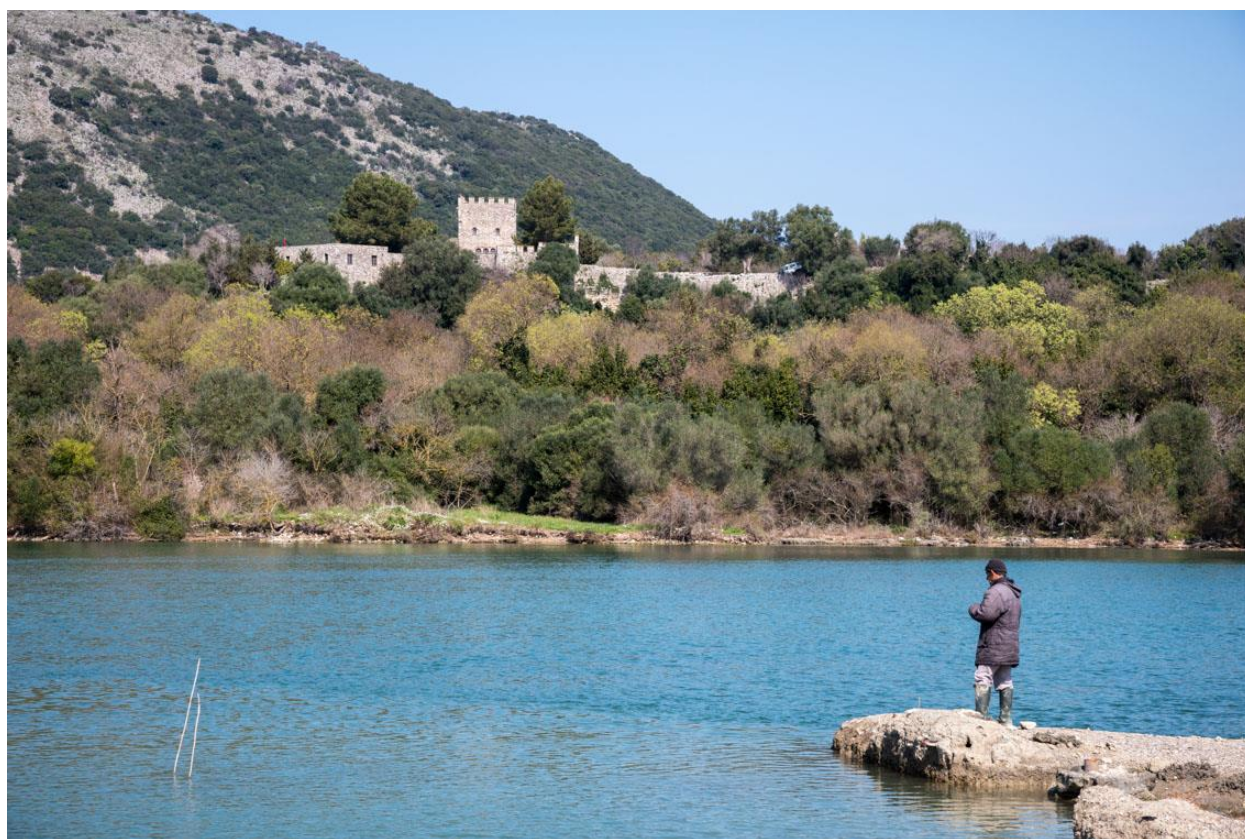




Voices of Butrint Second phase

Final Report submitted to the Butrint Foundation



June 2015

Voices of Butrint (Second phase)
Report submitted to the Butrint Foundation

This report undertakes to represent the work of the Centre for Albanian Cultural Heritage (Trakult Centre) in the frame of its Voices of Butrint Project (VoB 2), carried out with financial support of the Butrint Foundation.

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Centre for Albanian Cultural Heritage (Trakult Centre) – Report, June 2015.
Front-cover: Local fisherman with Butrint on background

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Acknowledgments

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the Butrint Foundation who has generously funded the project Voices of Butrint. We deeply express our sincere thanks to our adviser Karen Knight for her professional instructions, recommendations and time during the project and Brian Ayers for his continuous support to the project.

Special thanks go to local school directors and teachers for their continuous support to the project in the second phase.

The project would not have satisfactory results without the enthusiastic and devoted work of the following assistants-thanks are extended to them all: Mirgen Shametaj, Erin Pitt, Mirela Parangoni, Oliver Gilkes and Pete Eastland.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly we wish to extend our thanks to many individuals and local people who generously offered their time and provided material to the project.

Background

The project Voices of Butrint second phase took place between March and June 2015. The overall objective of the second phase was to take photographs to accompany the voices we had recorded in the initial stage, enabling us to prepare an educational package for teachers and pupils of local schools using the interviews and photographs together.

During the first phase, which took place in 2014, information was gathered on Butrint and its surrounding area through the memories of local residents. These stories were used during the second stage to share knowledge with the younger generation in schools of Ksamili, Vrinë, Shën Dëlli and Xarrë. Local stories and memories engaged children in the storytelling process making opportunities for them to explore their own meanings and connections to the stories, learning how history is created and encouraging a sense of identity connected to their present world.

In the second phase working with local teachers and using both the narratives and images we have begun to build strong relationships between Butrint and its local communities.

Also as part of this second phase, meetings with local teachers were held in March. During these meetings discussions took place with teachers of cultural heritage, history, geography, literature, etc. about the possibilities of preparing useful resources for teachers and children to use in classrooms and during their excursions to Butrint (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 Meetings with teachers and children at local schools during March

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Further, within the framework of the project Voices of Butrint, a meeting was also held in March with the Minister of Culture Mrs. Mirela Kumbaro and her advisor for arts and culture, Ms. Blerina Berberi. During the meeting the project's results over two seasons 2014-2015 was presented to show how the VOB Project has created a new approach to education and awareness of local residents towards local cultural heritage. The "Butrint Model" has the potential to be applied to any and perhaps every archaeological site in Albania.

Using the memories of local elderly residents alongside the professionally commissioned photographs we created educational materials for schools. In areas near historical and archaeological sites these types of materials can increase a sense of responsibility and local identity. Future collaboration with the Ministry of Culture to undertake similar projects in other archaeological sites in Albania was also discussed. This will be an excellent opportunity to support the Ministry's initiative "Friend of the Monument" linking local communities and schools with cultural heritage throughout Albania.

Publication for Local Schools

The Teacher's Kit prepared for VoB project give the class a deep insight into the place they are visiting. It uses the photographs and quotations from the oral history recordings to share stories and memories about Butrint. Photos of the interviewees are used alongside their words. Questions and suggestions for related activities are then placed to prompt the children to think about their own experiences and impressions of the historic site. The publication is designed to be used in conjunction with a visit to Butrint but can also be taken home by the pupils and shared with their parents and grandparents (Fig. 2-3).



Fig. 3 Teacher's kit: front cover.

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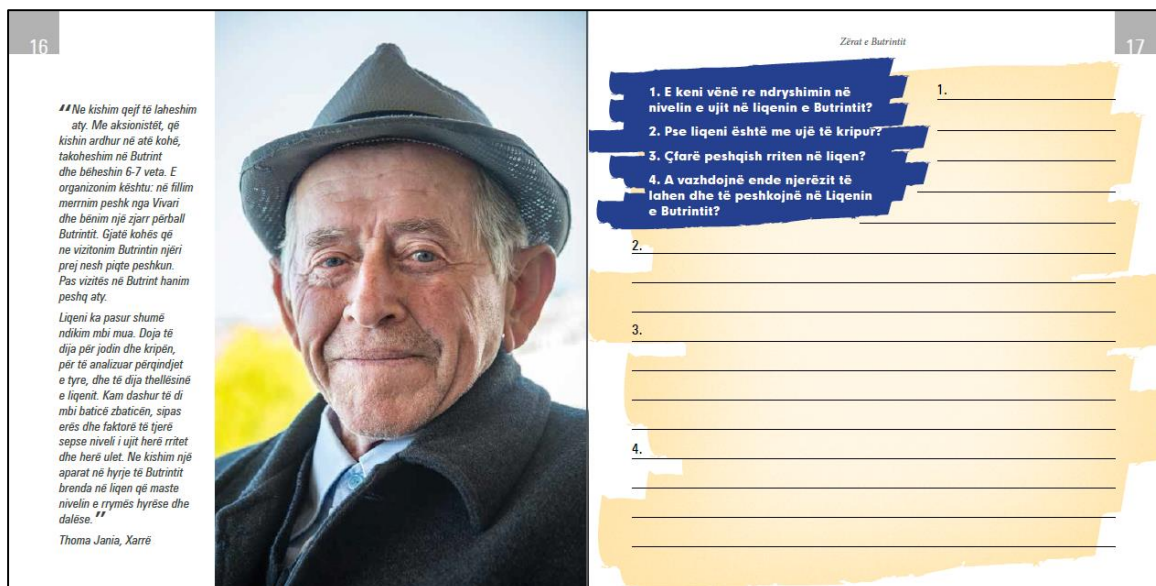


Fig. 3 Teacher's kit: pages with questions.

Site Activities

As part of the second phase in May local schools held a number of open activities in Butrint (Fig.4-5). These activities aimed to put in practice teacher's kit within the site's context. During their activities at Butrint, teachers of schools in Ksamili, Vrina and Xarra used the material that was prepared by the project in order to involve children with Butrint's stories. Through passages drawn from interviews and questions designed to stimulate imagination, school children were able to perceive Butrint in a different light from what they had seen so far in textbooks.



Fig. 4 School of Vrina during the open activities held in May at Butrint.

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Fig. 5 School children working with teacher's kit at Butrint

Moreover, the teacher's kit was used by the children after site visit in classroom and their homes (Fig. 6). It offers a priceless tool for teachers to encourage young children to record their elders in the communities, and use their words in different ways, thus maintaining the stories and perspectives of local people as well as that of the site.



Fig. 6 working with educational material in classroom

Conclusion

Voices of Butrint Second Phase achieved in excellent way, goals set at the beginning of the project in 2014. Local people who were removed if not excluded from their history had finally a voice. Any sense that they couldn't share in its care and maintenance has been replaced thanks to this project. The elderly have gained respect for their memories and have had their pride in living and working near or at Butrint, validated by the project. Butrint's archive is richer and more connected to the culture, the people and the place that surrounds the site. As one of the interviewees said; *"not everyone goes to Butrint to see the stones"*.

Local stories and memories included into educational materials for local schools will help school children to grow with local identity and site care. As a result, we can say with conviction that with a minimal budget, the project has managed to establish a close relation between the Butrint National Park, the Butrint Foundation and local schools and villages.

Continuity

What we learned from the schools and teachers we worked with was that they had little or no interaction with the site at Butrint, despite being geographically close by. This is a missed opportunity in terms of learning and in the longer term, support for Butrint.

The teacher's kit used only part of the material gathered in two seasons 2014-2015. There are still numerous stories and photographs that can be used to prepare publications, exhibitions and other imaginative projects if the management of Butrint should wish to improve the site's engagement and information for and with visitors and local people.

This project has given Butrint many options it can follow to interpret and engage people. We would suggest that some consideration is given to continuing what this project has begun in dialogue with local people to involve local schools and residents in the long term sustainability of role of the site.

Our first suggestion is to build on the profile this project has raised of Butrint. Its landscape and people are captured in the oral and written texts and high quality photography we have commissioned. This quality of the content deserves a wider audience, both local and national.

We will continue to look for funding to make such a publication possible; as a lasting memory of this project and as an international advertisement for the beauty of Butrint but would ask the Trustees initially if they would support such an initiative.

Secondly, in the wider context of Albanian archaeology, VoB has provided a model, an approach that can be used by historic centres and sites throughout the country. This will be possible in conjunction with the Albanian Ministry of Culture.