



2010 On Site Review Report

3990.ALB

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Conservation of Gjirokastra

Gjirokastra, Albania



Architect

Gjirokastra Conservation & Development Organization - Technical team

Client

Gjirokastra Conservation & Development Organization

Design

2001 - ongoing

Completed

2002 - Ongoing

Conservation of Gjirokastra

Gjirokastra, Albania

I. Introduction

Located in southern Albania, Gjirokastra was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2005 as a well-preserved example of an Ottoman Balkan town, distinguished by its residential architecture. This description is reinforced by one's first impression: hundreds of stone houses with gray slate roofs, cascading down the slopes of spectacular mountains. But Gjirokastra is more than this: it is a town with a Greco-Roman past, in a valley littered with ancient sites, and an enormous castle rising above it. It has Bektashi dervish convents, at least one of which is still functioning (most Muslims in the south consider themselves at least nominally Bektashi); and an elaborate network of tunnels and bunkers from the communist era (1944-1992).

Gjirokastra is also a town distinguished by absences: unlike the typical Ottoman town, it has only one minaret. The rest - along with mosques, churches, and bell towers - were destroyed during the communist era. It is from these absences that we begin to get a sense of the town's unusual and tragic past. Enver Hoxha, dictator of Albania for four decades, was a native of Gjirokastra. Through a strange twist of fate, he was persuaded to declare his hometown a 'museum city' in 1960. Seven years later, an Institute of Monuments was established. Although it could not save religious buildings, the IoM classified the town's heritage and restored or maintained many buildings. With the collapse of the regime and economy in 1992, the town's institutional structure disintegrated. This was compounded by the loss of municipal offices and merchants to the 'new town' in the valley, and the emigration of skilled builders and craftsmen to Greece and elsewhere. The final coup was delivered by anti-government violence in 1997, which destroyed much of the bazaar.

It is in this historical context that we must see the work of the Gjirokastra Conservation and Development Organisation (GCDO). Over the nine years of its existence, GCDO has endeavoured to save the town's decaying heritage, and to rebuild interest and capacity. With its partner institutions and with the assistance of a growing pool of donors, GCDO has undertaken a number of restoration projects. These include the careful restoration of two notable houses (one complete, one in progress); restoration of the fountains and square of a 17th century bathhouse, and stabilisation of the building (which will be restored under phase two); the rehabilitation of the bazaar; and restoration of the castle, which will soon house a museum devoted to the history and architecture of the town.

Gjirokastra is the centre of an emerging cultural tourism sector in southern Albania, which benefits from the natural and archaeological resources of the surrounding Drino Valley. The hope is that heritage can boost, rather than drain, the country's limited resources. To this end, GCDO has focused in recent years on the development potential of conservation - emphasizing human, as well as built, resources. Restoration projects are now designed with an eye to reuse and sustainability, integrating training, business development, and community outreach. Two such projects are the Artisan Incubator and the training of young restoration architects.

GCDO's grass roots approach is a practical one: if the community does not appreciate and engage with 'heritage', the organisation believes, the historic town has no future. In this, GCDO faces an uphill battle - given a legacy of top-down planning and an oppressive state, where 'volunteering' meant forced labour. It also faces harsh social and economic realities: maintenance of houses in the old town has been deferred by multiple, and often absentee, owners; the population is increasingly composed of rural migrants, who do not identify with the town's heritage or have the means to support it. In the face of these obstacles, GCDO is flexible and resilient. It acts as a lobbying organisation for heritage and enjoys support at the national level, where a number of Gjirokastrans hold prominent positions in government.

In the eyes of both Albanians and foreigners, GCDO, its partners, and their activities bring hope and energy to a country that is often lacking in both. Given Albania's very difficult history, their work must be seen as an important part of national healing.

II. Contextual Information

A. *Historical Background and Significance*

Gjirokastra was founded in the 3rd century BCE as a fortified settlement of the kingdom of Epirus, one of several Greek city-states in the area. In the 2nd century BCE, the Romans conquered the area, destroying the hilltop town and fort; new fortifications were not built until the 6th century. The town survived through the medieval period under the rule of feudal families, especially the Zenebishi family. The Ottomans conquered Albania in the early 15th century and Gjirokastra, with its strategic location and rich agricultural hinterland, was made a provincial capital. The majority of inhabitants converted to Islam - a process facilitated by the Bektashi dervishes who accompanied the Ottoman troops (the order had a special link to the elite Janissary corps). In the following centuries, Gjirokastra thrived as a mercantile and administrative centre, producing many officials for the Ottoman court. The population grew and residential districts expanded; lavish houses were built in an Ottoman idiom, incorporating local features and materials. In the early 19th century the castle was restored and partially rebuilt by Ali Pasha of Tepelana, the provincial governor who restored Gjirokastra's castle.

An outlying part of the Ottoman Empire and populated by non-Turkish groups, Albania was hardly docile. Ali Pasha's numerous attempts to secure autonomy ended in his execution in 1822. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Gjirokastra's intellectuals, politicians, and Bektashi *babas* (sheikhs) figured prominently in the 'Albanian Renaissance', a movement that sought autonomy or independence from the Ottoman Empire. When Albania declared independence in 1912, Gjirokastra found itself in disputed territory: the southern border was not recognised until 1921. Albania was invaded by opposing armies during the First and Second World Wars, with only a brief period of peace in the inter-war period, under King Zog. Gjirokastra was on the front lines during the Second World War, and the town changed hands several times. One of Gjirokastra's eminent natives, internationally acclaimed author Ismail Kadare, was a boy at the time and describes the period in his novel, *Chronicle in Stone*.

Enver Hoxha distinguished himself as a member of the Communist resistance (*partisani*) against the Italian and German occupying forces in the south. At the conclusion of the war, Hoxha and his colleagues imposed a repressive Stalinist system that lasted until 1992. They created and nationalised industries, and collectivised rural and urban properties. In their effort to create an atheist state, they destroyed houses of worship; imams, priests and monks were imprisoned, tortured, and executed. As Hoxha's international alliances failed (first with the USSR, then with China), his policies became increasingly isolationist and idiosyncratic.

As in other communist states, nationalism and the idealisation of rural life were expressed in an official 'folk culture', which is evident in the social realist painting of the time. This perhaps made Hoxha receptive to the idea of designating Gjirokastra and several other towns 'museum cities'. The man who persuaded him was Ismail Gani Strasimiri, an Albanian architect trained in Italy and fighter in the Albanian resistance. His military service, along with (by some accounts) a family or personal tie to Hoxha, gave Strasimiri access to the dictator. He convinced Hoxha to grant protected status to Gjirokastra, Berat, Durres, and Kruja (several smaller settlements were added later: Elbasan, Kohce, and Vlore). As the largest of the settlements and Hoxha's birthplace, Gjirokastra would have had special appeal.

Strasimiri had a distinguished career as an architect, and served for a time as director of the Institute of Monuments, where he and his colleagues successfully lobbied to save a number of important religious sites. As a professor of Architecture at the University of Tirana in the 1950's he established the 'Material Culture Group', which included archaeology, ethnography, and monuments protection. One of his four protégés was Emin Reza, the restoration architect who has worked closely with GCDO (now in his 70's). A specialist in Albanian vernacular architecture, Reza wrote his PhD thesis on Gjirokastra. The thesis was published as a monograph in 1981, and republished by GCDO in 2008.

The Institute of Monuments established a branch in the Gjirokastra to manage the 'museum city'. It developed a classification system that is still used today: 600 of the 2,200 old stone houses in the historic centre were designated 'monuments of culture'; of these, 55 were classified as 'Category 1' houses, and the remainder as 'Category 2.' Through the 1980's, the IoM appears to have been effective in restoring buildings and in assisting homeowners with maintenance. A percentage of the municipal budget was dedicated to a fund from which homeowners could draw, and specialised technicians and craftsmen undertook the work.

In 1992, with the collapse of the government and economy, many left the country (according to some estimates, one in four adults). In Gjirokastra, this meant that homeowners and skilled craftsmen left, and the institutional capacity of the IoM declined. Over the next few years government offices moved to the new town, and along with them, businesses and residents.

The idea of heritage and architectural conservation is at least 50 years old in Gjirokastra. There is a national Cultural Heritage Law and a local Institute of Monuments, albeit with weakened capacity. Practitioners like Emin Reza and his protégés see themselves as strict adherents of international standards. The problem in Gjirokastra is not that of introducing a new or alien concept: rather it is a task of rebuilding capacity, and making conservation relevant to a changed society and economy.

B. Local Architectural Character

The name of Gjirokastra probably derives from *argyros*, the Greek word for silver - a reference, perhaps, to the grey stone walls and slate roofs that shimmer like silver in the rain. The town is built into the steep foothills of the Gjerë mountains - an image captured by Kadare in *Chronicle in Stone*:

It was a slanted city, set at a sharper angle than perhaps any other city on earth, and it defied the laws of architecture and city planning. The top of one house might graze the foundation of another, and it was surely the only place in the world where if you slipped and fell in the street, you might well land on the roof of a house...

The various house types of the town have been documented by Emin Reza. Of these, the most imposing is a type of mansion with turrets (Turkish: *kullë*). Some of these houses are tall and semi-fortified, like Zekate House; those in the town tend to have a lower ground floor, like the Babameto House. The predominant building materials are limestone for walls and foundations, and slate for roofs. Interiors are often decorated with ornamental woodwork. The gray slate roofs create an impression of uniformity that was emphasised in the Italian study of 1999: it has become a kind of gauge of the state of the town's conservation. From the surrounding hills, one can see spots of red in the sea of gray - roofs clad in much less expensive (and imported) red clay tiles.

As in other historic centres, the problem of retaining 'architectural character' is related to wider economic and social issues. According to a local *usta* (master craftsman) who specialises in slate, the cost of installing a slate roof is around 12 times greater than installing one of clay tile. Replacing an entire slate roof thus represents a great financial burden: it is beyond the means most owners, and is not seen as a priority (especially when there are multiple, absentee owners). In the case of the 600 protected houses, the state is in theory responsible for 50% of restoration costs. The problem is securing the other 50%, and how to deal with the 1,400 non-listed houses.

Slate quarrying has also declined: pieces are cut thicker than they used to be, so a new slate roof may be too heavy for the structure. The best slate is exported to Greece. Maintenance and restoration are hampered by a shortage of skilled craftsmen. Many left the country during the 1990's-2000's; some are now returning, perhaps encouraged by the conservation of the town. The *usta* I interviewed, for example, spent 15 years in northern Greece, restoring the roof of a monastery. He returned to Gjirokastra to work for a contractor on a government-funded project to restore eight house facades (managed by UNESCO).

Finally, enforcement of conservation guidelines is weak or non-existent. With Gjirokastra's designation as a 'museum city' in 1960, work in the old town was placed under the joint oversight of the Institute of Monuments and the Municipality. Since the collapse of the government in 1992, the system has not functioned properly.

C. *Climatic Conditions*

Gjirokastra's climate is moderate and pleasant, especially during late spring and early autumn. Temperatures get quite cold in winter and hot in summer, although the town benefits from mountain breezes. Rains can be heavy during the winter and early spring; in the winter there is occasional snow.

D. *Site and Surroundings*

The town of Gjirokastra is located in the Drino Valley, between the Luxheria Mountains to the east and the Gjerë Mountains to the west. The landscape is beautiful, and there are a number of near-by attractions such as the archaeological park at Antigone. GCDO is working with a local UNDP/UNESCO project ('Culture and Heritage for Social and Economic Development') to develop a tourist itinerary based on a combination of cultural and eco-tourism. The major source of tourists is Greece (the border is 35 minutes by car), although there are also tourists from other EU countries and from within Albania.

The town is the administrative centre for the Gjirokastra region, which includes ten towns. Most Gjirokastrans are ethnic Albanians and Muslims (Bektashis); there is a Greek minority, and small numbers of Vlachs and Romas.

The official population of the town is 35,000; of these, 18,865 live are registered as living in the old town. GCDO estimates, however, that actual numbers are much lower. The total population (old and new towns) is probably around 24,000. Of these, the population of the old town is probably several thousand, and no more than 7,000. The rest may be living in the new town or elsewhere in Albania. As noted earlier, Gjirokastra is known for many prominent families; many of the current generation (professionals, public servants, etc.) now live in the capital.

There are an estimated 2200 'typical stone houses' in the historic centre and buffer zone (the latter was so designated by UNESCO, based on the Italian study of 1999). Of these 2,200 houses, GCDO estimates that 40-45% are uninhabited (they plan to take a survey this year). As noted earlier, one of the key problems of urban management is multiple ownership: a single house may have as many as 60 owners or claimants. This is due, on the one hand, to multiple heirs; on the other, to the expropriation of houses during the communist era and their restitution after 1991. Many documents were destroyed in the process, and it is difficult to establish title.

The 'new town' developed in the valley only from the early 1990's. As in similar cases, the new town has been favoured by investment: it is the preferred area for government, business, offices, and residences. A master plan for greater Gjirokastra (old and new towns) is underway, one of seven city plans commissioned by the central government. It is being conducted by an Israeli firm, with Greek participation. GCDO has lobbied the firm to include special provisions for the historic centre. It is unclear whether IoM and GCDO will be included in the planning process.

III. Programme

A. *History of the Inception of the Project*

In the late 1990's, the state of the old town prompted policy-makers to act. Ylli Asllani, who served as Mayor from 1997-2000 (now Advisor to the Prime Minister), sought technical assistance from a number of international and European sources. In 1999, Italian consultants produced a 3-volume study of Gjirokastra's old town, funded by the European Council. The study and maps were to form the basis of a management plan, but it seems that the plan has yet to be implemented.

In 2000 Mayor Murat Kaçi met with the President of the Republic, Rexhep Meidani, to discuss the problems of the old town. At that time, the Packard Humanities Institute (PHI) was funding work at Butrint National Archaeological Park, one of the most important sites in Albania (listed as a World Heritage site in 2000). Specifically, PHI was funding two organisations there, the UK-based Butrint Foundation and the International Centre for Albanian Archaeology. President Meidani suggested that he and Mayor Kaçi contact PHI regarding possible assistance to Gjirokastra's old town. Discussions were initiated and in 2001, at the President's request, the Gjirokastra Conservation Office (GCO) was established under the auspices of the Butrint Foundation.

For the first four years, GCO was run by a British director. In 2005, the office was transferred to Albanian leadership. At that time, the name of the organisation was changed to the Gjirokastra Conservation and Development Organisation. The name reflected a shift in the organisation's mission: a new emphasis on conservation as a development strategy. (For clarity's sake, the name GCDO will be used throughout.)

B. *How were the Architects' and Specialists chosen?*

The Albanian director and executive manager were identified and hired by the Butrint Foundation. Emin Reza, restoration architect and expert on Gjirokastra, has served as consultant and technical advisor to GCDO since the organisation was founded. Other experts have been brought in by donor agencies: British experts have worked as technical and programming advisors; and a Swedish advisor now trains young restoration architects through a project sponsored by Cultural Heritage without Borders.

C. *General Program Objectives*

The program objectives of GCDO were initially focused on traditional restoration projects – saving key buildings, in order to demonstrate the value of the town's heritage. In 2005, GCDO adopted a wider agenda: looking not only to the town's past, but to its future. Projects were now conceived with an eye to the reuse of buildings, capacity building, tourism development, and community outreach and education. Specific projects are described in Sections IV and VI below, and in Appendix 1.

IV. Description

A. *Evolution of the Design Concept*

The work of GCDO over the course of its nine year history involves numerous projects and initiatives, undertaken with various partners and sponsored by a number of different donors. The work plan was designed with the help of a study undertaken by London-based Prince Research Consultants, working with John Robbins Architects. This study also formed the core of Gjirokastra's application for the World Heritage List, a process that GCDO supported. The study and strategy were updated by PRC in 2005, following GCDO's shift toward revitalisation (both the original document and update are included in the documentation). The approach has been elaborated and modified by GCDO over the years, in response to their work in the field. Architectural documentation, restoration and design are done by young Albanian architects under the supervision of Emin Reza and/or Swedish architects from the CHWB project.

Following is a description of GCDO's key projects, loosely categorised according to the two major program areas: conservation and revitalisation. It will be clear, however, that these areas often overlap; both have included public education and outreach activities. A complete list of projects, including dates, cost and funding sources, may be found in Appendix 1.

Restoration and conservation

GCDO's restoration projects have been of two types: 1) important buildings and sites, with high visibility; and 2) smaller buildings to house elements of the revitalisation program, as well as GCDO offices.

- Obelisku, the first local Albanian language school, built in 1911, was restored for use as GCDO's offices in 2001-2.
- The Zekate House, an impressive Ottoman *kullë* dating from the early 19th century; restoration was completed in 2007. The house was partially restored circa 1977 by the Institute of Monuments, but had suffered from neglect and vandalism. GCDO undertook a careful and comprehensive restoration of the house, working with architects Emin Reza and Richard Andrews and specialists from the Institute of Monuments. In exchange for the restoration work, the owners allow the building to be open to the public (The house was expropriated from this family in 1967; they live in a small house that they were permitted to build next door). The building was also the site of a 'restoration camp' in 2008, attended by 15 students from Albania and other Balkan countries.
- The Seven Fountains, a 17th century religious complex comprising a bath house (*hammam*) and a network of fountains and channels, organised around a public space. The mosque of the complex was destroyed by the communist regime; only the base of the minaret remains. The area had been used as an unofficial dump. Phase 1 involved restoring the fountains and channels; clean-up of the square; re-cobbling the surrounding streets; and stabilizing (partially reconstructing) the roof of the *hammam*. Phase 2 will include restoration of the *hammam* itself and further improvements to the square

(including relocation of a large water main that sits on top of one of the channels). The second phase is on hold, pending resolution of an ownership dispute with a family living in a house adjacent to the *hammam* (they were given squatting rights by the regime).

- Bazaar rehabilitation

A project to reverse the destruction and decline that occurred during the 1990's, and especially as a result of the 1997 riots. After researching ownership of the buildings, GCDO began the physical work: clean-up, restoration of shops, white-washing, and the re-cobbling of streets. The project ran from 2003-6, but some aspects are ongoing. It is accompanied by a revitalisation effort, with a Tourist Information Office and artisans' facilities to be installed in the Omarate House.

- Omarate House

Part of the bazaar rehabilitation/revitalisation project. Along with the Babameto House, the project represents GCDO's move toward adaptive reuse. Phase 1 involved restoration of ground floor spaces for use as a shop for local artisanry and a Tourist Information Office (both opened in 2007). Phase 2, nearing completion, involves the restoration of the upper floor for use as an 'Artisan Incubator' (see below). Securing the building involved complex, but ultimately successful, negotiations with multiple owners: in exchange for restoration, GCDO projects will get free rent for five years. This process helped GCDO develop a model for working with owners of other buildings, for example, the Babameto House (see below).

- Restoration of the Castle

An impressive complex that towers above the town, it dates from the 14th century with major rebuilding carried out in the early 19th century. Work began in 2006 with survey and documentation, and a community-based clean-up effort. The interior has been partially restored, including the National Armaments Gallery and the wing that will house the future Museum of Gjirokastra and the Drino Valley. Work in the Museum wing includes careful removal of plaster, installing electrical and water lines below a raised stone floor, and the design of entry and gallery areas. Photovoltaic panels on the Castle roof provide interior and exterior lighting. Interpretive historical panels have been designed and installed throughout the grounds. GCDO is currently developing a proposal for a Master Plan that will address reuse and on-going maintenance of the building and site. The Castle serves as the venue for the National Folklore Festival.

- Babameto House

Dating from 1887, this house probably served as collective housing for dervishes at the adjacent convent (destroyed in the 1960's; a religious school or *medrese* and the town's only functioning mosque are across the street). The building will house a hostel, exhibition spaces, and a restored 19th century kitchen where cooking classes will be held. A building behind the Babameto House will house workshops for traditional building crafts. A complete set of documentation, restoration and design drawings was produced

with supervision from the CHWB project; the set will be put out to bid shortly. Restoration camps will be held during construction.

Revitalisation and capacity building

These projects focus on the revitalisation of the bazaar through the encouragement of local artisans and building trades; the training of architects specialised in restoration; and tourism development. They are linked to the 'hard' projects described above.

In addition to the projects mentioned here, GCDO engages in various outreach and training activities (see Appendix 1). The organisation also has an active publicity campaign, including a web site in Albanian and English (www.gjirokastra.org) and a bi-monthly newsletter.

- Bazaar revitalisation

A series of projects located in a renovated building in the bazaar (see Omarate House, above). These include:

- Tourist Information Centre

Open seven days a week; provides tourist information, including maps, brochures, and a full-colour Gjirokastra guidebook (published by GCDO in 2009; the tourist map and brochures were designed and produced by the UNDP/UNESCO project). The Tourist Information Centre also serves as a point for data collection and surveys, and has conducted training workshops for workers in the tourist industry. Opened 2007.

- Artisan Centre

Developed in partnership with the Albanian Handicrafts Confederation to encourage the production and sale of locally made crafts. Artisans receive 80% of the sale price of goods sold in the shop. Opened 2007. GCDO also organises an annual Artisans' Fair in Gjirokastra, which brings artisans from the region and elsewhere in Albania.

- Artisans' Incubator

To be located on the upper floor of the Omarate House; construction is almost finished. The Artisans Incubator will offer training to artisans working with small-scale items. Another part of the project aimed at the traditional building trades will be held on the site of restoration projects, like the Babameto House.

- Training of restoration architects

As mentioned earlier, this is a project of the Swedish organisation CHWB. Young architects (there are currently three) come to the program after completing professional training. Under the supervision of Swedish architects, who come to Gjirokastra once a month, they produce documentation, restoration, and design drawings for GCDO's

projects. They perform all aspects of project management, including bidding and construction supervision. The architects work in GCDO offices.

C. *Structure, Materials, Technology*

GCDO works to ensure that restoration work is done according to accepted international standards. 'Licensed restoration contractors' are required by both the Albanian government and by UNESCO. There are four in the area, but quality is not always satisfactory. GCDO has recently acquired the right to supervise restoration work (previously, supervision could only be done through the IoM). GCDO supervisors are Albanian architects trained through the CHWB project, and by Emin Reza who visits monthly from Tirana.

D. *Origin of Technology, Materials, Labour Force, Professionals*

All materials and techniques used in restoration projects are local. The licensed restoration contractors are from Gjirokastra or the wider region. GCDO has occasionally contracted directly with local tradesmen.

The director and executive manager of GCDO are from Tirana: they spend weekdays in Gjirokastra and return home on the weekends. The other project managers and staff are local. As noted earlier, foreign consultants have offered assistance at different points in GCDO's nine year history.

VI. *Technical Assessment*

A. *Functional Assessment*

Restoration and Conservation

GCDO's first projects - the Zekate House, the Seven Fountains project, revitalisation of the Bazaar, and the Castle - were well chosen for visibility and impact. The Zekate House is magnificent and the restoration work is meticulous. Phase 1 of Seven Fountains is essentially an urban improvement scheme: the project cleaned up the area, restored the fountains and channels, and stabilised the *hammam*. It is a lovely complex and amenity, but would benefit from maintenance by the municipality; hopefully this will happen once Phase 2 is complete. The Bazaar and the Castle are particularly noteworthy projects, in terms of direct benefits to the community and potentially, to the economy.

With its partner organisations, GCDO has managed to arrest the decline of the bazaar. After the 1997 riots many of the shops were burned out shells, and the area was largely abandoned. Now, shops are occupied again, with grocery stores, coffee shops, and other businesses that serve a local, rather than tourist, clientele. GCDO has set in motion a process that is now being continued by other donors (UNESCO, for example, is currently replacing metal storefronts with traditional wooden ones). It also seems to be persuading policy-makers that the old town has a future.

The importance of the Castle cannot be overstated. It is an impressive monument and clearly Gjirokastra's most prominent asset. The results of GCDO's work are already clear: I visited the Castle on a week-day, yet there were quite a number of visitors (Albanians and Greek tourists) - strolling around the grounds, taking in the spectacular views, reading the well-designed informational panels. Once the Museum is open, the draw will be even greater. The proposed master plan for reuse and maintenance will hopefully produce a creative strategy, to make the most of the complex.

Restoration methodology has been guided by Emin Reza who, as noted above, was one of a core group of restoration architects mentored by Ismail Gani Strasimiri in the 1950s and 1960s. In the latter years of a long and distinguished career, Reza is deeply committed to both Gjirokastra and international standards of conservation method and practice. 'The Venice Charter is our bible', he says. Reza's contribution is now supplemented by support from the CHWB project. The young architects mentored by Reza and the Swedes are thoughtful and highly competent. Hopefully there will be more of them.

In recent years GCDO has shifted its focus to the sustainable reuse of buildings. But in a 2008 report for the World Bank, GCDO Executive Manager Elenita Roshi noted that 'regulations... block the adaptive reuse of historic buildings.' Here we see the mixed blessing of the 'museum city': on the one hand, it benefited from the care and oversight of an Institute of Monuments through the 1980's; on the other, restrictions on the 600 Category 1 and 2 houses make adaptive reuse very difficult. The regulations are familiar: Category 1 buildings cannot be changed either on the outside or inside; Category 2 buildings can only be changed on the inside. Although the latter sounds flexible, it means that façades (one assumes, even secondary facades) cannot be changed. This in effect prohibits new openings, doors and windows - a problem in the dark lower floors of Gjirokastra's historic houses.

The tension between strict conservation and the need for change - required by adaptive reuse - exists in every historic city and district in the world. The difference here is that the listed buildings are all houses: there are few historic institutional or commercial buildings that can accommodate public uses. Too close adherence to international practice could end by producing what are, in effect, 600 'house museums'.

What is needed, then, is a rethinking of the regulations - and the development of an adaptive reuse strategy suited to the residential buildings of the city. GCDO might benefit from initiating dialogues with other towns and projects that have dealt with these issues.

Revitalisation and Capacity Building

- Training of restoration architects

In cooperation with CHWB. The project recognises the lack of restoration architects in the country and tries to rectify this. The results of the training are impressive: the set of drawings produced for the Babameto House is one of the most thoughtful and complete restoration sets I have seen.

- Bazaar revitalisation: artisan projects and tourism development

GCDO has undertaken these activities in order to 1) encourage traditional crafts and building trades; 2) support the recovery of the bazaar with the production and sale of artisan products; and 3) provide support for tourism.

- The Artisans' Shop and the Tourist Office are seen as highly successful by observers. This is thanks to dynamic leadership by two local women, Lubjana Baoja (Artisanry) and Enkeleida Roze (Tourism Development). Both women network actively with the wider community, and have created a very positive 'public face' for GCDO. The National Artisans' Fair has become a big event: artisans from around the country display their work amidst food vendors, music, and dancing – bringing life and attention to the Old Town.

The Artisans' Incubator will train and support traditional artisans and building trades; as such, GCDO sees it as the cornerstone of its efforts in the bazaar. The Incubator will be located on the 2nd floor of the Omarate House, where restoration is nearing completion.

During our visit I questioned whether the narrow, carefully restored space was suited to the program. Might workshops not be better on the ground floor? Could a different use be better suited to the space - for example, an office for the restoration architects, who now work in cramped quarters? Most importantly, is a classroom the best venue for craft training?

Current thinking on the revival of traditional crafts and trades has moved away from the notion of the 'training school', in favour of methods that encourage established forms of apprenticeship. The idea is to identify craftsmen and builders, and help them do what they do, where they do it, providing technical and financial assistance. There are a number of benefits to this approach. First, it recognises that the craftsmen themselves are able to organise their work: it thus encourages autonomy and entrepreneurship. Second, it recognises craftsmen as the authors and caretakers of heritage; as they reap financial and social benefits, they become advocates for the heritage enterprise. In the case of the building trades, builders may become contractors in their own right, with some training in technical procedures and financial management. They can then compete as 'licensed restoration contractors' (required by UNESCO and many governmental agencies), rather than being mere employees of a large construction firm.

As it develops the Artisan Incubator program, GCDO might benefit from cooperation with an organisation like GTZ, which has successfully designed and managed this type of project (notably in Shibam, Yemen). GTZ might also assist in developing strategies for historic town management, including adaptive reuse strategies.

GCDO's approach to 'traditional crafts' could also be developed and expanded. This program has benefited artisans, primarily women, who live in Gjirokastra and the surrounding countryside. The program has also planted the seeds of a national artisans' network. There is a great deal of excitement about this, and there is clearly some market for traditional crafts among tourists (and perhaps, to some extent, locally). Experience in countries like Morocco has shown, however, that 'traditional' techniques can be fruitfully applied in contemporary

design (industrial and interior): this might add an element of dynamism to local crafts and increase appeal to tourists.

Finally, as home to eminent writers and artists, Gjirokastra has a unique opportunity to present itself as a 'City of the Arts.' Although most writers and artists now live in Tirana (or abroad), links could be established with Gjirokastra. Not only a quaint mountain town defined by its past, Gjirokastra could become a showplace for contemporary Albanian culture. GCDO has co-sponsored exhibitions of artwork on a limited basis, but this could become a more prominent feature of its program. It could start small and would require support to artists, as a market for their work develops.

Local observers have noted that GCDO's great advantages are energy, flexibility, and openness to new ideas. The suggestions above are intended to provide a few of the latter. They might help to make an outstanding program even better.

B. Impact of the Project on the Site

As should be clear from the foregoing, the impact of GCDO's work has been substantial. There is a general sense among those concerned with the old town - present and former policy-makers, managers of local development efforts, and foreign observers - that the darkest days of the old town are over: things are getting better. They credit this to GCDO's careful selection of projects, its visibility and outreach, and its efforts to demonstrate the benefits of heritage to the town.

C. Durability and Long-term Viability of the Project

As in most conservation efforts, the long-term viability of GCDO's work is largely dependent on factors beyond its control. At the same time, abandoning these efforts is not an option. 'We have to aim high, but start with the possible', says Director Sadi Petrela.

In order to assess long-term viability, we need to ask two questions: Is saving the old town feasible? If it is saved, can it be sustained?

Can the Old Town be saved?

This depends on serious and sustained support from policy-makers. Albania faces the task of building a modern state: essential infrastructure is still missing, and the government lacks an effective and transparent institutional structure. Given this situation, one might not expect heritage to be a priority. But Gjirokastra *does* seem to be a priority, at least at the national level. This is thanks to the town's potential as a tourist centre; international attention (which GCDO has helped mobilise); and the personal attachment of many policy-makers to the town.

GCDO has managed, through carefully chosen projects, to insert both life and hope into an area that had neither. Now, implementation of an urban management strategy is sorely needed. The blueprint may exist in the Italian study (which now, ten years later, should be re-evaluated), and/or could be developed in cooperation with an agency like GTZ. The main

player would likely be the Institute of Monuments, working with GCDO; the Municipality, which is responsible for enforcement, would have to get behind it.

While red tile roofs may compromise the ‘architectural character’ of the town, more worrisome are the roofs that have collapsed entirely. These houses are not among the 600 that are protected, so government funds are not available for them. In addition, there are numerous exceptional houses in severe disrepair. In 2006 the Albanian government approved a one million Euro project for the restoration of selected facades. (This was the first, and to date, the only action taken by the national Board of Gjirokastra, which GCDO created with the Institute of Monuments in Tirana.) The project was designed, and is being managed by, UNESCO. It appears to deal with facades only (not structure or interiors); uses for the buildings have not been determined in all cases. Clearly the façade project is helpful, but it’s a fraction of what is needed.

Support from the national government is important, but it cannot substitute for commitment from local government. This in turn depends on the latter’s constituency, which is largely located in the new town. The long-term strategy for revitalisation of the old town lies with the private sector, but there are preconditions for private investment. These include: 1) addressing the legal issues of multiple and absentee ownership and responsibility for house maintenance; and 2) program initiatives to bring ‘life’ to the old town, such as moving government offices back, and relocating a faculty of the university there. I was assured by current and former mayors that these two initiatives are moving forward. (The university project was tabled when the location and design of a new building was rejected as inappropriate.)

GCDO has targeted its campaign to both the ‘top’ (lobbying government and decision-makers) and the ‘bottom’ (grass roots activities, aimed at getting new town dwellers to ‘buy into’ the old). It has also pursued, and excelled at, an indirect strategy: generating interest and support from international donors. One hopes that this multi-pronged strategy will pay off.

Is Conservation Sustainable - that is, Self-supporting?

GCDO and its partners have focused on tourism as the sector that will support heritage and jump-start the town’s economy. There have been numerous critiques of tourism, and its drawbacks are well known. But it is undeniably one of the main economic benefits of heritage (and it is at least implicitly recognised as such by UNESCO). As a small city in the south, with poor connections to the growing capital, Gjirokastra is marginalised both socially and economically. Cultural heritage tourism seems to have potential as an economic strategy that builds on the town’s assets.

GCDO’s case for a tourist route in southern Albania - taking in environmental, historical, and cultural sites - is a compelling one. The countryside and mountains are stunning, and there are numerous archaeological sites; the historic town of Gjirokastra, with its important Castle, can serve as the centre of this itinerary. The tourist season is six months per year (April through September), yet there were tourists present in March; the mountains hold the possibility of winter sports. The thought is to marry cultural heritage tourism with eco- and even agro-tourism (given the rich agriculture of the area) - emphasizing cultural and natural assets as two poles of sustainability.

Are there enough tourists? The numbers have been increasing, and the potential seems to be there. Tourism has increased in the last several years: 14,000 tourists were counted by the Tourist Information Office in 2009 (up from 6,000 in 2007; this does not count those who bypass the office). There is an expectation of increasing revenues. A number of B&B's have been opened in the old town, and renovation of the communist-era hotel in the main square is almost complete (once considered the worst hotel in Albania, it is now reasonably comfortable - this is where I stayed).

Northern Greece is currently the primary source of tourists, since the border is only 35 kilometres away by car. Several tour companies include southern Albania in their itineraries for northern Greece, with Butrint Archaeological Park as a major attraction. GCDO's goal is to keep tourists in Gjirokastra overnight and ideally, and for several days. This in turn requires upgrading tourist amenities and services - something that GCDO has encouraged through training workshops.

A related question is *how* heritage is conserved - to serve both the tourist market and the wider economy. This brings us back to an earlier point: the need to re-evaluate current regulations, and develop a methodology for adaptive reuse that is specific to the building types and needs of the town.

VII. Users

A. *Description of those who use of Benefit from the Project*

In discussing beneficiaries of the project, it is important to bear in mind the very difficult socio-economic conditions that prevail in Albania. It is just now beginning to recover from the events of the 1990's, with modest numbers returning from abroad. But the benefits of recovery are largely concentrated in the capital; development of outlying regions and towns (like Gjirokastra) is a priority.

Property Owners

Traditional sources of wealth and status (land and property) were destroyed under communism. Property is now divided among many owners and claimants. For the 70-some owners of the Zekate house, for example, the property was a burden rather than an asset. They have benefited from the restoration, but could not have afforded it or coordinated it. The same is true for the buildings in the bazaar. Rents are still so low that existing tax incentives are meaningless. But the improvement and revitalisation effort has added value, and the buildings are largely occupied. The benefit to property owners, then, is renewal of value, rather than windfall profit.

Artisans

Beneficiaries of the project are mostly women living in the town and surrounding villages. They have seen modest financial benefits, but perhaps most important are the social and psychological benefits: they see new value in their work, and are now part of a wider

(national) network. Artisans from other parts of the country also sell their products in the shop and participate in the National Fair. If carefully designed, the Artisan Incubator has the potential to support traditional crafts and building trades (and thus, by extension, the conservation of the town).

The General Population

As in other urban conservation projects, the wider population will ultimately benefit. The rehabilitation of the bazaar has attracted some businesses back to the old town, providing needed goods and services. GCDO's efforts to create a tourist hub in Gjirokastra have already seen some success. Investment in tourist-oriented businesses (like new B&B's and the hotel renovation) suggests that people expect revenues to increase. Such expectations will likely boost momentum.

VIII. Persons Involved

The key players are: GCDO Director, Sadi Petrela; Executive Manager, Elenita Roshi; GCDO staff; and architect Emin Reza. For a complete list of staff members, contributors, and partners, see the attached list of project personnel.

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April 2010

APPENDIX 1

Gjirokastra Conservation and Development Organisation projects, 2001-present

I. Cultural Heritage: Conservation and Revitalisation

Completed/ongoing:

- ***Zekate House restoration and revitalisation***

<i>Description:</i>	The restoration of the Zekate House signalled a revival of faith in the preservation of the town's heritage. Built in 1811, it is one of the grandest Category 1 houses. It is one of numerous characteristic fortress houses built at the height of the region's strength in the 18 th -19 th centuries. GCDO, collaborating with the Institute of Monuments and Culture and architects Emin Riza & Richard Andrews, undertook restoration of the building's structural and decorative features including wood restoration, re-slating of the 283m ² roof, cleaning of the foundation, cistern, entrance gates, and surrounding area, and general refurbishment of the house. The four year project involved craftsmen from across the region. Today the Zekate house serves as the only monumental house open to visitors. It is a model of practical and purposeful restoration.
<i>Dates:</i>	2003 - onward
<i>Cost:</i>	265,000 USD
<i>Square meters:</i>	484 m ²
<i>Sponsor(s):</i>	Packard Humanities Institute (250,000 USD) and Culture Heritage without Borders (15,000 USD).
<i>Partners:</i>	The Institute of Monuments (IoM) and the Gjirokastra Regional Directorate of Monuments (now called the Regional Directorate of National Culture) provided supervision. Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB) assisted with floor repair and maintenance work during the 2007 restoration camp.
<i>Status:</i>	<i>Completed.</i> Phase two will involve furnishing and interpretation of the house.

- ***Restoration of the Obelisku as GCDO offices***

<i>Description:</i>	The restoration of the first Albanian language school (built in 1908; formerly the 'Ilira') was GCDO's first project in Gjirokastra. The building was restored by a local architect and craftsmen using traditional methods and locally sourced materials. Work began in June 2002, and GCDO moved in during November of that year.
<i>Dates:</i>	2001 - 2002
<i>Cost:</i>	45,000 USD

Square meters: 250 m² (with courtyard)
Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute
Partners: Municipality of Gjirokastra supported the restoration; the local IoM supervised work.
Status: **Completed**

- ***The Seven Fountains Hammam and Square***

Description: In September 2003 GCDO began a project to restore the historic Seven Fountains complex. This project restored the square - which had been used as an unofficial town rubbish dump - as a public amenity. It also restored the fountains and water channels, and the roof of the *hammam*. The project was completed in April 2004. The next phase of the project will restore the *hammam* and open it to the public. This work can occur once the Local Government finds alternate living quarters for the family currently residing there.

Dates: 2003 - 2004
Cost: 40,000 USD
Square meters: 230 m²
Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute
Partners: IoM, Municipality of Gjirokastra, and local Muslim Committee.
Status: Phase 1 - **completed**

- ***The beautification and rehabilitation of the Bazaar of Gjirokastra***

Description: Dating from the 17th century, the bazaar is the heart of the old town and the centre of its craft traditions. Communist expropriations and later destruction and abandonment during the 1997 civil unrest had left the bazaar an unpleasant and grim area. The first phase of the GCDO's bazaar project involved researching the ownership of the buildings (2004 through 2006). This phase was going on as streets were re-cobbled (2004) and cleaning and whitewashing took place (2006). In 2007, GCDO organised the first National Artisan Fair in the bazaar. The first Artisan Centre and Tourism Information Centre (also GCDO projects) opened in Gjirokastra's bazaar in 2007, aiding its revitalisation.

Dates: 2004 - onward
Cost: 30,000 USD
Square meters: 4,140 m²
Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute (15,000 USD), CHwB (15,000 USD).
Partners: IoM invested in roof/façade restoration, 2008-09; the Municipality of Gjirokastra supported the white-washing and cleanup works; CHwB financed training in traditional plaster work, and supported the clean-up.
Status: **In progress**

- ***The Castle of Gjirokastra: Restoration and Reuse***

Description: The project encompasses a number of components aimed at restoring the Castle and its grounds and developing sustainable uses for the site. Project components have included: photogrammetric survey of the Castle; clean-up and de-vegetation of the courtyards and fortified walls; water-proofing of the Castle roof; restoration of the Museum galleries; restoration of the National Armaments Museum; design and installation of visitor interpretation panels; and installation of solar panels for the illumination of the entrance gallery. Initial projects for the design and installation of the ‘Museum for Gjirokastra and the Drino Valley’ are currently underway.

Restoration of the Castle has incorporated several community efforts, including a massive clean-up of the grounds in 2007. The Castle is stage to the National Folklore Festival, which is held every 5 years (the last one was held in September 2009).

Dates: 2006 - onward
Cost: 510,640 USD
Square meters: 24,000 m²
Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute (120,000 USD), Philanthropic Collaborative of New York (265,000 USD), UN Global Environmental Facility, Illumination project (46,640 USD), The Ministry of Tourism, Youth, Culture and Sports (187,000 USD).
Partners: Regional Directorate of National Culture, IoM, Ministry of Tourism, Youth, Culture and Sports. Municipality - ongoing support for the Museum and gallery restoration. Philanthropic Collaborative of New York - survey, research and oral histories for Museum content; UNDP/UNESCO Program for Cultural Heritage and Social and Economic Development - signage and visitor interpretation panels.
Status: **In progress.**

- ***Cobble street restoration in the Bazaar and old town of Gjirokastra***

Description: Cobbled streets are a defining feature of the old town; the network was extended under the communists, but had fallen into disrepair. GCDO has supported the Municipality’s restoration and maintenance of the cobbled streets in the bazaar, along the road to the Castle, and in the area of the town’s largest high school.

Dates: 2004 - 2008
Cost: 70,000 USD
Square meters: 300 m²
Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute (60,000 USD), Municipality of Gjirokastra (10,000 USD).
Partners: Municipality
Status: **Completed**

- ***Restoration of the Omarate House***

<i>Description:</i>	The Omarate House is one of the largest houses in the bazaar, along the important road that leads to the Castle. With support from the building's owners, GCDO restored half of the first floor and transformed the space into an artisan shop in 2007. In the same year GCDO prepared a proposal for the whole Omarate House to be restored and converted into an Artisan Incubator. UNDP/UNESCO Program for Cultural Heritage and Social and Economic Development funded the largest part of the restoration costs, while GCDO will manage the Incubator.
<i>Dates:</i>	2006 - Onward
<i>Cost:</i>	53,000 USD
<i>Square meters:</i>	180 m ²
<i>Sponsor(s):</i>	Packard Humanities Institute (13,000 USD), UNDP-UNESCO program for Cultural Heritage and Social and Economic Development (40,000 USD)
<i>Partners:</i>	Omarate owners contributed by letting the house for 5 years, rent-free. IoM supported restoration project, Forum of Artisans and Craftsmen of Gjirokastra supported Artisan Incubator concept.
<i>Status:</i>	In progress

- ***Creation of a walking trail from Antigonea to Gjirokastra***

<i>Description:</i>	GCDO partnered with the UNDP and Antigonea Archaeological Park to construct a series of hiking trails from a network of existing shepherd paths. These trails highlight the natural and historic significance and beauty of the area surrounding Gjirokastra and Antigonea Park. It is hoped that such use of natural space can motivate the protection and conservation of the regional environment and stimulate further efforts for eco-tourism in the local community.
<i>Dates:</i>	2009
<i>Cost:</i>	4,000 USD
<i>Square meters:</i>	N/A
<i>Sponsor(s):</i>	Packard Humanities Institute (3,600 USD), UNDP-UNESCO Program for Cultural Heritage and Social and Economic Development (400 USD).
<i>Partners:</i>	Commune of Antigonea, with the Administration and Coordination Office of Antigonea Archaeological Park will protect and maintain the trail. Peace Corps Volunteers are providing mapping and technical support for the trail design and signage.
<i>Status:</i>	Completed

- ***Restoration and revitalisation of the Babameto House***

<i>Description:</i>	The Babameto House, a First Category monument house, will be the first house of its kind to be fully restored for a programmed,
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sustainable reuse. The approach sets a precedent for the restoration and reuse of Category 1 and 2 houses, many of which have been heavily damaged. The restoration is serving as a 'practicum' for three young architect restorers trained by CHwB. The house will serve as a venue for twice-yearly restoration camps, which bring together students and experts on from Albanian and other Balkan countries.

Dates: 2009 - onward
Cost: 674,000 USD
Square meters: 784 m²
Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute (85,000 USD), Cultural Heritage without Borders (589,000 USD).
Partners: Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport (MTCYS), IoM, Regional Directorate of National Culture, Office of Administration and Coordination of the City Museum of Gjirokastra (OACCMG) offered technical and general support.
Status: **In progress**

Proposed projects:

- ***Restoration of Skendulati House***

Description: Restoration of a well-preserved category 1 house that is 'urban' in character (less 'fortified' than the Zekate House). The project will incorporate on-site training for restoration architects and craftsmen.
Dates: 2011 - onward
Cost: 150,000 USD
Square meters: 300 m²
Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute and others.
Status: Proposal and fund-raising are in progress.

- ***Restoration of Shahu House***

Description: Restoration of well-preserved Category 2 house. The project will incorporate on-site training for restoration architects and craftsmen.
Dates: 2011 - onward
Cost: 230,000 USD
Square meters: 415 m²
Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute and others.
Status: Proposal and fund-raising are in progress.

- ***Illumination of the Gjirokastra Bazaar***

Description: Illumination of the bazaar at night is necessary for its full revitalisation. Based on GCDO's experiences in the Castle entrance gallery, where it installed photovoltaic panels, the project will provide an appropriate level of energy-efficient lighting.
Dates: 2011 - onward

Cost: N/A
Square meters: 4,140 m²
Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute and others.
Status: A Project proposal is being created and fundraising is in progress.

- ***Master Plan and Maintenance Scheme for Gjirokastra's Castle***

Description: The Castle is the most visited monument in Gjirokastra. In order to safeguard its future, a master plan for on-going restoration work, use, and maintenance must be developed and implemented.

Dates: 2010 - onward

Cost: N/A

Square meters: 24,000 m²

Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute with another donor.

Status: Proposal and fund-raising are in progress.

- ***Creation and restoration of pedestrian walkways in Old Town***

Description: Growing vehicular traffic poses a direct threat to pedestrians who share the cobbled roads. Creating an alternative network of pedestrian routes will benefit local residents, businesses, and tourists. A proposal is underway for the first pedestrian short cut, based on a University of Pennsylvania Study.

Dates: 2008 - onward

Cost: 35,000 USD

Square meters: N/A

Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute with another donor.

Status: **In progress**

- ***Restoration and refurbishment of Command Bunker Tunnel network***

Description: Conversion of a Communist-era network of bunkers and tunnels into a multi-room exhibit area, focused on Communist heritage. Structural assessment and a study have been completed.

Dates: 2011 - onward

Cost: N/A

Square meters: 450 m²

Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute with another donor.

Status: Proposal and fund-raising are in progress.

II. Training/Research/Community Awareness

Completed projects:

- ***Conservation Seminar***

Description: A seminar on the architectural conservation of historic homes, held in Gjirokastra and attended by students from several Albanian universities. The seminar was led by Emin Riza, Reshat Gega (IoM), and Richard Andrews.

Dates: September 2003

Cost: 4,000 USD

Square meters: N/A

Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute

Partners: Institute of Monuments; Gjirokastra Regional Directorate on Monuments of Culture.

Status: **Completed**

- ***Management Plan for Gjirokastra***

Description: Study sponsored by GCDO, written by Prince Research Consultancy with assistance from the local IoM. The study, entitled ‘The Conservation and Development of Gjirokastra’ (written in both English and Albanian), subsequently formed the backbone of the dossier presented to UNESCO in Gjirokastra’s bid for UNESCO World Heritage listing in 2005. Their report is illustrated with photographs by Tony Lumb, an internationally known photographer who has now made several visits to Gjirokastra at the invitation of the GCDO.

Dates: Spring 2002

Cost: N/A

Square meters: N/A

Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute

Status: **Completed**

- ***Publication of The Museum City of Gjirokastra***

Description: The new edition of Emin Riza’s monograph on the architecture of Gjirokastra (‘Qyteti-Muze e Gjirokastres’) was published with GCDO funding in September 2004. An English version will be available soon, and the Albanian version will be reprinted.

Dates: September 2004

Cost: 4,000 USD

Square meters: N/A

Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute

Partners: Emin Riza

Status: **Completed**

- ***Bazaar inventory and ownership survey***

Description: The bazaar inventory started in 2004 and a survey was prepared to collect data. In 2007 the survey was completed, including ownership data. The survey has been utilised in GCDO project design, for example, in the selection of sites for the Tourist Information Centre and Artisan Shop.

Dates: 2004 - 2007

Cost: 1,700 USD

Square meters: N/A

Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute

Partners: National Archive (Gjirokastra branch) provided data on ownership registration.

Status: **Completed**

- ***Artisan Centre***

Description: The Artisan Centre was developed in partnership with GCDO and the Albanian Handicrafts Confederation. A historic building in the Bazaar Quarter of Gjirokastra was renovated to house a shop for the sale of handmade Albanian crafts (opened May 2007). Artisans receive 80% of the price charged for their goods.

Dates: 2007 - onward

Cost: 14,000 USD

Square meters: 40 m²

Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute

Partners: Albanian Confederation of Artisans, Forum of Artisans and Craftsmen in Gjirokastra, Regional Directorate of Monuments of Culture (the latter provided window frames for the shop).

Status: **On-going**

- ***Tourist Information Centre***

Description: The TIC was opened in 2007 and has been operating seven days a week since its inception, offering free information, brochures, and maps to visitors. The TIC also acts as a centre for data collection and tourism development surveys, with the aim of improving the quality of tourism services in the city and region. The TIC has served thousands of tourists since 2007. Many publications have been created and printed, most recently the comprehensive Gjirokastra Guide book published by GCDO.

Dates: 2007 - onward

Cost: 27,000 USD (with publication costs)

Square meters: 25 m²

Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute

Partners: Peace Corps volunteers who provided technical expertise and mentoring during founding of Centre.

Status: **On-going**

- ***National Artisan Fair***

Description: First held in 2007, the annual National Artisan and Cultural Heritage Fair brings together over 200 artisans from all over Albania. The fair has provided a forum for debate and petitioning of local authorities for assistance to and protection of craft producers in Albania. The Fair has established Gjirokastra as centre for arts and crafts.

Dates: 2007 - onward

Cost: 16,000 USD

Square meters: N/A

Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute, Ministry of Tourism, Youth, Culture and Sports

Partners: Institute of Social Anthropology, Tirana; Albanian Confederation of Artisans.

Status: **On-going**

- ***Board of Gjirokastra***

Description: Created by GCDO in cooperation with the Institute of Monuments in Tirana. The Board held its inaugural meeting on 20th September 2006 in Tirana and the MP for Gjirokastra and Minister of Economy, Genc Ruli, was elected as Chairman. The mission of the Board is to address problems of conserving and revitalizing the historic town. In 2006 it approved one million Euros for select projects in Gjirokastra, under the oversight of UNESCO.

Dates: 2006 - onward

Cost: N/A

Square meters: N/A

Sponsor(s): N/A

Partners: Institute of Monuments; Genc Ruli, MP from Gjirokastra and former Minister of Economy, Trade and Energy; Ylli Aslani, advisor to the Prime Minister for Local Government Affairs (former Mayor of Gjirokastra).

Status: **On-going**

- ***Publication of Trekking in Southern Albania***

Description: GCDO commissioned two Irish archaeologists, Benen Hayden and Jerry O'Dwyer, to survey archaeological sites in southern Albania and identify a network of hiking trails in the region. Their work is documented in *Trekking Through Southern Albania*, published by GCDO in 2005 and available at the Tourist Information Centre. An expanded reprint with GIS data is forthcoming.

Dates: 2005
Cost: 12,000 USD
Square meters: N/A
Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute
Partners: Butrint Foundation
Status: **Completed**

- ***Gjirokastra Youth Survey***

Description: A survey that gauges local youth's attitudes toward and knowledge of cultural heritage. This created a knowledge base for GCDO training programs targeted at several professions.

Dates: 2007
Cost: 2,700 USD
Square meters: N/A
Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute
Partners: Education Directorate of Gjirokastra, supporting participation of youth and teachers in survey
Status: **On-going**

- ***'Friends of the Monuments' project at Asim Zeneli High School***

Description: GCDO helped found this student association at Asim Zeneli high school. The association has participated in a number of GCDO's campaigns and activities.

Dates: 2008
Cost: 1,200 USD
Square meters: N/A
Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute
Partners: Education Directorate of Gjirokastra; Asim Zeneli High School Director.
Status: **On-going**

- ***Civic activities***

Description: GCDO has sponsored numerous community outreach activities. The goal is to engage citizens in heritage conservation, and at the same time to begin to rehabilitate the notion of community service (which acquired a poor reputation under communism). Programs have included clean-ups, tree plantings and other activities on the Castle grounds, in the bazaar, and elsewhere.

Dates: 2006 - onward
Cost: 2,800 USD
Square meters: N/A
Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute

Partners: Red Cross-Gjirokastra; Gjirokastra Municipality; Regional Directorate of Monuments of Culture.

Status: **On-going**

- ***Vegetation removal and tree planting at the Castle***

Description: Vegetation is a major threat to many of Gjirokastra's stone structures. The Castle hill and walls, in particular, were heavily covered by *Ailanthus Altissima*, one of the most aggressive, non-indigenous trees in the area. The project removed these invasive trees and replaced them with local species.

Dates: 2008 - onward

Cost: 5,100 USD

Square meters: N/A

Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute (1,700 USD), Global Environment Facility (3,400 USD)

Partners: Gjirokastra Municipality (staffing); Forestry Regional Directorate (expertise).

Status: **On-going**

Proposed projects:

- ***Building and Ownership Survey***

Description: Basic data on home ownership, occupancy, and building use is necessary to develop strategies for conservation and revitalisation. The proposed survey will gather this data from both the historic centre and 'buffer zone', while initiating a dialogue with homeowners.

Dates: 2011 - onward

Cost: N/A

Square meters: N/A

Sponsor(s): Packard Humanities Institute and others.

Status: Fundraising

- ***Maintenance manual for Gjirokastra's houses***

Description: A manual that would provide guidance for homeowners: how to modernise and upgrade a house while preserving its historic character and features.

Dates: 2011 - onward

Cost: To be determined

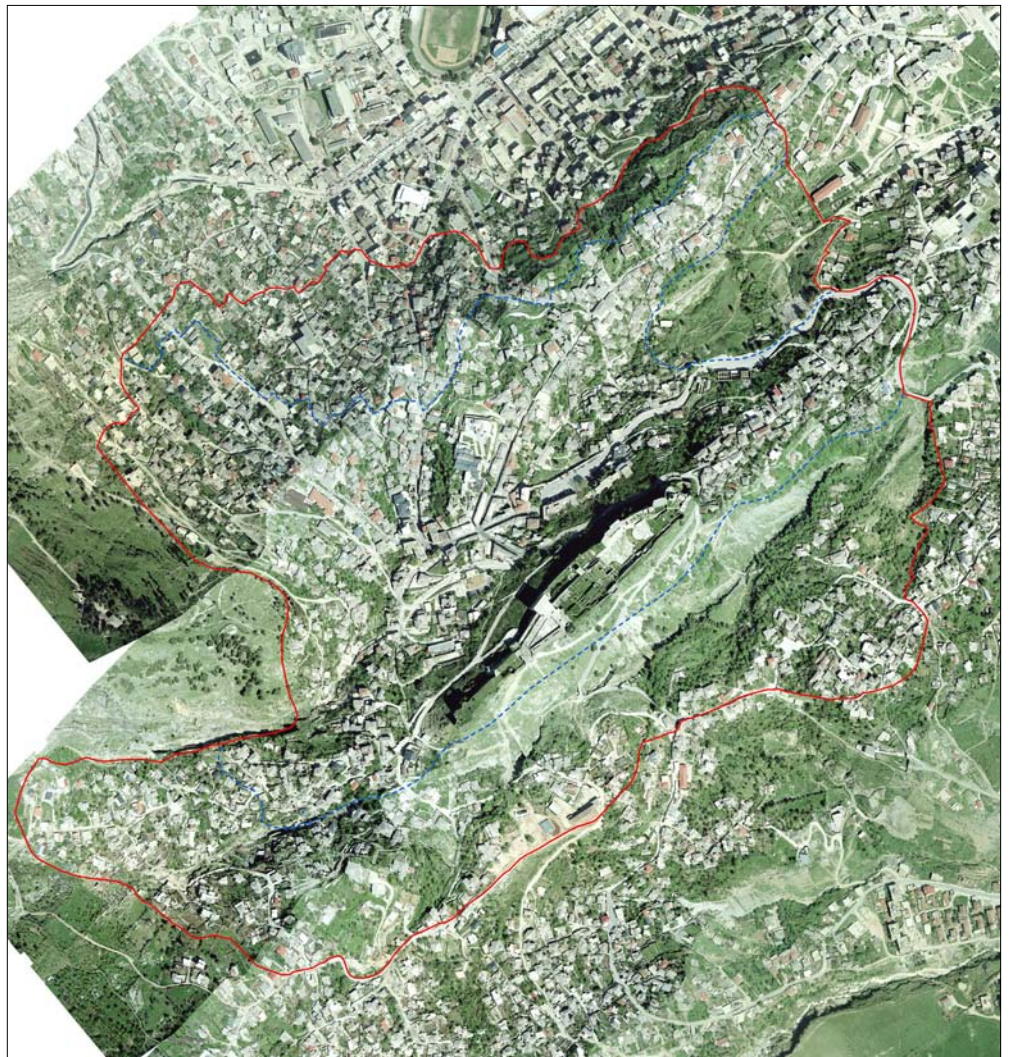
Square meters: N/A

Sponsor(s): To be determined

Status: Project development and fundraising.

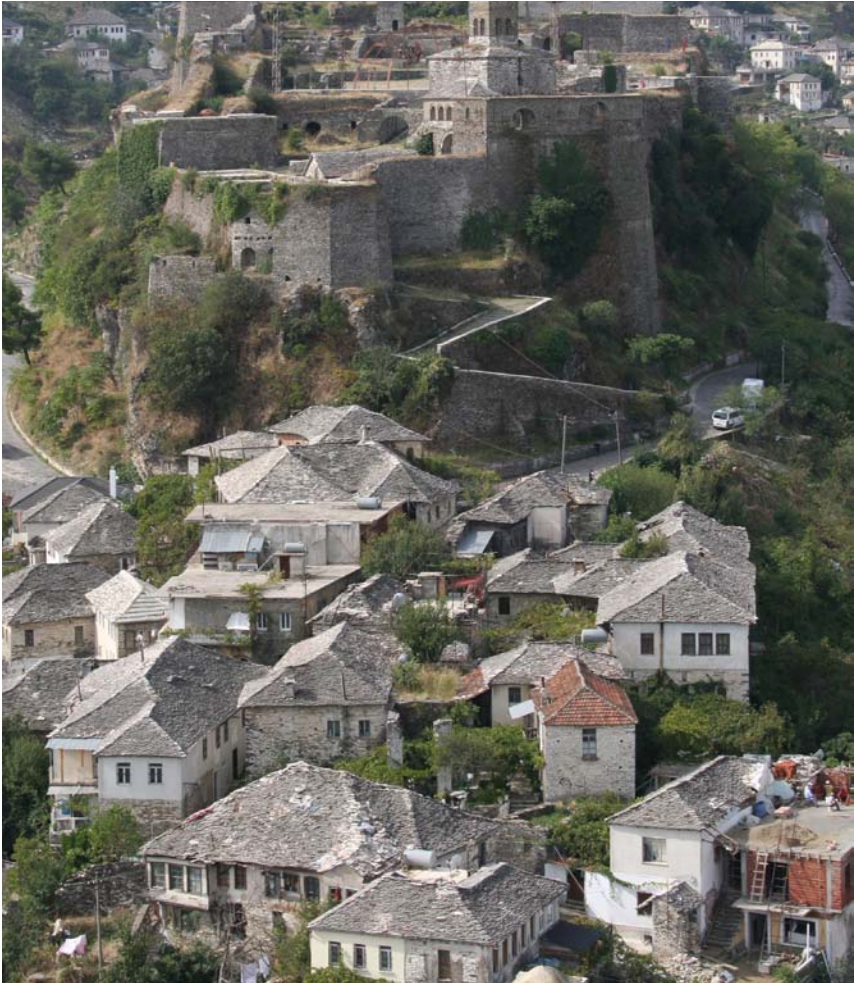
- ***Traditional building materials: assessment and recommendations***

<i>Description:</i>	Materials required for restoration are becoming scarcer and more expensive. The project will research the reasons for this situation, and make policy recommendations aimed at improving it.
<i>Dates:</i>	2011 - onward
<i>Cost:</i>	N/A
<i>Square meters:</i>	N/A
<i>Sponsor(s):</i>	N/A
<i>Status:</i>	Project development and fundraising.





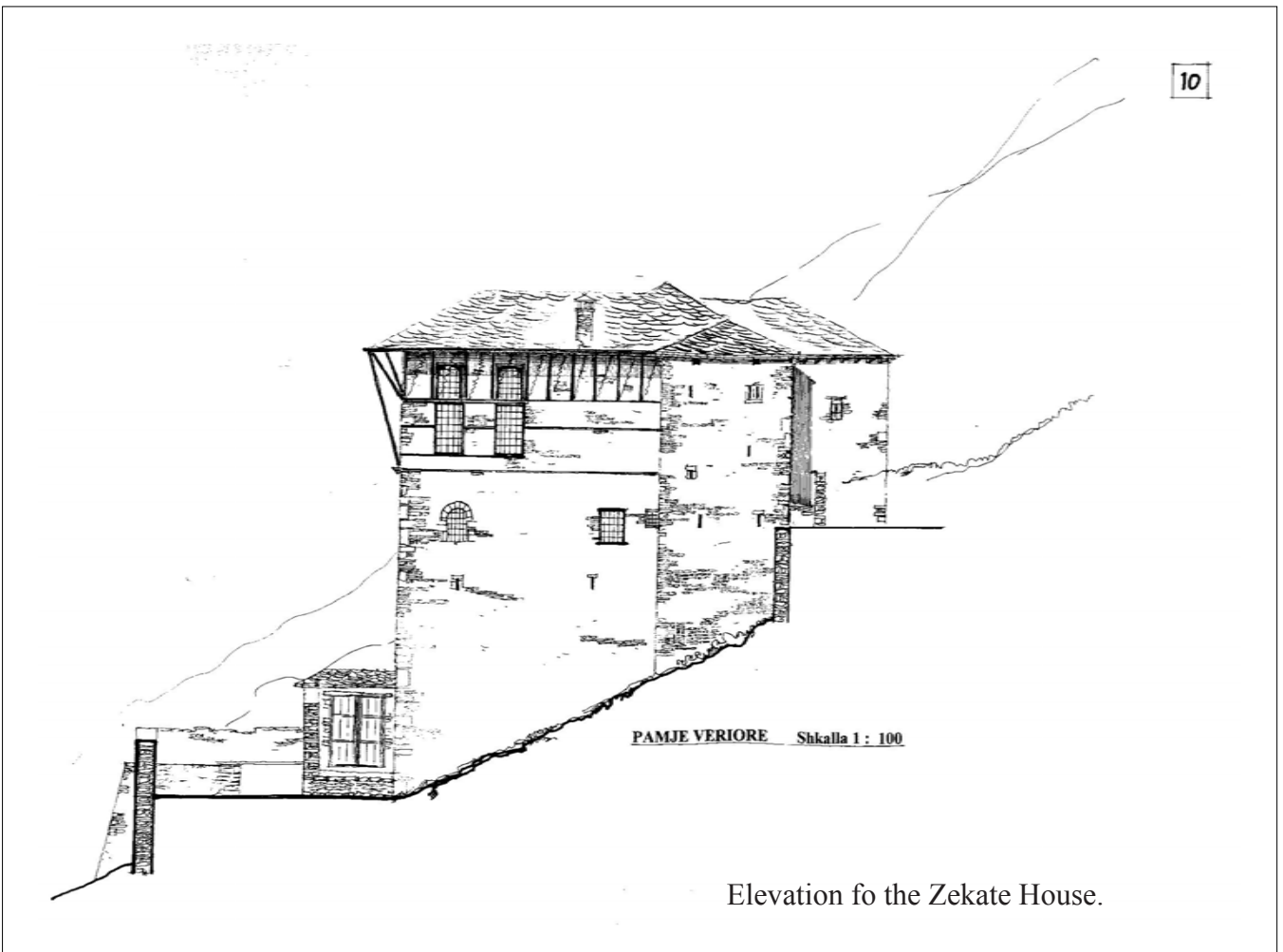
View of Gjirokastra.



View of Gjirokastra.



Zekate House restored by GCDO.



Elevation fo the Zekate House.



The Seven Fountains, before and after restoration.

Inauguration of the Seven Fountains.





Bazaar viewed from the castle.



A shop in the bazaar before restoration.



View of the restored bazaar.

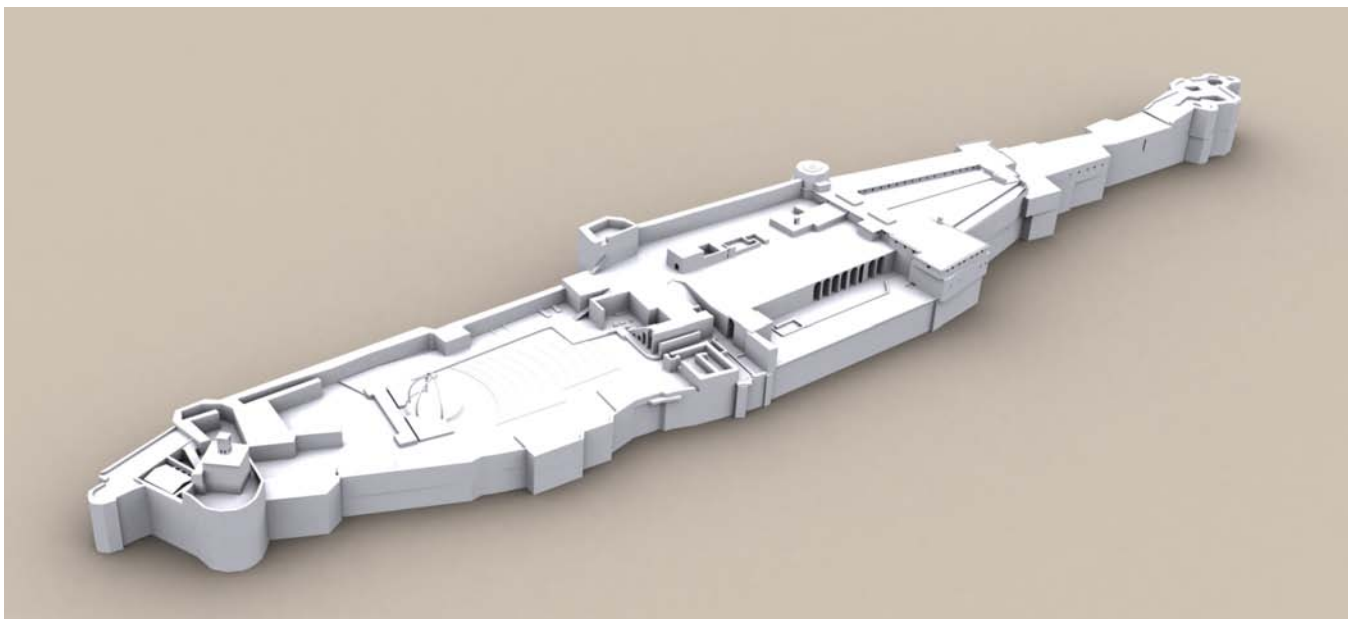
View of the restored bazaar.





Aerial view of the castle.

3D rendering of the castle.





Photovoltaic panels on the castle.

Armaments Gallery in the castle, restored by GCDO.

