

What development for the Prespa region?

Cultural issues and heritage conservation for the enhancement of local identity and as a catalyst for sustainable development

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Abstract - *Assessing the development of an area requires a thorough understanding of its identity, in order to prevent the economic growth from distorting the peculiarities of the site. In this sense, a strategic project for the Prespa region, and particularly the municipality of Pustec, must adopt a holistic approach, seeking to manage as many aspects of the development process as possible.*

Economic development must be assessed, and consequently guided, with consideration of its impact (cost-benefit) also on the region heritage. Firstly, the impact that an infrastructural, touristic and social development may have on the natural heritage must be evaluated, assessing how the territory will be altered by new roads and urbanization, taking into account both the preservation of natural beauty and the environmental effects on the lake ecosystem. Secondly, the effects on cultural heritage, including the numerous archaeological sites and Byzantine cave churches, should be assessed to ensure their sustainable preservation and fruition.

Additionally, it should also be examined the impact of the development on the material and immaterial culture of the places. The spread of alternative lifestyles and of increasingly easier connections with the outside world may lead to the decline of traditional customs, affecting not only social dynamics but also architectural and cultural practices. In many cases, rapid development in previously isolated areas results in the abandonment of vernacular architecture in favor of standardized models. Therefore, evaluating sustainable development in the region involves considering the distinctive architectural aspects of the Prespa region and exploring ways to preserve and enhance them to establish a unique identity for the area, including for tourism, while respecting its genius loci.

Keywords - *Pustec, vernacular architecture, genius loci, local identity, historic centres, basic buildings*

Introduction

The recognition and preservation of cultural heritage have long been acknowledged as essential endeavours. However, the criteria for identifying heritage and determining strategies for its conservation have evolved over time. In recent decades, there has been a broadening of the definition of heritage, which was once confined to architectural monuments and natural wonders considered for their aesthetic value. Today, aesthetic and historic significance alone are no longer a sufficient basis for heritage identification. Instead, there is a growing recognition of other forms of value, such as testimonial and identity value, which extend beyond traditional monumental and landscape heritage to incorporate broader cultural domains. Today, the concept of heritage can involve intangible aspects, including anthropological and ethnographic elements like local traditions. Moreover, there is an expanded consideration of material culture previously overlooked due to

its lack of monumental status. This disciplinary evolution leads to discussions on preserving historic town centres and vernacular architecture, including basic buildings, which fall under this broadening of the idea of heritage. The widening of the concept of heritage necessitates the identification of suitable preservation approaches, which may not always be easy to acknowledge. Indeed, as the concept of heritage becomes more and more pervasive, conservation cannot lead to the crystallisation of every aspect of a society's life. Against this backdrop, this contribution aims to explore the heritage of the Prespa region, focusing on the municipality of Pustec. It aims to highlight the region's unique characteristics and challenges, particularly regarding heritage elements that may be rather difficult to identify. Additionally, efforts will be made to propose protection strategies for the area's non-monumental built heritage, which

is particularly vulnerable due to its fragmentation, diffusion, and exposure, especially in the event of rapid and uncontrolled economic development.

Literature review

The dialogue on heritage conservation and enhancement raises recurring questions regarding both the definition of heritage itself and the practical methods to ensure its preservation and utilization. In this regard, the Charters for Conservation and Restoration crafted since the early 20th century serve as valuable documents aimed at establishing a universally recognized set of principles. These charters not only offer practical guidance but also delineate the scope and effectiveness of the discipline. Serving as a fundamental point of convergence among scholars, authorities, and practitioners, they provide crucial guidelines for objectively assessing approaches to heritage.

Italy's unique landscape, characterized by an exceptional density of architectural and archaeological monuments shaped by historic events since antiquity, has facilitated the rapid advancement, compared to other regions, of the discipline concerning restoration and conservation practices. Thus, it's not surprising that Italian scholars have made significant contributions to these charters. Their involvement underscores the vitality of the discipline, which has been cultivated in both academic and practical spheres since the 19th century and further solidified in the 20th century through figures like Gustavo Giovannoni.

Giovannoni's influence on the 1931 Athens Restoration Charter is noteworthy, as his ideas helped shape the principles articulated in that document. The Charter [18] emphasized the importance for nations to care for their heritage and uniform legislation giving priority to public interest over private concerns. Furthermore, it advocated for broadening the study of art to instil in people the love and respect for their cultural legacy. The Charter also introduced the concept of monuments not as isolated entities, but as elements embedded in a context given by the historic city.

The Italian Restoration Charter of 1932 [18] confirmed the purposes of the Athens document at the national level, expanding the concept of scientific restoration, i.e. based on objective principles. The subsequent Venice Charter of 1964 [18] reflected on lessons learned from restoration efforts post-World War II, emphasizing the principle that «restoration ends where the hypothesis begins». It stressed the importance of avoiding stylistic falsification, introducing the need to operate «with the sign of one's age» in the reconstruction of irreparably damaged portions. Moreover, the Venice Charter broadens the concept of preservation to the urban environment, partly overcoming the idea of a picturesque context, which still permeated the previous charters.

Further charters, including the Italian Restoration Charter of 1972 [18] and international declarations

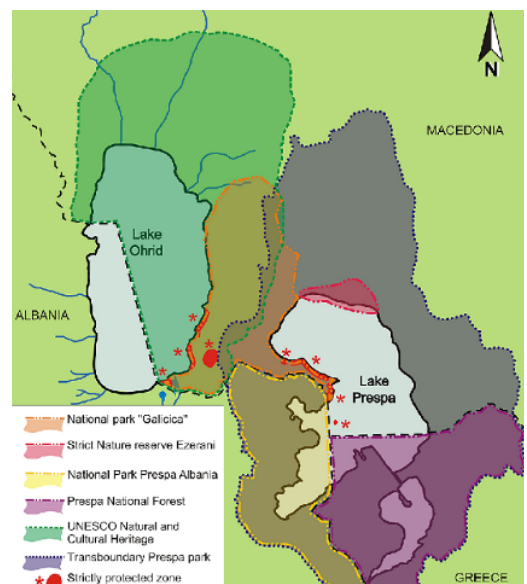


Fig 1/ The division between Albania, Macendonia and Greece of the Prespa Lake. It is possible to see the presence of nationally divided parks.

source/ Kostoski Albrecht Trajanovski (2010)



Fig 2/ The church of St. Mary of Maligrad, interior and exterior, one of the 11 cave churches on the Prespa Lake.

source/ Prospora (2019)

like the Amsterdam Declaration of 1975 [18], the Washington International Charter of 1987 [18], and the Krakow Charter of 2000 [6], and many others, continued to underscore the significance of preservation, conservation, and restoration. They increasingly broadened the concept of heritage, emphasizing the need to protect not only architectural monuments but also landscapes and historic centres in a widespread manner.

In this context, it is important to consider the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, signed in Faro in 2005. The Faro Convention definitively sanctions the broadening of the concept of cultural heritage, defining it as «a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify [...] as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time» [14]. Furthermore, it is defined how the value of heritage is not intrinsic to an asset, but derives from the recognition of the community, which attaches value to specific aspects of cultural heritage, and consequently wishes to sustain and transmit them to future generations.

On the other hand, the recognition of the structural value of all historic settlements and basic buildings, no longer viewed solely as picturesque background for monuments, undoubtedly owes much to the studies initiated by the school of thought established by Saverio Muratori since the 1960s. This paper specifically acknowledges the contributions of this school, focusing on its typological and morphological analysis of building fabrics, which were further developed and refined by Gianfranco Caniggia. Caniggia's work emphasises the reading of built environment and deepens the comprehension of the historic processes that have shaped it. For Caniggia, comprehending the dynamics underlying the evolution of historic urban fabric is, on the one hand, the tool for identifying the value of the basic buildings and, on the other hand, the instrument that can guide new interventions on the consolidated fabric [4]. His approach seeks

to align new interventions with historic logics preserving the integrity of historic centres and avoiding any distortion of their character.

The Ferrara school, which the present paper intends to be part of, is grafted onto the critical conception of the conservative intervention, as identified by the figures of Cesare Brandi, Guglielmo De Angelis d'Ossat, Renato Bonelli, Roberto Pane, and many others, whose thought strongly influenced the disciplinary dissertations of the second half of the 20th century, conditioning the 1964 and 1972 restoration charters in various ways. Accordingly, Professor Dalla Negra's interpretation of Restoration is aimed at re-establishing the architectural text's legibility, whenever it is mutilated or tampered with or degraded, through an intervention that may be contemporary but is in harmony with the pre-existence [13]. This principle coexists with the conviction of the need for a value judgement on the architectures to assess if they are susceptible only to conservative restoration interventions or can allow for transformation and restructuring interventions. Depending on the value of an asset, it is possible to intervene either in a more conservative or transformative manner. Especially in the case of basic building types, it is often possible to recognise a value of basic building types, which enables non purely conservative interventions, but which should be developed in an assonant manner without renouncing design, along the natural evolution of historic basic building types over time [8].

Tangible and intangible heritage of the Prespa region

Heritage protection as an aspect of identity and a driver of development

As highlighted in the Amsterdam Declaration «historical continuity must be preserved in the environment if we are to maintain or create surroundings which enable individuals to find their identity and feel secure despite abrupt social changes» [18]. Such a belief is the topic of numerous reflections that have been developed over the years, involving both scholars and the Council of Europe's production at regulatory and policy level on culture. While the precise definition of



Fig 3/ The church of St. Mary of Maligrad, interior and exterior, one of the 11 cave churches on the Prespa Lake.

source/ Prospora (2019)

cultural heritage remains a topic of ongoing debate, it is generally identified as the product of significant human endeavours, connecting the importance attributed to the object with the collective memory it represents. Thus, Heritage can be considered a «cultural scaffolding» [5], manifesting the identity values of a community and its evolution within a specific territorial context. This expanded notion of cultural heritage encompasses not only architectural monuments but also a multiplicity of forms, including landscape and natural heritage, as well as intangible heritage linked to the ethnographic values that define human identity.

The Prespa Lake region shows a transversal identity heritage across its different shores, encompassing Albanian, Greek, and Macedonian territories. Historically, the lake has served as the primary communication route connecting the settlements along its shores. The surrounding mountains have fostered the development and preservation of distinctive identity traits shared among these settlements. However, the introduction of national borders in the early 20th century, dividing territories that were once united under the Ottoman Empire (Figure 1), has added complexity to the region's heritage dynamics. Given this historic context, heritage preservation in the Prespa region holds particular significance.

On one hand, it can help strengthening the bonds between the lake's shores, advocating for strategic policies aimed at facilitating cross-border interactions. Additionally, the region's preserved customs, settlement patterns, and natural landscapes offer a unique and compelling touristic attraction, contrasting with the industrialized and densely populated areas elsewhere.

On the other hand, the preservation of heritage also presents challenges. While constituting a potential vector of economic and social development from a tourism perspective, there is a delicate balance to maintain. Development initiatives aimed at harvest tourism have the potential to alter the very heritage they seek to promote. Thus, it is crucial to carefully assess both the potential and challenges inherent in the region's heritage.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the Prespa region's heritage, it is essential to identify

its key aspects, considering both its potential and vulnerabilities. This holistic approach will enable stakeholders to develop sustainable strategies that can take advantage of the region's heritage for positive economic and social outcomes while safeguarding its integrity for future generations..

Monumental heritage: landscape and architectural monuments

The very first heritage aspects that can be identified in the Prespa region are those connected with a conventional conception of heritage, notably focusing on architectural monuments. These monuments hold significant aesthetic and historic value and are typically identified and protected by regulatory bodies which identifies assets of cultural interest and ensures their preservation. This identification may be subject to refinement following accurate in situ assessments, but it is basically already present in the region. Notably, the region shows numerous archaeological sites, including prehistoric hut settlements and ancient and medieval fortifications. Among the architectural monuments, the most notable are the Byzantine churches built on cliffs and other challenging terrains, serving as hermitages during the Middle Ages (Figure 2). Preserving these buildings present unique challenges, not only in ensuring physical conservation, which cannot be taken for granted in any case, but also in facilitating their meaningful utilization. Overcoming the natural obstacles to access these hermitages requires the establishment of routes and installations that should harmonize with the surrounding context while respecting the integrity of these assets. Maintaining their authenticity and cultural significance requires careful planning and implementation to avoid any distortion.

However, in addition to architectural heritage, another major heritage asset in the Prespa region pertains to the landscape (Figure 3), which was once identified as natural beauty. Nowadays, this term is considered outdated as it is linked to an exclusively aesthetic conception, whereas the idea of landscape encompasses the territory in a holistic manner. This broader understanding recognizes the inherent environmental, cultural, and ecological



Fig 4/ The pristine landscape of Prespa region, from the street to Pustec.

source/ author, Pustec (2023)

values embedded within the landscape. The Prespa Lake ecosystem, along with the surrounding mountain complexes, is embedded with remarkable biodiversity and environmental significance. While the presence of several national parks across the bordering nations is a positive indicator (Figure 1), there is still space for improvement in coordinating and linking these entities to enhance their effectiveness in conservation efforts.

A significant challenge lies in addressing the impact of intensive agricultural practices, particularly in Greece and Macedonia, on the lake ecosystem. Pollution from pesticides and fertilizers, as well as excessive water consumption, have contributed to a decrease in the lake's water level, posing a significant concern in recent years [15]. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts to mitigate pollution, promote sustainable agricultural practices, and ensure the conservation of water resources. Safeguarding the integrity of the landscape and its associated ecological values, is an essential clue for the region to uphold its heritage while fostering long-term environmental sustainability.

Widespread heritage: ethnographic issues and evidence from material culture

In a contemporary perspective on heritage, it becomes imperative to recognize additional elements of the cultural fabric that define the identity of people of the Prespa region. This encompasses both tangible and intangible aspects of culture, reflecting the social traditions and way of life unique to the area. These cultural elements are evidence of the enduring survival of certain practices, often fostered by the region's geographical and geopolitical isolation as a border area.

The demo-ethnographic aspects of the region are evident in the enduring social structures, traditions, dialects, and customs that have persisted over time. Traditional occupations, particularly those related to agriculture aimed at subsistence, continue to rely on pack animals such as mules and horses, as well as manual tools. This permanence is particularly pronounced in the Albanian area, where agricultural mechanization has been slower to penetrate compared to the Macedonian area, which

benefits from more extensive flat terrain. Even the tourist-driven development which has already begun to alter the social compositions of local populations of the Greek region, has not yet made an impact in the Pustec area. Indeed, involving local populations in a participative conservation process is crucial to ensuring that conservation efforts align with the needs and values of the communities deeply connected to the territory. The 2005 Faro Convention underscores the significance of engaging local communities in the conservation of cultural heritage, advocating for collaborative and inclusive approaches. Strategies should be devised to actively involve residents in various aspects of conservation, including the collection and transmission of traditional knowledge, as well as participation in guided processes of urban regeneration and restoration. Additionally, efforts should be made to promote sustainable tourism practices that prioritize environmental preservation and respect for local culture. By fostering greater awareness and appreciation of regional heritage among both visitors and residents, these initiatives can contribute to the long-term preservation and vitality of cultural heritage in the Prespa region.

However, the dynamic relationship between society and material culture means that social changes also impact on tangible aspects of heritage. This often leads to the loss or modification of certain material aspects, such as the replacement of wooden boats with plastic ones, the alteration of traditional lot fences, and the demolition of historic houses in favour of modern concrete buildings. Inadequate regulation of such replacements is a significant factor contributing to the changes in the urban landscape, resulting in the loss of both formal and structural values (Figure 4). While it's essential to empower the preservation of intangible traditions by establishing cultural centres to sustain traditions, festivals, dances, traditional fishing and farming methods, and local idioms, it's equally crucial to conserve certain physical aspects to uphold the region's identity. Preserving these physical elements, particularly architectural structures comprising the basic buildings fabric of the region, is fundamental as they serve as tangible manifestations of the area's building



culture. Although these buildings may not be formally protected like architectural monumental heritage, they are nonetheless vital testimonies of the region's architectural identity. Therefore, it's necessary to critically assess their value and identify acceptable transformation possibilities to safeguard their intelligibility. This approach ensures the preservation of valuable elements inherent in these basic building types while allowing for necessary adaptations.

Therefore, since protecting the historic urban fabric is essential for maintaining the identity of places, it's crucial to comprehensively understand the values embedded within them, so that correct actions can be adequately addressed. Only this understanding will help prevent their loss due to replacement by modern buildings while also avoiding their transformation into static tourist sceneries devoid of any authenticity. By striking a balance between preservation and adaptation, the region can retain its unique identity while fostering sustainable development.

Tools and methodology

Understanding morpho-typological aspects of the basic buildings fabrics as an instrument for preservation

Recognizing the need to preserve diffuse heritage beyond architectural or landscape monuments requires a deep understanding of the underlying reasons and construction methods of basic buildings. Unlike architecture meticulously planned by the critical conscience of a discernible designer, basic constructions often exhibit an apparently chaotic layout. However, these organic buildings fabrics are not products of chance; rather, they originate from a logic of adaptation to the territory and the needs of inhabitants, driven by the builders' «spontaneous conscience» [4]. Such spontaneous buildings involve a non-mediated response to various factors such as local topography, construction techniques, and society structure, aiming to create efficient settlements through a dialectic between human action and environmental reaction. Consequently, a critical analysis of the historic and environmental context, combined with a detailed survey of historic urban design, allows for a deeper understanding of

urban settlement formation, unravelling apparently chaotic fabrics and revealing the underlying logic behind their structure. Through the lens of Muratori and Caniggia's school of thought, the analysis begins with understanding the concept of building type as an «a priori synthesis» of the archetypal house for a specific space and time. Identifying building types involves both a theoretical a priori understanding and an analysis of reality a posteriori, tracing the evolution of the building type over time through synchronic and diachronic variants [4]. In this evolutive approach, building types develop through the settlement of simpler structures on a building parcel, gradually growing and diversifying through successive additions. Building type influences the creation of the urban fabric according to its aggregation capacity. This implies that analysing urban development necessitates a continuous transition from considerations of urban planning to architectural design, and from morphological to typological investigation. This shift in focus is crucial for recognizing the intricate details present in historic buildings and comprehending their evolution over time. For instance, while row houses tend to cluster together forming continuous street fronts, courtyard basic building types do not exhibit this characteristic. To this second typology can be ascribed most of the historic buildings in Pustec and in the settlements around the Prespa lakes (Figure 5). Moreover, conducting a morpho-typological survey serves not only an historic purpose but also provides valuable insights for identifying intervention strategies at various scales (urban, territorial, or architectural). This approach is especially pertinent for municipalities like Pustec, given the ongoing of informal urban practices, in continuity with the spontaneous historic settlements. The objective is to comprehend the evolutive patterns of historic basic building types, allowing for interventions that preserve their essence while accepting a certain degree of transformation which should be compatible with historic buildings while accommodating contemporary lifestyles. This ensures that these buildings retain their authenticity without irreparably altering their characteristics or transforming them into mere scenography for tourists. On a broader urban scale, understanding

the fabric and typologies of historic areas can impact on the planning of new developments, ensuring coherence and harmony without resorting to mere stylistic imitation.

While a comprehensive analysis of all settlement in Pustec may not be possible in this paper due to time constraints and limited data, preliminary observations based on cartographic imagery can provide valuable insights. Not only these observations reveal the peculiar features of the settlements in the Prespa region, but they also underline the importance of employing morpho-typological studies in urban planning and historic centre revitalisation efforts in order to preserve the intrinsic value of existing basic buildings.

Identification of the main basic building types and constructive techniques

The settlements in the Prespa region typically occupy slightly elevated positions above the lake and the adjacent flat agricultural areas, forming a low-promontory settlement type. Examples include Tuminec, Gorice and Madhe, Diellas, and Pustec. These settlements are often structured along secondary ridge-top routes (following the definitions of Caniggia Maffei 1979) descending

from surrounding hills, with the initial courtyard houses clustered near a small church, although this may not always be visible due to urban changes over time. As settlements evolved, new fabric has been often constructed downstream, featuring new flat or pseudo-flat paths, some of which were situated close to the lake before the decline in water levels in recent decades. On the opposite side, toward the heights, stables and sheds are typically located, while flat lands closer to the lake are utilized for agriculture (As visible on Figure 5).

Planting building routes generally follows curved paths along contour lines, maintaining horizontality, whereas connecting routes tend to be considerably sloping. Between two planting building routes, fabrics of courtyard houses are arranged in a loose manner, resulting in historic centres characterized by low settlement density and a significant presence of orchards and gardens, often bordered by masonry fences or wooden palisades. Even with a preliminary observation, some basic building types can be identified, stemming from the base type of 1 or 2 rooms and an open area (Figure 6). The derived buildings are generally more complex, with two floors and more or less extensive wooden porches (Figure 7).



Fig 6/ Orthophoto of Tuminec (Pustec).

source/ Google Maps

During the communist era, the marginalization of the Prespa region led to new buildings retaining a similar morphology, although maybe with little more plot regularity. The building boom of the 1990s had a marginal impact on the Pustec area, where, however, courtyard buildings of distinctly modern construction can be found, characterized by the use of concrete and hollow bricks, often featuring classically inspired decorative motifs totally unrelated to the regional context.

The construction techniques employed in historic buildings of the Prespa region are relatively simple and rely heavily on locally sourced materials such as stone and wood, which are abundant due to the mountainous terrain. In some cases, particularly in non-residential structures, unfired clay bricks (adobe) are used. This kind of masonry, often combined with wooden inserts, is probably the evidence of the most archaic construction technique that can be found in the area, which has only survived in some of the more elementary buildings (Figure 8).

In both adobe and stone buildings, wood plays a significant role, serving as anti-seismic reinforcement, inserted in strips every 5/6 recourses. Additionally, wood is widely utilized for floors, roofs,

architraves, and intricate overhanging features designed to create terraces and loggias. While the specific function of these architectural elements may vary, their presence must be read in relation to the region's mild climate, influenced by the presence of the lake despite the high altitude, which allows outdoor spaces to be liveable for a good part of the year. In historic buildings, the use of terracotta is generally limited to under-eaves cornices and roofing tiles, while modern buildings feature a much more extensive use of bricks. Consequently, modern buildings appear entirely out of place in the context due to their morphological, typological, and material characteristics. The decay of historic buildings, coupled with the loss of traditional building skills and inadequate urban planning control, often results in the frequent replacement of stone buildings with new constructions that are completely different in terms of techniques and types. This practice irreversibly distorts the identity of the places, erasing the historic urban fabric and disrupting the visual cohesion and identity of the region.

Vulnerability and possible interventions

An in-depth analysis integrating history and

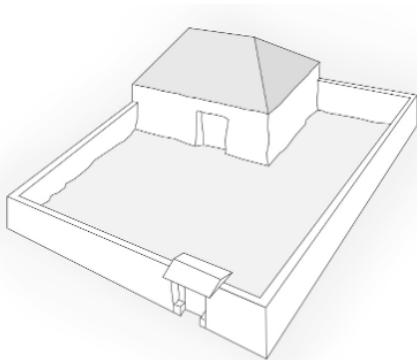


Fig 7/ Base Types that can be seen in Pustec Villages. source/ Elaboration by the Author

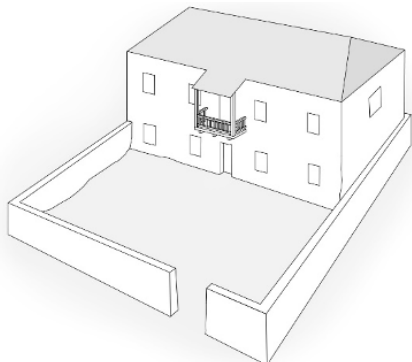


Fig 8/ Advanced courtyard type that can be seen in Pustec Villages. Porches often have a wide variety of configurations. source/ Elaboration by the Author



Fig 9/ Typical construction techniques: on the left stone masonry with wood strips; in the center adobe masonry; in the right plastered stone masonry with brick mouldings and terracotta roof tiles. source/ author (Pustec 2023)

cartography could serve as an excellent basis for identifying a comprehensive planning and intervention strategy. Understanding the historic routes around Lake Prespa, even those now abandoned and used as mule tracks, can provide valuable insights on how effectively promote the area to attract tourism. This strategic plan, if politically supported, could be implemented across Pustec and surrounding villages, connecting the entire region and leveraging its cultural and natural heritage. On an urban scale, the logics governing the development of the historic built environment, identifiable through a morpho-typological reading, can serve as guidelines for interventions on both existing and new buildings. A thorough understanding of settlement typologies would facilitate the identification of solutions that employ compatible materials, respecting the alignment of buildings and distribution systems. However, it's crucial that this knowledge doesn't lead to attempts to mimic old constructions with new ones. Instead, it should foster a dialogue between modern architecture and historic heritage, respecting the natural evolution of building types while allowing for the technical and intellectual expression of modern design principles. This approach should aim to build bridges between contemporary buildings and the region's rich historic legacy, ensuring the preservation of its cultural heritage.

The in-depth study of historic forms of building aggregation shouldn't be limited in proposals for urban restoration, which often focus solely on street furniture or conservative-chromatic indications on wall envelopes. Instead, it should delve into the analysis of building types within their processuality to establish the «physiological limits of transformability» [7]. By doing so, we can equip ourselves with the necessary tools for conducting interventions that preserve historic fabrics without reducing them to mere scenery.

This comprehensive knowledge is essential for guiding contemporary interventions toward a genuine respect for the genius loci, enhancing the conservation of local identity and the promotion of the region's cultural heritage. By understanding the evolutive processes that have shaped building types over time, we can ensure that interventions honour the authenticity and character of the built environment while accommodating the needs of modern society.

Conclusions and recommendations

In conclusion, the local identity of the Prespa region presents characteristics that hold great potential for economic and tourism development. The natural isolation of the area has not only preserved untouched landscapes but also safeguarded local traditions, particularly in settlement and construction practices. However, this valuable heritage faces significant threats from the very economic development it could foster. Consequently, Heritage, in this context, represents both a strength and a vulnerability. While it possesses intriguing and unique qualities, it is also fragile and easily susceptible to damage. Among the most endangered aspects of heritage are the basic buildings that shows intact pre-modern typological characteristics. Without careful intervention, there is a risk of irreversible damage caused by unchecked development. To mitigate this risk, it is imperative to conduct thorough studies of these settlement fabrics to elaborate conservation strategies and respectful intervention approaches. This proactive attitude is crucial in order to safeguard the fragile ecosystem of the region from being overturn by rapid and uncontrolled development. The ultimate

danger lies in the potential replacement of historic fabrics or their transformation into mere tourist attractions, thereby eroding the intrinsic identity of the places. Only by prioritizing the preservation of local heritage, we can ensure the long-term sustainability and authenticity of the Prespa region for generations to come.

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