.

A bit about the Regional Restoration Camps

While working with cultural heritage across the Western Balkan region, CHwB have recognized the need not only to work with preservation of physical assets but as well to work with preservation of historical techniques and crafts. Following the successful model of working camps implemented by NGO Expeditio and a Swedish Association for Building Preservation in Montenegro, a regional restoration camp model was created. Combined curriculum with theoretical lectures and practical exercises

that develops through 14 days is a good opportunity to practice the traditional techniques as well as to get the introduction into conservation ethics and principles. Further to this by bringing together female and male young professionals from the Western Balkan region in an environment in which they expose themselves, their knowledge and beliefs, their minds will become critical and observant. Different interpretations/ understandings raise discussions that seek solutions, and the result is an environment where cultural or national differences are put aside. CHwB has experienced this at the regional restoration camps in Gjirokastra. Here participants from all of the countries of the Western Balkans get to know each other's' cultural backgrounds as well as work together to get through everyday obstacles. Discussions on culture, gender roles and politics are also part of the camps. In this way CHwB tries to inspire young generations to unite and challenge prejudice and political propaganda and not to be divided by cultural differences.

A good cooperation with Universities.

Looking into the 9th edition of Regional restoration camp, which is taking place in between 1st and 14th of September in Gjirokastra, rewarding result of the camps is an ongoing engagement of Universities. Polis –International School of Architecture and Urban Policies and lately also with State University, Faculty of History and Philology, master course in "Cultural Heritage Management" are two of our main educational partners in Albania. Both Universities are accrediting the camps for their students and are working

towards strengthened capacities of young professionals as well towards raising awareness on traditional techniques and crafts.

A small hint on Lectures

Throughout five years that regional restoration camps are developing we are proud to have lecturers coming from different European Universities and distinguished institutions. To name few of them, Architectural Association, School of Architecture in London, UK; Swedish Royal Academy of Art; National Technical University of Athens; Faculty of Geology, Tirana Albania; University of Gothenburg, and many others. We believe that the strength of the camp is that many of lectures are held by experiences specialists that come from Institutions for Cultural Heritage protection from Albania and across Western Balkan.

Exercises and works on sites

The exercises are delivered as a part of the ongoing repair works on historical monuments in Gjirokastra. They range from works with timber, traditional lime plasters and mortars as well as works with consolidation of painted plaster surfaces. Beside the hands-on practical works, additional exercises on surveying and techniques on surveying, mortar segregation analysis, analytical studying of historical structures and lately We leave the trace Free hand drawing class Experienced craftsmen introducing the tools and works Practical and team work on the site 35 XRF studies, are developed. The exercises are led by experienced craftsmen, while specialists are also taking

part in exercises related to additional exercises.

Work with a community

Since the beginning the regional restoration camps have tried to engage the local residents in Gjirokastra. However, the most suitable model was developed only in 2010, when CHwB has launched a campaign "Repair Your Monument" inviting all the owners of historical monuments in Gjirokastra to apply and seek the help with small repairs of their monuments. Since 2010, those repairs are educational models for hands-on exercises and are as well a proper link in between the monument owners and students who together learn about importance of proper maintenance and proper techniques of repair.

Interpretation

Besideworking with crafts, regional restoration camps have embraced the work with interpretational concepts. Who is the monument for? What does it mean for a community? What are the stories it can tell? Are some of the questions for which we are trying to find the best possible answer, as a way to bring the monuments closer to community and not to treat it only from the secluded professional point of view. Monuments are of and for community! Who is behind Regional Camps? The successfulness of camps lies in devoted and passionate work of CHwB staff in Gjirokastra. However, this would never be enough without our excellent craftsmen from Kosova and Gjirokastra, and without the support of Albanian institutions, such as Ministry

of Tourism Culture, Youth and Sports; Institute of Monuments of Culture and National Directorate of National

Culture in Gjirokastra.

Added value. A specific segment of the camps, is a class on freehand drawing. A well-known local painter and sculptor developed the class. He has created a class of joy for the one to attend it. The classes are held in one of the best-preserved monuments of culture of Gjirokastra, Skenduli House. As to reach more than just a pure class, the drawings of participants has been recently turned into set of postcards that are sold and a profit is turned to the budget for the maintenance of a Skenduli House.

Something for the end

Following the path of the best model and trying to present and practice the traditional techniques as far as possible, regional restoration camps have so far trained 380 young professionals and students from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Serbia, Macedonia, Kosova, Greece, Italy, UK. This would never be possible without continuous support of our donor, Swedish International Cooperation and Development agency (Sida), and Headley Trust, European Commission and Adventures in Preservation.





Practical and team work on the site

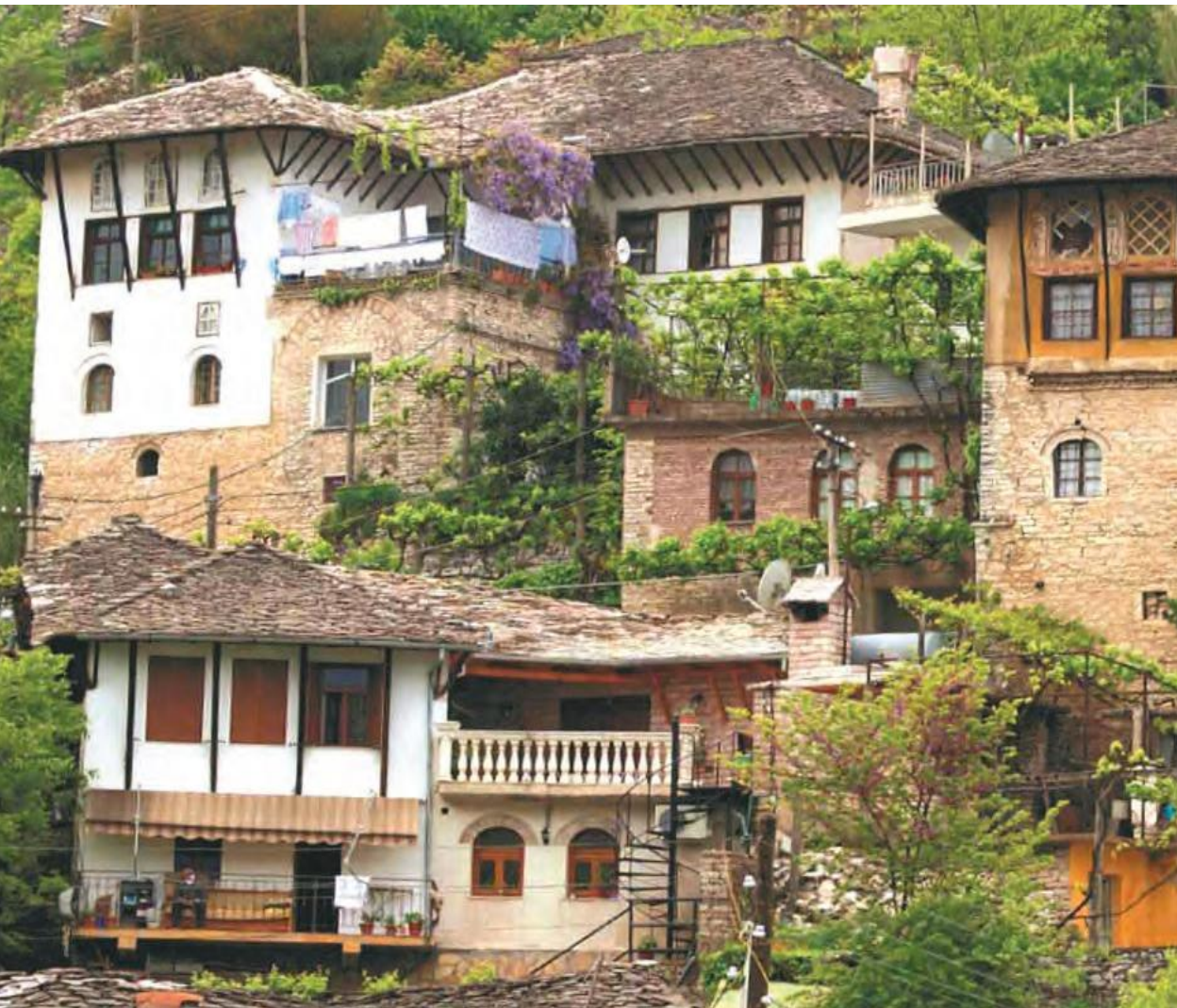


Free hand drawing class



Gjirokastra Restoration Camp







Architectural proposal: Reconstruction of the High School "Asim Zeneli" and the surrounding area

Metropolis Studio, Polis University

Design Group

Arc. Endrit Marku
Arc. Besnik Aliaj
Arc. Sotir Dhamo

Work Group

Arc. Keti Hoxha
Arc. Besart Gjana
Arc. Emel Petërçi
Ing. Dilaver Oshafi
Ing. Josif Miti
Ing. Artan Dersha
Ing. Orion Zavalani
Restorer: Ervin Panidha





Positioning the project area and connection with the city



Existing layout of buildings



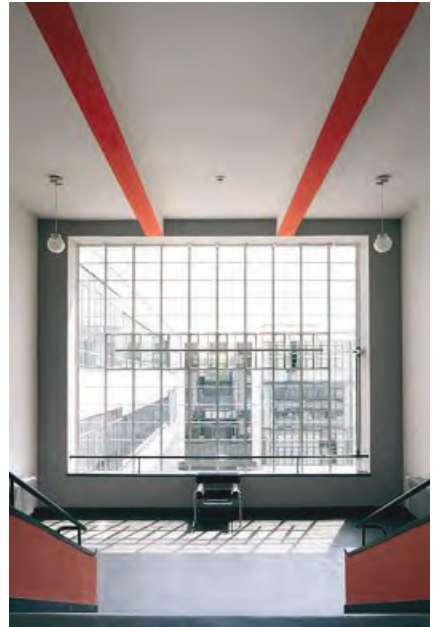
North Facade

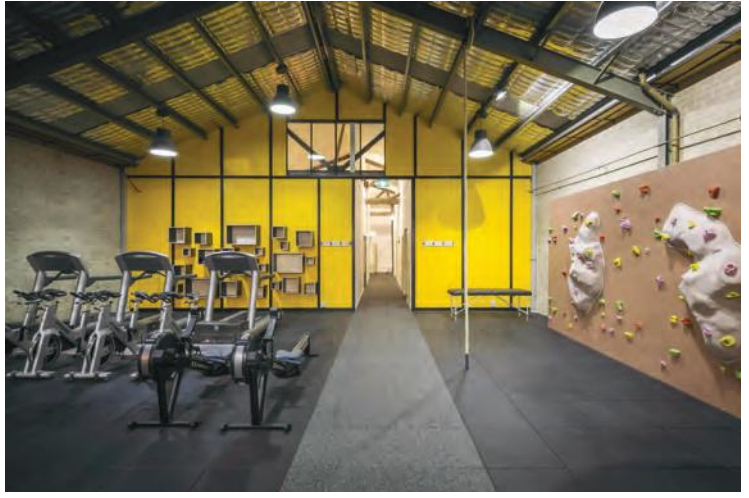


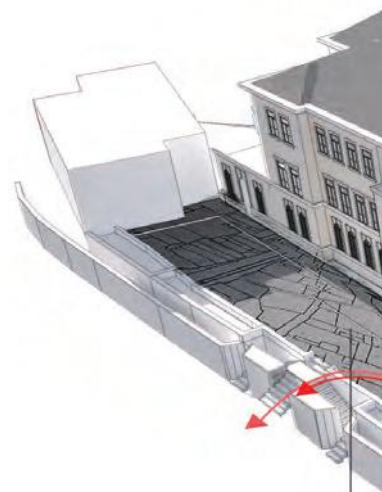
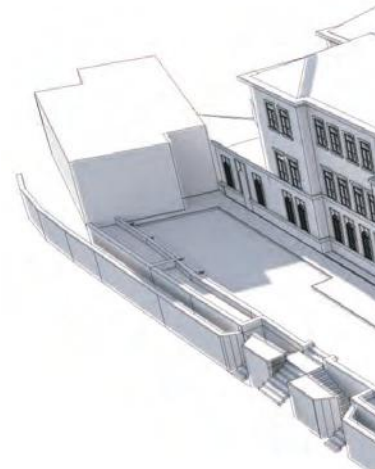
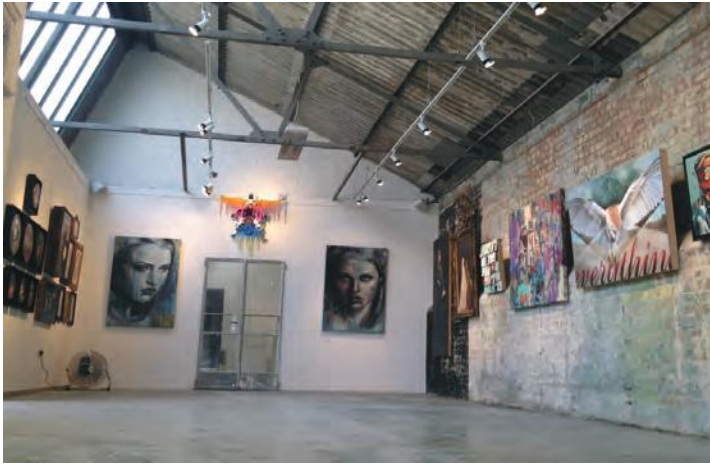
South Facade



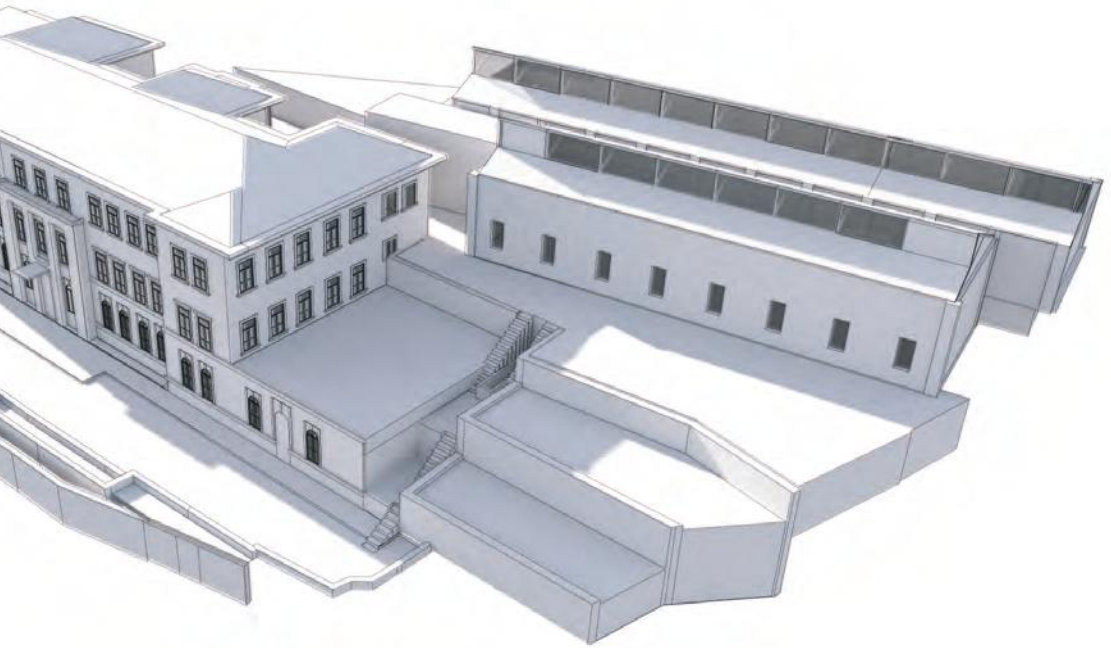
East and West Facade



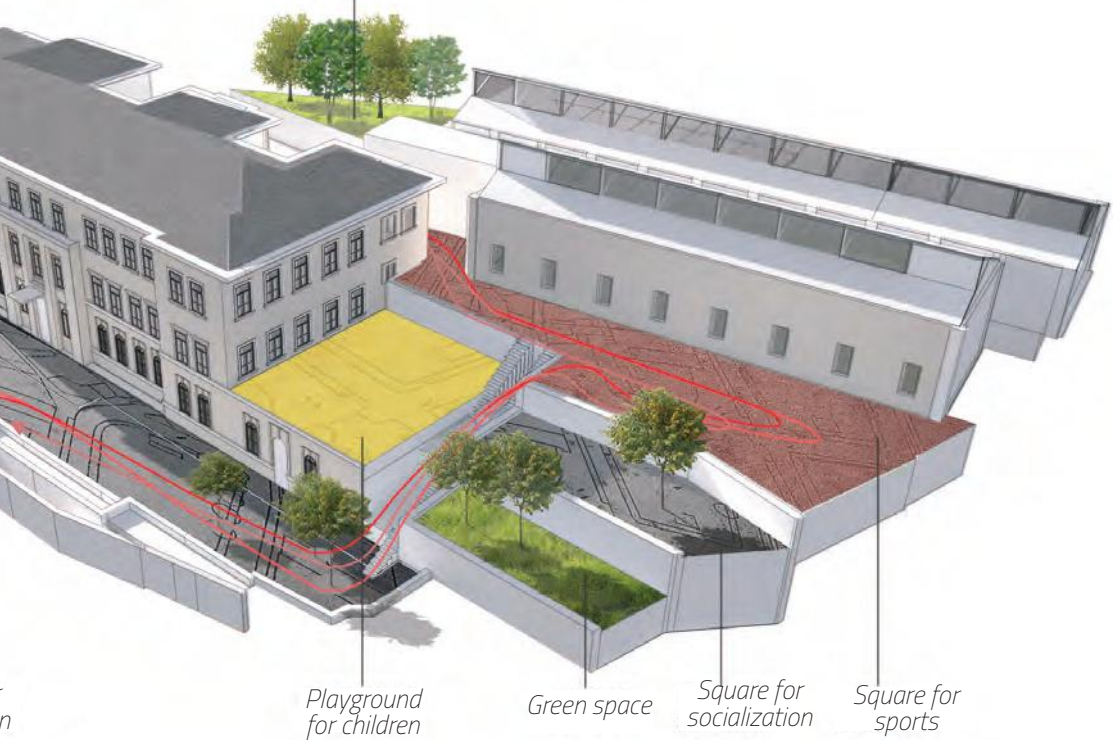




Square for socialization



Green space



Playground for children

Green space

Square for socialization

Square for sports

An example for the rural area of Gjirokastra The case of Zagorie territorial and tourism plan

Work Group:
Besnik Aliaj, Sotir Dhamo, Ledian Bregasi, Ledio Allkja
Mario Shllaku, Eranda Janku, Dea Buza, Blerti Bajo
Figali Dardha, Gerdi Papa, Kejt Dhrami

Zagorie Municipality:
Arqile Mekshi
Andon Pango

This part of the guide will contain:

- Historical and landscape values of settlements of the municipality of Zagorie;
- Land use;
- Resources and potentials of relevant settlements;
- Objectives to be achieved;
- First ideas for requalification of settlement centers;
- Suggested materials for intervention in the structures of settlements.

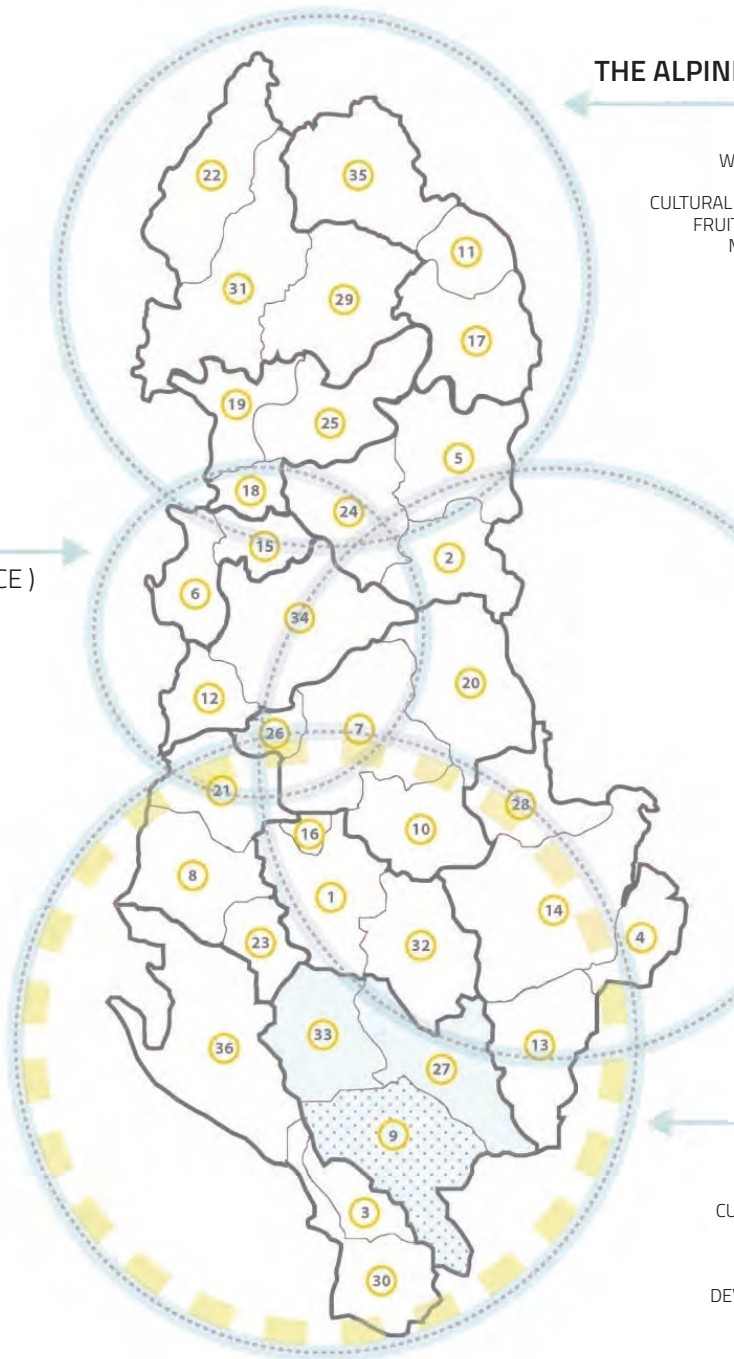




ALBANIA REGIONS

METROPOLITAN REGION (INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE)

- SERVICE INDUSTRY
- OBJECTS WITH HISTORICAL VALUES
- PORT AND MARINE TOURISM
- COUNTRY ENTRANCE GATE



W
CULTURAL
FRUIT
M

CU
DE

E REGION OF ALBANIA

ENERGY AND MINING

HEALTH OF TRADITIONS AND HABITS
 NATURAL AND LANDSCAPE VALUE
 OBJECTS WITH HISTORICAL VALUES
 T CULTURE, VINEYARDS AND OLIVES
 MECHANICAL AND WOOD INDUSTRY
 LIGHT FOOD INDUSTRY

EAST-WEST GATE

REGIONAL COUNTRY GATE
 CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL CENTER
 NATURAL AND MINERAL RESOURCES
 PETROLEUM PROCESSING INDUSTRY
 FOOD INDUSTRY
 CULTURAL OBJECTS & HISTORICAL VALUES
 TRADITIONS IN WOOD AND STONE PROCESSING
 FRUIT CULTURE, VINEYARDS, OLIVE

ALBANIAN RIVIERA

(ECONOMIC ENGINE)

NATURAL AND LANDSCAPE VALUE
 PORTUAL ECONOMIC-TRADE CENTER
 CULTURAL OBJECTS & HISTORICAL VALUES
 FRUIT CULTURE, VINEYARDS, OLIVE
 PROPERTY & MINERAL WATER
 LIGHT FOOD INDUSTRY
 DEVELOPED AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK

ZAGORIE LOCATION



DIVISION OF ALBANIA IN REGIONS



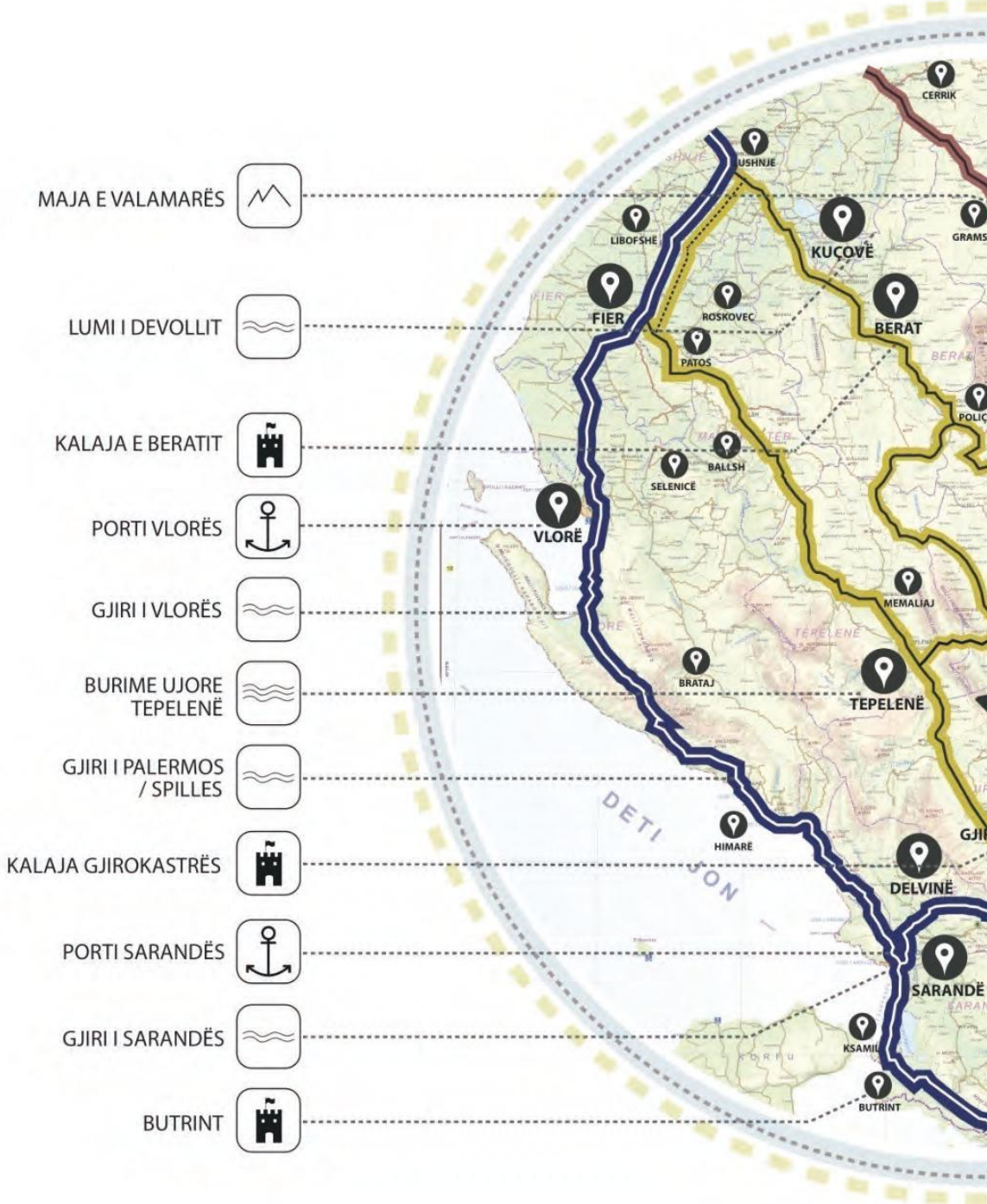
- 1 - Qarku i Beratit
- 2 - Qarku i Dibrës
- 3 - Qarku i Durrësit
- 4 - Qarku i Elbasanit
- 5 - Qarku i Fierit
- 6 - Qarku i Gjirokastrës
- 7 - Qarku i Korçës
- 8 - Qarku i Kukësit
- 9 - Qarku i Lezhës
- 10 - Qarku i Shkodrës
- 11 - Qarku i Tiranës
- 12 - Qarku i Vlorës

DIVISION OF ALBANIA IN DISTRICT

- 1. Rrethi i Beratit
- 2. Rrethi i Bulqizës
- 3. Rrethi i Delvinës
- 4. Rrethi i Devollit
- 5. Rrethi i Dibrës
- 6. Rrethi i Durrësit
- 7. Rrethi i Elbasanit
- 8. Rrethi i Fierit
- 9. Rrethi i Gjirokastrës
- 10. Rrethi i Gramshit
- 11. Rrethi i Hasit
- 12. Rrethi i Kavajës
- 13. Rrethi i Kolonjës
- 14. Rrethi i Korçës
- 15. Rrethi i Krujës
- 16. Rrethi i Kuçovës
- 17. Rrethi i Kukësit
- 18. Rrethi i Kurbinit
- 19. Rrethi i Lezhës
- 20. Rrethi i Librazhdit
- 21. Rrethi i Lushnjës
- 22. Rrethi i Malësisë së Madhe
- 23. Rrethi i Mallakastrës
- 24. Rrethi i Matit
- 25. Rrethi i Mirditës
- 26. Rrethi i Peqinit
- 27. Rrethi i Përmetit
- 28. Rrethi i Pogradecit
- 29. Rrethi i Pukës
- 30. Rrethi i Sarandës
- 31. Rrethi i Shkodrës
- 32. Rrethi i Skraparit
- 33. Rrethi i Tepelenes
- 34. Rrethi i Tiranës
- 35. Rrethi i Tropojës
- 36. Rrethi i Vlorës

MAIN SOUTHERN CORRIDORS

- 1
ALBANIAN RIVIERA CORRIDOR
- 2
**DRINOS-VJOSË CORRIDOR
OSUMI-SEMAN CORRIDOR**

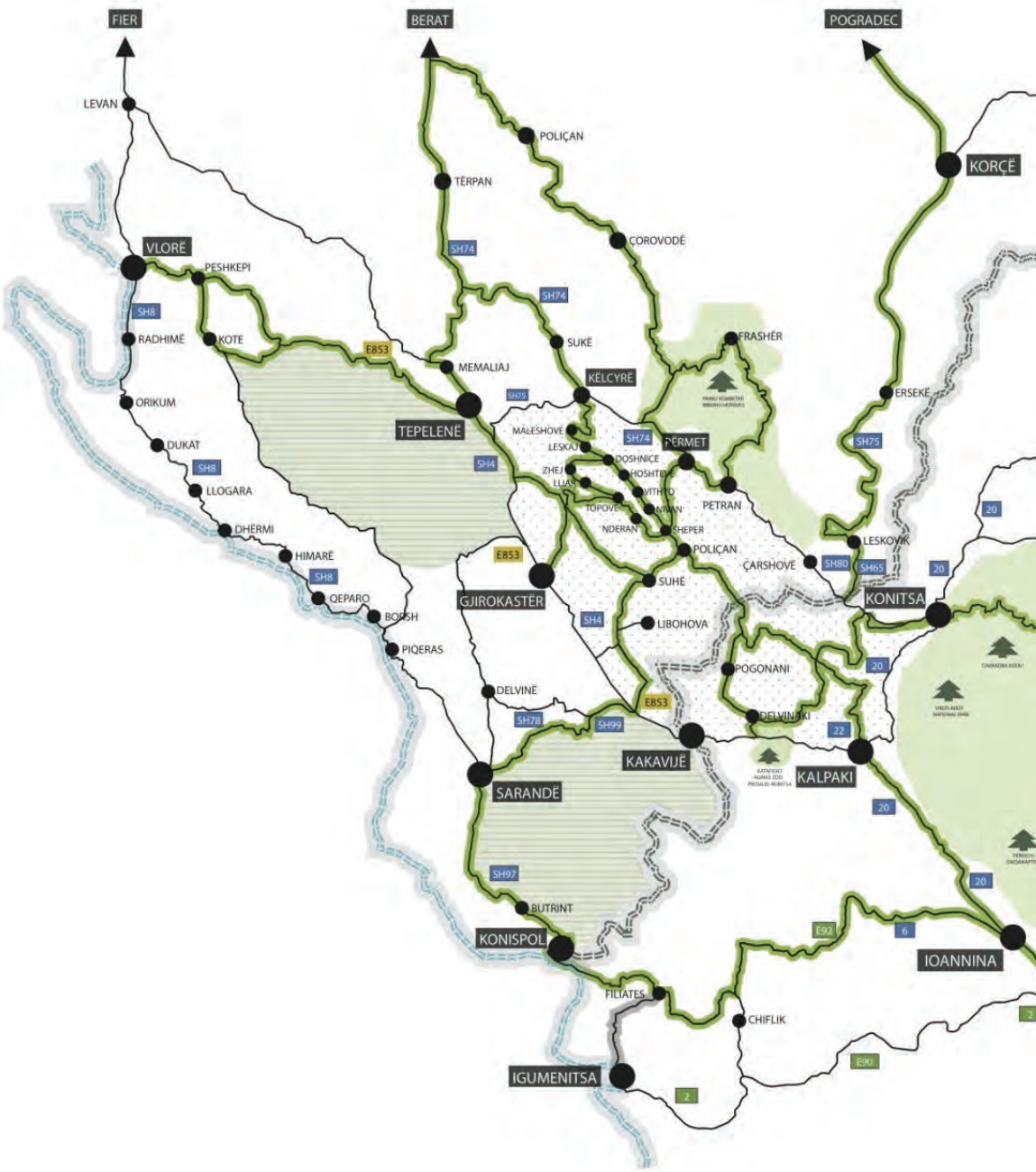


3 DEVOLL-SHKUMBIN CORRIDOR **4** MOUNTAIN-EASTERN CORRIDOR (PËRMET-ERSEKË-KORÇË)



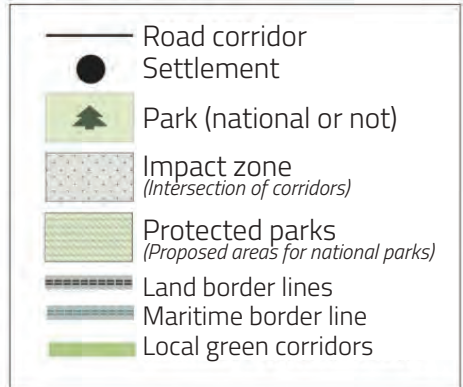
-  LIQENI POGRADECIT
-  MALI I THATË
-  MALI I TOMORRIT
-  VOSKOPOJË
-  DARDHË / PISTE SKIJIMI
-  MALI I GRAMOZIT
-  PËRMET / UJËRA TERMALE
-  MALI I DHËMBELIT
-  MALI I NËMËRÇKËS
-  MALI I LUNXHËRISË
-  BURIME UJORE BURETO

GREEN-TOURIST CROSS-BORDER ITINERARIES

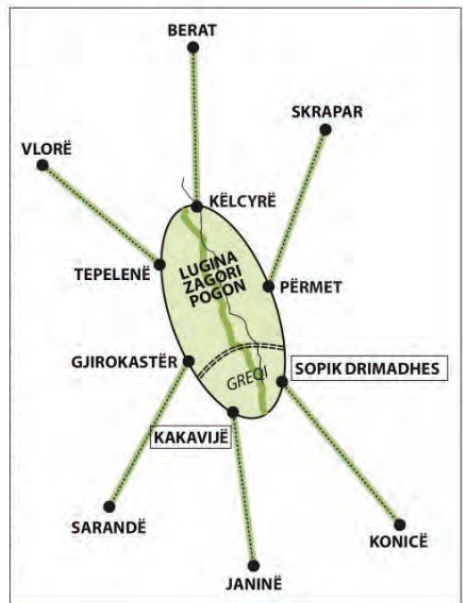




Legenda



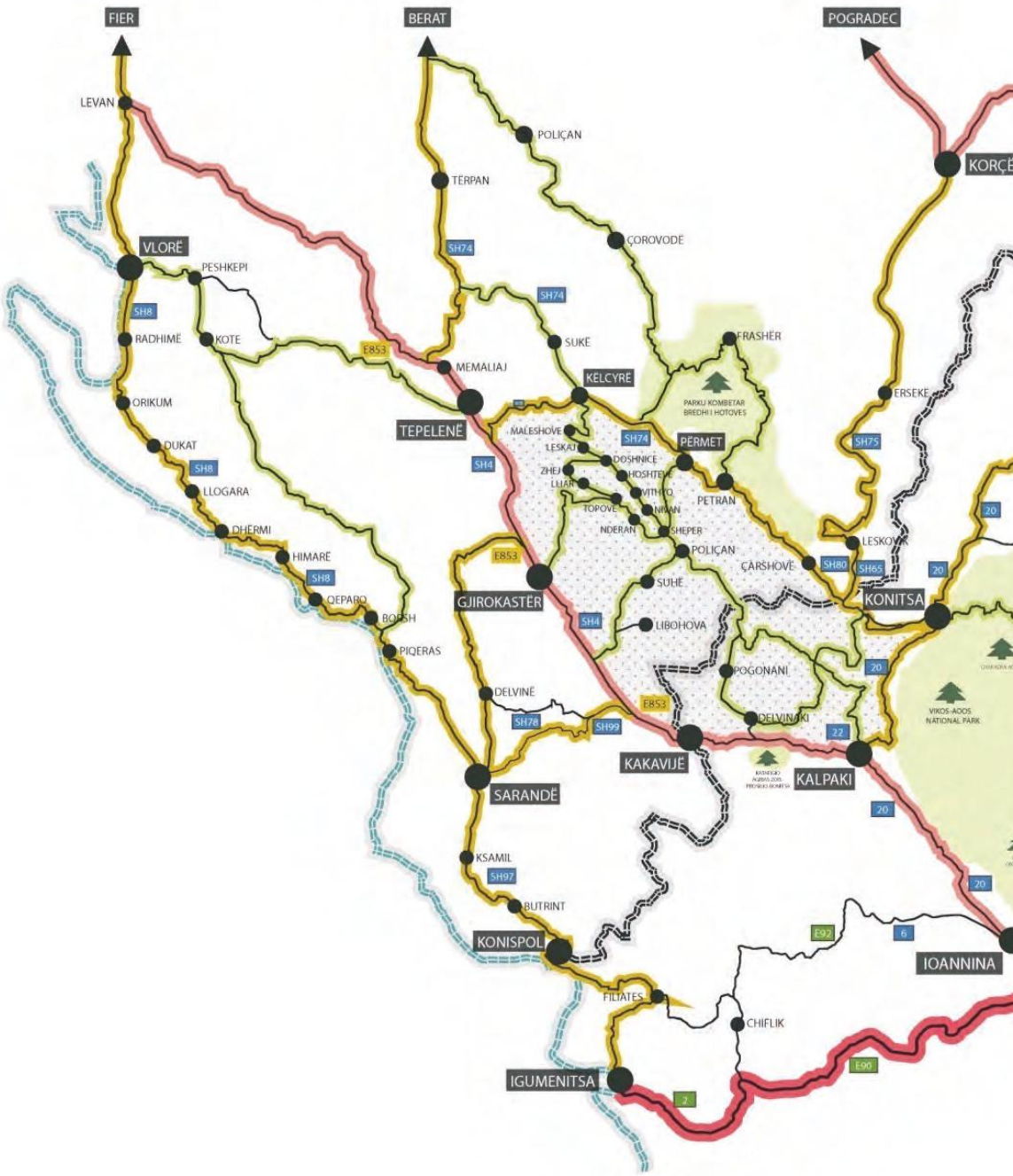
SCHEME OF INTERNAL GREEN CORRIDORS



SGREEN CORRIDORS & ZAGORIA VALLEY

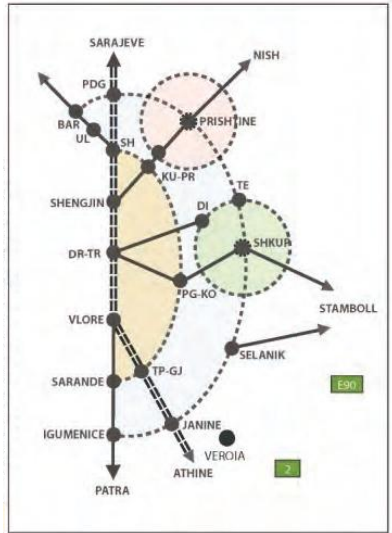


THE MAIN NATURAL AND ECONOMIC CROSS-BORDER CORRIDORS

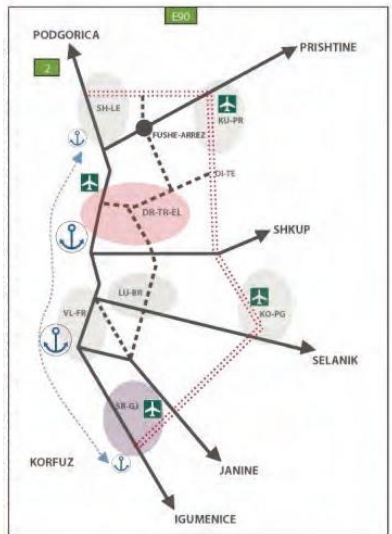




ALBANIA-REGION ROAD ACCESS



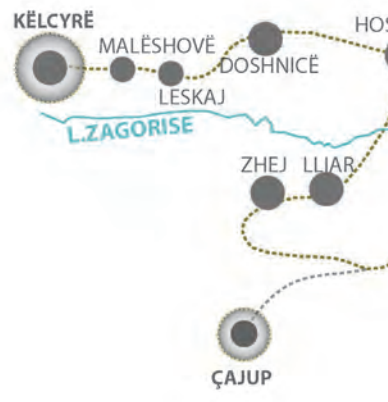
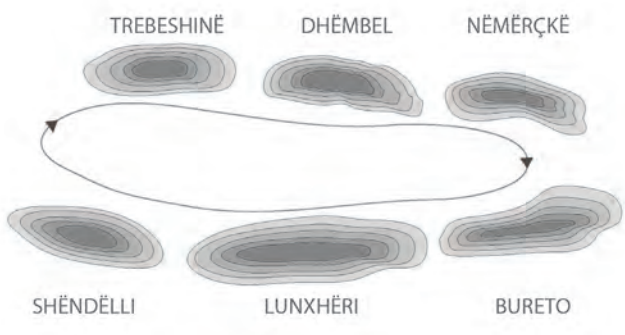
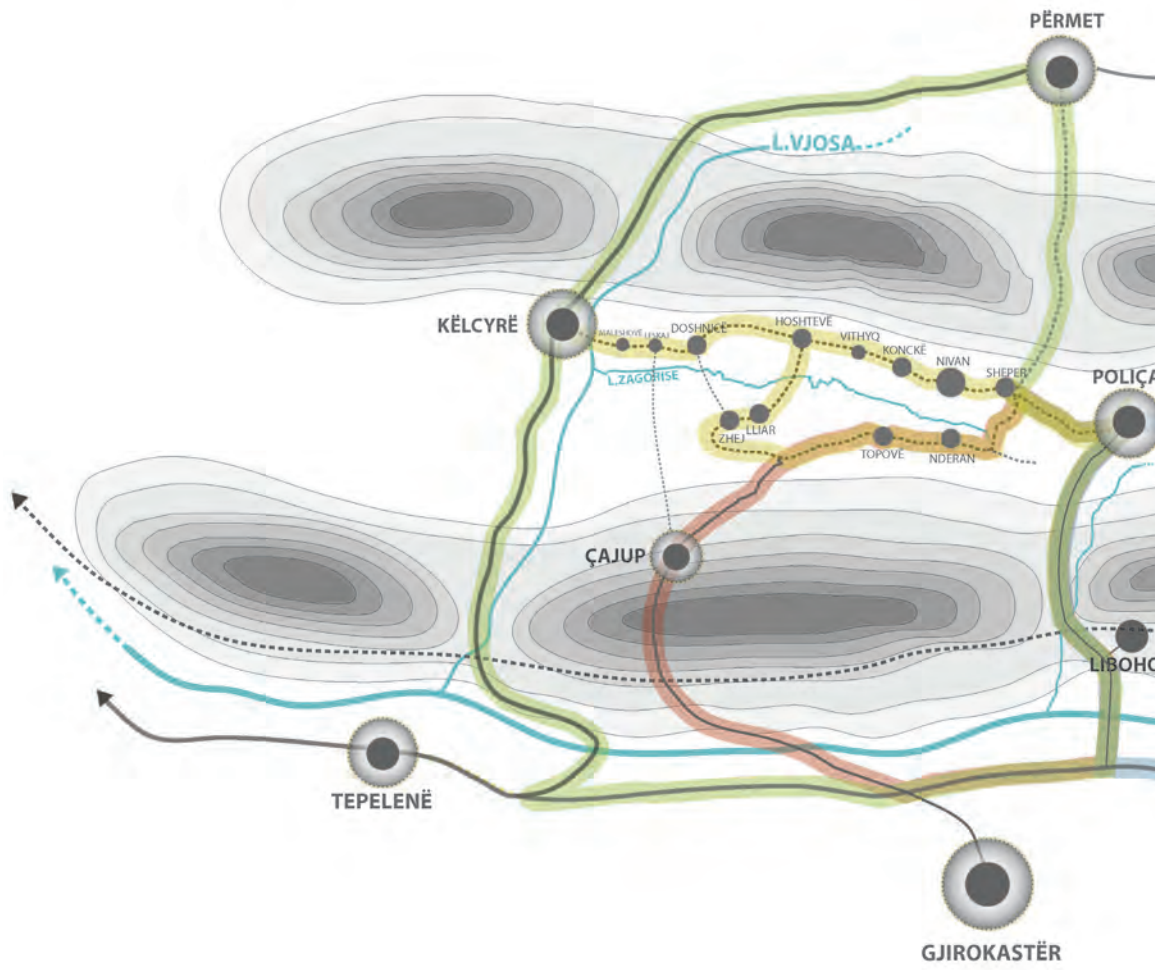
ROAD CORRIDORS AND DEVELOPMENT NODES

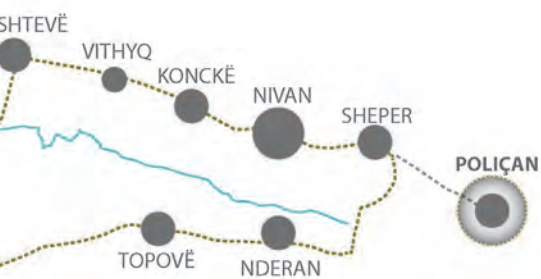
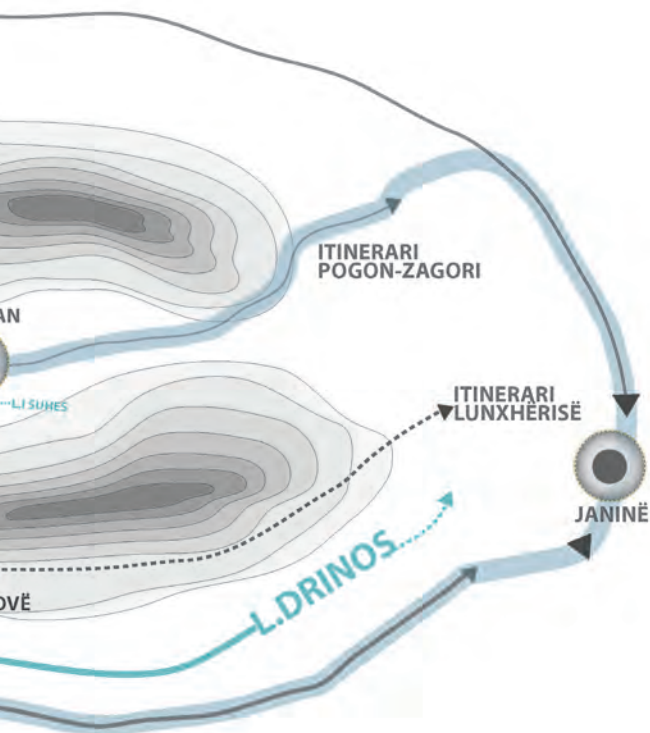


Legenda

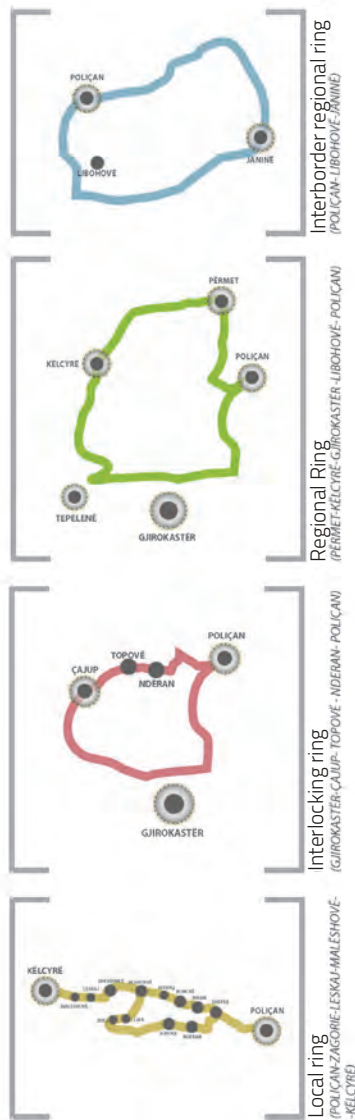
- Road corridor
- Settlement
- Park (national or not)
- Impact zone (Intersection of corridors)
- Land border lines
- Maritime border line
- Paneuropean corridor Egnatia
- Regional Corridors (Intersection with Greece)
- Main National Corridor
- Green Local Corridors

SYSTEM OF TERRITORIAL RINGS

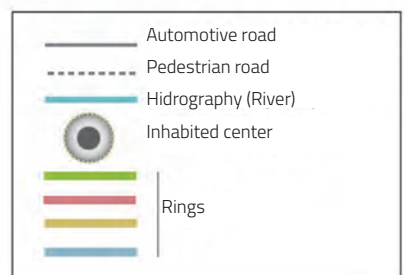




Rings



Legenda



RELIEF

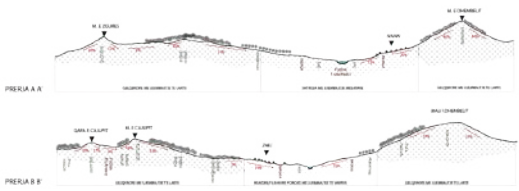
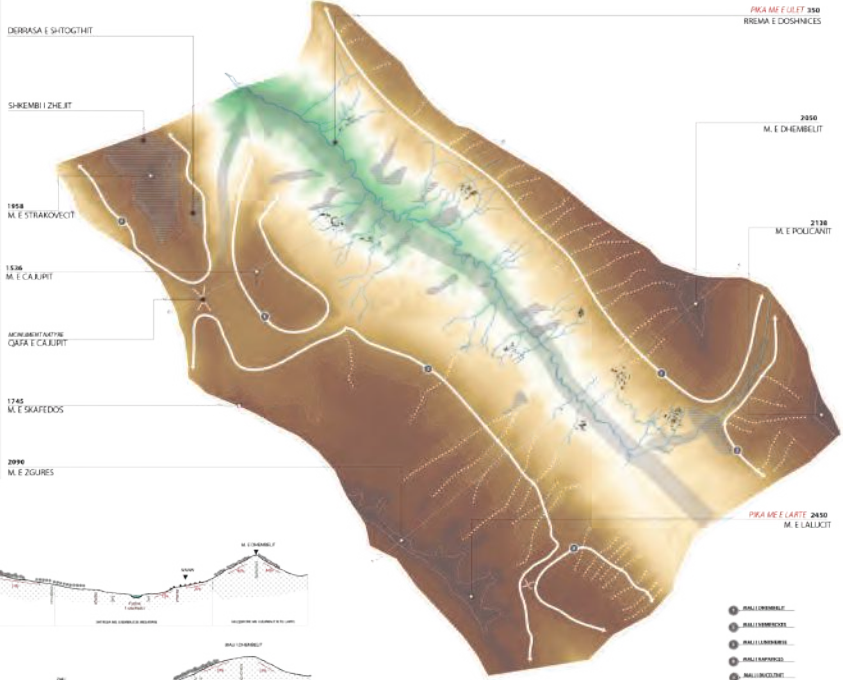
LAND HEIGHT

- Vija me lartësi 1000 metra
- Vija me lartësi 2000 m
- Shqipëri e reze

RELIEF ELEMENTS

- Kulltim / rrethim me ujë
- Çështje të ujërave
- Ekipazhi shkollor
- Qafa mali
- Lugina kryesore
- Elementet e vërejtura të relievit

ADMISTRATIM NËNOR (2002) M



LANDSCAPE SYSTEM

MATRICAT

- Zonë e shprehur nga bimësia
- Peshatë hapësirë
- Peshatë shpatë / kultivuar
- Grupime bimësi të dendura
- Grupime bimësi të fragmentuara
- Grupime bimësi të malla

Corridors

- Rrëshime bimësi
- Tërheqje mjedimore nga infrastruktura



LAND COVER

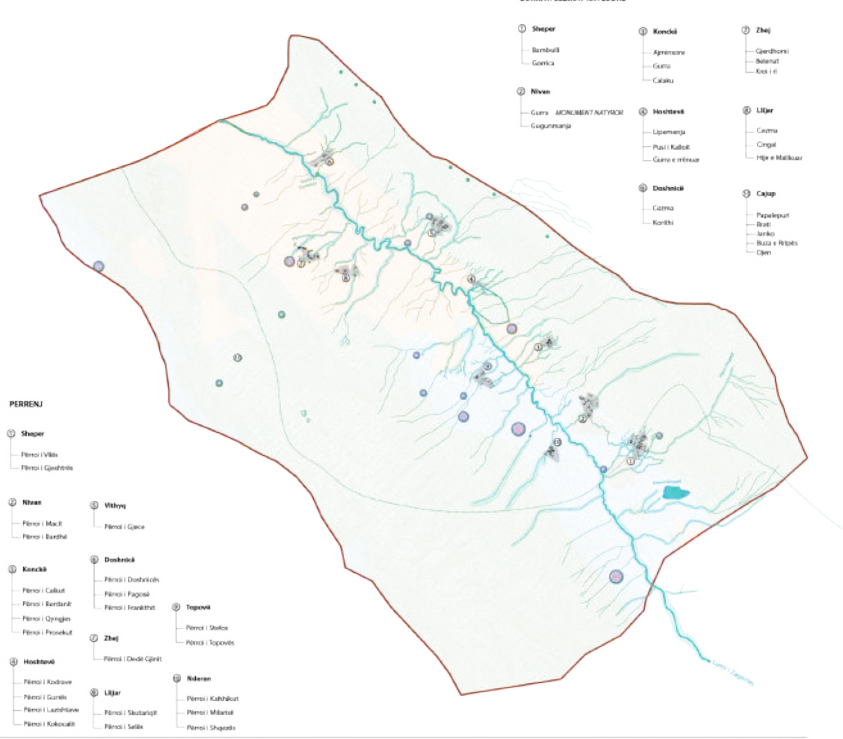
Lojet e bimesise

- Pjll halor me bredha
- Pjll lid
- Pjll duahiu
- Pjll i perzier
- Liradh
- Kullote
- Zone me shkrime miksa
- Zone me bime medicinale
- Zone me karakter bujqesor



HYDROGEOLOGICAL SYSTEM

- PËRSHKUESHMERIA E TERRENIT**
- SHËRMBËRËSITË SHKURTË ME SLEVA NENTKOSORE
ARBUKLA, ALUNDETE, BANCË, PUNIBATE, ZHAROBRI
 - SHTËPËLA ME PËRNASË TË KUNDËRME ME
LUMBAJTE, MESHATËRE
 - SHTËPËLA ME LUMBAJTE TË MASHË E PËRNASË
TË LIRË, OSGËRORË SHËRRESORË, TË CAKË E TË KARTËZDAM
- RRJETI LUMOR**
- RRJET LUMOR SHËRRESOR
 - RRJET LUMOR OSTROR
 - FERRËDU TË FERRËCKËSËN
- LUMJET NENTKOSORE E MBITKOSORE**
- LUMJE
 - RËZDËNIMËRE ALIÇESORË
 - VONË PËRËR MASHËRE
 - BURIME NANTËRE LUMJE
 - LUMVARRË
 - LUMVARRË
 - LUMVARRË
- DOKUMENTIMET**
- LUMVARRË SHËRRESORË
 - FERRËCKËSËN







Hoshteva

Between earth and sky. Elevated at the foot of the mountain, where rare landscape values stand out.

Village at an altitude of 750 meters, located downstream of the river Zagoria, on its right side. It is an old settlement and this is evidenced by the first findings in the Monastery of St. Sotir in the century. X. and in Plesha in the c. XV.

It is mentioned in the Ottoman documents of 1582-83 with 19 families and 1826 with 50 houses. In 1890 there were 120 houses, in 1927 - 467 inhabitants.

After the liberation Hoshteva had 400 inhabitants. On April 22, 1957, the Agricultural Cooperative was established, in 1959 it merged with Vithyqi and in 1960 with Zheji. In 1969 the village was electrified and telephoned. Also during

this year, 12 socio-cultural works were erected in the service of education, culture, health and social life, such as: the Konckë-Hoshtevë highway was built, an 8-year school was opened, a cultural center, a kindergarten, an ambulance, a bakery and bread, others.

Vithyqi, village at an altitude of 500 m, located about 1 km to the right of the lower course of the river Zagoria.

The locals call it Bythyq or Small Village. Mentioned for the time being first in 1852 with 15 houses, in 1913 with 94 inhabitants, in 1927 with 93 inhabitants, and in 1961 with 12 houses. The main direction of the economy is livestock, orchards and bread grains.







View from the church of St. Peter, as well as the center of the village.



History, Culture, Traditions and Customs of Hoshteva.

Hoshteva, is an old settlement and its beginnings are evidenced around the X century. The inhabitants of Hoshteva are autochthonous, but during the Ottoman rule (XVIII - XIX century) came some families from the provinces of Korca, Kolonja, Përmet, Labëria and Sul (Greece). In the church of St. Friday, in the 20s of the century. XVIII, the assembly was organized, where the pledge was made to fight against the Ottoman invaders. Representatives from all over Zagoria and the surrounding villages participated. Hoshteva was the main supporter of Ali Pasha Tepelena and defended him from Kurt Pasha of Berat and bey Tepelena, so Ali, as a sign of gratitude, built the house of Kristananja and Kostara, two bridges over the Hos stream, and the bridge over the river Zagorisë.

Monastery of St. Sotir

To the east of the village of Hoshtevë, about 500m away, the ruins of a church of the Monastery of St. Sotir, a cult monument surrounded by centuries-old oaks, attract the attention of passers-by. This cult

object hides inside its ruins a history of over a thousand years, a fact that makes it the oldest cult monument to date in Zagorie. Hoshteva's remarks. Lonely coniferous forest pile with an area of about 6 ha. It lies next to Gjurmëmushka and serves for boring data in summer. It is protected by law from the state, but unfortunately it has recently been damaged by the state, being cut for construction materials.

Even in the North-East of Doshnica Plank, between the coast of Bazhura in the North and the Udin Pass in the East, there is a considerable pile of dense ridges with a lower height than those of Hoshteva.

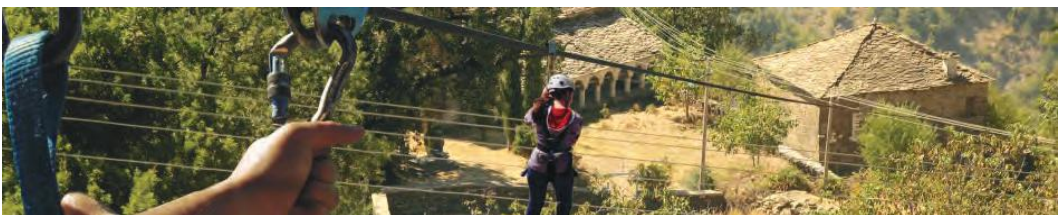
In 1967, during the movement for the eradication of religious prejudices, backward customs and the material basis of religion, which exploded throughout the country, the 3 main churches of architectural and artistic value, that of St. Peter, St. Kolli and St. Sotir, were destroyed and returned. in cooperative warehouses. Hoshteva had 20 churches. During the years 1870 - 1940, 6 priests served in them. The first Albanian school was opened in 1919 with 29 students.



View from inside the church of Hoshteva. Frescoes, and other decorative elements



Hoshteva Center



The creation of a local internal ring is one of the main objectives of general interventions in the area. This ring not only unifies the connection of settlement systems within the municipality, but also creates opportunities for the realization of shorter and faster connections of these systems. One of these connections is that of Hoshteva with Lliari, as well as the strengthening of the existing connection with Doshnica. In addition to the creation of the internal regional ring, priority is given to the improvement of the existing road infrastructure inside the village of Hoshteva, which will enable not only the

passage of vehicles, but also the creation of pedestrian routes.

Another objective is the creation of the village center and the furnishing of a square, which will welcome the main public activities. Part of this square will also be important objects such as: the church of St. Paul; guest house that will also serve as a bar and restaurant; ambulance, as well as the school, which will be reactivated and will host other services such as: summer camping area, vocational training center, information center and also space for nursing and medical service.

Koncka

Story of amazing nature, and not only.

A place of rare natural beauty; rich culture, and with early tradition in trade relations. Village at an altitude of about 800 m on the right bank of the river Zagoria, at the foot of the mountain Biseit.

About the history

Its existence is mentioned in the Ottoman documents of 1431 with 27 families, but the first archeological discoveries made of ceramics show that Koncka is an even earlier settlement. In 1852 there were 30 houses, in 1913 - 156 inhabitants and in 1939 - 200 inhabitants. Its inhabitants have distinguished themselves in anti-

Ottoman resistance, especially for the preservation of the Christian religion. Koncka is distinguished as an area based on economic development, small livestock, bread cereals and vegetables. In Koncka is the church of St. Mary, which is preserved as a cultural monument. Every year, in the spring, a large fair was organized near it, which was also attended by residents of Përmet and Pogon. There has been a Greek language school in the village since the 1970s, and in the meantime Albanian language education was offered in other neighboring villages in the Zagorie Commune.





The concept of development of the center of Konckë village.

As described above, each village will have a separate building, which will provide space for the provision of various services to the villagers. Alternatively, this building will welcome medical, postal, guide information and tourist accommodation, as well as a space dedicated to meetings and recreational activities for young people and other residents. Konckë village square will aim to include not only the Church of St. Mary, as a cult object of great importance for the area, but also the above-mentioned building and the road

that leads to these two important objects. By giving this public space this form and character, ie of a itinerary-square, it is intended to create a special identity where the local architecture, traditions and customs of the inhabitants are promoted, since along this itinerary there are different houses and paths connecting with various residential and natural areas.

The stone is a characteristic and representative material of the area, so the roads will be made of cobblestones and along this itinerary-square and connecting paths, rest places will be created equipped with greenery and benches.



The metal seal of the village

Land use, Konckë has in its use, vacant land, mainly pastures and shrubs, housing, cult objects, and agriculture.





Lliar

Special hospitality and cuisine

224 Village at an altitude of 720 m, about 2 km on the left bank of the river Zagoria, in its lower course, at the foot of Bucelth mountain. Mentioned for the first time in Ottoman documents of the century. XV and XVI with 15 families as well as those of the century. XVIII. Lliari opened the first school in the Greek language in 1848, which continued until the beginning of the century. XX. There was also a church (Holy Trinity) built on the foundations of an old church by the Patriarchate of Istanbul (1884) It had architectural and artistic values, but was destroyed in the 60s of the century. XX Lliari according to the census in 1852 had 25 houses, in 1899 - 350 inhabitants, in 1913 - 272, in 1927

- 219 and 1939 - 300 inhabitants. During the last 30 years of the century.

XIX is populated with inhabitants coming from Labova e Zhapa, Progonati and the province of Kardhiqi. During the century. XVIII - XIX the inhabitants of Lliari processed the stone and traded it in Northern Greece. This is also evidenced by the existence of a pebble factory on the rock of Rec. The inhabitants of Lliari started emigrating in the first years of the century. XIX and especially at the end of it and 1900 - 1918. In Lliar there is an old house of Koçaj with a bold special architectural construction, built in the 60s of the century. XIX and had a magnificent screw 90 m high and 3 m in diameter.



Detail from inside the church of St. Triadhës Local



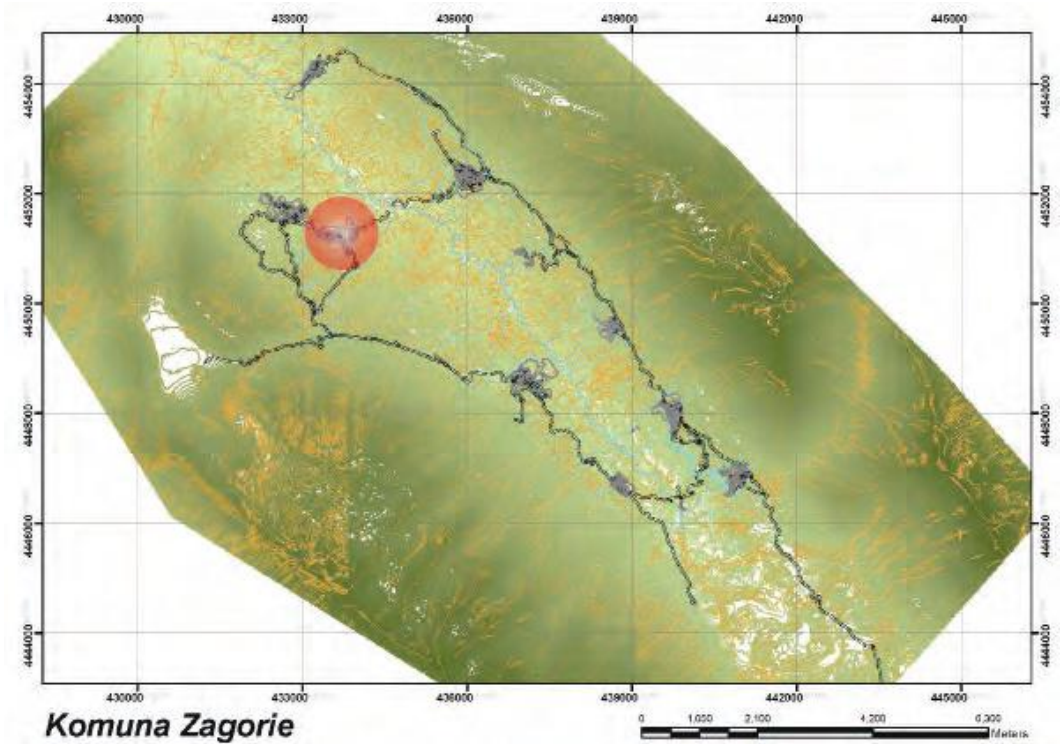
*Church of St, Triadhès; Local house;
Characteristic wooden gate
Local food products*

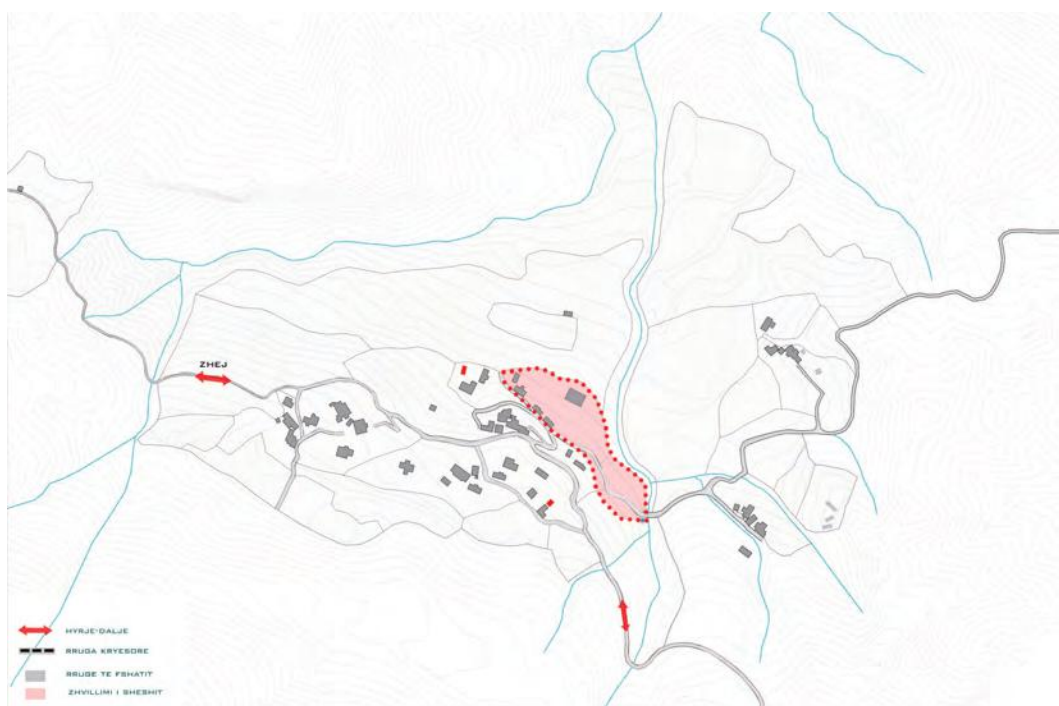
Development of Lliar village center.

The village of Lliari will have a square, part of which will be the church of St. Triadha, the multifunctional building of the village, as well as the spaces around these buildings, with all the natural elements that are located there. Another important element of the village is the stream, which passes near the square. Protection from pollution and the creation of a green belt around it, are the two main objectives of the intervention in the village of Lliar.

Other services will be provided in the area, and here we mention the multi-functional building, which as in any other village in the municipality, here too will welcome various services, such as medical,

postal, information point, and space for recreational and educational activities. An important part of the village will also be the development of cuisine, as Lliari is known not only for citrus, fruits and products obtained from their processing, but also for cooking meat and preparing and preserving food for cold months.





Zhej

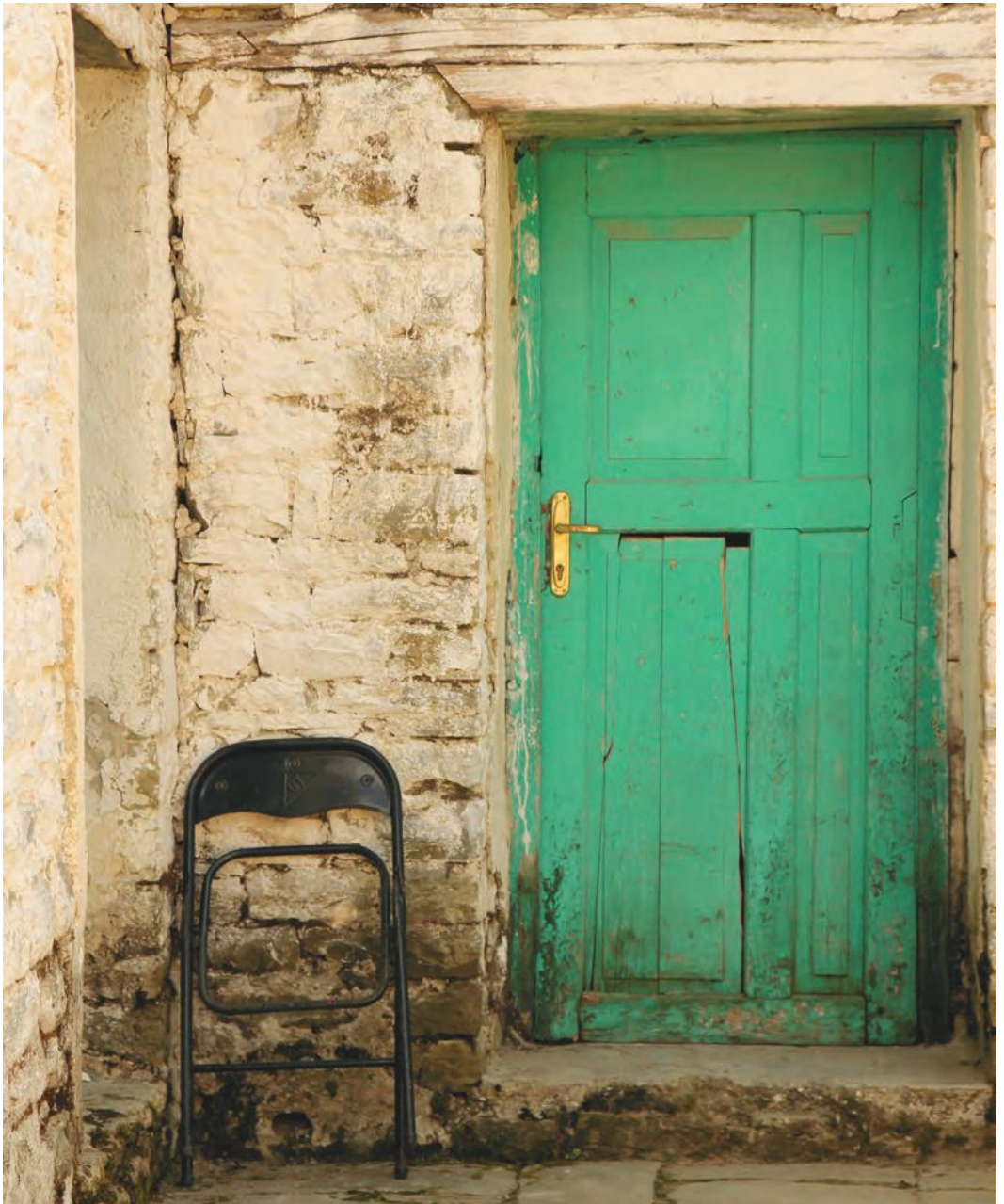
The cradle of culture and education

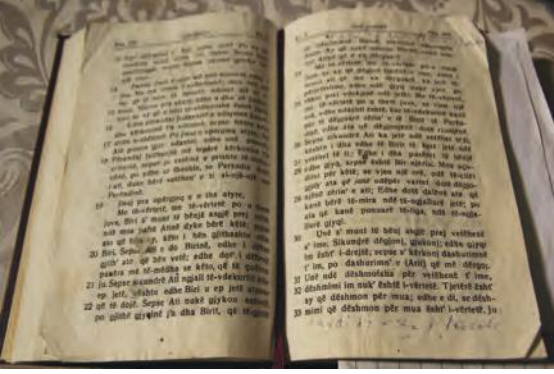
Zheji has always been a beautiful village, with cobbled streets.

Houses surrounded by protective walls and decorated gates, where the color scheme is extremely sweet .. You have to look at Zheji from a high point to enter his labyrinth, but again with great difficulty. Village positioned east of Bucelth Mountain, with an altitude of 700 m. It lies at the foot of Belenat and is surrounded by low hills. It is connected to Çajupi by two footpaths, one passing at Buza e Ripë (between Strakavec and Bucelth) and the other on the south-east side of the latter. According to the data it

is an ancient settlement. This is confirmed because in Belenat and Vërri i Zhejit tombs and pottery of the ancient period have been found. The 9-year school is a great asset of Zheji, in which many students have started their active life, who then, following the other high schools of the country, have managed to excel in all fields. Zheji has had 12 churches and celebrates Holy Friday every year. There was a folk group, which was distinguished in folk and national festivals. The main direction of the economy are bread grains, orchards, vineyards, livestock and especially small livestock.

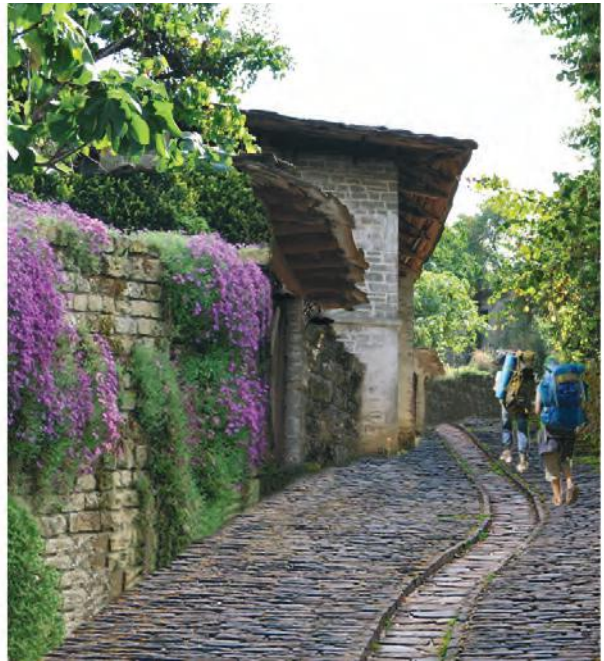
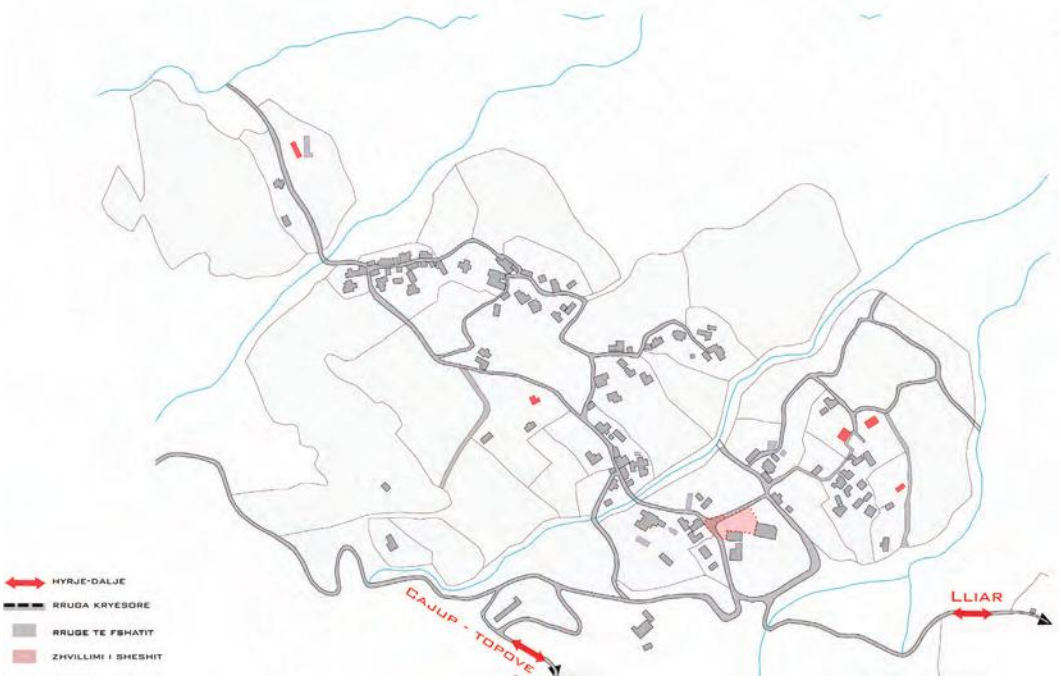






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Ndëran

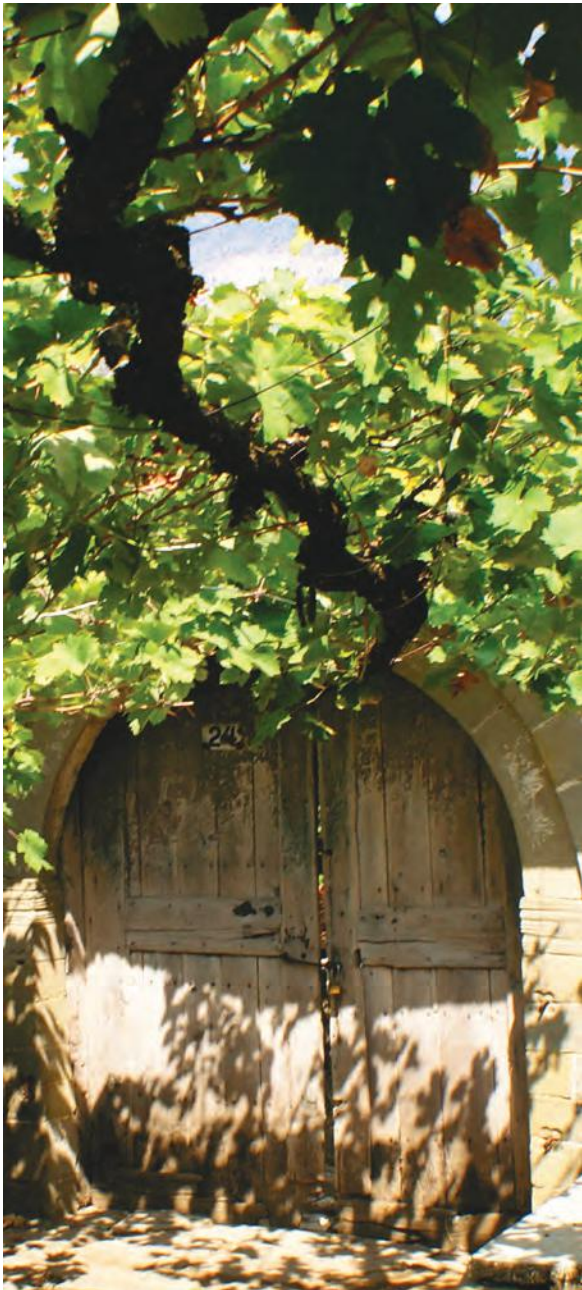
The hearth of Zagorie history

Village at an altitude of 740 m, on the left bank of the river Zagoria, in its upper course. Mentioned in Ottoman records of the century. XV, XVI and it is said that before these centuries it was by the river, together with Nivan. In 1952 it is witnessed by 18 families.

At the end of the century. XVIII and at the beginning of the century XIX, inhabitants from Panariti of Korça, Erseka, Picari, Progonati, Luzati of Tepelena, Kuçi of Vlora and Central Albania settled in Ndëran.

During the '80s and' 90s of the century XVIII was a safe base of Ali Pasha Tepelena, who was sheltered and guarded by a local family. In 1852 there were 65 houses and in 1899, 400 inhabitants. At the beginning of the last century began the mass emigration of the population, mainly to Kavala and Larissa (Greece and Macedonia) and the number of inhabitants dropped to 286 in 1913, 261 in 1918 and 200 inhabitants in 1939. The earthquake of 1913 destroyed Milaria's neighborhood.

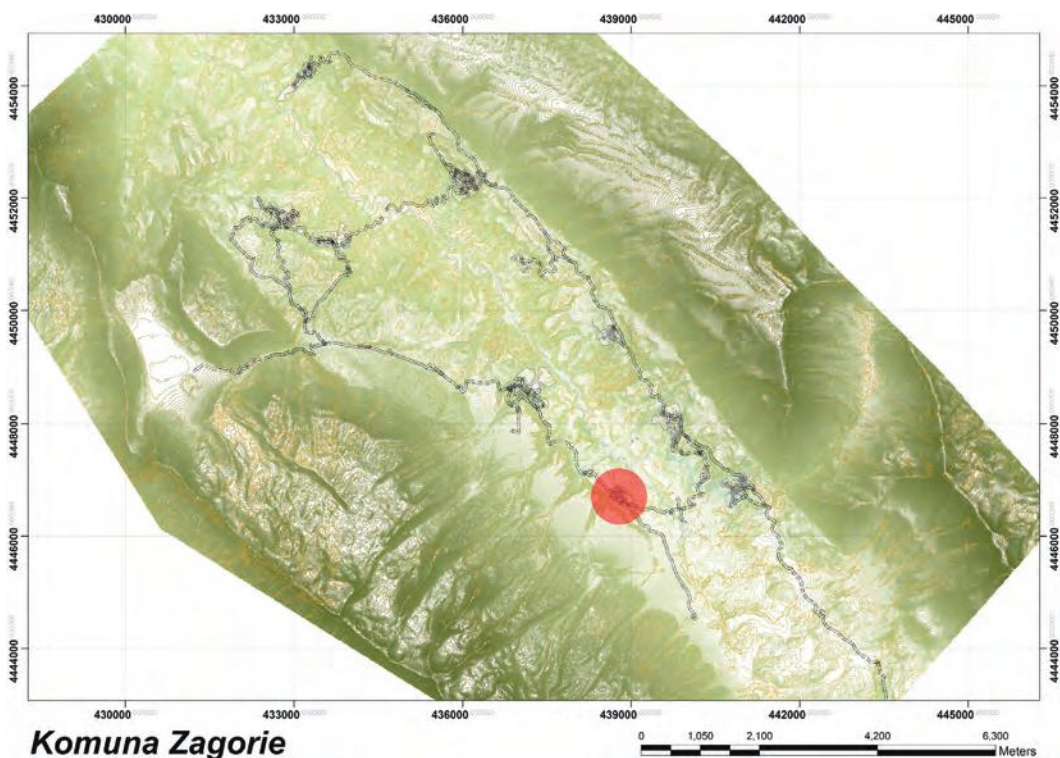






The concept development of the center of Ndëran village.





The center of Ndëran village will consist of two main squares, that of the village church and that of the multifunctional building, and the connecting space between these squares. In this way, it will be possible to give life not only to the respective squares, but also to the space between them, which also integrates residential areas.

Regarding the multi-functional building, as well as in other villages of the Municipality, it will welcome various functions, such as medical, postal service, information center on tourist itineraries and potentials of the village, as well as space other dedicated to various recreational activities.

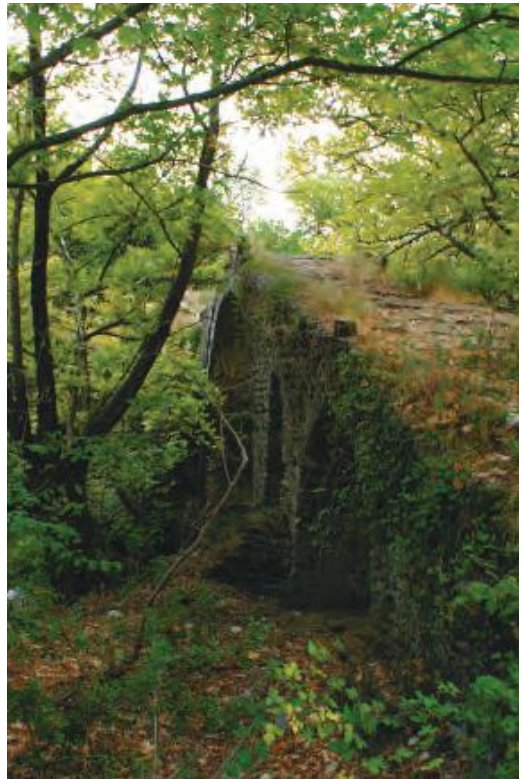
Nivan

Municipal Institutional Center.

Village at an altitude of about 800 m, on the right bank of the river Zagoria, at the foot of Biseit. It is the center of the municipality of Zagoria which includes 10 villages of the province. It is mentioned as an ancient settlement and it is said that, before the Ottoman conquest, it was located near the river, together with Ndëran. According to Ottoman records in 1431 there were 28 families and paid the annual tax 2007 axes; in 1582 42 families. While in 1852 the Upper Nivani is evidenced with 40 houses and the Lower with 20. In the second half of the century. XVIII, 9 wealthy families of the village, were put in the service of the Ottoman rulers and some of them embraced Islam. Nivani became famous for his Monastery of St. Mëhill, in which many meetings, assemblies, fairs and religious festivals have been held

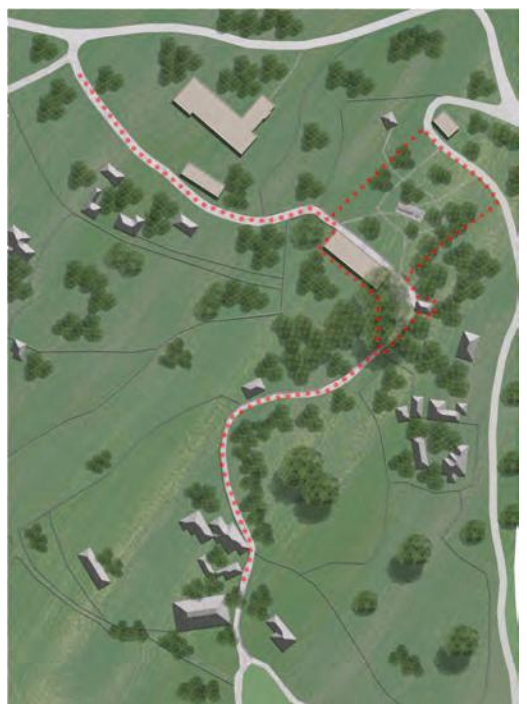
since the century XVIII to the present day. Near this monastery is opened the central school, the middle half of Zagoria. During the second half of the century XIX Nivani is populated with inhabitants coming from Përmeti, Erseka and Kurveleshi. In the Monastery of Nivan in these years many efforts were made to turn the Greek school into an Albanian school. It opened in 1899 with 65 students. The Albanian school was opened in 1922. It was closed within the year and reopened in 1925. After the liberation in Nivan the Health Center was opened, the agricultural high school was established, the center of the locality, the cooperative and the other United Council were established. The main direction of the economy is the production of bread grains, vegetables, small livestock and fruit crops.







The center of the Nivan will be near the source of the village, which provides a considerable space, which is also located near the building which will have various functions, mentioning spaces for recreational activities, bar and restaurant, a mini library, and space for various meetings and gatherings. Equipped with greenery and space to relax, the Nivan fountain will return to its former state, when it was the only place where residents could organize their meetings.



Sheper

A place not only with rich history, but also with culture, traditions and customs known throughout the Municipality

Village at the foot of Dhëmbelit, in the middle of the road Gjirokastër - Poliçan - Përmet, at an altitude of 800 m. It was previously located in its West and was referred to as Tërrovë.

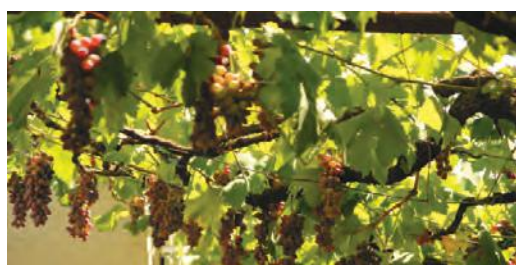
It is an old village; is proved for the first time with this name in the Ottoman registers of 1431 with 38 houses. In the second half of the XVIII century had 300 houses and 3 inns for trade caravans, which passed on the road Korça - Përmet - Qafa e Dhëmbelit - Dropull - Saranda.

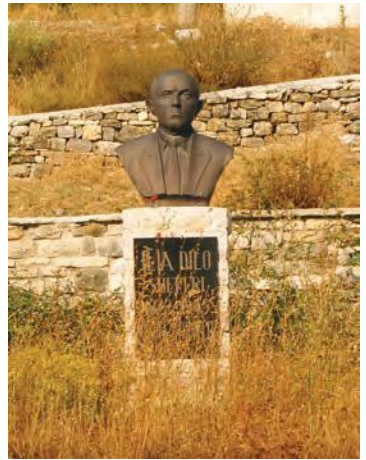
In 1852, according to the Greek historian P. Araventinoi had 150 houses and in 1898 - 1200 inhabitants. Shepher had a school in the Greek language in 1874; also many

students attended Nivan school in the '80s of XIX century. While in 1898 Sheper's school had 65 students and 2 teachers. At the beginning of the last century, many efforts were made for the Albanian school.

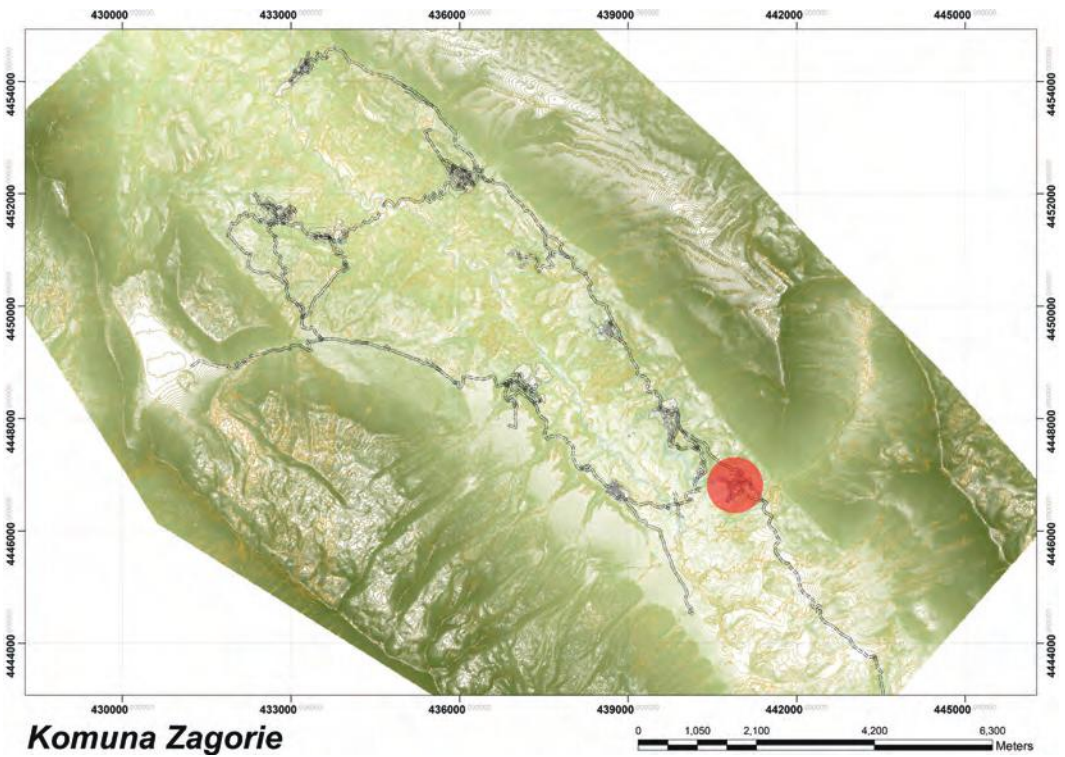
In 1906 there was a secret walking school for learning the mother tongue, while in 1910 the "Orthodox League" was established. In the first decades of the XX century began mass emigration; about 40 families settled mainly in Macedonia and Greece.







Sheperiotes in Albania



Komuna Zagorie





The concept of development of Sheper village center.

The center of Sheper village will also be a space lying between the village church square and the square next to the multi-functional building. Along this space that will be considered as the center of the village, are located the most important buildings for the village, where we mention the buildings that provide various public services, as well as houses, which are of special architectural importance. From this part, considered as the center of the village,

various paths are connected, which lead to other attractions in the village, as well as inside the inhabited neighborhoods. Various tourist itineraries will traverse these areas, offering tourists not only amazing natural views, but also elements from local traditions and customs, as well as the opportunity to stay in inns or visit the houses of the village, where you will can taste local food products and of course homemade brandy.



Image that shows how can to look this square.

Topovë

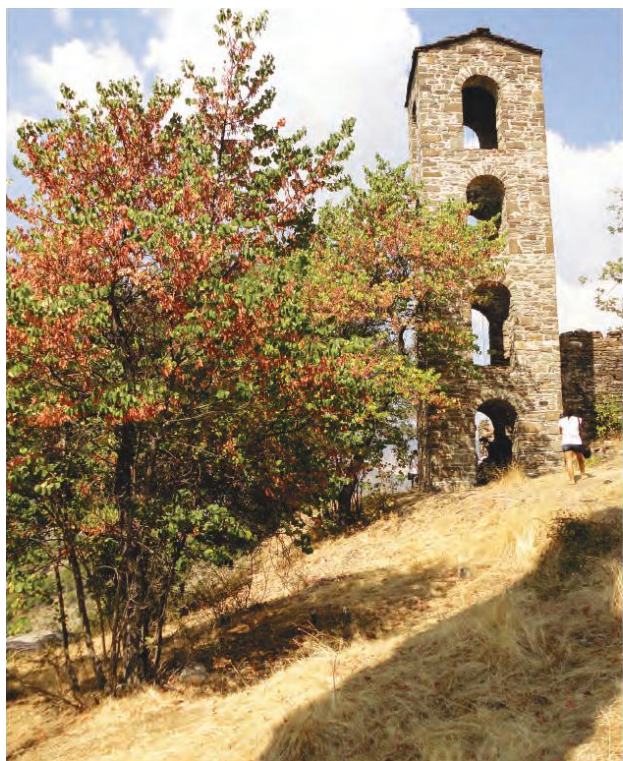
Tradition and culture in the processing of citrus and fruits.

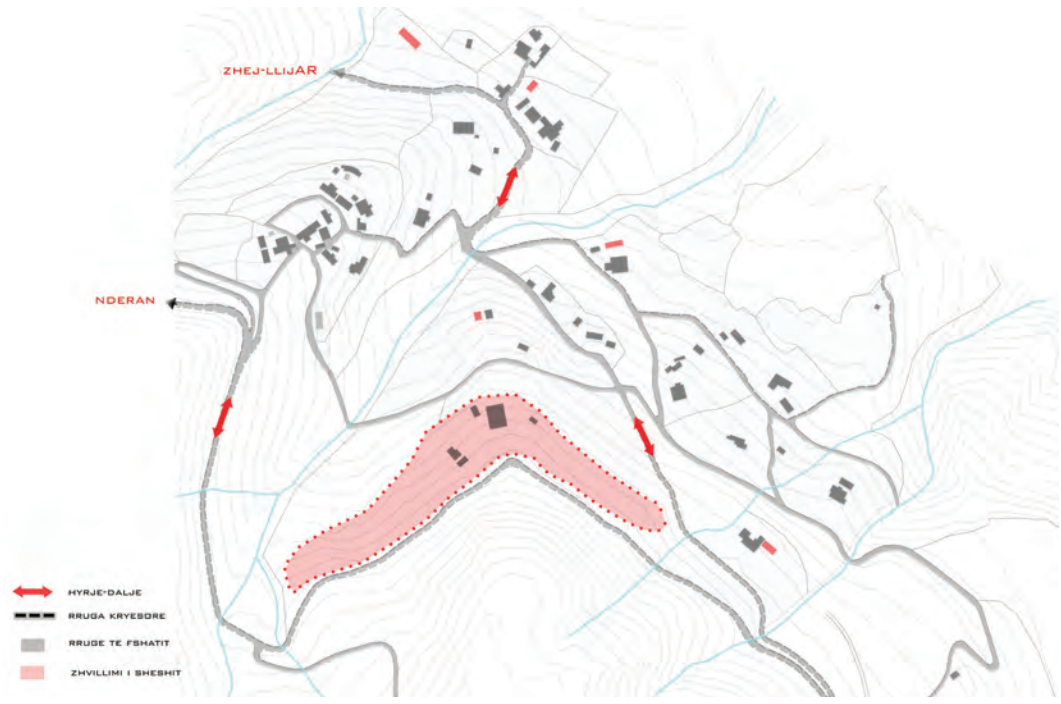
244 Village at an altitude of 600 m, about 2km. To the left of the upper Zagoria River, it lies in a pit on both sides of the stream of the same name. It is an old residential center. Centuries ago, it was located by the river. There were four churches, of which that of St. Mary was older than that of St. Kollit, which is preserved as a cultural monument. Topova School was opened in 1874 in Greek and in 1898 had 30 students. For its maintenance the villagers gave 500 grosh per year. The population has a fighting tradition: it has supported Ali Pasha Tepelena to secede from Turkey. According to the census of 1913 it had 287 inhabitants and in 1927 - 300. In this period, it was for several years the center of the municipality. After the liberation, it was the center of local government in Zagoria for several years. The maternity hospital and the hospital of the province have been set up here. In 1962, as a result of heavy and torrential rains, Topova suffered major landslides,

which destroyed its urban line. Today there is a primary school, 16 families with 40 inhabitants. On July 18, 2002, the church of St. George was inaugurated.

WHITE STONES. In the place called Gurdë e Bardha, about 700m south of the village, in the arable lands, during the arrangements with mechanical means, ceramic fragments came to the surface. Even in the years that followed the locals during the agricultural works continued to encounter such findings. According to the descriptions of these fragments, they have been heavy stones in large quantities (over 100 pieces), and fragments of ceramic vessels. The area in question is bordered on the south by the stream of Gurra i Bardhë, on the east by the place called Fshate (according to the data there was once a village), on the north and northwest by the pit of Lëmi and streams and on the west by St. George.







The creation of a local internal ring is one of the main objectives of general interventions in the area. This ring not only unifies the connection of settlement systems within the municipality, but also creates opportunities for the realization of shorter and faster connections of these systems. One of these connections is that of Hoshteva with Lliari, as well as the strengthening of the existing connection with Doshnica. In addition to the creation of the internal regional ring, priority is given to the improvement of the existing road infrastructure inside the village

of Hoshteva, which will enable not only the passage of vehicles, but also the creation of pedestrian routes. Another objective is the creation of the village center and the furnishing of a square, which will welcome the main public activities. Part of this square will also be important objects such as: the church of St. Paul; guest house that will also serve as a bar and restaurant; ambulance, as well as the school, which will be reactivated and will host other services such as: summer camping area, vocational training center, information center and also space for nursing and medical service.



The concept of development of the center of the village Topova

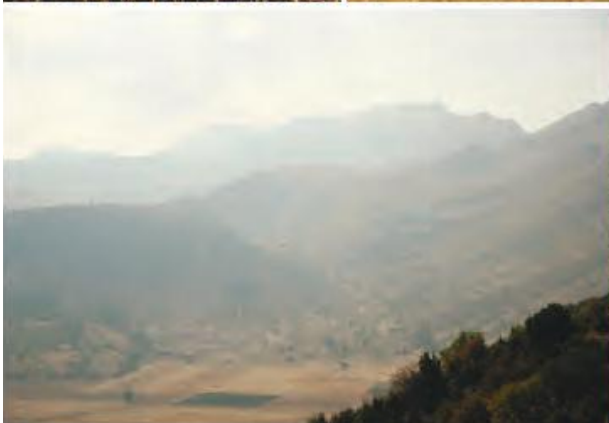
Field of Çajupi

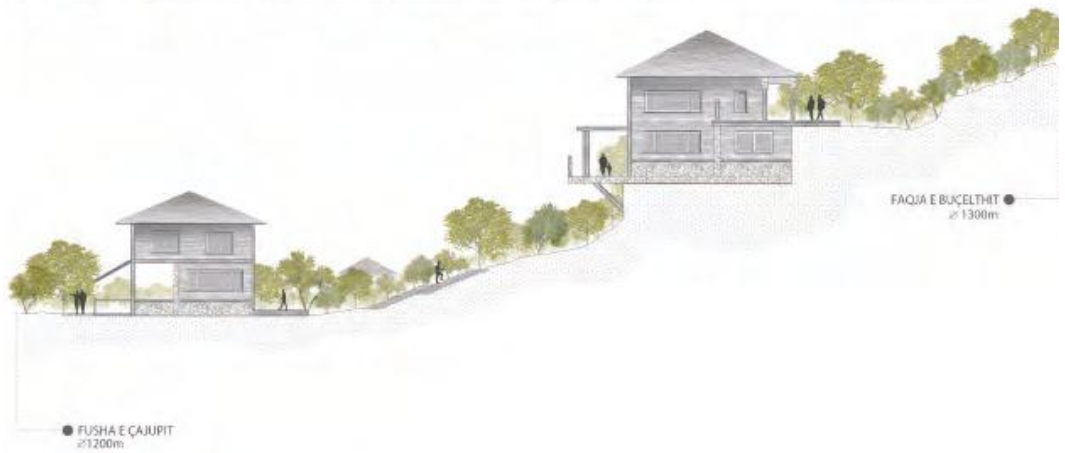
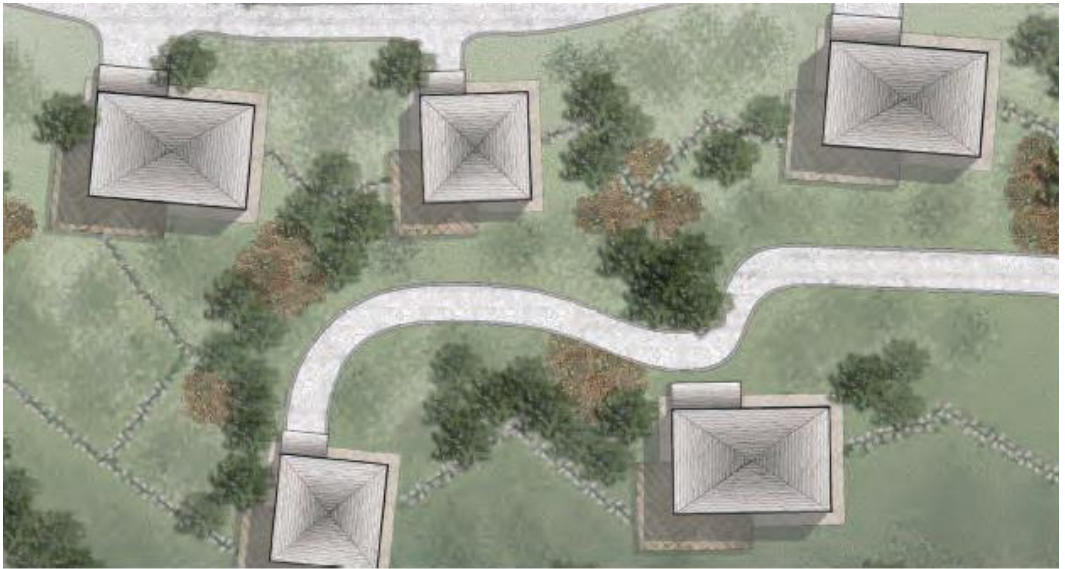
Rare natural wealth for the area, with special relief that stimulates not only landscape tourism, but also winter tourism, horseback riding and various walking routes.

The Çajupi field about 1200 meters above sea level and about 30 kilometers from the city of Gjirokastra is a rare natural monument, not only for Zagoria, but for the entire region and beyond. A place where nature has generously forgiven fresh air, cold water, flowers and trees, which like nowhere else complement an almost fabulous panorama. And not only that, but if you are going to be in the Çajup field, you are very close to the Çajup Pass, which is also considered a Natural Monument. The

central part of the field during the winter is covered by floods, but still during the warmer months of the year, it is planted with different products, which not only give it more value, but also make it more beautiful and colorful, which contrast with the deep green of the surrounding bushes and pastures in the mountains. Numerous water sources, scattered in the territory, add even more to the values of the Çajupi Field.









We have considered Fushë e Çajupit as the entrance gate of the Municipality of Zagoria, the point from which every itinerary through the villages will start and continue. Among other things, to support this goal, at the entrance of the Çajup Field there will be a parking space, from where you can then move with local tourist cars, horses or on foot. Also at the entrance of the field, an information point will be located, which will provide data on the activities that will take place in the Çajup Field, as well as beyond it, in the villages.

Favored by the relief, it is thought that the main service that will be provided in Fushë e Çajupit, in addition to being a gateway, is the establishment of a ski resort, which will create two tracks of beginner and intermediate levels, a basic service building, a series of small holiday villas, camping development space in the southern part of the plain, as

well as a series of natural itineraries for both pedestrians and horseback riding.

Holiday villas will be small accommodation spaces, which will welcome not only family vacationers, but also working groups for organizing workshops and projects. One of the most important goals is to create a spirit of cooperation of different authorities, to bring to the Municipality working groups in the field of restoration. Given that a good part of them are organized in the neighborhoods of the city of Gjirokastra, it will be simple to move part of this flow through the villages of the Municipality of Zagorie.

The base building of the resort will be a 2-storey structure, with wood and stone base, which will offer various services, where in addition to the hotel, restaurant and bar, there will be shops, a swimming pool, sauna and a meeting room and conferences.

Innovative Urban Design Strategies for a Traditional City. The Case of Gjirokastra.

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POLIS University / Tirana, Albania

Abstract

This article arises as a need to address a phenomenon that has affected all small towns that do not reach a certain population. The problem in question is related to the displacement of the population from small settlements to large urban centers. As a result, we have the shrinkage of small settlements creating what are called shrinking cities and the overcrowding of large centers that go from the Metropolis to Megalopolis or up to the totalitarian scenario of Dioxiadis, that of Ecumenopolis.

The main objective of this paper is to propose some intervention strategies in urban areas that can regenerate the image of the settlement to prevent the shrinkage of the settlement itself and to regenerate its image.

The preliminary hypothesis is that the use of these strategic interventions, in urban areas and settlements, can regenerate the image of an area or a settlement by improving its conditions and preventing shrinkage. The verification of this hypothesis will be done through the analysis of past case studies and the emphasis of successful cases in contexts that are at the same time as similar as are different from Gjirokastra. Taking these cases, both in different and in similar contexts, emphasizes the value of these context-independent strategies.

Introduction

The treatment of the topic of shrinking cities was decided to provide a solution to a problem that can be perceived directly from a simple and intuitive observation of small settlements in Albania. Following the research, our perception was confirmed by statistical data which stated that all counties in Albania, except for Tirana, have shrunk from 2011 to the present day and that the county that has shrunk the most was Gjirokastra which had lost almost 35% of the population.

In Albania, the problem of shrinking small

settlements until their total abandonment mainly affects settlements that do not exceed 100,000 inhabitants, while those that do not reach the limit of 2,000 inhabitants are being completely abandoned.

To solve this problem, Polis University addressed this problem in two courses, that of Studio and Theory of Urban Planning¹ and on the studies conducted in the first year of the International Doctorate in Architecture and Urban Planning (IDAUP)². The results of these two courses are included in this publication.

¹ / Studio and Theory of Urban Planning course, each academic year, addresses a specific topic related to the main issues encountered in the Albanian context. The methodology followed is dealing with the problem in theoretical and practical terms, suggesting at the end of the course recommendations and suggestions that can be applied in all those cases of the same character where a similar problem appears.

The course takes place, under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Besnik Aliaj and Dr. Llazar Kumaraku, with the third year of studies in the scientific masters of Architecture and Urban Design, and Urban Planning and Environmental Management.

² / In the joint Doctoral program with the University of Ferrara in Italy, in the framework of the joint workshop in the academic year 2019-2020, was addressed the topic of shrinking cities. The results of this research are published in this publication. To achieve this result we work intensively in the two workshops held one in Ferrara and the other one in Tirana but also throughout the first year of Ph.D. with further research to detail the analysis and to answer to the specific problem.

The problem of shrinking settlements, in this case also that of Gjirokastra, led to the abandonment of three different categories of spaces: the first relates to public spaces that in the old historic city are very few but also in the case that they are present, as in the part built during the communist period, appear degraded; the second relates to spaces abandoned due to the decommissioning of industrial areas, and the third with the abandonment of private dwellings. These three categories require three solutions with different characters and scales. In the following, we will seek to provide some strategies that are able to cover exactly these three categories of spaces.

Interventions in public spaces - The case of Roma

One of the most emblematic cases of shrinking cities, which through specific interventions has stopped the shrinkage and regenerates the image, is the case of ancient and medieval Rome. Ancient Rome reached its maximum population at the beginning of the second half of the second century, during the empire of Antonino Pio and immediately after the large-scale urban interventions made by Emperor Adriano. During this period the population of Rome reaches approximately 1,200,000 to 1,700,000 inhabitants. The first contractions of the Roman city began immediately after "il sacco di Roma" by the Visigoths of Alarico. Later in every "sacco" that was done to the Romans the population was halved and the city was abandoned leaving behind a host of buildings that were transformed

into ruins. The last shrinkage occurred immediately after the last theft in 1527. According to Spini (1965: vol. 1. p. 121) "La splendida metropoli di Leone X, coi suoi 85 000 abitanti si è ridotta bruscamente a una cittadina, con poco più di metà della popolazione". From this, it can be deduced that by the middle of the sixteenth century Rome had shrunk so much that it numbered a population of about 40,000 inhabitants. The city of Rome begins to be rebuilt and redeveloped based on the urban reorganization carried out by Domenico Fontana³ under the papacy of Pope Sisto V., The urban reorganization of Rome was based mainly on the requalification of public spaces and their connection with straight road axes. It should be noted at this point that these interventions were punctual and polar⁴. The result of the reorganization of Rome, through interventions in public space and the regeneration of the image of the city, was the increase of the population and the city itself, although it took more than a century for the realization of the whole vision of Domenico Fontana. The case of Rome clearly shows us, both in antiquity and in the Renaissance, that the requalification of public spaces is another strategy to stop the shrinking of cities. It should be noted here that these interventions are made in the space of the main squares and in the axes that connect these squares.

In the city of Gjirokastra, this strategy can be used mainly in the part of the city built during the communist period and in the one built in the last thirty years because in the old city the presence of public

space of squares is limited. In fact, due to the special orographic character and its tradition, the old town of Gjirokastra does not have real urban squares but has urban spaces and "pits" which together with the whole old circulatory system can be considered as a large public space that can be regenerated⁵.

This strategy, as in the case of Rome, appears to be effective in halting the contraction and restoring hope in a city that is currently experiencing a state of great spatial degradation. The regeneration of these spaces will have the consequence of reducing the abandonment and increasing the possibilities to offer as much environment as possible in the service of the tourism economy.

Spaces of Industrial Archeology: Land Banking and their transformation into cultural areas.

One of the aspects that have influenced the shrinking of the city of Gjirokastra is the deindustrialization of society. This phenomenon, which according to Clark (2013) is one of the main that influence the shrinking of industrial cities, has affected even those cities in Albania where there was a kind of embryonic industrialization. Among these cities is even Gjirokastra, with its industrial areas which after their destruction in the last thirty years have caused considerable unemployment and have also highlighted abandoned spaces without function.

Regarding this second category of abandoned spaces in Gjirokastra, more precisely, those of industrial areas can be used the strategy of the Land Bank⁶. This strategy, which has been used mostly by administrations in the USA, has given good results in the regeneration of settlements. Once a territory "bank" has been established by the local administration or a specific association, the aggregated territories can be given for use to users with time limits according to

their interests. Some of these territories can be transformed into public parks of different characters or simply "blocked" to be used at another time.

Another strategy for the regeneration of the city of Gjirokastra is the requalification of abandoned areas to become green areas, now or in the future⁷. This strategy as pointed out by Schilling, J., and Logan, J., (2008) in the article "Greening the rust belt: A green infrastructure model for right-sizing America's shrinking cities" has given effective results in all contexts where it has been used. This strategy, combined with that of the Land Bank, can guarantee the regeneration of all areas of industrial archeology.

Another strategy, In addition to Land Bank, for abandoned industrial areas is their transformation into areas that can be used for various activities ranging from educational, tea to cultural or those dedicated to various activities in the world of the spectacle. In Italy, there are many cases of these industrial areas transformed into university campuses, museum areas, various offices for the administration, or even television studios. An emblematic case in the city of Rome is the transformation of "Mattatoio" which is located in the "heart" of the city and which now contains almost all the functions that were mentioned a little while ago.

Interventions at the level of abandoned dwellings. The case of "Albergo Diffuso".

The shrinking cities in Albania and especially those located in border areas are closely related to the financial aspect of these areas. As Gjirokastra is a city with a weak economy bordering areas with a more stable and developed economy, there has inevitably been emigration of the population mainly to Greece, but also to other areas. Due to this high emigration of the population in the city of Gjirokastra, we are in the presence of a big number of

³ / For the intervention of Domenico Fontana Fontana can be consulted: BENEVOLO L., (1993 6ED), *Storia della città - La città moderna*, Roma-Bari: Laterza. Pg. 56.

⁴ / About punctual and polar interventions can be consulted the articles of KUMARAKU LL., HOXHA E., (2018) *THE ANTI-POLE - A strategy to intervene in the urban context*, Forum A + P 19, Tirana: Polis-Press. ISSN: 2227-7994 pg. 62-74 and article by KUMARAKU LL., (2020) *Urban and Territorial Planning paradigms in transition*. *Academia 100+ Villages and Dropull case*. In Aliqj, B., Rossi L., (eds) *Rurban sequences: inquiries on Dropull's states of Liminality*: Tirana: Polis-Press. ISBN 978-9928-347-01-5

⁵ / Some interventions for the old town of Gjirokastra, with polar character, are published in the article of KUMARAKU LL., PAPA, D., DOBJANI, E., (2016) *The Adaptation of the Traditional Cities to Contemporary Use Interventions in Historical Areas: The Case Study of Gjirokastra*, *Online International Interdisciplinary Research Journal, {BiMonthly}*, ISSN 2249-9598, VI, (1), pg. 156-169.

⁶ / On the Land Bank strategy can be consulted the following link >>> www.thelandbank.org/downloads/gcl-b_10th_anniversary_booklet.pdf. (retrieved, Jul 2020)

⁷ / The strategy of reserving areas to use in the future for public parks or greenery has been used for almost two centuries. As pointed out by Aliqj, B., (2014) *Levizjet e Planifikimit ne Shba*, Tirane: Polis-Press, this strategy has been followed since the XIX century in American Urban Planning strategies.

⁸ / About the Albergo Diffuso concept can be consulted the publications made by Giancarlo dall'Ara on the website www.albergodiffuso.com; www.alberghidiffusi.it and <http://albergo-diffuso.blogspot.com>. Dall'Ara published with the publishing house Franco Angeli in 2015 "*Manuale dell'albergo diffuso. L'idea, la gestione, il marketing dell'ospitalità diffusa flessibile*" which explains the concept, conditions and innovation contained in the idea of albergo diffuso.

abandoned buildings. Buildings which due to non-use suffer constant degradation. To stop the degradation and to restore these former vitalities, it is necessary to adapt them to new functions or services that are in line with contemporary needs. For more than twenty years in Italy, the concept of "Albergo Diffuso"⁸ has been used for the revitalization of settlements and the reuse of abandoned buildings. This concept is very innovative and respects the local tradition and culture of the settlements where it is applied. The Albergo Diffuso concept is not just a network of buildings managed by an organizational center at a certain point of the settlement, but it is an ecological and sustainable organizational type. First, this concept excludes the construction of new spaces and uses those that exist and that have become obsolete or abandoned and therefore is not a built hotel but created where the rooms are scattered throughout the settlement. Second, Albergo Diffuso is a "horizontal" type of organization that can spread throughout the historic settlement. In the case of Gjirokastra, this organizational type is in line with the characteristics of the old city. Third, Albergo Diffuso appears to be an efficient space in terms of social distancing norms and tourist models that guarantee healthy spaces. And at the end, this is a model the lives of visitors to the settlement intertwines with the life and culture of the settlement, thus stopping a "territory consumption" model as Guy Debord described it in *The Society of the Spectacle* and introducing a new concept where tourism is not just a consumer but builders of new values.

In the city of Gjirokastra, the use of such a concept would regenerate abandoned houses and give an economic impetus to the whole context. The amount of buildings in the historic city of Gjirokastra is large and their reuse would return to this context the former vitality. From this point of view, the historical and traditional offer of this city makes it compatible with having several different "diffuse hotels".

Conclusions

This article sought to read the structure of the city through three different layers: public spaces, decommissioned industrial buildings, and abandoned houses. In Gjirokastra, these three physical components of urban space currently appear degraded. Their location covers specific points in the settlement which are scattered throughout the city starting from the historic city, to the one built during communism and to the city built in

the last 30 years.

To address the image degradation and shrinkage of the city, three strategies have been proposed to intervene in urban space. The first strategy, that of the requalification of public space is a "lesson" that comes to us from history through the study of the case of Rome which after the great shrinkage it had throughout the Middle Ages managed to regenerate immediately after the first interventions made by Pope Sixtus V. The second strategy, that of Land Banking is currently being used in many cities in the USA that are shrinking as a strategy to stop shrinkage and improve the quality of settlement space. The third strategy has to do with the organization of abandoned dwellings in "alberghi diffusi", thus creating a solution that regenerates certain parts of the city and introduces an innovative and sustainable organizational type.

Through the use of these three strategies which have been proven for their effectiveness in different geographical contexts, the shrinkage of the city of Gjirokastra can be stopped by giving it a contemporary image through the use of potentials and cultural and historical tradition that it has as a UNESCO city.

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Fig.1 / Vison for the city of Gjirokastra. Source / Author



Fig.2 / Render of the Çerçiz Topulli square. Source / Author

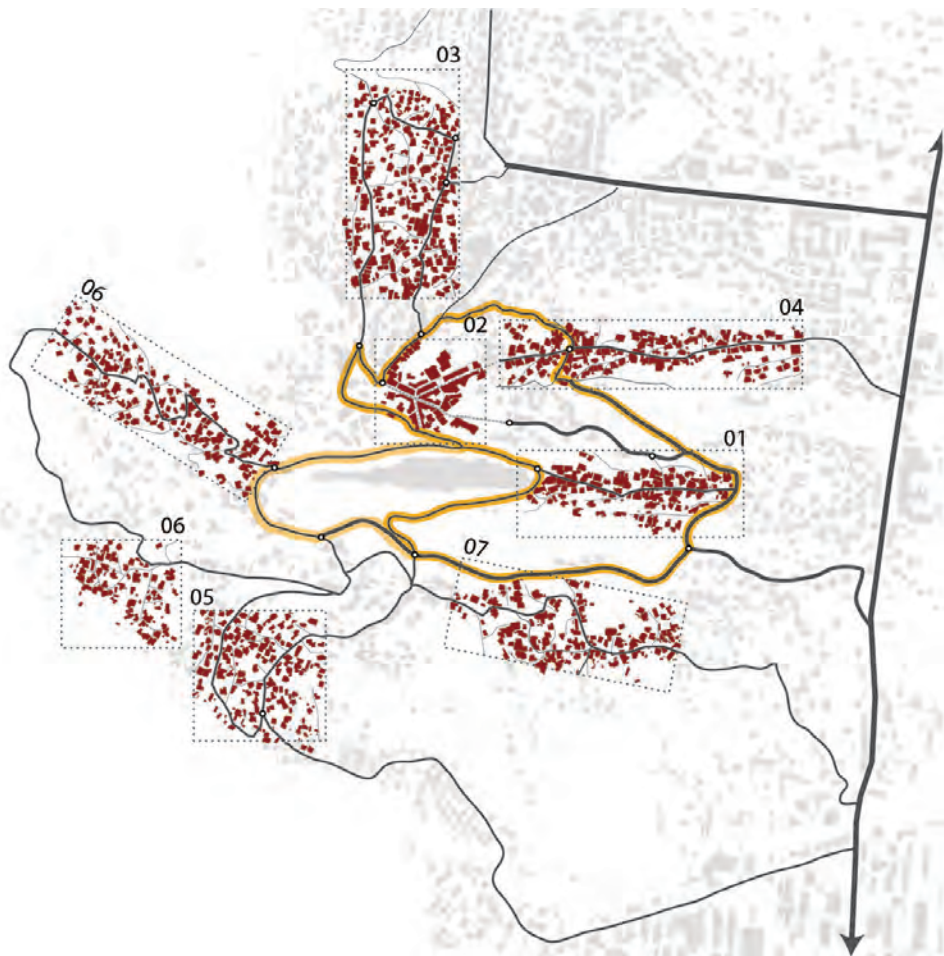


Fig.3 / Territorial and Urban Morphology. Source / Author



Fig.4 / Proposed Bypass for the old city. Source / Author

EXISTING ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

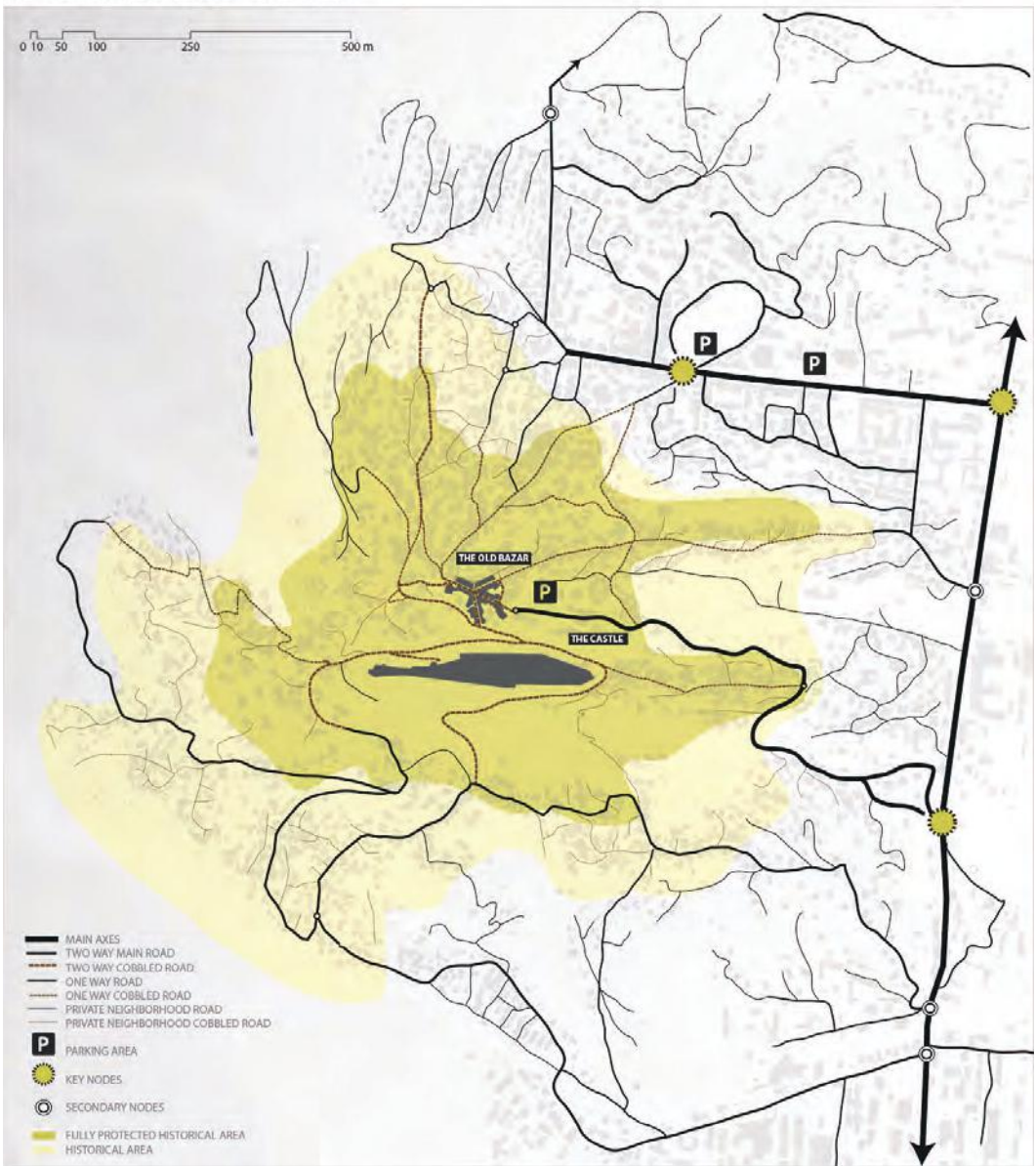


Fig.5 / Actual road infrastructure. Source / Author

PROPOSED ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

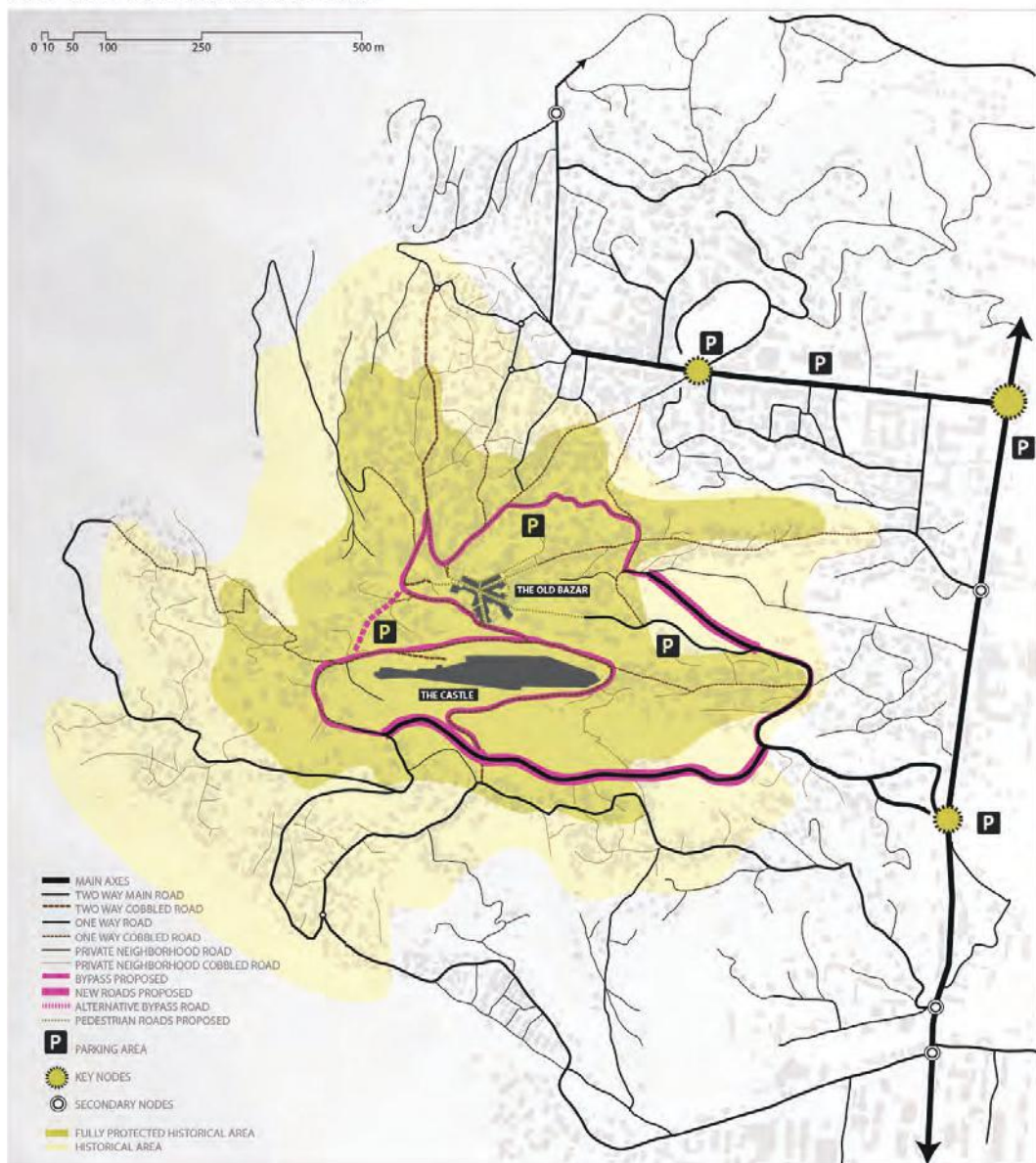


Fig.6 / Proposed road infrastructure. Source / Author





4.1

RETHINKING GJIROKASTRA. Can architecture and city planning stimulate hope and growth for shrinking cities?

Besnik Aliaj, Loris Rossi, Llazar Kumaraku
POLIS University / Tirana

4.2

Drawings as a form of knowledge
Re-presenting Gjirokastra

Loris Rossi
Laura Pedata
POLIS University / Tirana

4.3

Against the grain.
Two theoretical studies for re-thinking Gjirokastër

Alberto Grando
PhD. researcher / University of Ferrara

4.4

Architecture and the City in the interplay of socio-cultural instances: Gjirokastra in a (Post-)Modern Condition

Dasara Pula
PhD. researcher / POLIS University

4.5

Placemaking Gjirokastra.

Doriana Musaj
PhD. researcher / POLIS University

4.6

Covered Embers - The rebirth of Gjirokastra from its ashes

Eleonora Baccega
PhD. researcher / University of Ferrara

4.7

Gjirokastër fortress hillside. Geotechnical hazards assessment and stabilization measures as key factors for the fortress preservation.

Endri Duro
PhD. researcher / POLIS University

4.8

The city of design and culture

Ivonne Ortiz Sanchez
PhD. researcher / POLIS University

4.9

Gjirokastra rebirth through distributed retirement houses

Luca Lezzerini
PhD. researcher / POLIS University

4.10

Smart accessibility patterns and shrinking cities: The added value of urban design.

Marco Negri
PhD. researcher / University of Ferrara

4.11

The Gjirokastra Experience
The Art Loop. An urban path to foster the connection between a territory and its cultural identity.

Nicola Tasselli
PhD. researcher / University of Ferrara

4.12

The Time Agent

A hypothesis of a possible development of the city of Gjirokastra through a vital connection between buildings, public space and works of art.

Stefano Romano
PhD. researcher / POLIS University

4.13

Improving health and well-being in the cities

Xhoana Kristo
PhD. researcher / POLIS University

4 workshop

Rethinking Gjirokastra

Can architecture and city planning stimulate hope and growth for shrinking cities?

International PhD Workshop

02 – 13 December 2019, Tirana / Gjirokastra, Albania

Tutors:

Prof. Dr. Besnik Aliaj, PhD. Loris Rossi, PhD. Llazar Kumaraku
PhD. Sotir Dhamo, PhD. Skënder Luarasi

Co-Tutors:

Tutors: Prof. Dr. Besnik Aliaj, PhD. Loris Rossi, PhD. Sotir Dhamo
PhD. Llazar Kumaraku, PhD. Skender Luarasi, PhD. Ledian Bregasi, PhD. Godiva Rembeci

Assistants: PhD. Besjana Qaja, PhD. Sonia Jojic.

PhD students / Alberto Grando, Dasara Pula, Doriana Musaj, Eleonora Baccega, Endri Duro, Ivonne Ortiz Sanchez, Luca Lezzerini, Marco Negri, Nicola Tasselli, Stefano Romano, Xhoana Kristo.

Introduction:

This Workshop is a research activity organized annually under the framework of the International PhD Program of POLIS University (Albania) and Ferrara University (Italy), in the fields of Architecture and City Planning. Aimed at the 35th PhD cycle candidates, the workshop builds on the previous and ongoing research work, focusing in the territorial, city and architecture scales, and is developed under the framework of the Scientific Research Department (R&D Faculty) in cooperation with the Observatory of the Mediterranean Basin (OMB) a sub-unit of IF Innovation Factory, at POLIS University which is a "center of excellence" in housing, planning and development with focus on sustainability and resilience, established in cooperation with Co-PLAN Institute, Ministry of Finance of Albania, and UNECE. Each year the research activity promoted by the PhD workshop is aimed at a specific topic, which is then opens for

debate and critical analysis by each PhD student individually, in order to develop their capacity for operating, within any given planning context, by developing theoretical tools, able to generate design processes and new research paths. This year's topic will concern the case of Gjirokastra UNESCO city, as one of the key cities in Southern Albania with a high risk of depopulation. The historical city patterns is questioned under the cultural challenge of "Shrinking Cities", an international research platform created and coordinated by Philipp Oswalt in between 2002-2008. The social and political crises addressed by the Albanian nation in the past has opened a critical debate between local authorities and the different cultural disciplines like city planning, architecture, art, journalism and philosophy. One of the main objectives of this International PhD workshops since 2015 is to collect multidisciplinary experiences coming from different fields of architectural knowledge, in order to

consolidate a group of researchers and professionals with a capacity to accept new complexity and challenge for the future urban crises, thanks to a multi-disciplinary approach.

The idea to elaborate a critical thought around the concept of "Shrinking city" must be seen as an occasion to investigate the city of Gjirokastra through an approach established in the individuation of autonomous objects or urban fragments, within the existing city patterns, capable of injecting new hopes for the future of Gjirokastra. Within this frame of work one of the main objectives of this workshop is to define urban strategies in order to reestablish a new relationship between historical city and its interrupted objects due the depopulation crises. In other words, giving a second life, opportunity means to reactivate a cultural debate, starting by shaking the attention of the Albanian citizens and the local authority. As main idea the PhD students have to observe, select and investigate specific urban fragments in order to develop strategies involving different discipline and field of knowledge.

Design experience:

POLIS University together Metropolis Office l.t.d in the previously years have been involved in many projects concerning urban regeneration and planning development by the local and Albanian authority. In 2015 Atelier Albania at the request of the Ministry of Culture and mandated by the office of the Prime Minister, announces an international urban design competition to collect design proposals for a Bypass

Road in the UNESCO protected city of Gjirokastra . POLIS University, Metropolis Office l.t.d, G&K and CHWB were invited to give their contribution. The design project proposed was titled: "Gjirokastra Organic Loop". This Project will be for us starting point for the future developed strategy of Gjirokastra historical town.

Historical background:

(the below description is taken from the scientific paper: L Lazar Kumaraku, Dorina Papa, Etleva Dobjani, The Adaptation of the Traditional Cities to Contemporary Use Interventions in Historical Areas: The Case Study of Gjirokastra, in Online International Interdisciplinary Research Journal, {Bi-Monthly}, ISSN 2249-9598, Volume-VI, Nov 2016 Special Issue.

The town of Gjirokastra is one of the few historical cities of the medieval period in Albania which is still inhabited in nowadays. Despite Illyrian origin, the city took his form mainly during the ottoman period in the XVI-XVII century, expanding outside the Castle along the ridges of the hills in the direction of Vjosa valley and the mountain "Mali igjerë", following the organic configuration features, typical of ottoman cities. With the expansion of the city outside the castle walls, the Bazaar area becomes an important center and is considered also as a public space that connects all the neighborhoods. Actually, it is located at the Castle's feet, in the barycenter of the historic city. Due to the presence of smiths, embroiderers, shoemaker, coopers, sculptors with their craft activities and the exchange of local or regional goods, made the area of the bazaar

the most important meeting place in the city, turning it in a sort of cultural and social "agora". From the architectural and spatial perspective, the Bazaar area differs a lot compared to the residential neighborhood configuration, since the commercial buildings that bound the road usually two stores high, were placed in line and escalated according to the configuration of the terrain. Usually, on the first floor were placed commercial activities, while the upper floors were used as storage of various goods, or as karvansaraje for regional merchants. Gjirokastra Bazaar has a trident configuration, opened towards the Castle in the east and extended in the other directions, in order to structure the neighborhoods through the main axes.

The neighborhoods usually were extended along the ridges of the hills and were organically articulated in the line with the topography of the terrain through a strong connection between architecture, urban and landscape system. The harmonious combination of different variants of residential architecture created according to the orography, the ottoman urban system with narrow streets that follow the course of the terrain and the visible presence of greenery creates an ensemble of outstanding aesthetic, urban and landscape values. In this regard, the use of local stones for road paving, for containing walls and roofs of buildings has created a unique atmosphere which was described by Ismail Kadare in his book "A chronical in stone", dedicated to Gjirokastra: «Gjithçka në këtë qytet ishte e vjetër dhe e gurtë, duke u nisur nga rrugët dhe krojet e gjer tek pullazet e shtëpive të mëdha shekullore, që ishin të mbuluara me pllaka guri ngjyrë hiri, të ngjashme me disa luspa gjigande.» In this context, it is easy to understand what Christian Norberg-Schulz called Genius Loci (the spirit of place). Traditions and legends in Gjirokastra (legend of Princess Argjiro, etc) associated with the descriptions of Kadare, have put in to tangible evidence the urban and architectural qualities, the existence of a collective memory sculpted by strong and fierce nature of this city which prove the extraordinary human connection with the land and space. «Duke ruajtur me vështirësi jetën njerëzore në gjymtyrët dhe nën levozhën e tij të gurtë, qyteti i shkaktonte asaj pa dashur shumë dhimbje, gervishje dhe plagë, dhe kjo gjë ishte e natyrshme derisa ky ishte një qytet prej guri dhe çdo prekje e tij ishte e ashpër dhe e ftohtë» .

This symbiosis between the city and the character of human life was reflected throughout the centuries and had led

to the creation and persistence of the spirit of place. In the recent years, due to drastic social, economic and technological changes, typical of the modern time, the fragile equilibrium between humans, architecture, and traditional urban landscape system was put into risk. The abandonment of the historic city, the degradation of buildings, inconsistent interventions towards the existing context, new abusive construction, as well as the chaos produced in the city as a result of the increasing number of cars and their concentration in the bazaar area has decreased gradually the interest of tourists and is seen as a risk factor for such historical values that the city embody. That's why, trying to preserve a certain balance constitutes the challenge of intervention in such contexts, that necessity the activation of urban life, as much as the conservation of the historic image which in turn can contribute in activating urban life and touristic attraction.

Thematic Groups of Reserchers

(A) Eleonora Baccega; Nicola Tasselli; Stefano Romano;

(B) Endri Duri; Marco Negri; Xhoana Kristo;

(C) Alberto Grando; Dasara Pula.

(D) Doriana Musaj; Ivonne Ortiz Sanchez; Luca Lezzerini;

Main Objective

As main objective each group must elaborate a strategy in the scale of the city developing acupuncture interventions. All the groups will work under the same general strategy, developed under the framework of the International Competition: "Gjirokastra Organic Loop" by POLIS University and Metropolis I.t.d.

Methodology

The workshop is structured in a way that promotes the merger of different expertise to address the diverse aspects related to the Gjirokastra and its region. The following steps will be used as a pragmatic approach to combine theoretical knowledge, physical environment and existing data:

1-Introduction to the Area

2- Theoretical Lecture + Case studies

3- Site Visit-fieldwork

4- In class work + Project discussion

Expected Results:

A - Graphical material

B - Presentation + exhibition

C - "RETHINKING GJIROKASTRA.

Can architecture and city planning stimulate hope and growth for shrinking cities?" (scientific papers)

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Drawings as a form of knowledge Re-presenting Gjirokastra

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This paper introduces the relevance of using drawings, notations, and diagrams in analysing, observing, and reinterpreting shrinking cities. This year the 35th cycle PhD workshop was centered on the case of Gjirokastra (Centre, 2021) one of the main cities in south Albania with a high risk of depopulation. In the 1990s, more than a quarter of large cities worldwide shrank, and the phenomenon of urban depopulation has been studied and analysed worldwide with different theories on possible interventions (Hollander, 2018). Drawing a timeline around the concept of shrinking cities is quite complicated due to the different shrinkage typologies. Nevertheless, the research "Shrinking Cities" developed between 2002 and 2008 by Philipp Oswalt (Oswalt, Rieniets, & et al., 2005) gave a valuable contribution, and it was adopted as a background reference in several later investigations. In general, urban depopulation is caused by multiple factors like suburbanisation, deindustrialisation, and post-socialist change. In the architectural field, such factors can overcome their negative acceptance and become an opportunity to address Urban

landscape design strategies.

One of the topics arising from this phenomenon is linked to the fact that any shrinking process leaves behind visible and invisible traces. The abandoned fields and buildings, and the Urban and social degradation are visible. The new vacant status of the urban system is also visible, and it can stimulate new informal uses and functionality, denoting a clear expression of City's and citizens' new needs. One of the characteristics of visible traces is the fact that they can be read and translated into data and drawings. On the other hand, the invisible traces are unattainable and illegible, like the white canvas of an artist waiting to be painted. The task of an architect, especially the task of a PhD researcher, should be compared to the work of a sharp observer capable of reinterpreting the visible and the invisible traces through theoretical and practical tools. In the PhD workshop the traces left behind by population shrinkage have been investigated through drawings¹,

In his 1992 Essay on "Drawing and Making in the Landscape Medium", James Corner observes how drawings are "intermediary and translatory medium(s)", and hold the

¹ / For an interesting point of view on the matter of drawings as an alternative way of knowing see: Ray Lucas (2019). *Drawing as Being: moving beyond ways of knowing, modes of attention and habitus*. In S. E. Igea Troiani, *Visual Research Methods in Architecture* (pp. 76, 94). Bristol, UK / Chicago, USA: Intellect.

² / Talking about the three distinct qualities of landscape and architectural drawing - namely "projection, notation, and representation", he explains how in architecture and landscape, projection drawings (the plan, the elevation, the section, and the axonometric) are the projection of a shape on a flat picture plane (CORNER, 2014, p. 170); notations systems (such as measured projection drawings, and written specifications) specify the properties of a building or landscape in a way that makes them transmissible and reproducible without ambiguity (CORNER, 2014, p. 174) (they enable us to consider the simultaneity of different layers of experience); while "representational drawings aim to re-present a given landscape or building, seeking to elicit the same experiential effects but in a different medium - to give the same effects again", they can attempt to reproduce a graphical impression, a perfect imitation of reality (CORNER, 2014, p. 175).

possibility of being projective, notational and representational at the same time². (CORNER, 2014, p. 184)

With this in mind, apart from being investigated as an example of shrinking City, Gjirokastra has been studied using drawings to produce new knowledge fragments within a fragmented city. Untold aspects of Shrinking cities can be found in all the leftover urban patterns where the absence of a meaning is studied using a set of line drawings, diagrams and notations. Drawings were used to reconnect Gjirokastra's leftover urban space with a range of new possibilities capable of renewing the city image. Therefore, in this PhD workshop, the practice of drawing is employed as a tool to see Gjirokastra through new lenses.

The above concept can be better explained using the words of Stan Allen when he talks about Architectural drawing as notation: "Architectural drawings also work notationally, and can be compared to musical scores, text or script. An architectural drawing is an assemblage of spatial and material notations that can be decoded, according to a series of shared conventions, in order to effect a transformation of reality at a distance from the author. The drawing as artifact is unimportant. It is rather a set of instructions for realising another artifact" (Allen, 2000, p. 32).

Stan Allen built a series of definitions whereby mapping the unmappable became a sort of manifesto, to transpose ideas rather than translate reality. His work highlights the specific capacity of "architectural drawing to work on

reality from distance". By using Nelson Goodman's theoretical framework, his idea was to include the concept of drawing in architecture as allographic art: "Allographic arts are those capable of being reproduced at a distance from the author by means of notation" (Allen, 2000, p. 33).

Therefore, the meaning of notation introduced by Stan Allen acquires an enigmatic sense translated through a series of keywords such as anticipation, invisible, time, collective, digital diagrams. Each word is an attempt to build a relationship between the 'abstract' and the 'concrete', addressing urban and architectural ideas through the experience of drawings. An abstract drawing can convincingly inform a project proposal; in the same way, a project can give a clear response in a specific context. Drawings, diagrams, and notations are essential tools capable of changing reality through lines and signs, suitable to signify a new urban and architectural space. (Fig. 1)

Drawing and thinking

The experience of drawings addressed during the PhD workshop finds its relevance in the above investigation, in two different moments. During the site visit, when hand drawings and sketches were a fundamental instrument to experience Gjirokastra's design journal. The City was observed through a site visit journey, walking, and mapping the primary urban experience linked to the Urban Shrinkage process. The City's space was explored and the capacity of abandoned areas to offer further design reinterpretations

was observed. The second moment where drawing was crucial was during the workshop, when specific drawing approaches served as a theoretical device to build a new urban scenario. Line drawings, diagrams, and notations developed by each PhD group achieved a high definition and were presented in a sequence of design strategies linked to a specific unfinished or unsolved urban status.

Drawings in this context are not used merely for reflection and analysis, but rather as generative mediums "producing agents" or "ideational catalysts". (CORNER, 2014, p. 162) Referring to Duchamp's powerful *Genre Allegory* (George Washington) (1943), James Corner defines a drawing he refers to as re-presentational; because "it doesn't simply represent a world already in existence, a quantity we already know, but rather it tries to re-present the world in ways previously unforeseen". (CORNER, 2014, p. 181) This means not only that in practical terms there are drawings, like architectural plans, which reveal otherwise hidden aspects of buildings (or things that are only visible from an airplane, a satellite, or when we observe ancient building ruins that reveal the plan layout of a building) but also that through representation and notation we can imagine and transmit unnoticed and hidden aspects of a place and suggest possible futures.

One of the workshop's main objectives was to deliver work capable of producing new knowledge on the existing Gjirokastra urban tissue. The relationship between the unsolved city patterns and a new urban narration was explored by the PhD students through a series of topics such as:

- Urban Museum-Flow-Identity-Art Loop-Knots&Sprawl
- Accessibility-Abandoned Spaces-Urban hubs
- Morphology-grid-urban energy-water-paths-regeneration
- Experience-collaboration-diversify

Along the above topics, the idea of mapping the unmappable was supported by a double-action. First, by introducing a series of arguments contemplating the possibility to realise a new Urban agenda for Gjirokastra, and second, by defining a set of drawings with the aim of revealing a hidden frame from historical urban Patterns. The achieved outcomes can be described as a drawing toolkit, where the negative experience of urban depopulation is converted into a catalogue of new opportunities. The use of specific drawings transformed the afore

mentioned topics in a field of conditions capable of reconnecting the solved urban areas with the unsolved ones. The PhD students produced different approaches, and a number of suggestions on how to reinterpret the Urban void left behind by the shrinkage process.

In some cases, line drawings were used to trace over and give new hope to the existing urban structure. The dynamics of art in the urban space acquired a strong meaning; architecture form is linked to a new perception of time explored through performative art and installations. The City is conceived as a cultural platform; some abandoned buildings work as performative pixels regenerating the surrounding area. The idea to use axonometric drawings to redraw the existing buildings shifted the perception of abandoned structures, transforming them into works of art, a showcase to exhibit in some sort of open-air museum. The line drawings suggested a regeneration of Gjirokastra through a performative itinerary whereby the inhabitants behave like water flowing between different interrupted city structures. (Fig. 2)

In some other cases, the drawing notations produced during the site visit were reformulated as an abacus of design actions. Gjirokastra city patterns were redrawn as an archipelago of urban hubs ready to generate new realities, answering to the new needs of the city. The entire City form can be reactivated through the rehabilitation of urban landmarks such as points, lines, and objects. In this case site annotations introduced an interesting approach whereby the city can be drawn starting from its fragments, rather than by an overarching masterplan. (Fig. 3)

A further attempt consisted in using drawings as a morphological experience. Tracing the lines of the territory became an opportunity to find a new city trajectory. By observing Gjirokastra from above it was possible to redraw and select specific orographic and hydrographic trajectories. The drawing as an experience of tracing and selection brings back to our mind the act of highlighting a meaningful word or sentence in a written text. The act of redrawing on a given map is a critical investigation to learn from, or an act to produce new knowledge. The drawing elaborated by the PhD students tries to take on a new type of investigation assigning a new trajectory to the direction of the city. By following the morphology of the site, the projects highlight a transversal

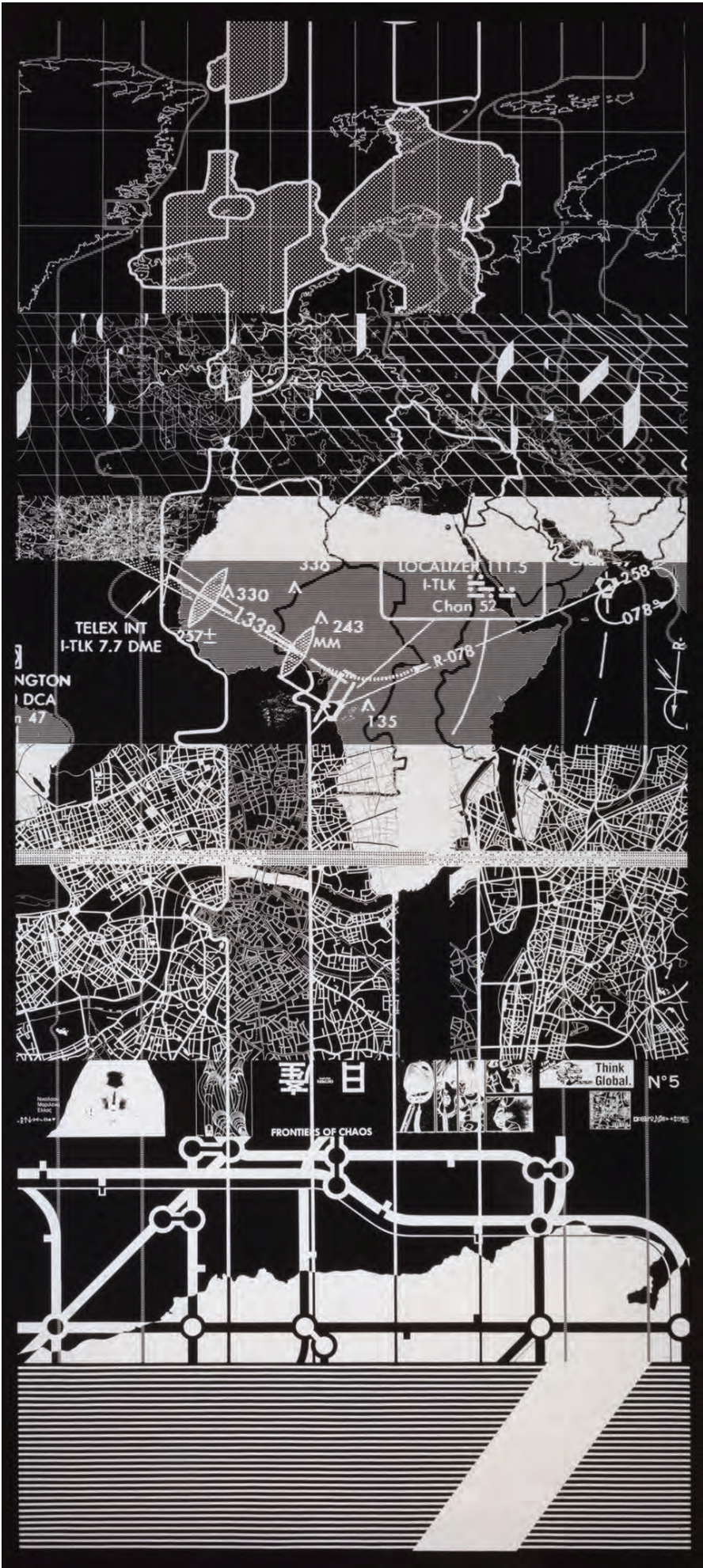


Fig. 1 / Stan Allen and Marc Hacker. Scoring the city 1986.
 Sources / http://web.mit.edu/wdmc/Public/StanAllen_MappingTheUnmappable.pdf

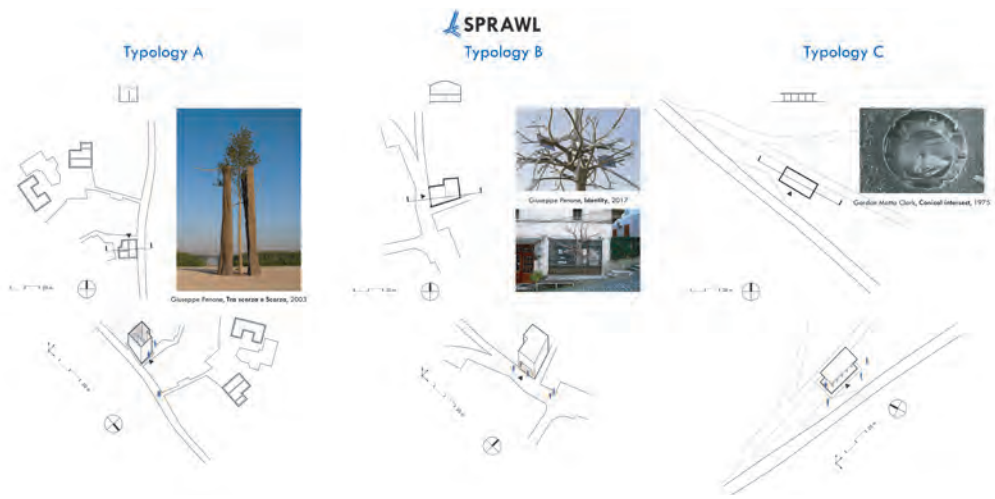


Fig. 2 / Drawing by Eleonora Baccega, Stefano Romano, Nicola Tasselli



Fig. 3 / Drawing by: Edi Duro, Marco Negri, Xhoana Kristo

"fascia", linking the historical city of Gjirokastra with the new development. (Fig 4)

The story of representation is subject to social and programmatic activities. In the last example, Gjirokastra city patterns were used considering their potential to offer an integrated system between Urban Morphology and new functionality. The use of diagrammatic drawings reflects a pragmatic approach focused on an alternative way of reading the shrinking process through a programmatic use of the abandoned spaces left behind, ultimately proposing the addition of a health related functional layer to the city. Drawings, in this case, were used to reconnect the abandoned areas through a new program.

Conclusion

This paper intended to recognize the

importance of drawings, diagrams and notations as form of knowledge. Building on the concept on Stan Allen's theoretical framework - which defines drawing as a tool capable of conveying a design project from a distance - the same concept of distance, understood as physical disconnection from Gjirokastra's urban reality, was applied by the PhD students in their proposals for a transformation of reality at a distance, transposing through drawings and notations their ideas about the city's abandonment process.

Drawings have the capacity to represent the world as it is, and to imagine what it could become. At the same time, drawings should be considered for both their speculative (devising possible futures) and demonstrative function (tools of composition and communication). "In

STRATEGY DIAGRAMS

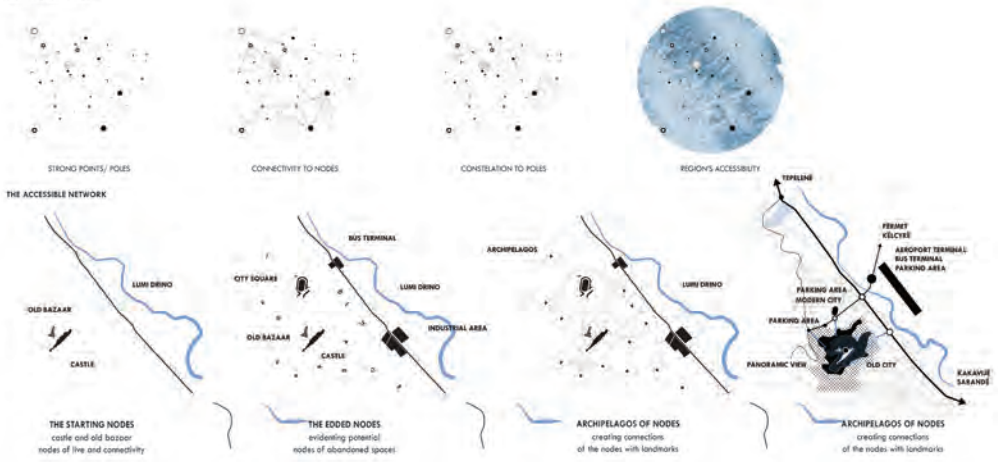


Fig. 3.1 / Drawing by: Edi Duro, Marco Negri, Xhoana Kristo

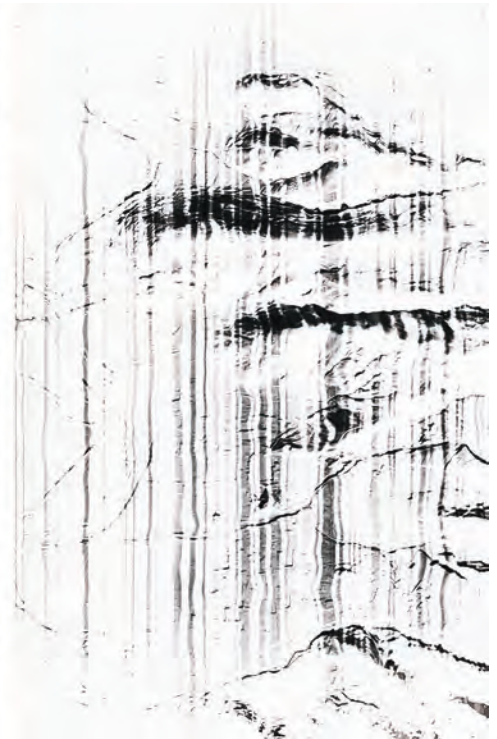


Fig. 4 / Drawings by: Dasara Pula, Alberto Grando

the first, drawing is used as a vehicle of creativity, and in the second, drawing is used as a vehicle of realization." The above distinction is what defines the difference between producing an image and or "drawing as work or process", namely a creative act. (CORNER, 2014, p. 184).

Going even beyond the speculative field and into the practical demonstration of how to realize the project, there are drawings, like Carlo Scarpa's where the overlaid plan drawings, sided by construction details and overall views, demonstrate the design intent of the executor. They are not "scientific tools for presenting a future reality", or transmitting a result, but actual demonstrative drawings were "the representation of space is one with the space of representation". (CORNER, 2014, pp. 188-189) (Fig. 5)

Keeping all the above in mind, representational techniques were used by the PhD students to propose different approaches aimed at inverting the city's shrinkage trend through Art and performative itineraries repopulating the urban context; design actions aimed at reactivating the city starting from its fragments; new urban growth trajectories drawn starting from the city's morphological characteristics; or following a purely programmatic approach.

Drawing as a form of knowledge underlines the importance of drawings in architectural research, regardless of the execution time and technique. Drawings are equally important as written text, capable of being read, translating reality, and devising future scenarios.

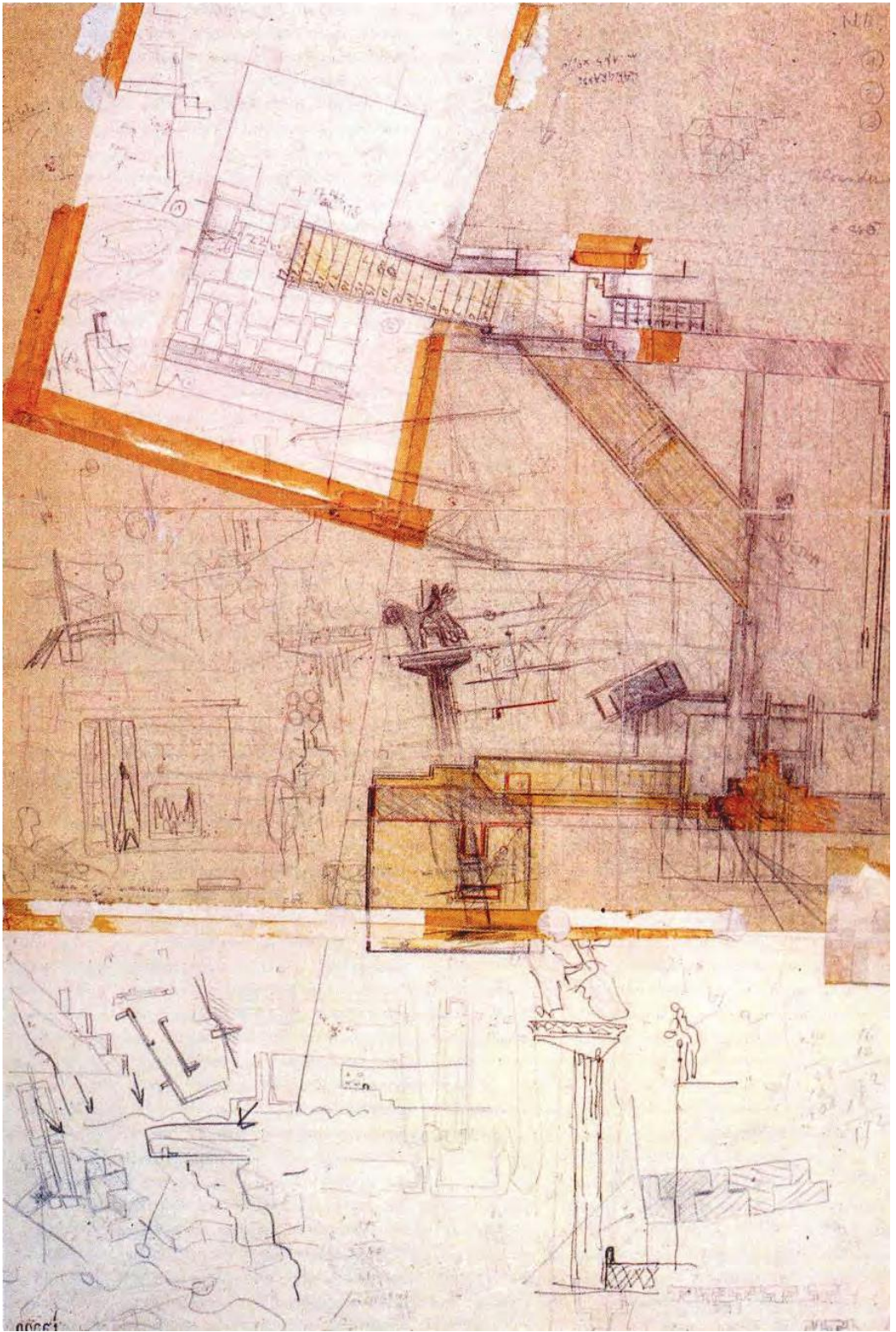


Fig. 5 / Cangrande drawings, Castelvecchio, Verona Carlo Scarpa. Source / <https://unitgblog.wordpress.com/2014/03/02/unit-g-ice-station-tutorials-9-monday-3rd-march-10am-unit-space/>

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Università
degli Studi
di Ferrara

Workshop Legend

1 / Covered Embers

Eleonora Baccega, Nicola Tasselli, Stefano Romano

2 / Accessing Gjirokastra

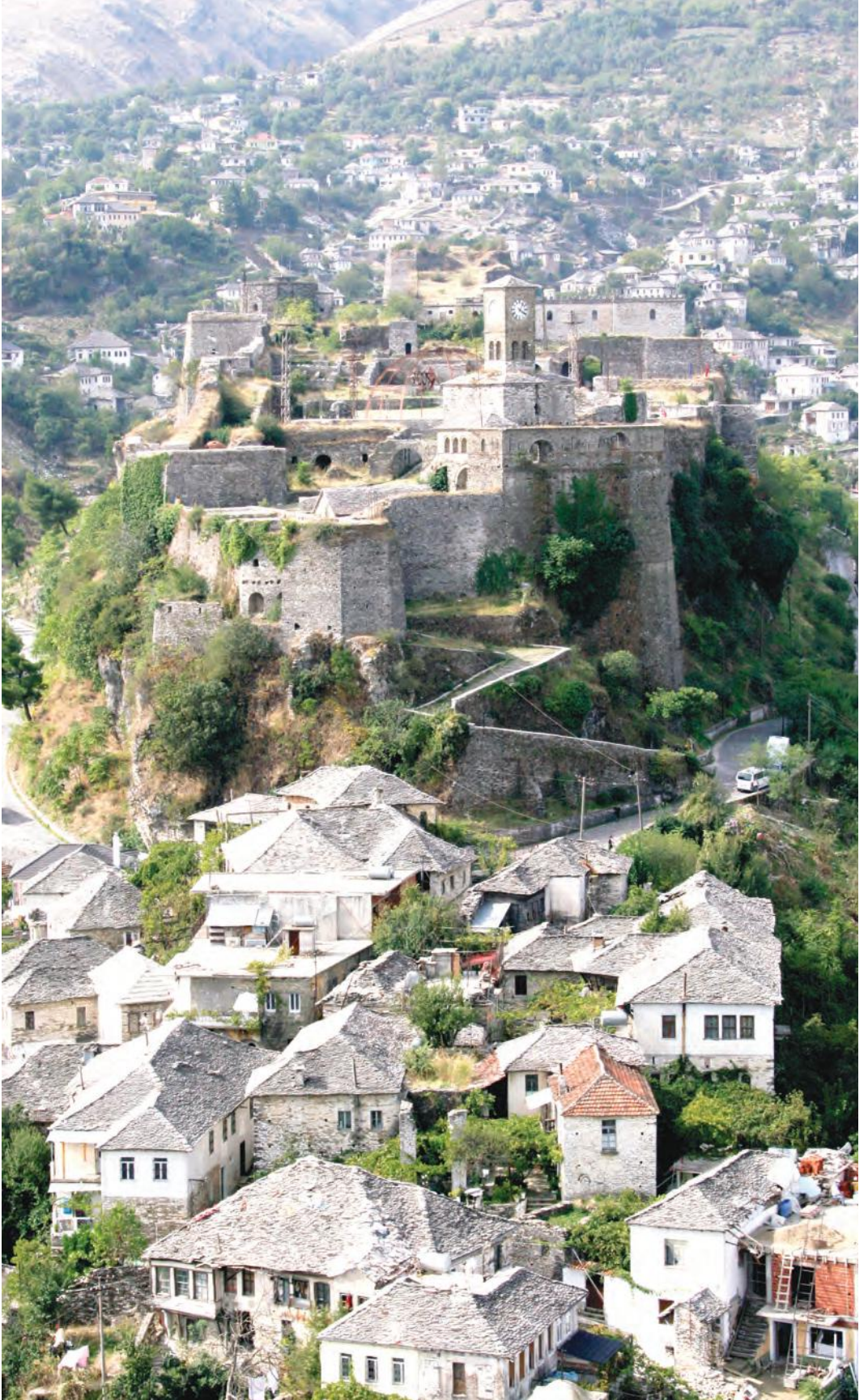
Endri Duro, Marco Negri, Xhoana Kristo

3 / Against the Grain

Alberto Grando, Dasara Pula

4 / Health City

Doriana Musaj, Ivonne Ortiz, Luca Lezzerini





1 / Covered Embers

Eleonora Baccega, Nicola Tasselli, Stefano Romano

To force a city to die to rise from its own ashes

The project starts from a utopian reflection on the city of Gjirokastra, the initial request to revitalize the city pushed us to reach the zero degree of shrinking, forcing the situation to allow the city itself to find the survival strategy in its final spasm.

The initial reference of all the reflection is the final scene of Michelangelo Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* in which the female protagonist imagines that her employer house explodes, a fierce criticism of capitalism, used by us as a seed to understand that the city it had to "explode / die" to reborn.

Another visual citation in this sense is that of Francis Alys and his "modern procession" that we use from the point of view of the image. People like a water flow that slides along the city streets. Our visit to Gjirokastra has given us the opportunity to verify the morphology of the city and to discover the quantity of water present in its territory, rivers, streams and various watercourses cross the whole hill along which the old town unfolds. a flow that is also fed by rainwater. Water has therefore become the "purifying" element through whose flow it also displaces people from the old city to reach zero degree.

At this point, in the empty city transformed (ideally) into a huge sculpture of itself. We highlighted a series of buildings damaged

in various ways and abandoned (in the old part, in the new and in the industrial ones) that have become the starting points of the rebirth of Gjirokastra. What we have called empty pixels, that is, modules that contain the seeds of the construction of the new identity of the city.

We identified 3 typologies of empty pixels. The first typology, divided itself into two sub-types, uses the abandoned and damaged buildings of the historical area. (Sprawl)

The second typology instead uses the "unfinished" of the industrial and the contemporary areas of the city. (Linear)

The third typology of abandoned buildings, different from the previous ones due to the very large dimensions of these buildings in the contemporary area of Gjirokastra. These buildings are former factories and former schools that will be used as residences for artists and ateliers in which to encourage further collaborations between public and private sectors. A separate description deserves the stadium of the city that we have decided to transform into a public space, superimposing on its previous identity that of the soccer field, a new identity of performative space; opening the stadium at ground level to guarantee practicability at all times and adding a stage on which to perform.

Origin



Michelangelo Antonioni - Zabriskie Point (1970)
stills from film

Water

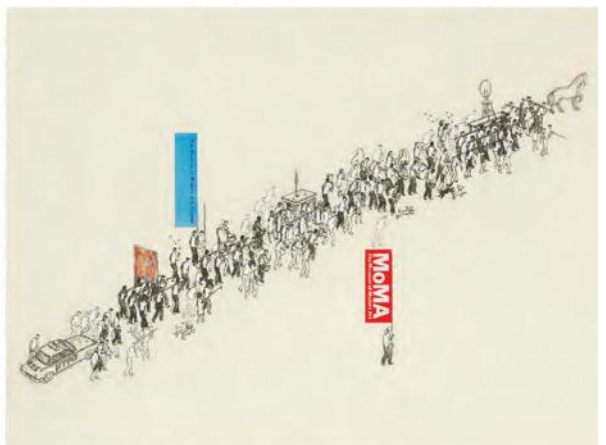


Bill Viola - Ascension (2000)



Bill Viola - Water Martyr (2014)

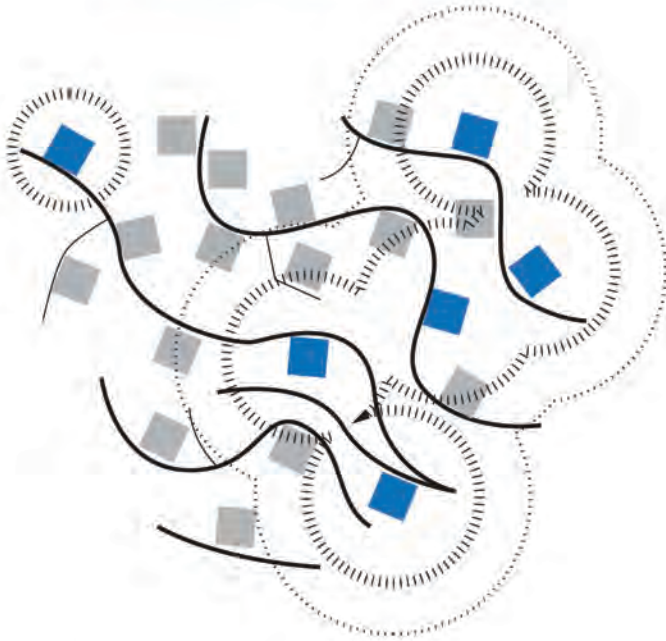
Flow



Francis Alys - The Modern Procession (2002)

Fig.1 / To force a city to die to rise from its own ashes Problem
Source / Eleonora Baccega, Nicola Tasselli, Stefano Romano

OLD CITY
BIOMIMICRY SPRAWL



Functional depopulation
because of outdated
construction methods

INDUSTRIAL
AXIAL DEVELOPMENT



Economical
due to the industry
towards emerging

With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.
Isaiah 12:3



Rebirth

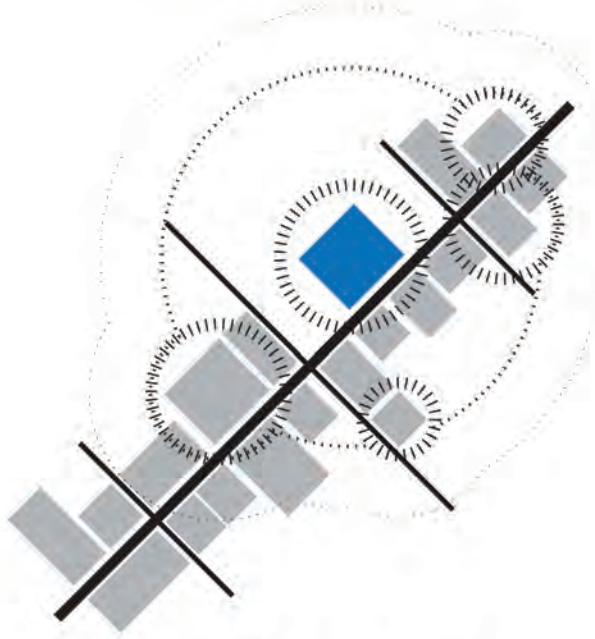


TRIAL AREA VELOPMENT



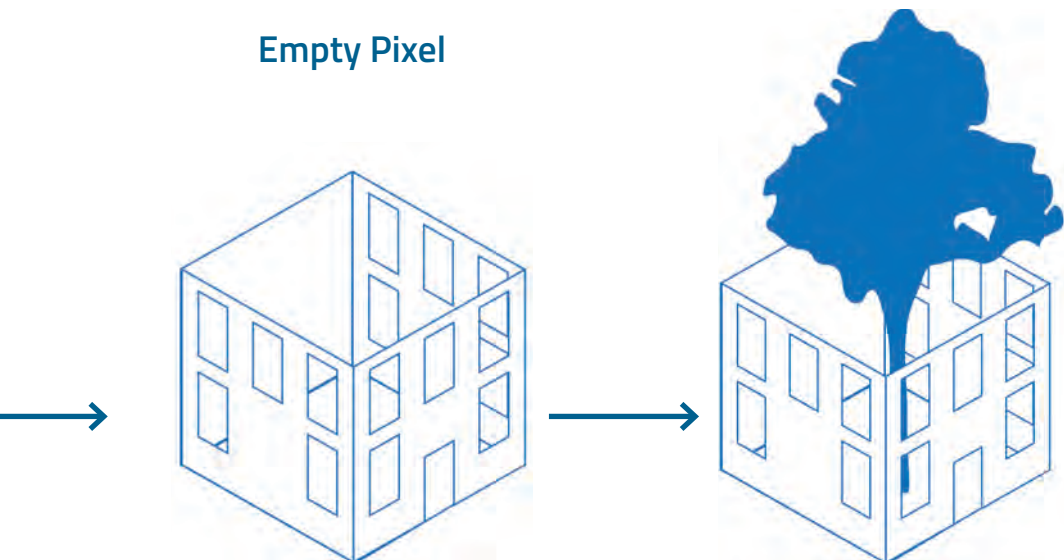
depopulation
ustries migration
erging countries

NEW CITY SOLID PROXIMITY



Social depopulation
that brought to the
facilities uselessness

Empty Pixel



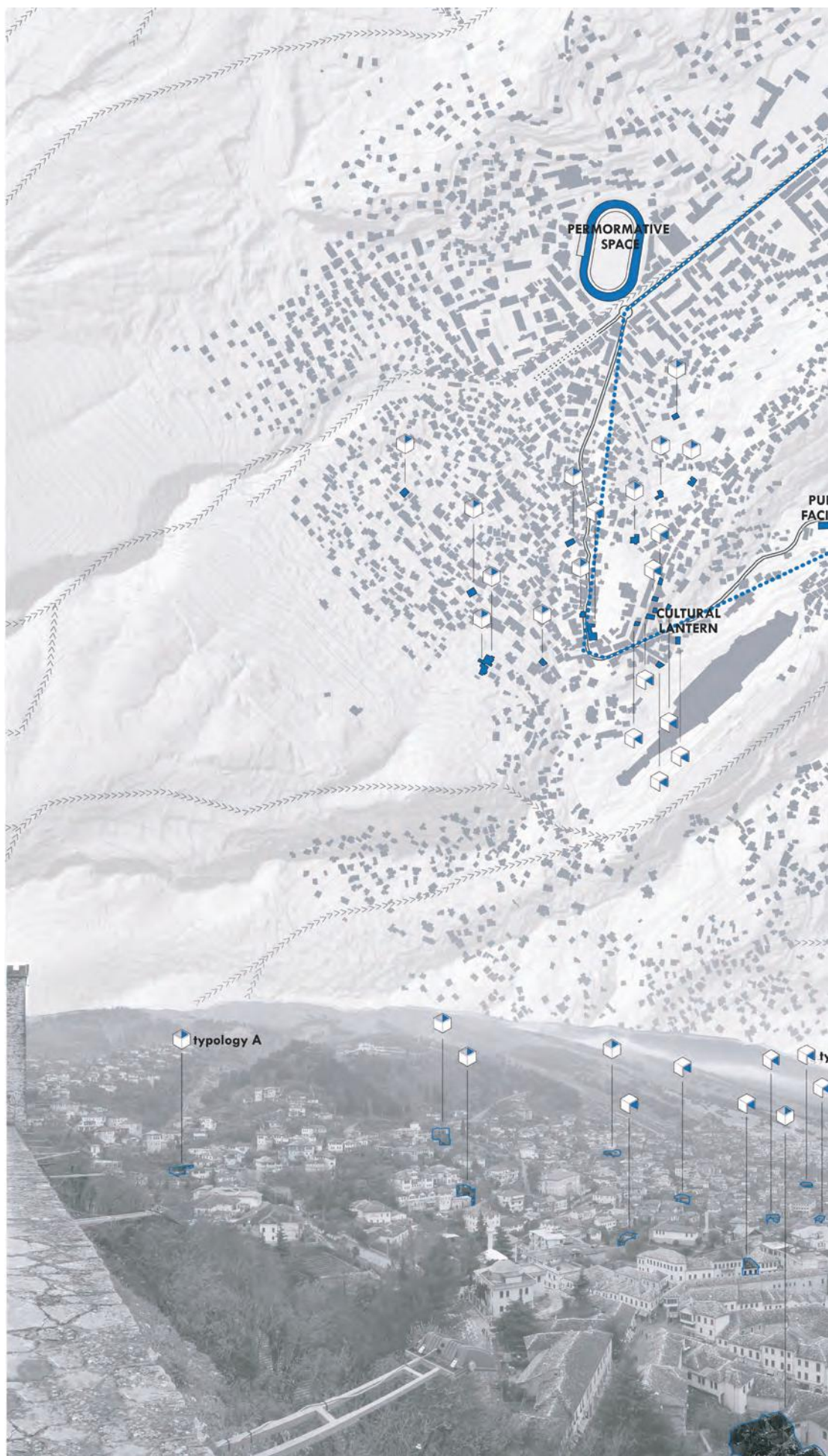
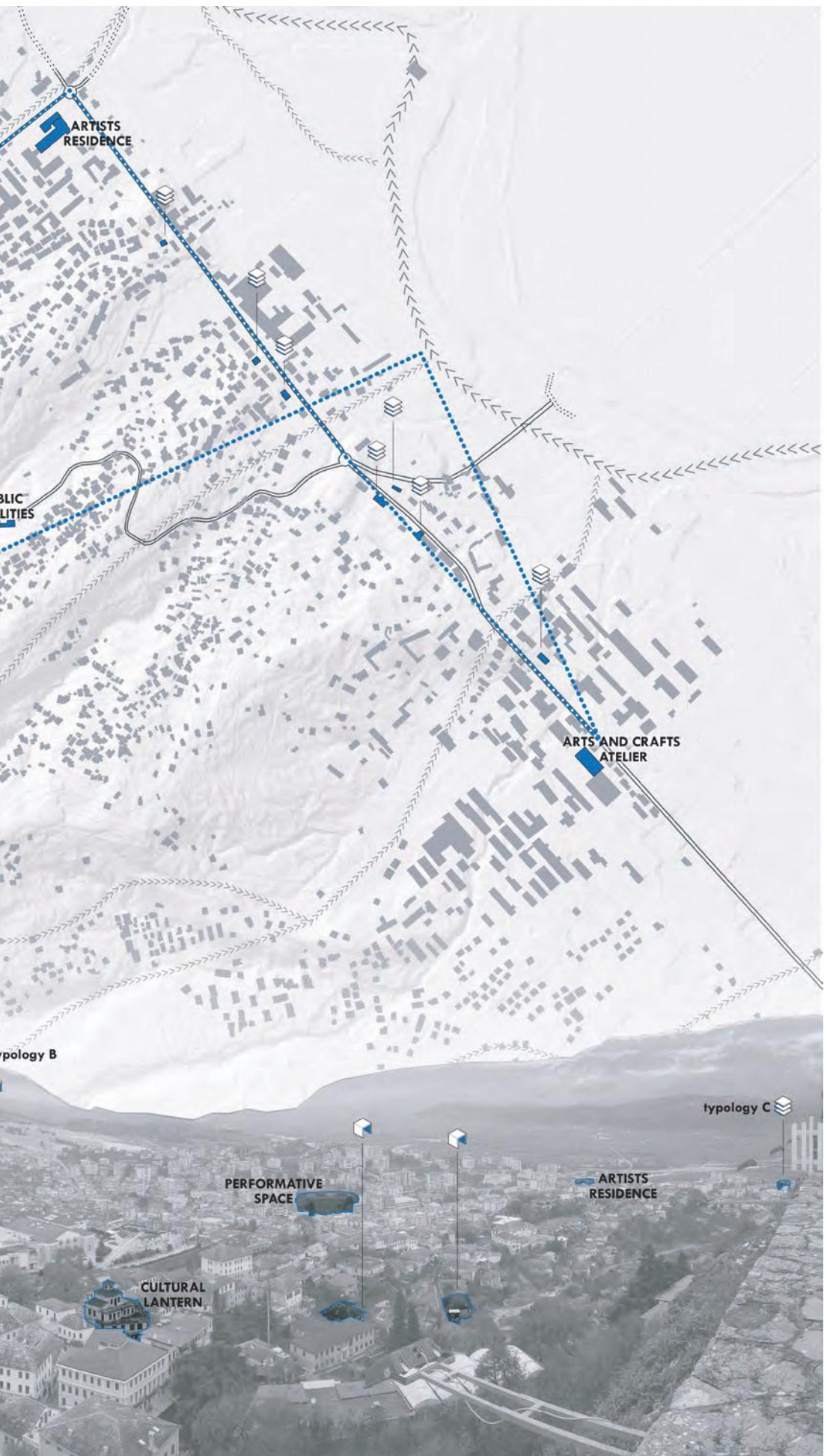
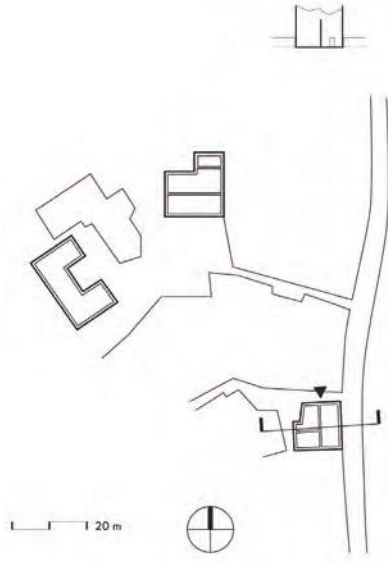


Fig.2 / CULTURE AS A DRIVER to fit the UNESCO standards that brings to TAYLOR-MADE ACTIONS All the interventions cobine the identity of the place together with an idea of culture that will bring art in the city. Source / Eleonora Baccega, Nicola Tasselli, Stefano Romano



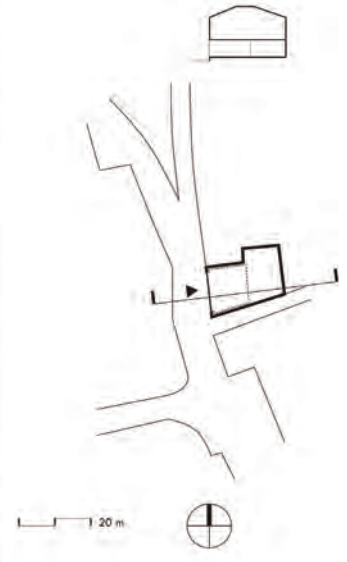
SPRAWL

Typology A

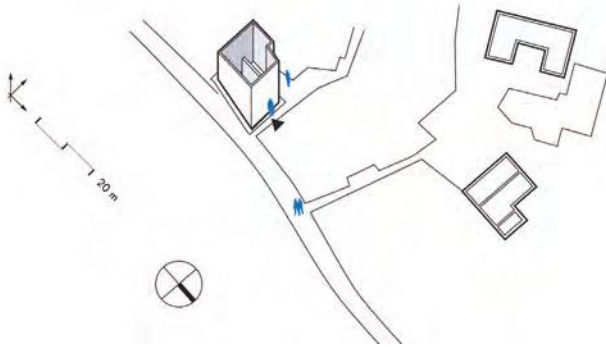


Giuseppe Penone, *Tra scorza e Scorza*, 2003

Typology B

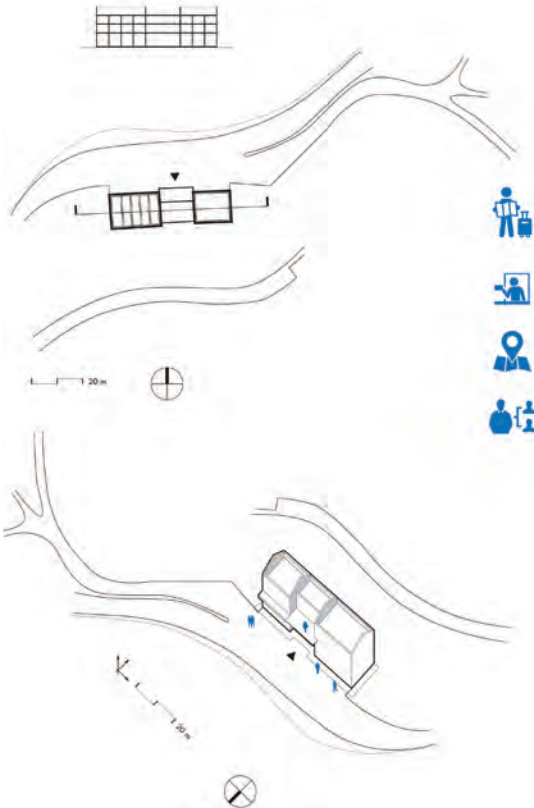


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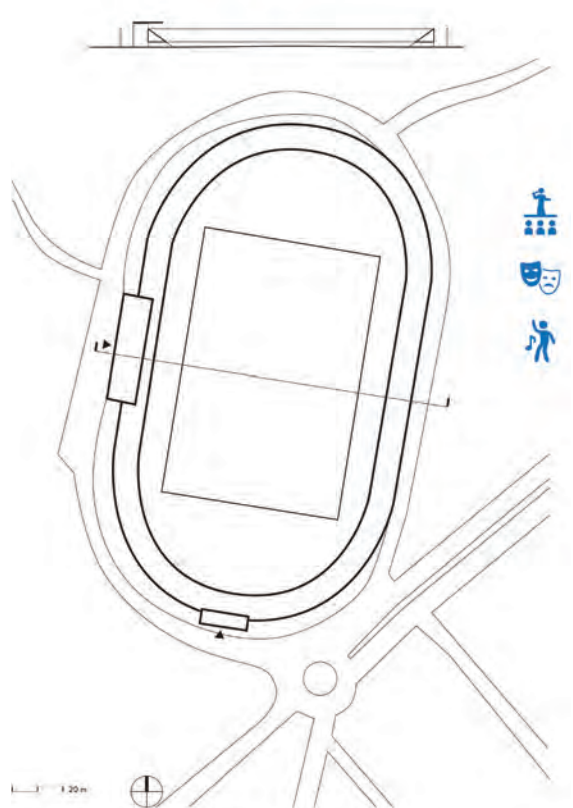


KNOTS

Public Facilities



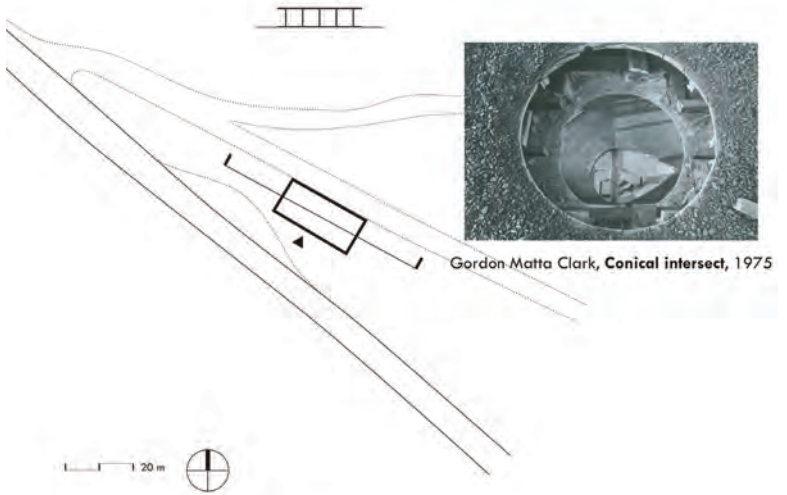
Performative Space



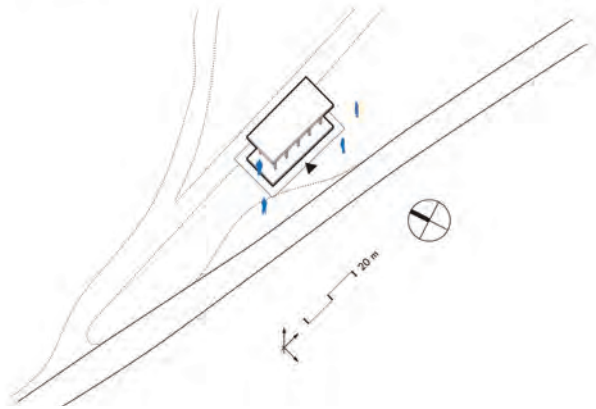
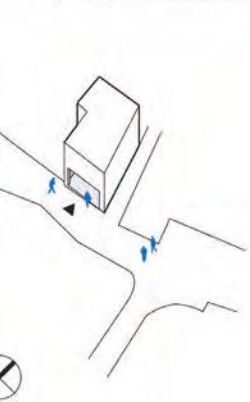
Typology C



Giuseppe Penone, Identity, 2017

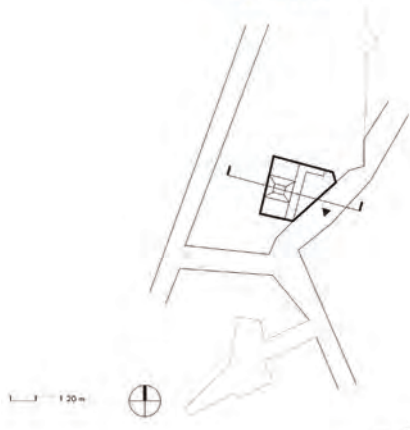
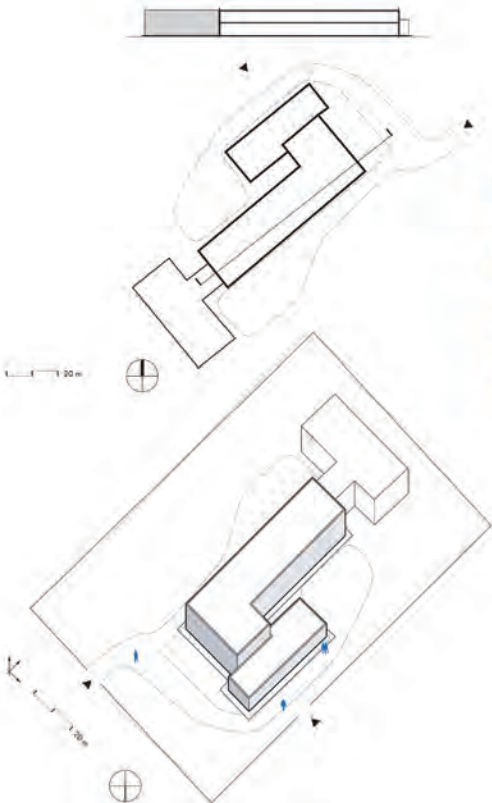


Gordon Matta Clark, Conical intersect, 1975

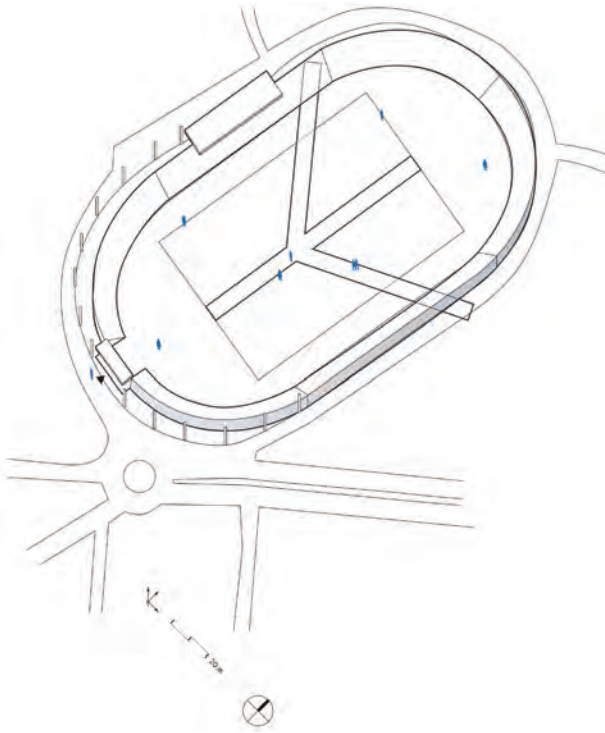


Artists' Residence

Cultural Lantern



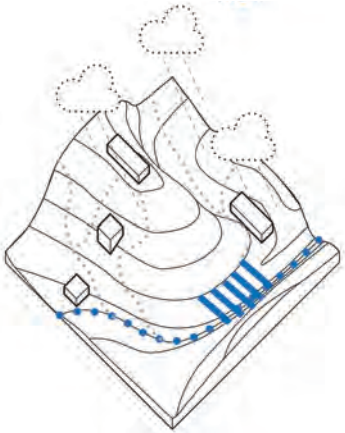
KNOTS



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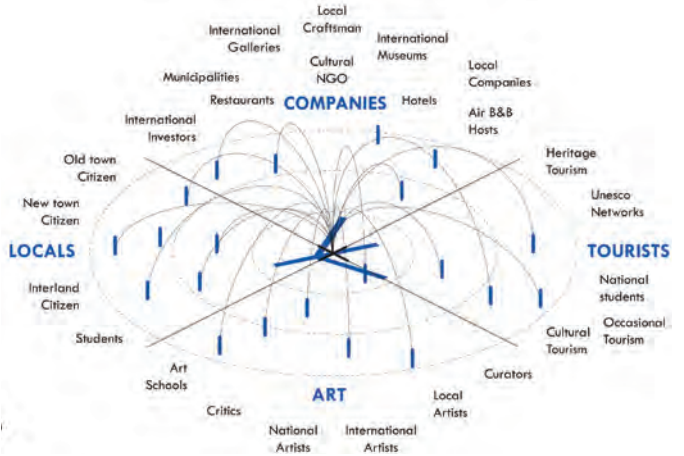
PROJECT KEY-ASPECTS

Water flow

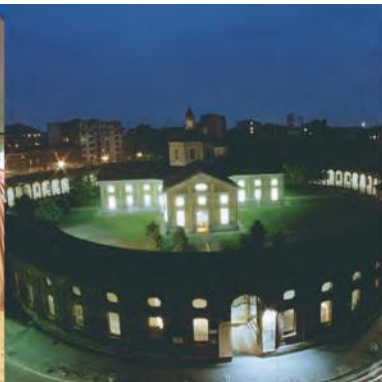


SHIPPING & INDUSTRIALISM > WATER FLOWS > CLEANING > POPULATION > ABANDONMENT > REPOPULATION > REPOPULATION > WATER LAUNCH > ART & HERITAGE > ART LOOP > MOVING & INDUSTRIALISM > REPOPULATION > WATER LAUNCH > REPOPULATION

Users and Stakeholders



Facilities



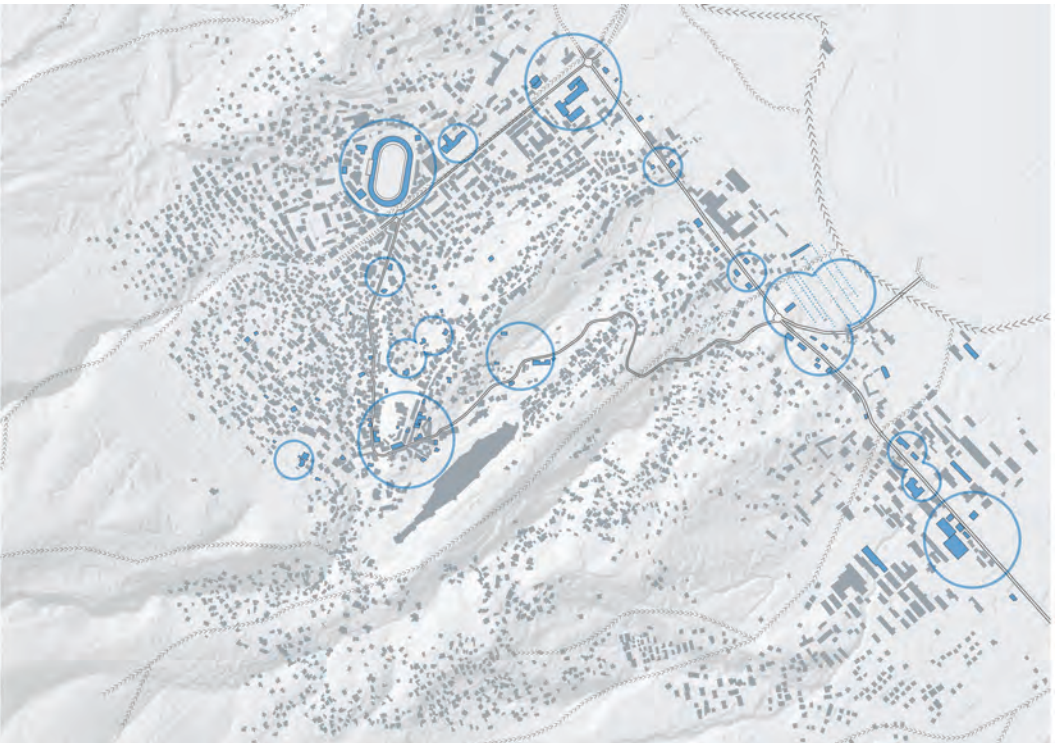
Cultural Lantern



Performative Space



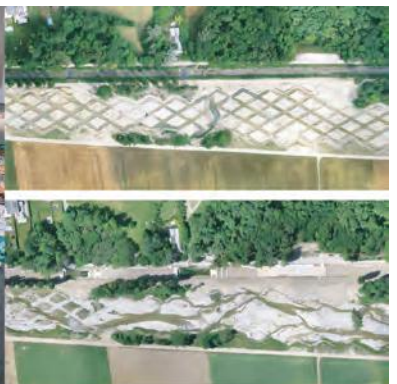
Gjirokastra 2050



Artists' Residence



Arts and Crafts Atelier



Water Land Art



2 / Accessing Gjirokastra

Endri Duro, Marco Negri, Xhoana Kristo

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In our strategy we want to address the problem of accessibility in Gjirokastra city which cannot be seen only in a physical point of view, but also taking into consideration different important factors. In doing so the concept of constellation as a group of stars that forms an imaginary outline or pattern that represents an image can be used through which actual points of Gjirokastra can be revitalized and new ones can be added that will serve as important poles in the proposed constellation.

The concept can be well-defined in the case of Gjirokastra due to accessibility-related issues like the lack of infrastructure, abandoned buildings, lost heritage and lack of public transport. The proper definition of these poles and giving a strategy of connecting them can surely solve the problem of accessibility in this city, reducing also the problem of shrinkage.

The poles have different characteristics, and are mainly an alteration of modern parts like the stadium and industrial zone with historical and cultural heritage zones of the city like the old bazaar. Abandoned areas were also taken in consideration with the aim of revitalizing all the surrounding buildings in these poles for different purposes.

The landmarks for each pole have a vital role in the strategy we propose since they would help firstly in giving an identity to the poles and secondly in the orientation. Landmarks can be existing like the bazaar, the tower and the chimneys in industrial areas (which can be categorized as vertical landmarks) and others can be added based on the location, characteristic of the zones where the poles are proposed and also on previous famous landmarks like Luca Piazza Anfiteatro, Walnut- Public Spaces, Serpentine Pavilion etc.



Fig. 1 / References of the proposals
 Source / Endri Duro, Marco Negri, Xhoana Kristo

Accessibility as a Device



OROGRAPHY
The existing terrain configuration is a challenging issue in terms of accessibility



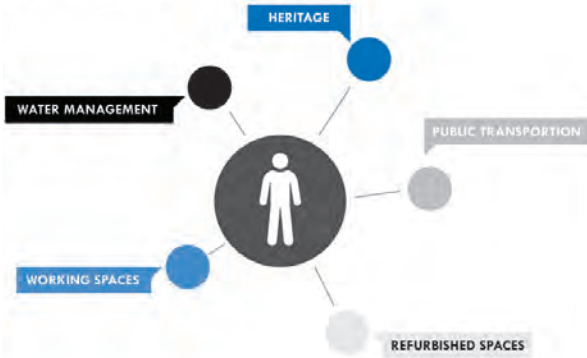
ABANDONED INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS
The industrial area is characterized by a large number of abandoned buildings



LOST HERITAGE
Cultural values of Gjirokastra are not accessible because of the lack of maintenance

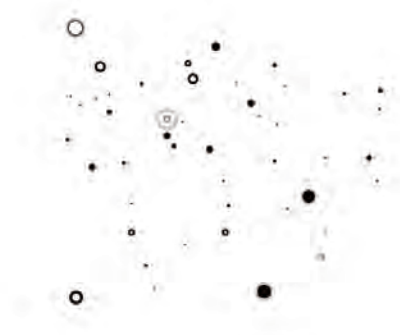
Gjirokastra: A new constellation of accessible urban spaces

MULTI-LAYERED ACCESSIBILITY



OROGRAPHIC ACCESSIBILITY

Strategy diagrams



STRONG POINTS/ POLES

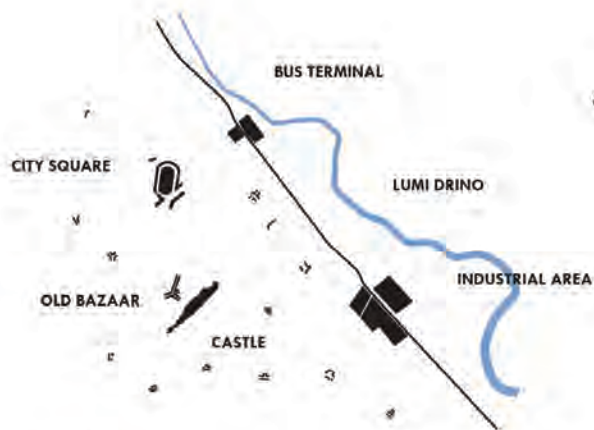


CONNECTIVITY TO NODES

THE ACCESSIBLE NETWORK



THE STARTING NODES
castle and old bazaar
nodes of live and connectivity



THE EDEDDED NODES
evidencing potential
nodes of abandoned spaces



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The public transport does not offer a full coverage of the city and also there is not a specified timetable



ACTIVITIES

Lack of open spaces and therefore of activities opens to new possibilities for Gjirokastra

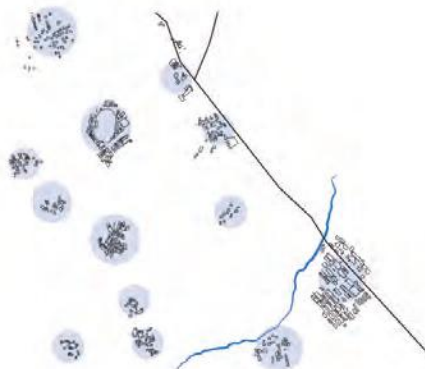


NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

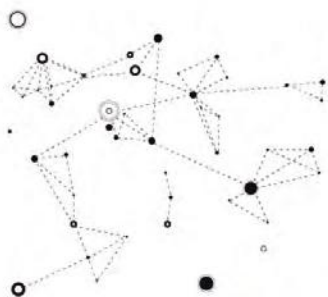
the access to water is not the same in different areas of the city because of a lack in the water distribution system



SERVICES ACCESSIBILITY



RECONSIDERED SPACES



CONSTELATION TO POLES



REGION'S ACCESSIBILITY

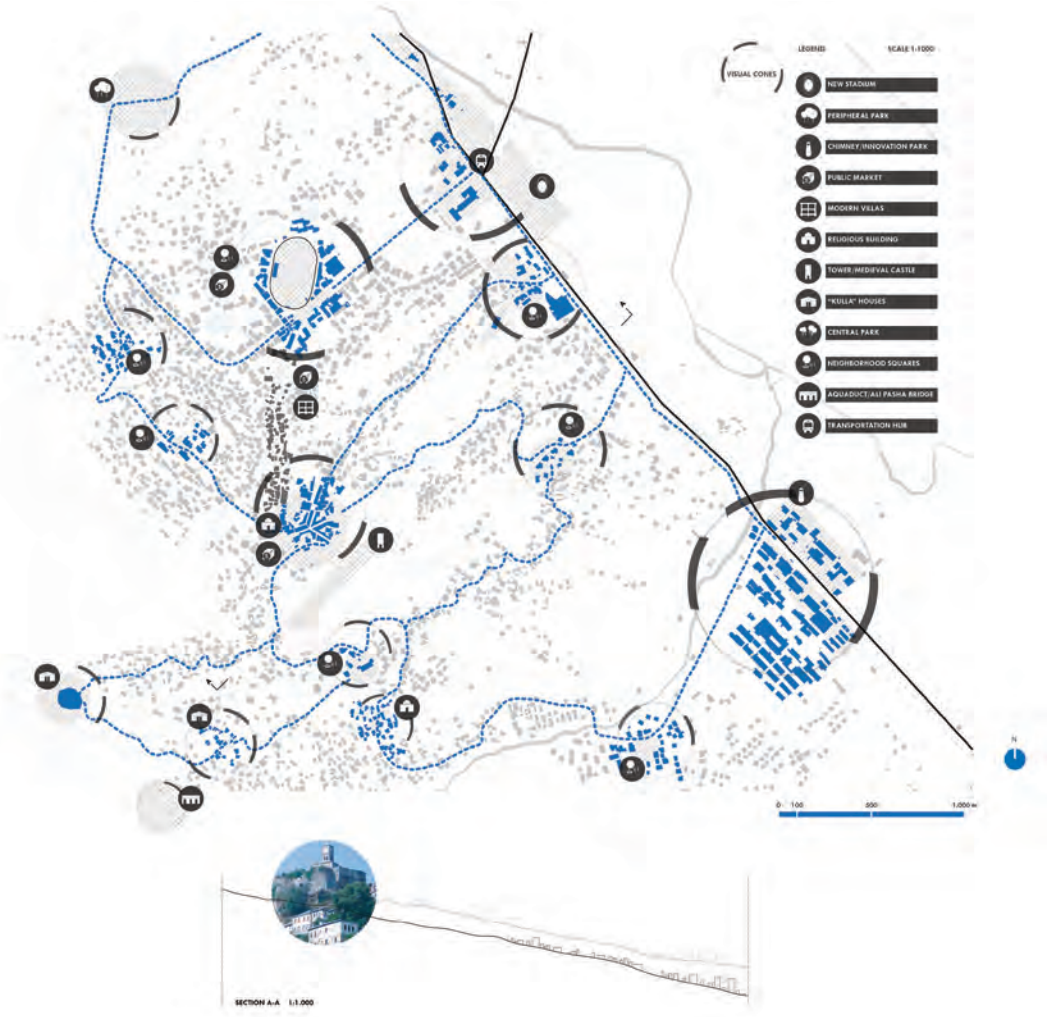


ARCHIPELAGOS OF NODES
creating connections
of the nodes with landmarks



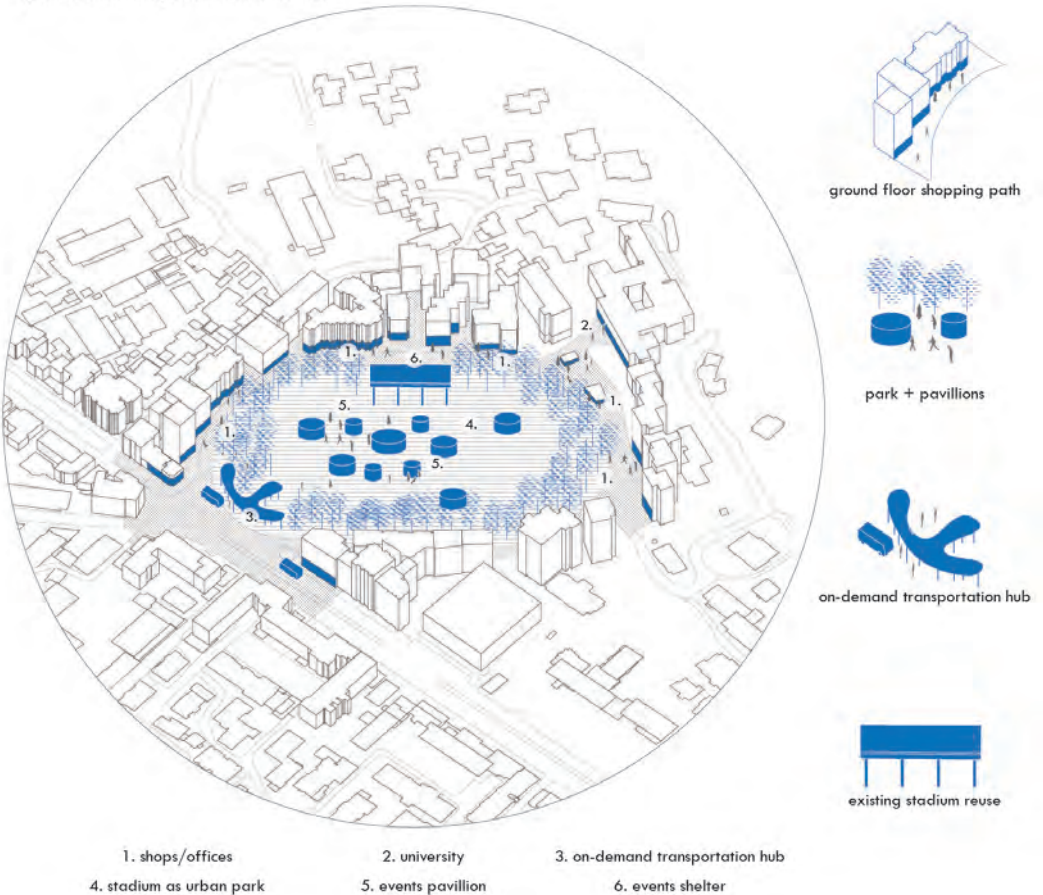
ARCHIPELAGOS OF NODES
creating connections
of the nodes with landmarks

Strategic Masterplan



1. NEW BAZAAR

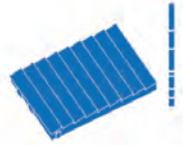
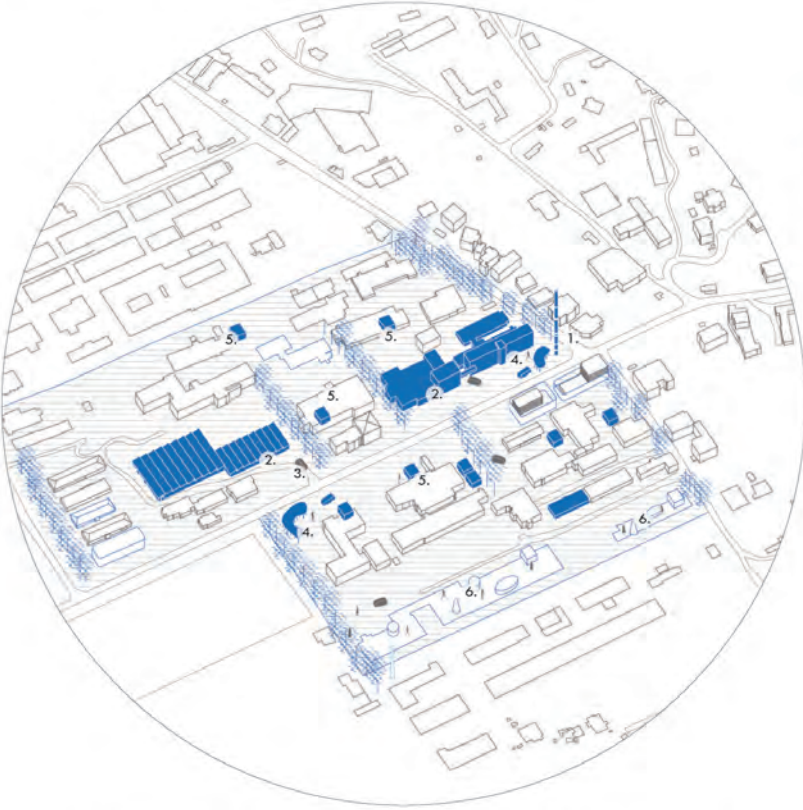
provide accessibility to main urban services



- 1. shops/offices
- 2. university
- 3. on-demand transportation hub
- 4. stadium as urban park
- 5. events pavillion
- 6. events shelter

2. INNOVATION PARK

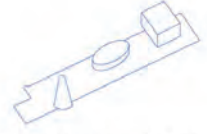
provide accessibility to business innovation and market



existing factories retrofitting



on-demand transportation hub



reuse of abandoned industrial ground

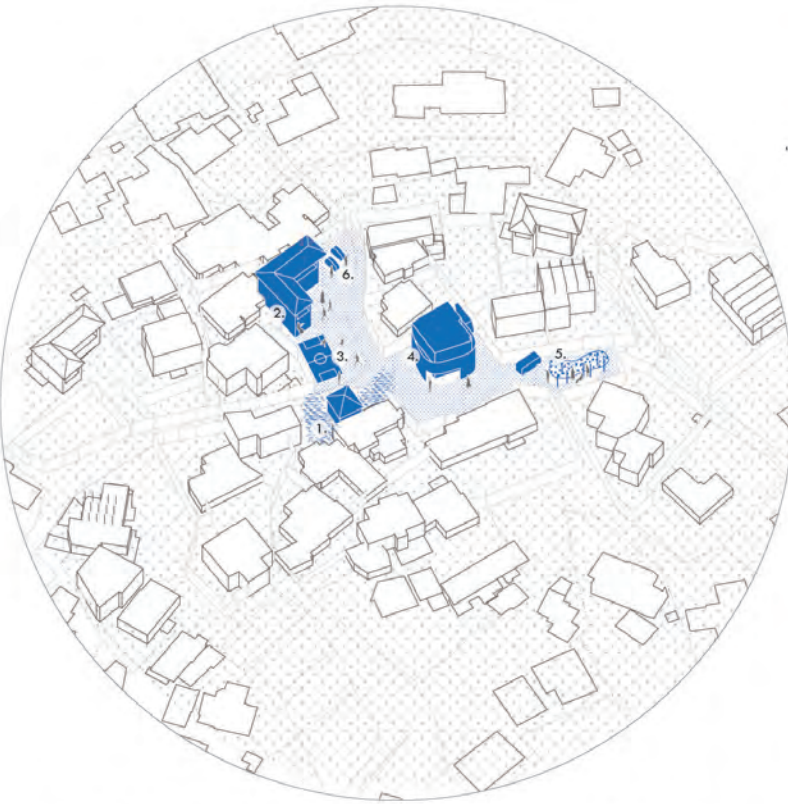


added volumes

- 1. sensors tower / landmark
- 2. stonecraft/woodcraft atelier
- 3. start-ups / industrial facilities
- 4. on-demand transportation hub
- 5. logistic facilities
- 6. mock-up area

3. COMMUNITY HUB

provide accessibility to neighbourhood services



"kulla" refurbishment + playground



pergola transportation hub



walled shared space



existing shops retrofitting

- 1. neighbourhood services/commerces
- 2. local atelier
- 3. playground
- 4. supermarket/depot
- 5. on-demand transportation hub
- 6. shared transport area



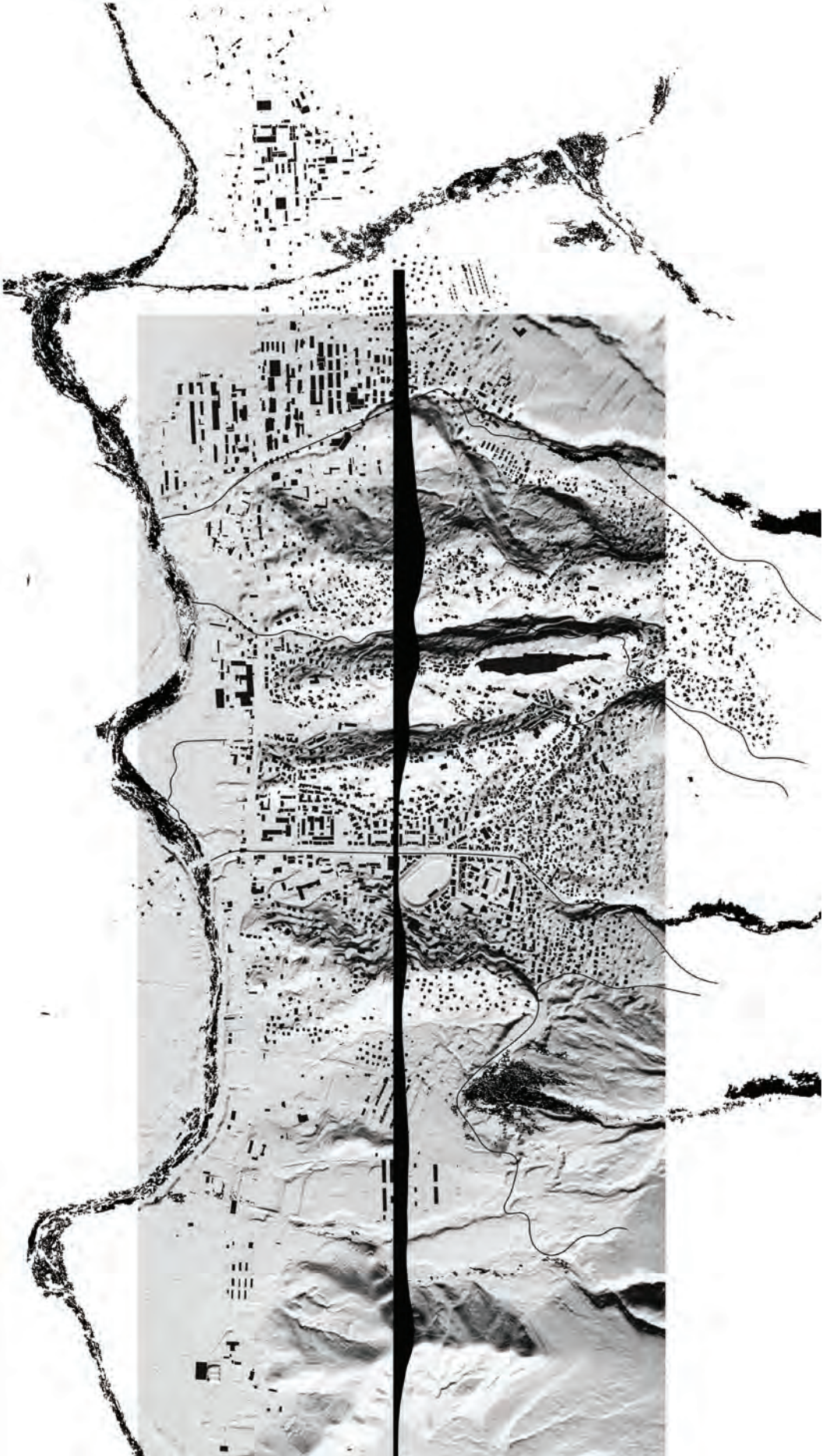
3 / Against the Grain

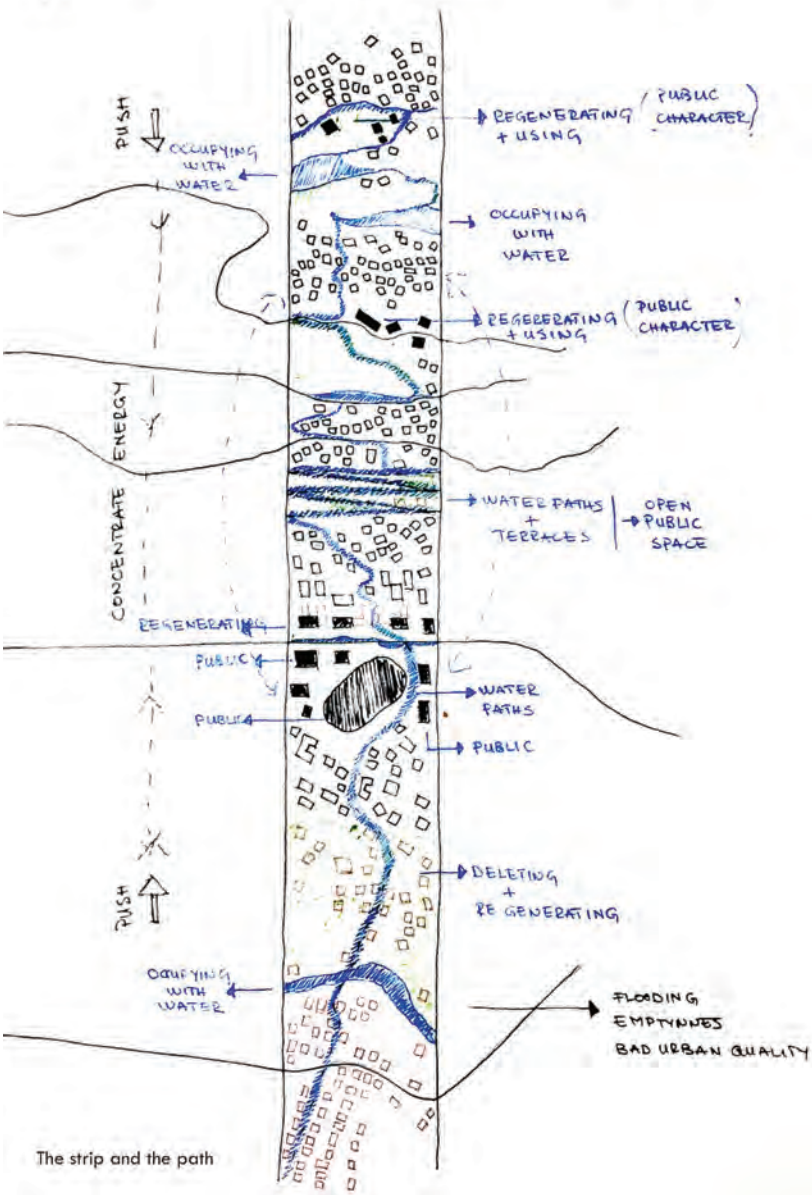
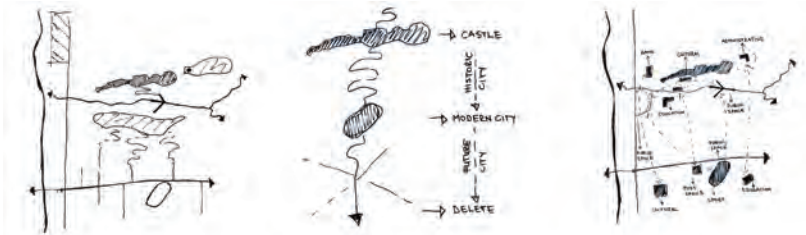
Alberto Grando, Dasara Pula

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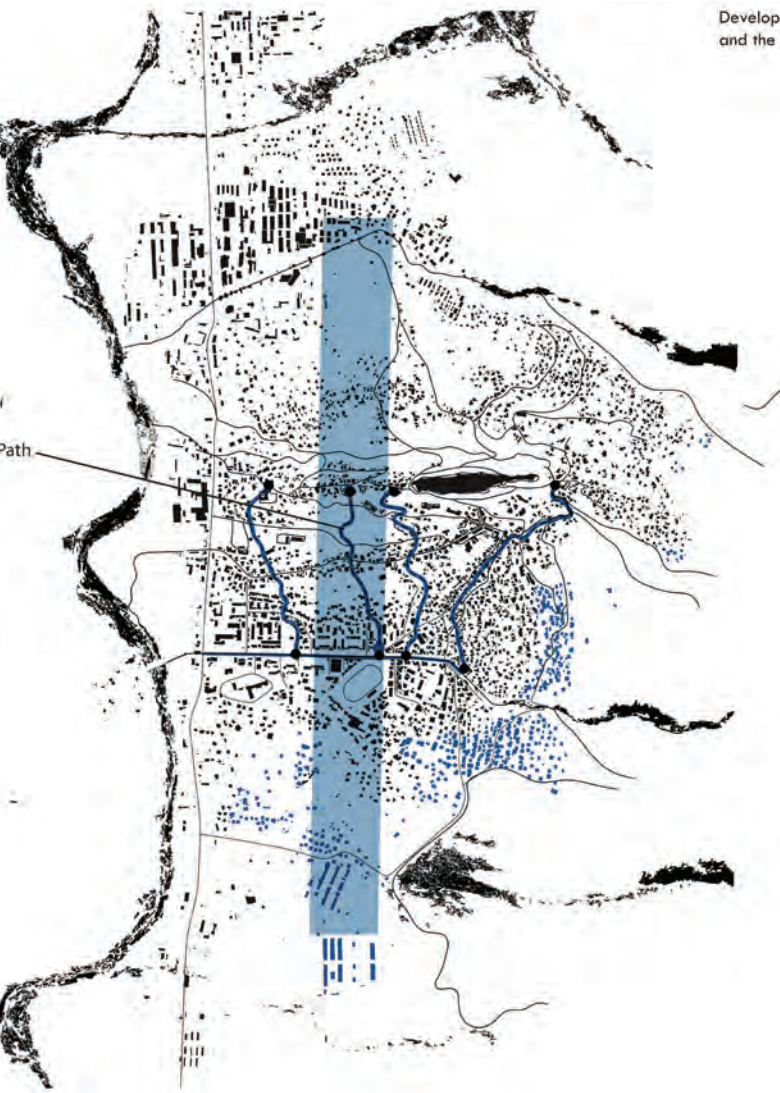
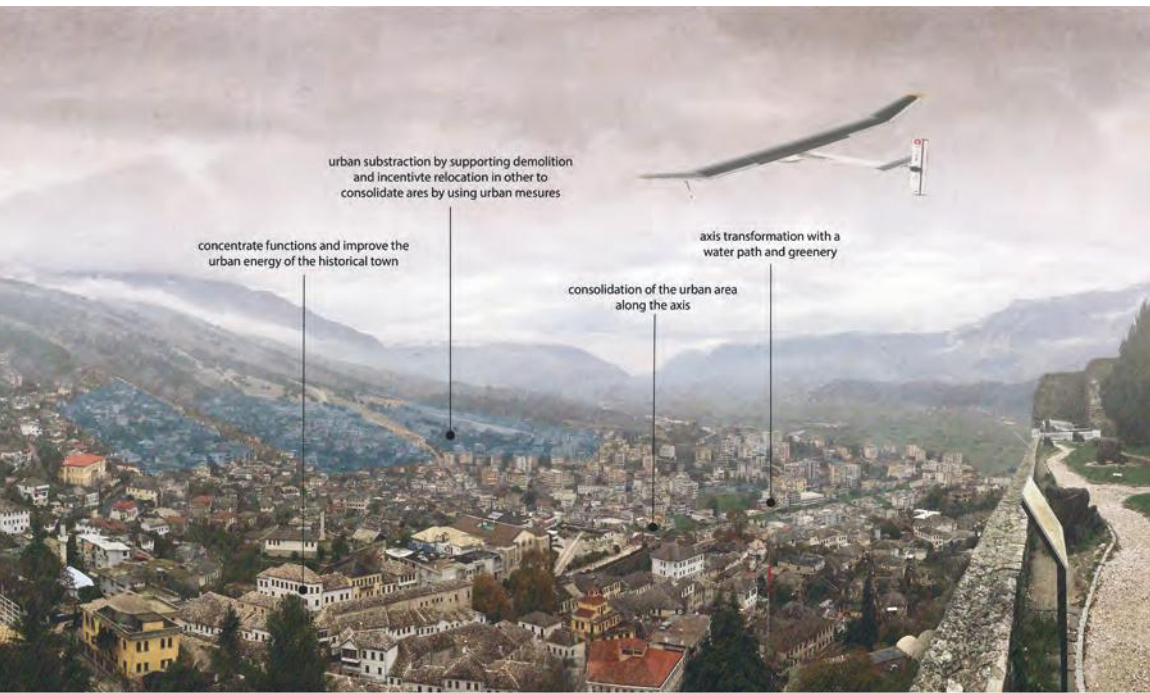
Gjirokastra is characterized by two constitutive aspects: the old, historic city which is under the protection of UNESCO since 2005 (a medieval city, developed and expanded during the ottoman period) and the new, modern city (built during the communist period). The aim of the workshop was to study Gjirokastra's structure as a whole, in order to address the problem of "shrinking", which is an issue that the city – and its historical part in particular – is facing. In this context, we focused on three issues, resulting from our research and site-visit: 1) the abandoned architectural heritage and the lack of social life and other activities in the old city; 2) the absence of a relationship between the modern city and the old city, as the former was developed separately from the later, conceptually, aesthetically and functionally; 3) the large number of informal buildings and residential quarters built on non-appropriate or dangerous land. To address these issues, our proposal deals with the urban morphology and the process of "deleting". Our approach is to frame the city in a modern condition: Gjirokastra is not just a historic city, it is a modern city with a historical part, it has a university, a hospital, a stadium, etc. In the case of Gjirokastra, the urban morphology followed the topography of the city by creating an organic street

pattern, following the northeast – southwest direction. The same direction characterizes the modern city, built in the outskirts of the old city. A distinct element of Gjirokastra's urban morphology is its hydrography, signified by water "paths" along the narrow streets of the city. By using the urban morphology, our project tries to create a relation between the old and the modern city. This relation is focused on revealing and analyzing the southeast – northwest direction: the contrary of northeast – southwest direction that characterizes the existing development, thus, illustrating the title "Against the Grain". This will emphasize the existing physical connections and stress all the activities between the old city and modern axis, by proposing to re-use the abandoned buildings in the historical part for public functions. Our proposal uses the hydrography to create "water paths" along two parts of the city, overlapped with existing connections. By using one path as a model, the city is studied inside a strip, in order to see what exists there and what can happen in the future. In this context, we proposed a process of "deleting" parts of the city, in order to deal with informal constructions built on dangerous land, by creating another land and opportunity. This means to create space for public activities, parks, greenery and water.





The strip and the path



Development of the strip and the path



This project wants to improve the connection by using water to create paths along two parts of the city. These paths are thematic axes and are overlapped with existing connections: culture, sports, education and health. By using one path as a model, we will study the city inside a strip. In order to see what is there. The idea is to propose in the future a process of deleting parts of the city: delete informal constructions that are built in dangerous areas and are empty in some cases, by giving importance and by creating another land and opportunity. This means to create space for public activities, parks, greenery and water.



4 / Health City

Doriana Musaj, Ivonne Ortiz, Luca Lezzerini

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Once the objectives and the development of the workshop were proposed, the groups were created. The formation of my group was particularly interesting as was an interdisciplinary team with professionals of different areas: an urbanist architect, a systems engineer, and a product designer (me). The different views of task each of us lead to combining different perspectives to the assigned job. Think about the recovery of the city, taking into consideration all the problems analyzing it from three different visions, and including three different approaches allowed us to conform to an innovative proposal. The camp visit to the city of Gjirokastra was set on the initial part of the workshop. During the visit, we could wander around the city space and the vicinities, and as a result, enrich and expand our views and experience the city. The team was able to identify spaces with high potentiality in the old city, the new city, and the industrial area. Knowing the three zones of the city filled our senses with images, panoramas, colors, textures, materials, history, and sense of belonging, allowing the team to identify common characteristics, of the three different spaces. Also, the team was able to enrich the data with field collection, complementing the information provided on the classwork. All those elements combined supplied the required elements and sensibility to reinforce the teamwork and generate a powerful strong proposal. In the second part of the workshop, the team focused on the generation of the proposal. As a starting point, we developed a brainstorming session. As a result, we

were able to generate and expose different approaches and perspectives, and next, we proceeded to create groups of similar ideas and hierarchically organize them to further development. One of the guiding observations permitted us to observe that a punctual intervention on just one zone of the city will not allowed us to fulfill all the objectives of the task, and only combining an intervention in all three will work:

The team proceeded to realize a spatial analysis with maps, dividing it into layers of populated areas, parklands, and communication and circulation elements. From the urbanist perspective, the identification of spaces and the analysis of their intervention potential were required. From the designer's perspective, the focus on identity, construction techniques, local materials, and potential to develop products was united to the specialty to generate a distribution of activities within the city. Finally, from the engineer vision, the promotion and development of services to improve comfort and accessibility were necessary. As a result of all the exposed arguments, the team came up with a proposal for the development of a city focused on art and design, in which different services and programs can be offered. All these activities must be centered on the recovery of identity across the product development with local techniques and materials. Finally, an activities circuit is proposed, it will be focused on maximizing the city and surroundings points of interest in order to generate a wide offer of activities to all kinds of public.



HERITAGE
HISTORY

RESTORATION

TOURISM

LANDSCAPE

BETWEEN

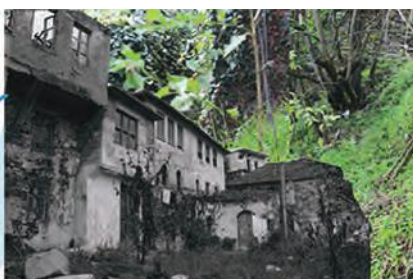
ATTRACTION

EXPLORE

RESTORATION

LANDMARK

LIFE
STONE
SPACE



GET LOST





Connecting private and public realm through "Gjirokastra's Passport". Communiting with locals by living their UNESCO site inside their legacies



Placemaking is about the benefits that accrue to us, our neighbors, our community, and even our culture when we engage with each other in a high-quality and healthy public realm. Including public participation in its design and use helps create community identification. Active programming, public events, and public art are powerful tools that help foster community pride.



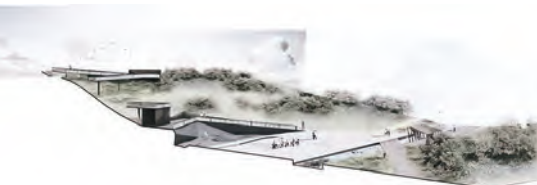
Placemaking embraces inclusivity by offering a universal platform for discourse. Everyone is a maker of place.

Everyone can serve the agenda of excellence in design, supportive environments, healthy communities, and thriving neighborhoods. In a high-quality public realm, we shed our individual bubbles and participate in a life of greater civic engagement.

Active Participation



In this band, the green areas are mostly unused, disconnected and wild. The idea is to recover them, preserving part of their landscape but using them to connect different "islands" of the city that, today are disconnected. Improving such connections will also allow tourist to live a wider area of the city, also thanks to the smart mobility system.

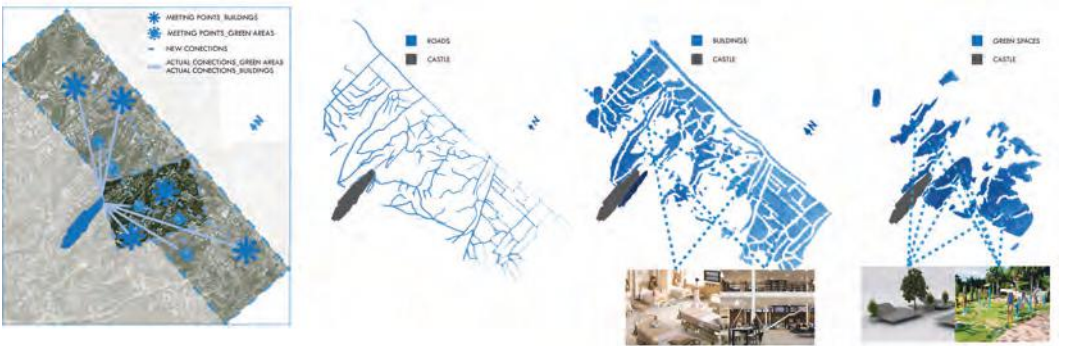
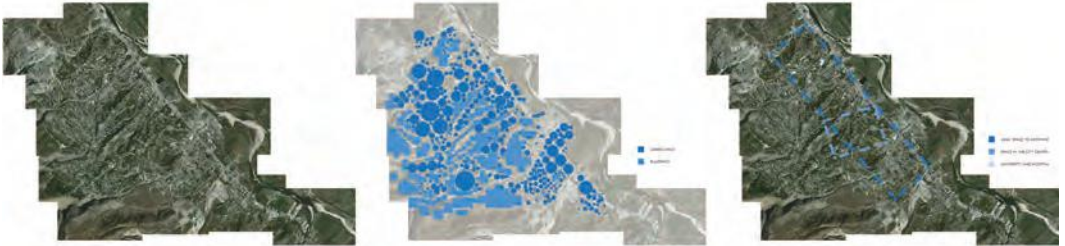
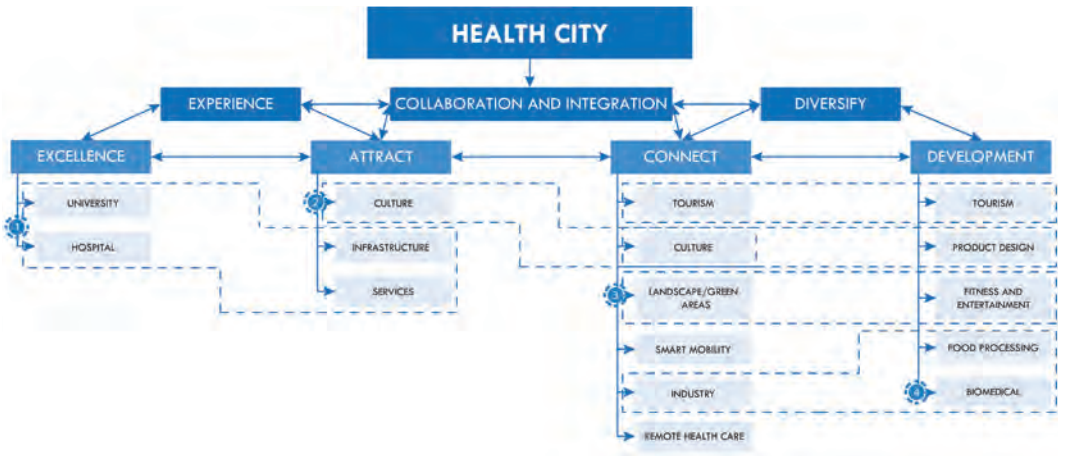




Traditional and Innovation.

As the Academy of design takes place, tradition will flow its best practices through combining the old with the new as technology. The elders with the youngsters a connection to be built in terms of development and inclusivity.





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EXCELLENCE

UNIVERSITY + HOSPITAL

Empower the university to support and use the presence of the excellence centres like the hospital and the sanitary services (The Village) or biomedical products factories (Industrial Zone). It also will support the development of the Design Academy.

The hospital must be expanded and specialised on geriatrics and rehabilitation. It will be moved into a new one located in the green area between the industrial zone and the Village, in a natural and relaxing environment.

The Old Hospital will change to become an extension of the University.

empower	sanitary services
biomedical products factory	geriatrics + rehabilitation
improve economy	school and hospital furniture
Design Academy	

CONNECT

LANDSCAPE + FITNESS AND ENTERTAINMENT

The Green Zebra is a set of alternating urbanized zones with green wild areas that make a band parallel to the main national road and which is long about 2 km and large around 1 km.

recover	urban furniture
preserving	fitness furniture
reforesting	green paths

ATTRACT

CULTURE + PRODUCT DESIGN

"Home Farming", "Home Handcraft", "Home Restaurant", "Home Theatre", open the private spaces to public and provide products/services.

Teach and learn from the exchange of traditions and culture. The meeting pot of cultures will enrich the existing cultural offer of the city.

Design Academy, by the University, where ideas are transformed in design, products and services.

products
exchange
ancient techniques
teach and learn
history
identity

DEVELOPMENT

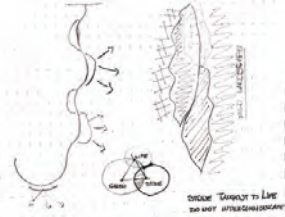
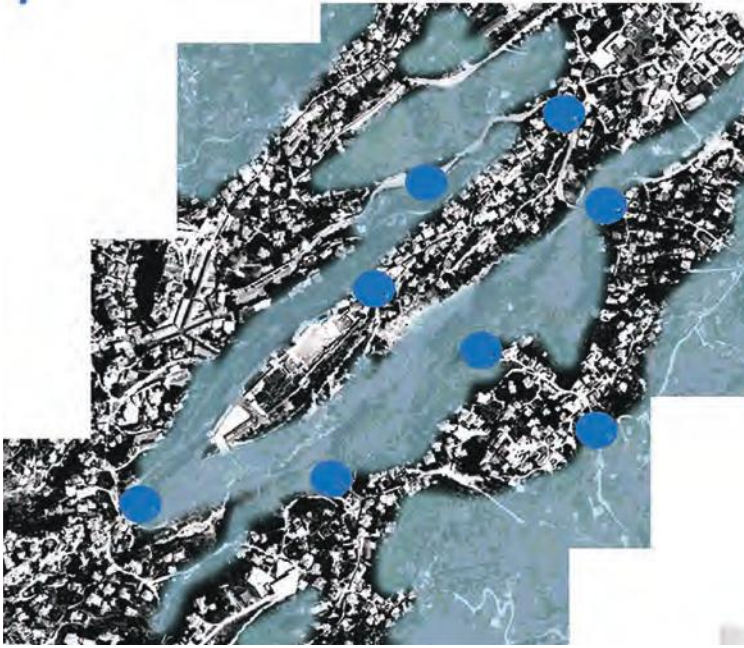
INDUSTRY + BIOMEDICAL

The birth of biomedical companies will be promoted by the City of Health strategy. The companies in biomedical will be those about remote assistance and wearable devices because elderly and patients will require such services.

Sanitary products for rehabilitation and for old people. The settlement of private diagnostic centres and clinics.

biomedical	fashion design	fitness furniture	design accessories
textiles	urban furniture	food processing	





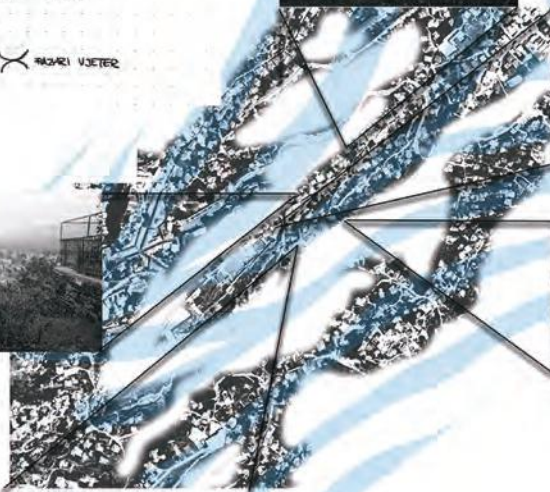
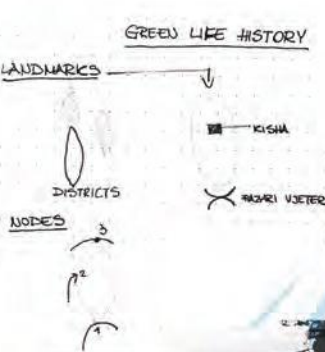
The zebra lines

Connecting through doors



The zebra lines, is a set of alternating urbanized zones with green wild areas that make a band parallel to the main national road and which is long about 1.300 m and large around 700 m.

Intersection of different disciplines as architecture, urban design, urban landscape, landscape architecture, art, public art, community cultural programs (art and crafts, traditions crafts, etc., and supersedes their boundaries by focusing on collaboration, communication and place instead of isolated projects, bringing together individuals of all backgrounds, interests and talents.







Against the grain. Two theoretical studies for re-thinking Gjirokastër

Keywords / Urban planning, Landscape perception, Psychogeography, Digital mapping

Alberto Grando

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to seek an approach that goes beyond the dualistic - and maybe simplistic - contraposition between the old and new part of Gjirokastër; an approach where the method is more important than the result itself and where design is not predetermined by the initial conditions. An approach, therefore, where the old and the modern part of the city are seen as two sides of the same urban entity, where the imposition of an idea "a priori" is the tool that helps to think "against the grain".

This article refers to two different research fields, both raised within the contemporary discussion of the urban planning. The first one refers to the postmodern debate: starting from some of the most important studies of the post-war period, which are largely based on the theoretical work of M. Ungers and lately R. Koolhaas, the case study of Gjirokastër takes inspiration by imposing an ideal grid (or bands in this case) as a governing principle. This hypothesis makes us see the entire urban landscape through a pattern of bands, like a strong array of directional sectors, perpendicular to the intuitive NE-SW direction of the main streets. In addition, this method allows a process of de-contextualization and re-composition of different "pieces" of the city, in a dialectical action of relating the singularity with the entirety urban complexity. The second study refers to the pioneers of the psycho-geographical approach like that of Guy Debord, which helps develop a distribution model of how visitors experience the urban space, in order to give useful inputs for the final urban design proposal. A set of images describes the design concept, which aims to enforce and strengthen the relationship between the different neighborhoods of the city - in particular between the old and the modern part. The design aims to achieve this target in two ways: as a physical one, by implementing a set of paths that can mend the different parts, and as a programmatic one by encouraging to relocate different functions in the city in order to drive the future development.

Introduction

Gjirokastër is known for the importance of its historical center and the charm of the old houses perched on the hillside. While these elements make the city one of the most important touristic spots in the region, the city is more than that. The last century imposed a new planning paradigm, which drove the urban evolution of its modern part through zoning, axial organization, and geometrical regularity. The two parts of the city are in a state of dynamic equilibrium: on the one hand, we

have the historic part, which has started in the last years to be an important cultural-touristic destination; on the other hand, we have the modern part or 'socialist city', which seems to rehash the urbanistic premises that generated it.

In fact, even if the modern part of Gjirokastër cannot be inserted within the bigger post socialist cities paradigm¹, its urbanity suffers the same lack of identity that characterizes some towns of the post-socialist era. The spaces that used to serve as places of social and architectural

¹ / See *Utopian spaces: symbolic transformation of the "socialist cities" under post-soviet conditions // Re-Imagining The City: Municipality and Urbanity Today from a Sociological Perspective*. Ed. by M. Smagacz-Poziemska, K. Frysztacki, A. Bukowski. Jagiellonian University Press, 2017. P. 33-55.

experiments have turned into ordinary localities, whose spatial logic, external shape and urban planning has no other symbolic meaning beyond the recent Albanian history. In total opposition with such condition, the old city is characterized by centuries of cultures and connection with the surrounding landscape.

Due to the complexity of the problem, this paper refers to two important research fields that enlivened the discussion around the urban spaces during the last century.

The first one refers to the postmodern theories of urbanism, which started back in the '60 by Matthias Ungers (author of the pamphlet *Grossformen im Wohnungsbau*), who undermined the ideas of postwar urban development. This theoretical framework supports the analysis and serves as the starting point for a contemporary paradigm in which the urban tissue and the new developments carry renewed relevance beyond their bounded form and shape.

The second one is the psycho-geography approach, a form of research and design inquiry that focuses on the perception and exploration of the urban spaces. By filtering the analysis through these two theories, the design suggests connecting different parts of the city by two different means: a physical one, by implementing a set of paths that mends different areas, and a programmatic one, which encourages relocating different functions.

State of the art

Gjirokastra is a medieval city (south of Albania), built on the hills expanding from the mountain "Mali i gjerë" and culminating with the Castle of Argjiro. During the ottoman period (XVI-XVII) the city expanded and developed outside the castle walls toward Drino's valley². The Bazaar area became the center of the city, which was used as a marketplace and for cultural and social exchange. Besides its historical stratification, the urban fabric of Gjirokastër is made even more complex by the morphology of the site, marked by steep slopes that affect not only the form of the urban environment, but also its perception. The old town, in fact, was built on hilly areas by following the ridges, thus taking advantage of the defensive slopes to control the valley underneath. The highest point of the old part is about 310 above the sea level, while the modern lays at 195 m, which means there are likely more than 100 meters of difference in elevation. This configuration creates an urban structure based on some ramifications developed alongside the main streets, which mostly follow the cliffs, taking advantage from the gentlest slopes.

Due to the morphology, the urban fabric is branched into different "fingers", which start from the old bazaar and the Castle area and slowly descend. This shape not only reveals something about the historical development of the city, but also affect the way people experience the site. Hills and steep slopes influence the paths and

² / Kumaraku, Papa, Dobjani, *The Adaptation of the Traditional Cities to Contemporary Use Interventions in Historical Areas: The Case Study of Gjirokastra* Online International Interdisciplinary Research Journal, pag. 157, Volume-VI, Nov 2016 Special Issue (1) 2016

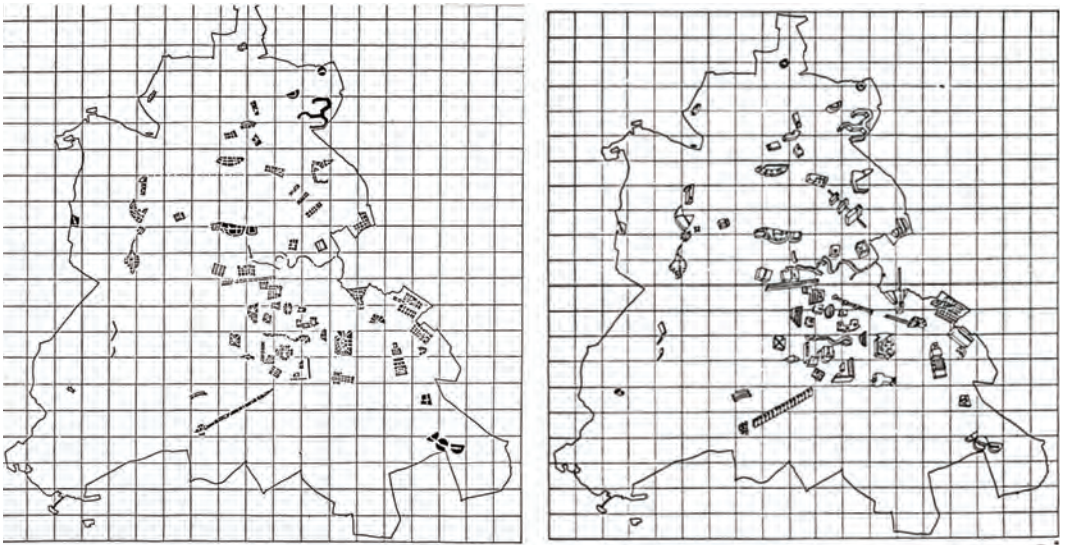


Fig. 1 / Image from O.M. Ungers. *Berlin as a Green Archipelago*, pag. 197.
This image is taken as a reference for the implementation of the design concept.

connections between the different part of the city, creating a perceptual pattern and distorting the perception of the urban space. Places which seem near in the map, are felt distant when people experience the city: this phenomenon is even more evident if we consider the relationship between the old and new part. The modern city, in fact, lies in a flat area at the foot of the old center, and is well connected to the national road. However, the need for better connections and easier transportation shifted the importance towards the more functional and modern part of the city, thus triggering the replacement of shops and activities. Using a device like a band, as it will be seen in the next chapter, allows to decontextualize and re-contextualize portions of the city and helps to find new ways to see the urban fabric.

Methodology

The band

Back in the 60's, starting with M. Ungers, a line of thought began to question the quality of the urban space in the modern cities. *Grossform im Wohnungsbau*, one of the first works by Oswald M. Ungers, set the stage for all the subsequent discussion on this topic:

The city made up of "complementary places" consists of the largest possible variety of different parts, in each of which a special urban aspect is developed with a view to the whole. In a sense it is a system of the "city within the city." Every part has its own special features, without however being complete or self-contained. [...]

and therefore combines with other highly developed places to form a complex system,

*a kind of federation*³.

The power of this idea, however, is to set up a conceptual framework (Figure 1), in order to activate a dialectic relationship between the single architecture and the overall plan: it uses analogy and metaphor as catalysts of a "superordinate idea", that is, in other words, a starting point for "an overall concept that binds all the parts together"⁴.

Two main things are taken as an inspiration for urban design intervention in the city of Gjirokastra:

- First, it is the increasing relevance of the program beyond the style in urban planning, which became one of the subjects of speculation for all the contemporary architecture⁵. For the purpose of this project, the program is a key element in order to relocate some function that reactivates parts of the city and creates synergies. Some of the old abandoned buildings are in fact used to insert civic functions in the old town, trying to balance the urban role with the modern city and avoiding to let the old bazar like an unanimated open museum.

- Second, the use of a theoretical spatial framework as a device for setting the ground of the project. If in the case of Berlin, the grid is used to find meaning in a non-hierarchical, isotropic and almost formless space, in this case the grid is used differently: it is modulated on the complex morphology of the site (see Figure 2), which helps us think against the more intuitive way of the existing streets. If in Berlin the grid is a tool that helps create meaning, here it helps think outside the box.

³ / Oswald M. Ungers and S. Viehts, *The Dialectic City*, Pag. 20, Milan: Skira, 1997.

⁴ / M. Biraghi, "Le ragioni della forma", in *Storia dell'architettura contemporanea*, vol. II, Einaudi, Torino 2008, p. 312.

⁵ / Hättasch M., *Form after Urbanism: the potential of Grossform*. *The Plan Journal*. Pag. 59-76, 2016.

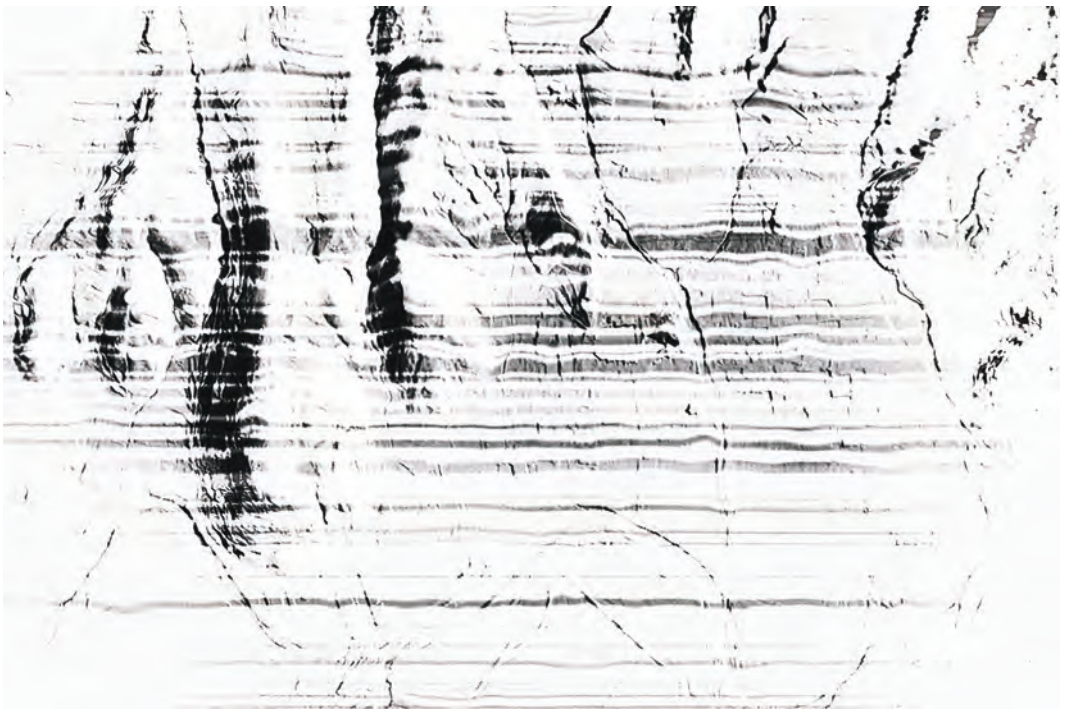


Fig. 2 / An elaboration of Unger' matrix. This image synthesizes the design approach: the adaption of the abstract geometrical framework to the site area suggests exploring the urban fabric along a set of bands, instead of adopting a matrix. The greyscale images emphasize the morphological characteristic of Gjirokastra. Credits: Author.

In fact, one of the most important steps in this project is the adaptation of the abstract rigid grid (see Figure 2) into long bands, which create a lateral cutaway of the town, against the direction usually people experience it. In this way, the band incorporates very different parts of the city: the fortress, a part of the old bazar, the neighborhood in the hills and modern town.

Psycho-geography: a study of spatial distribution

The other theoretical framework of this proposal is that of psycho-geography, which helps to develop a model which describes the way how people experience the city, in order to support and address the design choices for the project. The Scope of this section is to find information that helps us understand how people use and enjoy the urban space in Gjirokastër. Since there are no data regarding the numbers of tourists provided by the accommodations, the decision was taken to map the number of the pictures taken by visitors. Although this method doesn't represent a scientific and quantitative measurement of the touristic dimension and enjoyment of the site, it can provide

precious information about the qualitative patterns or habits of the visitors. This approach can be found among the various situationist procedures developed by the psycho-geography movement - a field of study started in the '50 in France by Guy Debord. His research around the exploration of urban environments emphasizes the concept of playfulness and *détournement*⁶ (diversion or drifting). In particular, this activity consists of quick passages through various environments where the ludic-recreational concept together with the whims of the moment represent the main operation of exploring the urban space⁷. In other words, this activity is closely linked to recognizing the effects of the nature of space and the affirmation of a playful behavior, in opposition the classic notions of travel and mapping. Diversion differs from the simple walk essentially in terms of the approach to the territory⁸. The one who "diverts" renounces the conventional way of moving and adopts an indeterminate walking strategy that does leads to moving randomly within a territory. But how this study can be transformed into an empirical tool for understanding the fruition of the urban space? The

⁶ / Guy Debord, *Théorie de la dérive*, in *Les Lèvres nues*, n. 9, November 1956

⁷ / Guy Debord, *Psychogeographic guide of Paris*. Rosengreen 1955

⁸ / Jouet, Jacques "Frise du métro parisien (Poem of the Paris Subway)," *Studies in 20th Century Literature: Vol. 26: Iss. 1, Article 13*. 2002. On April 18th, 1996, Jacques Jouet set out to write a particularly panoramic subway poem. The mathematician (and Jouet's fellow Oulipian) Pierre Rosenstiehl had devised an itinerary that would take the poet through every station of the Parisian subway system in a single day, boarding the first train and descending from the last at the same arbitrarily-chosen station, with a minimal number of returns to a given station and of changes of line.

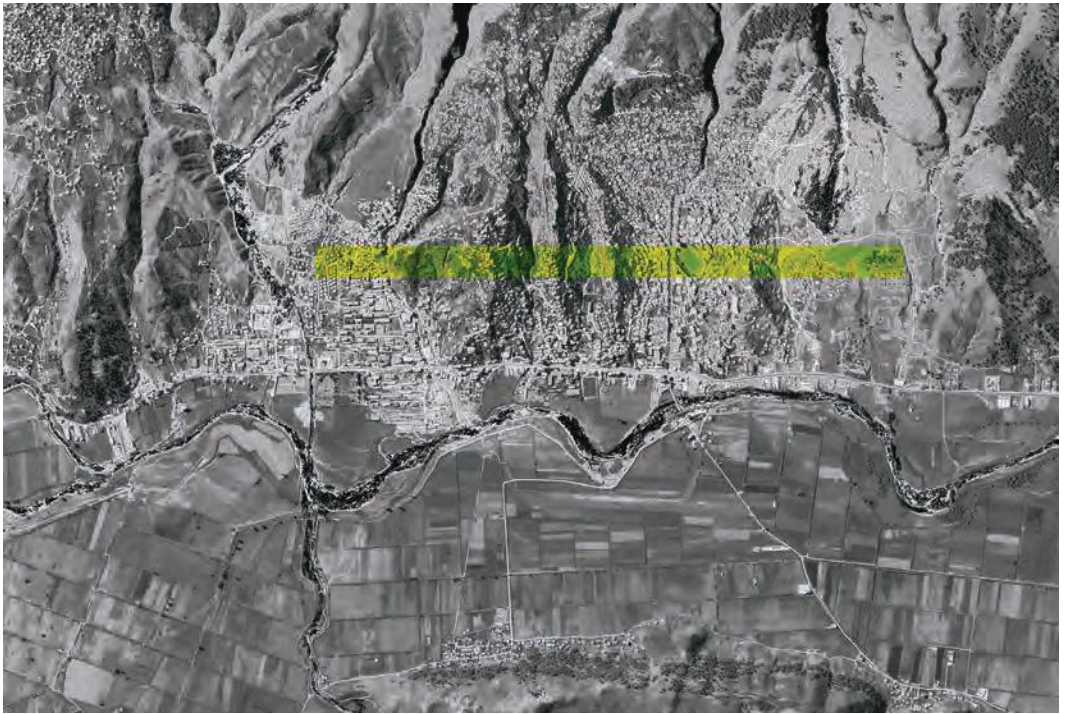


Fig. 3 / View of the city of Gjirokastrë, heading S-W. The yellow band describes the project idea, which analyzes the urban environment along the yellow strip, in a process of de-contextualizing and re-contextualizing the fragment of the city. Source / the author.

mass-utilization of GPS devices (including the smartphones) opens new scenarios of research in this topic. In particular, the method used here consists of showing the distribution of the pictures provided by the Flickr⁹ database: since every picture is geo-referenced and datable, it is possible to produce maps that visualize the distributions of the photos in the space, revealing which are the more visited and enjoyed places. The map of Gjirokastrë (Figure 5) is divided by 100x100m squares, and each one shows through a color the number of pictures-day in the span 2007-2012. For each cell, the model adds the number of photo-user-days for all days from 2005-2014 (or a user-defined range within those years), and returns the average annual number of photo-user-days. The results show, as expected, a high concentration in the old bazar area and the castle. Such result tells a lot about the difference in the way people experience the old and the modern part of the city and suggests an intervention that helps people experience other parts of the city that are not visited as frequently.

Results

Studying the city along the sequence of bands is a counterintuitive move, which

goes against the phenomenological experience of the city. Many studies refer to the concept of sequences and repetition as a category of space¹⁰. It's important to highlight that the notion of sequence is directly connected to some visual arts: many examples of film footage and editing, use this concept not only to describe a space, but also as a narration tool¹¹. An interesting topic is also the notion of repetition connected with the description of urban space in pop culture, as a researcher like Adam Krism points out: in the pop and rap music tradition¹², the musical video is often taken by the car, showing the repetition of the streets, in an attempt of recomposing the urban space like photograms on a film. In the specific case presented, the bands are a device - a frame - that limit and at the same time stimulate the perception of the urban space. In particular, the operation of decontextualizing the strip shows an interesting rhythm between the urban zones and the green narrow valleys (figure 8). This particular configuration is due to the natural morphology of the sites, which encourages building on the ridge of the cliffs, letting the greenery growing in the small valleys in between. The project proposes to reconnect these different

⁹ / Flickr is an image hosting service and video hosting service. It was created by Ludicorp in 2004. It has changed ownership several times and has been owned by SmugMug since April 20, 2018. Photos and videos can be accessed from Flickr without the need to register an account, but an account must be made to upload content to the site. Flickr database contain millions of geo-referenced photo, that can be used to produce helpful analysis.

¹⁰ / See Moretti L., *Strutture e sequenze di spazi*, «Spazio, n. 7» Gruppo Editoriale Spazio, Roma, 1953.

¹¹ / See Lynch, Kevin *The Image of the City*. The MIT Press, 1960.

¹² / See Kris Adam, *Music and Urban Geography*, Chapter 4, Taylor and Francis Group LLC, New York, 2007.

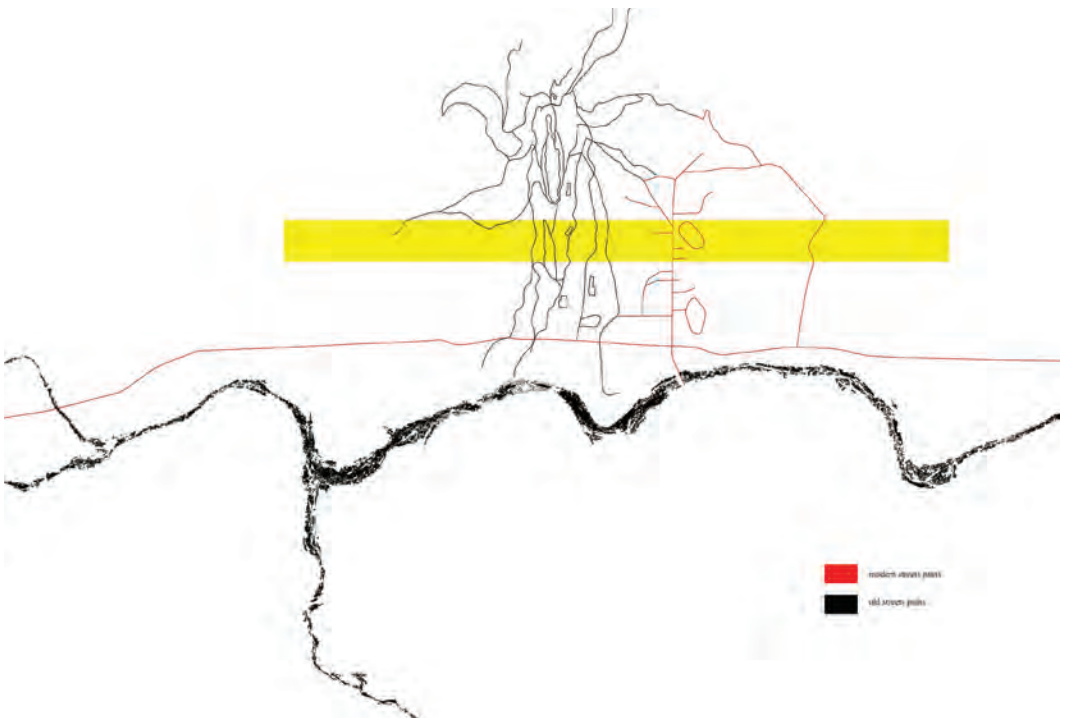


Fig. 4 / Map of the streets of Gjirokastrë and the river Drino. The map shows the old streets (in black) and the modern one (in red) The yellow band indicates the focus area of the project. Source / the author.

scenes, like “urban episodes” by working along the strip’s direction and by modifying the program. The expected results overtake the apparent phenomenological separation between the old and the new part of the city and restore a sense of oneness to the community, which helps spreading the tourist and the visitors to different parts of Gjirokastrë. The results establish a relationship between the different parts of the city in order to increase the connectivity between the historical part and modern city.

To be more precise, the two parts aren’t completely disconnected physically, since there are some existing walking paths from the bazar. The project aims to highlight and restore some of these paths and improve the usability and the comfort for the pedestrians through small interventions in and around them. The actions foresee a renovation of the flooring by taking inspiration from the old stone roads and take some measures

- Like ramps and facilities for access – in order to overtake the steep slopes which now represent an obstacle. The actions of the project along the strips are:
- Provide physical connection along the bands, which will encourage to experience of the town across different urban environment (old-new) and across different spaces (built – unbuilt);
- Going beyond the separation between the old and modern neighborhoods, thus creating thematic patterns that come down from the old cities to the

modern part, and helping visitors to enjoy Gjirokastrë from different points of view.

- Create a theme for every path by attributing a meaning connected with the characteristics of the area of that band.

The site survey reveals some feasible paths that connect the old part to the new one. In particular, four main paths are individuated; each one starts from the historical part, which is the most visited and ends in the modern part. The paths don’t require huge transformations that would alter the urban fabric of the city.

All the actions are limited to some small interventions which complete or improve the walking comfort for pedestrians and also the awareness for the citizens. The paths are studied in terms of linking some strategic public services like the post office, banks, shops (see Figure 7). Not only this: since the paths are crossing different environments, they also work as interesting tools in experiencing the city from all the sides (the old consolidated urban fabric, orchards, informal buildings, etc.).

Signage and information points can also help the visitors enjoy these paths, and they could be helpful in guiding the tourists to different areas. The interventions do not have high physical impact, and they are addressed to improve the quality of the existing paths, increasing the awareness of the historical heritage.

Conclusion

Even if design remains in a conceptual level

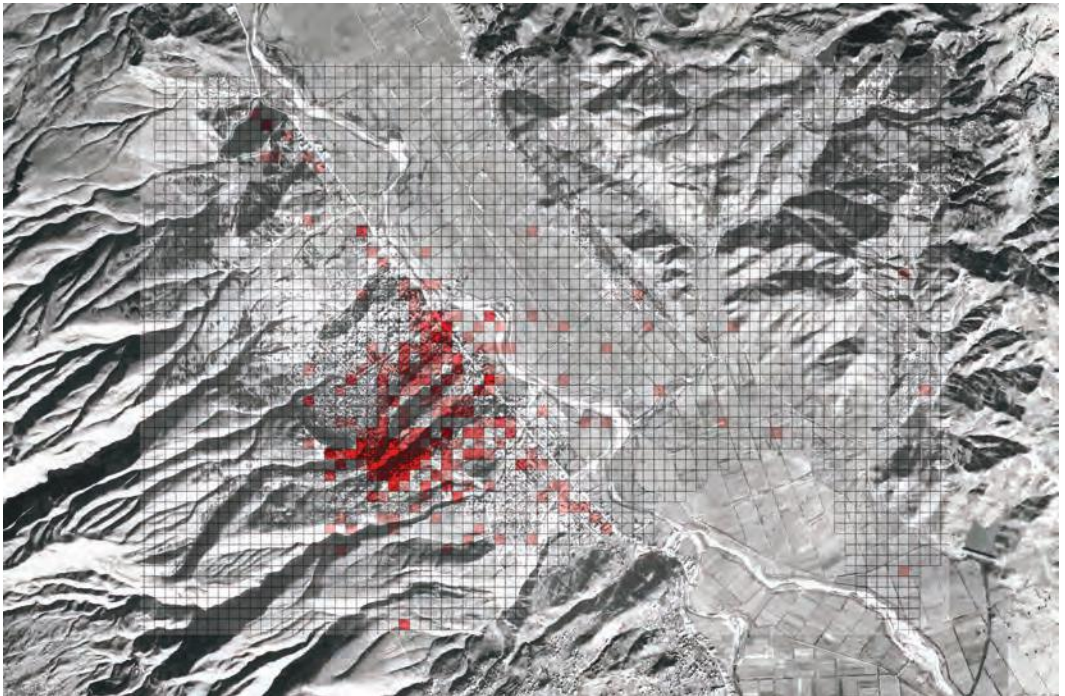


Fig. 5 / This map shows the concentration of image taken by visitors in Gjirokastër, based on a matrix of 100 x 100 m. Source / the author.

and does not intend to be an exhaustive design proposal, there are some useful hints that put the basis for an overall strategy for further developments. The two main ideas raised in this paper - which are the imposition of a geometrical tool (the band) and the space distribution of the visitors - can trigger and enable a process of urban planning and transformation. In particular, the programmatic spatial distribution is one of the most important architecture topics of the last decades. It's interesting to notice that within postmodern discourse, the program alone is thought to be a sufficient organizing device of the space¹³. One examples of such premise is the Palais de Tokyo reuse, designed by Lacaton&Vassal, a building dedicated to modern and contemporary art:

Sometimes architecture is already there. That was the case with the west wing of Paris's Palais de Tokio, a hulking Neoclassical exhibition hall that had been occupied and abandoned by a string cultural institutions by the time the design competition for a new contemporary art center was held in 1999.

*The decision to add nothing was not a denial of architecture; it was simply a different way of approaching their role. "The work of an architect is not only to build" Lacaton explained in an interview in 2003. "he first thing to do is to think, and only after that are you able to say whether you should build or not."*¹⁴

Even if this is still an open question, the program can have a huge impact on urban design and can give some precise directions to the development of the project. The strategy of the proposal is to identify the empty or abandoned buildings in the city and relocate the functions; the scope is to curb the trend of concentrating a lot of the civic function in the modern part of the city, which is easier to reach by car. There is a risk of draining the old part of the city of all the vital functions that used to animate the old bazar area.

The idea of the project, in a nutshell, is to individuate some dismissed buildings, like the old school building in Dunavat neighborhood, and relocate some civic functions there, in order to use the program as a tool to reactivate the urban and avoid the risk to transform the old town into an open museum. Thus, the concept proposes to the municipality to compile a report with all the empty and non-used buildings owned by the public body, which can be the key tool for the activation of the program strategy.

Furthermore, the program can expand not only to the building, but also to the streets: mixed uses need to be understood in terms of urban grain, density and permeability. The distinction between private (residential) and public (commercial) spaces is defined by the typo-morpho-logical structure of building

¹³ / See Hättasch M., *Form after Urbanism: the potential of Grossform: The Plan Journal*. Pag. 59-76, 2016.

¹⁴ / David Huber, *Beyond Belief: David Huber on the Architecture of Lacaton & Vassal Beyond Belief*, «Art Forum» Vol. 53, No. 9, 2015.



Fig. 6 / View of one of the existing streets. The aim is to increase the quality of the paths by paving the ground with local stones, improve connection, remove barriers and put signposting.
Source / the author.

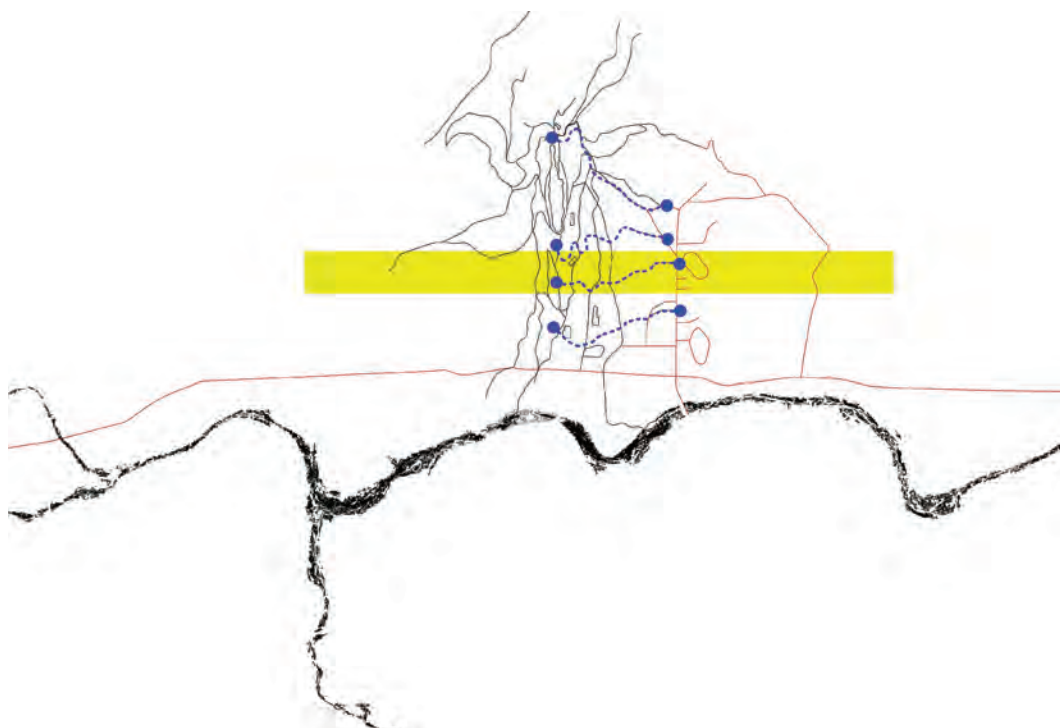


Fig. 7 / In this page: OLD urban fabric (black) and MODREN urban fabric (red) of Gjirokastrër. The blue connections represent the new paths proposed. Source / the author.

fronts and backs, which can enable a transition to the public street life through private buildings addressing the street, as it has been discussed in this article in the Journal of Space Syntax (JSS):

*the processes by which the mixing of uses takes place is important, such as diversity, conservation and regeneration. The diversity of activities in a street 'is a product not simply of the mix of activities within the buildings and blocks that abut a street but also of the design and public use of the street itself'. The issue is not only of design or the position of entrances in buildings, but also concerns how the street becomes an active space of mutual collaboration between the private and the public realm*¹⁵.

Discussion

The article illustrates how theoretical approaches can be instrumental in mending the separation between the historical cities and modern urban

development, mostly created in the last century. In addition, it shows how some of the problems can be overcome by using very light interventions, like increasing the connection, adding signposting or create new paths. From a theoretical approach, this paper emphasizes a strong conceptual framework during the design process, which can help us find solutions that go outside the common path of urban design praxis.

By intervening into the street fabric, which represents the lymphatic system of the urban environment, it is possible to re-establish a oneness and modify the way to experience the city, both by visitors and citizen.

The reassignment of the program, together with the individuation of some strategic abandoned building, can relocate the program and create, along with the new paths, a positive synergy for the whole city.

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¹⁵ / Narvaez, L. and Penn, A. "The Architecture of Mixed Uses". In Journal of space Syntax, Vol. 7 (1), p. 107-136, 2016.

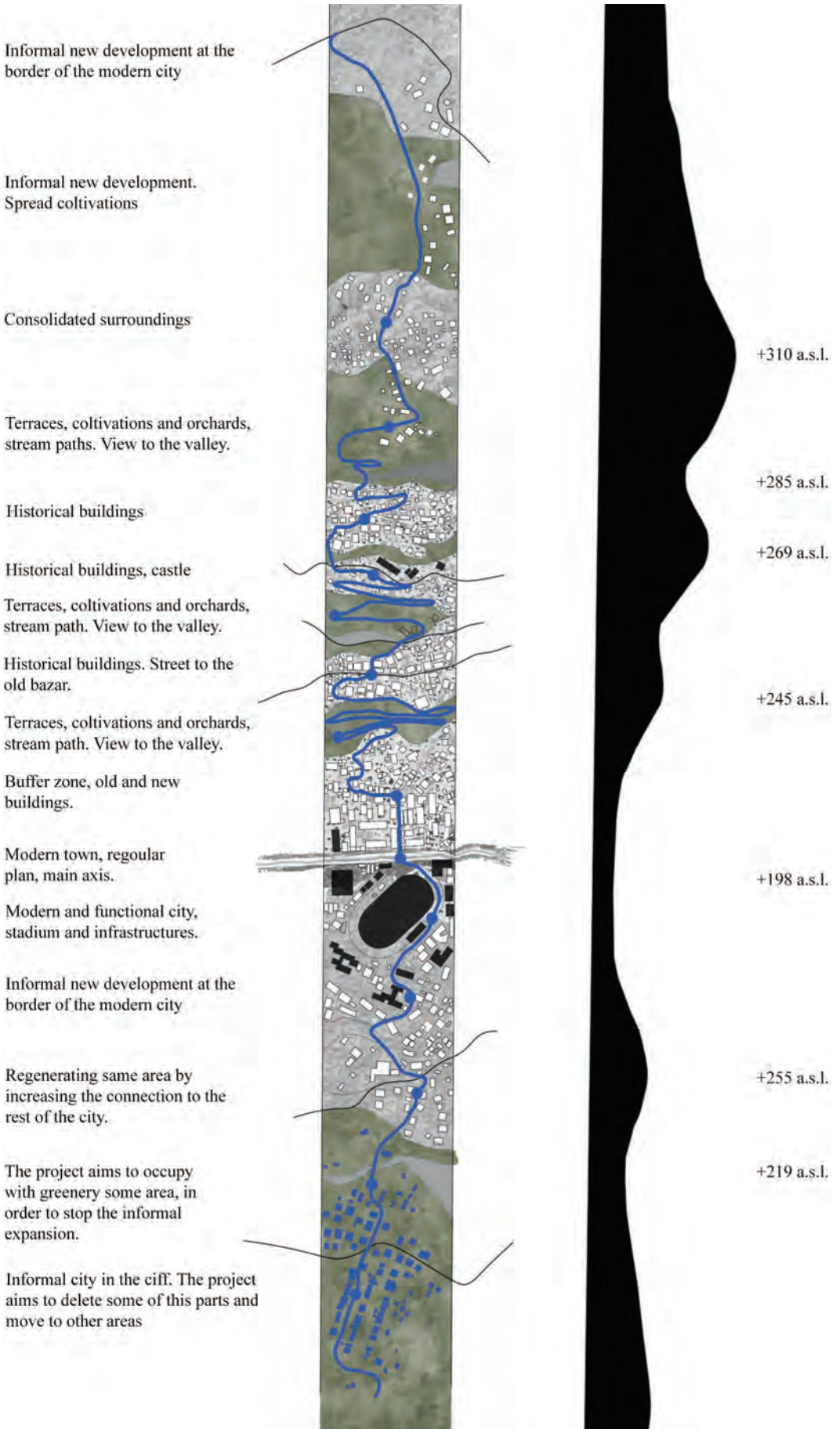


Fig. 8 / Focus of the yellow band with the description of each area. The black shape represents a cut-away of the site with the elevations along the band. Source / the author.

Architecture and the City in the interplay of socio-cultural instances: Gjirokastra in a (Post-)Modern Condition

Keywords / (Post-)Modern City, Urban Energy, Urban Editing, Cultural and Natural Heritage.

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Abstract

Our understanding of an architectural phenomenon is interrelated with political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions. As Friedrich Jameson would put it: architecture, politics, economics, sociology, technology, film, painting, etc., are structurally connected instances (Jameson, 1991).

Therefore, to interpret an architectural creation – a building and a city – one has to look at all configurations formed out of the combination of these instances. In this context, current global conjunctures make the city face challenges posed by the capitalist system, globalization process, migration, and uncontrolled growth of the cities. Today's society is constantly confronted by a global crisis emerging from such issues, a crisis which impacts the operation of architectural practice.

This paper studies what occurs in the city within architecture's interplay with political, economic, social and cultural instances. The discussion will focus on the modern and postmodern period, their relation to the pre-modern history and to the vision for the future city. The concept of the city and its transformations are framed within specific changes in politico-economic and socio-cultural systems, looking at (post-)modern architecture and city planning as representations of radical ideological shifts.

This paper will discuss the conditions of the shrinking cities through the city of Gjirokastra (Albania) as a case-study. Gjirokastra's historical part is under UNESCO protection since 2005. The discussion for the future vision of the city of Gjirokastra relates to its historical part, which "lost" its "urban energy" to the modern part of the city. The objective of this paper is to think Gjirokastra and its future differently by framing the city in a (post-)modern condition: by providing a development scenario based on urban editing, rather than growth and new building programs.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to stimulate a critical way of thinking about the future city. It is concerned with the concept of the city within the conditions created by postmodern political, economic, social and cultural developments, changes and transformations. The paper thinks architecture as a (re)creation of the city, contextualized in the discourse of post-urban transformations (post-war; post-industrial; post-socialist) occurring in historic cities. When discussing about architectural or cultural values, interventions in historic cities – especially in those that are protected by law –

were/are more complex because of the impact on historical sites and buildings. Thus, this paper will study the interplay of postmodern instances in architecture, city planning, politics, economics, and so forth, within the relation between historic cities and their current and future development. In doing so, it will propose a language through which we communicate between different aspects of the city. And, if architecture is considered a re-creation of the city, then it is also a re-creation of languages, relationships and 'urban energies' occurring there.

In the history of philosophy, architecture

is used as a metaphor for creation. As Kojin Karatani has demonstrated, architecture creates new situations, new environments and new societies (Karatani, 1995), occurring in the city, which is thus, a re-creation of architectural practice. To some extent, this relationship is also studied by David Harvey in *Neoliberalism and the City*. Referring to the sociologist Robert Park and philosopher Karl Marx, he shows that the city is the man's attempt to re-create the world where he lives, as he pleases (Harvey, 2007). Thus, in the re-creation of the city, he also re-creates himself (Harvey, 2007). In this context, a hypothesis can be formulated, that there exists an 'urban energy' between architecture and society, which is reflected in the city. We interpret this 'urban energy' as a tool for regenerating the historic cities and deal with their current crisis. This will be illustrated through the case study of the historic city of Gjirokastra, framed here as a modern city with a historical part, a university, a hospital, a stadium and an industrial zone. By framing Gjirokastra in a modern condition, we will rethink it as a whole: as multifaceted and not simply as an historical city.

Theoretical Framework: The City Within Shifted Social and Cultural Systems – (Post-)Modern Transformations

The paper discusses the modern and postmodern society and architecture, in order to understand their impact in the existing structure of the historic city. For instance, high modernism is credited with the destruction of the fabric of the historic city and of its older neighborhood culture,

by way of the radical disjunction of the new Utopian high-modernist building from its surrounding context (Jameson, 1991). Yet, insofar as modernism still believed in "some residual zones of 'nature' or 'being,' of the old, the older, the archaic" and still believed that one could "do something to that nature and work at transforming that 'referent' " (Jameson, 1991:9), the future was projected on the past. For Jameson, from the 1950s onwards, premonitions of the future have been replaced by notions of the 'end' and 'crises' of this or that – the end of ideology, art, social class; the crisis of Leninism, social democracy, or the welfare state; etc. – constituting what is called postmodernism (Jameson, 1991). In this context, one assumes that what occurs after modernism, is often associated to specific crises, caused by intense and, on occasion, radical politico-economic and socio-cultural shifts, reflected in architecture and city planning. For instance, the concept of the "shrinking city", although it is not a modern phenomenon, in modern history has emerged within the conditions created from the shift from socialism to post-socialism and from industrialism to post-industrialism (Hemer, 2013). It is the spatial outcome of capitalism and globalization, caused by population loss and abandonment, deindustrialization, suburbanization and the decline of economic development (Fernandez, 2013). Thus, by introducing new ways of production and consumption, new political and economic systems, cities – traditional and modern –, on occasion, are faced with an emptiness and a lack of development.

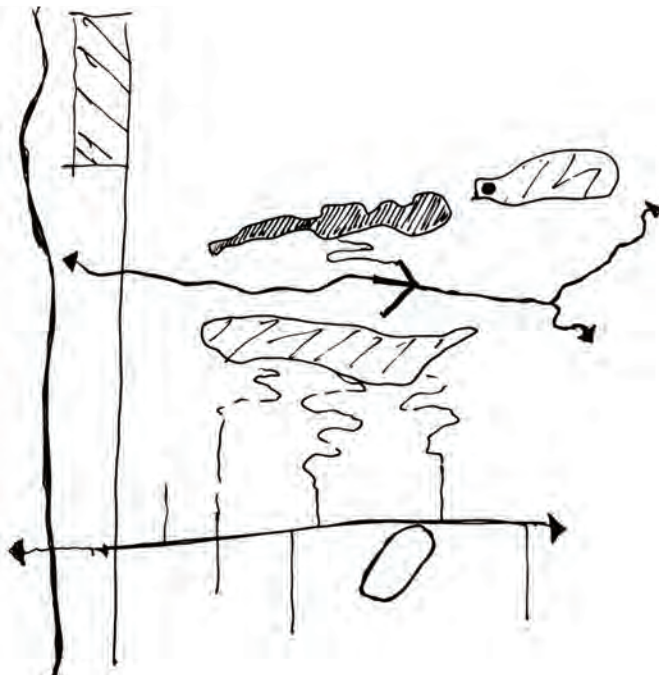


Fig. 1 / Sketch of Gjirokastra showing the historic city and modern city inside a diagram.
Source / the author

This paper is focused on the context of Gjirokastra in Albania – a South-European country that experienced radical ideological shifts. The Post-WWII era is characterized by rapid modernization in architecture and urban planning, as in many European cities. (Hemer, 2013). Looking at the city of Gjirokastra, we understand that the new – modern – city was built as an extension of the old – historic – city. Modern buildings, such as the University, the hospital, the stadium and the residential quarters, represented economic progress and social emancipation through an architectural programme. Yet, in the aftermath of socialism (as in many countries of the Eastern Bloc), the shift to a democratic system took place as a “shock therapy” in the course of only few years (Aliaj, Shutina and Dhamo, 2010). In terms of the economic development, many state-owned companies did not survive privatization, leading to planned closures and a massive loss of industrial jobs (Mykhnenko and Turok, 2008). Thus, many people migrated towards Western Europe, leaving behind empty buildings and spaces – a shrinking city. Meanwhile, in territorial terms, the city continued to grow in an uncontrolled and informal manner. The “shock therapy” resulted in informality and absence of planning (Janku, 2018).

Setting the Context: Gjirokastra as a Case-Study

Gjirokastra is a medieval city in the south of Albania, punctuated by the Castle, built on the hills expanding from the mountain-chain “Mali i Gjerë” (i.e. Wide Mountain). In 1961 Gjirokastra was proclaimed a

“museum – city”, by a decision of the Council of Ministers of Albania. Since 2005 the historic city is under UNESCO protection (Kumaraku, Papa and Dobjani, 2016). During the Ottoman period, Gjirokastra developed and expanded outside the castle walls in the direction of the Drinos valley (Kumaraku et.al., 2016). The Old Bazaar area became the centre of the city, which was used as a marketplace and for social exchange. The urban morphology followed the topography of the city, by creating an organic street pattern, developed in the northeast-southwest direction. The same direction characterizes the modern city built in flat land in the outskirts of the historical city in the north-west direction, together with the industrial part in the south-east direction [Fig.1]. The new centre represented the communist ideology – the progress and social emancipation – through public buildings and modern types of residential buildings. Thus, the modern city was developed separately from the historic city. It seems that there are two cities in Gjirokastra that speak different languages. In this context, Ismail Kadare writes that the old city of Gjirokastra rejects all comparisons:

“The traveller seeing it for the first time was tempted to compare it to something, but soon found it impossible, for the city rejected all comparisons” (Kadare, 197:5).

The term “urban energy” is used in this paper as a metaphor for expressing the cultural and social life of the city, the relation between the individual and the city – its built and natural elements. One

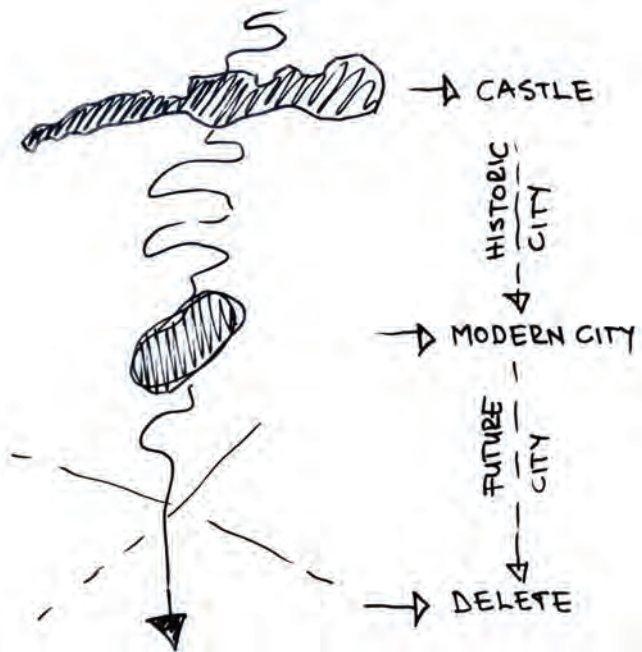


Fig. 2 / This diagram shows the modes of intervention in the city.
Source / the author

can assume that Gjirokastra had this energy in the city centre, with the old bazaar which is similar to the concept of Italian Piazza or Greek Agora. But, in the name of modernization, people moved down to the modern city, where this "urban energy" was regenerated. During the 1990s, Gjirokastra was one of the Albanian cities with the highest rate of emigration, thereby causing a population shift from a dominant young age to old age (Filipi, 2014:24). Being a tourist attraction, the historical centre of Gjirokastra is threatened by the side effects of gentrification, loss of shops for residents in favour of tourist shops, as well as the destruction of not only the urban landscape, but also of people's daily lives, neighbourhood life and social customs (Casanovas, Bañeres, Sjekloča, 2016). The architectural heritage is in the process of destruction because most of the protected houses are left empty and there is a lack of economic development. Thus, the "urban energy" is not that present anymore, and Gjirokastra today is a city in a shrinking process.

Analysis and Discussion: Gjirokastra in a (Post-)Modern Condition

When discussing the relationship between the past, the present and the future, – represented here through the historic city and its (post-)modern condition – we will interpret the city as an architecture of collective memories (Ungers, 1979). Thus, Architecture (as an ideology) can be interpreted as the imaginary relation of the individual with his/her real conditions of existence (Althusser, 2001), occurring

in the city. This relation can be mapped. For instance, Kevin Lynch demonstrated that the alienated city is a space in which people are unable to mentally map either their own positions or the urban totality in which they find themselves (Jameson, 1991). But, the process of mapping is possible in the traditional city through traditional markers – monuments, nodes, natural boundaries, etc. (Lynch, 1960). Thus, by framing the city of Gjirokastra as a whole structure – a modern city with a historical centre – we can regenerate the social life and the 'urban energy' through architecture. In this context, architecture as the interplay of cultural heritage, topography and hydrography (built and natural elements), stimulates a possible vision for the future city: a vision constructed on the premise of urban editing, by re-thinking the city in its fixed territory – in its streets, its buildings and its emptiness.

This approach towards city planning, was proposed by Ungers, Koolhaas, et.al., in "The City in the City: Berlin a Green Archipelago". They believe that the city cannot be repaired to its former substance and configuration (Ungers, et.al. 1977), thus, it has to be edited. The proposal consists of a collage of different urban islands and "emptiness" between them. The urban islands have an identity in relation to their history, social structure, and environmental characteristics (Ungers, et.al, 1977), while "emptiness" represents now valueless structures that could be gradually transformed into natural (green) zones, without any rebuilding (Ungers, et.al, 1977). The development

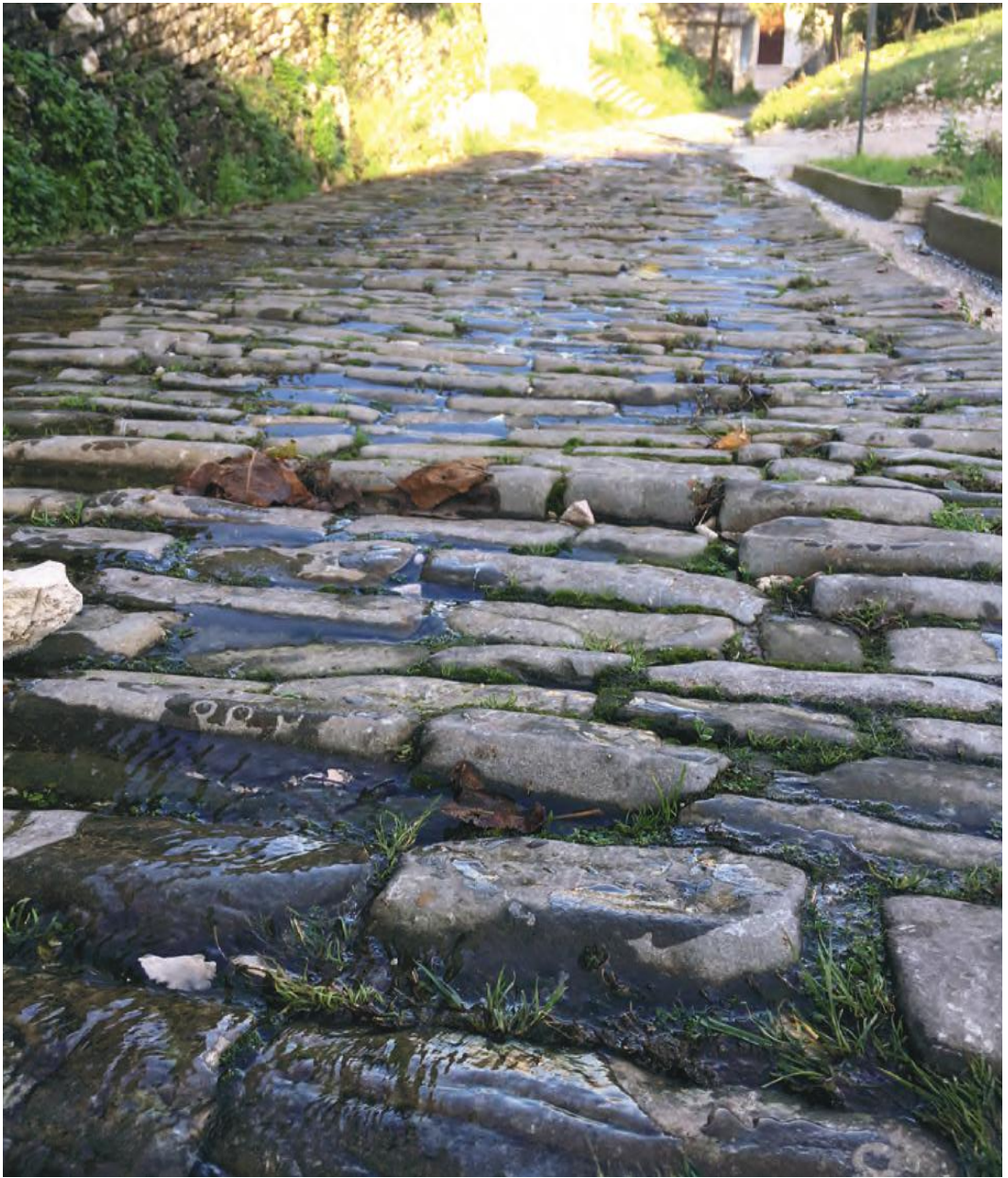


Fig. 3 / A photo of the water flows along the streets of the city. Source / Alberto Grandó.

of this proposal is a result of the process of shrinking as a general tendency and a global phenomenon.

In this context, the reduction of the population and the abandonment of specific zones (e.g. the industrial zone in Gjirokastra) and structures within the city, represents aspects of the shrinkage. As in Berlin, this process might provide an opportunity to redevelop zones that are no longer satisfactory on technical, social and structural levels (Ungers. et.al, 1977). In the case of Gjirokastra - "The City in the City", means finding the modern city in the historic city. "Edited" Gjirokastra would represent a system of modified nature, which will give back new land and opportunities by deleting and regenerating parts of the city [Fig.2].

A proposal for the future city of Gjirokastra should be concerned with developing (i.e. editing) existing potentials of both the modern and historical part, and recreate

a connection between them, through a specific language. In doing so, this paper proposes to emphasize the activities between the two parts of the city and regenerate the cultural heritage by re-using abandoned traditional and modern buildings for public functions (e.g. former Bajo Topulli Primary School in the historical part or the industrial zone).

A key element of the identity of Gjirokastra that could be used to connect the modern and historic centre, is hydrography. Water flows along the streets of the historic city and goes down towards the modern part in a transversal way towards the river [Fig.3]. The connection between the two parts of the city can be improved by using water to create paths, which overlap with the existing connections. Creating a connection between the historic and the modern city by using water paths opens the way to the idea of a polycentric urban system related to the bold message of

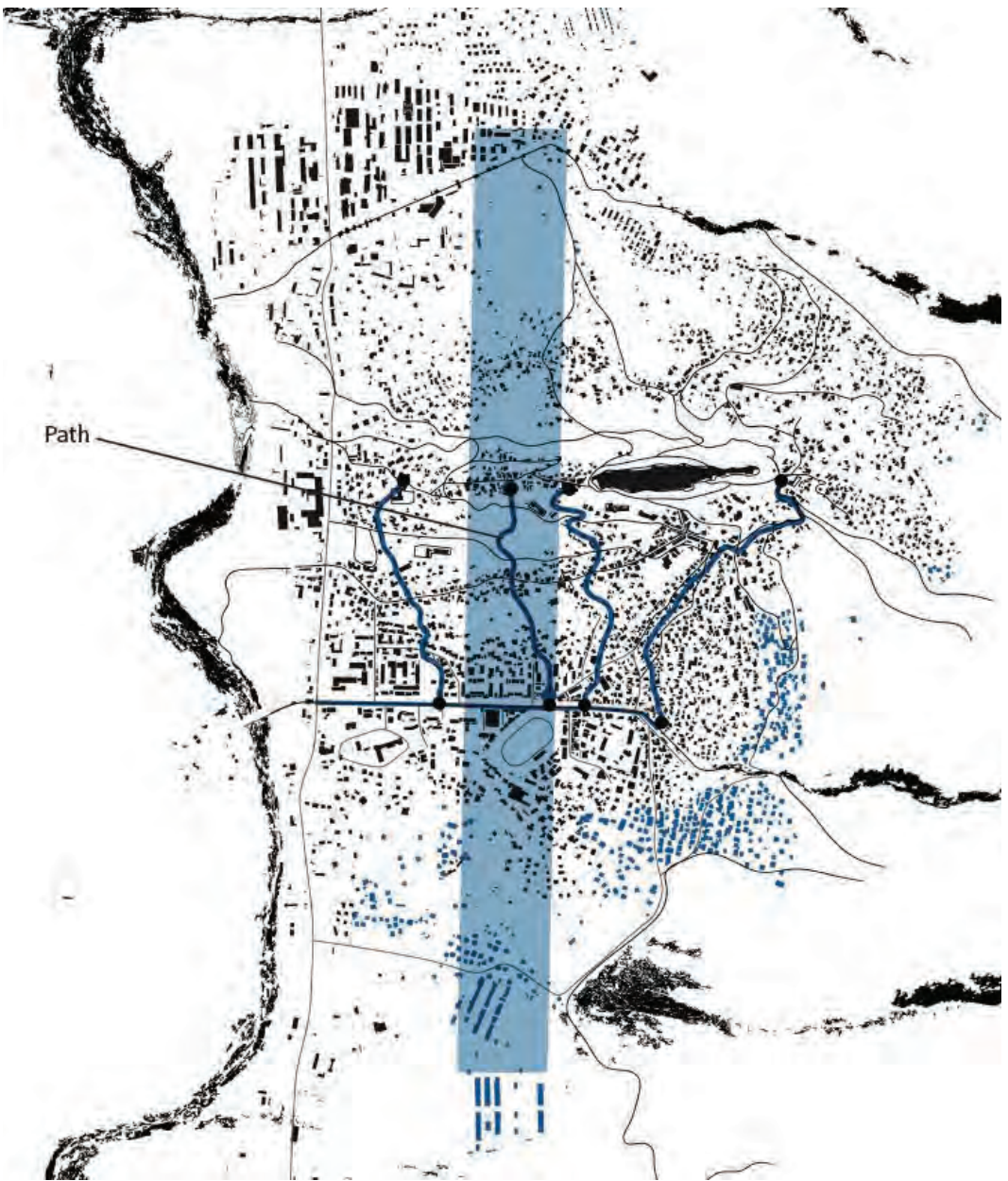


Fig. 4 / Map of the proposed interventions in the city. Source / Alberto Grando & Dasara Pula

Berlin: A Green Archipelago, suggesting a city of many islands instead of one condensed centre (Ungers et al., 1977). These paths would connect many islands in the city, thus creating a network, while the "emptiness" between the different parts of the city would be filled with new land, created from a process of deleting and editing.

Conclusions

The discussion about the problems, challenges and opportunities for Gjirokastra is often inside the discourse of cultural heritage. The objective of such discussion is related to the historic center – future plans for its development. But one should be aware that the challenges of Gjirokastra, are also related to the post-modern part. The city is shrinking in all of its spatial structure. Development, in this case, is not related to urban planning in the sense of growth and construction, but to

a process of editing what exists (Ungers, 1979). By using one of the proposed water paths as a model, the city can be studied inside a strip, proposing to delete specific parts in the future.

The idea is to delete informal constructions that are built in dangerous areas and are empty in some cases, by giving importance and creating another land and opportunity [Fig.5]. The abandoned buildings, without building standards, built in dangerous areas, and in non-appropriate land, should be considered for the process of deletion (presented in blue, Fig.5.).

Even though it seems like a utopian and radical scenario, Gjirokastra should make demolition part of its urban strategy for the next fifty or hundred years. Thus, this paper proposes that the new urban plans will not have to deal with urban growth, instead they will deal with editing what is already there. Creating new land, means

creating space for natural transformations. This space would contain parks, greenery, walkways, or urban areas for agricultural use.

This proposal supports the regeneration of social life and “urban energy” between two different parts of the city. Furthermore,

it represents the post-modern city of Gjirokastra as an architecture of collective memories: a place where the cultural heritage, natural elements and social life of Gjirokastra would be reconstructed and regenerated as a whole to form and sustain the city’s “urban energy”.

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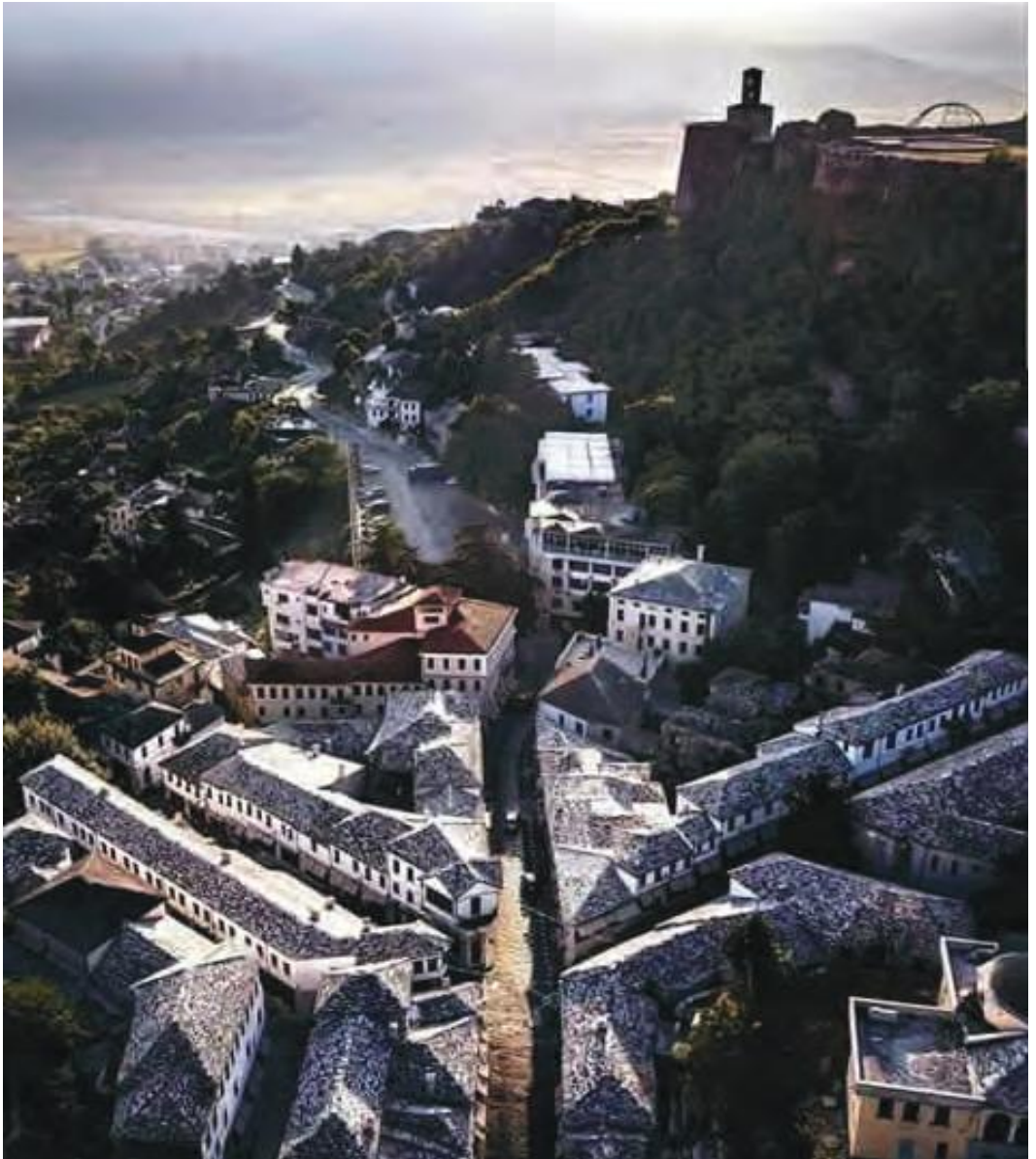
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Placemaking Gjirokastra.

Keywords / urban space, placemaking, city image, heritage site, Gjirokastër

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the urban elements which contribute to placemaking. By developing the quality of public space in collaboration with insider and outsider inhabitants, using the theoretical frameworks of Lynch, Alexander, and Jacobs, this study aims to explore the roots of the concepts, criteria, and experiences of placemaking. Field observation and interviews were used as primary data sources. Cityscape, its relief, landscape, and urban elements, and the data collected underwent descriptive analysis, the results of which served as a ground for the construction of research questions addressed during the qualitative study. Interviews as primary sources were part of the exploration of how people perceive their city, and which city images took part in creating the local activities. Results of the study show that there are great potential green areas inside the city core, which are disconnected from the urban space representing a fragmented edge. By revitalizing restoring and regenerating the original activities Gjirokastër as place could be rebuilt. Places we can't reach can't be valued or recognized as city values. A great public space is the one that is easy to get to, easy to enter into it, and walk-in or walk through. The city forms read two different frameworks: Kevin Lynch's Image of the City, and Christofer Alexander's The Nature of Order. Then the elements of the city are observed and analyzed through the lenses of Jane Jacobs, on their contribution to people's perception, and how they contribute to the city life.

Introduction

During the pandemic year the citizens flooded back to the parks inside and outside the city. Yet, what this health crisis evinced was that not everyone was granted equal access to the green areas. The green space inside the city core is considered a highly valued space for city life and community integration. In terms of human activities and relaxation, the concept of the green area is now being reevaluated, especially after the COVID-19 crisis took place in early 2020. Google statistics show that park attendance in countries across the globe has increased during the pandemic lockdown. The urban areas, especially those with high density, have fewer green areas, which makes residents go to parks in order to get in touch with nature.

Gjirokastër is one of the main cities of the south of Albania and part of the Adriatic corridor. The city is well known in the country

as one of the most distinguished and unique cities for its astonishing historical architecture, lifestyle, and culture. The old town of Gjirokasta is the first UNESCO site in Albania, so labelled since 2005, and a good example of Ottoman architecture. Nowadays the city is developing as a pivot for the development of cultural heritage tourism in the south of Albania. With a rich network of cobbled and steep streets the old town consists mostly of two-story houses constructed from the 17th to the 19th century. In terms of landscape, itineraries, and architecture, the old part of the town is a separated from the new part, which developed during the 20th century. The distinction between these two parts is also created by the territory; while the old town is built on five hills that are interconnected at the Bazaar node, the new part is built at the bottom of the hills, mostly on a flat area.

Methodology

The research brings an explanatory methodology based on field observations as a primary source. Explanatory research aims to explore the main aspects of an under-researched problem, through city maps, photography, and data gained from observation carried out in the field. Interviews as primary sources were part of the exploration of how people perceive their city, and which city images took part in the local activities. The interviews were conducted mostly in city squares and vital city points such as a coffee shop, grocery shops, and souvenir shops during the three days of the observation.

Background

The medieval town of Gjirokastër, built during the Ottoman period XVI-XVII, expanded outside the castle by following the organic configuration of the terrain, typical of Ottoman cities. The neighborhoods were built organically in line with the topography, following the terrain with typical narrow streets. The buildings aligned with both sides of the road, and sometimes were set in a distance from the road. The hilly terrain influenced the formation of separate neighborhoods. Several areas are dead-end roads, creating small plazas, surrounded with high walls and two to three storied buildings. The old town is covered in grey and white stones, while public life takes place mostly at the Bazaar node, a junction

of four neighborhood itineraries. Ismail Kadare, the well-known Albanian writer, described the city's life and culture in his books and novels. Born and raised in "the city of a thousand steps"¹, he captured the small details of urban life, particularly how the citizens perceive and negotiate between the common and private aspects of the town. In *Chronicle in stone*, Kadare describes how Gjirokastër – its difficult terrain, materials, and urban configuration impacted the daily life of people.

State of the Art: Shared Cultures, Shared Heritage, Shared Responsibility

The concept of placemaking originated in the early 60-s, particularly through the work of the urban activist Jane Jacobs and William H.White. "Placemaking is the process of creating quality places that people want to live, work, play, and learn in" is a concept generated by Project for Public Spaces², a project that defines how public space can create a sense of place and a place of sense. When first introduced, placemaking was defined as a collective process that makes the public dimension more tangible. The process can be described as a total reconceptualization of space according to a vision of collective community, one that is expressed in concrete spaces, such as parks, squares, streets, markets, and public buildings. What Jacobs and White emphasize the most in their work is that places that can't be reached, valued or recognized as city's

¹ / *The city of a Thousands Steps*_ How the author names Gjirokastra in his novel as its roads are sloppy and the sidewalks have stairs.

² / Project for Public Spaces <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>



Fig. 1 / The front porch doors. Source / the author, 2019

value. A great public space³ is the one that is easy to get to, easy to enter into it, and walk-in or walk through. On the other hand, the activities involved in it or offered by the space to the people visiting it are also very important. Having something to do gives people reason to visit the public place. If the space is empty or abandoned, there nothing is interesting for people to do there. Are the urban design elements enough to generate a public place for city dwellers to meet?

While in *The Image of the City*, Lynch evinces five dominant urban elements that are responsible for creating the image of the city that functions as a dynamic organism interacting with people, Jacobs examines the city vitality through its users, that is, how they intermingle with the city's urban elements. By understanding how cities work, she perceives the city in terms of two fundamentally connected ecosystems - one created by nature, the other by human beings. According to Jacobs, for these ecosystems to sustain themselves, they require much diversity that develops organically over time and enables placemaking.

Long-lasting communities: The case of Gjirokaštër, Albania

Gjirokaštër, the 'fortified' urban center of the south of Albania, became part of the World Heritage List⁴ of UNESCO, as a rare example of a well-preserved Ottoman town, by meeting two out of ten selection criteria (iii) and (iv). According to

criterion (iii), Gjirokaštër bears outstanding testimony to the diversity of urban societies and to longstanding ways of life which have almost vanished today. According to criterion (iv), Gjirokaštër bears testimony to various types of monuments and vernacular urban housing including the urban landscape. It is this heritage that makes Gjirokaštër an open museum to be accessed by everyone. Even though separated by the terrain, the five neighborhoods, share the same common values and are interconnected with the radial itineraries that intersect at the Bazaar. The people of Gjirokaštër inherit the tradition and culture of the old city.

Traditionally, the street has been the public space where the social and economic activities took place. The old town has a particular urban element: at each doorstep there is one stone as a place to sit. Even though the stone-seats are present, there are no people frequenting this traditional public space. During field survey, several casual interviews were done to the local habitants met on the street, -"The roads are empty now. Some decade before you could still watch the children playing on the sloppy paths, and grandparents guarding them from the porch door", an elder habitant describes, on the question that, why there are so many doors with the big stone to sit in front of the porch (Fig_1) -"A corner to sit and watch, communicate and talk with the neighbors is we have lost

³ / <https://www.pps.org/article/grplacefeat>

⁴ / <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/569>



*Fig. 2 / Green wild area inside the historic center of the citadella, inaccessible.
Source / the author, 2019.*

today. Most of the locals have bought an apartment in the new part of the city and many others just left the country”.

The lack of public life seems to be one of the main reasons for the abandonment of the city. As the sloppy terrain makes life more complicated, especially during snowy winters, the inhabitants tend to leave the medieval town and search for a new lifestyle. The current inhabitants, mostly retired people, are concerned for the future of the town, also because according to their perception, the younger generation do not prefer this part of the city any longer. “The life in the new part of the city is much more vivid, and the younger people prefer coffee shops and restaurants to meet and gather. The town is vivid only during summer when tourists come and visit”- says the owner of a hotel in the historic center. The existing public spaces, such as the green areas and public squares seem to have been abandoned for the most part of the day. Their urban role is replaced by coffee shops and restaurants, mostly in the new part of the city.

In order to be successful, cities need to be destinations that offer an identity and image of their community. Gjirokastër is one of the main historic sites of the country, and as such, it is an important tourist destination. The interviews with three hotel owners revealed the fact that until now tourism has not been economically sustainable, and its public spaces are not generating enough people and the green zones, are not accessible. A public place,

according to Jacobs and White, can be transformed into a living place through the design of places, the experiences they make possible, and the consequences that these public spaces-living places could have into our lives⁵. Providing for a range of various of activities at different times of the day or periods of the year, like a playground or sports activities, can bring people together at the same place and at the same time.

As the town is shrinking, the image of the historical center must be rebuilt, in order to attract new residents, businesses and investments. Lynch's *The Image of the City* provides a theoretical framework to address how the image can be rebuilt through its underlying patterns and characteristics. Even though Gjirokastër has a lot of green areas inside the old town, there is no public access to these spaces. Several of them are in steep terrains, at several points impassable, and rarely exposed to view. This is the case of what Lynch named a fragmentary edge. The edges, as one of the five city elements, although probably not as dominant as the paths in the case of Gjirokastër, are important organizing features, particularly in the role of holding together common areas. The town silhouette is perceived as an extension of topography, with mountains and valleys, where the slopes alternate between urban zones with green wild areas in between. From above, they seem very similar to the stripes of

⁵ / <https://www.pps.org/article/wwhyte>

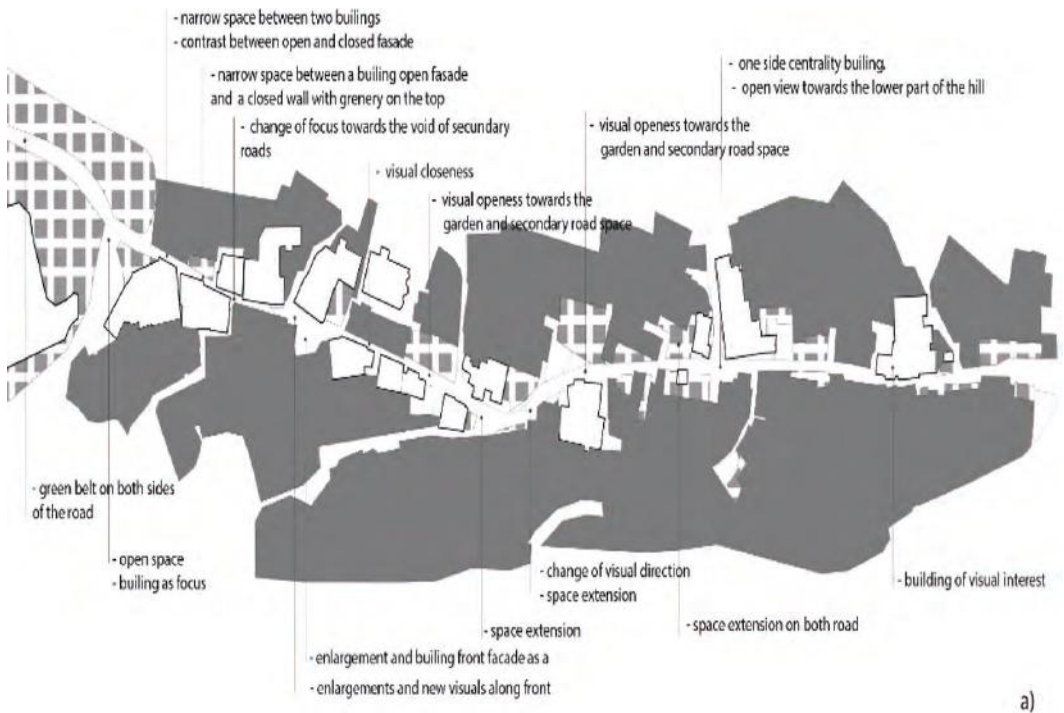


Fig. 3 / *The Positive Space*. Source / Papa, Dissertation thesis, 2017 / Lecture Workshop 2019

a zebra, with visible fragmentary edges (Fig.2).

These zebra stripes- green areas if accessible from public, could be identified as Alexander develops in his geomatics properties, the positive space, (Papa, 2017). This positive space identifies the continuous and unified spaces interconnected to each other, such as paths, nodes, and edges of the old town that seems to dissolve to each other through material, colors and architectural elements, by creating so a sense of space.

Conclusions

Building Gjirokastrë's city image, especially its historical center, in order to attract new residents, businesses, and investments, means revealing what the city hides inside its pattern. Creating a new place for city dwellers to meet through urban design may not always be enough. The districts, edges, voids, nodes, landmarks, and itineraries have welcome people, in relation to the concept of placemaking as a collective process, makes the public dimension more tangible. Gjirokastrë's green areas, hidden and not accessible by public, are defined as appropriate city image elements that can offer such a dimension.

The expected outcomes by recovering these elements, preserving part of their landscape, and using them to connect the different islands of the city that are currently disconnected, can improve the connection and communication of city image elements. As field observation reveals, the creation of communications

through trans passing natural and artificial boundaries, is possible, and necessary to create Placemaking.

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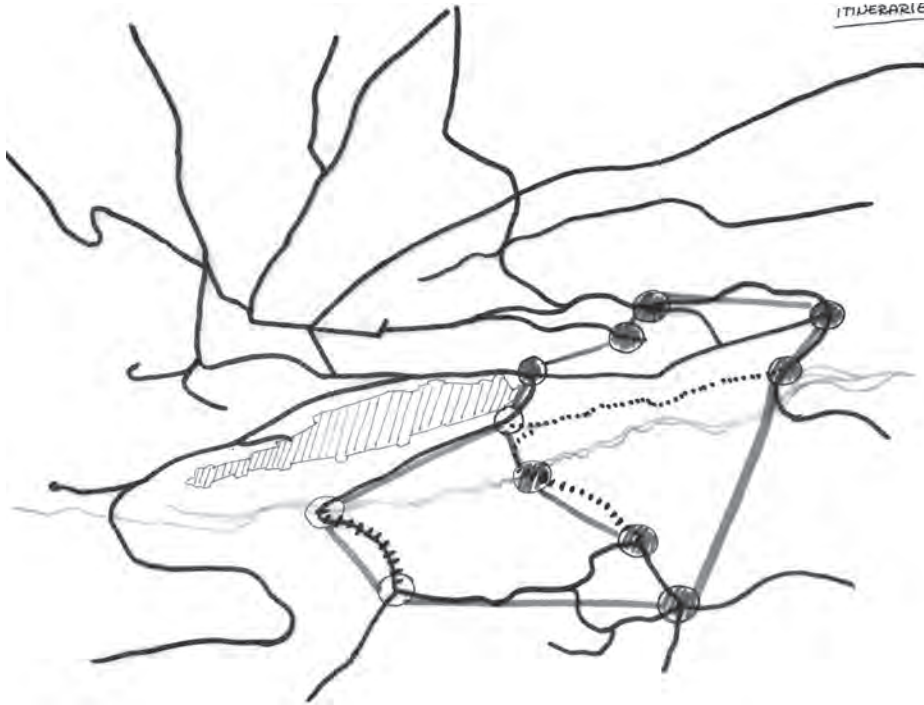
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Fig. 4 / City district fragmentation sketch. Source / Ortez, 2019.



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Fig. 5 / City elements sketch. Source / the author, 2019.

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Covered Embers: The rebirth of Gjirokastra from its ashes

Keywords / Depopulation, Identity, Knots and sprawl, Art Loop, Self-ustainability

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Abstract

One depopulated city with three separated identities: this is what Gjirokastra looks like today. On the slopes of the mountain, the historical city center consists of small buildings, many of which are left abandoned, disposed on the ground, following a natural, almost biomimetic, sprawl. On the lower part, there is the industrial area, an axial development alongside the national road, which is full of unfinished and abandoned buildings. The most recent urban sprawl is characterized by a dense urban fabric made of big structures, a pattern renamed as solid proximity.

The depopulation of the city seems to be unrestrainable and its death unavoidable: this fate was considered as the inception of the project proposal, which aimed at exploiting the abandoned and unused buildings and making them the impulse for a new vitality of the city, by taking advantage of the neglected private buildings and by returning them to the community as places for socialization and gathering.

The attempt to stop the depopulation of the city should start from the unification of the three different parts of Gjirokastra into a single project by establishing a connecting loop. This is not enough, however, to keep people in the city and keep the city alive, so the adopted approach considered a more forward-looking intervention by attracting and involving people in the city. This was considered possible by using of Art as a catalyst that brings the inhabitants and visitors together, as well as a resource for the administrators. The resulting "Art Loop" project will be distributed throughout the territory, and it will consist of abandoned and ruined buildings which are given new life through aesthetically beautiful, socially useful, and economically advantageous functions, as well as through new cultural places for the community recovered from carelessness and the unceasing passage of time that leaves them empty.

This project is made of knots or focus points, which stand for relevant abandoned buildings, and will assume new essential functions for the new life of the city. The stadium, an empty school, a typical house, and a modern reinforced concrete villa will be transformed and assigned new functions. A net of different types of ruined buildings will put these knots together: broken, ruined and unfinished structures will be converted into public spaces for citizens, ideal stages for occasional performances and temporary pavilions for a Biennale in Gjirokastra.

After an initial period during which the only expectation is the continuous depopulation of the city, stabilization of the situation with a greater attachment of the inhabitants and a stronger attraction of tourists interested in the artistic performances throughout the city is expected to gain ground. In a longer period, there will be a trend reversal and Gjirokastra will become a landmark for the Balkan region.

While controversial, this self-sustaining project exploits the weaknesses and exacerbates the actual conditions to find a lasting solution to the unstoppable depopulation and the total abandonment of the city.

Introduction

The city of Gjirokastra, located south of Albania and capital of the prefecture with the same name, is known for its mediaeval towers and unusual architecture (Seidl, 2014:164). It lays on a 300 meter-hill on a valley between 'Mali I Gjerë' (the 'Broad Mountain') and the Drinos River. Its historical city centre is a UNESCO World Heritage Site together with the city of Berat, as they "are inscribed as rare examples of an architectural character typical of the Ottoman period. [...] Gjirokastra, in the Drinos river valley in southern Albania, features a series of outstanding two-story houses which were developed in the 17th century" (whc.unesco.org). Its unique character was described by Ismail Kadare, a contemporary writer born in Gjirokastra, as "...a strange city, and seemed to have been cast up in the valley one winter's night like some prehistoric creature that was now clawing its way up the mountainside. Everything in the city was old and made of stone, from the streets and fountains to the roofs of the sprawling age-old houses, covered with grey slates like gigantic scales. It was hard to believe that under this powerful carapace the tender flesh of life survived and reproduced...It was a slanted city, set at a sharper angle than any other city on earth, and it defied the laws of architecture and city planning" (Kadare, 2011).

Although the city is affected by the illegal construction of the late 1990s, its authenticity is strongly preserved through its typical houses, stone walls and the way of life of the citizens. Together with other historic countries in Albania, it is "a unique cultural heritage in the Mediterranean

area" (Bashi, 2015:89).

The city, however, has expanded during the last decades and this has led to the formation of the other two settlements: the new city centre and the industrial area. The former is a residential and commercial expansion made of multi-story, concrete-structure buildings that stand compactly alongside one of the city's main roads. This dense urban fabric has been recognized as solid proximity. The industrial area is the late 20th-century factory development along the SH4 national road, part of the European E853, that connects Durres and Tirana to Greece. Almost all the buildings face this main road, a sign of a city that had played an important role in the Albanian industrial scenario. This configuration has been renamed 'axial development.'

The current asset of Gjirokastra is the traces of the old city, a glorious city characterized by the prosperity of its inhabitants together with its fortified architecture (Mezini, Pojani, 2015). It appears impressive and its history amazes researchers and tourists, but many buildings are now empty, and their maintenance is difficult. The entire region of Gjirokastra has suffered from a consistent depopulation: at least one-fifth of the population has left the country since 1990, and in the surrounding area this rate triples (Grevsjö, Noorzaei, 2014). In the historical city centre, there are plenty of abandoned buildings and crumbling structures that contribute to a distorted and degraded image of the city (Dipasquale, Carta, Galassi, Merlo, 2020). The industrial area is affected by this kind



Fig 1. Gjirokastra viewed from the castle. On the lower part of the picture the historical city centre, on the upper part (further) the new city centre. Source / the author.

of growing depopulation, too. Empty and unfinished buildings are scattered along the national road, and only a few of them are occupied. All the above-mentioned buildings are private properties that would need private investments to be settled and repopulated. In a scenario of continuous decrease in the number of inhabitants, private actions are quite unlikely, thus demanding initiatives from the public administration to avoid the departure of those that still live in Gjirokastra. This would be possible through two different ways of intervention: first, through actions focused on public property in order to improve services and facilities for citizens; second, through a policy that encourages buying the abandoned private buildings and recovering them.

Both these options are hardly feasible at the moment due to a lack of public properties on which to intervene and the economic possibilities through which to afford these interventions.

However, if there's a continuous decrease

in the number of inhabitants on the one hand, then there is an encouraging increasing but still limited number of tourists on the other. Between 2009 and 2013, for instance, the number of tourists doubled reaching about 30,000 visitors, mostly from eastern Europe (Kotollaku, Margariti, 2015). This becomes the inspiration for the project, which aims to further increase the number of arrivals in the city and offer an innovative experience of a unique city.

Objectives and Methodology

The research aims finding possible instruments to avoid the progressive depopulation of Gjirokastra and preserve its role as a commercial and touristic hub for southern Albania. After the site inspection, the question - "Can architecture and city planning stimulate hope and growth for shrinking cities?" - became: "Why should architecture and city planning stimulate hope and growth for this shrinking city?". Gjirokastra appeared as disjointed, made



by three different identities and every idea seemed unachievable.

In the historical city centre, there are small and predominantly two-story buildings, seemingly chaotically displaced, but which follow the natural morphology of the mountains in a configuration renamed biomimicry sprawl. Many of these buildings are abandoned and are collapsing since there is no maintenance after each frequent heavy rain and the drainage system is insufficient. This problem is affecting the entire historical city centre, compromising the integrity of a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

As previously mentioned, the other settlements of the city, the new residential and commercial expansion and the industrial area, are not linked to one another and the historical city centre. Therefore, the answer to the initial question has to start from thinking about the unification of the different identities of Gjirokastra as the only way to prevent its complete depopulation.

The main problem of Gjirokastra is related to the progressive abandonment by the inhabitants. As a result, there is now a collection of ruined and unsafe buildings scattered around the city belonging to private owners together with empty public buildings, all detached from the urban fabric, buildings on which the public administration cannot intervene. This problem affects all the three cores of the city and will be considered as an optimal starting point of the urban strategy in this project.

The strategy is to identify some unused buildings that will be linked together by a loop which will have a dual objective: to connect these buildings in order to give them a unique and more powerful meaning and, at the same time, a connection with different areas of the city. These buildings will be chosen based on two main criteria: their state of conservation and their location. Regarding their conditions, buildings must be empty, in ruins, or decaying, i.e. gutted buildings whose



Fig. 2 / A ruined building in the historical city centre of Gjirokastra, typology A. Source / the author

perimeter walls or roof have collapsed. Regarding the position, the first to be chosen will have to be in focal positions, in order to create a path that crosses the city in its entirety and is along the route of inhabitants and tourists.

However, this link may not be sufficient to avoid the depopulation of Gjirokastra, and a more forward-looking intervention is needed. One possibility is the intervention through Art, which is used as a catalyst to keep people in the city by giving them a reason not to leave it and a resource for the administration to carry out improving interventions. In this way, the whole city of Gjirokastra will be the setting of an outdoor exhibition, a sort of Biennale, which will attract artists who will bring their contributions and visitors that will be able to admire them.

This means engaging the number of tourists that, according to statistics, has increased during the last years (Qiqi, Rova, 2014).

Periodical events could be organized both by the city administration as well as private investors. Calls for artists could be opened and disseminated through social media and institutional sites, or competitions can be held within academies and universities. On the one hand, many ruined and unsafe buildings scattered throughout the city were selected to be part of the project. These were divided into three typologies. The first (Fig 2) is made of those buildings with nothing but the perimeter walls, a sort of empty envelopes. The second typology (Fig 3) consist of hollow buildings with at least one gutted wall.

These two typologies are concentrated in the historical city center, while the third one (Fig 4) occurs in the industrial area, and it is made of unfinished buildings, almost all with a columnar or pillar structure.

First of all, the unsafe structures will be consolidated and after that, all the buildings will be transformed into public spaces that can host urban gardens, playgrounds or social spaces, but meanwhile, they can be turned temporarily into pavilions for any exhibition. In the case of urban gardens and playgrounds, the spaces will be equipped with everything necessary for the enjoyment of the activities. For the social spaces to be transformed into pavilions, interventions will be limited to the floor finishing and the arrangement of benches and seats. The connection between these buildings through the above-mentioned loop will be realized through the homogenization of the flooring and the arrangement of urban furnishings in order to evoke the unity of the project, such as benches, baskets, streetlamps, information panels or drinking water fountains. Materials or even colors can be used as leitmotif for the project, so that in every part of the project visitors and inhabitants can feel to be part of it.

On the other hand, five relevant buildings are considered in terms of position, dimensions and potentiality that will support the activities in the pavilions. In the historical city centre, the first is a big and ruined house close to the city Hall that will be transformed in a public facilities office, i.e. ticket office, tourist information centre and refreshment area. The second is an



Fig. 3 / An empty and abandoned building in the historical city centre, typology B.
Source / the author



Fig. 4 / Unfinished building in the industrial area of Gjirokastra, typology C.
Source / the author

atypical house with concrete structure, close to the first one: considering its originality, it will become an exceptional performative space. Denis Santachiara did something like this, proposing an installation in Milan that turned the building into a lantern. In the newer city center, there have been identified other buildings that could be involve in the project, more specifically at the edges of the main road on which the built area overlooks. One is a disused school which will be converted in a residence for artists, a kind of hostel where foreign artists and visitors can stay while in Gjirokastra. The other is the stadium, an oversized structure nestled among all residential buildings, which is most of the time empty. The project wants to give back this space to the community, transforming the stadium into a stage available for any type of performance. A reference can be the Teatro Continuo by Alberto Burri in Milan, a simple installation that invites people to be an active part of the show.

The last knot to be considered is a disused factory located in the industrial area - a big open-space structure that has nothing but its envelope. In this case, considering the position on the national road and among other factories, the project aims to convert it into an atelier, a didactic place where industries can teach arts and crafts and rent it for periodical workshops. This activity will be an opportunity both to pass on the craft and to get an economic return by the rent of this space.

This "knot and sprawl" project aims to keep the city united, by taking advantage of its weaknesses, and be economically self-sustainable: all the interventions will be carried out gradually and without excessively upsetting the status quo. Within a couple of years, the sprawl should be outlined and the first events should begin. In the meantime, consolidation and redevelopment of the so-called knots should take place, so as to be functioning in four to six years. The interventions on the knots should be sustained by the income from the events organized along the sprawl.

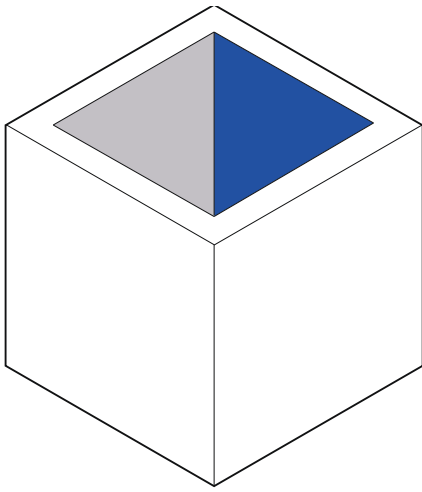
The users and stakeholders that are interested in the project can be divided into four different categories:

1. *Locals:* the public administration, for instance, can take advantage of profits from the rent of the spaces and, in general, from the establishment of an Art Biennale throughout the city.

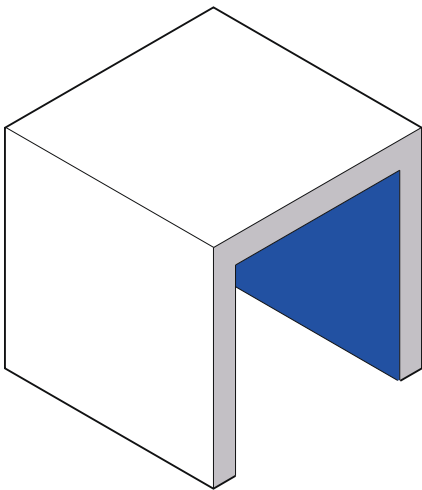
2. *Art sector:* national and international artists can perform in Gjirokastra, showing their abilities to visitors and thus increase their popularity, together with the curators and critics that can be involved in the exhibitions.

3. *Companies:* industries that can invest in the available spaces in the city, hotels and restaurants that can fully work during the exhibitions, or international investors that can support the activities.

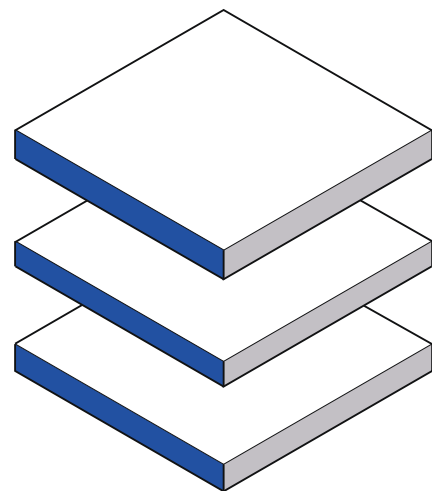
4. *Tourists:* national and international



Typology A



Typology B



Typology C

tourists, and occasional or intentional visitors, who can enjoy the activities of a dynamic and up-to-date city. Investments by the stakeholders and initiatives by the public administrators are the key to this project: they can ensure gradual but indispensable changes, using arts and crafts as the mean to make the strategy successful.

Results and Future Developments

As previously mentioned, the depopulation of Gjirokastra cannot be curbed in a short time, but the trend can be reversed only after a period of transition. This means that any approach to be taken will coexist with the continuous emptying of the city for a while and, in the meantime, the effect of the interventions will reduce this phenomenon. First of all, as mentioned before, the selected unused buildings will be turned into pavilions for exhibitions or in public spaces to promote socialization by consolidating the unsafe structures and by homogenizing the main elements, i.e. floor finishing, urban furniture, plants and trees.

Besides that, two different scenarios at different times are imagined: the first in 2030 (Fig 8), and the second in 2050 (Fig 9). In ten years, fewer people will live in the city and many other buildings are expected to be abandoned but, at the same time, the first actions to avoid the displacement are already put in place: the knots will be already defined and transformed, the sprawl of abandoned buildings will be identified, and these will be turned into public spaces for socializing, leisure activities and exhibitions.

During this period, the above-mentioned Biennale in Gjirokastra will be established, starting to gain importance in the national and international panorama. However, the greatest changes are expected to be noticeable only after a longer period. In 2050, the depopulation is estimated to have ended while the adopted strategies have taken effect. This will lead to the re-population of Gjirokastra together with greater care both for the buildings that will be recovered and for the open spaces that which will be improved for citizens. The knots will be still visible, but their influence will have expanded to the surrounding area, involving other buildings and improving the quality of a bigger part of the city. This way, Gjirokastra will be a modern and up-to-date city, a destination for many tourists who, fascinated by the natural beauty and the artistic charm, will make it a crucial point for the whole Balkan peninsula.

Fig. 5 / Schematic representation of the three identified typologies. Source / the author

Conclusion

Gjirokastra is one of the main cities in Albania, located south of Albania, close to Greek border. The historical city centre stands on the slopes of the mountains and is flanked by two other territorial expansions: the newer city centre in the north and the industrial area on the east side. These three areas are not linked with one another and this character emphasizes the problems in the city, which now appears without a strong identity and any attractions.

This project focuses concretely on the current situation in Gjirokastra, which faces a continuous exodus of people moving to other cities, leaving Gjirokastra becoming the memory of itself.

The strength of this proposal stands in its concreteness, which aims to suggest feasible actions, both in economic and social ways, to avoid the disappearance of the city. The project starts by analyzing the current situation and the unavoidable trend of shrinking, and by recognizing the impossibility to stop such trend. Therefore, each strategy has to coexist with the shriking or depopulation trend for a certain amount of time until the strategy of the re-population of the city with new activities takes place.

This project starts from the selection of five relevant buildings, renamed knots, which will be converted into public spaces or will assume public functions to improve the quality of life in the city. Besides this, a lot of disused and ruined buildings are chosen to be part of a network, renamed sprawl, which aims to connect the three different identities of the city, thus creating a larger and stronger whole. The proposed interventions require limited initial investments, adapting to the needs and the possibilities of the city. This project may be considered controversial insofar as its first goal is not stopping the depopulation rather promoting it, as if the recovery could only take place after a complete defeat.

After a period of transition, Gjirokastra will recover its role as a focal point for the south of Albania from a social, cultural, as well as an economic point of view. This will undoubtedly improve the quality of life for all the inhabitants and will attract more people to live there. People will feel to be part of a brand-new city that is at the same time strongly anchored in the past, an enviable feature that only a UNESCO site with such an important history can boast of.

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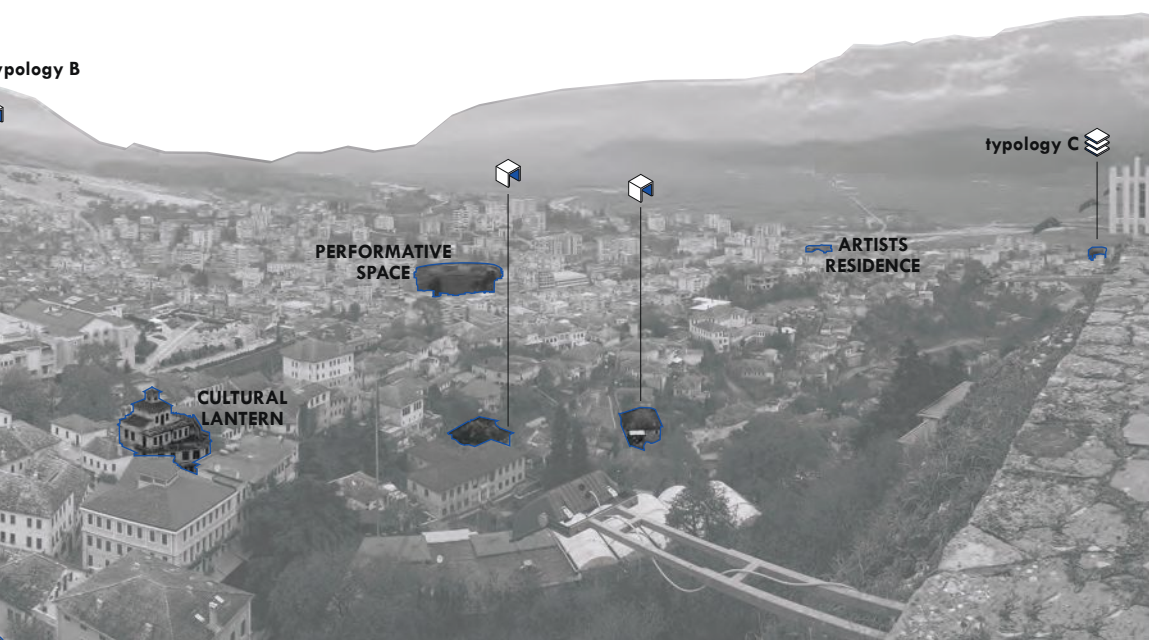
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Fig. 6 / "Teatro Continuo" by Alberto Burri in Milan. Source / <https://www.mymi.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/teatro-continuo-burri-ok>



Fig. 7 / View of some of the interventions proposed for Gjirokastra. Source / the author.



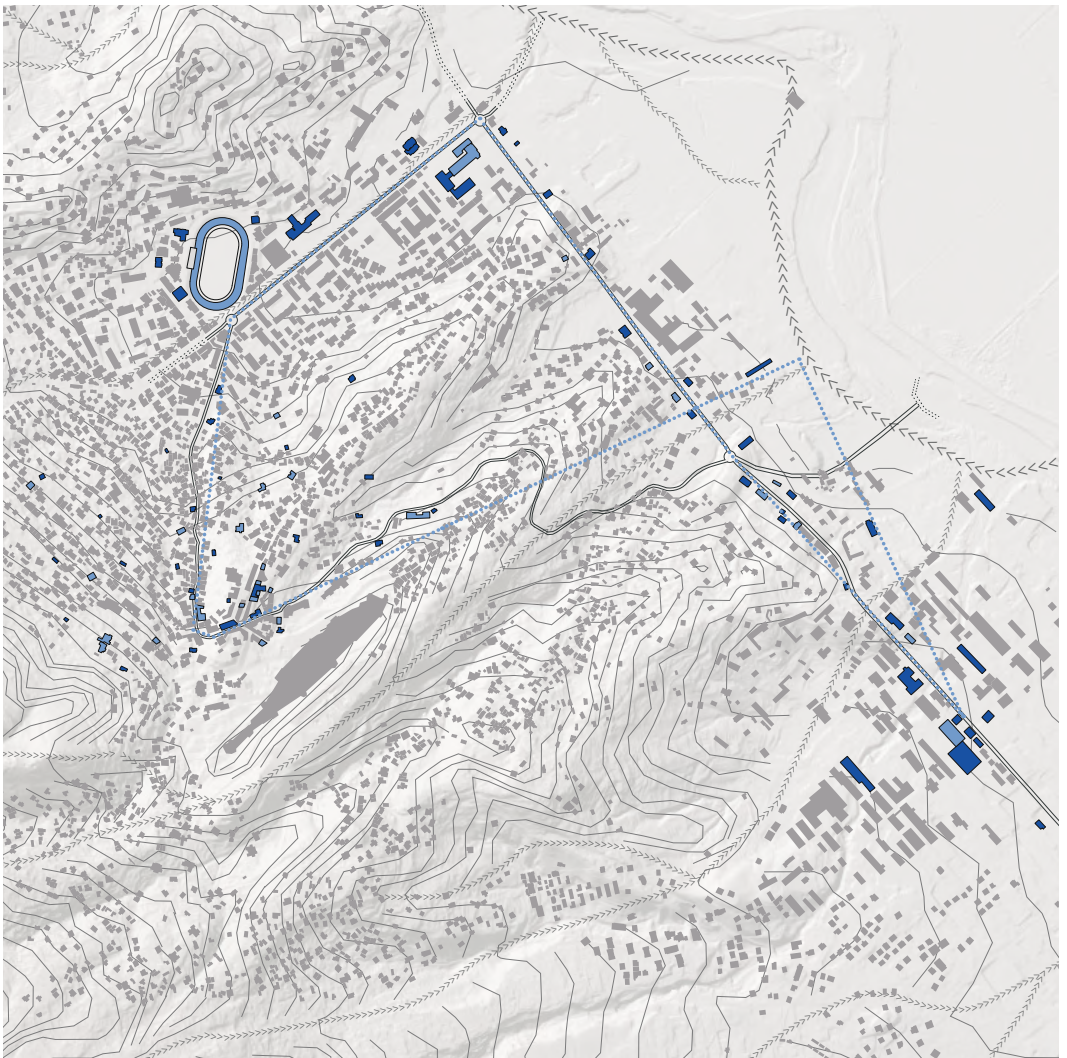


Fig. 8 / Hypotheses for Gjirokastra in 2030. The light-blue buildings are those considered for the first intervention (the so-called "knots and sprawl") which will be already transformed, while the blue ones are supposed to be the buildings that by 2030 will be abandoned and objects of new interventions. Source / the author.



Fig. 9 / Hypotheses for Gjirokastra in 2050. The light-blue buildings are all those already involved in interventions in the previous years, while the circles indicate the surrounding areas that by 2050 will benefit from the interventions carried out.
Source / the author.

Gjirokastër fortress hillside. Geotechnical hazards assessment and stabilization measures as key factors for the fortress preservation.

Keywords / accessibility, factor of safety, natural hazards, modelling, preservation, slope stability

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Abstract

The city of Gjirokastër, located in the southern part of Albania, few kilometers from the border with Greece and from the port of Saranda, is one of the main cities in the country both economically and culturally. The location, cultural heritage, and the economic potential are some of the main factors that make of Gjirokastër an important region. Due to the characteristic Ottoman architecture, since 2005, the old part of the city has also been part of the UNESCO World Heritage list. Many studies conducted by the Albanian and non-Albanian planners, architects, archeologists, and engineers emphasize the importance and values the city has. The fall of communism and the events in post 90-s had a negative impact in the city: many demographical changes, and lack of funds and projects are putting the city and its cultural values in danger.

The Old Bazaar and the Fortress are two of the most distinguished sites in town and can be seen as the main poles from which the revitalization of the city can begin. The Fortress, extending on a rocky hill, is the biggest and one of the oldest constructions in Gjirokastër. Due to its superior position relative to the other parts with an elevation of about 370 meters serves as an important landmark that divides the city into two parts.

The hill where the fortress is located may be prone to several geotechnical hazards like erosion, instability and rock falling due to natural factors including winds, water and earthquake. Studies show that the seismic activity of the area varies from 5.5- 6.5 in Richter scale. This is further compounded by factors related to the unplanned development and interventions in the nearby area which affect the initial stability of the slope. Since the fortress is one of the most representative sites of the city and can be considered a main pole of accessibility, it is vital to preserve and protect it from potential hazards that affect the structural stability. By using relevant literature related to geotechnical hazards, hazards assessment and mitigation, empirical geotechnical data together with computational modelling, this paper makes estimates the potential hazards of the rocky slope where the fortress is located and the consequent effects in the fortress itself. Based on the results provided by the analysis regarding the potential and mechanism of failure, different stabilization methods can be proposed to prevent further problems that can greatly affect the fortress and the nearby area.

Introduction

The city of Gjirokastër lies in a mountainous region with a characteristic configuration of five different mountain sides in the center of which a fortress in a rocky hill is located. In the words of the famous English writer and painter Edward Lear during his journey in Albania in 1848, Gjirokastër is a town "... crowned by what forms the most striking feature of the place, a black ruined castle

that extends along its whole summit, and proudly towers, even in decay, over the scattered vassal-houses below." This shows how the fortress is tightly related with the city and its origins. The fortress, dating back to the 13th century, has housed different functions, including that of a prison. Nowadays, due to its historical values, it represents one of the strongest and most important points of the city from

the touristic and cultural point of view, and it can be considered, together with the Old Bazaar, as one of the main poles from which the revitalization of a shrinking city as Gjirokastër can begin.

Due to many human and non-human factors, the fortress is facing difficulties related to its structural stability. On the other hand, the rocky hill is also prone to weathering processes that can lead to dangerous geotechnical problems that can impact the stability of the fortress itself and endanger the citizens living in the area nearby. The non-human or natural threats are related to the seismic threat, erosion, wildland fires, landslides, and rock falls, while the human factors are mainly related with the lack of financial support and a management plan, uncontrolled urban development and the abandonment of the site by the inhabitants etc. (Jigyasu et al., 2014).

In Gjirokastër, as a Museum-city enlisted in the World heritage list with many notable sites, including the fortress, there is an urgent need for a proper hazard assessment together with a risk assessment that provides the probability of occurrence of a specific hazard and the impact this hazard may have on the surrounding areas. This need is much more obvious in the case of the fortress and the hill where the fortress stands. This is considered one of the most critical zones due to the fractured layered of

conglomerates on the top of the narrow ridge and the presence of a very large rock below the fort, which makes it susceptible to rock fall and toppling, and in some location even to landslides (Jigyasu et al., 2014: 24). The risk assessment must then be followed by proper mitigation measures in order to prevent or reduce the risks and the consequences they can have in the structural stability of the fortress itself and the surrounding area, since many buildings are located just below the hill.

Assessment methodology

The risk assessment requires both qualitative and quantitative data that can be obtained through previous similar studies, site visits, monitoring, thematic maps and in-situ investigations together with laboratory testing. The collected data can then be used through the help of well-defined geotechnical analytical models and software, in order to quantify the problem and give an overview or detailed information regarding the geotechnical hazard, which in the case of the fortress, will be related to the landslide and rock falling. Hazard¹ and risk² recognition, together with the successful treatment, require thorough understanding of a number of factors including types and forms of slope failures, geological conditions and their relationship with the potential failure form, elements of a slope stability, significance of slope activity or amount and rate of movement (Hunt, 2007: 4). The methodology used for this work consists of archival and desk research. The aim is

¹ / Hazard refers to the slope failure itself in terms of its potential magnitude and probability of occurrence (Hunt, 2007)

² / Risk refers to the consequences of failure on human activities (Hunt, 2007)



Fig. 1 / Gjirokastër fortress and aqueduct depicted by Edward Lear. Source / invest-in-albania.org

Hazard	Berat	Gjirokastër	Butrint
Fire (structure)	✓	✓	✓
Wildland Fire	✓	✓	✓
Geohazard (earthquake)	✓	✓	✓
Geohazard (landslide)	✓	✓	
Geohazard (rockfall)	✓	✓	
Flooding	✓		✓

Tab. 1 / Natural hazards in three World Heritage Sites in Albania. Source: Jigyasu et al., 2014)

to obtain good knowledge of the concepts behind slope stability analysis and stabilization methods by studying relevant literature together with the collection of the necessary data to be used for generating the model using commercially available software. The generated model can then give a rough estimation of the hill stability, and according to the results, preliminary stabilization methods can be proposed. The main limitation of this work has to do with the proper determination of the geotechnical parameters needed for the analysis. Generally, these parameters are obtained through several laboratory and site tests whose number depends on the importance of the problem in hand. To overcome this issue, the necessary data needed for this work are obtained by taking in consideration the opinion of several experienced engineers and by carefully studying relevant recommendations based on empirical formulas proposed by several authors.

Topographical and Geotechnical Information

The analysis requires the usage of both qualitative and quantitative data which

can be divided into three types:

- Topography configuration of the site
- Geological configuration of the site
- Geotechnical parameters of soils and rocks.

Topography

A topographical map gives detailed information regarding the configuration of the city in altitude. In order to properly analyze the slope stability a cross-section needs to be generated from the topographical map.

Geological Configuration

An approximate geological profile for the section a-a shown in Fig2. was elaborated using rough experiences from past studies which show that the fortress itself stands on a strong and well cemented conglomerate with some joints present and a height of around 20-30 meters. Below the conglomerate there are flysch deposits of mainly sandstone and claystone, and on both sides of the hill, just above the flysch, there are deposits of loose to medium dense brown to beige silty clay with a height varying from 3 to 4 meters. The geological configuration

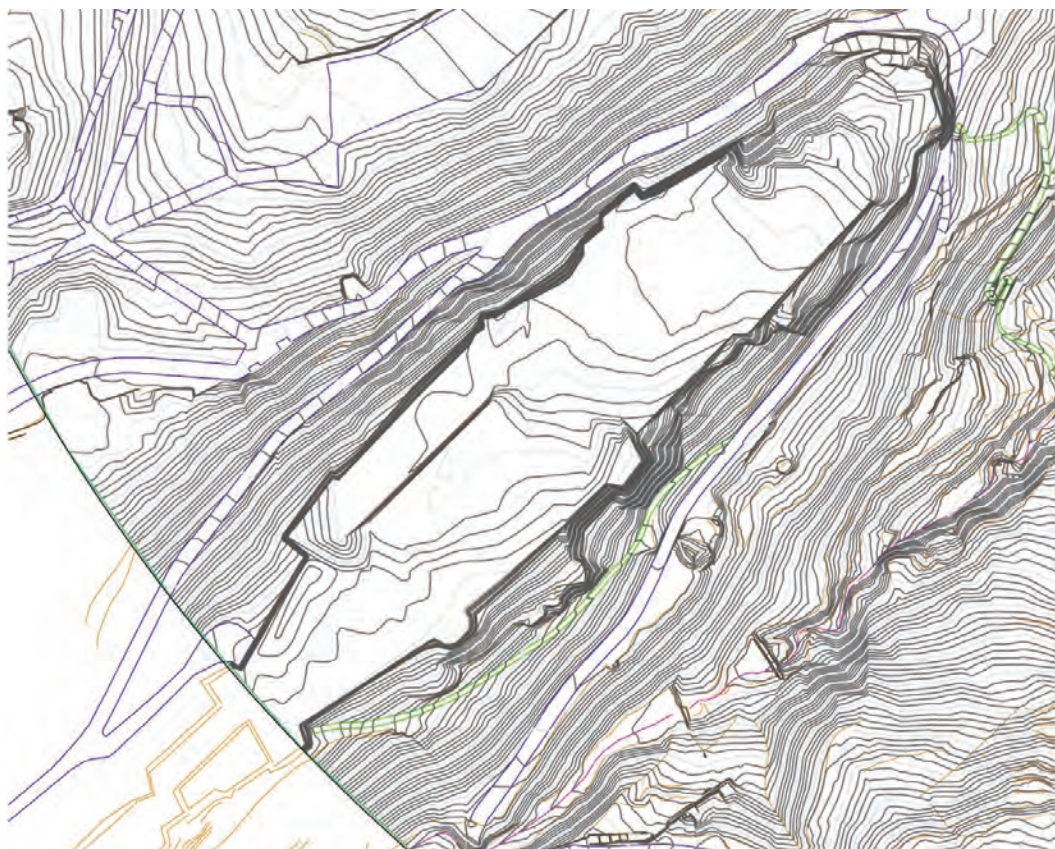


Fig. 2 / Topographical configuration of the fortress area (up) and aerial view of the zone together with the cross-section to be studied (down) (adaptation from the work of Eng. Adriatik Kodra.

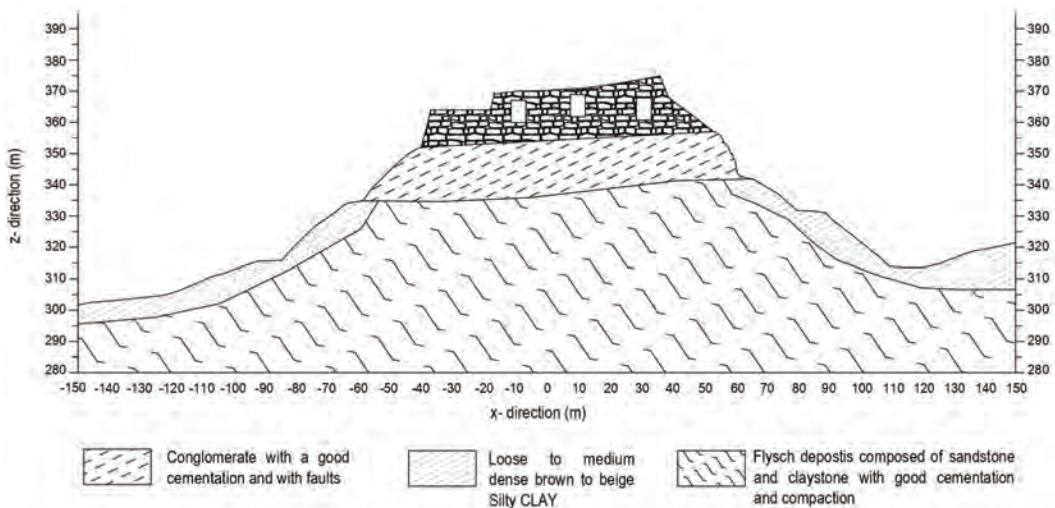


Fig. 3 / Geological profile of the hill. Source / the author, with the help of Eng. Skender Allkja

for the section a-a is given in the picture above:

$$\tau = \sigma' \tan \phi + c \quad (\text{Mohr-Coulomb})$$

Geotechnical parameters and models

The physical and mechanical parameters of soils and rocks characterize the natural state and behavior of these materials under external static or dynamic loads. There are numerous parameters that serve as input variables for the analytical model depending on the problem at hand. Their determination is a complex process since their correct values are determined using different in-situ (terrain) and ex-situ (laboratory) tests. For the purpose of the study, it is reasonable to proceed with the determination of these parameters using a simpler approach based on quick surveys and literature recommendations. This approach is widely used and preferred where there is lack of information for a specific site, and it is applicable not only for research purposes but even in applied design situations (Sartar, et al., 2015). For example, in order to analyze the stability of two excavated slopes in the region of Sikkim Himalayas, the parameters using several recommended empirical formulas were determined, and only some quick surveys without any detailed in-situ or ex-situ tests were taken into account.

The slope stability problem requires an analysis of the shear strength of soils and rocks in the potential failure surface

$$\sigma'_1 = \sigma'_3 + \sigma_{ci} \left(m \frac{\sigma'_3}{\sigma_{ci}} + s \right)^{0.5} \quad (\text{Hoek- Brown})$$

along the slope in order to determine whether the resisting forces are higher than the destabilizing ones. Two of the most known and used theories regarding the shear strength are those of Mohr-Coulomb failure criterion (Das, 2010: 365) and Hoek- Brown failure criterion (Hoek et al., 2002). The first criterion is going to be used to characterize the silty clay deposit and the second one the flysch deposit together with the conglomerates, since this criterion is used for rocks:

The rough values of the parameters to be used as input variables for the analysis of the hill's stability are determined after a detailed study of the recommendations proposed by (Marinos & Hoek, 2001) and (Shen & Karakus, 2014) and also a detailed study regarding the flysch deposits characterization in Albania (Malaj et al., 2017). Additional information was gathered taking into consideration the opinions of several experts of the field with a broad experience in geotechnical matters. From these two different sources, the parameters were selected such as to ensure the most unfavorable situation. The information is summarized in the following table:

Soil/ Rock	Mohr- Coulomb failure criterion			Hoek- Brown failure criterion		
	γ (kN/m ³)	ϕ (degree)	c (kPa)	σ_{ci} (MPa)	m_i	GSI
(1) Silty Clay	19	22	18	-	-	-
(2) Conglomerate	24	54.04	278	100	21	50
(3) Flysch deposits	23.4	17.77	53	25	4	32

Tab 2. / Shear parameters to be used in the modelling

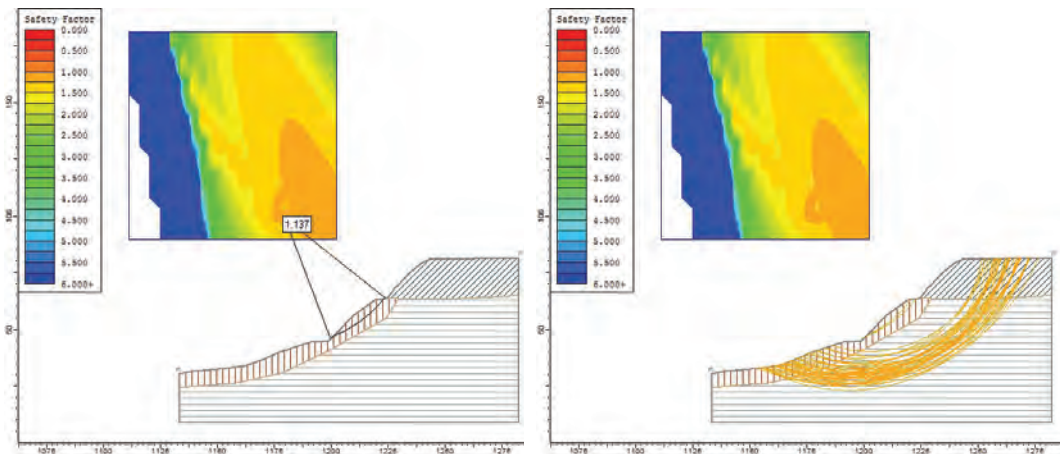


Fig. 4 / Global minimum slip surface(left) and the surfaces with a factor of safety lower than 1.2 (right)
Source / the author

- γ - unit weight of the soil or rock
- ϕ - internal angle of friction
- c - cohesion
- σ_{ci} - uniaxial compression strength of the intact rock material
- m_i - rock material constant
- GSI- Geological Strength Index

The equivalent Mohr- Coulomb failure criterion parameters for the rocks are a result of the process of linearization of the Hoek- Brown criterion (Hoek et al., 2002:3), and it is necessary to be determined in order to perform the stability analysis.

Fortress Hill Analysis

The analysis was performed in three stages: in the first one, the geometry of the slope was generated using the topography, in the second stage all the soil and rock parameters determined in Table 2 were inputted and assigned to the proper layers. In the final stage, according to Fig 2, the analysis was performed using the auto grid option in which a grid of 20 by 20 points was created with the aim of generating a large number of points that serve as centers of potential slip surfaces, each one of them having a different radius. The analysis's results showed that the lowest factor of safety is 1.137, which corresponds to a slip surface passing through the silty clay deposit. By applying a filter for the slip surfaces with a factor of safety lower than 1.2, it can be clearly observed that there are many dangerous surfaces along the conglomerate and flysch deposits too.

The factor of safety expresses the ratio between the resistance along a surface and the sliding forces acting on the same surface. The compiled factor of safety by the analysis of 1.2 means that the resistance exceeds the sliding forces by 20%, but geotechnical analyses are always characterized by uncertainties related mainly to the parameters used in

the model, external loads and the slope geometry itself. This is the reason why in many practical situations probabilistic methods apply to answer for these uncertainties, or higher values of the factor of safety of around 1.5 are required to consider a slope stable (Das, 2010: 515).

Conclusions

In the case of the fortress hill, by accepting a factor of safety of 1.5 as proposed by (Das, 2010: 515), it can be concluded that there is a risk of instability, taking into account even the fact that external factors like erosion, seismic action or traffic loads (along the slope there are two roads) were not considered in the model, and their effects can further reduce the factor of safety.

Since some of the most dangerous slip surfaces pass just below the fortress, as by Fig 4, the instability of the slope can bring serious problems of rocks and soils falling and sliding, which can affect the stability of the fortress itself. In order to avoid these problems slope stabilization methods must be used to raise this factor of safety and stabilize the slope to prevent future serious problems.

While there are many stabilization methods that can be used based on many factors like the materials composing the slope, intensity and orientation of the discontinuities, slope activity, form and magnitude of potential failure etc (Hunt, 2007: 94), in the case of the fortress's hill the usage of vertical and horizontal drainage systems can be used in order to avoid water-related issues, combined with rock anchors and bolts in order to increase stabilizing forces. More detailed analyzes can be further used to better specify the stabilization methods taking into consideration technical, economical, and aesthetic aspects.

This study provides data and strategies on improving the fortress's hill stability.

While this information may be general, it is a viable starting point for more advanced analyses for both research-oriented or more specifically applied project. One way of enhancing this research would be that of taking in consideration other external factors like earthquake, water and dynamic loads due to traffic, their impact on the calculated value of the factor of safety together with detailed analysis of the stabilization interventions itself through analytical and computational modelling.

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The city of design and culture

Keywords / Design, culture-identity, summer schools, artistic residence, experience

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Abstract

Gjirokastra is the main city of the Ionian region in the south of Albania. Since 2005, the city was included in the UNESCO List of World Heritage as a Cultural site. This article aims to develop a proposal for rethinking Gjirokastra, which has become a shrinking city. Its main goal is to propose through the analysis of case studies a model with strategies to turn Gjirokastra into a city of design and culture. The proposal seeks to emphasize the strengths of the city such as tourism infrastructure, like hotels and restaurants, restored buildings, and courses and workshops organized by the municipality that focus on the culture and history of the city, by pursuing new sources of income and taking advantage of the tourist development that have taken place so far. This proposal also aims to empower the citizens of Gjirokastra to have their own businesses and be an active part of the development of this new city.

This paper focuses on two main strategies: first, the development of Summer Schools (two to four weeks in length), and second, the Artistic Residence (one to three months length) for local and foreigner artists, designers and architects. The summer schools will be conducted by local masters to teach techniques of working in stone, wood and fabric. The in-residence artists will work with the urban space, buildings, landmarks or local materials. The process consists of producing and working with a plan that includes where to stay, what to eat and what to experience in the city, and how to generate historical, cultural, natural and gastronomic paths inside the city and in the surrounding areas for different time periods. The selected case studies that we will analyze are from Latin-American and Europe: from Chio Lecca, Peru; Bauhaus Foundation Dessau, Germany; and Manos de colores, Ecuador. We will work with concepts from Participatory design and co-creative design.

As part of the school, each designer, artist or architect is expected to develop a design product of high quality for everyday life with the learned techniques and local materials. At a later stage, these objects will be produced and distributed in the city for the Albanian market and subsequently exported. The in-residence artists are expected to generate unique pieces of art that will be exposed in a gallery for locals and tourists to visit. The choice of the case studies was based on the programs and outcomes they have had when they were developed. The result of the proposal will be a group of strategies that the municipality or associations of citizens of Gjirokastra can implement in the city. Also, as conclusion guides lines will be presents for the process after the implementation of these strategies.

Introduction: State of the art

This article aims to develop a proposal for rethinking a shrinking city, Gjirokastra. This proposal comes from the workshop "Rethinking Gjirokastra" developed in December 2019 by the POLIS University of Albania, for the group of students of the 35th cycle of the International PhD in Architecture and Urban Planning.

"Berat and Gjirokastra are inscribed as rare examples of an architectural character typical of the Ottoman period. Gjirokastra, in the Drinos river valley in southern Albania, features a series of outstanding two-story houses which were developed in the 17th century. The town also retains a bazaar, an 18th century mosque and two churches of the same period.

Gjirokastra was built by major landowners. Around the ancient 13th century citadel, the town has houses with turrets (the Turkish kule) which are characteristic of the Balkans region. Gjirokastra contains several remarkable examples of houses of this type, which date from the 17th century, but also more elaborate examples dating from the early 19th century." UNESCO (2019).

Gjirokastra is the main city of the Ionian region in the south of Albania. This region is part of the "Albanian riviera," known for its cultural sites (some already inscribed under UNESCO) and for its proximity to the sea that makes it suitable for maritime tourism. The city has had an important place in the history of Albania, and in 2005 it was inscribed by UNESCO in the List of World Heritage as a Cultural Site. Since then, UNESCO has been working with the Albanian government to develop strategies to preserve the city.

UNESCO has identified several factors that have an impact on the city: ground transport infrastructure, housing, Illegal activities (Illegal construction dating from the late 1990s and later), management systems/ management plan, and other threats like the lack of adequate firefighting arrangements in the historic urban zone. UNESCO (2019). Through doctoral research thesis and projects POLIS University has also recognized several factors that have put the preservation of the city at risk: the migration of its citizens to Tirana, the lack of cadastral information, lack of diversification of activities, lack of jobs, and lack of civic agency on the

management of urban space, heritage and the city itself.

Taking this context into account, the main goal to this paper is to propose a model and strategies through which to turn Gjirokastra into a city of design and culture. The proposal takes advantage of the strengths of the city, such as the tourism infrastructure, hotels and restaurants, the few restored buildings, and courses and workshops. Then, through case studies, the development of the strategies will be situated in the cultural context of the city. This proposal also intends to empower the citizens of Gjirokastra to have their own businesses, pursue new sources of income, and be an active part of the development of this new city. The strategies will generate a dynamic between the activities, people and different parts of the city.

Touring the city, a cultural heritage of objects, fabrics, fashion, graphics and spaces of everyday life unfold. Understanding and engaging this heritage will enable the citizens to regenerate the identity of their city as part of Albanian culture. Techniques, materials, and landscapes are specific to this city and its history. These important elements will be framed and engaged through summer schools and artistic residence. As a summary, this proposal highlights as city characteristics and problems, and aims to involve all the actors in the process of the rehabilitation and regeneration of the city and its heritage.

Local and foreign artists, designers and



Fig. 1 / Historic Centre of Gjirokastra, view from the castle. Source / the author, December 2019

architects, the participants will be mainly this target group for the summer school, but anyone who wants to participate will be welcome. There will be two programs, one for two weeks and the other for four weeks. In these programs, the participants will work with local masters to learn the techniques of stone working, wood working and fabric weaving, which are characteristic materials and techniques in Gjirokastra. In the first program, the participants will learn one technique tied to the material and in the second program they will learn the techniques of all the materials. Through the methodology of Participatory Design and Co-creative Design¹, the interaction between the masters and the participants will result in innovative and high-quality products for everyday life. These products will be introduced to the local market and larger Albanian and international market.

Second, an Artistic Residence with the same target group as the summer school for one to three months will work with proposals that includes the urban space, buildings, landmarks or local materials. Such proposals are expected to generate

unique pieces of art that will be exhibited in local galleries. The municipality, the tourism sector, and the citizens must work together, creating alliances and a network of joint work and support.

Methodology: Case Studies analysis

The methodology was centered around two case studies. Latin-America and Western Europe. From Latin-America there are Chio Lecca, Peru and Manos de colores, Ecuador. These cases reflect principles of Participatory and Co-creative Design that combine the experience of the site, learning activities and tourism. From Western Europe, there is the Bauhaus Foundation Dessau, Germany, which contributes with experience in the field of tourism and Artistic Residence.

Chio Lecca

Chio Lecca is a Fashion Institute in Peru with two centers, one in Lima and one in Cusco. The latter is the nearest city to Machu Picchu a UNESCO World Heritage Cultural site and one of the most visited places in the world. For its Summer School, The Fashion Institute take advantage of the fact that Peru has high quality alpaca²

¹ / Participatory design (originally co-operative design, now often co-design) is an approach to design attempting to actively involve all stakeholders (e.g. employees, partners, customers, citizens, end users) in the design process to help ensure the result meets their needs and is usable. Participatory design is an approach which is focused on processes and procedures of design and is not a design style. The term is used in a variety of fields e.g. software design, urban design, architecture, landscape architecture, product design, sustainability, graphic design, planning, and even medicine as a way of creating environments that are more responsive and appropriate to their inhabitants' and users' cultural, emotional, spiritual and practical needs.

² / Alpaca wool is the natural fiber harvested from an alpaca, an endemic animal from the Andes region.



Fig. 2 / Historic Centre of Gjirokastra, touring the city. Source / the author, December 2019

wool, an endemic and highly prized material. The program for the summer school offers a complete service for the participants. They have a residence for the students while they attend the school. They have also arranged visits to Machu Picchu and to indigenous communities near the city; they have workshops with the women from the communities to learn the ancient techniques for spinning alpaca's wool, dyeing, and weaving it in handlooms.

The facts to consider in this case are:

- Generation of a pack for services that include tourism infrastructure, residency/hotels, restaurants and attractions.
- Identification of characteristic techniques of the city to establish the work between

the master's artisans and the future students at the summer schools.

- Strengthen and recover the use of endemic materials and artisan techniques typical of the city.

Through the facilities and services of the summer schools, Chio Lecca has promoted the participation of local, local people and foreigners and has disclosed the tangible and intangible heritage of Peru.

Manos de Colores

"Manos de colores is a Project that works with artisan communities with the aim of generating economic income for women artisans and their families. It has work with 6 of these communities, an artisan route that starts from the



Fig. 3 / Fabrics and textiles from Gjirokastra, touring the city. Source / the author, December 2019



Fig. 4 / Sequeiros, JC . 2018. Mujeres tejedoras del Cusco exponen lo mejor de su arte ancestral. Source / [online]. Available at: <https://diariocorreo.pe/edicion/cusco/mujeres-tejedoras-del-cusco-exponen-lo-mejor-de-su-arte-ancestral-video-818337/?ref=dcr> (Accessed: 5 march 2020)

province of Pichincha to Esmeraldas and the idea is to put a value and pay tribute to de artisans who care for and protect our cultural heritage.” Makiwan (2019).

Manos de Colores is a project in Ecuador from Probeta Design, an Atelier in Quito that works with indigenous communities and their small associations that are mostly women from all over Ecuador. This project has been going on for five years with successful outcomes in the communities. This project aims for the development of artisan products from each community, which have a powerful component of identity and endemic materials.

The facts to consider in this case are:

- Building a sense of collaboration between the municipality, tourism sector and the community, working together and leaning on each other.
- Reestablishing almost lost artisan techniques.
- Encouraging the youngest citizens of the community to return and learn the artisan’s techniques

The aim is to develop methodologies and techniques from Participatory design and co-creative design, generate a sense of belonging to the territory and the community and valorize their work. In addition, the products that have been developed are commercialized, thus completing the design product cycle, and generating economic stability for their families and thus of the community.

Bauhaus Residence

“Since 2016, the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation offers an Artist in Residence program that enables contemporary artist from all over the world to live and work in the Georg Muche | Oskar Schlemmer House. Each Bauhaus Residency ends with the presentation of a new work that will remain in the Gropius House. This exhibition with the title Gropius House || Contemporary is open for visitors.” Bauhaus, (2019, p. 7)

The Bauhaus Foundation in Dessau has a project called the Bauhaus Residence, in which artists, designers and architects propose projects in the Bauhaus master’s Houses. They will live and work in these houses for approximately 3 months. The artwork will then be exhibited in the Gropius house. The participants of the Bauhaus Residence experience the city and its infrastructure and interact with the citizens and the tourist that visit Dessau.

The facts to consider in this case are:

- The urban infrastructure that provides the artist elements to develop the artwork,

the generation of the local economy, and the need to have urban spaces and stores among other services.

- The city is known through the artwork.
- A different type of tourism will be encouraged through culture.
- The city will get enriched with the experiences from artists, designers and architects from all over the world.

Gjirokastra must provide the participants with infrastructural, hospitality and cultural services. For the summer school and the artist residence the hosts must guarantee comfort and accessibility; the restaurants and bars must be adequate to taste the local and regional food for which Albania is recognized. The experience will be complemented with cooking workshops. For the weekends and for the afternoons/nights there will be different options, such as cultural events (theater, cinema), adventure (camping, fishing, hiking), relaxation (spa, pool) and historical tours (Hadrianopolis, Antigona, Gjirokastra’s castel).

These services will develop in the old and new part of the city and in the surrounding areas. It is important not to concentrate the activities only in the old neighborhoods of the city in order to engage the people with the place. It is also necessary that the largest number of citizens, regardless of gender and age, are involved in this program because collaborative and cooperative work is needed.

Results

Through these case studies we have identified strategies that have worked successfully and that can be implemented in this context. they are:

- Generate a pack for services that include tourism infrastructure, residency/hotels, restaurants and attractions, as well as guided tours to the castle of Gjirokastra and the places near the city, such as Hadrianopolis and Antigone.
- Identify characteristic techniques of the city in order to establish the relationships between the master’s artisans and the future students at the summer schools, as well as reestablish almost lost artisan techniques (stone).
- Strengthen and recover the use of endemic materials (stone, wood and textiles) and artisan techniques typical of the city.
- Build a sense of collaboration between the municipality, tourism sector and the community, working together and leaning on each other.
- Enable and encourage the young citizens



Fig. 5 / *Manos de colores*. 2019. Products of masapan [online]. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/manosdecoloresecuador/> (Accessed: 5 marzo 2020)



Fig. 6 / Exhibition in the Gropius House, Artistic Residence, Dessau. Source / the author, February 2020



*Fig. 7 / Exhibition in the Gropius House, Artistic Residence, Dessau.
Source / the author, February 2020*

to return to the city and learn the artisan's techniques.

- The urban infrastructure should serve as a stage and context for the artwork, which in turn will revitalize local economy.
- Make the city known through artwork.
- Encourage tourism through new infrastructure
- Enrich the city with artistic and architectural experiences from the local region and beyond.

Conclusions and future developments

After having established the strategies and after having structured the programs, it is proposed to carry out the second phase of the project, which involves the restoration of the industrial zone. This space must be adequate for the production of the designed objects. A new graphic system must be also developed for the city, a brand for the summer schools, and for the products that would



Fig. 8 / Hadrianopolis, near Gjirokastra. Source / the author, December 2019

be developed there. A Gallery must be set up for art of residence artists, by using an already restored building in the old part of the city or an adequate space in the industrial zone. There must also be both a permanent and moving exhibition. These activities will trigger jobs for people and motivate them to remain in the city. With this proposal, we aim to generate a cycle through learning, development and production of objects with the identity and soul of Gjirokastra.

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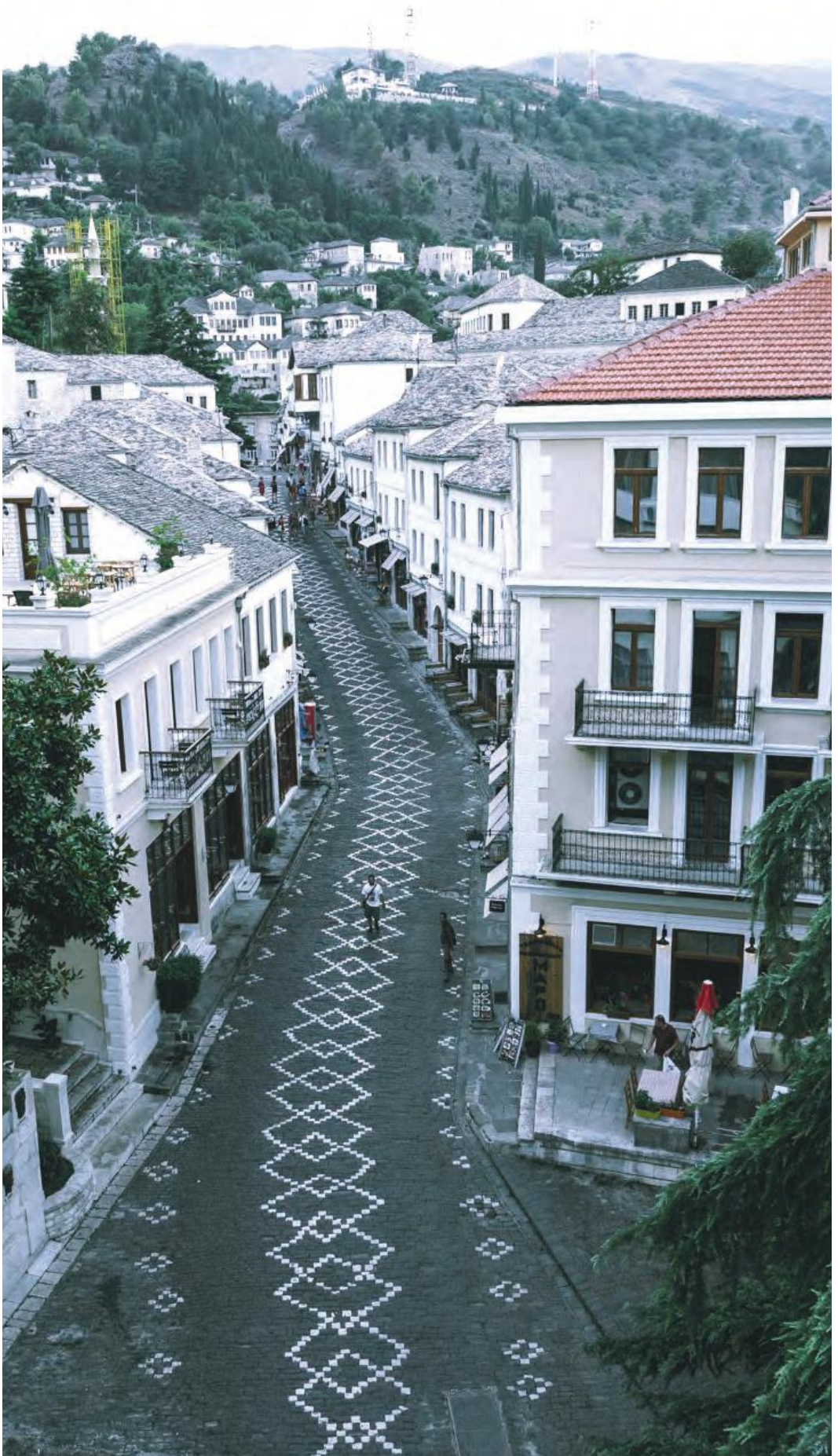
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Gjirokastra rebirth through distributed retirement houses

Keywords / city rebirth, smart technologies, smart mobility, smart healthcare, city for elder people, urban planning

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Abstract

Gjirokastra is facing a shrinking process that is hitting both population and economy, collapsing both and increasing the average age of inhabitants. Despite it being a UNESCO site and a well-known touristic target, the crisis seems to be irreversible. It is necessary to revert this process to avoid the final collapse of a city which has a lot of resources and a long-lasting history.

The paper investigates how to support the renaissance of Gjirokastra economy and society, fueling both through the redesign of its urban plan to support its transformation into a "City of Health", which means widening the main economy pillar from tourism to health services. The idea is to create a local market for medical and sanitary services that will cause the creation of new industries and companies, attract new younger and professionally prepared people, bring equity and start a virtuous loop that will fuel itself for a long time. The local sanitary and medical market will be initially powered by attracting older people, following the example of other countries, especially basing on the Portugal experience.

To move towards the "City of Health" target, the paper proposes to integrate currently isolated areas of the city; create a synergy between surrounding lands, the city and the industrial zone; develop a medical excellence area and attract people from abroad.

The research question is: how to modify the urban plan of the city in order to attract elder people from abroad for their retirement and to create the opportunity of a local medical and sanitary industry development?

The methodology used in this research has been based on an on-site survey, a literature review to analyse similar experiences, a SWOT analysis of the opportunities offered by current urban tissue and plan. Sketches and maps have then been developed to focus the strategy. Technology solutions have been also considered to solve issues emerged in the analysis.

Final conclusions evidence that Gjirokastra has good opportunities and a main strategic plan that can be followed to trigger the rebirth of the city, but some important urban plan changes have to be made.

Introduction

Gjirokastra is currently known for its UNESCO label as World Heritage Site and most of its economy has been based on tourism but it seems to not work. Gjirokastra is a shrinking city that needs a rebirth or will die.

According to some studies (Bickert and Göler 2012), tourism is not enough because tourists visit the city in one day and do not stay for the night and do not remain in the city for many days.

After analysing the current state of Gjirokastra economy, a strategy to let the

city to rebirth has been defined, preserving existing economic positive factors, and creating an economic flywheel attracting money from abroad and people from both Albania and outside it. The main idea behind this strategy is to focus on health, building in Gjirokastra a set of healthcare resources that can take advantage of existing accommodation infrastructure and touristic resources. To develop such an idea, the strategy focuses on residential kinds of healthcare like geriatrics and rehabilitation services. The healthcare services should be designed to attract

foreign people, generating a new kind of medical tourism. Albania is currently the target of medical tourism, mostly for dental and aesthetic treatments, and this kind of tourism generates an economic positive flow because it requires the tourist to stay for many days in Albania (Nexhipi 2018).

Gjirokastra has an ideal configuration to support the development of "distributed retirement house" for foreign people. The main idea is to attract retired people to spend their retirement living in Gjirokastra, like already happens, for example, in the "sunset migration" for Portugal (King, Warnes and Williams 2000). The climate, the lower cost of life and the natural and cultural resources can be attractive for average-class retired people from middle and northern Europe. But to attract them is necessary to create good retirement services.

The most important of these services should be:

- Health services for older people (geriatrics and rehabilitation)
- Cultural opportunities
- Free time management

In this paper, a specific subset of them is analysed considering the "distributed retirement house" (DRH) concept.

The Distributed Retirement House

A DRH is a retirement house where old people live, autonomously, in residential units of one or more persons (De Florio 2007) (alone, couple, or familiar group). These persons can be monitored or helped by caregivers but maintain a good

degree of freedom and autonomy. The retired people will have, depending on the accommodation type, the possibility to grow their own vegetable garden, or flower garden and to sell these products on the local market. They can also be involved in various hobbies (handcrafts, cultural, ...) and sell the result of these hobbies too. Retired people can practise hobbies they already know or locally learned, generating a cultural exchange that can be useful both to them and to local citizens (Rothuizen 2011).

The idea, then, is to create a retirement house that is made by many distinct residential units where people can have tailor-made assistance according to their needs but maintaining a good autonomy (Kaluža 2010). Each person will have a specific retirement context, that they can adapt to their needs and the technological infrastructure will conform to such a personalised view (González et al. 2009). Each person will be guided to identify this new situation as "home" (Ewart 2013), being inserted in a community of pairs, rich in stimuli, and with a lot of cultural and entertainment opportunities.

The DRH is an exceptionally good opportunity for Gjirokastra because it will use the existing touristic services in a different way, increasing their level of usage. But it will also be a part of an economic flywheel to invert the Gjirokastra economic trend and attract younger people from Albania, as workers, lowering the average age. In fact, basing on the Portugal (and similar) experience (King 2000) it has been clear that the presence

of elder people with expenditure capability over the average of the local population will create an induced economy that will also recall people (nurses, doctors, fitness trainers, ...) from other places to increase local workforce.

Methodology

The methodology followed in this paper has been based on an on-site survey, a literature review to analyse similar experiences, a SWOT analysis of the opportunities offered by current urban tissue and plan. Sketches and maps have then been developed to focus the strategy. Technology solutions have been also considered to solve issues emerged in the analysis.

The methodology has been implemented by the following steps:

- Analyse urban structure of Gjirokastra and of its neighbouring, through an on-site survey and maps analysis
- Analyse, through literature, other experiences about how older people can be organised in such distributed accommodation
- Identify resources available in Gjirokastra and develop a SWOT analysis
- Define a possible location of the DRH, using results of previous methodological steps
- Identify communication needs (both informative and transport), defining main flows according to above defined DRH and other resources location
- Identify suitable technologies (available and forthcoming) to fill communication needs, reviewing similar cases on literature and analysing their impact to the urban planning
- Define change proposals to the Urban Plan to fit above items, through maps and sketches.

Current urban context

Gjirokastra has in the Castle its focal point from which its development has started. The Castle is surrounded by ancient districts which are the original settlements and their evolution in time, following city growth.

The city is placed on the north-eastern slope of the mountain and develops in NE direction, sliding along four main "fingers" of the mountain, separated by small valleys. The fingers have, approximately, the same orientation of the Castle. This city core is enclosed into two wide areas that embrace it. One, on the north, is a recent residential, business and service area, grown along the main axis of Boulevard 18 Shtatori. The second one, on the south, is the industrial area.

On the eastern side of the side, parallel to the national road SH4, there is a river which flows from north-west to south-east and, crossing it, a wide plain which is suitable for agriculture. Proceeding in NE direction there is another set of mountains which runs parallel to the one from which the City starts. The recently developed zones suffer from a compromised and chaotic urban development. The residential zone fades from the initial settlements, which are mainly composed by Ottoman historical buildings, into a modern town, with progressive change from historical urban tissue into a recent and, often, compromised one. The industrial zone is mainly composed of old warehouses which are abandoned.

In the area along Boulevard 18 Shtatori, there are important resources like the University, the Hospital and most of the shops and services that, except for tourism, generate current economic flows in Gjirokastra. The transport system is not really developed and is mainly based on private, fossil fuels based, transport. The university has a good potential but the hospital, despite of the design made by Kristo Skender Luarasi, has been built at the end of the '40-th and needs further development to really support its role of Regional Hospital, being too small for the inhabitants of the region and due to the concurrence of Ioannina (Greece) Hospital, better organised and with a higher service quality.

Last, but not least, is the Gjirokastra morphology that, in the areas suitable to host the DRH, is made of steep slopes, narrow streets and abandoned or ruined buildings.

Due to these premises, creating a distributed retirement house in Gjirokastra requires a rethinking of the city urban plan and the introduction of some modern technologies to enable elderly to live in the city.

The research has evidenced a possible set of changes that should be done in the city urban plan. First, because the old Gjirokastra is distributed on various hills, these must be connected, possibly further developing already existing connections, to allow communications in a form suitable for older people. These already sketched connections are parallel to the main national road that runs along the river. The Hospital should be moved on the border of the industrial zone, to allow it to grow and create an induced production site for healthcare products and services, also leveraging the already existing green area. The University should be expanded to support the expected increase in course

The Strategy

- 1 Excellence in Healthcare Services
Improving Hospital and University.
Excel in **Geriatrics** and **Rehabilitation**
- 2 Attract Retired People from abroad
Culture, healthcare, climate, wonderful site,
better purchasing power
- 3 Connect areas
Create people flows, **synergy** with tourism,
agriculture and industry, **smart mobility**
- 4 Develop farming and industry
Diversify, **integrate**, make **modern**



Rethink

Fig. 1 / Infographics about the Main Strategy. Source / infographics made by the author



Fig. 2 / Local artisan working stone. Source / image of the author 2019

differentiation and demand.

Before describing, in detail, how the urban plan should be rearranged, it is important to take a look at the technological requirements of smart mobility and remote healthcare because they will play an important role in redefining the city plan.

Technology role

The big challenges that have to be won are: how to enable old people to freely move in a city with steep slopes and badly paved (because they are ancient pathways) roads and how to let people feel safe when they live alone in a foreign country. Urban planning can rearrange

public space to satisfy these needs.

Other issues like the integration of elders into the new, foreign context, overcoming cultural and language barriers will not be considered because they will not impact urban planning.

The Role of Smart Mobility

To allow people to move in a city like Gjirokastra, allowing them to even exit from city premises and go in the neighbourhoods where there are a lot of natural resources, an autonomous mobility system has been considered.

The requirements for this autonomous mobility system are:

- Electric vehicles which move at slow

speed (max 40 km/h)

- Vehicles can be managed either in car sharing or as property

- When vehicles are shared, they can be called and, autonomously, they will reach the caller. After serving him or her, they will proceed with the next call or move to a recharge station, solving the issue of lack of parking.

- Vehicles must be able to climb low height steps and move in the narrow and steep paths available in the city

- Vehicles must be easily accessible by elderly

- Vehicles should have (Eck et al. 2012), mainly, 1 or 2 seats, and can have simple driving commands if the driver wants to drive them

This technology is not yet fully mature, but it can be ready in a few years, especially because the speed of the vehicle is low.

Smart Healthcare and Intelligent House

Elder people, to be attracted to a foreign country, need to perceive that they are safe, and this can be achieved through remote healthcare monitoring devices.

Each person will wear a wearable device (Melander Wikman 2008) and will be monitored by it and by some other devices (intelligent cameras, movement detection, ...) that can alert medical personnel (or even call an ambulance) if something is going wrong with the person's health.

The wearable device should be able to connect with the smart mobility vehicles and will continue to monitor a person's health and alert, if needed, even during transportation. Also, remote healthcare devices should be installed in every residential unit to allow physicians to remotely diagnose the person's health through tele-medicine services. This technology is already available, and it is expected that it will be improved in dimensions, communication distance and battery duration in the next few years. The residential units where people live should have smart capabilities to help elderly (Al-Shaqi et al. 2016) in their daily life. This kind of technology is already mature (Shreelakshmi et al. 2019) and is quickly improving, year by year.

Technology influence on public space

The above depicted technologies will influence the urban planning as described below:

- the original paths and streets can be preserved or restored without impacting the livability for elders, leading to a preservation of the original city morphology about communication roads

- the medical emergency or daily

transport of elders for therapies can be made reliable even in a case of distributed and not continuously guarded like in the concept of DRH, allowing the creation of small residential nucleus, exploiting existing Ottoman buildings, with no need to create huge centralised accommodation structures for elders, preserving or restoring existing urban tissue

- new paths can be easily created to connect zones of the city not yet connected but using a connection which is in harmony with the rest of the city.

The Urban Plan revision

Main planning strategy

The urban plan revision proposal is based on the need to reuse what exists (and possibly improve it), to develop what is missing but needed and to facilitate economic growth, aiming to support the "City of Health" creation.

In the main "City of Health" strategy (not described in this paper, which has been narrowed to the DRH development) four pillars have been identified to create a positive expansion of the economy. These pillars are health services, agriculture development, industrial zone, and knowledge development. Despite the main strategy is not detailed in this paper, its most important aspects of the Urban Plan revision are, anyway, described here, to give a global vision of the Gjirokastra future urban plan, in a wider perspective than focusing only on the DRH development, rather enclosing the DRH creation into a bigger picture. This especially applies to the agriculture and agroindustry development and for some aspects of the development of the industrial zone.

Agriculture and agroindustry

To develop agriculture, an adequate riverbank must be built and the plain in front of the city should be filled with greenhouses, most of them to produce vegetables that will be processed in the industrial zone.

The plain must be organised to have easy access to the plots to allow easy transfer of produced goods into the industrial zone, through bridges and through the national road.

Hospital development

The existing public hospital must be moved from its current position to a new one near the industrial zone because this will facilitate the growth of a local industry of sanitary services. This relocation of the hospital will also allow its empowerment, making it bigger and, maintaining a good

ratio among buildings vs. existing green, will also be more restful and comfortable for patients. The relocation of the hospital will require the empowerment of already existing streets to allow both traffic with the main road (the local national road) and with the industrial zone. To support transition towards clinical excellence, the hospital must be easily connected with more equipped hospitals in the neighbouring (even in Greece, because, today, Ioannina, for example, is already a destination for Albanian people that need medical assistance) that can support the local hospital both with remote medicine and with advanced services that can be provided in site. For this reason, good surface connections are needed. These connections must be defined based on an inter-regional and international plan that goes far over the scope of this paper.

Knowledge development

To develop knowledge in medical and sanitary fields, it is necessary to review the University giving more space to the Medicine faculty, moving it into the new hospital buildings.

But not only the Medicine faculty must be improved: engineering and professional schools must also be created.

Engineering, mainly electronic engineering, robotics, computer science, mechanical and materials engineering, will be the technological partner of Medicine to allow the local industry to take off and develop sanitary and medical services (as considered in the main strategy, not described here).

Professional schools (for nurses, sanitary operators, ...) are also particularly important to make Gjirokastra the "City of Health". All these schools (engineering and professional) can be hosted in the spaces where today the hospital is.

To develop knowledge (but also to support smart mobility and remote medicine) a modern telecommunication infrastructure (Samala 2019) must be built (Gui et al. 2007). In addition, the local medical and sanitary services (and their information systems) should be able to digitally communicate through standard protocols (Saman et al. 2012) with similar resources in the region and in the neighbouring countries.

The Industrial Zone

Following the strategy to further enhance the agriculture in the lands near Gjirokastra, the development of an industry for food processing (that is over the scope of this paper but complies with the bigger

strategic picture) should be considered in the urban plan change. To really support the "City of Health", an industry of sanitary and medical services and entertainment services should be developed. To support this, urban planning must be adapted and focused on these kinds of industries.

The industrial zone is composed of two main areas, one along the national road and another on the south of the city. The new urban plan should allocate entertainment (and fitness) industry on the side of the national road and the food processing and sanitary and medical services on the back of the national road area or in the southern city zone. The entertainment industry should be partitioned among two main ranges: adult people and elderly people. This partitioning is important because the same space can be used during the day by elderly and in the evening by young people or under-seventy people. This dual-use entertainment zone is one of the keys to attract people from abroad.

Old City renaissance and the Green Zebra

To support the Distributed Retirement House concept, it is necessary to restore existing buildings in the ancient city area, developing from them the accommodations required by elderly. But the Old City can be considered as a set of settlements distributed along some neighbouring hills. These settlements are poorly connected through narrow and often even not paved roads, with wild green everywhere.

To develop the idea of a distributed retirement house, it is necessary to create good connections between these hills, improving the roads, controlling the green, creating, on the city map, something like a black and green zebra crossing, where "black" are the settlements and "green" are the areas between them. This group of settlements and green areas has been named by the author as "The Green Zebra" because, looking it on the map, is composed by the "city fingers" cited above, separated by wild green areas (the valleys between them), generating a pattern that is similar to a zebra-crossing with black and green stripes, as shown in the picture below.

The Current Urban Plan

The current Urban Plan is structured, moving from North to South, with the new town, a modern and chaotic set of mostly residential buildings, where are located both the Hospital and the University, the Green Zebra, with the most of the ancient buildings, in various states of restoring, and the Industrial Zone to the far South



Fig. 3 / Modern wearable device. Source / Photo by Daniel Korpai on Unsplash



Fig. 4 / Audi off-road autonomous electric vehicle concept car. Source / The Wheel Network, 2019



Fig. 5 / "The Green Zebra" surrounded by a red border

(and a portion on a strip parallel to the National Road and the river axis).

The Revised Urban Plan

The revised Urban Plan sees the movement of the Hospital into the southern green area of the Green Zebra, the expansion of the University in the Old Hospital and in the New Hospital buildings, a change in the distribution of activities in the Industrial Area (entertainment & fitness on main road side and other industries in the southern interior), the connection of the stripes of the Green Zebra, and the creation of the Distributed Retirement Home inside the upper and middle area of the Green Zebra as depicted in the image below.

Conclusions

Gjirokastra morphology, through a focused urban planning, can be empowered to support the development of an economy

also based on medical and sanitary services, that partially relies on existing tourism infrastructures. This urban plan should, anyway, be a part of a bigger picture aimed to create synergies and development between tourism, industry, medicine, and educational resources.

With some improvements and adaptations, the existing urban space can quite naturally support the development of a DRH, although some innovative technologies (smart transport and smart healthcare) must be applied to avoid huge or intolerable impacts on urban tissue.

Connecting the original settlements (i.e. the "Green Zebra" stripes), restoring Ottoman buildings, redesign industrial zone master plan to facilitate medical and sanitary industry, empower hospital and university are some of the main steps needed to develop a DRH-based contribution to the economy.

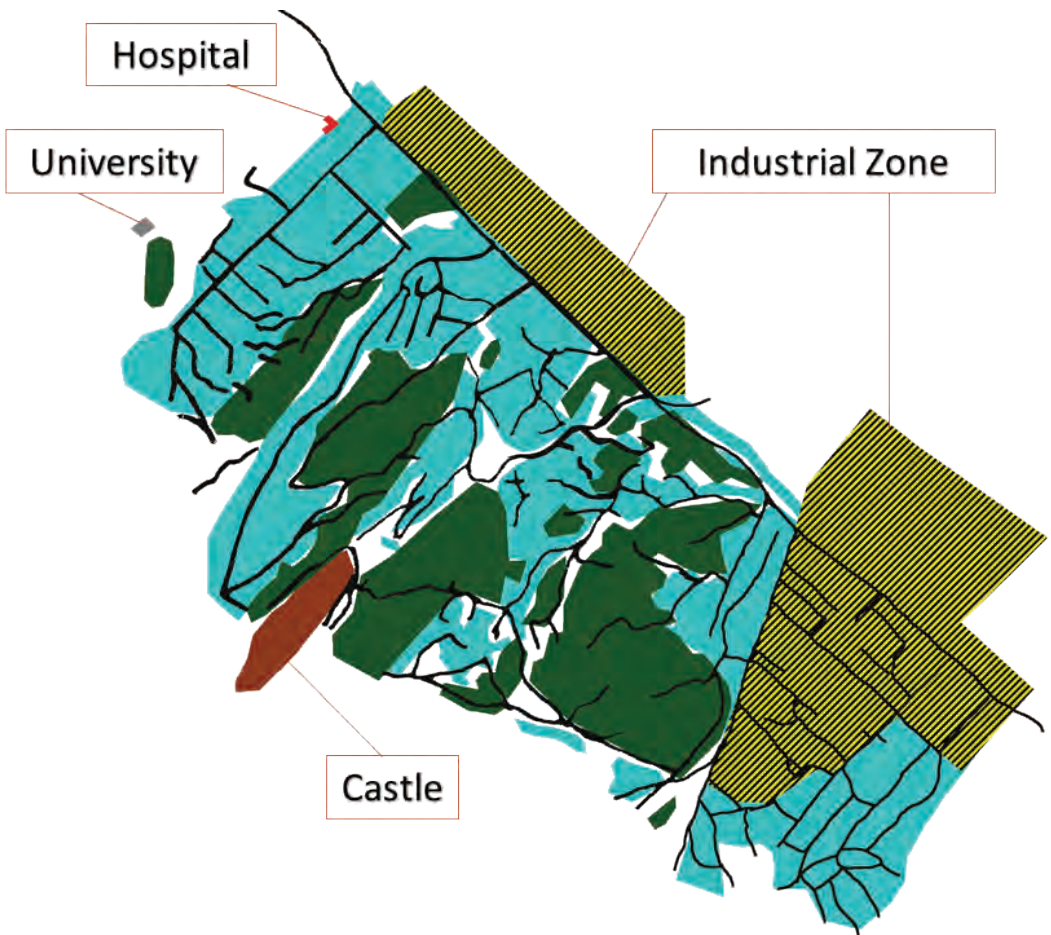


Fig. 6 / The As-Is situation. Source / infographics of the author 2019

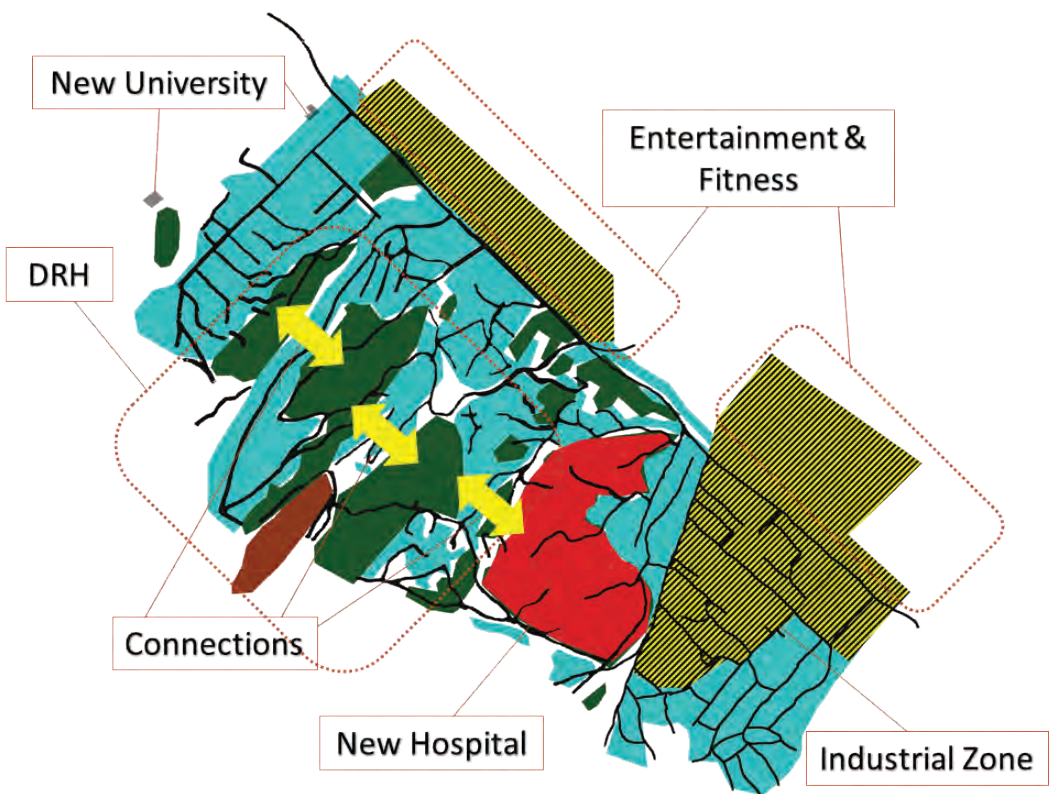


Fig. 7 / The New Urban Plan with Distributed Retirement House (DRH)

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Smart accessibility patterns and shrinking cities: The added value of urban design

Keywords / urban design-rural areas-accessibility-smart city-smart mobility

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Abstract

During these last decades, the shrinkage of cities has become a major urban issue, a process caused by many factors but one that will generally increase during the next years. This is mainly because of the trend of urbanization: in 2016 the UN estimated that 54.5% of people live in urban settlements, and that by 2030 it will become 60%. The non-urban areas impacted by depopulation, will face several issues in terms of land maintenance, heritage preservation, and conservation of local traditions.

This dynamic is strongly related to the notion of accessibility, which, here, stands for the possibility of people to access places, spaces, items, and services. This approach tries to include different points of view such as the notion of accessibility seen in transportation terms, based on its efficiency and multimodality, or the issue of accessibility concerning people with disabilities.

The ongoing digital revolution has further impacted the issue of accessibility. The pervasive transition from analogue to digital processes and the development of Information and Communication Technologies has provided new opportunities to supply information, infrastructures, and public services to people. With our smartphones, citizens can access and produce data, which can then be used by them to increase their awareness about urban opportunities and optimize urban projects and policies. Worldwide internet connection has blurred the relation between a place and its use, deepening reuse strategies for buildings and neighbourhoods. The development of shared and circular economy and new health standards in cities has led to the innovation of public services both in an evolutionary way (e.g. water supply and management, waste management) and in a disruptive way (e.g. transportation design, urban hybrid services). Smart Cities projects try to catch most of these opportunities, focusing on innovative urban solutions able to exploit this potential.

This article aims to contribute to this debate, reviewing some of the main definitions of urban accessibility and showing the possible added value given by innovative urban strategies open to ICT solutions. To better understand this approach these notions will be related to Gjirokastra, one of the most important cities in southern Albania. Its distinctive combination in terms of heritage, strategic position and business opportunities are facing urban shrinkage, with the consequent loss of city population, lack of maintenance of its renowned heritage and a declining economy. Then a design proposal that uses the notion of accessibility to analyse and indicate strategic accessibility patterns to challenge shrinkage will be outlined. These actions will be referenced to pilot projects and case studies to prove how innovative urban design can add new value to urban accessibility patterns. The conclusions will resume the role of urban design dealing with these issues, indicating constraints and potentials of this approach.

The shrinking phenomena

Urban design in the near future will deal even more with the shrinking phenomena - a complex issue that is defined above all by the declining numbers of inhabitants

(Grasland et al., 2008). The increase of world population (from 8.3 to 10.9 billion estimated in 2050, currently 7.7 billion) will impact mostly the developing countries and urban areas: by 2050 African and

Asian countries will host 85% of the future population growth and urban areas, which cover just 2.8% of the global land area and will accommodate 65% of people (currently almost 50%). These data (UN, 2016; EEA, 2015) show, like carbon paper, the future paths of shrinkage. Depopulation in rural lands will continue as a worldwide trend, continuing to be the new normal (ESPON, 2017), and even in urban areas there will be different scenarios from less to more developed countries.

Besides depopulation, other issues contribute to the definition of urban shrinkage processes (Rink et al, 2010). Its main causes are found in the economic system, often declined and weak in these regions; to socio-demographic trends, such as ageing and migration; settlement system development that often presents a sprawl urban expansion. Even natural disasters or political events can be part of this list. These contribute to a shrinking process by generating a vicious circle for cities' life (Oswalt, 2005). In this depopulation process the workforce migrates and the remaining population ages, increasing the supply for social services and causing social cohesion issues. The decline of population and local market reduce the municipal budget causing a lack of public services and maintenance. Therefore, the economic system weakens, continuing these negative effects in a self-perpetuated process termed as "complex shrinkage" (EPSON 2020, Martinez-Fernandez et al., 2012).

In Europe, the scientific literature on this field has currently shifted from the

study of cities to rural areas. This change in perspective happened because of the size of the issue, with a continuous depopulation trend in wide European regions, and the evidence that rural shrinking can be seen as one of the first marks to an extended population decline for the country (ESPON, 2017). In this context, with an increasing amount of areas affected by depopulation and marginalization, urban planning and urban design can be drivers for innovation and the improvement of quality of life.

Common approaches to accessibility

Analyzing this issue in terms of urban accessibility can open up new perspectives in urban design for shrinking regions. Below is a brief literature review about some of the most common paradigms on urban accessibility. The first and most shared one is related to the promotion of equal opportunities for people with a disability: "Accessibility refers to the provision of 'flexibility' to accommodate each user's needs and preferences" (Valdes, 1998). This concept promotes equality and social inclusion and generates several improvements in urban design. Public spaces, buildings, objects now have to be conceived to avoid any kind of barrier or exclusion for people: using ramps instead of stairs in public spaces or multilingual signage are just a few examples of this improvement. The second paradigm of accessibility refers to "the ability to reach destinations using a given transport mode" (ITF, 2019), providing an essential key to measure economic growth, appeal and quality of life of cities and regions

(Geurs and Wee, 2004). In time, the literature has created several indexes on this field to analyse and compare the performance of transportation systems in different countries. An effective and up-to-date index is given by ITF which defines accessibility as “the product of the proximity of valued destinations (the result of land-use policies and private investments) and the performance of the transport system (the result of transport policies and investments in infrastructure)” (ITF, 2019). This definition shows the evolution of this approach to urban accessibility, considering not just the issues of transport or land use but also social inclusion, by matching transport performance and communities and quality of life, by using different values for more or less desirable destinations. Then in 2015 UN states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which contains Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a series of strategic issues, carved to direct and support actions for a long-lasting wealth. While transportation-based accessibility indexes are focused on the quality of mobility networks, SDGs widened the perspective from the research for best access to the definition of which elements should be regarded as accessible, referring to accessibility as an operative device to reach fundamental needs.

This brief literature review about accessibility shows how shrinkage can be analysed as a reduction of accessibility, a process in which rural/urban land lose people, appeal, GDP and people lose access to places, spaces, networks, services. Community-based design and future-proof solutions are useful design tools to start community empowerment strategies.

Digital revolution and accessibility

The ongoing digital revolution has a relevant impact on accessibility issues. The pervasive transition from analogue to digital and the development of Information and Communication Technologies has finally changed our system of knowledge, trade and live. As argued by Boorsma (Boorsma, 2018) this radical change in perspective can be explained by the shift from centred networks to distributed networks (Baran, 1964). Centred networks can be defined as system organizations, characterized by the will to standardize the single components of the network and by the presence of a central element of supervision. Public health program, big-scale industries and earliest telecommunication systems are

just some examples of this organization model. Inspired by neuronal activities, the distributed network creates redundant links from each network knot and diffuse intelligence in each one of them - a radical innovation, one of the first to combine computer technologies and communication networks. Initially designed to increase data transmission speed and the resilience of communication networks, in time it contributed to the birth of the Internet.

This model can be used to explain innovations brought by current digital revolution: multiple nodes/users, even more links, countless interactions between them, and high resilience. Currently, almost all human fields tend to structure themselves as a distributed network maintaining their efficiency and benefit from network effects such as Metcalfe’s law. Amazon, Google, Airbnb are just a few examples about how we use digital technology in everyday life, and AI and machine learning are ready to use sooner than we can imagine. The idea of urban accessibility has therefore changed, as stated by several authors. “During the last few decades, advances in electronic and online communications (e.g., internet or mobile-based banking) have transformed social services [...]. Nevertheless, such gains cannot fully offset the disadvantages posed by persistent inequalities in physical access to resources and opportunities that are primarily concentrated in urban centres. [...] [these services cannot] be fully addressed by technological advances alone. As such, understanding where the largest gaps in accessibility remain both globally and locally is of critical importance to a broad range of policymakers, investors, and development partners” (Weiss et al., 2018). From this state of the art review, we can argue why an up-to-date accessibility approach has to consider both physical and digital access, in particular digital services and innovation networks.

Regarding the first point, the approach is to leverage opportunities given by ICT technologies and community engagement combining digital services with adaptive reuse strategies at different scales. While abandoned or underused buildings can be refurbished into innovation parks or co-working spaces, incomplete public utilities can be reinforced with small scale supplies. This approach has been proposed and tested in several case studies. The first one is the EU project COWOCAT_RURAL (2014-2021) which aims to tackle worker outmigration and attract skilled professionals in rural

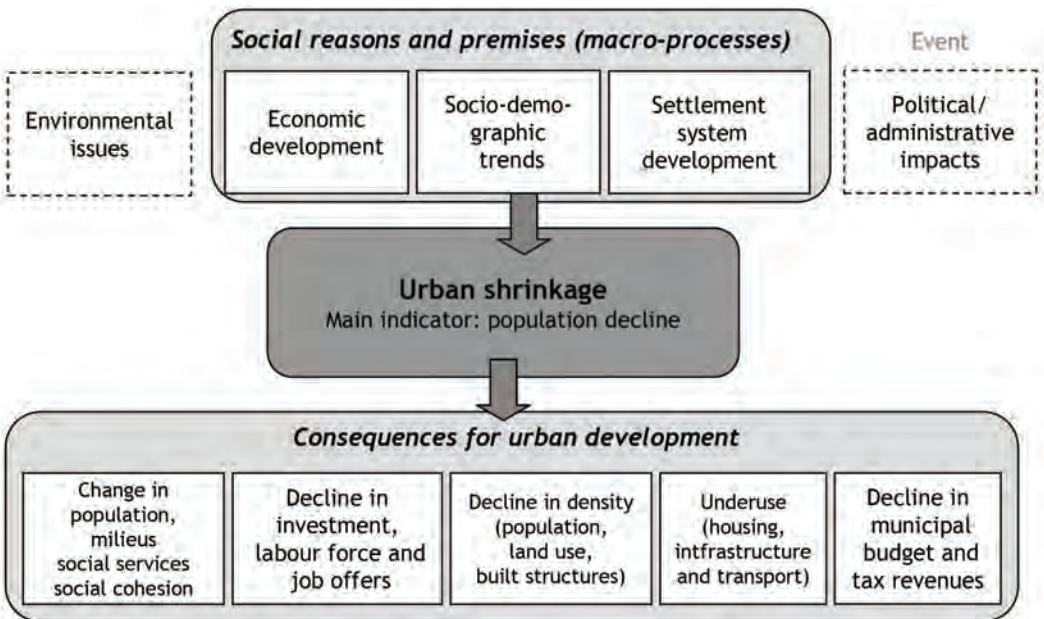


Fig. 1 / The Shrink Smart conceptual model of urban shrinkage, 2009. Source / Grossmann, Haase, Rink and Bernt).

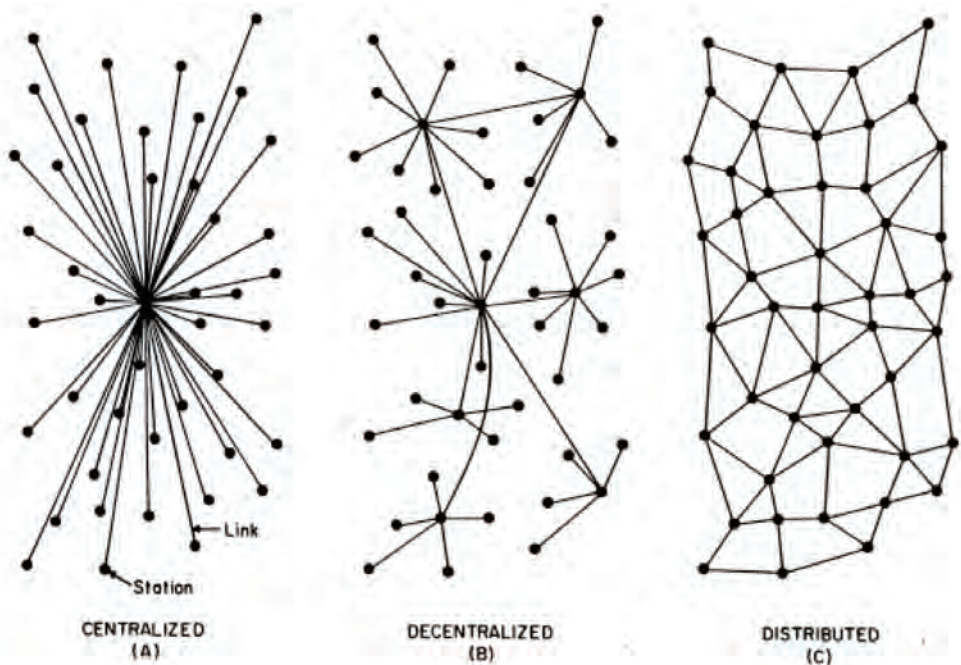


Fig. 2 / Types of networks by Paul Baran, 1964. Source / Internet bit.ly/2QGcNnJ).

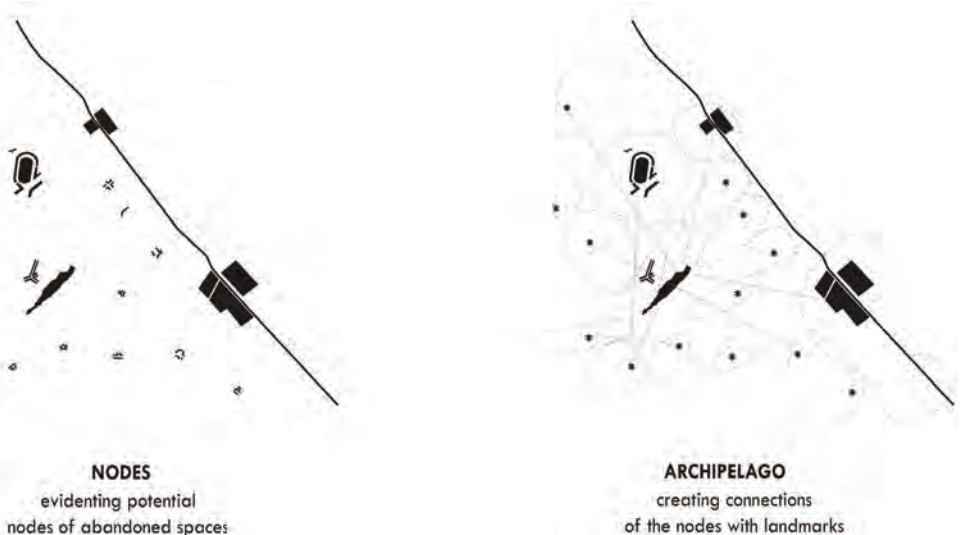


Fig. 3 / Gjrokastrë urban proposal. The accessible distributed network. Source / the author

areas by transferring in these regions the experience of coworking, digital business services and networking platforms. One of the most interesting services is Rural&Go, which combines workplaces for short smart working sessions in outstanding rural landscapes. An innovative combination of tourism and work can be tested in Gjirokastër. Another case study which matches adaptive reuse strategy to stimulate work opportunities is the Campus of Generations - an intergenerational learning school created in the shrinking area of Brandeburg to update workers' qualifications and promoting re-employment (URBACT, 2013). Continuing this approach basic public utilities can be improved using small-scale distribution systems (Saladin, 2003) which can be less expensive and more tailored to the context.

Shrinking and accessibility issues in Gjirokastra.

The above-mentioned considerations regarding shrinking dynamics and accessibility patterns can be used to approach some of the main issues of Gjirokastra, one of the most important cities in southern Albania. Like many of the rural prefectures in Albania, Gjirokastër has faced a significant loss in population starting from a massive migration in the '90s. The shrinking dynamics has also affected the city with a significant decrease in population, while the demographic projections to 2030 continue this trend. On the other hand, the city of Gjirokastër has one of the most renowned urban heritage, with the historic centre sanctioned by UNESCO since 2005. The main landmarks of the city are the castle and the bazaar, recalling its former role as the main trade centre of the region. Despite the relevance of its heritage, Gjirokastër's historical buildings are now poorly maintained, especially the ones in the margins of the area delimited by UNESCO. The state of conservation of heritage fabric, ground infrastructures and inappropriate new developments in the historic centre and its buffer zone is an increasing concern of UNESCO (UNESCO 2020).

According to the notions of accessibility as previously defined, these issues can be addressed as complex phenomena that produce a loss of accessibility for local communities and city users. As other decentralized approaches, this one aims to solve the problems as close to the household level as possible in order to encourage bottom-up engagement and propose high-impact policies and actions. In Gjirokastër, the shrinking process reduces work opportunities,

economic development and basic services. Nevertheless, the declining state of conservation of the historic centre tends to loosen the ties between communities and local heritage, resulting in dangerous decaying buildings with altered cultural values. These phenomena deal with the image and identity of Gjirokastër, a border town between Albania and Greece. Its strategic position in an important commercial route along the valley and its characteristic cobblestone streets point to the bounded link between the city's identity and infrastructures (Dalakoglou, 2017), and indicate the potential of accessibility networks to lead spatial re-significations.

Smart accessibility patterns: a possible approach and case studies

As remarked in the previous chapter, the accessibility issues in Gjirokastra involve several dimensions of urban life. This is the starting point of the design proposal "Accessing Gjirokastra" by Endri Duro, Xhoana Kristo and Marco Negri within the international PhD workshop "Rethinking Gjirokastra" organized by POLIS University and Ferrara University. The design proposal is characterized by the identification of smart accessibility patterns, developing a distributed urban network made up existing and potential urban poles and multi-layered connections based on visual connections, transport network and complementary functional needs. To define this network three main elements have been taken into account: workplaces and basic services, heritage and mobility networks.

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Fig. 4 / Cowocat_rural coworking spaces and advertising. Source / internet <https://bit.ly/20192ScI>



Fig. 5 / Transportation hub image on REGIO-MOB report. Source / Interreg Europe

case study which matches adaptive reuse strategy to stimulate work opportunities is the Campus of Generations - an intergenerational learning school created in the shrinking area of Brandeburg to update workers' qualifications and promoting re-employment (URBACT, 2013). Continuing this approach basic public utilities can be improved using small-scale distribution systems (Saladin, 2003) which can be less expensive and more tailored to the context.

To improve the state of conservation of heritage fabric, the design proposal has integrated the existing cultural landmarks such as the castle, the old bazaar, religious buildings with neighbourhood hubs, reinforcing the role of the residential urban fabric with the creation of small-scale

urban spaces and services for tourists and the local community. This approach implements cultural heritage adaptive reuse with circular economy principles and smart specialization strategies, according to EU project CLIC (2017-2020). One of the CLIC best practices is the refurbishment of the New Bazaar in Tirana, which employs the Tourism / Business Improvement District (T/BID), an innovative governance and financing tool for the maintenance of the long-term sustainability of the process. The national scale of this case study and the evidence of its success can match the conservation needs of the non-labelled historical buildings in Gjirokastra. On the other hand, the neighbourhood regeneration process can reference the experience of San Roque Neighbourhood

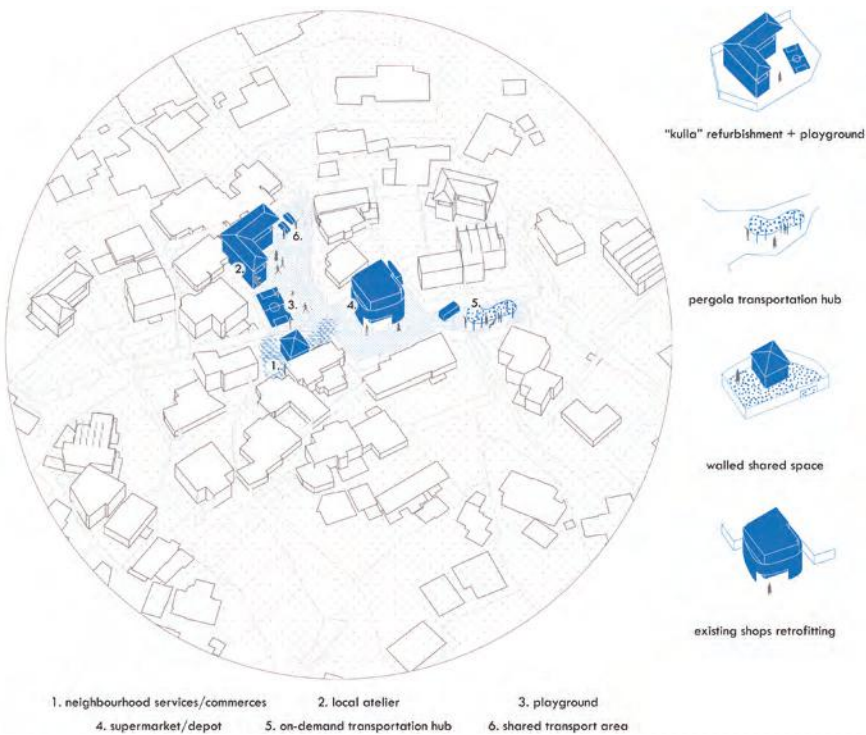


Fig. 6 / Gjirokastra urban proposal. The node "Neighbourhood Hub". Source / the author

in Ecuador. A working-class residential neighbourhood classed as a UNESCO World Heritage was starting to lose its distinctive cultural values due to economic issues and inappropriate refurbishments. The response was the establishment of Maintenance Campaigns, conducted with an inter-institutional governance model which included university, owners and the municipality. The Campaigns consist of collaborative refurbishment actions that maintain the local character of the urban fabric, changing its use if necessary. Side effects of this approach, particularly interesting for Gjirokastra's heritage, are the maintenance of local construction knowledge, the revitalization of local real estate market and the improvement of a common responsibility about cultural heritage (ICLEI, 2020).

The last element on which accessibility patterns are based is urban mobility. The existing mobility system is characterized by a mountainous topography, with several steep and narrow streets. It is more difficult to provide public transport in historical neighbourhoods, and as a result private cars and mopeds are the most used vehicles by the Gjirokastra's ageing population. To face these issues, the design solutions have been selected to reinforce multimodality and demand-based services with soft-mobility measures. The use of Demand Responsive Transport - DRT - with on-demand stops and small-scale transportation hubs, Mobility-as-a-Service - MaaS - systems to increase multimodality and improve sharing and

community mobility, the creation of a Local Travel Plan Network - LTPN - are some the main proposal to increase the level of accessibility, interlacing the different parts of the city and promoting social, cultural, economic exchanges.

Mobility improvements in touristic areas and marginal regions have been studied in several EU projects during these years. The EU project STARTER (2012-2014) has promoted the creation of LTPNs to promote energy-efficient and sustainable mobility for tourism, indicating soft measures such as on-line information or shared promotion policies that influence significantly the tourists' travel behaviour. Regarding the improvement of sustainable mobility in marginal regions Interreg Central Europe RUMOBIL project (2016-2019) has been focused on cooperation strategies to support mobility in rural areas, promoting pilot actions such as real-time infomobility for DRT services, public participation in bus stops refurbishment, and multimodal transport hubs.

Indeed, Interreg Central Europe REGIO-MOB (2016-2020) has developed more integrated mobility strategies, e.g. a network of shared e-bikes, the promotion of carpooling by combining several transportation modes, and the use of advanced apps to manage and organize car journeys. All these pilot actions reveal how decentralized mobility solutions and soft mobility actions can increase accessibility in marginal areas, supporting local tourism and businesses with a positive impact on the environment and the quality of life.

Conclusions

The above-mentioned literature review and research proposal, supported by several pilot actions and case studies demonstrate how a wide accessibility approach can be useful to challenge the shrinking city phenomena. An accessibility-based approach can, therefore, improve the awareness about the impact on the ordinary life of proposed strategies and actions, encouraging bottom-up processes and high-impact actions in the long term. In this sense, ICT technologies and urban design can act as main devices to drive urban development: digital revolution can reduce negative effects of marginalization by implementing networks and build the digital imagery of the city. Urban design, then, can improve urban quality and re-imagine public and private spaces for fragile communities.

The main limitations can be found in the multidisciplinary nature of this approach, which could involve different expertise not always available in small-scale administrative organizations, the definition of common criteria regarding the multi-layered notion of accessibility, especially for its digital aspects, and context-related constraints, most relevant in shrinking cities that are facing an economic decline which is commonly linked to economical and decisional downgrade. Despite these constraints, current policies on shrinking cities and global trends show the potential of a multi-layered accessibility approach to face this issue and the potential of urban design to effectively impact wellbeing and sustain local activities. This perspective, now described in its principal aspects, is open to further studies to deepen the links between accessibility, urban design and people's quality of life.

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The Gjirokastra Experience

The Art Loop. An urban path to foster the connection between a territory and its cultural identity.

Keywords / Cultural heritage, Urban museum, Identity, Art loop, Existing built asset

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Abstract

The city of Gjirokastra is experiencing severe depopulation (Rembeci 2016). This phenomenon is a result of both economic and social factors, and it reflects a widespread trend in all rural areas of Albania, but it assumes relevant dimensions in Gjirokastra. Medium and long-term strategies that trigger "value chains" are needed to counteract this phenomenon by intervening on critical issues on both the economic and social level, in order to slow down or reverse the demographic drop. Art and local culture can become drivers for social and productive revitalization, providing development opportunities in a territory whose economy can rely again on the manufacturing industry. The old town of Gjirokastra has been included in the UNESCO (Unesco 2020) list of protected sites since 2005. Its territory hosts significant historical and archaeological evidence from the Byzantine to the Ottoman Empire. Important architectural testimonies are preserved from the latter in the oldest part of the city. The buildings realized between the 1920s and the 1940s by famous Italian architects for the city's most affluent merchant families are of particular historical interest. Private mansions, hotels, banks and utility buildings were built by bringing into this area the construction technologies and the architecture style in use in Italy at the time (Bilushi 2008). The urban fabric is characterized by an extraordinary variety of composition, due to both the historical stratification and the organic distribution resulting from the topography. The urban development has led to the emergence of three distinct loci or souls over the centuries. The old town, located close to the ridge, is characterized by a dense and organic fabric. The new city, located at the foot of the ridge, has a modern fabric, and the industrial area developed along the primary road network and the river. These represent three distinct phases, which contribute to the identity of the place and people. The maintenance and preservation of this identity must be the primary driver to develop an intervention strategy. Each part brings a specific social and cultural background that can enrich the city as a whole. The aim of this research is to reconnect the three loci of the city by intervening on the existing urban tissue. The abandonment of the historical city is evinced by historical buildings which are functionally and structurally compromised, or partially collapsed, and cannot be restored but only rebuilt. At the same time, the new city deals with a socio-functional abandonment, in which large 20th-century buildings have lost their function insofar as the needs of an evolving population have changed. Finally, due to global economic changes the industrial facilities are abandoned. These facilities are too modern to be catalogued as industrial archaeology, and too old to be re-functionalized with modern standards. From these assumptions comes the idea of a strategy that foresees the reuse of different types of buildings that share a functional identity crisis (Torresi 2006). The aim of this strategy is to promote the reuse and renovation of the urban fabric, without rebuilding actions, operating through targeted interventions that can act as punctual actuators: single buildings which can work as drivers of economic and social interest (top-down) and trigger collaborative activities (bottom-up). The methodology used in this research is based on the analysis of the development plans already carried out by the municipality and on the trends in tourism development. I am starting from the assumption of using local culture as a tourism driver (Pattuelli 2013), and by preserving and promoting it as an added value. The methodology used foresees the simulation on the existing case studies of

non-reconstructive approaches, which guarantee the authentic experience of the tourist. These buildings identify an exhibition path as an urban-scale loop, making the activities accessible through an easily identifiable way. The exposition route in the city of art intercepts abandoned buildings of historical interest, duly converted, to perform functions related to exhibitions, art productions, and public services. These activities, planned as a management strategy of tourist routes, will contribute to define the first step to improve the tourist accessibility and city management and create opportunities for potential stakeholders.

The city of Gjirokastra needs a strategy that promotes economic development while maintaining its cultural identity as much as possible. The proposed strategy aims to identify a way of intervention inspired by those realities that have already faced such process. Activities already tested allow evaluating more consciously which initiatives can be more effective in the Albanian context and which not. Art and culture are a significant driver for the economic revival of historic cores in a state of gradual abandonment. The dialogue between ancient and modern cores is a primary objective. Promoting cultural activities involving both the historical core and modern expansion ensures that new facilities are no longer necessary.

In the European city, the historic centre plays a significant role in the definition of cultural, social and historical characteristics of a community. Around this nucleus, man's activities are developed and consolidated, generation after generation, contributing to the formation of the social structure of the community that dwells there (Pickard 2002). Such "historicized" cores, however, are affected by a relatively new issue, but drastically rapid in evolution. From the Industrial Revolution to today, we have passed rather quickly from a

predominantly agricultural and commercial society to an industrial and service society. This evolution has led to a change in the needs of the people who live there, quickly making buildings that have been perfectly functional up to that point both unsuitable and uncomfortable. The urban cores involved, therefore, need political, social and economic interventions in order to trigger adequate redevelopment (Council of Europe 2008). The identified solutions must be translated into actions that meet the requirements of the contemporary urban development. These interventions are therefore to be planned with great care and competence, mediating between the historical and cultural importance of the subject of the intervention and the characteristics required by the new needs of those who have to live there (Icomos 1987). Only in this way will the oldest cores be able to survive the progressive depopulation that affects them, avoiding becoming places of abandonment or soulless tourist centres. Similar problems can also arise in more modern urban areas, where a delicate socio-economic balance rules the presence of new production facilities and residential areas mainly used by those employed in the field. This connection means that when production capacity is no longer available,

The Gjirok

exper

The Art Loop

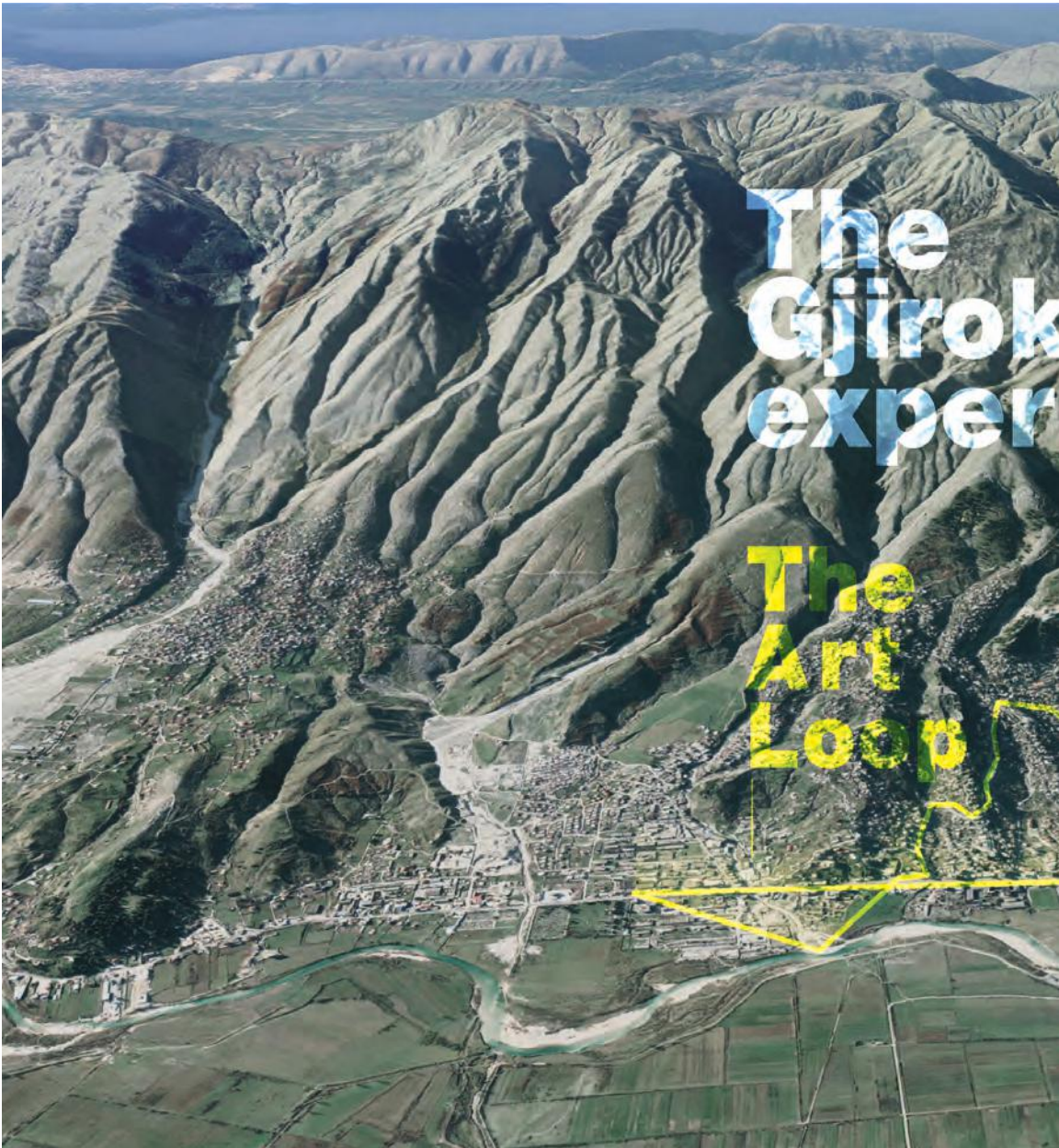


Fig.1 / Gjirokastra_Art Loop. Source / the author

there is also a gradual abandonment of the residential part and consequently also of all those service buildings that serve the community.

The city of Gjirokastra is historically identified as one of the most important cities in southern Albania, founded in the 13th century on the top of a very articulated hill overlooking the valley of the river Drino. The city is distinctly characterised by an urban fabric that comes from the topography of the land on which it lies. This particular formation shapes the road network and morphology of the houses, which are naturally oriented in accordance with the terrain. These aspects, together with the traditional use of stone as a building material, define the most interesting characteristics of the typical residences of this area (Tower-house) (Mileto 2015). Many of these houses are abandoned, some even in a

very advanced state, due to problems that make maintenance activities very complicated. These difficulties are, on the one hand, the result of the current economic situation, and on the other hand, linked to the number of owners for each single building.

The road network is particularly affected by the topography, mainly in the historical centre of the city, creating a network of streets that are often very narrow and unsuitable for vehicular traffic, irregular and steep. The grid that is created between the vehicular and pedestrian traffic is also affected by a further complexity, insofar as it often coincides with dried riverbed created by the outflow of meteoric events. The issue related to the drainage of rainwater has always been present and certainly deserves a more in-depth reflection. In the historic city centre, buildings erected in the early

kastra ience



twentieth century during the Italian occupation of the Albanian territory are inserted in contrast to the old town. These buildings are characterised by the revival of compositional styles and construction methods typical of Italian architecture of the early twentieth century. These buildings were created for the affluent merchant families of the area who made use of Italian designers who were very fashionable at the time. To encourage the race to modernity, service buildings such as hotels, schools and churches were also built. Many of these buildings occupy central positions in the urban fabric, but they are now abandoned, having exhausted their primary function as economic and social conditions changed. Nowadays, organised tourism is concentrated in a few specific spots such as the fortified Citadel, the Bazaar and a few museums, leaving no margin for other activities. These points of interest in the

periods of highest flow concentrate many presences in a small area, giving rise to problems that come about in terms of pedestrian congestion, vehicular traffic and overloading of services that support tourism.

Objectives and Methodology

The proposed strategy aims to identify an intervention strategy that will allow better use and encourage interconnection between different urban areas. It is possible to identify a fairly defined stratigraphy in the evolution of the city. The historical core that grew up near the fortified citadel overlooks a more recent late-twentieth-century expansion that reaches the bottom of the valley close to the primary road network and the river. Here there is also an industrial and commercial centre, now in a state of abandonment. Taking into account the characteristics of each urban area, the proposed strategy aims

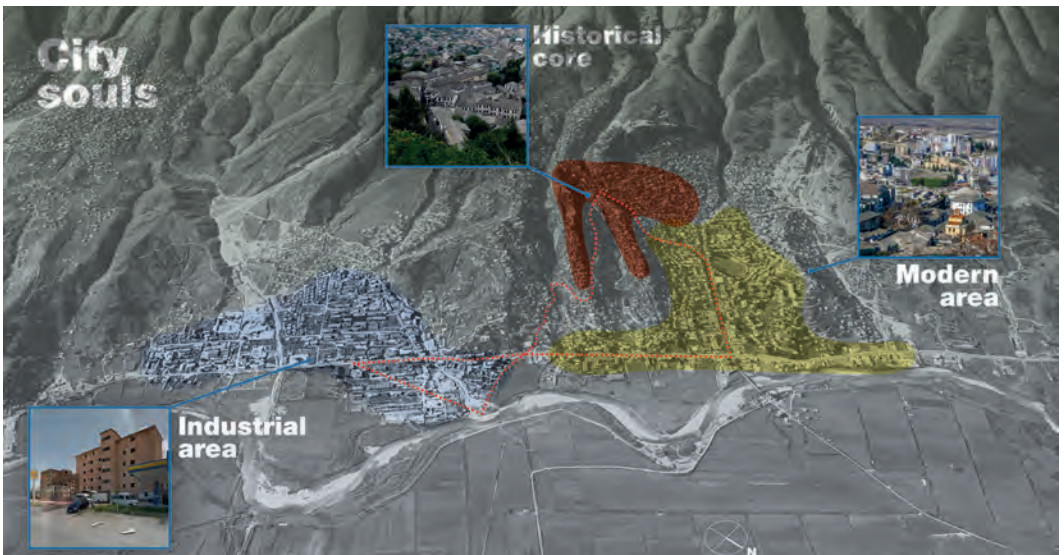


Fig.2 / The three loci or 'souls' of the city, the historic core overlooks the hilltop, while the more modern development area connects it to the main road network. The industrial area by the river witnesses the manufacturing past of the area.
Source / the author.

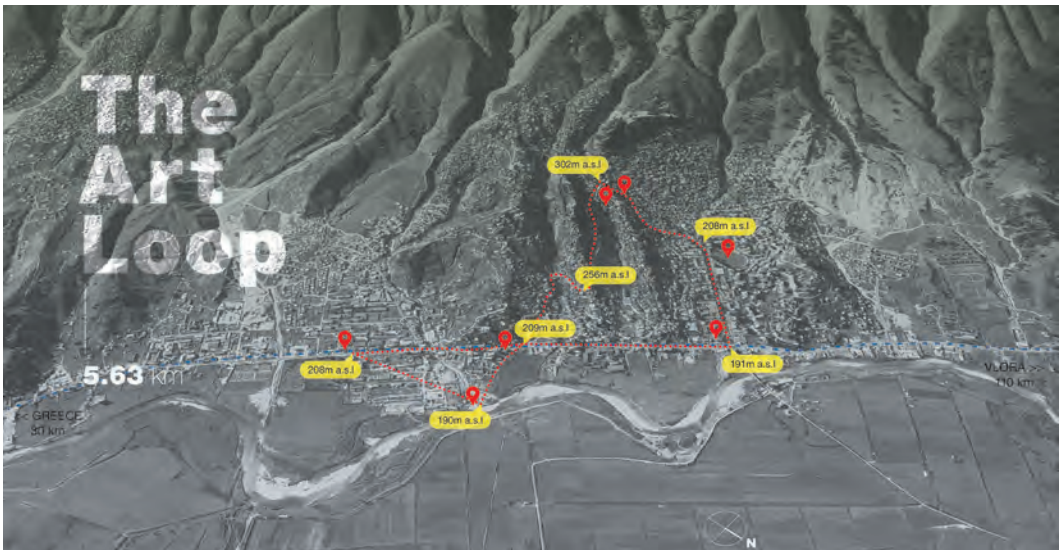


Fig.3 / The Art Loop path. The route of about 5 km intercepts points of interest that belong to the three souls of the city. Source / the author.

to provide feasible and economically sustainable proposals that take into account the current cultural, economic and political situation of the territory in which they will be applied (Faoro 2019). Another objective is to provide useful indications for the implementation of scalable interventions, taking into consideration the possibility of intervening gradually, favouring approaches that are not invasive and reversible on the historical urban fabric. The preservation of the status (Leask 2016) of a UNESCO World Heritage city is a primary objective, an added value to be enhanced, so as not to lose the possibility of focusing also on the percentage of international tourism linked to UNESCO network. It is necessary to operate according to the directives issued by UNESCO, and by other authoritative bodies (Icomos 1999) in the

field of intervention on the historic building (Casanovas 2013), in order to foster interventions that are not compatible with the status of a "World Heritage city".

This strategy proposes to apply a deductive approach to the urban renewal process. It starts by identifying a set of "key criteria" on which to develop a comparative methodology. The identification of comparative criteria allows a deeper understanding of the issues involved, helping to outline structured and sustainable ways of intervention. Through the study of the characteristics of the historical city, the modern city, as well as the industrial city (Douet 2013), we can identify measurable and comparable criteria. These criteria will be organised to allow direct comparison with those of similar case studies, and thus evaluate



Fig.4 / Identification of some possible case studies. XXsec buildings, built in the period of the maximum economic boom of the area. Abandoned historical buildings, collapsed buildings of which only the external walls remain. Going down into the new city one comes across abandoned specialist buildings, unfinished reinforced concrete structures and abandoned factories. Source / the author.

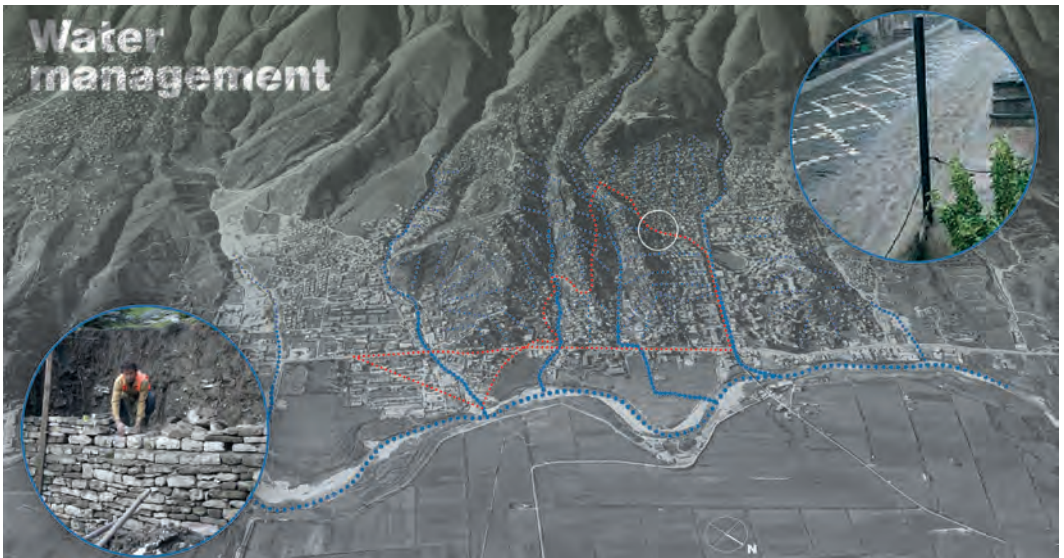


Fig.5 / Rainwater management can be integrated into the re-functionalisation activities of the Art Loop route. A large part of the rainwater flows along the streets of the historic city, flooding the lane. The adoption of a drainage system placed under the road helps to solve this criticality. Source / the author.

their effectiveness and adoption. This can optimise the intervention process, working with methodologies that have already demonstrated their effectiveness. Proposing a strategy based on interlinked interventions allows us to provide a sufficiently comprehensive overview of possible future intervention on a larger scale.

It is, therefore, to be considered as a starting point for a more extensive reflection, foreseeing already in the definition phase of the strategy the possibility to create further interventions of the same type operating on different areas.

The proposed methodology also makes use of methodological definitions already adopted by the scientific community in the field of interventions on the existing building of historical and bounded interest.

Strengths and weakness identification

Beginning with an initial analysis of the city, carried out both through inspections and the study of documentation, it is possible to identify some critical aspects on which to focus an intervention strategy (Unesco 2015). Taking into account that the proposed strategy will have to be feasible and economically sustainable, the aim is to put in order the possible proposals favouring those solutions that can provide greater results with less effort in economic and social terms (Genao 2018).

The main strengths of the city are identifiable both in the historical and modern core. The Cultural uniqueness (Unesco) of the historical centre is still intact even if a large part of the buildings is in a state of abandonment. Only a small part is currently used, and this

XXth century building

40°04'29.2"N
20°08'20.3"E

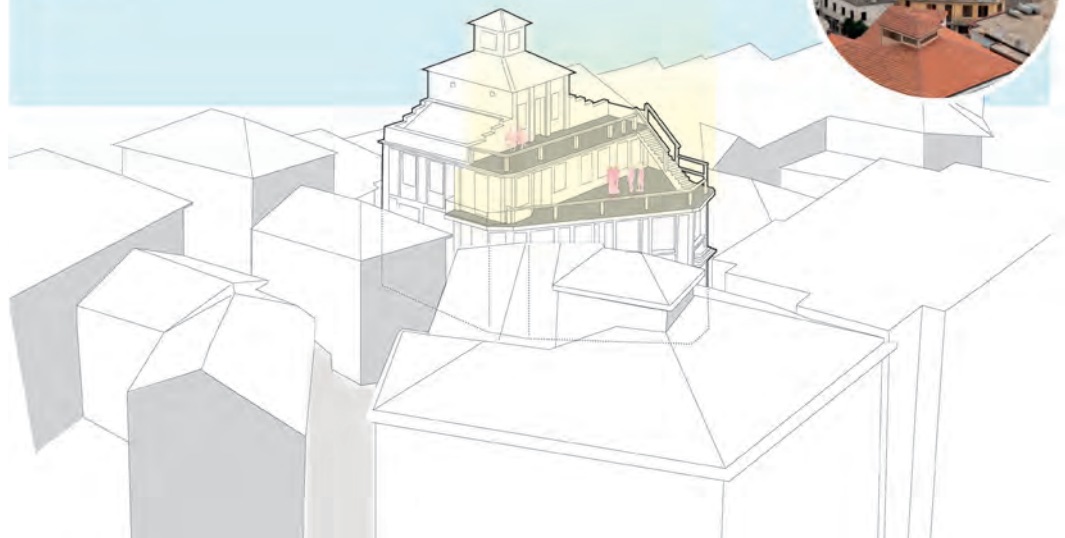


Fig.6 / The city has some buildings that belong to the early 20th century, a period when the wealthy merchant families of Gjirokastra commissioned important Italian-style buildings to influential Albanian and foreign architects. These buildings, duly refurbished, can host tourism service and accommodation functions. Source / the author.

Abandoned facility

40°04'19.4"N
20°09'23.6"E



Fig.7 / In the area close to the river we can find signs of the city's manufacturing past. From that period there remain a good number of buildings that can be considered industrial archaeology. Large covered spaces that have been functionalized can host activities that require large open-space. Source / the author.

guarantees a fair amount of buildings on which to intervene. Moreover, the area is historically characterised by a long-standing tradition of stone working, a peculiar and predominant element in the area. Furthermore, the historical-naturalistic aspect is not of secondary importance, as the town is located in a valley full of possibilities for activities linked to historical-cultural excursions. The new core, on the other hand, can

provide modern infrastructures and support services, providing receptive spaces in line with modern standards, and a modern road system designed for vehicular traffic.

Finally, the relationship with the river can be a further strong point. There are many weak points in the historic centre. Tourism is seasonal and is concentrated in some areas of significant interest, creating phenomena of congestion and

Collapsed building

40°04'29.0"N
20°08'14.3"E



Fig.8 / In the historical part of the city, there are collapsed buildings. These buildings are fascinating and testify to the settlement's volumetry. These buildings, of which it would not be convenient to proceed with reconstruction, are consolidated and managed as testimonies. Inside them, they can host open-air installations. Source / the author.

Abandoned building

40°04'29.9"N
20°08'15.0"E

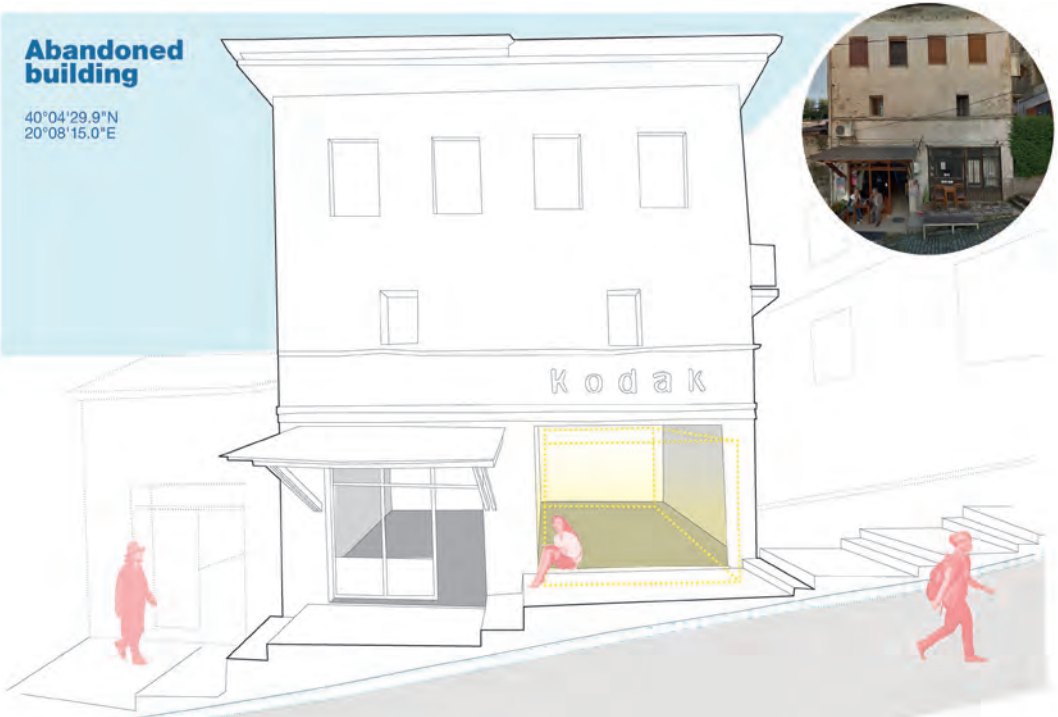


Fig.9 / Many buildings are partially abandoned. These buildings can host local handicraft activities or small artistic installations with commercial spin-offs. Source / the author.

inefficiency. Other issues are linked to the causes that contribute to the depopulation of the historical centre. Historical buildings require considerable investments to be adapted to the needs of modern life (functional abandonment), making this practice unattractive. Furthermore, problems are arising from the terrain's topography, and consequently from the configuration of the road network. The road system that has developed over the

centuries, flowing between buildings and the hillside, is not ideal for today's vehicular traffic. The topography of the terrain also influences the management of meteoric water, which was historically managed using roads as drainage. Climate change and the consequent changes in weather perturbations means that this system no longer works, making it necessary to take action to mitigate the erosion of the land. In the modern city, the economic

Concrete frame

40°04'36.9"N
20°09'07.7"E

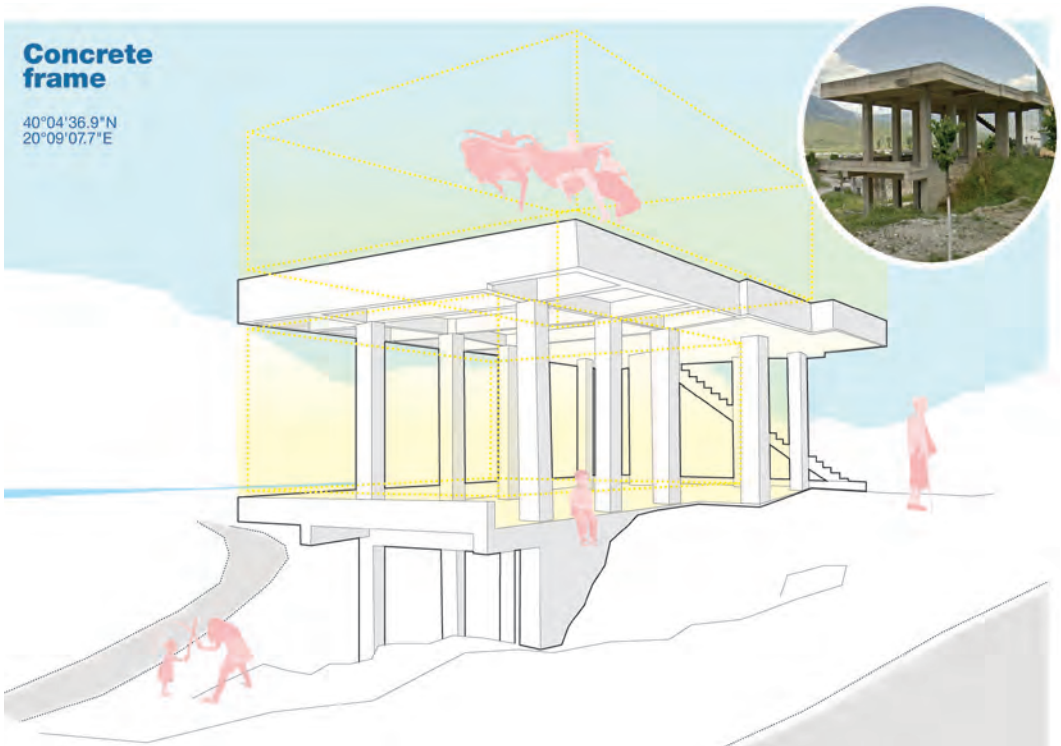


Fig. 10 / Many unfinished reinforced concrete structures are also located along the main roadway. These frames can be used for artistic installations that require large spaces and can be displayed outdoors. Source / the author.

crisis in the manufacturing sector has led to the abandonment of productive areas, consequently triggering the phenomenon of depopulation that has also affected the residential sectors and services. Starting from what has been identified as weak points, we can identify critical factors and systemize them as key criteria useful to identify the most appropriate strategy and planning interventions that counteract them by exploiting the "strengths".

Comparative case studies

In order to define the intervention strategy that should be adopted, it has been decided to analyse similar case-studies, concerning urban agglomerations with historical centres affected by similar problems. These case-studies were analysed in order to identify which initiatives were taken as actions to counteract them, and which were effective. The realities examined are: Bussana (Giuffrè 2005) Liguria - now a location for artists, Favara Sicily, Farm cultural park, Gibellina (Camarrone 2010) Sicily, Trapani. Open-air museum, Grottaglie Puglia, Taranto. The ceramics district, Pennabilli Emilia-Romagna, Rimini. The poet Tonino Guerra and his Artists in the square.

- Bussana Vecchia and the artists' community (San Remo, Italy). The city destroyed at the end of the 19th century by an earthquake was abandoned for decades until it was colonised by a community of Italian and international

artists in the 1950s. The houses restored by the artists gave life to an active and internationally recognised community that manages to live on art, attracting even today artists and visitors from all over the world.

- Favara, the cultural park (Agrigento, Italy). In seven years, the Sicilian city, in the province of Agrigento, has gone from "the city of illegal buildings" to the "Farm cultural park" with 120,000 visitors a year, attracting public and private investment for urban redevelopment works, art installations and culture. The activities that are planned cover the whole year and make it possible to maintain a stable flow of visitors by directly employing 150 people.

- Gibellina and contemporary art. (Trapani, Italy). The city destroyed by an earthquake in 1968 was rebuilt a few kilometres away. On the ruins of the old town was built a majestic work of Land Art (Grande cretto, 1970) while the new town was transformed into the largest open-air museum of contemporary art in Italy.

- Grottaglie (Taranto, Italy). The city, having suffered a severe employment crisis at the end of the 20th century, decided to relaunch its economy by investing in the ceramic handicraft sector. In a few years investing in high-quality handicraft products, they have managed to set up their market, by creating a brand that

identifies and protects locally handcrafted products.

- Pennabilli (Rimini, Italy). For over forty years the small village of Pennabilli has become an attractive pole that appeals to visitors on a national and international level, taking advantage of its proximity to the Rimini Riviera. The village has been able to reinvent itself as a location for the international festival of street artists, staging theatre, music and circus performances in its streets. During the year, numerous artistic and cultural events are organised.

These all share a "soft" approach that does not aim at modernising and updating the historical fabric, but tries instead to adapt new needs to the existing fabric. The risk of the reconstruction of urban gaps from scratch is that of incurring the "Disneyland effect". This effect irreversibly removes the "patina of time" that distinguishes them (The refurbishment of the German Quarter of Tblisi, Georgia).

Art Loop: Identifying the strategy

The proposed strategy aims to create a path that reconnects the old part of the city with the new one, creating opportunities for economic development for the city. The Art route allows those who use it to visit the whole city and not only the most famous locations. The strategy also aims to bridge the historical and cultural fabric by connecting key buildings (Historic landmark) that need to be consolidated and re-functionalised. These buildings thus become functional nodes that host the accommodation activities or exhibition spaces that shape the route of the Art loop. The re-functionalisation of the route is also intended to be the starting point for a wider infrastructure that hosts the works needed to manage part of the rainwater under the roadway. The strategy is based on the identification of an urban path that runs in a loop (Möbius strip). This path connects nodal points defined by 20th-century buildings that will host specialized and service functions. The path crosses the city from the highest and oldest part of the city through the late-twentieth-century development to the riverside characterized by the former industrial area. From here the route goes up to the old part allowing the visitor to observe the majesty of the fortified citadel. The visitors will find a route about 5 km long (WHO 2016), through which they can compose a visit that allows the enjoyment of the whole city and which is not limited to the usual landmarks. The strategy takes into account the realization of the path as the possibility to operate

interventions that are useful for the mitigation of hydrogeological problems.

The proposed strategy for the city of Gjirokastra is divided into three parts: the first part identifies buildings with specific characteristics that can be functionalised and host service activities, the second part identifies collapsed or abandoned buildings that are consolidated and conserved in their state, and finally, the route layout is designed to identify stormwater runoff paths, while the substructures that allow their management and disposal are integrated into the roadway.

A Building defined path – KNOTS

In the urban fabric of Gjirokastra there is no shortage of buildings in a state of neglect, both historical and recent. The strategy is to propose the re-functionalisation of some of these, called "Knots", which will serve as pivotal points for the path playing a specialised role. These buildings will be redeveloped to meet modern standards. Considering the historical and cultural importance of some of them, it is suggested to adapt digital survey and diagnostic tools, combined with a data management system using BIM software, which will allow recording the original composition of the buildings and the following interventions (Garagnani 2011). (APR survey, Laser scanner, Monitoring). This approach allows to collect data which are useful for the management of the created path, and strategic in order to plan maintenance and for future implementations.

Memories of the historical fabric – SPRAWL

The collapsed, abandoned or unfinished buildings are reused as containers for artistic performances. These buildings are scattered throughout the urban core and can be adapted to their new function with a small investment. In the collapsed types, which can be found mainly in the historical area of the city, some installations do not require the presence of the public inside them. Being able to use them mainly from the outside means that structural consolidation and modest finishing works are necessary for their adaptation.

In contrast, for the more modern types characterised by a reinforced concrete frame structure, mainly present in the area near the river, it will be necessary to intervene on the accessibility of the interiors and on the safety of the raised floors to make possible the presence of the public inside the spaces. These interventions can be easily managed

through the use of digital survey technologies and parametric modelling in order to standardise the interventions and the fitting out procedures where possible.

The "Waterways"

In the city of Gjirokastra the problem of water management is an old and unsolved problem. Not being able to operate radically on the urban fabric, the strategy suggests continuing to use the roads to convey the rainfall for short sections. This use of the road as drainage can be done implementing expedients in the stone paving design that will slow down the flow and drive water to collection and management system using special paths. This method of water management breaks the impetuosity of the flow and rules the flow direction. This intervention helps to counteract the phenomena of erosion and collapses that are currently occurring, with a significant impact on the budget for maintenance. Operating in this way, the surplus water is quickly drained and directed to the riverbed downstream.

Conclusion and discussion

The proposed strategy aims to provide to the artistic path its own identity, a sort of "Wayfinding" (De Paoli 2015) that allows immediate identification of the same within the urban fabric, promoting its use. The proposed solutions require a political, economic and social effort, especially at a local level, in order to ensure that the necessary investments will be limited and guarantee direct repercussions in terms of supply chain. The case studies examined here also present implementation criticalities, but these can be exploited in advance by avoiding repeating the same mistakes. The artistic path thus developed becomes the cultural link that connects the historical and cultural soul of the city with its modern one. The artisanal heritage becomes an artistical driver and shows itself to domestic and international visitors. The proposed strategy does not aim to reverse the process of abandonment of the city or to provide solutions that restore the interest of the manufacturing industry in this area. The dynamics that drive these processes are too wide and difficult to predict. Such an articulated strategy takes into account the expected benefits in terms of linked activities for locals, tourists and investment companies:

- Activities for the design of the interventions, their implementation, management and maintenance.
- Activities related to the tourist flow, such as reception (from the hotel to the

B&B), Restaurants, travel, trade, logistics, etc..

- Service activities for the resident artistic community.

Cultural identity, conservative approach and local involvement are the most appropriate keys to intervene in such an articulated area. The involvement of the community and the economic spin-offs linked to the cultural aspects that have made Gjirokastra a "Unesco Heritage city" can be the key to the development of a virtuous strategy. If the Art loop works in an effective and structured way, guaranteeing to the guest an authentic and satisfying experience, it will be the driving force behind an economy based on the attractiveness that only a millenary culture can trigger.

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The Time Agent

A hypothesis of a possible development of the city of Gjirokastra through a vital connection between buildings, public space and works of art.

Keywords / Art in public space; architecture; interaction; water; performance; empty-space; time

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Abstract

In this paper, we would try to investigate how art can act as a temporal agent and as a turning point to reflect on the past, present and future of cities. The city of Gjirokastra in Albania has been explored as case study, during a one-week workshop in December 2019.

Time might seem a simple concept, to a superficial reflection, perhaps because we all experience it in our life, considering that we develop our very existence within it, over time. The timeline that inexorably seems to flow in only one direction (from the beginning towards the end, from the present that becomes past, towards the future), is however the result of a superficial response to that complex structure which we call, for convenience, with a single name: Time.

Time is a complex structure, first because it is not unique. Einstein understood it and developed this concept in his Theory of Relativity. The theory evolves from the measurement of different Times in different spaces and the influence that these proper times have in relationship with things. Secondly, because there is still no law in physics that demonstrates a difference in structure between past, present and future, that is, no law can possibly prevent time from being cyclic rather than linear.

For example, if we try to imagine a cyclical Time, we can link it to the idea not only of the seasons on our planet in its movement around the Sun, but also to the idea of life and death of living beings and why not, of cities in their physical structure. Analyzing the temporal cycle of architecture and public spaces.

The fact that cities live by cycles is not a new thing, several authors in different fields have dealt with it, analyzing the intrinsic causes of the birth, life and death of some of them. In this case, in the case of Gjirokastra, we will analyze how in the old city, which is currently experiencing a phase of depopulation, art outside institutional spaces can become a temporal agent of analysis of the past, reflection on the present and lure for the future. Not simply as a tourist attraction, on the contrary as a subject capable of revealing a mechanism, located in the depths of a temporal, social and economic cycle.

Art outside institutional spaces, that is, located in the urban spaces of the city is an extraneous element that act as a vector in the context, to convey reflections, emotions, physical and social changes. The old town of Gjirokastra has in its urban fabric many abandoned or decaying buildings. These buildings can become integral parts of the structures of as many works of art that use architecture and nature. In this case, art becomes narration over time, through site-specific installation of artworks that can affect reality through reflection and interaction with people and spaces.

Introduction

This paper will investigate how art can act as a temporal agent and as a turning point around which to reflect on the past, present and future of cities. The city of Gjirokastra in Albania has been explored as a study case, during a one-week workshop in December 2019.

Time might seem like a simple concept, perhaps because we all experience it in our life. The timeline that inexorably seems to flow in only one direction (from the beginning towards the end, from the present that becomes the past, towards the future), is however "the result of a superficial response to that complex collection of structures" (Rovelli, 2017: 15) which we call, for convenience, with a single name: Time. Time has a complex structure, because first of all, it is not unique. Einstein understood this and developed this concept in his Theory of Relativity. The theory evolved from the measurement of different times in different spaces, and the influence that these times have in relationship with things. Second, the complexity of the temporal structure results from the fact that there is still no law in physics that demonstrates a difference in structure between the past, present and future, that is, no law can possibly prevent time from being cyclic rather than linear. For example, if we try to imagine a cyclical Time, we immediately visualize the cyclical rhythm of seasons, or the revolution of our planet around the Sun. But we can also relate this idea to a cyclical time of life and death of living beings and why not, other organism-like formations like cities. Analyzing the

temporal cycle of architecture and public spaces of the cities.

Problems

The fact that cities 'live' by cycles is not new. Several authors in different fields have dealt with it, analyzing the intrinsic causes of the birth, life and death of some of them. In the case of Gjirokastra, the paper analyzes how in the old city, which is currently experiencing a phase of depopulation, art outside institutional spaces can become a temporal agent of analysis of the past, a reflection on the present and a lure for the future. Here art is not seen as a tourist attraction, but as a mechanism located in the depths of a temporal, social and economic cycle.

Gjirokastra is one of the most ancient and beautiful cities of Albania. Its historical center is protected by UNESCO. After WWII, the city started to develop at the bottom of the hill where the old town is located. This provoked a movement of people from the old to the new city, because of all the facilities available in the new town, not to mention the possibility to intervene in the building without all the limitations imposed by UNESCO on the old city. Such conditions triggered a slow depopulation of the old city, which today looks like a beautiful place without any life inside it.

The Municipality of Gjirokastra has tried different strategies of repopulating the old city without achieving a real success. The municipality has organized Folk Festivals, Theatre Festivals, Painting Exhibitions

(mostly of local painters). The problem with these kind of activities is that they are not connected to a unique vision of the city, and they do not instill the identity or the uniqueness of such a peculiar city as Gjirokastra. How, then, can we transform an open - air museum into a real city, by bringing back people there?

In the historical center of Gjirokastra, there is the ethnographic Museum and the National Museum of Armaments. These spaces are mostly for tourists who have already decided to visit them as part of the cultural heritage of the city, yet such spaces do not directly contribute to a unified vision of the city. Because of its peculiar characteristics of a city-museum, Gjirokastra could use art and culture as pivotal elements to transform itself. The form of the city, that of the old buildings and the castle – forms a morphological network that can engage with the new city and its different identities. Gjirokastra has also iconic structures that can be re-thought as landmarks of a new contemporary, art-oriented identity. The old and mostly abandoned factories from the Communist time are of another time, yet they can be reactivated and re-engaged with the new potential developments and transformations of the city.

The art outside institutional spaces, that is, the one located in the urban spaces of the city is an extraneous element which is situated in the context as a vector to convey reflections, emotions, physical and social changes. The evolution of what constitutes a work of art, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, has witnessed a widening of the methodological spectrum of expression and media used by the artists. "Artists went out in the streets, outside the museum and the galleries, to confront with the real world and to involve a broader audience" (Bignami, Pioselli, 2011: 5). Descending from the idea of sculpture in the urban context, art in public space is a broader category, which fits into the contemporary discourse on the complexity of the very idea of a city. Artists nowadays use sculpture, installations, performances, but also video screenings and photography as interventions into the public spaces by always questioning the complexity of the city as an organism.

Objectives and strategies

The hypothesis of this research is that Gjirokastra can host permanent and temporary artworks that will transform

the city physically and will also change the perception of Gjirokastra to a broader audience. This idea stresses complexity as a generator of the new identity of the city, through the connection and interaction between the architectonic structures and artworks that must physically intersect buildings, spaces and other elements of Gjirokastra.

For just as the rain and the snow pour down from heaven And do not return there until they saturate the earth, making it produce and sprout, Giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, So my word that goes out of my mouth will be. It will not return to me without results, But it will certainly accomplish whatever is my delight, And it will have sure success in what I send it to do¹.

Rain was the main inspiration and starting point. The idea emerged by chance, during the workshop; it was an epiphany about the possibility of using the flux of water as an interstitial agent, capable of carving the architectonic structures, and at the same time being vital for the germination of life. The flux of water comes down from the sky and from the hill descends down to the new city, crossing it like veins in a human body. Rain works as a kind of Big Bang for the project, a performance that could function as a symbolic event of purification, a sort of final exodus from the old town toward a new Gjirokastra, now ready to face contemporary complexity. (Pict. #1) In this performance people take with them their most important stuff and leave the city exactly as a procession, in a row, following the flux of water from the hill to the new town. Now Gjirokastra, the old city of Gjirokastra, reaches a ground-zero level, a new starting point for its self-analysis.

Following the flux of the water of the city, some spots were identified as pilot elements of the new cultural identity and were analyzed as typologies of interaction and intervention on the city, through art. In this case, art becomes narration over time, through site specific installations of artworks that can impact reality, and through reflection and interaction with people and spaces. The role of the artist turns out to be different: "the artist is not so much a leader or educator as a conduit for collective hopes and desires" (Bishop, 2012: 97).

The first typology of buildings is that of those whose roof has collapsed. (Pict. #2)

¹ Isaiah 55:10-11



Fig. 1 / Illustration for the performance: Il grado zero Concept of the performance. Source / the author



Fig. 2 / Abandoned house in Gjirokastra city. Source / the author



Fig. 3 / Abandoned Shop in Gjirokastra city. Source / the author

This typology was titled 'the sky house'. This typology of buildings is very iconic because it reminds one about the common dream of breaking the borders of the place we live in. While the audience inside the perimeter of the house can see only the sky, it experiences a vertical movement of the body through the direction of the gaze that rotates from the horizon 90 degree up to the sky.

The second category of buildings are the abandoned shops. (Pict. #3) This typology was titled 'the horizon house'. This typology refers directly to the socio - economic situation of the city. It is strictly connected to its shrinking and the difficulties of people to work in the old town and keep it alive. In this typology the gaze is parallel to the ground, perfectly horizontal.

Descending downhill from the old town by following the flux of water, one arrives where the factories from Communist time stand (Pict. #4). One of these former factories was chosen as another typology of the new cultural identity of Gjirokastra. This typology was titled 'the astounding house'. Empty cathedrals of social utopia, mostly abandoned nowadays, they are bigger than the previous two typologies. Inside them the audience experiences a different feeling, one of being little in comparison with the architecture. One feels like a child inside an unexpectedly big space. The gaze goes around and around, moving horizontally and vertically, trying to capture the totality of the space.

The journey continues along the highway, toward the city center, in order to identify another building typology, that of unfinished houses. (Pict. #5) This typology was titled: the level house. This typology also relates to the social and economic aspects of society. These buildings have remained unfinished for different reasons; for example, their owners live and work outside Albania, and only when their economic situation allows them to allocate some money to the house, they continue to build. The other reason is that the construction companies that have built them may have gone bankrupt. In these buildings, one experiences a totally open situation where the gaze moves horizontally and the body vertically, in order to access all the floors of the structure.

In addition to these typologies, two other edifices that relate to the framework of this analysis are identified. One of them is an abandoned office building located at

the beginning of the boulevard. The other one is the stadium. As previously noted, the main proposal of this paper is one that makes Gjirokastra a hub for permanent and temporary artworks that transform the city physically and perceptually, through the typologies identified above.

The sky house (Pict. #6a)

Inside this house you can really feel the power of nature and how it immediately assimilates what remains unused by humans. The inspiration came from different artists, such as James Turrell, who cuts the ceiling of Museums and galleries to allow the audience to experience the sky as a work of art, or Giuseppe Penone, who transforms trees them into natural sculptures. For this typology, it is proposed to place big tree at the center of the empty space of the house as a permanent installation. The tree symbolizes the strength of the nature and its close relation with the abandoned buildings. As the level zero is reached through a procession of people leaving the old town, that's exactly the moment when nature reaches its maximum power and starts a silently and constant dialogue with the architecture of Gjirokastra.

The horizon house (Pict. #6b)

This typology of buildings provides the audience with a completely different feeling. These buildings were shops before being abandoned, and they are smaller than the sky houses. The main characteristics of this typology is the horizontal gaze and the interaction between people inside it; this interaction will continue to be crucial also after the artistic intervention we thought for it. The inspiration for this typology came from all the artistic practices under the category of relational art and/or interactive art, as, for instance, in the artistic practice of Rirkrit Tiravanija. Thus, in the sky house one sees the crown of a big tree, in the horizon house one sees the roots of, what you can imagine being the same tree, coming out from the facade of the shop. This could be read as the proliferation of nature, but also as a space-time continuity of the natural element in the life of Gjirokastra. The other characteristic - that of the interaction between people inside the building - will be experienced through an open laboratory for the audience inside the shop, where the audience can learn carving techniques, and where anyone can make art, which remains exhibited into the horizontal house.

The astounding house (Pict. #7a)

In this building one faces a change of



Fig. 4 / Abandoned factory in Gjirokastra city. Source / the author



Fig. 5 / Print Screen from Google Street View's map of Gjirokastra. Source / the author



Fig. 6a / Illustration for the installation: Il cielo in una stanza Concept of the installation, Stefano Romano, Nicola Tasselli, Eleonora Baccega. Implementation of the idea: Stefano Romano, drawing by Stefano Romano



Fig. 6b / Illustration for the installation: A piedi nudi Concept of the installation, Stefano Romano, Nicola Tasselli, Eleonora Baccega. Implementation of the idea: Stefano Romano, drawing by Stefano Romano

scale; the dimensions are completely different from the previous typologies, and consequently one's relation to the space is also changed. Factories are places of wonder, where things come to life and become objects of your life. They are somehow magical; the gaze cannot really find a place where to stop but goes around and around trying to read all of space. But is it really possible to capture the totality of the complexity of our contemporaneity? The common element of nature is, again, the main protagonist of the installation into this typology. The space is imagined as a forest, an enchanted forest where magical things can happen, like when a fairy tale narrator narrates texts written by writers, artists, and different professionals. Site specific performances address the relation between nature and human constructions. The inspiration for this installation came from different artists like Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Christo and Jeanne-Claude. Furthermore, keeping its identity of being a place where objects are born, the astounding house will host a laboratory of arts and crafts where young students, artists, and professionals can experience different techniques and practices, in close collaboration with national and international companies.

The level house (Pict. #7b)

In this typology one finds again the relationship with the dimensions of a house, like those in the old town. Staying inside this building feels completely different because there are no walls, just floors and ceilings. One looks around horizontally, but to experience everything, one has to move vertically through all the floors. The inspiration for the permanent installation in this typology came from Gordon Matta Clark and his interventions in the structure of buildings which were transformed into giant sculptures. All the floors/ceilings of the edifice will be cut creating a series of holes in the middle to house a big tree, to reiterate the relation nature/human construction, but also to symbolize the idea of the fireplace. Around the tree there will be chairs arranged in concentric circles like waves that propagate in the water. This typology is situated along the Drino River in order to stress again the physical and visual relation with the flux of water coming down from the hill and reaching the river.

All typologies were titled 'house', in order to create a unique code in people imagination, a code that reminds one of something familiar and known, a place that is a shelter and also a place to receive

friends and hosts. At the same time, we can consider them Heterotopies because "the heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (Foucault 2006: 6)

Approaching the new town center, just on the side the main boulevard, there is the stadium. Sports facilities are peculiar constructions, and in the case of Gjirokastra, the Municipality wants to change the function of that structure and build a new stadium in another area of the city. The decision of the Municipality was fundamental in defining the new function of the stadium. The inspiration came from an artwork by Alberto Burri titled Teatro Continuo in Milan (Italy). The artist created an open air stage where professionals and normal people have the possibility to perform their ideas. The idea is to create a similar structure inside the Gjirokastra stadium by keeping the stands in order to give people the possibility to seat along the pitch, and by opening the structure below the stands in order to transform the stadium into an open park. The field will maintain the game lines, like a memory of its past and will host a concrete stage on it in order to give professionals and people the possibility to perform 24hrs a day. (Pict. #8)

As noted earlier, along the main boulevard, besides the stadium, there's another building identified during the day of the workshop in Gjirokastra. This other edifice is an abandoned office building located at the beginning of the boulevard. In the framework of furnishing the city with a new identity, This structure will be transformed into a place where artists, architects, curators and other professionals can stay during periods of study and activities in Gjirokastra.

Results

The project can generate a different city where people can engage culturally with a different reality, but also a city with a new economy as a result of a path. "The term «path» indicates at the same time the act of crossing (the path as the action of walking), the line that cross the space (the path as an architectural object) and the narrative of the crossed space (the path as narrative structure)" (Careri, 2006: 7/8). The economic aspect will develop as a consequence of the new identity of the area where pilot typologies of buildings are located and engaged through artistic activities. In the future, other edifices can be identified according to the previous



Fig. 7a / Illustration for the installation: *La foresta* Concept of the installation, Stefano Romano, Nicola Tasselli, Eleonora Baccega. Implementation of the idea: Stefano Romano, drawing by Stefano Romano

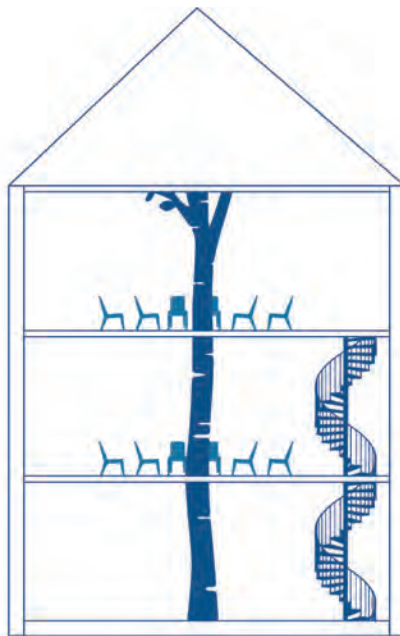


Fig. 7b / Illustration for the installation: *Come il fuoco, come il mare* Concept of the installation, Stefano Romano, Nicola Tasselli, Eleonora Baccega. Implementation of the idea: Stefano Romano, drawing by Stefano Romano

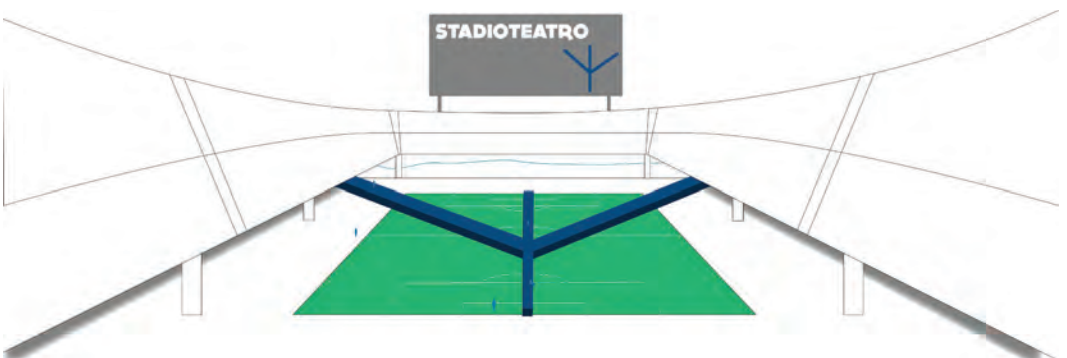


Fig. 8 / Illustration for the installation: *StadioTeatro* Concept of the installation, Stefano Romano, Nicola Tasselli, Eleonora Baccega. Implementation of the idea: Stefano Romano, drawing by Stefano Romano and Nicola Tasselli

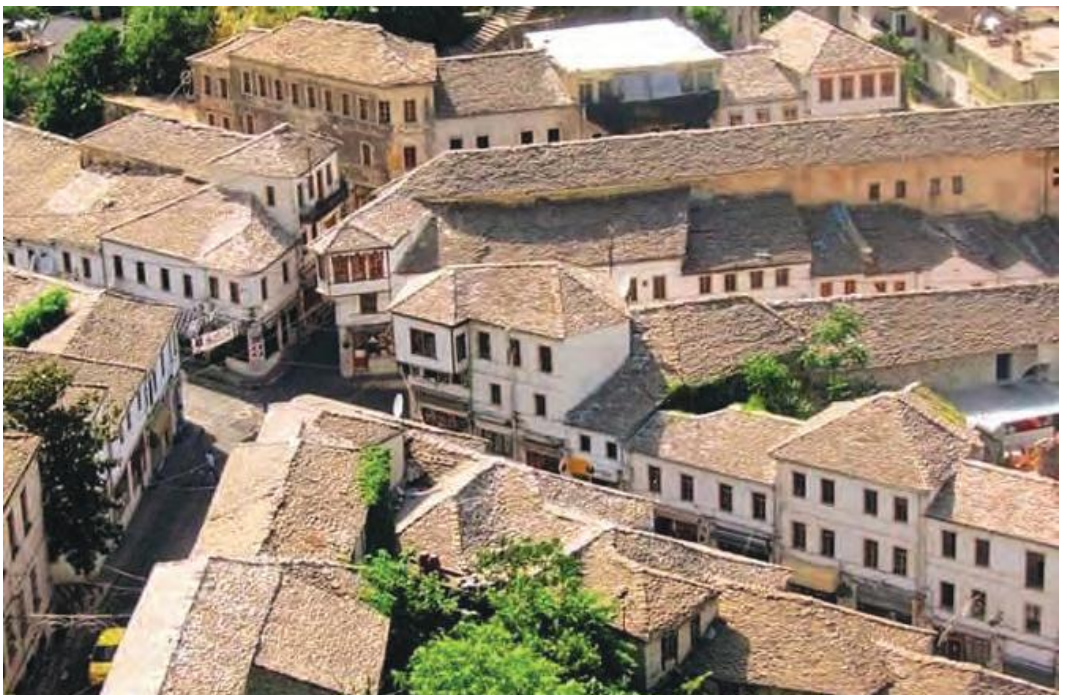
or new typologies and will be used for artistic interventions, inviting other artists to contribute to the realization of the utopia of a museum city. Here, the word 'museum' is not used simply as a place where to display and preserve artworks, but in a more expanded sense, that of a place that becomes a space where the meaning and identity of the city itself and all those engaged in this process, can be built. Another important aspect from an economical point of view is the laboratory where artists experiment with different materials furnished by different companies.

Conclusions

This project changes the landscape of the city through five pilot typologies of buildings and transformations. This project will impact other constructions in Gjirokastra from a functional and aesthetic point of view, thus changing the city slowly yet constantly from a museum city to an experimental cultural city. In this case, art is a temporal agent, because through art, it is possible to reach the zero level of the city and clearly visualize the flux of nature that moves behind the surface of Gjirokastra. This flux becomes visible through time and change the shape of the city through an economy that transforms buildings into interactive sculptures and participative spaces.

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Improving health and well-being in the cities

Keywords / Health, Wellbeing, constellation, community hub, visual communication

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Abstract

In 1990 after the reinstatement of democracy in Albania, urban development was rapid and uncontrolled. The effects of informal housing and the lack of planned transportation altered the character of the territory fragmenting the landscape. There was an evident lack of accessibility of public space, as social interaction between the city and its citizens had drastically faded. Apart from the abandonment of the old traditional houses and the historic city center the same phenomenon had also affected factories and former industrial areas in the periphery of the city.

This paper aims to define how Gjirokastra can connect its intermediate spaces and can nurture the character of its community whereby aspirations, wellbeing and interaction can be improved. The paper investigates possible scenarios on how to stimulate social interaction as a dynamic and changing sequence of social actions between individuals or groups. In addition, well-being should be also improved through design for locals and visitors, unifying the image of traditional cities and as a result requalifying public space. 'Intermediate spaces' are leftover public, semi-public and semi-private or private areas between or among the adjacent existing buildings, which may be abandoned or not. This paper investigates the morphological relationship between such spaces and buildings. Further analysis demonstrates that there is a link between such relationship and the betterment of social interaction, which stimulates economic growth. To this end, actions must be taken for the restoration and protection of architectural landscape and social interaction values, enabling Gjirokastras' social energy, health and well-being. This research will rely on literature review and case study models on the requalification of public spaces, abandoned areas and terrain surveys, and analyses of the neighborhoods of Gjirokastra as potential areas investigating design proposals to enhance its identity and future development.

"Healthy cities breed healthy people." (Fernandes, 2018) Rethinking Gjirokastra as a model city of health and well-being in Albania in terms of the shrinking urban processes will help improve the socio-economic development level while evoking its traditions.

Gjirokastra's Glorification

Gjirokastra, as a place rich with culture, guarantees a peaceful and healthy lifestyle in its hilly terrain. The medieval castle and the old bazar with its shops and Ottoman settlements are invested in a long life of tradition and culture. As the birthplace of the communist dictator, it was living

in a time of glory during his dictatorship. Industries, factories, agriculture, craftsmanship, traditions and customs were the engine of economic and social development. Gjirokastra used to "bear outstanding testimony to the diversity of urban societies in the Balkans, and to longstanding ways of life which have today almost vanished." (Centre, 2020)

Abandoned Economic Resources

After the 90-s, Albania faced many difficulties in all levels of public administration. The 'Great Depression' started in 1990 with the fall of the communist party, which had ruled for

45 years. "Gjirokastra's economy was already declining rapidly. To achieve full employment, the communists assigned far more people to work in the already outdated and inefficient industrial complexes than were actually needed. The collapse of the communist system resulted in the catastrophic loss of thousands of jobs in Gjirokastra" (Foundation, 2020). Industries, factories and agriculture stopped production and cultivation, and public properties were mostly privatized (Fig.1). Public investments were abandoned with no hope for the future. The former industrial area is characterized by a large number of abandoned buildings. With the desire for a better future, thousands of unemployed people either migrate to the capital of Albania, or emigrate abroad, such as in the neighboring Greece, for work (Foundation, 2020). 'The last of Mohicans' were senior citizens of Gjirokastra as they lived with the void of space in time.

Lost Heritage

Albania went from extreme totalitarian control to absolute freedom. Unstable government resulted in lack of territorial management and mass migration. Statistical data from the Ministry of Urban Development in 2014 show that over 400.000 informal buildings (Fig.2) at a national scale were built, thus creating a challenging and complicating system for the national economy and social development. (Aliaj, Rossi and Porfido, 2018:174)

Traditional houses were abandoned by the original owners. This resulted in the long-

term problem of the loss and unprotected of cultural heritage (Fig.3). Additionally, while the government's priority was focused on public security and economy rather than in urban development, the national or local level investment in housing remained out of focus. The effects of informal housing and the lack of planned transportation altered the character of the territory by fragmenting the landscape. The transformation of landscape and configuration of the natural habitats started in this period (Aliaj, Rossi and Porfido, 2018:174).

Lack of Accessibility

There is an evident lack of accessibility and public spaces, as social interaction between and within the old city and new city of Gjirokastra has drastically faded. Apart from the abandoned factories and former industrial areas in the periphery of the city the same phenomenon has also affected neighborhoods of the old city with its Bazaar. (Fig.4) Such situation is compounded even more by the existing terrain configuration due to the hilly topography, characteristic of Gjirokastra. (Fig.5) Lack of infrastructure has generated problems in the public transportation system, slowed down the exchange of goods, and disconnected the two cities with its surrounding neighborhoods, thus resulting economic underdevelopment (Fig.7a,7b,7c).

Tourism Improvement Districts

In the framework of the "National Tourism Strategy for Albania 2014-2020" (Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism, 2020)

the Albanian-American Development Foundation, created an Entrepreneurship Program which enlisted Gjirokastra among other Albanian cities. The program is known as "Tourism Improvement Districts" (TIDs): "This program strives to increase the number of overnight visitors and work as a driving force for destination marketing and promotion. With the work of businesses and the local government, TIDs are managed through a non-profit steering association between them. These associations are powerful funding tools which help hotels, craft shops, local artisans, and other businesses increase revenues in areas that are turned into local destinations" (Albanian-American Development Foundation, 2020).

Restoration as Economic Developer for Gjirokastra

As part of a series of development actions was the restoration of the Gjirokastra's Bazaar. The AADF, Gjirokastra Municipality and the Ministry of Culture of Albania inaugurated its completion in September 2018. "The initial investment from the AADF of US\$ 2 million will be followed by continuous support, capacity building and promotion of the businesses in the Bazaar area, for a total investment of US\$ 3.5 million in the coming years" (Albanian-American Development Foundation, 2020), (Fig.6 & 8). Such restoration projects have been a positive example in the revitalization of the space itself and in attracting the entrepreneurs and citizens of the old city. The created spirit and energy of life in Gjirokastra is also stimulated through organized activities such as periodic festivals (Fig.9) that try to engage the visitors and entertain the locals for longer amounts of time (Local Festivals, 2019).

Accessing Gjirokastra – Health and Well-Being

Despite these positive touristic investments, there are still numerous problems that Gjirokastra is facing that affect its citizens. Among the problems of lost and unprotected heritage and abandoned industrial buildings, transportation is the next big problem. The public transport does not offer full access to the city, there are no regular schedules. There is a lack of open spaces and activities that can trigger new possibilities for Gjirokastra. Access to drinking water is not the same in different areas of the city because of a lack investments and management in the water distribution system (Fig.10,11,12). Gjirokastra, with all its natural resources and cultural features,

should be featured as a model city of Health and Well-Being in Albania rather than a city that is fading.

Constellation as a Strategic Tool

The problems indicated above point to the need to reconnect the city with its citizens in a complex system that lasts longer than the touristic season. As professionals we are trained with all good intentions to "solve" fundamental problems of the society. This leads to a sort of neo-colonialist behavior of the designer who gives the solution in response to his personal intellectual knowledge (Aliaj, Rossi and Porfido, 2018:189). As a result, during this workshop we tried to solve the fundamental problem of accessibility of Gjirokastra at all levels. Accessibility was not perceived only as physical but also as a social connection. In terms of accessibility, we focused on the social interaction in physical spaces which promote Gjirokastra as a city of health and well-being. (Fig.13) Bonding the social interaction was conceptualized through the idea of constellations. (Fig.14) The concept is implemented by first evincing all the existing physical spaces (voids) and artefacts of Gjirokastra that can be revitalized and serve as important poles in the proposed constellation (Fig.15). The role of the outline or pattern is to properly to create visual and physical connection among these poles, this favoring health and wellbeing (Fig.16). "We must integrate our concepts of 'public health issues' with 'urban planning issues'. Urban planners, engineers, and architects must begin to see that they have a critical role in public health. Similarly, public health professionals need to appreciate that the built environment influences public health as much as vaccines or water quality." As stated by Richard J. Jackson and Chris Kochtitzky.

Constellation as a Strategic Tool

The concept of the healthy city was first promulgated by the World Trade Organization in 1988 (Charter, 2020). In 1996 ten specific standards for the healthy city by the World Health Organization (WHO) were issued. These standards provided for improved secure environment, nutrition, water, housing, health benefits and effective waste disposal systems. An important aspect was to have groups of citizens and various organizations assist each other and work in a coordinated manner to improve the health of the city. Involving the citizens in formulation of policies that affect the health and welfare of daily life was also



Fig. 1 / Rooted Industry. Source / the author



Fig. 2 / Informal Housing. Source / @shprehje.gjirokastrite, Facebook

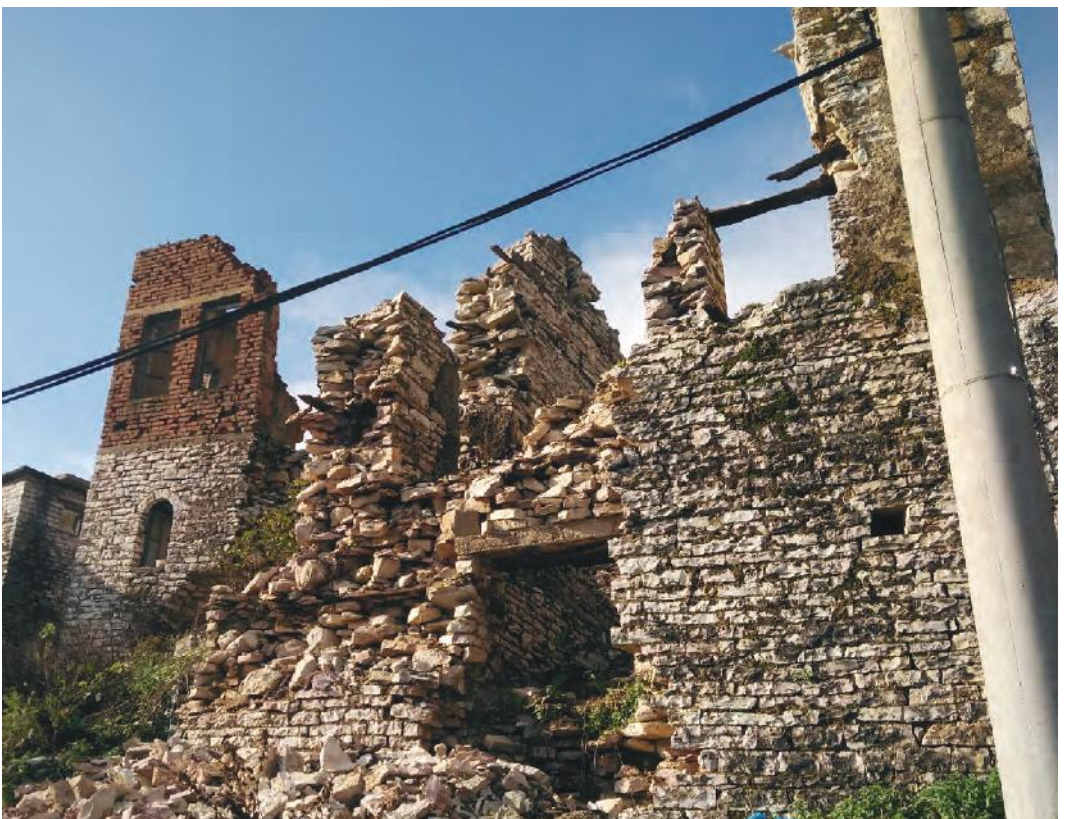


Fig. 3 / Informal Housing. Source / @shprehje.gjirokastrite, Facebook

considered important. Providing a place for entertainment and leisure activities that would enhance communication among the population was considered fundamental. Respecting diverse lifestyles and race and religious beliefs, preservation of cultural heritage was considered crucial aspects of a healthy city. These principles will lead to a healthy, disease-free life and increased longevity (Yuming WANG, 2020).

"Healthy cities breed healthy people" stated director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus when addressing the delegations of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network Summit of Mayors, held in Copenhagen, Denmark. He mentions that while we get better health services and better opportunities for education and employment in cities, the latter are exposed to many health risks (crowded living conditions, sedentary lifestyles, more processed food, pollution, traffic accidents, etc .) If people are healthy, cities and communities thrive. Solutions for a healthier city are simple and affordable. Bike paths, car free zones, parks, reliable public transport, responsible waste management are samples that he lists referring to successful examples such as Copenhagen and Curitiba. Health depends on reducing gaps between the best of and worst of communities. For cities to thrive and be healthy, we need to ensure that everyone has access to Public transportation, safe and attractive outdoor spaces, healthy foods and affordable health services (WHO, 2018).

A reference for this paper was the Ph.D. publication of the architect Elena Dorato titled "Preventive Urbanism, The Role of Health in Designing Active Cities". In her essay she explores and explains the increasing connection between the medical field with all of its curative abilities

to the urban analysis of Healthy and Active City. Dorato highlights the possibilities of urbanism as essential in providing a prophylaxis of a qualitative life and health of the citizens in the urban developed areas. She analyzes the importance of urban health in the built environment, which will create the possibility of "organs" of urban life to work qualitatively and effectively, especially in the cases of the global pandemic that society faced in 2020.

Dorato tackles a list of elements related from urban and human bodies, to the cities and their well-being until the scale of design in urban and planning. These relations were perceived in a long period more as epistemologically and from the social point of view where the system and characteristics of the urban space as the key leading elements of the qualitative aspects of health and physical activity. Even though those elements and relations were investigated superficially and hardly analyzed in detail. (Dorato, 2020)

"Nowadays, health and the practice of physical activity must be seen as relevant goals to be achieved also through comprehensive and integrated interventions in the physical environment, where communities live and develop, addressing through urban policies and programs, and from a design perspective, the problem of urban living in terms of sustainability, safety, accessibility, and attractiveness."¹

The bonding between the territories and spaces through the practice of health and well-being is fundamental to re-activate Gjirokastra. This city must be restructured and promoted as the city of "ευ ζην"², where life flows quietly through connections and activities that will occur in different territories of the city will and stimulate the



^{1/} Dorato, E., 2020. *Preventive Urbanism. The Role of Health in Designing Active Cities*. Macerata: Quodlibet.

^{2/} The art of living well, welfare.

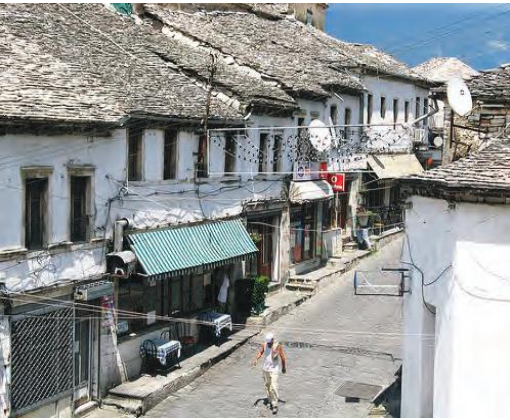


Fig. 4 / The degradation of Bazaar.
Source / Sanne Aabjerg Kristiansen, Flickr



Fig. 5 / Orography of Gjirokastra.
Source / the author



Fig. 6 / Restauration Process at TID Gjirokastra Bazaar.
Source / Albanian-American Development Foundation



Fig. 7 / a,b,c / Fragmented Perceive of Landscape Due to Orography.
Source / a. Blero Topulli, Unsplash; b.the author; c. Anita Hendrieka

active life of the citizens. This active city will guarantee the well-being and health of the territory by taking advantage of the qualitative aspects of climate, landscape and heritage, and linking them with multi-leveled connections.

First of all, physical connection relates to the improvement in the level of infrastructure – public transportation, minibuses, frequent bus lines that connect faster different areas of the cities within and between, the redesign of alleys and narrow street systems (softer slopes, added footsteps, handrails), the rehabilitation of abandoned industrial buildings, and the restoration of lost heritage buildings through the program of Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHWB, 2020) (Fig.17). The physical connection of spaces within and between cities are proposed solutions that stimulate social interaction and improve the physical body to move in the city. More or less those proposed elements transform the city topography into an open recreation center. Health and well-being are possible only if offered to everyone without extra cost³.

Secondly, visual connection is stimulated through landmarks of each pole. Landmarks have a vital role in the proposed strategy because they give an identity and orientation to the poles. Landmarks may be existing, like the bazaar, the tower and chimneys in industrial areas (which can be categorized as vertical landmarks) (Fig.18), while new ones can be added based on location, the characteristics of the zones where the poles are proposed, and previous famous landmarks references such as those of Luca Piazza Amphitheatre, Walnut- Public Spaces, Serpentine Pavilion etc. (Fig.19) Last but not least, it is important to mention the gazing. Gazing is perceived as a continuous process of participation: the time spent in a public space that guarantees social interaction. (Fig.20) There are possible scenarios that show how to stimulate social interaction as a dynamic, changing sequence of social actions between individuals or groups. Through the design of those “hubs,” the unification of the image of traditional cities and the requalification of public space is improved. Hubs are adapted to a location. In most spaces, there are intermediate spaces. Those spaces are leftover public, semipublic and semi-private or private areas which may have a relation to the abandoned or still occupied buildings adjacent to them. Therefore, the character of the buildings themselves can change according to their relationship with

the surrounding space. The concept of the intermediate space crosses architecture, city and the territory, and their related disciplines. Maciocco describes the symbolic-practical structure of the self-recognized society, denoted through the concept of the “intermediate space,” which is “not just or so much as a border area in the territorial sense as, rather, a terrain of cultural and disciplinary exchange, an attempt to cast off the established mental and cultural systems.” (Maciocco, 2014)

Three Scenarios – Connecting pieces of memory

In the process of improvement, urban spaces will enable social connection and accessibility. In the strategic masterplan (Fig. 21) the focus is on three main spaces – scenarios of poles/hubs. The urban poles have different characteristics and are mainly an alteration of modern parts like the stadium and the industrial zone in relation to historical and cultural heritage zones of the city like the old bazaar.

New Bazaar – provides accessibility to main urban services. (Fig.22)

Gjirokastra, even if it is composed of two cities, an old and new one, is missing its own agora – a main square where all citizens of Gjirokastra can be gathered. In addition to the old stadium, the main public square in the space, as in Lucca Piazza Amphitheatre, should be established. In the ground floors of the surrounding buildings there are shopping paths. In the entrance of the square there will be an on-demand transportation hub. The existing stadium is re-used to fulfill the function needs of the square which will be designed to work as a park with its greenery and pavilions.

Innovation Park –accessibility to business innovation and market. (Fig.23)

In the innovation park all the existing factories will be retrofitted. Transportation hubs will be on-demand. In order to suit the needs of the innovation market, the abandoned industrial buildings will be reused in order to protect the image of the city and the surrounding natural landscape.

Community Hub – accessibility to neighborhood services. (Fig.24)

In supporting health and well-being, the abandoned and neglected ‘kulla’ will be refurbished (Fig.25). ‘Kulla’ are chosen in the nodes/poles, as they can play the role of a generator for social and economic development in different neighborhoods of the old city. Since Gjirokastra is known

^{3/} *cost is associated to the regular city maintenance taxes only



Fig. 8 / End of Restaurant of Bazaar. Source / Piotr Abraszek, Flickr



Fig. 9 / National Folklore Festival in Gjirokastras Castle. Source / Blerina Berberi



Fig. 10 / Lack of Qualified Public Transport. Source / the author

for its alleys, narrow streets and its private gardens, it improves the neighborhoods by transforming the private gardens into open shared space by removing the fences. This will let the traditional landscape architecture spread like a manifesto, from the gardens to the alleys and narrow streets which will visually open the perspective of the paths. The transportation hub is guided by pergolas that will be linked with retrofitted shops. These elements of vernacular architecture will settle the memories of the city and preserve its authenticity.

Conclusion

Rethinking Gjirokastra as a model city of

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health and well-being will help improve the socio-economic development, while evoking its traditions.

Gjirokastra has many potential poles/hubs which can work together as a constellation to revitalize all the abandoned/neglected spaces of the new and old city. With the proposed scenarios of the new bazaar and innovation park-community hub, the strategic management of the linking elements and the participation of the locals and authorities will become the first model city of health and well-being in Albania.

As a result, Gjirokastra as a healthy city, would be able to breed healthy people and maintain a sustainable economy.

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Fig. 11 / Lack of Open Public Spaces. Source / the author



Fig. 12 / Lack of Natural Resources Management. Source / the author



Fig. 13 / Life in the City of Gjirokastra in 1988. Source / DanMs, SkyscraperCity

STRATEGY DIAGRAMS

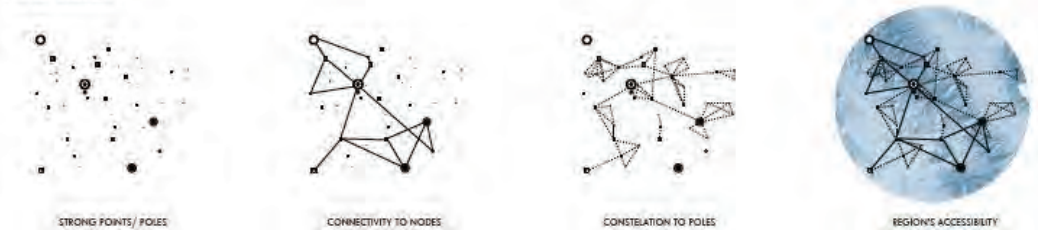


Fig. 14 / Constellation as a Strategy. Source / the author

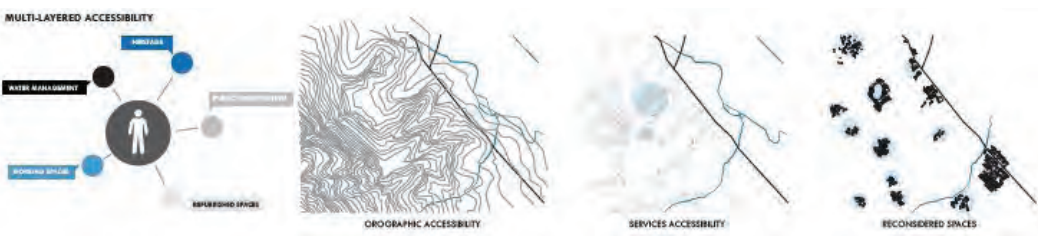


Fig. 15 / Voids - Strong Points of Constellation. Source / human scheme, Marco Negri, the rest the author

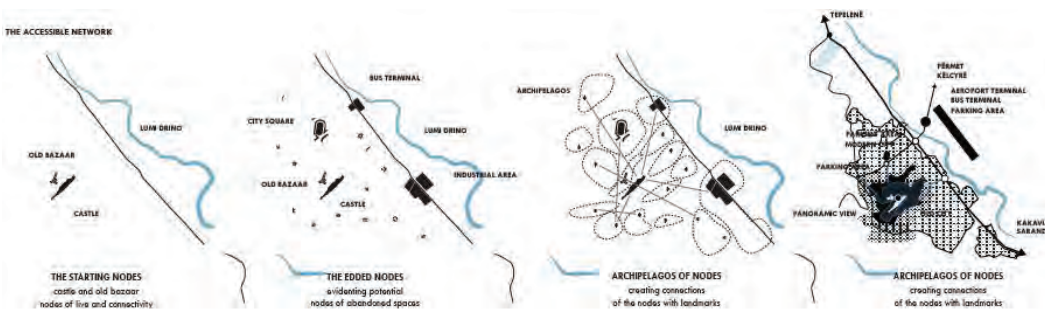


Fig. 16 / Gazing System of Constellation - Accessibility in Different Levels. Source / Marco Negri and the author



Fig. 17 / Restoration Camp - Restoration of Abandoned Heritage of Gjirokastra. Source / Cultural Heritage without Borders Albania



Fig. 18 / Vertical Landmarks - Clocktower in the Castle of Gjirokastra. Source / Visit-Gjirokastra

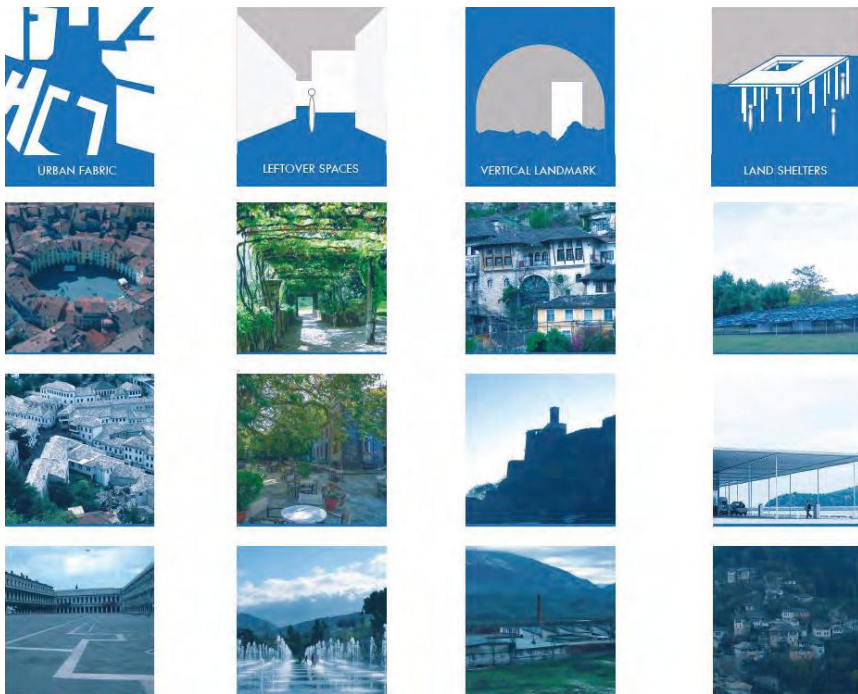


Fig. 19 / Used References of Accesibility of Gjirokastra. Source / the author, images from the website



Fig. 20 / Rrapi of Gjirokastra - Vernacular Square of Bazaar. Source / @shprehje.gjirokastrite, Facebook

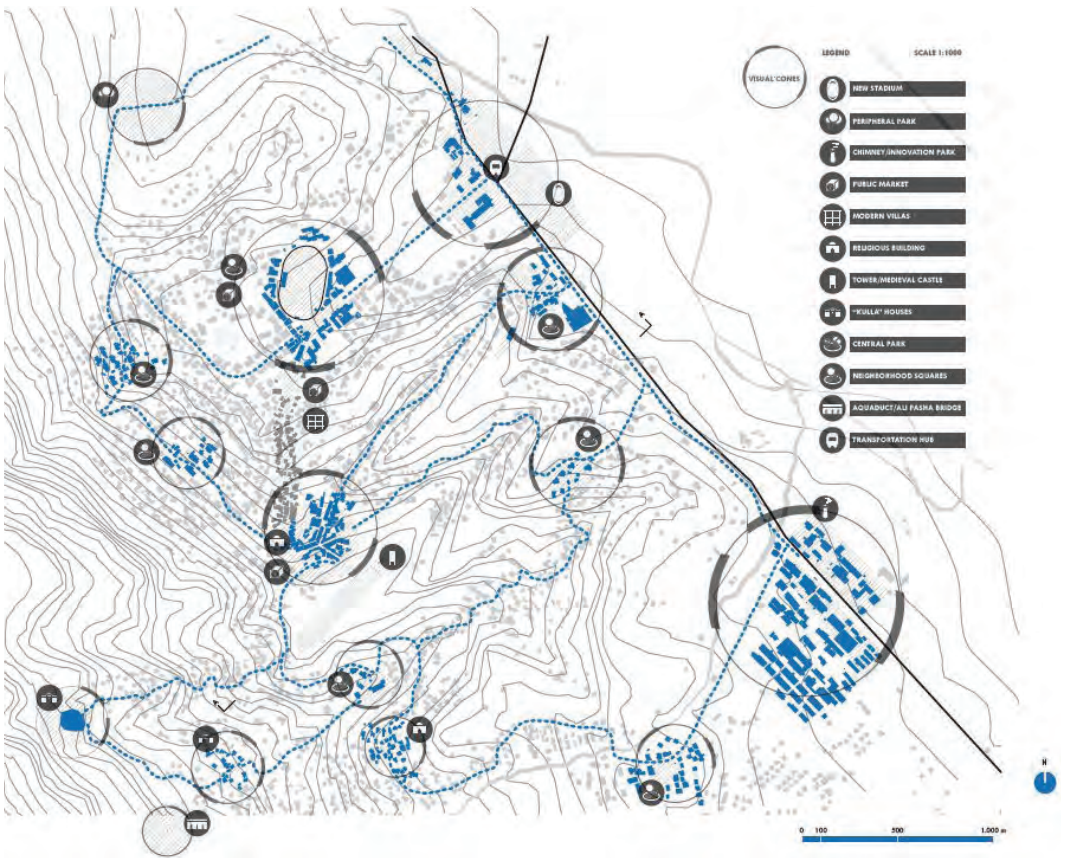


Fig. 21 / MasterPlan - Accessing Gjirokastra. Source / the author, Marco Negri, Endri Duro

1. NEW BAZAAR

provide accessibility to main urban services

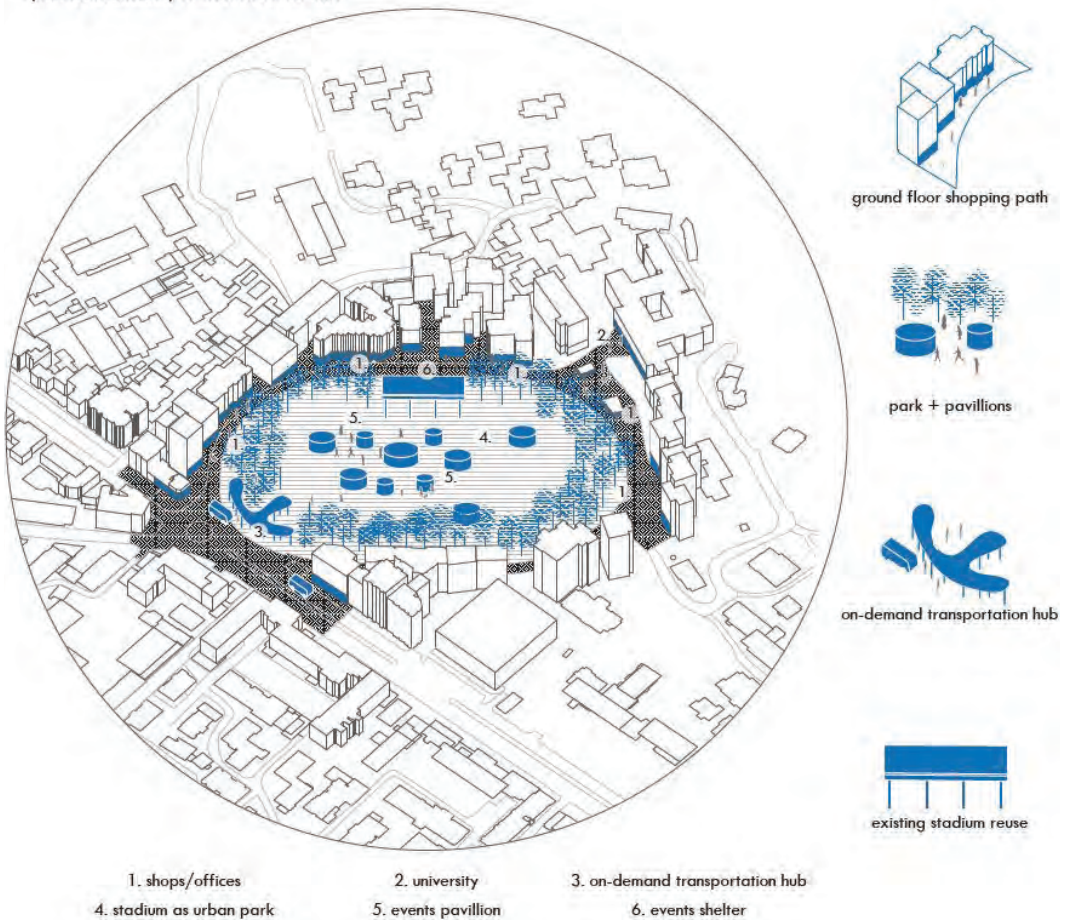


Fig. 22 / Scenario of New Bazaar - MasterPlan - Accessing Gjirokastra; source - the author, Marco Negri, Endri Duro

2. INNOVATION PARK

provide accessibility to business innovation and market

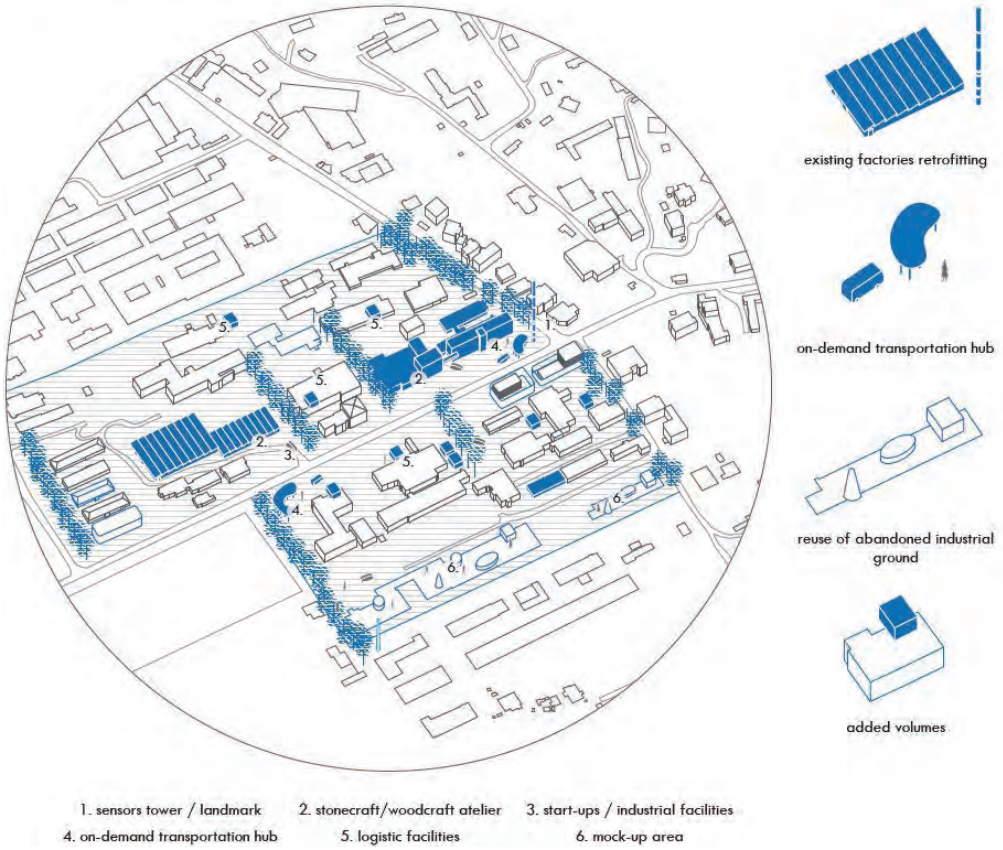


Fig. 23 / Scenario of Innovation Park - MasterPlan - Accessing Gjirokastra.
 Source / the author, Marco Negri, Endri Duro

3. COMMUNITY HUB

provide accessibility to neighbourhood services

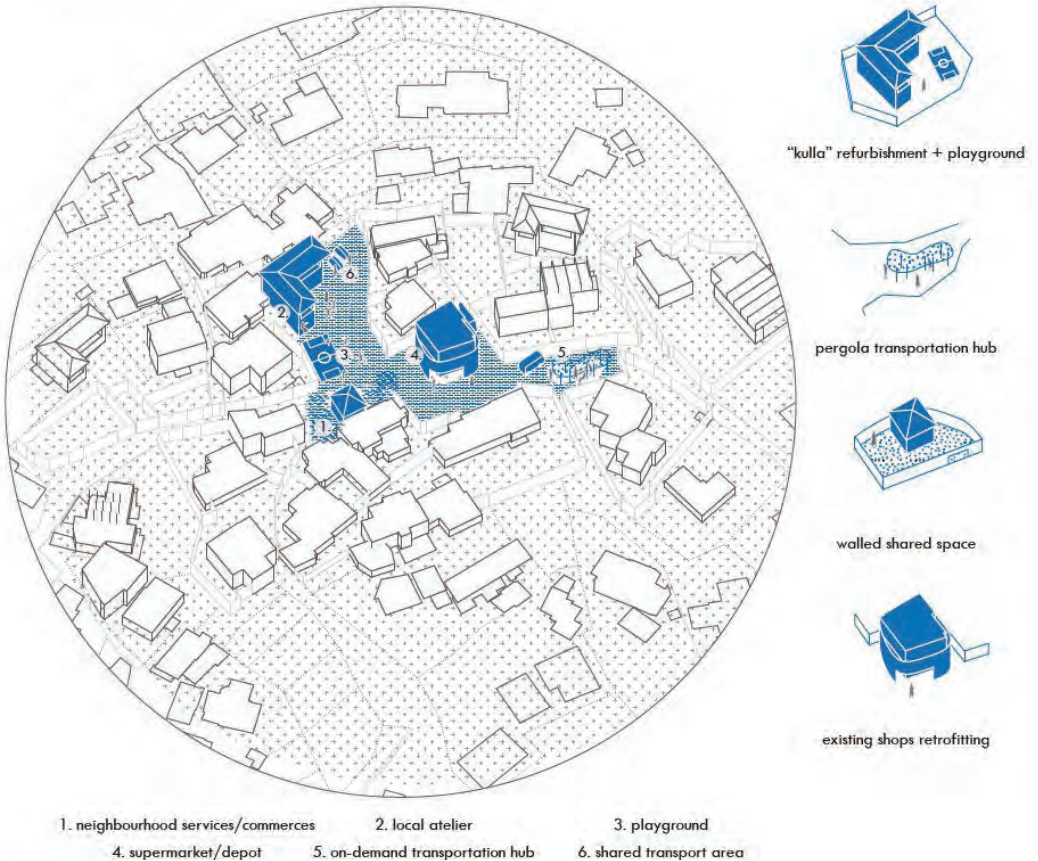


Fig. 24 / Scenario of Community Hub - MasterPlan - Accessing Gjirokastra.
 Source / the author, Marco Negri, Endri Duro



Fig. 25 / Architecture Landscape of Gjirokastras Gardens. Source / the author



5.1

Rethinking the “UNESCO City”
Gjirokastra, Albania:
Can architects and city planning
stimulate hope and growth for
shrinking cities?

Besnik Aliaj
Sotir Dhamo

5 conclusions

Rethinking the “UNESCO City” Gjirokastra, Albania: Can architects and city planning stimulate hope and growth for shrinking cities?

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Dr. Sotir Dhamo
POLIS University*

The main idea of this one-year international PhD project of POLIS & UNIFE was to elaborate a critical thought around the concept of “Shrinking city”. This was seen as an occasion to investigate the concrete city of Gjirokastra Albania, through an approach established via the individuation of autonomous objects or urban fragments, within the existing city patterns, capable of injecting new hopes for the future of Gjirokastra. Within this framework one of the main objectives of the workshop has been to define urban strategies in order to reestablish a new relationship between the historical city and its interrupted objects, due the depopulation crises. In other words, the objective has been to give a second life, or chance, or opportunity to the city, which means to reactivate a cultural debate, starting by shaking the attention of the Albanian citizens, local communities, and the local authority as well. So after a session of introductory theory, than the participating PhD students had to observe, select and investigate specific urban fragments; in order to develop strategies involving different disciplines and fields of knowledge. POLIS and UNIFE strongly believe in the interdisciplinary approach. They both believe at “frontier research” in order to be able to explore the borderline of knowledge on architecture and territorial planning, in close relations with other areas of expertise, knowledge and disciplines.

PART 1: Theoretical

Aliaj & Dhamo - try to summarize theoretical references for the phenomena

of shrinking city. They refer to Hollander and Glazer for the suburbanization as one of the reasons behind the reverse-urbanization; the lack of appreciation on national infrastructure such as highways, and increase of interests on railroads and ports. They also mention Pallagst, whom thinks that shrinkage is a reaction against de-industrialization. In addition, they mention Bontje whom proposes four main factors contributing to the shrinking cities effect: i) Urban development model; ii) One-company town or Mono-structure model; iii) Shock therapy model; iv) Smart decline. Such theoretical framework also analyze pragmatic political philosophies such as “planning for less – less people, less buildings, less land uses – in order to maintain or increase the standard of living”.

Besnik Aliaj - latter on describes a bottom-up process of city envisioning for Gjirokastra, which he technically lead himself. The idea was to understand the needs and priorities of local people and communities and demystify the expectations for the future. According to local people Gjirokastra represents for them the main gravitational center of the southern Albania region, that has a strong interaction with the main gravitational center of the North-Western Greece, Ioannina. In this regard, the development priorities of the two sides of the cross-border regions need to be better coordinated, especially in the context of Albania's efforts towards European integration. This means that the main infrastructural trunks of the Gjirokastra

region, is good potential for fast and direct connection with the main European infrastructure corridors, thanks to the quick access to Greece (see Albania 2030 Manifesto @ <https://ombresearchseries.org/>). The municipality of Gjirokastra then is proposed to be developed according to five priorities: i) Development of infrastructure and public transport; ii) Urban and environmental development; iii) Tourism, landscape, history and other development resources; iv) Consolidation of city as a regional center for education, culture and sports; v) improvement of public services, like: water supply, urban waste, lighting and electricity network.

Bauer & Deegros - with collaboration of Bagarić & Fauster, show experiences of shrinkage in Austria. They underline the fact that small towns throughout Europe are also facing severe similar challenges. Many are shrinking in population size, and losing the younger generations. This often results in close-down of infrastructure, which are necessary for local supply, education, medical care and public transport; lowering also the quality of life. Experts in the fields of urbanism, traffic planning and administration are actively engaged with studying such towns to find reasons and possible ways out of such development typology. For authors it is often overlooked the fact, that not only conurbations themselves are changing, but their transformation is also linked closely to the surroundings. There are parts of territory that exist and function as unit - or not. Indeed the transformation processes of relations within a territory

are directly related to the development of individual conurbations. In addition, territorial relations, as well as everyday realities and mobility, in and between European cities have changed, as the situation within these cities themselves. While a classification of areas that no longer applies is still utilized in practice. The authors stress the fact that what we witness today is a hybridization and transformation in those categories, as one could be "rural - through our residential perspective; and urban - through our social practices ...". Therefore, in order to meet contemporary planning challenges it is necessary to shift from the common static typology (the urban, the rural, the small and the big cities) to a typology of relations. According Béhar, examining these relations holds the potential of depicting why some small cities are more successful in their development than others. Within the small towns a distinction needs to be made among those remaining under the influence of a dominant city (urban dependent); those that operate in a network of cities without true hierarchy (network city); and those embedded in a local basin organized with strong internal relations (local basin). This is the first step to draft strategies on how to develop small cities in a future-oriented way and thereby improve access to opportunities depending on local territorial conditions.

Dorina Papa - Deals with esthetic quality of the historic urban landscape. She focuses on the historic city image and townscape tradition. This means a pleasing experience related to the city perception,

as one of the most important qualities of the urban environment. Since antiquity, such element of appeal and appreciation of the city has been considered as crucial in city and architecture treatises. Aristotle sustained that the city should be built in a way to transmit happiness. This atmosphere is evident in the traditional cities, in which monuments, residential buildings, squares and roads make up together a harmonious whole. Papa refers to the visual quality of traditional cities, via Camillo Sitte's influential book "The Art of Building Cities". Sitte states that traditional cities transmit a sense of nostalgia that remind us of happy times and argues that this feeling of nostalgia is perceived due to the artistic harmony of the city image. The art of building discussed by Sitte includes the idea of the city as an arrangement of its parts into a harmonious whole. This design unity that characterizes traditional ensembles is the key element of visual appeal. Unity happens at different scales. Elements composing the urban structure must be interrelated visually and contribute to reliving the overall image as a whole. Therefore the author thinks that this is the key point for a strategy that brings Gjirokastra out of depression.

Skënder Luarasi - Underlines the other side of story. He says that one of the things Gjirokastra contests, inverts and destabilizes is precisely the myth of being an old, 'traditional' town, a monument of a past destined to remain frozen, reminiscent of a time that no longer exists, before modernity. Author underlines that by walking in the very heart of the historical town of Gjirokastra, one finds a distinct and varied modern texture, which consists of modern buildings of different periods, from the early twentieth century to the late 60-s and 70-s. The volumes and façades of the modern structures are either distinctly articulated with pilasters, or are simply left as plain, finished with stucco. What is even more striking, is the 'naturalness' with which the modern 'fits' into the old, so much so that it is easily missed. Yet such 'fitness' is not a synthesis but rather a juxtaposition of two different things. So, what makes Gjirokastra heterotopic is the proximity and combination of a vernacular, about which a lot has been written in the official historiography, with a disavowed modernism, about which nothing is written yet. What makes Gjirokastra heterotopic is the juxtaposition of the vernacular and the modern, which are neither opposed nor synthesized. They take place in under the same castle, in the same neighborhoods,

across the same slope, more often than not adjacent, juxtaposed, and intertwined with one another. We often think of modernity as monolithic and as a rupture with the past. A closer look reveals, however, that modernity is characterized by a stylistic multiplicity, which is structurally connected to economic, social and cultural distributions that go well beyond the physical and imaginary confines of the old town. So Luarasi together with Papa, pave the way for a combined strategy of revival against the shrinkage effect, by combining both the traditional and modern features and revoking the a successful way out from history towards future.

Sonia Jojic - Deals with the strategy of promoting sustainable tourism, where (re-)branding Gjirokastra could be an enhancer. She says: the cultural routes, creative tourism and tourism-for-all; could be all perfect as (re-)branding strategies for the creation of sustainable tourism in Gjirokastra. Such strategies are seen as potential tools in enhancing Gjirokastra as a tourist destination and re-adapting/re-vitalizing its economic and demographic aspects. Branding is associated primarily with economic value. Yet, through sustainable tourism, branding also holds symbolic value, since it constitutes a strategy to provide places, cities, towns, with image and cultural meaning. The integration of the three pillars of sustainable tourism, indicates the need for individuality and emotional connection with the environment in the contexts of globalization, thus giving cities and regions depth, originality, and a distinctive character. The Image of the city' is an important factor in persuading native people to return to their city, and the tourists with different means to visit the city.

However, authorities should be more than responsible in giving proper consideration to a strong brand that will trigger the urban development of the city and the strengthening of its identity. In the case of Gjirokastra, city branding is seen as the process of distinction and diversification, where the potential local tourism organizations, cultural and arts facilities, and many other institutional or individual actors should join to develop images of the place. This will to attract potential consumers and investors to particular local areas, involving the component of place making (the process which makes a specific place more attractive) and city branding (the process of promoting a place). Thus the promotion of such places through creative tourism and tourism-for-

all as enhancers of “cultural tourism” can promote city branding, and reshape the city image. This will help develop the city's image and improve its economy.

Erida Curraj - In her article seeks production footprints in favor of innovation for Gjirokastra. One of the main findings of her research is the emergent awareness for protecting the Albanian industrial heritage. The industrial heritage in Albania is underestimated, and few actions have been taken to preserve it. Each day is costing a huge loss to the Albanian heritage and the preservation of the historic industrial sites. The author identifies the industrial landscape of Gjirokastra between 1950-1990. The main challenge for her has been the documentation and gathering evidence, since there is a lack of previous research, and no good documentation of the privatization process. No previous studies have focused on the industrial infrastructure of this city, considering it as something not useful. This shows a lot about the mentality of governance in the past, and only by changing that it is already a big step for Gjirkastra.

In this regard, the author aims to foster a political, institutional, and civic awareness on preserving the industrial heritage. Through an active understanding of its own production capacity, Gjirokastra might be the next destination of the investment on the sites of preserved industrial heritage. Gjirokastra's case study in her research could be a good model for other preservation initiatives for industrial heritage in general in Albania. Therefore the preservation of the industrial heritage in Albania will not be an easy process, but of course it will not be impossible. To achieve it, two main steps need to be undertaken: i) first, to increase awareness of the importance of industrial history in understanding it as a heritage; ii) and second, to harness the tendency to use industrial heritage. The identified potentials of industrial heritage in Gjirokastra are: textile industry, metal processing plant, leather and shoe factory, furniture factory, beverage implant, construction material industry, etc.

Besjana Qaja – Elaborates transport network impact in the shrinking city of Gjirokastra and its rural region. Author says that in order to be able to improve the settlements that inherit certain historical development, there must certainly exist incentives which include social, economic and infrastructural aspect, in order to bring back inhabitants and investments in those “traumatized” living settlements.

These can be achieved through a series of measures starting from: i) reducing unemployment by stimulating entrepreneurship; urban renewal programs (renovation of central parts of the city, protection of industrial craft and cultural heritage, revitalization of various facilities for cultural/educational purposes, etc.); ii) reactivation of local actors, adjacent towns and main villages, as well as enterprises, business environment institutions, non-governmental initiatives, etc.; iii) stimulating cooperation with more advanced spatial units, in order to achieve the adaptation of successful strategies for the return of residents and their subsidization; iv) improving the secondary and tertiary road network to create a network of more connected living settlements to the main access corridor such as the upcoming European motorway (the so called “blue corridor”) in the case of Gjirokastra; v) improving the transport network to start a new life cycle for the city and its neighboring settlements. As recommended before, all social-economic-infrastructural measures combined together aim to improve the performance of the living settlements in relation to their living conditions, and by not letting down the local people which makes them to escape in other cities or countries. In contrary authorities must encourage the creation of an atmosphere of valuing local resources and promoting the city and region, with the rest of Albania and with the nearby cross-bordering Greece. Genuine complementarity in this cases is more useful than the wild competition.

Gian Andrea Giacobone – Elaborates the concept of driverless transition - the value of autonomous mobility for sustainable urban development. To him cases like Gjirokastra city has a dynamic and difficult terrain. Therefore despite walking and biking, driving (especially in public transportation) must also be somehow earmarked and branded to the local conditions there. Author emphasizes that in the last two centuries, contemporary cities have been progressively changing their urban landscapes according to the functional necessities of the auto-centered transport system, but, over the years, that model of consumption has unfortunately contributed negatively to the environmental degradation of public spaces. Nevertheless, with the advent of autonomous vehicles, urban planners have new opportunities of rethinking urban mobility in a new and sustainable way by completely reshaping transport infrastructures and re-organizing land





uses for the future development of more accessible and livable cities. In fact, autonomous vehicles are expected to transform the use and experience of the vehicle itself but also change the overall infrastructure design, which, in turn, will have a great impact on urban planning, location choices, and land use organization, etc. For these reasons, this theoretical contribution sheds lights on the urban transition towards autonomous transport by reporting the main advantages – in terms of safety, social and economic inclusion, freeing of public space, as well as sustainability of the urban environment – under the condition that the new technology is able to offer to urban planners means for improving the quality of existing mobility systems. Moreover, Giacobone highlights the benefits of autonomous vehicles by describing briefly an ongoing research experiment that is testing the use of driverless cars in the real world. Considering this, the manuscript gives urban planners a new perspective capable of adapting spatial planning and land-use organization to future and uncertain challenges related to the implementation of advanced technologies such as autonomous vehicles in the existing urban context. In particular, the opportunity of assessing the impact of those vehicles on the existing cities (including Gjirokastra) will prepare urban planners to play a strategic role in defining a common urban development policy framework for helping Albanian and European cities to evolve in perfect symbiosis with the new and disruptive driverless technology. Not mentioning that autonomous vehicles could be the “new brand & image” to help the city even indirectly to stop shrinking and change negative opinions about it.

Alessandro Massarente – Illustrates the concept of “dynamic heritage” with the case of Havana, Cuba. He discusses practices and theories related to urban planning and architectural design in a similar UNESCO listed cities, promoting a shared approach on the theme of urban regeneration, although in other historical context. The practices and theories of Massarente derive from concrete field researches, as well as didactic experiences within the “interdisciplinary logic”. This research and pedagogical experiences in Havana, has been related to the concepts of rehabilitation, regeneration, heritage conservation, which were considered like “moving concepts”. The emblem of such dynamic is the evolution of the concept of heritage: from tangible to intangible,

from monuments to cultural landscape. Havana and its territory, indeed represent a privileged case study from which is possible to observe not only influences of European and North American culture on the Global South cities, but could also be observed an original hybridizations process deriving from the intertwining of different practices related to the local urban planning and architectural design, with UNESCO cities guidelines and practices, which is also a good reference for Gjirokastra as well.

PART 2: Practice

CHWB, Culture Heritage without Borders & Department of Architectural Conservation (DAC), at Royal College, University of Fine Arts, Stockholm, Sweden - two old partners of POLIS University, with their permission allowed us to republish their research and strategy on how to restore a world heritage site like Gjirokstra, via bottom-up process of stakeholders participation. The work describes in depth preparatory actions for preserving and restoring cultural heritage in transitional/shrinking situations. For professionals from abroad it is not an easy task to evaluate how to handle internal questions in a foreign town. They often don't know how their opinion differs from that of the local inhabitants. However, in this case they successfully tried to find possible spaces for their proposals, and suggested things which may be regarded as (un-)realistic. So the question is: which consequences will arise for Gjirokastra being a “UNESCO World Heritage”? What kind of knowledge is necessary for the local handling of it? What is important to save and to what extent can some buildings be demolished? What seems most important for the town are the dilemmas: i) revitalization and modernization; ii) or, preserving the cultural heritage? But of course, at the end one must make all this work together and create a well-functioning unity in the city. This is not an easy task.

CHWB & DAC have undertaken first an in-depth analysis of the city. Then they posed the question: how to revitalize the city? They put a special attention to the origin and later on to the “Ottoman town” by going through a process of walk along origin and history of the city. Then they document examples of everyday heritage from the urban ensembles and bazar, public spaces, exteriors and interiors of historic buildings, etc. They pose also the alternative of hosting the local university of Gjirokastra in the premises of “historic town”, in order to make it alive and functioning, especially

thanks to the presence of young people. They advise also adaptation of certain houses for commercial functions or touristic purposes. Authors underline the importance of educating local masters and artisans, especially on maintaining the tradition of masonry; stone, iron and wood works. They also try to link the city with the heritage of the local villages, rich in agriculture, landscape and historic itineraries along Drinos river valley, as well as winery and raki production customs. Concrete improvement projects and renovation field camps are also described in this part of publication, and in many of them students of POLIS also participated, by contributing to the renovation organized jointly by NGOs like: CHwB, Mozaik, Co-Plan, with the help of local and international donors.

MetroPolis.al architectural studio @ POLIS University - illustrates in this book a case of how a modernist and historical building, in the same time, is renovated as part of a historic neighborhood, but without losing its originality. This is the case of "Asim Zeneli" gymnasium school building in Gjiroakstra, a concrete project under implementation, that uses some of the principles mentioned above. This is a kind of acupuncture intervention tries to illustrate how selected and strategic interventions of public investments can be used to fuel city improvements in general.

Polis Planning Unit - illustrates how rural areas of Lunxheri, Mashkullore and Lazarat at Gjirokastra municipality, could be planned and developed by combining historic, agricultural, landscape and touristic potentials, and in the same time promote the reverse effects of shrinkage. This is done thanks to the bottom-up planning experiences in another similar area, at nearby municipality of Libohova. The images of work undertaken in Zagori area, show how planning instruments in a shrinking area are combined with guidelines of tourism promotion to stop shrinkage.

Llazar Kumaraku - deals at the end with the subject of innovative urban design strategies for a traditional city like Gjirokastra. It also refers to the work done by the Polis Planning Unit in the case of "city center bypass" for Gjirokastra - an international competition - organized by local and central authorities. The main point for the proposal is to avoid hard infrastructure works, by using soft innovative design instruments that better facilitate circulation and public transport,

without traffic encroaching in the historic center, and without damaging it by heavy civil works.

PART 3: Research

International PhD Workshop - elaborates shortly a kind of Terms of Reference for the annual International PhD Research Project between POLIS and UNIFE. As main objective of research, each group must elaborate a strategy in the scale of the city developing acupuncture interventions. All the groups worked under the same general strategy, developed under the framework of the International Competition: "Gjirokastra Organic Loop" by POLIS University, as mentioned above. In terms of methodology, the workshop is structured in a way that promotes the merger of different expertise to address the diverse aspects related to Gjirokastra and its region. The following steps are used as a pragmatic approach to combine theoretical knowledge, physical environment and existing data: i) Introduction to the project and area ; ii) Theoretical lectures and illustration via case studies; iii) Site visit and fieldwork; iv) In-studio work and project discussion; v) Theoretical research and paper which is elaborated over the year.

The leading team of professors: Besnik Aliaj, Loris Rossi, Llazar Kumaraku, Skender Luarasi, Sotir Dhamo, etc., focused on this paradigmatic approach: The symbiosis between the city and the character of human life, is seen as a reflection throughout the centuries, which has led to the creation of persistence to the spirit of place. In addition, during the recent years, due to drastic social, economic and technological changes, typical for modern times, the fragile equilibrium between humans, architecture, and traditional urban landscape system, has been put into risk. The abandonment of the historic city, the degradation of buildings, inconsistent interventions towards the existing context, new abusive construction, as well as the chaos produced in the city as a result of the increasing number of cars and their concentration in the bazaar area, it has decreased gradually the interest of tourists and is seen as a risk factor for the historical values that the city embodies. That's why, trying to preserve a certain balance constitutes the challenge of intervention in such contexts, that necessitates the activation of urban life, as much as the conservation of the historic image in return can contribute for the reactivation of urban life and touristic attractions.

Rossi & Pedata - paper tries to recognize the importance of drawings, diagrams and notations as form of knowledge. Building on the concept on Stan Allen's theoretical framework - which defines drawing as a tool capable of conveying a design project from a distance - the same concept of distance (understood as physical disconnection from Gjirokastra's urban reality) was applied by the PhD students of POLIS/UNIFE in their proposals for suggesting transformation of the reality at certain distance. This means transposing through drawings and notations of their ideas to the city's abandonment process. In few words, they conclude by saying that drawings have the capacity to represent the world as it is, and to imagine also what it could become. At the same time, drawings should be considered for both their speculative (devising possible futures) and demonstrative function (tools of composition and communication). So drawing as a form of knowledge, underlines the importance of drawings in architectural research, regardless of the execution time and technique. This means that drawings are equally important as written text, capable of being read, translating reality, and devising future scenarios.

Below are summarized the conclusive findings of the work done under the above mentioned logic:

Team 1: Covered Embers (Eleonora Baccega, Nicola Tasselli, Stefano Romano) - Identified and used 3 typologies of the so called "empty pixels": i) The first typology, divided itself into two sub-types, uses the abandoned and damaged buildings of the historical area (sprawl); ii) The second typology, instead uses the "unfinished" of the industrial and the contemporary areas of the city (linear); iii) The third typology of abandoned buildings, differs from the previous ones due to the very large dimensions of buildings in the contemporary texture of Gjirokastra. These buildings are former factories and former schools that might be used as residences for artists and ateliers, in which could be encouraged further collaborations between the public and private sectors. According them a separate description deserves also the stadium of the city that they decided to transform into a public space, superimposing on its previous identity as a soccer field, with a new identity of performative space; opening the stadium at ground level to guarantee functional practicability at all times and adding a stage on which to perform.

Team 2: Accessing Gjirokastra (Endri Duro, Marco Negri, Xhoana Kristo) - The concept of constellation of this team is referred to a group of "urban stars" (the city texture is the "sky") that forms an imaginary territorial outline or pattern, which in return represents an image to be used, through which actual reference points of Gjirokastër can be revitalized, and new ones could be added. These will serve for the team as important poles in the proposed territorial "constellation". The concept can be well-defined in Gjirokastra due to the accessibility-related issues, like: lack of infrastructure, abandoned buildings, lost heritage and lack of public transport, etc.

The proper definition of these territorial poles, as well as giving them a strategy of connection, can solve a lot of problems in relation to the accessibility in this city, reducing also the problem of shrinkage. The territorial poles have different characteristics, and are mainly seen in alteration with modern parts, like: the stadium and industrial zone, the historical and cultural heritage zones, the old bazaar, etc. Abandoned areas are also taken in consideration with the aim of revitalizing all the surrounding buildings in these territorial poles for different purposes and functions. The landmarks in each territorial pole have a vital role in the proposed strategy of the team, since they would help in giving an identity to the poles in itself; and contribute to the better orientation within the city. Landmarks could be already existing, like: the bazaar, the castle and clock tower, or the chimneys in an industrial areas, as well as the highest points of churches and mosques (all to be categorized as vertical landmarks). Others might as well be added based on the location, characteristic of the zones, etc., where the territorial poles are proposed. Authors referrer also to the famous international landmarks examples like "Luca Piazza Anfiteatro", "Walnut-Public Spaces", "Serpentine Pavilion", etc.

Team 3: Against the Grain (Alberto Grando, Dasara Pula) - focused on three main issues: i) the abandoned architectural heritage, as well as the lack of social life and other activities in the old city; ii) the absence of relationships between the modern city and the old city; that seems to be developed in the past separately from each-other; conceptually, aesthetically and functionally; iii) the large number of informal buildings and residential quarters built on non-appropriate or dangerous land. To address all the three issues, the

team's proposal deals mainly with the urban morphology and the process of "deleting". The used approach is to frame the city in a modern condition: Gjirokastra is not just a historic city, it is a modern city with a historical part, it has a university, a hospital, a stadium, etc. In addition the morphology of Gjirokastra followed the topography of the city, creates an organic street pattern. The same characterizes also the modern city, which is built in the outskirts of the old city. Another distinct element of Gjirokastra's urban morphology is also its hydrography, signified by water "paths" along the narrow streets of the city. By using all such elements of the urban morphology, their project tries to create a relationship between the old and the modern city.

Team 4: Health City (Doriana Musaj, Ivonne Ortiz, Luca Lezzerini) – proceeded by realizing a spatial analysis with maps, dividing it into layers of populated areas, parklands, communication and circulation elements. The identification of spaces and analysis of their potential intervention were required further by the team. From a designer's perspective: the focus on identity, construction techniques, local materials with potentials to develop original products was used to unify the specializations and generate a redistribution of activities within the city. From the engineer vision: the promotion and the development of services in order to improve comfort and accessibility, was also seen as highly necessary. As a result of these arguments, the team came up with a proposal for the redevelopment of a city focused on art and design, in which different services and programs can be offered.

All activities could be centered towards the objective of the identity recovery across the development of original local products, which uses original local techniques and materials. Finally, a territorial activities circuit has been also proposed, focused on the objective of maximizing the city and its surroundings points of interest, in order to generate a wide spectrum offer of activities to all segments of the public.

The ideas are latter on elaborated in depth by the individual papers of each project participant finalizing also their main recommendations for Gjirokastra:

Eloenora Baccega – says that the attempt to stop the depopulation of the city should start from the unification of the three different parts of Gjirokastra into a single project by establishing a 'connecting loop'. This is not enough, however, to keep

people in the city and keep the city alive, so the adopted approach considers a more forward-looking intervention by attracting and involving people in the city and using art as a catalyst.

Endri Duro - The old bazaar and the fortress are two of the most distinguished sites in town and can be seen as the main territorial pole from which the revitalization of the city can begin. The fortress, extending on a rocky hill, is the biggest and one of the oldest constructions in Gjirokastra. Due to its superior position relative to the other parts with an elevation of about 370 meters, it serves as an important 'landmark' that divides the city into two parts. However urgent and periodic actions must be undertaken to prevent erosion and seismic faults.

Ivonne Ortiz Sanchez - seeks to emphasize the strengths of the city, such as: tourism infrastructure, hotels and restaurants, restored buildings, and courses and workshops organized by the local municipality and NGO-s, which focus on the culture and history of the city, by pursuing new sources of income and taking advantage of the tourist development beyond 'normal' seasons. This means to empower Gjirokastra citizens to have their own businesses and be active part of the city, via organization of summer/winter courses and artistic residencies.

Luca Lezzerini - investigates how to support the renaissance of Gjirokastra economy and society, fueling both through the redesign of its urban plan and to support its transformation into a "City of Health", which means widening the main economy pillar from tourism towards health, services. The idea is to create a local market for medical and sanitary services that will cause the creation of new industries and companies, and attract new, younger and professionally prepared people, as well as it will bring equity and start a virtuous loop that will fuel itself for a long time. The local sanitary and medical market will be initially powered by attracting older people, following the example of other countries, like in Portugal. This balances supply and demand for the city markets.

Marco Negri's - accessibility approach tries to include different points of view such as the notion of accessibility seen in transportation terms, and based on its efficiency and multimodality. It also contributes to the complex issue of accessibility concerning people with

disabilities, by making use of the digital technology and transformation. The pervasive transition from 'analogue-to-digital' processes and the development of information-and-communication technologies, has provided new opportunities to supply information, infrastructure, and public services to people. Nowadays with our smartphones, citizens can access and produce data, which can then be used by them to increase the awareness about urban opportunities and optimize urban projects and policies. Worldwide internet connection has blurred the relation between a place and its use, deepening reuse strategies for buildings and neighborhoods. The development of shared and circular economy and new health standards in cities has led to the innovation of public services both in an evolutionary way (e.g. water supply and management, waste management) and in a disruptive way (e.g. transportation design, urban hybrid services). Smart Cities logic try to catch most of these opportunities, focusing on innovative urban solutions able to exploit such a potential.

Nicola Tasselli - underlines that Old Gjirokastra located close to the ridge, is characterized by a dense and organic fabric. The new city, located at the foot of the ridge, has a modern fabric. The industrial area is developed along the primary road network and the Drino river as well. These represent three distinct phases, which contribute to the identity of the place and people. Therefore the maintenance and preservation of this triple-identity must be the primary driver to develop any intervention strategy.

Stefano Romano – says that art outside institutional spaces, and located in the urban spaces of the city, is an extraneous element that could act as a 'vector' in the local context, to convey reflections, emotions, physical and social changes. The old town of Gjirokastra has in its urban fabric many abandoned or decaying buildings. They could become integral parts of the structures of as many art-works that make use to the local architecture and nature. In this case, art becomes a narration over time, through site-specific installation of artworks that can affect reality through reflection and interaction with people and spaces.

Xhoana Kristo - investigates possible scenarios on how to stimulate social interaction as a dynamic and changing sequence of social actions between

individuals or groups. Well-being for her should be also improved through design for locals and visitors, unifying the image of traditional cities, and requalifying public space. 'Intermediate spaces' and 'leftover public, semi-public and semi-private or private areas' between or among the adjacent existing buildings could be important assets for starting transformation, simply by using morphological logic.

Final Reflection

The processes of "shrinkage" are multidimensional phenomena encompassing cities or regions of nowadays. Such territorial entities are experiencing dramatic decline of their economic and social bases. The dominant factors for the phenomena are usually diverse and complex, but the two most evident factors of the "shrinking cities" are: i) the loss of employment opportunities; ii) and out-migration of population. Other research also underline that decline is usually enduring. This makes shrinkage to jeopardize the prosperity of the city, the region and their competitiveness. Therefore - following also recommendations from the partner School of Planning at Kaiserslautern University, Germany - it can be said that in order to provide a perspective for the development of resilient and sustainable nature, in certain shrinking cities, it is necessary: i) to adapt to the selected shrinking city a multi-disciplinary approach of research; ii) to analyze in addition case studies and paths of concrete actions in favor of the selected shrinking city; iii) to develop methodologies, training skills and applications for the strategies how to combat the shrinkage phenomena; iv) last but not least, to provide trainings for a new generation of planners, where universities can play a significant role.

Shrinking crises often and repeatedly confront urban development in our realities. In the past, 'old' crisis such as structural changes in society, and nowadays, recent global crisis like COVID 19 pandemic, all affect aspects of our life, like: health, economies, education, social and political stability, thus posing new challenges for cities and urban development in general. Although it is still unclear to what extent cities are changed now and in the future, it is urgent to be considered that the future-oriented solutions with sustainable and resilient considerations, should be designed to guide development in general. However, cities that lose population due to structural changes in longer periods of

decline are the most vulnerable ones. But cities in different contexts and geographic locations might react differently. Many of them are now eager to learn from their own mistakes, and to identify “best practices” as examples of solutions towards shrinkage. Indeed, crisis often offers space for creativity and innovations, such as: i) Schneidewind, et al (1) suggest in their ‘Post-corona city’ paper; ii) and Pallagst, et al (2) mentions on “out of the box” strategies for shrinking cities. The research project of POLIS/UNIFE in Gjirokastra tries exactly to acknowledge research tools and methodologies to tackle “shrinking cities” and their revitalization, while considering also sustainability and resilience dimensions. It intends to engage researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in concrete reflection about approaches, strategies, practices of different territorial scales, as well as underline their limitations with the goal of becoming resilient at the end of the tunnel of ‘shrinkage’.

Some of the main identified strategies and instruments against shrinkage could be grouped as below:

1. Conceptualizing and governing shrinking cities – This means investigating the concepts and paths for revitalizing shrinking cities, especially disruptive events; factors of dependencies and uncertainties; overlapping between ‘shrinkage’ and ‘growth beyond’; etc. It is essential to investigate the real reasons behind and the complete picture of the phenomena, rather than merely looking into the superficial causes of shrinkage. In addition, the affected cities must first analyze policy responses and planning strategies in governing shrinking cities, by understanding the way processes, planning strategies and policies, are directed; as well as by discovering which are the involved stakeholders.

2. Greening and right-sizing shrinking cities - Underlining ‘greening’ and ‘right-sizing’ as catalysts for new ideas and innovative methodologies to deal with the issue of ‘shrinking cities’; it needs to involve a paradigmatic shift from “growth-centered” planning to “shrinking” sustainably logic. While “greening” has become almost standard in many revitalizing initiatives, “urban gardening” programs in the public spaces and cities could become the next step towards bio-economic and energy efficient objectives, that bring back trust on shrinking cities.

3. Re-growing and post-growing cities

– By focusing on the strategies of shrinking cities, it can help stop decline and encourage new/robust “place-based” development. It is very important to understand that shrinkage per se, is not the final destination of a city. It can be indeed a starting point for new type of urban economies and innovative land uses. The response of the local authorities through creative and innovative experimentation of spatial planning and city management, could be a positive turn-around of a city’s crisis.

4. Social factors of reviving shrinking cities – This means that by establishing a way to understand the impact of social infrastructure improvements, we can also better understand the (non-)active social networks; social groups with special requirements such as: migrants, elderly, etc. This means we will be more aware for the role they play in the process of ‘shrinking cities’; be this in terms of housing, economy, or social life. This requires also monitoring the role of flexible services, co-production spaces, and public investments that aim growth against decline.

5. Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic of shrinking cities – The situation in the last 2 years, shows us that monitoring of urban development in shrinking cities situation, must be done by following the COVID-19 pandemic in different countries and cultural settings, in order to verify: if pre-existing urban trajectories have changed, accelerated or stabilized? Anyway, sustainability and resilience this will be a specific theme for research to be developed in the next international PhD project of POLIS/UNIFE along with 2021-22 academic year.

6. Frontiers of the shrinking cities – Last but not least, new developments affecting shrinking cities must be also verified under the perspective of changing regional/cross-border perspective and globalization patterns. This includes travel restrictions, protection and adaptation to climate change, etc.

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