

The 2nd Conference on Arberesh Studies

“Survival of the Arbëresh language in the 21st century”

- forum among stakeholders

Tirana, 4-5 September, 2023

Book of Abstracts

Qendra e Studimeve dhe Publikimeve për Arbëreshët



Center for Research and Publications on Arbëresh: <http://www.qspa.g>

Conference theme: Arbëresh survival in the 21st theme

– *forum among stakeholders*

Following the First Conference on Arbëresh Studies in 2021, a series of events on rather special themes, as well as research into more specific topics, including fieldtrips in South Italy, the Center for Research and Publication on Arberesh (CRPA) organizes the 2nd Conference of Arbëresh Studies, which will be held on 4-5 September 2023, in Tirana. The conference aims to discuss and evaluate the following:

- i) The concerns of linguists in Europe and beyond, regarding the minority and regional languages;*
- ii) the actual trends of the Arberesh language, especially in the last decades;*
- iii) an open discussion with all stakeholders, to share and evaluate the experience and expertise so far;*
- iv) cooperation with European and international institutions, centers regarding the language policies for the preservation, support and revitalization of Arberesh.*

In the early 1990s, linguists found accelerated rates of loss of minority languages, which they then defined as a linguistic disaster. By the year 2100, it is believed that 50 to 80 percent of the world's languages will be extinct. This tendency continued to be confirmed, with minor changes, even in the years that followed. But in the meantime, organized efforts have begun to face this threat. Internationally, there are a large number of institutions, linguists and researchers involved in this new subfield of linguistics, there are international scientific networks and regular conference groups. UNESCO has also shown its commitment through several documents, and continued efforts. In the Atlas of Endangered Languages, Arbërisht appears as 'definitely endangered'. The recent decades have seen increasing interest, studies and special attention. In the course of these efforts, the Council of Europe approved the European Charter of Minority and Regional Languages, and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

It has become clearer that time is passing quickly and the chances to build strategies and efforts for the survival of the language are narrowing. There has been but little research into Arberesh, and discussions among the community, policy-makers, researchers, activists, in the host and kin country, have become a necessity. This conference aims to encourage broad discussion, evaluation of the challenge of language survival, the relevance of the world's crisis regarding the endangered languages, the approaches adopted and applied in Europe and elsewhere to take the necessary steps. In view of the obvious emergency regarding the time for action, considering the present findings and research approaches, *this conference invites local and international researchers who have done research into the general framework of endangered languages, and more specifically into the present use of Arberesh, important policy-makers, researchers in specialized institutions or local researchers and activists, stakeholders within the Arberesh community: local government representatives, teachers and activists.*

The intended impact is that the stakeholders mainly among the Arber community, Italian institutions, local and foreign researchers, Albanian institutions in the policy-making or academic sphere, avail the data and evaluations from studies so far, from the examples of good practice and the models that the scientific world has conceived, so that efforts can be initiated - starting from the development of the language policies for the support of Arbërishte (and variants of Albanian that are threatened. More specifically, we hope that such commitment may lead to, or provide for actions and concrete steps for education of and in Arbëresh, protection and then expanding the spheres of language use, encouraging initiatives, and especially through new technologies, guaranteeing space in media and mass communication, social networks, etc.

The “language of the heart” needs a heart that works – the case of Arbëresh in the
21st century

Eda Derhemi

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

The talk focuses on the special features of Arbëresh language today in Italy from the perspective of the theory of endangered languages. It emphasizes its unique vitality against all odds, and, based on today’s state, hypothetically extrapolates on future developments. The language overview targets its varieties as they relate to other minority languages in Italy, as well as to other similar languages (like Arvanitika in Greece), weighing the role different institutions have played for the current state of the maintenance of these languages. Can Italy do better to maintain its precious linguistic diversity? Can the Albanian state help? Is Albanian a language that could in any way help in the revitalization process? Will people be able to hear Arbëresh in Sicily, Calabria or Basilicata in 2090? Or, I dare ask, will they still speak it in 2090?

BIO: Professor Derhemi completed her undergraduate studies in Linguistics and Literature at the University of Tirana, Albania, where she then taught for five years before leaving her native country in 1990. After living and working for some years in Italy, including working as a correspondent for Deutsche Welle, she came to the US to enter graduate studies at Illinois (UIUC) where she received a Master's degree in Linguistics and a Ph.D. in Communications. In 2001, while finalizing her doctorate at Illinois, she completed an internship working on indigenous languages and cultures of the world at the Office of Management of Social Transformation at UNESCO in Paris. In 2007 she conducted a year of Postdoc Research in Albania and Kosovo, with an Award from IREX for work on the linguistic representation of ethnic conflict in Kosovar Media. In 2014 she was awarded a grant as a Fulbright Scholar for research and teaching in Albania on language and propaganda. She has extensive teaching, field-work and research experience in various countries and universities lecturing in linguistics, Italian and Albanian language, and communications. In the recent years she has taught courses with a focus on sociological and sociolinguistic aspects of “Linguistic Endangerment”, “Language and Minorities in Europe”, “Languages and Cultures of the Mediterranean” and “Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Changes in the Balkans”. She regularly writes cultural and political opinion pieces for the main Albanian media. Recently she has co-edited the volume "Endangered Languages in the 21st century" (Routledge. 2023), and she is now working on a contracted volume with Brill "Endangered Languages and Diaspora".

Open Issues of Language Contestation in Italy

Regional and Minority Languages in Italy as Contested Languages

Federico Gobbo

University of Amsterdam

The panorama of non-dominant languages in Italy is rich and diversified, both in their respective institutional aspects and sociolinguistic profiles. On the institutional aspects, Law 482/1999 -- , with its lights and shadows -- was a turning point in recognizing Italy as a multilingual country, not to mention the ongoing debates after many decades. However, institutional aspects are essential but insufficient to preserve, maintain and promote non-dominant languages in Italy and beyond. Intergenerational transmission is crucial, and it can only be guaranteed with the engagement of the communities of practice supporting the respective languages. In this talk, the notion of contested languages will be clarified as a starting point for a subsequent discussion to stress the importance of attitudes and beliefs in recognizing a language as such and not as a "dialetto", "patois", "jargon", or other misleading and pejorative labels. After presenting a few fundamental case studies of contested languages in Italy, Europe, and beyond, the talk will elicit the essential sociolinguistic variables to define the levels of language contestation that make a language - unfortunately - contested; in particular, the notion of *partial* contestation will be introduced. The talk aims to invite a discussion to apply the notion of language contestation to Arbëresh, to foster its survival in the 21st century.

BIO: Federico GOBBO is Full Professor at the University of Amsterdam by special appointment in Interlinguistics and Esperanto. He has been Visiting Professor at the University of Turin in Italy and at the Nanjing University in China. He participates in various EU-funded projects at the crossroad of sociolinguistics and the digital turn, in particular Language in the Human-Machine Era (LITHME, active) and Mobility and Inclusion in Multilingual Europe (MIME, concluded).

He got his PhD in Computer Science, defended in 2009 at the University of Insubria (Varese-Como, Italy), with a dissertation on constructive adpositional grammars (CxAdGrams). His main research interests are Language Policy and Planning (in particular: Interlinguistics, Esperanto Studies, Contested Languages, Mobility and Multilingualism); Constructive Linguistics (in particular: Adpositional Argumentation, Language Acquisition in the Montessori Method); Philosophy of Ideas (in particular: Philosophy of Information).

His publications appear in several languages, mainly in English, Italian, Esperanto (in order of importance).

Language Policy and Language Planning for National Development: Asian examples

David Bradley

La Trobe University, Australia

President, Comité International Permanent des Linguistes

As a language with national and official status in two nation-states, a substantial diaspora in all surrounding countries and a more distant diaspora across the developed world, the survival and continuing development of the Arbëresh language into the future is assured. I will discuss some of the ways in which language policy and language planning can be helpful in fostering this survival, using examples from my experience in Asia.

Language policy is the top-down activity carried out by governments and official bodies, such as the selection, codification and development of a standard variety, and its dissemination through education, media and national life. Language planning is the bottom-up activity of orthography design and reform, documentation of traditional oral and other literature and the expansion of vocabulary and genres; language planning is most appropriately carried out by linguists, working closely with community and other experts. In some nations, the two functions are combined in an official language policy body like the Royal Institute in Thailand or the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in Malaysia.

The key to language vitality is a strong distinct identity, supported by positive attitudes about the language. Thailand has a National Identity Commission; since before independence, Indonesia has had the national philosophy Pancasila, one of whose five pillars is the unifying national language, Indonesian. Successful language policy and language planning are crucial here, to lead, support and respond to popular views.

In general, orthographic reform and vocabulary expansion must be done very carefully, only when absolutely necessary, to avoid discontinuities within the community and in materials published in the language. China provides an example: the reform of Chinese characters undertaken in China in the mid-1950s eliminated most characters and simplified about 40 per cent of the remaining characters. While this reduced the task of learners, it also divided the Chinese community worldwide, and separated those in China from their traditional literature and history. It also delinked China from Japan, Korea and Vietnam, with their ongoing tradition of using traditional Chinese characters for some purposes.

The presence of dialects (in the linguistic sense: local mutually-intelligible subvarieties of the same language) is universal; in some nations these are valued and supported at a regional level, while the national language is expanding to replace them in some areas and some domains. Dialects are part of the history and richness of a language, and must be carefully documented and thoroughly respected; this should also be part of a language planning process, maintaining a positive attitude to the internal diversity of a language. This is often not respected in many nations during the process of development, but many come to regret this later, when dialects have become endangered or cease to be used.

Another issue is the maintenance and development of a language in its diaspora. It is very important to foster the continuing use of the language in the nearby and the faraway diaspora through official and private contact and support for appropriate language education and cultural activities, without stigmatizing diaspora speech varieties for their differences from the standard. For a transnational language, this can focus on one original source nation, or can be pluricentric, as in the case of Chinese in China, Singapore and Taiwan.

Language policy and language planning are key to ongoing national development, and must be.

BIO: Prof David Bradley has made a major contribution to documentation and sociolinguistic study of many languages of Asia, and to work on endangered languages; particularly in work with various communities to maintain and revitalize their languages. He has also trained and supported many scholars to do similar work around the world. He has contributed very substantially to linguistic theory, particularly concerning language policy and language endangerment, and taken many leadership roles in the discipline, notably as President of the UNESCO Comité International Permanent des Linguistes (CIPL).

Current Positions:

Emeritus Professor of Linguistics, La Trobe University

President, UNESCO Comité International Permanent des Linguistes, 2014-2024

Fellow, Academy of Social Sciences in Australia and of Australian Academy of Humanities

Editor, *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, also seven other current editorial boards

Honorary Professor at Australian National University and at several universities in China

The framework for the evaluation of endangerment levels - issues and challenges

Christopher Moseley

SSEES – University College London

The paper attempts to explore the various measurements of vitality applied to languages around the world which have been analysed during the preparation of the UNESCO World Atlas of Languages, which evolved out of the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (2010). The new atlas is still forthcoming, but the findings of its team of authors, including myself, have been collected in a projected volume entitled *The World Report on Languages*. This projected volume has now been shelved.

Some languages gain vitality while other languages lose vitality. Language vitality is a measure developed to gauge the extent to which a language is used and its prospects of long-term sustainability. Many factors are considered in assessing language vitality. Also, many approaches have been proposed over the years for language vitality assessment. These include Fishman's (1991) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale, and the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) developed by Lewis and Simons (2010) based on Fishman's proposal. UNESCO (2003) proposed the Language Vitality and Endangerment Index based on nine factors, which is at the core of the Atlas of World's Languages in Danger (Wurm, 1996, 2001; Moseley, 2010). The Language Endangerment Index was developed by the Endangered Languages Project (Lee and Van Way, 2016, 2018) and focuses on the number of users of a language and the generations to which they belong.

The crucial descriptors to evaluate the endangerment level of a language ranked by their priority are:

- generational language use
- language competence of users
- percentage of users within the reference community
- percentage of digital users within the reference community
- size of the language

The paper goes on to evaluate these descriptors in terms of language vitality.

BIO: Chris Moseley is a graduate of the UCL SSEES, having done his Master's degree in Baltic-Finnic linguistics part-time while working for BBC Monitoring, a branch of the World Service, graduating in 1993. His research interest is in newly written languages and the creation of orthographies to suit them. He is also interested in linguistic geography and is co-editing the third edition of the Routledge Atlas of the World's Languages. For UNESCO he has edited the Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing. He is also a founder member of the Foundation for Endangered Languages and has been the editor of its journal.

Challenges to Endangered Languages Today

Salem Mezhoud

Foundation for Endangered Languages

The concept of language endangerment, or, more accurately, that of endangered languages, has become familiar around the world in recent decades, thanks mainly to scholarly studies and research, but also to practical initiatives, but has this increase of awareness entailed significant strides towards a solution to the problem? Documentation of threatened languages, evaluation of levels and grades of language endangerment, have encouraged organisations and communities to work towards language preservation and, more recently, for the revitalisation of severely endangered languages and the prevention of language extinction. Despite these developments, however, the problem is still an acute one and the rate of language endangerment has not changed in any remarkable way. Though the progress is real, so too, are the challenges. The challenges to Arberesh are no different from those of other endangered languages.

Almost by definition, endangered languages are minority or indigenous languages. The loss of their language, that is, a crucial part of their identity, is one of the reasons members of a community become a minority. Minorities become vulnerable to outside pressures and, as a result, continue to lose their languages. The vicious circle makes linguistic minorities particularly vulnerable. This is the premise of the problem and its first challenge.

International mechanisms for the protection of minorities have been established at different periods over the past century, by various organisations such as the League of Nations, the United Nations and the Council of Europe. In the long history of the protection of human rights, and among them, minority rights, certain aspects of the appertaining legal, political and socio-cultural undertaking have become constants. These include acceptance and rejection of the principles (simultaneously or subsequently), revisionism, political fluctuations, and continuing competition for control. Minority / endangered languages may benefit but more frequently suffer, from the prevalence of these constants. This is conflated by an absence of universally accepted definitions which entails a variety of interpretations of what constitutes a minority, a minority language, a national or regional language.

The existence of a number of international standards and initiatives on language in general and endangered languages in particular, has not guaranteed success in preventing, slowing down, or halting language endangerment. International and regional institutions do not necessarily use the same definitions, agree on the same parameters, or, furthermore, guarantee the complete commitment of their membership, thus making the task of protecting endangered language as challenging as it was before the adoption of the norms.

Local, regional, global contexts and institutions are central to the success of the endeavour, but institutions have the central role. Institutional failure increases the threat and adds to challenges. The popular developmental motto “Act locally, think globally” (or vice versa) applies to initiatives on endangered languages. The challenge is to persuade actors and stakeholders to commit to it.

BIO: Salem Mezhoud is a Trustee and the Honorary Secretary of the Foundation for Endangered Languages. He is currently a Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the School of Global Affairs at King’s College, University of London. Salem has a multidisciplinary background and a varied

career. After first training in anthropology and linguistics at the universities of London and Paris, specialising in West and North Africa, he was a lecturer in sociolinguistics and North African anthropology at the Sorbonne and then worked as a broadcast journalist with the BBC World Service and other networks, writing on international affairs.

He then worked for several Human Rights NGOs (Human Rights Watch, Minority Rights Group) before joining the UN, working for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs at HQ and the field in Africa and Asia. He also worked for UNICEF, ILO and UNDP. He coordinated NGO coalitions at the UN on the rights of the child, women's rights, minority and indigenous rights. He took part in the drafting of international human rights standards such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

He has held Research and Visiting Fellowships at Columbia University, The W. Wilson International Center for Scholars, and served on the Boards of several NGOs.

Activities of the Mercator European Research Centre and the case of the Frisian language.

Cor van der Meer

Mercator European Research Centre

The Mercator European Research Centre for Multilingualism and Language Learning is situated in the bilingual province of Fryslân in the Netherlands. As a research institute, the centre makes use of the excellent opportunities the Frisian situation has to offer as a living laboratory on multilingualism. At the same time, Mercator makes state-of-the-art research and interesting developments from other minority-language regions available to relevant stakeholders. In this presentation some of the centre's activities, studies, research and projects will be highlighted. Moreover, we will look at the education and policy situation of the language in Friesland, including a number of practical examples relating to issues of language revitalisation, preservation and promotion. The Frisian language is the only language fully recognised by the Dutch government through the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages and is officially Netherlands' second state language.

BIO: Cor has a degree in sociology and research methodology from the University of Groningen. He is manager of the Mercator Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, an NGO which is dedicated to research, acquire, circulate and apply knowledge which serves linguistic diversity in Europe. Van der Meer is an expert in the fields of multilingualism, regional and minority languages and language learning with an interest in Early Language Learning and Language Vitality.

From documentation to revitalization: showcasing the European context

Vera Ferreira

The Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR)

The field of language documentation has matured over the last two decades. A good knowledge of its methodology, standards and trends is important to ensure qualitative, lasting, multipurpose, innovative as well as sustainable documentation and successful revitalization. Community-driven documentation becomes one of the main challenges in the field. It is not only important to work directly and in a collaborative way with the speech communities but also to empower them to participate in the definition and implementation of research projects, letting their needs and interests play a decisive role in that implementation.

In this perspective, it is also necessary to evaluate and rethink the process of revitalization, which is often seen as a task that should be carried out by the school and at school. Giving priority to the school might have a negative impact on the maintenance of the language at a community level, considering a possible shift in responsibility (from the community to the school) that such a focus might imply. Thus, revitalization should be a bottom-up process, entirely motivated by the community; it should be integrated in the everyday life of the speech community and the materials to be created should be based on primary data that reflect the linguistic practices of the speech community.

Showcasing concrete examples from the Minderico, A Fala and the Mirandese communities, in this talk I will discuss the importance of using primary authentic data from (community-driven) documentation projects in the development of bottom-up revitalization strategies.

BIO: Vera Ferreira is a trained linguist with a background in language documentation and field research. Her main research interests lie in European endangered languages and in the connection between documentary data and language revitalization. As ELDP Depositing Officer, Vera provides advice and training on all aspects of language documentation, data management, metadata preparation and digital archiving.

A Digital Future for Arberesh

Claudia Soria

CNR-ILC

It is often assumed that minority and endangered languages, also called low-resource languages, are just “small-sized languages”. As a consequence, it is implied that digital development for those languages can simply be mirrored on that of bigger languages, possibly just made simpler. This is not the case. In this presentation, I will argue in favour of digital language planning carefully tailored to the needs of minority language speakers’ communities. I will present some recent initiatives and instruments to support speakers’ communities in the planning and implementation of digital language tools and services.

BIO: Claudia Soria is a researcher at CNR-ILC. She has a background in computational linguistics, with a focus on language resources in their entire life-cycle, from creation to representation to evaluation. She is one of the authors of LMF, Lexical Markup Framework, an ISO standard for the representation of computational lexicons. Her current research interests revolve around use of technological means, Language Technology in particular, for protection and valorisation of linguistic diversity and to enable digital opportunities to all. She was coordinator of the Erasmus+ project “The Digital Language Diversity Project”, and she is currently actively involved in several initiatives concerned with the relationship between technology and minority languages.

The diffusion of Arbëresh in Molise from a diachronic perspective.

When bottom-up meets top-down revitalization strategies

Carmela Perta

Università G. d'Annunzio, Chieti-Pescara, Italy

The factors which make unique a single situation of language maintenance and revitalization are explored here, through the example of Arbëresh; a particular interesting case considering its isolated condition from the mother country and from the rest of Italian Arbëria, and since deep contact with Italian and the surrounding dialects. The focus will be on Arbëresh speaking communities in the Southern Italian region of Molise - namely Portocannone and Ururi - which I fieldworked longitudinally: firstly the diachronic evolution of Arbëresh will be outlined; secondly the results will be read in the light of State intervention with regard of protection of historic language minorities and of grass-roots activities carried out by the Arbëresh speaking community in order to maintain and revitalize the ethnic language.

BIO: Carmela Perta is professor of Linguistics and Sociolinguistics at the University “G. d’Annunzio” of Chieti-Pescara (Italy). Among her research interests there are questions of language planning, dynamics of language contact in speech and writing and linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of minority languages with particular reference to Francoprovençal and Arbëresh.

Scenarios of Reversing Language Shift among minoritized languages in Greece

Christian Voss

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Today there are two Slavic-speaking minorities in northern Greece whose political and sociolinguistic situation are extremely different: the Muslim Slavic-speakers in Western Thrace who were exempted from the Greek-Turkish population exchange of the 1920s and since then experience a strong Turkish transnationalism, and the Christian Slavic speakers between Kastoria and Drama who have been claimed by Bulgarian and Macedonian irredentism during 20th century.

Facing a hostile and even toxic official discourse denying linguistic minorities in Greece until today, these minorities in the 1980s-1990s started an ethnic revival comparable to similar movements in Alsace, Flanders, Southern Tyrol some decades before. The paper will analyze the newspapers, journals and textbooks produced by the ethnic activists over the last 30 years. The unique selling-point of the Greek case-study are the different linguistic resources available for the status and corpus planning of the minority varieties: Even the choice of alphabet (Greek, Macedonian or Bulgarian Cyrillic, modified Latin, Latin with Turkish orthography) is mirroring political convictions here. Most of the ethnic activists today are New Speakers with an urban background, which implies the question of outreach and visibility among the village population.

Whereas the revival movement in the 1980s started with a strong EU-European affirmation and networking (e.g. the opening of an EBLUL-branch in Salonica in 2002), today the movement is struggling with the consequences of the Greek financial crisis since 2010 and in general the existential crisis and desolidarization of the EU. Nevertheless, the post-Cold War situation with the detoxification of relations to Bulgaria and since the Prespa Agreement in 2018 to North Macedonia substantially contributes to the vitality of Slavic dialects in the region. The question is to which degree the Greek-Albanian relations in general and the acute language death of Arvanite varieties as described by Hans-Jürgen Sasse and Lukas Tsitsipis have changed in the last 30 years and give hope for revitalization perspectives.

BIO: Christian Voss is a Professor and Head of the Department for South Slavic Studies at Humboldt University in Berlin since 2006. His research addresses the interface of sociolinguistics, historiography, and anthropology, and focuses on the South Slavic-Greek border region. He is the principal researcher in several research projects, e.g. „Melting Borders“ on the small border traffic between the Republic of Macedonia and Greece, on identity issues among Balkan Muslims, on linguistic gender mainstreaming in Croatia, Serbia, and Albania, and on the historical boundaries in the Albanian-Macedonian contact zone.

He is the founder and editor of the book series „Studies on Language and Culture in Central Europe“ and member of the editorial board of „Balkan Studies Library“, „Mediterranean Language Review“, „Südost-Forschungen“ and „Colloquia Humanistica“. Since 2012 he is a member of the „Classe di Slavistica“ at „Academia Ambrosiana“ in Milan, in 2022 he was visiting professor at Ca'Foscari University in Venice.

The presence of Arbëresh in public and private media, realization of the message in the television program dedicated to Arbëresh and productive creation of the supply chain.

Demetrio Crucitti

Director of RAI Calabria

This report aims to promote the activity carried out for the realization of the television program for the protection of the Arbereshe, Greek and Occitan Historical Linguistic Minorities in Calabria, at the RAI Regional Headquarters for Calabria, the realization of the related broadcasting on Digital Terrestrial, Satellite and also through the RAIPLAY platform. The directives followed for the production of contents accessible to all, both to the minority and non-minority population, are those of the European Treaty n. 148 "European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages, and of the Italian National Law 482 of 1999, and its Regulation Presidential Decree 345/2001. The use of dubbing and subtitles techniques in the production phase of post-production can be used for services: journalism, cultural programs, documentaries, guided tours, cartoons and off-screen, and can also be offered to all schools of all levels. Thanks to the low-cost technology, it is not simply a production chain of digital content accessible, but also serves to provide opportunities for parents, children and young people to understand the Arbëresh language, the primary objective of involving families in learning the Arberesh language, for example, dubbing a cartoon with your own voice for your child, facts without prejudice to the rights of the producer or author of cartoons, documentaries, etc. , an aspect which will be considered in the short-term report the entire value chain of digital video. This approach should allow the intervention of experts and residents in places other than the place of production of the digital video, perhaps by pursuing a system that can create opportunities for sustainable socio-economic development in local areas that also involve the teaching staff of the same schools internal area. We hope science will provide applications for speech recognition of the Arbëresh language as soon as possible, instead of dubbing the child voice actors with Avatars!

BIO: Demetrio Crucitti, now Independent Consultant, Journalist enrolled in the register of publicists of the Order of Journalists of Rome Capital and Lazio, Member of the Code Commission for Works and Public Services Tenders of the Order of Engineers of the Metropolitan City of Rome Capital, President of the Salvatore Crucitti Onlus Foundation, established in Rome in 2001, continues the action of protection of linguistic minorities throughout Italy. In February 2021, after about 40 years, he concluded the work carried out at RAI Radiotelevisione Italiana S.p.A., a Public Cultural Company Licensed for the Public Radio, Television and Multimedia Service, classified as a Manager. His employment relationship as Director of the RAI Regional Office for Calabria from 2011 came to an end in 2021. He continues to be committed for the protection of the three Historical Linguistic Minorities recognized by the National Law 482/99, present in Calabria: Arberesh, Greek and Occitan

The implementation of the law 482, its impact: the desirable institutional support

Damiano Guagliardi

President FAA (Federation of Arbereshe Associations)

23 years after its approval, the Law 482 can be defined in institutional jargon as a Manifesto Law. It contains provisions that, the legislator, already at the time of the discussion should have declared unworkable because, legally speaking, they were not implementing the provisions of art. 3 of the Italian Constitution. This leads to affirming that, despite the spirit of the law being favorable to its protective statements, the implementation practice denies any possibility of implementation. Absolutely inadequate are the articles 4 and 5, which deal with the subject of school education and art. 6 which allows initiatives such as the establishment of language courses and language cultures in support of the purpose of the law. In reality, with the 482 the State allows fascinating, but unfortunately demagogic, recognitions of the cultural heritage of the community admitted to protection, such as the recovery of the original surnames or the use of the language in public documents, but denies any form of public funding capable of providing for the implementation of the law. The same financial resources provided annually for the implementation of specific projects are negligible and the State, instituting the principle of delegation to Regions and Municipalities, has refused the direct management of the provisions of the law, has "washed its hands" like Pontius Pilate.

The art. 19, however, a great timely common action between the Albanian and Italian states can be transformed into a good opportunity for intervention for the Albanian minority in Italy. In paragraph 1 of the article it is written that «The Republic promotes [...] in special agreements [...] with foreign States, the development of languages and cultures [...] in cases where [...] they have maintained and developed the socio-cultural and linguistic identity of origin. The Arbereshe communities distributed in the Italian territory, even those transferred to other non-historical territories, fall perfectly within the scope of the provisions of the article.

For the Arbëresh community of Calabria, joint action between the two governments would be feasible in a short time and highly effective. The birth of the government institute QSPA (Arbëresh Center for Studies and Publications) in Albania and the entry into operation of the Foundation of the Arbëresh Minority of Calabria (legally in-house) could immediately lead to a common work platform in protection of the mother tongue, the recovery of the cultural heritage - intangible and material - and its valorization in the field of Education, Cultural Heritage and Tourism, unanimously recognized as driving sectors of the regional economies.

BIO: He was born in 1950 in San Demetrio Corone (CS) into a family of humble Arbëresh origin. His scholastic training was at the Liceo Classico di San Demetrio Corone where he obtained the classical high school diploma. In Urbino, at the Faculty of Teaching, he enrolled in the degree course in Sociology, but he dropped out three exams before graduation, choosing to become politically involved in Calabria. In 1976 he was elected municipal councilor in San Demetrio

Corone. Office that covers up to 1982 with a short period of assessor. In 2000 he was elected to the Regional Council (VII legislature), a position he held in the following one (VIII), and for eighteen months also in the IX legislature. In the VII and XI legislature he held the position of Vice President of the Special Council Commission Against the Phenomenon of the Mafia in Calabria. From August 2008 to March 2010, he held the position of Regional Councilor for Tourism and Cultural Heritage with responsibility for Linguistic Minorities and Emigration.

He is the founder of the Arbëresh Documentation and Research Center in San Demetrio Corone (1978), as well as President in the period 1980-1981.

Founder in 1981 of the Italian League of the Albanian Minority (Lidma), President of this organization from 1991 to 1995; Designer and Director of the International Institute (cultural collaboration between the Ministry of Culture of the RPS of Albania, the Municipality of Mongrassano and Lidma) Arbëresh Iconographic Center of Mongrassano 1990-1997. He is currently President of the FAA - Federation of Arbëresh Associations, a position he has held since 2016.

Determining the levels of the use of Arbëresh, its transmission among generations, the prioritization of factors, as prerequisites for the language policies

Edmond Cane
QSPA

There is a hot discussion whether Arbëresh is in a sharp decline and is reaching alarming levels of endangerment, while the delay of expert studies and forums make it impossible to develop language policies. Actually, there is empirical data, visible to the naked eye, widely discussed in the community, showing that Arbëresh is fighting with time to survive. The data from the June 2022 expedition of our Center, address this need. The research was carried out in a large number of Arberesh communes, with quantitative and qualitative data with a focus on Calabria. More work is needed in the future. The data confirm the massive decline in the use of Arberesh in family, community and professional environments. A more detailed examination highlights the course of the decline, and the ongoing accelerated rates, seriously threatening the survival of Arberesh. From several perspectives, the data confirms that the line of language transmission between today's parents and children has almost been cut off or blocked in most areas. While evaluating the factors, we can observe the priority of certain factors on the one hand, as well as their combination regarding the impact and the proportional weight to support or to undermine the use of Arberesh. This dynamic needs to be evaluated in the course of time, to assess the growing role of the state institutional framework, and the continuous shrinking of the family and community environment.

BIO: Edmond Cane graduated in English in 1988 at the University of Tirana. In 2006-2009, he completed his master's studies at the University of Tirana, and in 2016, he completed his doctoral studies in Albanian linguistics, in the field of grammar, at the Academy of Albanian Studies, Institute of Linguistics and Literature. He is currently a researcher at the Center for Studies and Publications for Arbëreshët, Tirana. His studies have been mainly in the cognitivist framework and use-based approaches, in contrast to structuralist approaches. He has a research interest in grammatical, typological spheres as well as corpus linguistics. In the last three years, the focus of research has been in the realm of endangered languages, mainly on the condition and context of the Arberia in Southern Italy.

The "demographic trends in the Arbëresh communes in Italy".

Francesco Perri

Vaccarizzo Albanese, Calabria

The paper analyzes the demographic trend of all the Arbëresh communes of Italy, so that we can estimate the reality of the situations experienced starting from 1807 and up to the present day. The analysis of the demographic trend of all the Arbëresh communes in Italy, serves to assess the reality of the situations experienced since 1807 until today. The first part presents the decennial population censuses from 1861 to 2021; the second part presents the analytical data of the natural movement and the migratory flow year after year, from 2002 to 2021. The study provides a framework that shows the path and flows (obtained in the different realities of Arbëresh in Italy), preceded by the table various that have to do with the use of Arberesh in the families of the above-mentioned communes. Furthermore, it analyses the various causes that influenced the depopulation of countries, such as: unemployment, two world wars, demographic issues, population aging, population decline and globalization with an analysis of the consequences of the risk of losing identity and language.

BIO: Francesco Perri was born in 1947 in Vaccarizo Albanese (CS), Calabria. After graduating in Economics and Commerce, he devoted himself to teaching legal and economic courses in secondary schools without neglecting his passion for local history, patiently researching in archives and libraries. For several years, he also dedicated himself to politics with the positions of Mayor in Vaccarizo Albanese, Councilor both in the Municipality and in the Mountain Community "Destra Crati" of Akris, as well as a member of the Committee of Guarantors of USL. n.5 of Corigliano Calabro. Co-founder (together with his friend Francesco Granata) and President of the Cultural Circle "Pasquale Scura" and, for several years, Conciliatory Judge of Vaccarizo Albanese. Some other commitments include the following:

President of the "Perri" Study & Research Center of Vaccarizzo Albanese.

President of the Guarantee Committee of the FAA (Federation of Arbëresh Associations).

Member of the Board of Directors of the Foundation of the Regional Institute for the Arbëresh Community of Calabria.

He is currently dedicated full time to historical research. For over twenty years he has collaborated, participating in research, and completing the printing of Prof. Marano's volume "Vaccarizzo Albanese: From the origins to the present day" of which he is also the author of the preface. He is a close collaborator of the Poet Writer DANTE MAFFIA, candidate for the Nobel Prize for Literature (last January he even accompanied him to Japan, where the International Poetry Festival entitled "Dante Maffia" was held). In recent years he has become passionate about reading novels and especially poetry.

Arbëresh in the Arbëresh-speaking communities of Molise: the state of the art

Fernanda Pugliese

Montecilfone (Campobasso), Molise

A recent research conducted in collaboration with professors of the University of Montpellier such as prof. Ksenija and Leo Léonard, has revealed that Arbëresh is still widespread in the Albanian-speaking communities of Molise in the adult population, but this is strongly at risk in the older generations young. In several areas this relates in particular with the school factor, where teaching is carried out sporadic, as an elective course, on choices not always shared by the teachers' colleges. The language transmission in the predominantly oral mode by families is also undergoing a strong decline because families, in most cases, consider the mother tongue not useful for the official communication, seeing English as the official language of the globalized world, thus underestimating the cultural and linguistic treasure of their historical and identity heritage.

What we want to highlight are programs and strategies, in the institutional and public sphere too, which may encourage curiosity and interest, so that the language of the forefathers becomes the bearer of ancient values in the ongoing transformations, including the new forms of multimedia communication that is also innovative from a technological point of view, to transfer languages and knowledge, i.e. the Arbëresh language and culture, that represents the origin of this population. For over five hundred years, the Arbëresh have retained their ancient ties, have kept alive languages, cultures, traditions of great historical and social importance.

BIO: Fernanda Pugliese lives in Montecilfone. Professor of Literature, as well as journalist, historian, essayist and writer. Founder of the Kamastra Magazine for the Linguistic Minorities of Molise and of the association with the same name which deals with the planning and management of the language counters of Molise, pursuant to the national law 482 of 1999. Founder of the Italian bilingual news program - Arbëresh Lajme that is broadcast on the channel of the online magazine AmoliveNews.it. She has organized training activities for employees, supervised the publication of the polynomial dictionary of Arbëresh dialects of Molise. She has conducted research studies and has been a member of the Regional Committee of Linguistic Minorities in implementation of regional law 15 of 1996. In this position, she has participated in the work of the Technical Consultative Committee at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. She is a member of CONFEMILI (Federal National Committee for Linguistic Minorities). She has participated in symposiums and conferences in Italy and abroad as a speaker. There are many specific publications, considering that her graduation thesis was on the poem Mino by Giuseppe Schiró. She has also supervised several elective exams in Albanian language and literature at the University of Bari.

Schooling in Arberesh today - the extracurricular courses

Ambrogio Bellizzi

Arbëresh teacher, Firmo, Calabria

BIO: Ambrogio Bellizzi, born in Firmo, an Arbëresh community in the Province of Cosenza, taught for over forty years at the Primary School, of which more than thirty in the school of his own town, always covering the role of head of the instrumental function relating to knowledge and preservation of the Arbëresh language and culture. To this end, he taught the mother tongue both in curricular and extra-curricular hours, organizing writing and reading workshops, theater workshops, coordinating the project activities relating to the knowledge and conservation of the language. Over the years, a variety of teaching materials have been produced, some of which have been collected in publications/published volumes. Among these: the work dedicated to the games of the past: “Lojërat dhe lodrat në traditën popullore të Fermës” (Games and toys in the popular tradition of Firmo) and the volume: Kujtimet (Si qemë një her) ... There are additional teaching materials (audio and video interviews with grandparents, on various aspects of daily life in the past: games, school, what they ate, how they dressed, work, etc.) Collection of poems, nursery rhymes, fairy tales and ancient proverbs) has been prepared and is awaiting publication.