

Anisa Duraj

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
THROUGH CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT  
AND REGIONAL REVITALISATION:  
THE CASE OF KOMANI, ALBANIA**

MA Thesis in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management.

Central European University

Budapest

May 2018

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(Albania)

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Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Chair, Examination Committee

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External Reader

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External Supervisor

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I, the undersigned, **Anisa Duraj**, candidate for the MA degree in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 28 May 2018

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# Abstract

The main purpose of my thesis is based on the promotion of Cultural Heritage as an asset for regional development. Therefore, my study devotes special attention to the tangible cultural heritage located in underdeveloped urban and rural areas and its role in the developing process. The development initiative of these areas with a focus on culture as foster for social progress is part of the 2011 partnership between UNESCO and the World Bank. It is also in line with the 2030 UN Agenda adopted in 2015 for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The emphasis is put on culture as a resource for sustainable development and rural revitalization. Culture through heritage by focusing on local communities and their traditions shapes behaviors and the sense of belonging somewhere. In this context, I argue that cultural heritage is important to sustainable development and it allows rural areas or segmented urban sectors to become self-sustained, create employment opportunities, and contribute to the environment protection. Thus, the cultural preservation and development challenges ask for prudent management practices and appropriate policy implementation. My goal in this proposal is to focus on a case study, Komani site in northern Albania, and to achieve innovative ideas for the management of the site and local development, by addressing existing challenges and new solutions.

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# Introduction

To this day, Albanian regional development remains a frequently discussed topic which concerns different fields of expertise. Passing from a centralized communist state to a neo-democratic one brought important changes. This alteration affected many sectors of the territorial development, especially the regions and their rural areas. The need to redefine urban and rural areas chaotically damaged in the transitory years of the change of regime has developed speculation for new ‘built capital’<sup>1</sup> based on the current unstable infrastructure. Moreover, during the transition period from post-communism to late-post-communism, Albania faced a major cultural clash. The connotation of culture changed from a mainstream attitude to a more liberal one. The concept of cultural heritage shifted and affected the way heritage was perceived and managed by the state. In this matter, though there is a need for infrastructural development and new estate investments, the country has an outstanding patrimony, which, if managed well, can improve both the cultural offer and the general well-being of the population. Through regional revitalization<sup>2</sup> as an important asset for sustainable development, the present research on cultural heritage management addresses the importance of tangible heritage as a long-term motivator for infrastructural development, intangible heritage promotion, and social behavior.

The research focuses on a specific case study, the archaeological area<sup>3</sup>, and the town of Komani, a medieval site located in northern Albania, which has historical significance and development potential. Immersed in the forestry mountains of the north, near the river Drin,

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘built capital’ is defined as any human-made environment, pre-existing or planned formation that is constructed or retrofitted to suit community needs. Citation: Green, G. P., & Haines, A. (2012). *Asset Building & Community Development*. Los Angeles, Calif.: SAGE.

<sup>2</sup> The term ‘regional revitalization’ consist in the improvement of the environment and rural infrastructure, as well as the construction of new domains and facilities, in line with the current landscape and vernacular architecture.

<sup>3</sup> The term ‘archaeological area’ will referrer to the total area of excavations, and includes various excavated archaeological sites located in different positions, but part of the same territory.

Komani, and other nearby medieval sites are currently under excavations by the French-Albanian archaeological mission. Although modern Komani retains its semi-industrial character due to a Communist-era Hydroelectric-power system, it is situated in an outstanding natural landscape in an accessible geographic location. In the context of regional development in general, and of Komani in particular, designing a pilot project makes it possible to focus on specific issues while making the research results visible and understandable for the stakeholders.<sup>4</sup> Besides the onsite analyses and reports of the French-Albanian archaeological mission, the present inquiry into the case of Komani will also entail benchmarking, as a comparative analysis with another site labeled ‘Bibracte’, Mont Beuvray, in France, of similar cultural impact and management strategy, in a rural territory. The association will be based on three main criteria, further analyzed in the thesis. This observation is based on the ‘Iceberg’ cultural model. By undertaking an onsite investigation of ‘the site’<sup>5</sup>, it became easier to observe the operating apparatus from different perspectives. During my stay in Bibracte, I had the opportunity to talk and conduct informal interviews with the General Director and the Head of the museum. I also had the opportunity to analyze the expressed and tacit values and reflect on the visibility of this type of management. My purpose was to pursue a comparison of the archaic system of heritage management in Albania and a new approach to integrated management in the cultural field. Thus, this study based on comparative analysis and a benchmarking case contains recommendations for a project proposal for the indicated area of Komani, in line with the 2015 World Bank initiative towards “Integrated Urban and Tourism Development.” In this vein, the outcome project, based on sustainable development, should

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<sup>4</sup> The stakeholders in this context are the entities to whom the project will be presented for support and funds; The Ministry of Culture in Albania, the County of Shkodra, the Municipality of Vau i Dejës, and the Albanian Found for Development.

<sup>5</sup> The term ‘the site’ or ‘site’ will refer to the totality of landscape and archaeological area of the selected territory under study.

promote the region, its heritage, and landscape through cultural traditions and vernacular settlements and by highlighting the social and financial benefits for the local community.

## Justification

Cultural heritage is the long-term memory of a society. The notion of cultural heritage has been gradually extended from individual heritage to national patrimony. Tangible heritage through buildings and landscapes shape the sense of belonging somewhere, of social traditions and cultural identity. Developments over the last twenty years show that significant urban qualities, which are independent of monuments and site protection issues are almost disappearing. Our perception of the urban environment is determined by the architectural heritage in its totality. The protection and conservation of historical backgrounds become a central long-term objective which must be based on a dynamic integration. The better we understand how to manage and develop our heritage, the stronger the landscape will become. Cultural heritage contributes to the satisfaction of human needs by providing symbolic meanings that bond cultural groups and communities across generations.

The current thesis stresses two main aspects of Cultural Heritage as an asset for regional development. The first aspect is connected to present-day Albania and the lack of proposed strategies regarding cultural heritage management within regional development. Nowadays spatial development is represented by sporadic buildings and architectural concepts. Despite of the low quality-built environment and urban space issues, the country possesses a vast heritage potential that can raise the cultural awareness of society and improve the general economy as well. Yet, proposed strategies regarding cultural heritage management and spatial development are still few and far between. Based on my experience in the field of architecture, the concept of architecture and urban development lacks progress in Albania. There is an obvious absence of interaction between these disciplines and culture. This holistic disciplinary boundary has

created continues tension, since new architecture in most cases disregards the existing architecture of the past. For a developing country as Albania, rich with built heritage, the focus should be put more on ‘regionalism architecture’<sup>6</sup> and after that on the semiotic aspect. Having had the chance to observe the French-Albanian mission operating in the north of Albania, I was impressed by the richness of our regions. Before that, it didn’t quite occur to me that the concept of architecture could be challenged not only by the future but also from the past. My interest turned toward cultural heritage. While working in the management field of estates, I also had the opportunity to develop a sense of project management and built management practices. In such circumstances, I was convinced that a mediation bridge between different professional fields is needed to be implemented in Albania. We need to rethink our fields of expertise as more flexible ones. Architecture should be used to solve problems, not cause them.<sup>7</sup> This involves perception of space through creation, a strong message that hides behind an idea, a vision of integrity and hope for change that connects past and present through the planning for tomorrow. By managing and promoting culture within architecture and regional planning as a main resource for sustainable development, it can serve local and national infrastructure, landscape regeneration, community encouragement, and economic growth. Herewith, I argue that it is of crucial importance to direct the view of younger generations trained in interdisciplinary fields towards the protection and reintegration of tangible heritage. By focusing on culture, through innovative projects, policymaking, and management plans, professionals and specialists of various backgrounds and fields of expertise will contribute to the improvement of the cultural awareness and future opportunities as well. My purpose therefore is to examine the role that cultural heritage as part of regional policies can play within

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<sup>6</sup> The concept of ‘Regionalism architecture’ or ‘Critical regionalism’ refers to the context and customs of making buildings in a particular region. See, in instance: Pietro Belluschi, The meaning of regionalism in architecture. 1955 [http://designtheory.fiu.edu/readings/belluschi\\_regionalism.pdf](http://designtheory.fiu.edu/readings/belluschi_regionalism.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Referring to the school of thought of architects Aldo Rossi, Luigi Snozzi, etc.

sustainable development. No society can flourish without culture and no development can be sustainable without it.

Another principal factor considered in my research is the important role of cultural tourism in the sustainable process. The Albanian Institute of Statistics data for nation's revenues in 2013, reveals that the main potential for social development and future progress in Albania lies in tourism and agriculture. Further, the international media have pegged social attention to Albania. LonelyPlanet, the Swedish Nomad and New York Times have advertised the best 'must see' attractions of the country.<sup>8</sup> National Geographic has listed Albania in the "Top 21 Best Destinations to visit in 2018".<sup>9</sup> Their depiction towards Albania as a unique unexplored place in the heart of the Mediterranean and Balkans land has contributed to the rise of foreign travelers and the increase of domestic tourism.

Tourism as a key sector has contributed to a significant part of Albania's national income: in 2015-2016 it rose from 13.2% (1.35bn Euro) to 14.2% (1.53bn Euro) of the total GDP. As a growing sector and foster for cultural development, the Tourism industry is a pro-lasting phenomenon for profits. Whereas most tourism in Albania is generated from the natural heritage, tangible artifacts and archaeological sites have lately enjoyed increasing attention. In consequence, by targeting natural areas with cultural heritage potential, while focusing on the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals 2030, tourism can become a profit-driven sector and can generate a steady system for the involvement and active participation of the local community.

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<sup>8</sup> Lonely Planet, "Albania Travel," Lonely Planet, accessed May 21, 2017, <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/albania>; "15 Reasons to Visit Albania at Least Once in Your Life," Swedish Nomad, February 25, 2017, <https://www.swedishnomad.com/reasons-to-visit-albania/>; Tim Neville, "Balkan Promises: Hiking the Albanian Alps," *The New York Times*, March 29, 2013, sec. Travel, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/31/travel/balkan-promises-hiking-the-albanian-alps.html>.

<sup>9</sup> By James Draper for Mailonline, "National Geographics Ultimate Places to Visit in 2018," Mail Online, December 11, 2017, [http://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/travel\\_news/article-5167465/National-Geographics-ultimate-places-visit-2018.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/travel_news/article-5167465/National-Geographics-ultimate-places-visit-2018.html).

# Chapter 1 – The Current situation of the Albanian cultural heritage framework

## 1.1 Institutional framework

Established for fifty years in Albania, the communist regime has influenced the way the historical past was constructed. During the communist era, the focus on archaeological excavation was put more towards Roman and Hellenistic antiquity rather than other periods of past. The archaeologists were obliged to excavate and preserve only what defined the Illyrian roots. That did not mean that other layers of history were not considered at all, but there was not so much intention to proclaim them as an important part of the national heritage. In such circumstance, heritage likewise history was also appropriated by the nationalism discourse of returning to the glorious pasts. In this context, the confrontation between the designation of historical artifacts as heritage has been subject to various discussion. The way the communist state chose to select and represent the past was purely based on nationalistic purposes.

Twenty-seven years after the fall of communism, Albania, among other post-socialist countries is still struggling to find its way as a democratic state. As a result, in present-day Albania, there is still tension regarding cultural heritage and national identity signification. As other Balkan states that have undergone ‘reputation damaging’<sup>10</sup> during the twentieth century, Albania was faced with the urge to re-emerge by trying to disregard and forget its ‘stigmatized past’.<sup>11</sup> Referring to Cultural Heritage management in Albania, though it has faced changes over the years, it is still based on the old administration structure and lacks a holistic approach and genuine engagement with local communities. Thus, the emphasis must be put on the current

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<sup>10</sup> Nina Bandelj and Frederick Wherry, *The Cultural Wealth of Nations* (Stanford University Press, 2011). See in particular: Rivera, *Impression Management of Stigmatized Nations: The Case of Croatia*, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Bandelj and Wherry. See: Rivera, (Dann 1996), 2.

institutional and legal apparatus operating in the national territory. The cultural patrimony is considered only in terms of built heritage and antiquities. Anything related to the intangible aspect is considered as folklore or tradition<sup>12</sup>.

Cultural Heritage in Albania, defined as historical, archaeological, and artistic heritage, is under the protection and control of the Albanian Ministry of Culture, with direct supervision of the Institute of Cultural Monuments (IMK). In case of archaeological heritage, there is a cooperation between IMK for direct administration, and the Institute of Archaeology (IAT), for academic supervision. The Institution of Archaeology is a research entity under the Ministry of Education and Science.

The current Albanian cultural heritage institutions are listed below:

- Ministry of Culture – Cultural Heritage Sector – main authority
- The National Council of Archaeology (NCA) – central administrative authority
- The Institution of the Cultural Monuments (IMK) – budgetary and scientific authority
- The Agency of Archaeological Services (ASHA)– monitoring authority
- Regional Directorates of National Culture – control, management
- Management and coordination office for the archaeological parks - maintenance
- National Centre of the Cultural Property Inventory - central registration
- National Centre of Folk Activities – research, management
- National Council of Restoration – advisory body
- Museums (national, ethnographic, etc) - research and management
- National Park of Butrint – research and management

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<sup>12</sup> Referring to Law No 9048, date 7.4.2003: For the designation and protection of the Cultural Heritage in the territory of the Republic of Albania. (Articles 3 - 4. II).

The Institute of Cultural Monuments was founded in 1965 (according to the Decision No. 67, dated 15/03/1965 of the Council of Ministers) and it is a budgetary and scholarly institution, whose activity is based on Law No. 9048 date 07.04.2003, on Cultural Heritage practices. Meanwhile, the Institute of Archaeology was established, first in 1976 as the Archaeological Research Centre of the Academy of Sciences, and later in 1991 recognized as a separate academic institution.

## 1.2 Legal framework

All cultural heritage laws operating in Albania are proposed and approved by the Council of Ministers, based on the 'Constitution of the Republic of Albania' amended in 1998. The first law of cultural heritage property was Law No 609, date 24.5.1928: "For the protection of cultural monuments and rare natural objects", approved by King Zog I.<sup>13</sup> It was only after the liberation of Albania in 1944, that the ruling communist state sanctioned the Decree No 568, date 17.03.1948 "On the protection of cultural monuments and rare items", by marking a very important step in the field of heritage protection. The Decree of 1948 was later replaced by the Decree No .4874, date 23.9.1971, followed by further revisions in 1974, and 1986. After the 1990s and the collapse of the regime, Law No. 7867, date 12.10.1994: "For the protection of movable and immovable cultural property", became the main legal document in the field of heritage protection, until 2003.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The first law for the protection of cultural monuments was proclaimed on June 22, 1928. Though short and concise, it put under legal protection all the cultural heritage artefacts found in the Albanian territory. However, at that time there was no categorization of these artefacts in movable or immovable, or based on value and rarity.

<sup>14</sup> Ols Lafi, PHD thesis: *Menaxhimi i Trashëgimisë Kulturore, Rasti i Shqipërisë*. "Republika e Shqipërisë, Universiteti i Tiranës, Fakulteti i Historisë dhe i Filologjisë, Departamenti i Historisë," n.d., 170. (personal translation: Cultural Heritage Management, the case of Albania. "Republic of Albania, University of Tirana, Faculty of History and Philology, Department of History," pg. 170.)

The most important cultural heritage laws currently operating in Albania under the Ministry of Culture are listed below<sup>15</sup>:

- Law Nr. 815, date 31.10.1996: For the approval of the "Memorandum of cooperation between the Republic of Albania and the United Nations Organization, for “education, science and culture”.
- Law No. 8614, date 25.05.2000: "For the ratification of the Agreement between the government of the Republic of Albania and UNESCO for the intercultural education and the education of human rights in Albania".
- Law No. 9048, date 7.4.2003 (revised with Law No 9882 of 28.2.2008: MTKRS 2009): "For the Cultural Heritage" in the territory of the Republic of Albania.
- Law No. 9386, date 4.5.2005: "For Museums" sets basic rules for the organization, functioning and classification of the museums in the Republic of Albania, and other authorities responsible for the overseeing of their activities in the service of society, with the aim of exposure, storage, and management of the museology objects part of the national cultural heritage.
- Law No. 9806, date 17.9.2007: "For the protection of the Archaeological Heritage", and the accession of the Republic of Albania in the European Convention.
- Law No. 119 years 2014: "For the right to the information".

The Law of 2007 based on international regulations foresees the protection and revitalization of monuments and sites, by bringing them closer to the public audience or community. The Law of 2003 has been amended further in 2006 and 2008 and has been under revision since 2013. The current law classifies monuments and archeological sites in ‘Nominated sites of I

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<sup>15</sup> The Cultural Heritage laws in Albania are written only in Albanian, despite Law 2003, which is officially translated in English. For reference, see: “Al\_forcultheritage2003\_engtof.Pdf,” accessed June 2, 2016 [http://www.unesco.org/culture/natlaws/media/pdf/albania/al\\_forcultheritage2003\\_engtof.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/culture/natlaws/media/pdf/albania/al_forcultheritage2003_engtof.pdf). The translation of the other laws from Albanian to English is the result of my own work.

category’, and ‘listed sites of II category’. A site or monument, or architectonic assemble must fulfill certain criteria (Articles 24-29) to be first listed and later designated as Tangible Cultural Heritage. In each case, according to the belonging category, interventions in these sites (restoration, revitalization, consolidation, etc.) should be discussed and approved by a special committee (of architects and archeologists), whom after detailed observations decide whether these interventions should be allowed or not.

The total number of landmarks and monuments by the Institution of Cultural Monuments are listed as following: 201 Religion monuments, 110 Built monuments, 9 Archaeological parks and 10 archaeological zones, 2 Cities Museums, and 1 World Heritage site.

- An “Archaeological park” is defined as a large landscape of historical values, archeological excavations, and in situs remains preserved and protected by the state.
- An “Archaeological zone” is defined as an area of situated monuments, or archeological excavations, where the presence of archaeological layers has been verified.

The Regional Directorates of National Culture define the status of tangible heritage and the required protection mechanism through quarterly and yearly reports. The main challenge of cultural heritage management in Albania lays in the low number of heritage professionals, by making impossible to cover all the archaeological heritage in the territory, particularly for those sites located in rural and remote areas. In fact, most of these heritage sites and buildings are not in good shape, due to natural conditions and age amortization.

The financial aspect of Cultural Heritage management in Albania remains a very problematic issue. Only a small percentage<sup>16</sup> of the total budget is allocated to conservation, restoration,

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<sup>16</sup> There is no available data regarding the allocation of funds. An information gathered from informal sources revealed that only 2% of the funds of the Ministry of Culture goes to the management and maintenance of the nominated heritage sites. Despite BUTRINT National Park, which has a special status as World Heritage site, and it is self-managed, by enabling 90% of revenue to be used for site maintenance and restoration.

and promoting of heritage per year. Though there is an effort to monitor the status of the sites, there is not yet a well-defined management strategy for ongoing preservation and promotion.

### 1.3 Post-socialism scenario

In the framework of political changes in post-socialist countries after the 1990s, the cultural and heritage sector have faced revisions. Consequently, the transition from a state-planned system to the capitalist economic impact brought a major alteration in the cultural infrastructure of post-communist countries, mainly the CEE region and the Balkans. In such circumstances, the role of the newly democratic states to redefine their image, as disconnected from past politics was based on survival strategies, and on a newly constructed system of symbols and values which could consolidate their national image in the international framework.<sup>17</sup> Hence, the way the past was constructed by the post-1990s government has been often interrogated by various discourses. Lauren A. Riviera points out the struggle of states with tarnished international reputation, and their effort to control the means of image production and promote alternative narratives.<sup>18</sup> Melissa Aronczyk, on the other hand, argues the role of governs in the erasing of elements which might compromise the legitimacy of the state-nation in the international market democracy.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the disappointing “democratic” experience, especially in Albania, and the ongoing problems related to the post-socialist economy and cultural approach have provoked several reactions towards groups of interest and practitioners. As David Harvey explains, crises in the economic system may form conditions for cultural and political changes.<sup>20</sup> Concerning Balkan’s countries, this represents a faced phenomenon in the past decade. As per Albanian reality, the drastic economic impact, and cultural changes, during

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<sup>17</sup> Eleonora Pasotti, “Branding the Nation: The Global Business of National Identity, by Melissa Aronczyk,” *Political Communication* 31 (October 1, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2014.956035>. See: chapter 3: Living the Brand: The Identity Strategies of Nation-Branding Consultants.

<sup>18</sup> Lauren A. Rivera, *Impression Management of Stigmatized Nations*, 14.

<sup>19</sup> Pasotti, “Branding the Nation.” See: Aronczyk, *Nation Branding*, 78.

<sup>20</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 2003).

the post-transition period in the twenty-first century have marked a turning point. Not only it has impacted the collective attitude through cultural diversification, but a new face of an emancipating country has been largely promoted.

With the downfall of the regime, for many years, the communist past and its legacy in Albania were censured and disregarded until the beginning of the twenty-first century. The heritage sector, as many other sectors, was disregarded, until the new millennium shifts of heritage representation and the emerging concept of ‘social heritage’<sup>21</sup> and the ‘cultural memory’.<sup>22</sup> As David Lowenthal writes heritage unlike history, is “sanctioned not by proof of origins but by present exploits” and it is “created to generate and protect groups of interests”.<sup>23</sup> Thus, heritage as “a historically produced pattern’ has been often attributed to the socio-political production and distribution systems and ideology of a society”.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, this new political approach of shifting heritage representation towards the recent traumatic-past rather than the historical past, raised up further attention in the social and the political context, especially in countries under a development process as Albania. The new politician cast, unlike the previous one, tried to deal with the existing scenario by addressing new issues and implementing novel practices in cultural and memorial heritage representation. Nevertheless, this type of attitude and effort targets another type of heritage, more related to memory rather than the history of the artifacts. Hence, the gap between present and past, history and memory, relays on the deployment of new traditions as cultural practices. Eric Hobsbawm hypothesizes that the invention or the emerging of new traditions very often is the cause of an autonomous act or part of the creative

<sup>21</sup> Lancelot Hogben, “Our Social Heritage,” *Science & Society* 1, no. 2 (1937): 137–51.

<sup>22</sup> Ann Rigney, “Cultural Memory Studies: Mediation, Narrative, and the Aesthetic,” accessed April 5, 2017, [https://www.academia.edu/17001542/Cultural\\_Memory\\_Studies\\_Mediation\\_Narrative\\_and\\_the\\_Aesthetic](https://www.academia.edu/17001542/Cultural_Memory_Studies_Mediation_Narrative_and_the_Aesthetic).

<sup>23</sup> Karin Myhrberg, “Heritage from the Communist Period in Albania – An Unwanted Heritage Today?” May 9, 2012, <https://gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/2077/29221>, 14: citation of Lowenthal (1996) 127 - 128.

<sup>24</sup> Erik Cohen and Scott A. Cohen, “Current Sociological Theories and Issues in Tourism,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 39, no. 4 (October 2012): 2177–2202, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2012.07.009>. Citation: Oliver-Smith & Hoffman, 2002, 3.

process.<sup>25</sup> He argues, that ‘invented traditions’ are often the elaboration of a response to times of crisis, to periods of rapid social change, and the need to face new situations. Since Albania is mostly known to foreigners for its communist past, ‘dark tourism’<sup>26</sup> and traumatic pasts commemoration were deliberately used to create an international perception of an emancipating country. Though this attitude was criticized by many as inappropriate, others saw it as an attempt of Albanian politics towards the European Union integration, where memory as heritage can play an important role in trauma mitigation and social recovering. Laurajane Smith introduces the ‘Disneyfication’<sup>27</sup> of tourism marketing and interpretation of heritage as the new phenomenon of modern times. In this framework, the effort of a late-post-socialist state’s approach towards new cultural production reflects the emerging of new traditions in cultural heritage practices. Though based on a strategical point of view, it represents a new image of tourism marketing, by generating notoriety and new ‘cultural capital’.<sup>28</sup> On identity bases, it casts out the existing heritage, particularly those sites of historical and archaeological potential suffering from negligence due to their location in rural and remote areas.

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<sup>25</sup>Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence O. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, 19th pr, Canto (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr, 2010). See: Introduction, and Mass-production tradition: Europe 1820 -1914.

<sup>26</sup> Rivera, *The case of Croatia*, 3.

<sup>27</sup> Laurajane Smith, “Uses of Heritage,” *Uses of Heritage*, Routledge, January 1, 2006, 1–351. See: The Discourse of Heritage. pp.33. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203602263>.

<sup>28</sup> Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*. See: ‘An inquiry into the condition of cultural change, 345 – 349’ The term ‘cultural capital’ is used in this case to refer the emerging of new studies of Albanian scholars towards the communism past, ratification of the ‘law of memory’, proposed in 2016, the raise of memory archives, etc.

## Chapter 2 – Komani as a case study

Within a context of political changes, heritagization is a complex contemporary concept that refers to both the process and its product.<sup>29</sup> As James Clifford points out, the preservation of an authentic domain is tied up with nationalist politics and cannot be sporadic or genuinely natural.<sup>30</sup> Referring to the current status of heritage's legal apparatus, and lately tendencies of diversifying heritage from a memorial point of view, there are still many gaps at the management level which need to be accurately considered. Most of the heritage patrimony in Albania is located in semi-urban and rural areas, such as the case of medieval Komani, a historical and archaeological area yet to be listed as a heritage site.

### 2.1 Location of the site

Komani (ancient Dalmace), lies in north-west Albania, 27 km north-west of Shkodra<sup>31</sup>. The so-called fortress of Dalmace dominates from 567 m height the left bank of Drini River, the most important river of the region (fig. 1). This rare strategic situation perfectly controlled the Drini valley on the mountainside, with a view on the medieval bishopric of Sarda, Gajtan and Scodra (Shkodra) fortress in front of Taraboshi Mountain (fig. 2). Meanwhile, in the south-western part of Komani there lays the 'Lake of Komani' (fig3), an artificial reservoir as a result of the Hydroelectric-power station built in the 1980s. The lake features a peculiar landscape surrounded by densely forested hills, vertical slopes, and narrow valleys. There are two ways to reach the Lake of Komani, by land and by ferry. It takes approximately one hour and thirty minutes by car from Shkodra to the lake, and there is no regional public transportation. The only operating vehicles are private minibusses managed by local people.

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<sup>29</sup> Kevin. Walsh, *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Postmodern World*. 2

<sup>30</sup> James A. Clifford, *On Collecting Art and Culture, The Predicament of Culture: twentieth-century ethnography, literature and art*, London: Harvard University Press, 6.

<sup>31</sup> Shkodra is one the main cities in country, and the largest city in northern Albania.

The ferry on the other hand operates daily round trips from Komani to Fierza, and connects the city of Bajram Curri to the region of Tropojë. The journey takes about two and a half hours and it is a linkage for remote villages, located far away from each other and the lake, and can only be reached by water.



Figure 1: Map of Komani and some of the principal sites in northern Albania. Image by Etleva Nallbani, 2012



Figure 2: Panoramic view of Drini's valley from the top of Dalmace. Photo by Anisa Duraj, July 2016.



Figure 3: Panoramic view of the Komani Lake and the surroundings. Photo by [Travel Club Albania](#).

## 2.2 History of the site

As shown in (fig. 1), from Dalmace to the right side it can be seen the Albanian Alps. This ‘mountainous gate’ through the entire middle Drini valley is only 8 km south-east of the nearest Roman station Pakué (modern town of Puka), of the ancient Roman road, which linked Lissus—Naissus to Ratiaria on the Danube. From the fourth century A.D. the south-west region of Komani belonged to the late Roman province of Praevalis, not far from Epirus Nova in the south, and Dardania in the east. This was the administrative context until the beginning of the seventh century. In the ninth century, the area marked the border between the Byzantine military theme of Dyrrachium and that one of Dalmatia. At the beginning of the eleventh century, most of the ecclesiastical centers of the region passed from the rule of the metropolitan Dyrrachium to the archdioceses of Antivarum, under the Roman Latin Church. This was the ecclesiastical situation established during the following centuries, albeit the temporary Byzantine established control under Manuel I Comnenos.<sup>32</sup>

Komani (Dalmace) was known from the middle of the nineteenth century for the wide and very rich cemetery as one of the most significant sites of northern Albanian medieval archaeology. Johan Georg Hahn identified Dalmace in 1867 and Alexandre Degrand recognized the vast extension and the high density of burials, exhuming several of them in 1898, which contained reburials with items. The findings were deposited in the French museum of Saint Germain-en-Laye and the research was published on behalf of Degrand travels in northern Albania. Nevertheless, the richest collection of the graves goods was gathered afterwards by Jesuit and Franciscan priests of Shkodra, to whom it was confiscated after 1945 by the communist state. At that time, these materials constituted the main deposits from Komani in the National Archaeological Museum in Tirana. The extreme density and richness of the graves assemblages

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<sup>32</sup> The information regarding the history was gather by the published article of Etleva Nallbani, *The Case of Medieval Komani* (Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia, Italia, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.14277/6969-115-7/SR-4-9>.

provoked a mass of theories among scholars on the ethnic, identity and origin of the Komani population. The name of the nowadays village of Komani became the eponymous of a very rich cultural identity community, associated to medieval ‘Arbër’<sup>33</sup> of northern Albania.

In 1927, several burials were excavated under the fascist influence by Luigi M. Ugolini, following later two main excavations realized during the communism era. Komani became part of a national archaeological excavation program carried out between the 1960s and 1980s. The archaeologists of the Institute of Archaeology Skënder Anamali and Hëna Spahiu directed the works in 1961-1964. Further excavations were carried out later by Spahiu from 1982 to 1984 (fig.4). During that period, almost 270 graves from Late Antique to the Early Middle Ages were excavated aiming at the discovery of the Illyrian-Albanian continuity. Despite the archaeologists’ work, most of the results remained unpublished at that time<sup>34</sup>.



Figure 4: View of the main cemetery excavated by Hëna Spahiu in 1984. The image on the left: (Albanien 1988, fig108). Source: Nallbani, Etleva. *The Case of Medieval Komani*. Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia, 2017. The photo on the right by Anisa Duraj, July 2016.

<sup>33</sup> The territory of Albanian in the Middle Ages was known as Arbëri, or the ‘Principality of Arbër’ (1190-1255). The medieval Albanian was called ‘Arbër’ for male and ‘Arbëreshë’ for female.

<sup>34</sup> Nallbani, *The Case of Medieval Komani*. See, in instance: Anamali, Skender, 1972, 1989

During 1970-80s, Albanian communist state exploited the resources of the valley, by constructing copper mine sites, and the largest Hydroelectric-power station of the country. In 1979, the Hydroelectric-power station planned to be built in the lower part of Komani area (fig.5) required the construction of a large concrete dam. Consequently, this rural territory with fertile field and terraces was transformed into an industrial area submerged by the lake of Vau Dejës. Several minor areas were flooded, and the upper slopes were quarried and deforested for cultivation. The dam erected near the settlement of Koman is the second of three main dams on the Drin river; the Fierza hydro station upstream, and the Vau i Dejës hydro station downstream. The 130m tall dam was completed in 1985 and inaugurated in 1986. Though Komani was not perceived at that time for its historical heritage potential, it was recognized for its panoramic and touristic attractions. In fact, based on the state plan of the 1980s, with the construction of the industrial system, there were built housing facilities for the workers' accommodation.<sup>35</sup> Among these new buildings, the state gave special permission for the construction of a domain named the French Villa (Vila Franceze), which served as a guest house for the French specialists working and living in Komani. In 1987, after the dam was finished, the villa's membership passed to the former Directory of 'Albturizm' for lodging domestic and foreign tourists.<sup>36</sup> This passage was realized with the consent of the Shkodra's district in the attempt to give to the area a touristic perspective. In this vein, the French Villa served simultaneously as a transit point for tourists with an interest in sighting and picnics in the Komani Lake, Tropojë and Kukës, and as a guest house for foreign delegations visiting the Hydroelectric-power system and the Komani dam. During the 1980s, the lower part of

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<sup>35</sup> Source of information: The National Archives of Albania. File 580,1984 on the 'Correspondence between the Ministry of Construction, and the Executive Committee of the Shkodra County about the issues caused by the construction of the Hydro-electrical power station 'Enver Hoxha' in Komani'; File 69,1987 on the 'Notification of the State Plan Commission sent to the Council of Ministers for the established objects in the construction site of the Hydro-electrical power station 'Enver Hoxha' in Komani, and their distribution'.

<sup>36</sup> Source of information: The National Archives of Albania, File 32, 1987 on 'The correspondence between the Director of Albturizem (Albanian Tourism) and the Ministry of Energy, for the delivery of a facility in Komani'.

Komani was inhabited and performing as a small town with more or less 2000 inhabitants. Nowadays these habitats cease to exist and Komani in total has less than 200 habitats. Most of the people are living in the mounting villages, and only a few of them are left near the lower part (fig. 6, 7). What characterizes Komani today despite the perpetual landscape is the damn, the French Villa, a few houses representing the local style, and the remaining vernacular architecture spread around in the mounting area.



*Figure 5: View of the Hydro-electrical power station of Komani. The photo on the left by author, 1980s. Source: The National Archive of Albania. The photo on the right by Anisa Duraj, July 2015.*



*Figure 6: View of the lower part of Komani from the top of Dalmace. Photo by Anisa Duraj, July 2016.*



*Figure 7: View from the river of current settlements. Photo by Anisa Duraj, July 2016.*

## 2.3 Archaeological excavations

From 2008, the site of Komani with its surroundings is part of a large French-Albanian archaeological research program, conducted by the Ecole française de Rome and the CNRS, in collaboration with the Albanian Institute of Archaeology in Tirana. The primary aim of this program is to understand the modalities of transition from late antiquity to the Middle Ages in the western Balkans. Secondly, the program aims to learn the history of the site from its origins by reconstructing its Late Antique and Medieval structure within the broader territorial context.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, large-scale excavations have been undertaken in several sectors of the site, followed by the first survey of upper hillfort areas in 2008, and a field survey of its surroundings in 2014. The results revealed a large extension of the necropolis and the complex topography of the settlement, covering more than 40 ha of the total area (buffer zone - 2200 ha) organized in several platforms and slopes, scattered at different heights, in a clear connection to each other. Based on the research presented by the French-Albania mission to the National Council of Archaeology, the archaeological chronology of the excavated

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<sup>37</sup> Nallbani Etleva, "Nouvelles Formes d'habitat En Albanie Du Nord Du VIIe Au XIIIe Siècle.Pdf," accessed 27 November 2017, [https://www.academia.edu/29860423/Nouvelles\\_formes\\_d\\_habitat\\_en\\_Albanie\\_du\\_nord\\_du\\_VIIe\\_au\\_XIIIe\\_siecle.pdf](https://www.academia.edu/29860423/Nouvelles_formes_d_habitat_en_Albanie_du_nord_du_VIIe_au_XIIIe_siecle.pdf).

landscape extends from the Hellenistic period to the eighteenth century, while the early Middle Ages to the thirteenth century mark the most expansive stage in the settlement. The field survey of 2014 recognized Komani as a mountainous site and considered the entire surrounding area covering nearly 16,800 km<sup>2</sup>. The following map (fig. 8) marking the main excavated areas was presented to the National Council of Archaeology, which approved it as following:

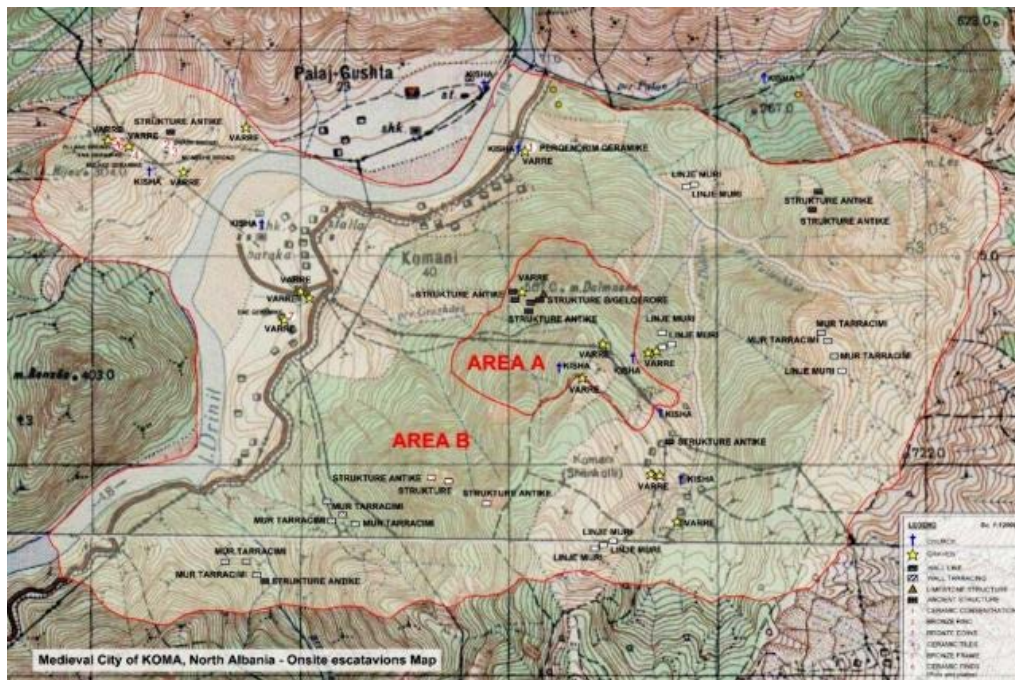


Figure 8: Map of the area of the planned excavations, including identified ruins and other features during the survey. Image by Anisa Duraj, 2014. Copyright © Komani Project, French-Albanian archaeological mission.

- **Area A** – recognized as a protected zone within Komani site, which legitimacy prohibits any interference or new constructions.
- **Area B** – defined as the buffer zone of ‘Area A’, where new constructions are permitted in cases specified within the regulation for the management of these areas.

Though scholars have given different opinions regarding the first structuring of Komani, Etleva Nallbani argues that Komani has been part of the late Roman defensive system of the Drini Valley and played an important role in the Roman economic network of Praevalitana and

Dardania (western Balkans).<sup>38</sup> Recent surveys in north-eastern Albania and western Kosovo have identified that the region inherited a dense network of Roman roads, and Komani is not far from the secondary road, which linked *Lissus* and *Naissus* through a series of cities, stations, and customs. Strategically positioned above the axis of the Drini River, the site played an important part in the defensive system of the valley. It became a key point on the secondary roads relating Dardania with Shkodra and the Adriatic. Moreover, from the seventh century, Komani and the Drini River valley give a demonstration of the typical process of medieval regrouping settlements in western Balkans.<sup>39</sup> This characteristic reflects on how new settlements, mainly located in hilly areas grow as a decline of the classical urban phenomenon by transforming the traditional urban hierarchies. Komani thus was based on both a long-term social and local hierarchy of the settlement where the main living area was surrounded by satellite quarters, each dedicated to different activities.

So far, the scale of excavations conducted by the French-Albanian mission has engaged only 20% of the entire built area, which has suffered from serious erosion<sup>40</sup>. Though the ongoing research is still partial and only concentrated in some of the parts of the settlement, it has a promising potential for extension. Based on the French - Albanian research outcomes so far (fig. 9, 10, 11, 12), Komani site recognized for its notable complexity during the early Middle Ages bears an important historical significance to be protected and preserved in time. Herewith, it should acquire at least the right to be listed as a cultural heritage site.

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<sup>38</sup> Nallbani, *The Case of Medieval Komani*. Also see: Curta 2006, Wilkes 1992, Korosec 1953.

<sup>39</sup> Due to the seventh century demographic collapse of Central and Northern Balkan, archaeologist identify the regrouping of different communities in near coastal areas as typical regional characteristic. Nallbani et.al. 2008

<sup>40</sup> Here, the cemetery, churches and extramural living areas are submerged, together with its satellite sites scattered on its territory. See: Nallbani et.al. 2008



Figure 9 (a, b, c): Findings of a church with synthronon<sup>41</sup> in lower zone 1B. Photos by Etleva Nallbani, 2016. Copyright © Komani Project, French-Albanian archaeological mission.



Figure 10: View of two transformed sectors in the ninth-tenth century. Image by Etleva Nallbani. Copyright © Komani Project, French-Albanian archaeological mission.

<sup>41</sup> Webster Dictionary of Byzantium: term used from no later than the 5th C to describe a structure in a church combining the bishop's throne and clergy stalls placed behind the altar against the east wall, and now found chiefly in the Eastern churches of former Constantinople.

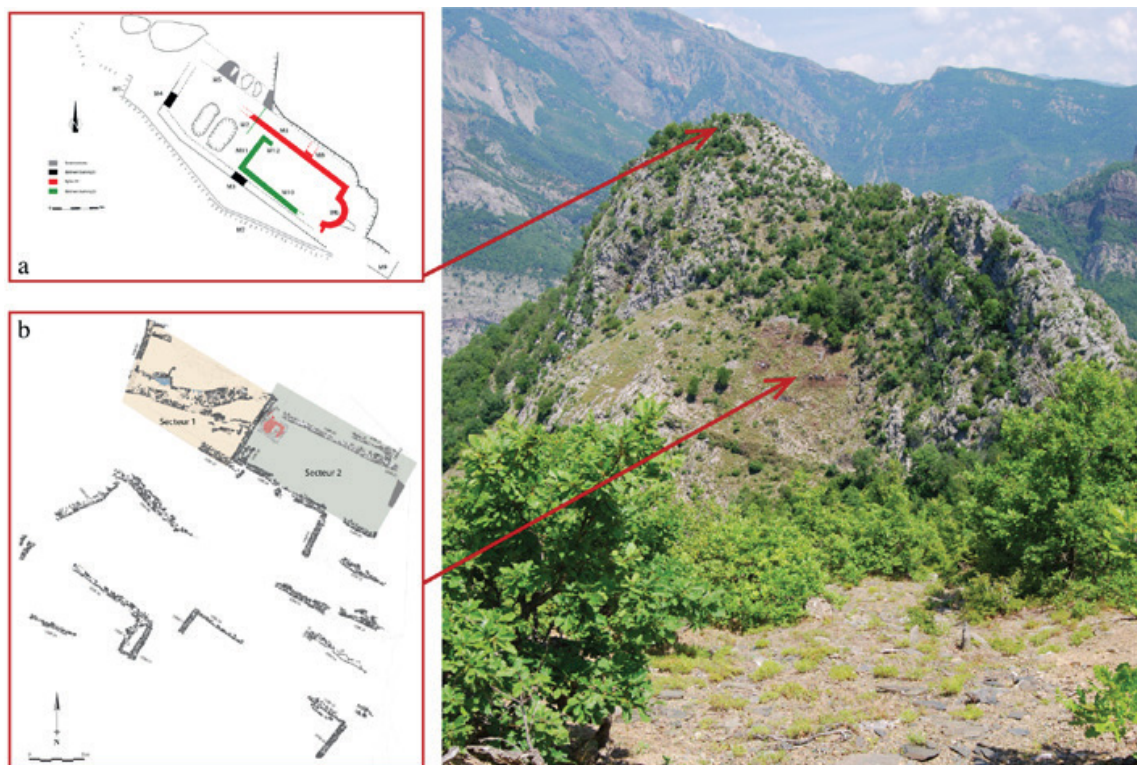


Figure 11: Western slope of Dalmace, featuring constructions layers of the late Antiquity and Middle Ages. Image by Etleva Nallbani. Copyright © Komani Project, French-Albanian archaeological mission.



Figure 12 (a, b, c): View from the south of Saint George area, church, burials, workshop, and other buildings. Photos (a, b) by Anisa Duraj. Image (c) by Luc Buchet. Copyright © Komani Project, French-Albanian mission.

## 2.4 The heritagization process

Though it lacks an elaborated rural infrastructure, Komani remains a source for tourism attraction, due to its ancient history, archaeological sites, and natural features of the surrounding mountains and the lake. Because of its distinct cultural and natural value, Komani has gained a certain recognition, but as defined in the Law of 2003 (Article 26 – on the Preliminary values), there are certain criteria to be fulfilled for a site or monument to be first listed and then nominated as tangible cultural heritage. Herewith by designating the area as ‘protected’ and ‘buffer’ zones, the state throws the first step of acknowledging the site potential for heritagization. Yet, there is still much work to be done before Komani takes full credits. Primary, there should be a proper cultural policy that recognizes sites of jointly tangible and natural heritage value, and secondly, an action plan is needed for the development of the area in the framework of regional and local sustainability. These goals can be achieved through a well-defined territory management strategy and appropriate alignment with the regional master-plan. By hatching a longstanding structure, which can revitalize the layout revitalize and make it accessible for tourists and visitors, the area will offer different alternatives and various cultural attractions. Furthermore, existing vernacular architecture must be restored, and new modern structures can be inserted in line with the rural features, where the community might provide local services, and offer handcrafts products. The core of this system must focus on the ‘historical and natural area’, by designing a proper management project for the integration of the archaeological sites in the landscape, the erection of a medieval-history-museum, and the valorization of the local traditions as intangible heritage.

## 2.5 The regional framework

Komani belongs to the commune of Temal, under the administration of the municipality of Vau i Dejës, part of Shkodra County. The Shkodra County is a geographical and administrative region in north-western Albania, also referred to as ‘the region’ of Shkodra, with capital the city of Shkodra. The region of Shkodra is bordered by Montenegro in the north and northwest and the Adriatic Sea in the west, the region of Kukës in the east and the region of Lezha in the south. The region occupies an area of 2,049 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of 245,700 inhabitants. According to the administrative division of 2009, the region has under its administration 3 main districts which include 5 municipalities, 6 towns, 29 communes and 269 villages. Among the natural features, there are three main lakes in the territory, the natural Lake of Shkodra, and two other artificial lakes: the Vau i Dejes Lake, 20 km east of Shkodra which occupies an area of 27 km<sup>2</sup>, and the Komani Lake, 40 km east of Shkodra which covers an area of 17 km<sup>2</sup>. Although quite rich in natural resources and socioeconomic development opportunities, the region has remained marginalized from the general economic progress of post-communist Albania.<sup>42</sup> Since the 1960s, there have been several important developments regarding the use of natural resources in the region of Shkodra, forming the basis of its economy. The construction of the Fierza and Koman Hydro-electrical power stations in the 1980s and the massive deforestation to create more agricultural land changed the environment drastically. Though the industrialization of this area influenced the social and economic life, it was also associated with environmental changes of the lands and the regions’ biodiversity. Ancient habitats and ecosystems were destroyed as new ones were created.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Nevila Xhindi, “Albanian towards Regional Development, The case of the Tirana, Shkodra and Kukes region” accessed March 12, 2018, [https://www.academia.edu/6829867/Albanian\\_towards\\_Regional\\_Development](https://www.academia.edu/6829867/Albanian_towards_Regional_Development). 97.

<sup>43</sup> Xhindi. 114.

Nowadays, the geographical position and the peculiar way of life in the region offer a combination of natural and cultural elements that create a unique ecosystem and a promising precondition for the development of sustainable tourism. Starting from 2005, few foreign projects aiming at the development of regional tourism have been initiated in different areas of the region. The most familiar cases are the projects in ‘Theth’<sup>44</sup> and ‘Valbona’<sup>45</sup>, which have shown promising results. In this framework of development potential, special attention should be paid to those unexploited areas in the upper lands which have a rich heritage of cultural and natural resources. The development of these areas, such a Komani can have a great impact on the rural environment, and landscape revitalization, and can improve the social and economic life of the local communities.

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<sup>44</sup> Theth is a touristic village and National Park, part of the Shkodra County. See, in instance, “Theth National Park,” accessed March 22, 2018, <http://www.panacomp.net/theth-national-park/>.

<sup>45</sup> Valbona Valley National Park is part of the Kukes County. See, in instance, “Valbona Valley National Park,” accessed March 22, 2018, <http://www.panacomp.net/valbona-valley-national-park/>.

# Chapter 3 –The role of cultural heritage in the framework of regional development policy

## 3.1 Albania as a candidate country of the EU

In the framework of Albania entering the European Union (EU), one of the main issues identified so far is related to the acceleration process that the country is facing, in terms of decentralizing central administration to regional and local levels.<sup>46</sup> The aim to get entitled with the status of ‘state member’ in the EU means that numerous areas of public policy and practices are undergoing intensive changes and development, including the cultural sector and the authorized heritage discourse (AHD)<sup>47</sup> of cultural heritage management.

Referring to Laurajane Smith, the AHD not only focuses on the aesthetical aspect of material objects, sites, and landscapes that must be protected and preserved for generations but also defines who the legitimate spokespersons of the past are.<sup>48</sup> In such circumstances, the way that cultural heritage is treated and managed in Albania very much resembles the rigid and traditional approaches deeply rooted in the nineteenth-century nationalist methodology. The generic view and administration of the cultural institutions operating in the country are still very centralized and disconnected from other public sectors.

For many years, most of the operating sectors in Albania including the cultural one, have faced lack of collaboration between the national and local level, or any interaction between each other. In 2014, with Albania gaining the status as a ‘candidate state’ of the EU, things started

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<sup>46</sup> Oriona Muçollari, “Albanian Regional Development Opportunities and Challenges in the Framework of the EU Policy,” *Eunomia. Rivista Semestrale Di Storia e Politica Internazionali* 0, no. 1 (July 19, 2017): 115–26.

<sup>47</sup> Laurajane Smith, “Class, Heritage and the Negotiation of Place,” on AHD, accessed March 11, 2017, [https://www.academia.edu/348666/Class\\_heritage\\_and\\_the\\_negotiation\\_of\\_place](https://www.academia.edu/348666/Class_heritage_and_the_negotiation_of_place).

<sup>48</sup> Smith, “The authorized heritage discourse (AHD) and its use,” 29-34.

to move forward. The EU standards put the focus on regional development<sup>49</sup> and on the integration process regarding local community wellbeing and education. Though regional development has gained governmental attention since 2006, Albania has faced major challenges in the implementation process, due to the lack of experience in designing proper regional development policies and because of extreme regional disparities<sup>50</sup>. As Nevila Xhindi describes in her PhD thesis, regional development policy was a very new area of public policy in Albania. She further underlines that in the given context of a candidate country, a reconfiguration in size and scope of regions and regional authorities in Albania has major relevance for the development process. Thus, an effective implementation for a sustainable regional development policy can require very close cooperation between experts, and synchronized actions towards socio-economic and environmental progress. Moreover, appropriate reforms should be enacted to establish and facilitate the course of ‘change of management’ and decentralization of the central authority.<sup>51</sup>

By acknowledging that regional policies affect various aspects of the development process, it underlines the need for measurement and monitoring by concrete indicators and tools. As a result, focus must be put on targeting cultural policies in the regional framework, based on EU standards<sup>52</sup>. This means that the regional development policies in Albania should be drafted by also including the cultural aspect. By doing so, this type of system will develop a benchmarking model of institutional culture, with concentration on regionally integrated management,

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<sup>49</sup> Referring to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for strengthening the economic and social cohesion of a ‘Region’ as an administrative area, division, or district: the basic administrative unit for local government. [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/funding/erdf/](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/erdf/)

<sup>50</sup> Xhindi, “Albanian towards Regional Development.”

<sup>51</sup> Xhindi. on The Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) signed on 12 June 2006 in Luxembourg.

<sup>52</sup> EU Commission. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS. Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe. Brussels, 22.07.2014.

[http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/publications/2014-heritage-communication\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/publications/2014-heritage-communication_en.pdf)

EU actions to improve environmental compliance and governance. Brussels, 18.01.2018. COM (2018) 10 Final. [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/pdf/COM\\_2018\\_10\\_F1\\_COMMUNICATION\\_FROM\\_COMMISSION\\_TO\\_INST\\_EN\\_V8\\_P1\\_959219.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/pdf/COM_2018_10_F1_COMMUNICATION_FROM_COMMISSION_TO_INST_EN_V8_P1_959219.pdf)

implemented in and by different levels of local governance.<sup>53</sup> In this regard, the new approach towards integrated collaboration of multi-level governance and cultural institutions has already been addressed in Albania by the World Bank 2015 initiative towards ‘Integrated Urban and Tourism Development.’<sup>54</sup> This project highlights an important point in the cultural and regional aspect, especially for sites located in rural areas, by promoting culture as foster for tourism development.<sup>55</sup>

Based on the above-mentioned reasons, two main issues will be analyzed. First, regional development is mostly considered in terms of education, healthcare, water, air pollution, forestry, and infrastructure rather than culture. Therefore, since cultural has been absent in regional policies, cultural heritage as a valid aspect of development is yet a foreign notion. Secondly, the tangible heritage in Albania is quite detached from the intangible heritage and social practices of the community, because of various factors and historical disruption. There is no real connection between local community and the cultural heritage connotation. Moreover, there is no recognition of intangible heritage as part of living expressions, or way of living. Herewith, I argue that the lack of consideration of heritage as a key promoter for the region and local livelihood derives from the conventional way of heritage management and the missing cultural policies as part of regional development.

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<sup>53</sup> Rachel Friedman, “Defining Integrated Landscape Management for Policy Makers,” accessed August 8, 2017, [https://www.academia.edu/7261508/Defining\\_Integrated\\_Landscape\\_Management\\_for\\_Policy\\_Makers](https://www.academia.edu/7261508/Defining_Integrated_Landscape_Management_for_Policy_Makers).

<sup>54</sup> “UNESCO and World Bank Collaborate on Culture, Urban Development, and Resilience | Urban Gateway,” accessed April 14, 2018, <http://www.urbangateway.org/news/unesco-and-world-bank-collaborate-culture-urban-development-and-resilience>.

<sup>55</sup> “Albania Local Economy and Tourism Development Receives \$71 Million Boost from World Bank,” Text/HTML, World Bank, accessed April 17, 2018, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2016/11/15/albania-local-economy-and-tourism-development-receives-71-million-boost-from-world-bank>.

## 3.2 The current status of heritage management

Cultural development in Albania endures yet an offset concept from the connotation of a region. Hitherto, none of the current operating laws, or any revised regulation or cultural policy has regarded heritage as a source for regional revitalization or development. In fact, there has been neither revision of current laws, nor new regulation proposed to open towards bilateral agreements. There has been no collaboration between cultural institutions and other public sectors, such as agriculture, the environmental sector, or territorial planning. As demonstrated, the current Albanian system of cultural heritage management is so far based on an AHD-method of heritage management that does not identify culture as part of regional development. Therefore, most of the archaeological sites located in rural areas are in oblivion and together with the surrounding landscape suffering from degradation.

Placing culture at the heart of development policies constitutes in the world's future and a precondition to successful globalization processes. In this light, the strong cooperation between the national authorities and UN and UNESCO joint programs for the safeguarding and promotion of cultural and natural heritage, and the cultural and creative industries as well, will be key for the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>56</sup>

In this context, detaching cultural heritage from the current management scenario to a new one needs accurate consideration of the actual operating apparatus. This means turning heritage from a 'frozen past', into a 'vivid' site, where local people would constitute an integral part. As Elidiana Bashi argues, diverse cultural heritage is prominent for the reduction of poverty in Albania, and the establishing of a sustainable economy.<sup>57</sup> By 'diversification', she refers to the

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<sup>56</sup> "Sustainable Development Goals for Culture on the 2030 Agenda," UNESCO, September 23, 2015, <https://en.unesco.org/sdgs/clt>.

<sup>57</sup> Elidiana Bashi, "Cultural Heritage of Albania – A Fabulous Economic Source for the Sustainable Economic Development of Tourism," *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences*, Heritage as an alternative driver for

World Conference on Cultural Policies, organized in Mexico on August 6, 1982, that determined the Mediterranean as a connection between nations and different cultures, a means of communication between the European and Islamic culture, and announcing the Mediterranean area “As the sea of the human civilization.”<sup>58</sup> In this regard, diversifying cultural heritage in Albania means to remove it from the existing AHD concept and integrate it in a bigger cultural-touristic scenario. Though part of the Mediterranean and under the UNESCO umbrella and partnerships programs, Albania has yet remained more isolated regarding cultural tourism than its neighbor countries. As Bashi puts it, the cultural heritage in Albania comes to visitors almost primitive, without any improvement or support from the main promoter institutions. This means that financial sources should be used from different levels in Albania to expand this kind of tourism, since the areas where most of the heritage is located are mainly rural and unexplored, with a low number of habitats and quite poor local communities.<sup>59</sup> Consequently, due to the low living standard and the deterioration of the environment, the local population is continually migrating from their lands, and the attempt to keep local traditions is at stake. The need for revitalization of this areas, especially in the north of Albania is real and urges for rigorous actions to be taken, for the protection and safeguarding of the regional livelihood, vernacular architecture, and surrounding landscape.

Referring on the aforementioned problematics, and on the EU agenda on the ‘Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe’, with focus on the Western Balkan,<sup>60</sup> a recent report has been

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sustainable development and economic recovery in South East Europe - Project SEE/B/0016/4.3/X SAGITTARIUS, 188 (May 14, 2015): 89–94, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.03.342>.

<sup>58</sup> Refereeing to <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0005/000525/052505eo.pdf>

<sup>59</sup> Bashi, “Cultural Heritage of Albania – A Fabulous Economic Source for the Sustainable Economic Development of Tourism.”

<sup>60</sup> “Western Balkans: EU Promotes Cultural Heritage Route - EEAS - European External Action Service - European Commission,” EEAS - European External Action Service, accessed March 24, 2018,

prepared as part of a mission delegated by the Council of Europe to support the Ministry of Culture of Albania to develop its strategic vision.<sup>61</sup>

The overall objective of the report is based on the development of integrated cultural and natural management tools. The target authorities are invited to focus on specific aspects of cultural sites within protected environmental areas and to favor the understanding of international visions on the role of culture within the landscape and the community. They are advised to support the elaboration of sustainable strategies for the management of the cultural environment and to allow professionals and community to have a meeting point and face a new aspect of cultural heritage within the existing context.

This new approach firmly challenges the old school of heritage management, by focusing on a different dimension of culture as foster for regional development. Moreover, it emphasizes the idea that the landscape as heritage can bring coherence to territorial policies by accelerating rural development. Furthermore, there is also an increasing recognition of rural development as part of the regional policy. A proper rural policy supporting towns and countryside is also necessary to provision the peculiarity of rural life, which is constantly changing. In this matter, regional policies must be drafted coherently to the cultural, natural, and rural priorities of the region.<sup>62</sup> By developing an Integrated Management plan in Albania and shared cooperation between authorities, one can initiate a new opportunity for regional revitalization. A proper environmental management of natural resources, a common engagement of the public services, and a mutual collaboration between the Ministry of Culture, other sectors (rural development and agriculture, tourism, and environment), and local municipalities, will be a key factor in

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[https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage\\_en/39440/](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/39440/) Western Balkans: EU promotes Cultural Heritage Route.

<sup>61</sup> “New Release: ‘A Cultural Strategy for Albania: Implanting the Cultural Bug’ - Culture and Cultural Heritage: Newsroom,” accessed April 10, 2018, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/-/new-release-a-cultural-strategy-for-albania-implanting-the-cultural-bug->.

<sup>62</sup> Xhindi.158

ensuring stability and growth to the region. Focusing on the symbiotic relationship between cultural and natural heritage and raising a steering committee from different levels of representations will decentralize the management system by introducing a new idea of bottom-up administration level.

Therefore, by targeting and promoting culture in the regions, more opportunities, local businesses, and regional services will be created and sustained by each other. As a first step, especially in the framework of Albania's effort to enter the EU, new policies for regional development focusing on culture and tourism diversification should be developed, and locally implemented.

### 3.3 Latest actions as part of regional strategies

In the purpose of integrated collaboration, the Ministry of Tourism and Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, in cooperation with the RisiAlbania<sup>63</sup> have lately launched the first national competition called "Local Holidays"<sup>64</sup> for the coastal, south-eastern and the identified areas as the "100 Villages" strategy.<sup>65</sup> The competition promotes new and innovative ideas in the field of tourism and provides support opportunities for revitalization of these areas. The aim of the project is to foster the development of traditional festivals, focused on culinary, and local activities, such as cultural, religious, and historical traditions. These activities will help to create new economic opportunities by adding value to existing

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<sup>63</sup> RisiAlbania is an innovative project, financed by the funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation that seeks to improve the opportunities of the young Albanian people in finding sustainable employment. "Risi Albania – Making the Labour Market Work for Young People," accessed March 12, 2018, <http://www.risialbania.al/index/>.

<sup>64</sup> The information was taken from the official website of the ministry of Tourism and Environment: "Ministria e Turizmit dhe Mjedisit," accessed March 12, 2018, <http://mjedisi.gov.al/2018/03/27/konkursi-per-organizimin-e-festave-lokale/>. The translation of the project from Albanian to English is the result of my own work.

<sup>65</sup> Integrated Rural Development Program - The program aims to coordinate development interventions in unexplored rural areas of 100 villages in Albania, mostly from the center-south of the country. The information was taken from the official website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. "Ministria e Bujqesise Dhe Zhvillimit Rural » 'Programi i Integruar Për Zhvillimin Rural – Programi i 100 Fshatrave,'" accessed March 12, 2018, <http://www.bujqesia.gov.al/programi-i-integruar-per-zhvillimin-rural-programi-i-100-fshatrave-2/>. The translation of the project from Albanian to English is the result of my own work.

ones, through collaboration with local entrepreneurship by providing a rich and authentic experience for domestic and foreign tourists in these regions. As a first stage, all the interested communes and municipalities are invited to submit a Project Idea to develop and implement authentic culinary festivals or cultural tradition with the focus on the south-eastern territory. Though the idea is very innovative for Albania and a step forward towards integrated management, the Ministry of Culture is still not part of this shared partnership. Once again, culture is left in disregard as a separate resource, isolated from the development process.

Nevertheless, the current changing context and attitude in the Albanian administration system, at least towards the tourism sector, means that new opportunities are open for regional development. This will lead to the drafting of new regional policies which will embrace different fields of expertise and level of management. Though a first small step and not widely extended, it marks a turning page in the public sector.

As for agriculture and local tradition in the context of regional development, a shared committee should also be raised for the promotion of integrated management in the cultural heritage sector. Based on new rectified cultural policies as part of regional development, a platform for project proposals and fundraising plans could be initially designed. This way calls for start-up projects could be developed and addressed to stakeholders, public and, private investors as well as development funds operating in Albania.

## Chapter 4 – Bibracte site as benchmarking case

Though there are some well managed archaeological sites in Europe, mostly state-run projects, selecting an analog one to compare Komani to was not an easy task. The choice of selection was not made on the similarity of historical excavations between Komani and other sites, but rather on their management approaches towards heritage in the rural landscape, as well as the local community's activities and integration in the region.

After a careful examination of Komani<sup>66</sup> as a cultural, natural, and semi-industrial site, and due to time and resources limitation, I decided to focus on only one benchmarking case of management strategy. In this matter, I choose Bibracte<sup>67</sup> a National park, Archeological Museum and Research Centre, in Burgundy, France.

The selection of Bibracte as a benchmark for the case of Komani is based on three main criteria of comparability and affiliation between the two sites:

1. the triple identity of Bibracte in relation to the pilot project proposed for Komani, as a national park, archaeological area and museum, and heritage research centre.
2. the management approach towards heritage in the rural landscape, as well as the local community's active integration comparing to the present situation of Komani.
3. the professional network and the ongoing French research program in northern Albania, which is supporting Komani for many years now, introduced me with the opportunity to visit Bibracte for a short research trip.

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<sup>66</sup> Current circumstances in terms of remote location, landscape features, and ongoing archeological excavations.

<sup>67</sup> The selection of Bibracte site, was based on the head of the French-Albanian archaeological mission, Etleva Nallbani's advice, during our last discussion regarding the thesis research period.

## 4.1 Introduction of the site identity

The modern site known as Mont Beuvray is generally identified as ancient Bibracte, and stands between borders of the French counties of Nièvre and Saône-et-Loire, in Burgundy, France. The site of Bibracte represented by a 1000 ha domain in total is situated in between Glux-en-Glenne village and Mont Beuvray<sup>68</sup>. The large excavation area, the hilly rural location, and the landscape heritage as a protected national park make the selected site a relevant case to study and connect to my project idea. Also, due to the French interest in Albania, Bibracte is seen as a great opportunity to learn from for the future progress of Komani area. Due to an established network between the French-Albanian archaeologists working in northern Albania and the Director of Bibracte, I had the opportunity to visit Bibracte for a short research trip. What is interesting about Bibracte in relation to Komani despite its triple identity, as a national park, archaeological area and museum, and heritage research centre, is the fact that Bibracte plays a crucial role in the region. In this matter, the management of the archaeological and natural site of Mont Beuvray has a considerable impact to the economy of Morvan and contributes to the revitalisation of the rural territory. Bibracte serves as a key promoter of Regional Development, and for mutual collaboration between professionals and community in the national, and international framework. Through its cultural and natural features Bibracte aims to promote cultural and natural heritage based on integrated management; to advocate for public engagement in the local level, and active collaboration between local authorities and the community; to create services and generate incomes for local business; to contribute to local promotions and touristic attraction for Morvan and the surroundings. The European Archaeological Centre as an EPCC (public establishment for cultural cooperation) with main focuses on the promotion of exchange inside the European archaeologic community. This

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<sup>68</sup> Information from the Bibracte's handbook, which is given to every guest of the research center.

establishment aims to keep professional standards among academics and practitioners of cultural heritage, to motivate academic interaction and an inclusive approach to the past. Bibracte proposes a wide range of cultural activities; such as permanent exhibitions, temporary exhibition projects, museum and sites guided tours, local festivities and fairs, entertainment program for children, etc. It offers as well various academic activities; such as supporting research and excavation through exchange inside European archaeologists, through training and work methods; hosting national, and international conferences, workshops, and educational programs, by also involving young practitioners through research periods and internships.

Despite its structure and the ongoing activities, what connects this site to my idea of a project proposal for Komani is related to Bibracte being an almost a new establishment. Though it was part of a national project, Bibracte opened as an institution only in 1995. Moreover, because of its extended terrain, the area is still in excavation process, and the archaeological work remains exposed under the visitor's gaze and curiosity.

Though Albania has not such a cultural heritage management repertoire as a well-developed country as France, the French example shows that a good management example is based on the goodwill of the state rather than the longevity of the heritage site. In such circumstances, Komani as Bibracte, and compared to other operating heritage sites in Albania can still have an opportunity to be differently developed. Moreover, the fact that Komani site is still under archaeological excavations can make it more appealing to the curious visitors, and this way of exposure should be recognized as a strength rather than a limitation.

## 4.2 History of the site

Located in Mont-Beuvray (820 m) in the heart of Morvan and Burgundy, 20 km away from Autun (fig. 13), France, the town of Bibracte was the earliest capital of the Gallic people of the

Aedui, in the 1st cent BC. The material culture of the Aeduis found during excavations have corresponded to the Late Iron Age 'La Tène culture. Recognized as a Gaulish oppidum (fortified city), the site has been identified as one of the most important hillforts in Gaul.



Figure 13: Maps of Bibracte, natural park, Morvan region. Images source: “Gérer un site patrimonial dans toutes ses dimensions L'exemple de Bibracte,” Powerpoint presentation by Vincent Guichard, February 2017 Copyright © Bibracte EPCC.

After being deserted for two thousand years, the ancient city was literally fossilized under the forest, till the arrival of modern archaeologists. Bibracte was identified by Jacques-Gabriel Bulliot between 1865 to 1895.<sup>69</sup> Bulliot excavated the site from 1867 to 1905, and from 1907 the excavations were directed by his nephew Joseph Déchelette. After this last death during World War I, the work was suspended, and the site fell into neglect. Nevertheless, of the interrupted process, the archaeological excavations conducted on the site in the twentieth century identified Bibracte as the “oppida civilization” of the late Iron Age.

<sup>69</sup> The first excavations started thanks to funding from Napoleon III who was writing his ‘History of Julius Caesar’, and found interest in Bibracte, since the site was mentioned by the Cesar in his Commentaries on the Gallic War.

In 1985, the excavations began again, and Bibracte became part of the “Grands Travaux Culturels - Major Cultural Works”, an ambitious archaeological research program, initiated by former French president Francois Mitterrand. The label of "Major Cultural Works" was created to designate monuments and sites which could benefit from a European scope program of diffusion and enlargement of the public by the Minister of Culture. In 1989, the European Archaeological Center of Mont Beuvray was created, which will reassemble the site, the museum, and the research center of Glux-en-Glenne. Though the initiative was launched in the 1980s, Bibracte was only inaugurated in 1995. The Minister of Culture, on the advice of the National Council of Archaeological Research, confirmed the oppidum of Bibracte (Mont-Beuvray, Saint-Léger-sous-Beuvray; Saône-et-Loire; Glux-en-Glenne; Nièvre). The excavations were conducted by Vincent Guichard and put into practice by both French and foreign teams.<sup>70</sup> Today Bibracte is a European research centre and archaeological park located in a protected forest. It represents an important point for interpreting Gaulish culture for a popular audience. Classified as ‘historical monument’, Bibracte received the label "Great Site of France" in 2007.

### 4.3 The working process

The site of Bibracte functions as a national and international cultural and scientific centre for intellectual, academics and practitioners of archaeological heritage. As an original research and cultural establishment, the site is equipped with high quality facilities. Together with the museum premises and the European research centre (fig.14), the entire establishment houses an archaeological laboratory and library (fig. 15), a cafeteria and two dormitories (fig. 16) for hosting researchers, students, and heritage professionals from all around Europe.

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<sup>70</sup> The information of the history of the site was mostly gathered from ‘Gérer un site patrimonial dans toutes ses dimensions L'exemple de Bibracte’. PowerPoint presented by Vincent Guichard, Bibracte EPCC, February 2017.



*Figure 14: The Research Centre of Bibracte and surroundings. Photo by Anisa Duraj. August 2017*



*Figure 15: The Library of Bibracte's Research Centre. Photo by Anisa Duraj. August 2017*



*Figure 16 (a, b): The Center's facilities; (a) shows on the left the cafeteria and, on the right, the lodging area; (b) shows the accommodation structure for school groups. Photo by Anisa Duraj. August 2017*

The overall working environment in Bibracte is very relaxed. The people who work there come mostly from the region and neighboring towns and some of them have been working there for at least 10 years. The staff is very hospital and polite and open to any newcomers.

In total there are around 25 people working in Bibracte as permanent staff, in charge of the Research Centre, the Museum, and the archaeological sites. Temporary staff is based on demands and may vary on guided tours, or temporary exhibition etc. During the operating time, ‘town hall’ meetings between staff and the general director are often organized. Also, the Director of Bibracte meets regularly with representatives of the local community.

Both the museum (fig. 17) and the archaeological sites (fig. 18) present the archaeology of Bibracte and aim to be a showcase of archaeological research at the national and international level. They operate under the following conditions:

- Opened daily from mid-March to mid-November.
- Sundays entrance free of charge.
- Organized guided tours in English and French
- Free transportation system for tourists from the nearest town.
- Various promotions: combined visitor’s tickets for the museum and guided tours (the Gaulish journey the archo-nature day, etc.), museum membership passes, and museum shop’s articles discounts.



*Figure 17: Front view of the Museum of Bibracte. Photo by Anisa Duraj. August 2017*



*Figure 18: One of the excavated and consolidated archaeological sites. Photo by Anisa Duraj. August 2017*

## 4.4 Integrated management strategy

Bibracte site and its surroundings operate under a shared management. Its administration and regular maintenance are based on a mutual partnership carried out by national institution and local authorities (fig.19). Thus, the public body in charge of the site of Bibracte/Mont Beuvray, the Research Centre, museum, and archaeological sites, is composed of a steering committee under the direction of the General Director of Bibracte:

- representatives of the Ministry of Culture
- the Burgundy Regional Council of the two counties, Nièvre and Saône-et-Loire
- the regional service of Cultural Affairs Management
- representatives of the Ministry of Ecology
- the regional Environment Directorate
- the Morvan Regional Natural Park
- the national Office of Forests, as a subcontractor for woodland management in Bibracte.
- the national Architects Order Board, for the development of the French territory

Meetings within the steering committee are organized based on a rigorous agenda, where follow-ups and issues are discussed. Every year there is a general meeting where the director general of Bibracte shows the achievement and challenges of the past year and presents the new plan for the upcoming year. Bibracte economy is based 75-80% on public funding, and the Ministry of Culture is the main financial partner. The allocation of the yearly budget is based on a specific plan priority proposed and approved by the general director and a public body of local authorities. The site itself generates stable revenue, 20-25% of funds from tourists and activities which covers the maintenance costs. They also lease the dormitory for visitors or researchers who want to use their archive and library towards a daily fee. During the inactive period from November to March, some of the collections are loaned to other museums.



Figure 19: The site organized as an archaeological and natural park, with the museum located at the foothills operating as an entrance: An example of integrated management of a heritage site. Source: PowerPoint presentation - Gestion du grand site et de ses territoires, Définition et gestion de la zone tampon paysagère. Image by Vincent Guichard, Bibracte EPCC, January 2017. Copyright © Bibracte EPCC.

Though the French system of heritage management is centralized, Bibracte represents a tailored style of bottom-up management, which seems very effectively, especially in such dimensions

of rural management. In the given context, the strategy of Sustainable Integrated Management involves an integrated territorial project, fostering cooperation on the local, regional, and national level. This concept of integration has emerged at the same time with the idea of sustainable development and they were considered mutually dependent. For obvious reasons, they have both been applied predominantly to environmental issues, and have increasingly enforced environmental policy and regulations. Though applying these ideas to cultural heritage seems to be both obvious and necessary, Guichard highlights that explicit mention of integrated management in normative documents relating to cultural heritage remains however extremely rare.<sup>71</sup>

This lack of documentation raises an important point concerning cultural policies in the regional framework and draws parallels between Bibracte and Komani. During the twentieth century, the landscape of the mountain region of Morvan, as well as the landscape of Komani, have changed drastically due to land abandonment, agricultural decline, and forestation. Despite the quality of landscape and remarkable geography location, the few populated rural areas are still suffering from long-term demographic depression and a poorly developed economy. From a touristic point of view, the valorization of the archaeological area of Bibracte faced difficulties. The site was unfamiliar and the region of Morvan lacked solid infrastructure and tourist accommodation, as Komani is doing presently. Because of national and local efforts, the Morvan identity and its culture, based on traditions, crafts, and onsite heritage, has been reinforced over the last few decades. In this area, As Guichard outlines, Bibracte enjoys the role of a cultural center for a local population with very few other cultural opportunities. In fact, the museum's programme is not restricted to archaeological exhibitions, but the to a mutual effort to produce alternative events related to creative arts or current matters, to

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<sup>71</sup> Vincent Guichard, *"An example of integrated management of a heritage site: Bibracte – Mont Beuvray (Burgundy, France)"*, Le Vie Dei Mercanti. Capri 2012

welcome artists in residence, run multi-disciplinary festivals and organize sessions with researchers, etc.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, the director highlights that this cultural openness also demonstrates that archaeology is not a passive traditional study of the land, but an approach which can be used as a resource for present challenges and further progress. In comparison to Bibracte, Komani also requires a national effort and in order to be revitalized and approachable to the public. Parallel to the territorial project ongoing since 2013, a new ambitious plan is being developed in Bibracte for the renewal of the “Grand Site de France” label. As Guichard stated, during my visit there, the primary means to achieve such goals are building a shared vision which considers the landscape heritage as the basis for the future and extending the management plan to a buffer zone.<sup>73</sup> In this vein, the idea to develop a project for Komani and further gather the existing sites of Albania under a similar unified label could be an effective incentive, which would also improve the long-term monitoring of the sites and their landscapes.

#### 4.4.1 Marketing strategy and local level cooperation

Bibracte’s marketing strategy is quite developed and based on cross-promotion. They use social media and the web mostly for marketizing events and local activities. They promote their research through different online platforms, and publications. Likewise, there is an active cross-promotion between the historical site and museum, the landscape, local traditions of agriculture and craft products, and organized and regional activities.

Bibracte shares collaboration with other local partners, such as the regional service of Cultural Affairs Management, and the Natural Park ‘Morvan terroir’ which contribute to the organization of local activities and festivities. They also cooperate with local business

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<sup>72</sup> Guichard. 2012

<sup>73</sup> This point of view was also shared in ‘Bibracte, Mont Beuvray: Gestion du grand site et de ses territoires, Definition et gestion de la zone tampon paysagere’. PowerPoint presentation by Vincent Guichard, Bibracte EPCC, January 2017, accessed in Bibracte Research’ Centre Library, August 2017.

producers of culinary traditions, such as blueberries honey, cakes, and beer (fig. 20). Cross-promotion between these entities is crucial.



*Figure 20: Local product, exhibit in the museum shop. Photo by Anisa Duraj. August 2017*

Bibracte also rely on outsourced cooperation with other Cultural and Research Institutes. Their strategy is to offer free accommodation to universities equipments in exchange of archeological excavations works in the site. New exhibition projects are organized in collaboration with other museum or cultural institutions (fig. 21).



*Figure 21: View of the Museum's supplementary activities; temporary video exhibition, showing excavation's findings in the Champagne region. Photo by Anisa Duraj. August 2017*

#### 4.4.2 Audience development

Because of its triple nature and the cultural approach, Bibracte receives a high number of visitors year-round. The customers who visit the site are divided in two groups, by habit and

choice. The audience by habit is usually in terms of domestic tourism, like the local community, or visitors from around France, and the one by choice relates to foreign visitors, such as international researcher and heritage practitioners. The yearly number of visitors is around 40-45,000 people. Most of them, 70% are domestic tourists, mostly local community, families, and school groups; 20% from other regions of France, and a small percentage from neighbouring countries, primarily the Netherlands and Belgium, and 10% are international visitors, travelers, and scholars. It takes generally more than 50 min by car from Bibracte's museum to the nearest two towns, Autun and Etang. Because of its remote location, during summer, free of charge buses are provided as public transportation for visitors from 10.00 am to 6.00 pm. As Vincent Guichard explains the visitors of the Morvan area are attracted by its landscape and have a deeper interest in heritage and history. Though few in numbers, they are loyal guests, appreciative of the environment and the archaeological content, and open to new initiatives and local activities.<sup>74</sup> In this regard, the breakdown of visitor numbers in a rural area is different from that of museums in urban settings.

In addition to the landscape, another important touristic attraction are the ancient trails (fig. 22) which connect the museum to the surrounding landscape. Besides featuring in local historical stories, the trails show the paths that the community's predecessors used in the past, and which have contributed to what the site has become today. In relation to these paths, Komani also features traces of ancient paths, presently used by the archaeologists to reach the site (fig. 23) Bibracte aims to widening and diversifying the public audience from cultural domestic tourism to cultural and natural foreign audience. They are currently promoting diverse activities, such as temporary exhibitions, special museum-day events, and ancient trails guided tours, through

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<sup>74</sup> Guichard. 2012, and based on my own experience in the site, this 'loyal' approach of the domestic tourism was quite feasible. Every day, and especially in the weekend, there were always people visiting the site, and participating in supplementary activities.

social media, booklets, and touristic maps. They are also working on new project ideas for tourism diversification, such as the ESK (tree-top walk-project). By creating alternative ways of tourism, it can generate more opportunities for local business and new investments in the territory. More foreign tourism means more guest houses, and more local products. However, this is still an initial project says Guichard which needs further analyses and caution, special related to the mass-tourism risk.



*Figure 22: View of ancient trays in Bibracte. Photo by Anisa Duraj. August 2017*



*Figure 23: Traces of ancient paths in Komani. Photo by Anisa Duraj. August 2017*

## 4.5 Future development

Despite its well-established management, Bibracte, as many other sites, constantly faces new challenges as well as upcoming opportunities. Though financially sustainable and supported by the state<sup>75</sup>, Bibracte's major issue is related to the migration of local community to bigger cities and to the low level of international tourism. Referring to Bibracte role in the improvement of the current situation Guichard reflects on the management of the site as a symbiotic relationship between cultural and natural heritage, and that such combination can yield complex solutions to current issues, related to agriculture, forestry, and tourism. In both cases of Komani and Bibracte, rural challenges are on the focus and they require prudent actions. In this matter, farming for example could be improved by ending landscape degradation, due to the decline of population and land abandonment. Agriculture can be recovered by connecting locally products and services to the local touristic market. Woodland management could also play an important role in the development of the landscape culture by promoting alternative methods of exploitation. By regenerating the forest and improving local practices, this can considerably affect the environment and development of ecotourism.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, tourism on the other hand should be diversified in Bibracte and standardized in Komani by developing accurate projects which will raise the quality of services for both visitors and residents. Based on the three main criteria: the triple identity, the management aspect, and the French expertise in Albania, using Bibracte's unique way of integrated management as a benchmark for Komani demonstrates that treating heritage and landscape as one, can retain support from different levels of authorities, by mitigating the bureaucracy in regional policy implementation. The rise of a partnership among local and national entities of

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<sup>75</sup> As mentioned by both the Director of Bibracte and the Head of the Museum, the total economy is based at 75% on public funding, and 25% on own incomes from yearly revenue. Also referring to 'Rapport d'activité annuel du programme de recherche sur le Mont Beuvray et son environnement', PDF presentation by Vincent Guichard, Bibracte EPCC, 2009, accessed in Bibracte Research's Centre Library. August 2017.

<sup>76</sup> Xhindi. 152

cultural and natural heritage as a unified body creates a longstanding development system for regional revitalization.<sup>77</sup>

Heritage and landscape in rural areas needs more attention and consideration from both the state and the community. In this regard, introducing the selected example as a benchmarking case for Komani, it is easier to communicate this idea to stakeholders. A clear confrontation with existing results of prominent heritage cases in rural settings, and the similarity of combined character between sites and the surroundings will increase their apprehension regarding the site's importance. While in theory, the overall analysis will cover the general aspects of heritage management in Albania, in practice, each 'site' within its regional territory must develop a tailored specific research and management strategy.<sup>78</sup>

My study on Komani will not only contextualize a theoretical approach, but also a practical scenario of the site regarding present and future challenges. The outcome of this study will be later drafted in a proper project design for Komani and the surrounding area. Due to time limitation the design idea will not be included in this paper, however the general concept will be further introduced.

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<sup>77</sup> Ann. Vourc'h, *"Protection, Management, and Sustainable Development: the 'Grand Site de France' Experience"*, Le Vie Dei Mercanti. Capri 2012

<sup>78</sup> In this context, I am referring to all the others undeveloped 'archeological and natural' sites in the territory of Albania, to which Komani case will serve as a starting point.

## Chapter 5 – Komani proposal as a Startup project

The archaeological excavations and research program of Komani has been conducted due to the willing of several research institutions, French and Albanian, which have financed and supported the site from 2008.<sup>79</sup> Though still in working progress, the excavated area and the archaeological findings bear historical importance for Albania. Because of a missing proper medieval-history-museum in Albania, much of these findings are sent to France for further examinations, and others are deposit to the Institute of Archaeology (IAT). Due to the remote mountainous area with difficult terrain and high altitude of Komani, and the lack of a proper semi-urban infrastructure in the region, reaching the site is very difficult and problematic. The absence of a regional master-plan for many years or concrete strategies have led to the ineffectiveness of the transportation system. The rudimentary infrastructure and the inefficient roadway constitute an important restraint for foreign investment, tourism, economic growth, and the provision of social services. In most of the cases, the poor condition of local roads is impacted by the mountainous terrain and their lack of maintenance.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, the lack of control by the state exposes the area to human and natural dangers, such as looting and forestry fires. In consequence of these threats, and because the archeological mission operates only from in the summer season (two months per year), after each expedition the archaeological sites are covered for preservation purposes. Until the next mission, the medieval Komani remains hidden under the soil, isolated and forgotten. In this regard, the idea to develop a decent cultural project which could affect the valorization of Komani site and its surroundings must be the focus of the integrated management idea. The archeological sites and their findings

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<sup>79</sup> Nallbani, *The Case of Medieval Komani*.

<sup>80</sup> Xhindi. 146

should have a dedicated place in Komani, so that the French-Albanian effort of the committed archeologists could be finally redeemed.

## 5.1 The pilot-project

As a first attempt, the pilot-project of Komani involves a project idea, which can be later elaborated in a project proposal and action plan. The project idea is based on a virtual mapping of the identified area (fig.23), showing a basic zoning of the spatial planning, as a first stage.

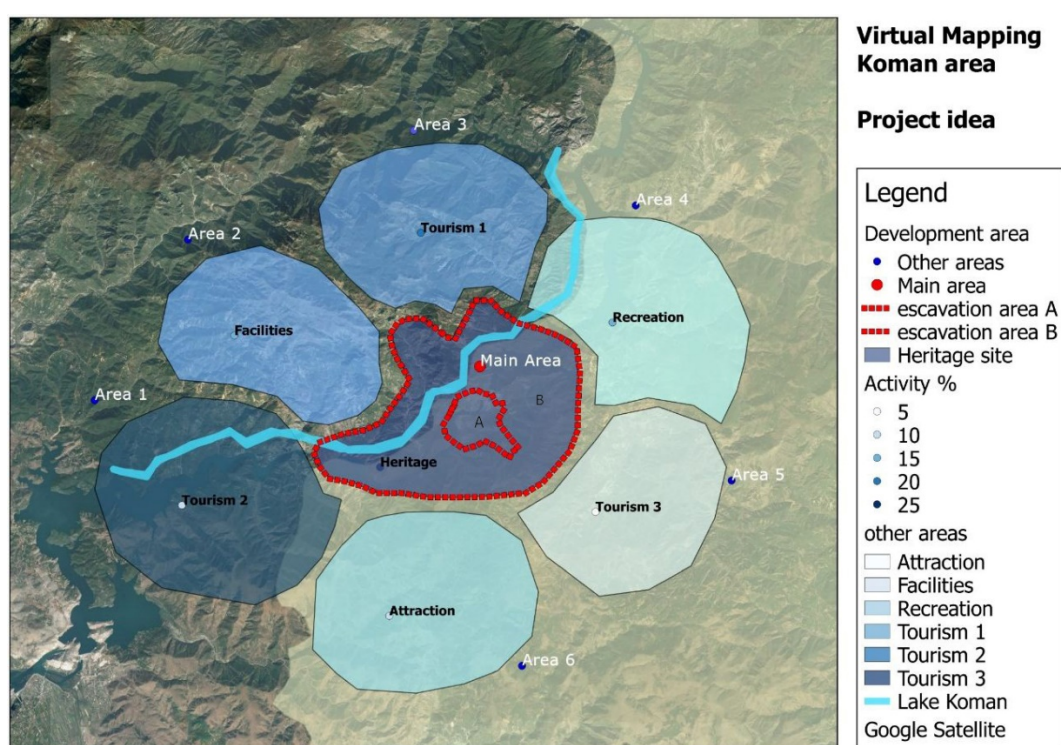


Figure 24: A virtual mapping of Komani area showing a basic zoning of the spatial planning, as a first stage.  
Image by Anisa Duraj. August 2017

In the next step, the further elaborated spatial planning will have a semi-urban and rural character and must be based on critical regionalism. The project will aim to be part of the current master-plan of the region<sup>81</sup>. It will depict the current landscape use, the status of the

<sup>81</sup> The new territorial division approved in 2014, affected many regions and municipalities in the country. Starting from 2015, the master-plan and territorial strategy of the Shkodra County approved in 2011 were suspended for revision. A new strategy was drafted for 2015-2030, which has not been officially disclosed. However according to the Albanian prime minister Edi Rama declaration of 2017, the region of Shkodra will be part of the 'Albanian Alp Masterplan' strategy which will focus on 4 main streams: Tourism (Cultural and Natural), Agriculture, Rural Development and Energy development. The total investment in this area will be around 980 million Euros, as a

infrastructure, in terms of facilities and roads, and the demographic distribution of the local community and their activities. Concerning the collected data, the project will propose a development strategy based on a proper management planning. This last will focus on Komani site as the core plan, by proposing consolidation ideas on the current archeological sites. Vernacular guest houses, rural roads, and mounting paths will be rehabilitated by using local construction materials and reversible structures. Despite the existing structures new facilities and amenities will be proposed in the lower part of Komani. More accommodations are required for tourists and visitors, which their way to Komani is currently only transitory. The archeologists also will have their own housing in this area and a small research center with storehouse. Lastly, a local medieval-history-museum will be designed, in line with rural features, where some of the findings can be exposed and accessible to the tourist's gaze.

By proposing the tangible aspect of this project, I will also explain its relation to the local people and the promotion of intangible heritage. In such areas as Komani local ways of life tend to be disconnected rather than subordinated to concerns about heritage conservation and tourism development.<sup>82</sup> Most of the economy of the local population of Komani is based on farming and agriculture. The north of Albania is particularly recognized for several traditions such as gastronomy (characterized by the cider of pomegranate, the cooking in 'saç', a characteristic saucepan of the region, wild vegetable pickles); handcraft works, (needlecraft) and handloom (tezgjah works); and the cultivations and distribution of plants (thyme, siderites, and sage) used as herbal medicines. Hence the lack of dedicated premises for the local community to share their traditions as a way of living induces the implementation of new facilities in Komani, as a meeting point between people.

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shared partnership of the State with the Albanian Fond of Development and the World Bank Strategy for regional development. The first stage of this investment 2017-2022 is forecasted to rise the number of tourist from 65.000 in 2016, to 102.000 within 4-5 years, by reaching around 600.000 visitors till 2031.

<sup>82</sup> Cohen and Cohen, "Current Sociological Theories and Issues in Tourism." Miura, 2010. 104

The impact that Komani will have on the region would be feasible and longstanding. This project will create services and employment possibilities. It will produce new tasks and taxes by generating incomes from the local business. It will contribute to the local touristic economy by promoting cultural heritage, local traditions, and other touristic attractions in the region

Though quite ambitious, this project invites national and local authorities, as well as the community to think about the importance of culture in the development process of a region. It certainly casts doubt on how development is perceived so far in Albania in terms of estate investments disregarding heritage sites and landscape. It also reflects on the current situation of cultural heritage management, and its disengagement towards other public sectors, such as the environment field and tourism. Thus, this project addresses cultural authorities to reflect on the importance of cultural and natural heritage as sources for development and tourism diversification.<sup>83</sup> Regarding the management aspect of Komani site, as shown in the case of Bibracte, the decisions will be based on a steering committee established by representatives from different institutions of the national and local level. Though the site will have its own director and can be managed by a small equip, the management cannot be as autonomous as in Bibracte. Since it is a start-up project, it will need accurate monitoring. For this reason, I would suggest that the monitoring process can be under the umbrella of the Regional Directories, which organogram must be revised. These Directories could play an important role in this matter, but priory, they must be independent of the Ministry of Culture and second, they need to develop a multidisciplinary agenda. Consequently, through enlarging and diversifying their staff, and by embracing new competencies and responsibilities, the Regional Directories will create new job opportunities, in the local and regional level.

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<sup>83</sup> Juan. Martín, *“La Cultura como motor de desarrollo”*. Actas del I Encuentro Iberoamericano sobre Financiación de la Cultura. Fundación de Casas Históricas y Singulares. Lima. 2012. (ISBN: 978-87-697-0664-0); Juan. Alonso Hierro, and Juan Martín Fernández, *“Activos culturales y desarrollo sostenible: la importancia económica del Patrimonio Cultural”*, en *Política y Sociedad* 2013, 50 Núm.3 (ISSN: 1130-8001).

## 5.2 Tourism diversification

Tourism is one of the many external forces influencing the potential and opportunities of regional development. Through time, the nature of tourism, and its relationship with society, has undergone a widespread change.<sup>84</sup> In Albania, a major alteration in tourism's connotation derived from the collapse of the Communist regime and the transformation of the country into a post-communist society. As Cohen writes, Post-communist countries, particularly the Western Balkans isolated life and culture were subsequently opened to inbound-tourism from the West. The relocation of focus to the "emergent economies" of non-EU countries increased apprehension towards the former isolated states. The rapid rise of tourism specially in Western Balkans was also affected by the applicability of the EU influence in these countries.

From a centralized 'domestic tourism' within borders, Albania was open towards 'international tourism' which found the country unprepared and destabilized. During the twenty-first century, the touristic focus in Albania has been majorly driven towards the southern coastline, which has been particularly vulnerable to rapid development changes, while the northern region has been omitted for a long time. However, according to 2009 statistical data from the Albanian Ministry of Tourism, the number of foreign visitors entering the country from the north, at the border crossing point with Kosovo was the third highest in the territory. Despite the weak regional tourism policies in northern Albania, the scarcity of tourism infrastructure, and the site's geographical distance from urban areas, there is an evident rise of intra-regional tourism. In this framework, the combination of the geographical location and unexplored heritage has attracted various medium-size international agencies with a focus on the promotion and support of 'sustainable tourism'. Their presence on the tourism market has mobilized private businesses who have invested in areas like Thethi, Kelmendi, Razma, Velipoja, etc.<sup>85</sup> Because of these

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<sup>84</sup> Cohen and Cohen, "Current Sociological Theories and Issues in Tourism." 148

<sup>85</sup> Xhindi. 150

interventions, and the variety of attractions that these areas offer (cultural and natural agri/eco-tourism, as well recreational activities such as camping, hiking, and rafting) tourism has risen significantly in the northern region. In Theth, for example, the figures reached up to 7,500 visitors per year and 2,000–2,200 vehicles per day heading to the destination.<sup>86</sup> As a result, these sites and their landscape provide a starting point for boosting northern region's potential as a new touristic destination.

Within the discourse of sustainable development, environmental sustainability was presented as a new category in tourism. Though many have argued this approach as the cause of environmental and mass-tourism issues, the rise of 'sustainable tourism' and 'ecotourism' marked an emblematic shift.<sup>87</sup> This type of tourism shows the linkage between biodiversity and the potential for more sustainable livelihoods, and how tourism promoters are adapting landscape representational strategies to biophysical changes in the light of climate changes.<sup>88</sup>

Due to the sustainability agenda there has emerged the idea of "socio-cultural elements" as features of natural diversity. 'Experimental tourism'<sup>89</sup> as part of the cultural tourism marks one of the major trends in the modern tourism industry which focus on exploring a place through its history, culture, and people. This last has played a major role in the reinterpretation of 'Heritage tourism', and the shift of interaction from the tourist gaze to a new attitude, by focusing on the "host-guest" relation as a more inclusive approach.<sup>90</sup>

Though the nexus of tourism and heritage has been previously restricted to the tangible legacies of historical past, its definition has recently been expanded to natural values and the intangible culture of local communities.<sup>91</sup> Under the conditions of cultural globalization, the significance

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<sup>86</sup> Xhindi. 148-150

<sup>87</sup> Cohen and Cohen. Saarinen, 2006, Kousis, 2000.

<sup>88</sup> Cohen and Cohen. Gössling, 2002, Buzinde, Manuel-Navarrete, Kerstetter and Redclift, 2010.

<sup>89</sup> William L. Smith, "Experiential Tourism around the World and at Home: Definitions and Standards," *International Journal of Services and Standards* 2, no. 1 (2006): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSS.2006.008156>.

<sup>90</sup> Cohen and Cohen. 5

<sup>91</sup> Cohen and Cohen. Ahmad, 2006; Vecco, 2010.

of heritage has shifted from ‘markers of continuity’, to ‘symbols of distinctiveness’.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, with the adoption of a community-based strategy, a more inclusive and sustainable policy of cultural heritage management has emerged.<sup>93</sup> Cohen attributes this change to the emerging sense of ‘Home and away’, ‘place and space,’ ‘destinations’ vs ‘attractions,’ as a tendency of the contemporary tourism to seek de-exoticism in exotic lands.<sup>94</sup> The assessment of heritage through its totality of cultural, natural, and intangible elements has played a major role in fostering tourism diversification.

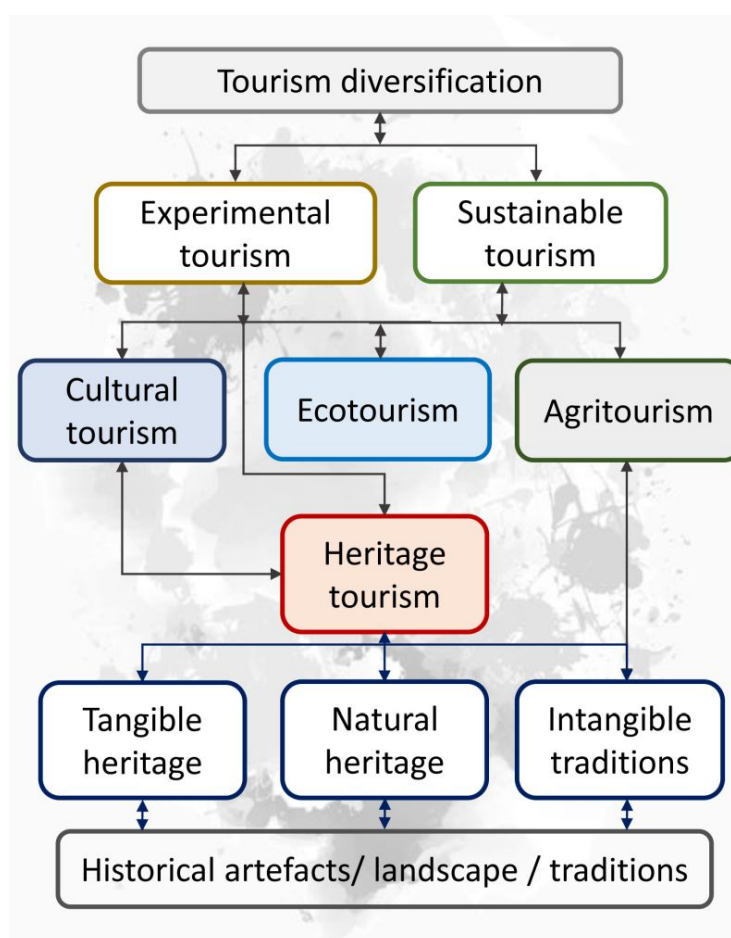


Figure 25: Tourism diversification chart. Image by Anisa Duraj. May 2018

<sup>92</sup> Cohen and Cohen. Logan, 2001.

<sup>93</sup> Cohen and Cohen. Miura, 2010, 126-7.

<sup>94</sup> Cohen and Cohen.; Smith, “Experiential Tourism around the World and at Home.”

## 5.3 Forecasted risks

Though tourism has a great development potential it can also have side effects for heritage and landscape preservation, due to excessive touristy. With the growing popularity of heritage tourism, authorities in charge and local entrepreneurs have the habit to exploit heritage sites for economic purposes.<sup>95</sup> In this matter, the ‘heritage industry’<sup>96</sup> can cause conflicts between heritage protection and tourism development. The conflict is mostly predominant in developing countries, where heritage tourism has received attention and can rapidly expand.<sup>97</sup>

Additionally, attention should be paid to the monitoring of the heritage sites, threaten by commercialization, uncontrolled tourist access, or excessive innervations, for attraction purposes.<sup>98</sup> Subsequently, Intangible heritage might also be at risk. The commodification<sup>99</sup> of customs, or the mass-production of values<sup>100</sup> and traditional crafts can put at stake their social role and the authenticity factor.

Despite the challenges and opportunities that heritage tourism will face and encounter during the path, its role in the regional development process is crucial, and thus is worth pursuing it.

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<sup>95</sup> Cohen and Cohen. McMorran, 2008.

<sup>96</sup> Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*.; Cohen and Cohen. Edson, 2004, 343.

<sup>97</sup> Cohen and Cohen. Wu & Cai, 2008, 308.

<sup>98</sup> Cohen and Cohen. Edson, 2004; Timothy & Prideaux, 2004.

<sup>99</sup> Cultural commodity and commodification, used in reference to Arjun Appadurai, “Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value,” in *The Social Life of Things*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3–63, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511819582.003>.

<sup>100</sup> “Luc Boltanski, Arnaud Esquerre, The Economic Life of Things.Pdf | Value (Economics) | Luxury Goods,” Scribd, accessed May 20, 2017, <https://www.scribd.com/document/341867540/Luc-Boltanski-Arnaud-Esquerre-The-Economic-Life-of-Things-pdf>. 37.

# Conclusion

This study applies to the current framework of Cultural Heritage management in Albania and stresses the need for integrated management regarding heritage sites located in remote, rural areas. As demonstrated, the research tries to equilibrate the concept of regional development in Albania, in terms of investments in historic sites and local infrastructure, proper planning, tourism diversification and development control of the territory.

In this matter, I structured my study in a mental order passing from the introduction of the current management system of cultural heritage in Albania to a new approach of integrated management in the cultural field. I devoted special attention to the historical and political framework of Albania, and its status as a ‘candidate country’ of the EU, by identifying the country’s efforts in this matter and the current challenges that it’s facing. Further, I focused on Komani, the medieval town in northern Albania under the French-Albanian research program as a case study for my research. In this regard, my work was based on a comparison between Komani and another site, Bibracte located in France. The selection of Bibracte as a benchmarking case to Komani was based on three main criteria: the triple identity, the management aspect, and the French expertise in Albania. The case of Bibracte shows an integrated approach towards the local and national level of collaboration and at the same time the autonomous management agility of a small team with a high diversity of skills. Moreover, it emphasizes the idea that landscape as heritage can bring coherence to territorial policies by accelerating rural development and tourism diversification. In such circumstances, one must understand that large-scale sites located in remote areas are a public responsibility, and the state and community role is crucial for their administration and ongoing maintenance.

The results of this research aim the promotion of cultural and natural heritage as part of the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and stress the role of ‘culture and landscape’ as a motivator for regional development and the well-being of the local community.

The outcome of this study contains cultural policy recommendations and a project idea for the indicated area of Komani, in line with the 2015 World Bank initiative towards “Integrated Urban and Tourism Development.” In this matter the pilot-project currently presented as a visual map aims the initiation of a start-up project, which could be later developed in a concrete project proposal and addressed primarily to the Ministry of Culture in Albania, and later in the name of a shared partnership to the County of Shkodra, the Municipality of Vau i Dejës, the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and the Albanian Found for Development.

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