

UNIVERSITY OF NOVA GORICA  
GRADUATE SCHOOL

**CONTESTED SPACES AND NEGOTIATED IDENTITIES IN  
DHËRMI/DRIMADES OF HIMARË/HIMARA AREA,  
SOUTHERN ALBANIA**

DISSERTATION

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*In memory of Vinko*

## Contents

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	7
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	8
<b>NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION</b>	10
<b>PREAMBLE</b>	15
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	26
<b>Theoretical Frames: The Construction of Spaces and Places</b>	29
<b>Fieldwork Framers: Dhërmi/Drimades of Himarë/Himara Area</b>	32
<b>Dynamic Processes of Construction and Reconfiguration of Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara Area</b>	37
<b>Contested Places and Spaces</b>	40
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	43
<b>1. THE VILLAGE AND ITS PEOPLE</b>	
<b>1.1. The Area</b>	43
<b>1.2. Geomorphological Story</b>	47
<b>1.3. Dhërmi/Drimades</b>	49
<b>1.4. Ambiguous Name</b>	52
<b>1.5. Shifting Localities</b>	55
1.5.1. Shifting of the “Local”	56
1.5.2. The “Local” and the “Other” – Distinctions and Interrelations	57
<b>1.6. Languages</b>	63
1.6.1. In Search of the “First Language”	65
1.6.2. Language and Education	67
1.6.3. Spoken Languages	69
1.6.4. Language as the Permit to “Enter”	70
<b>1.7. Religion</b>	71
1.7.1. Religion in Albania	71
1.7.2. Churches of Dhërmi/Drimades	72
1.7.3. Religion and Everyday Practices	74
1.7.4. Religion and Gender	76

1.7.5. Religion and Locality	77
<b>1.8. Population: Shifting Numbers</b>	78
<b>1.9. Family, Linages and Clans</b>	82
1.9.1. <i>Ikoyenia</i> or <i>Familje</i>	83
1.9.2. <i>Soj</i> or <i>Fis</i>	88
1.9.3. <i>Çeta</i> or <i>Varka</i>	91
1.9.4. Marrying within the Village	94
1.9.5. Inheritance	95
<b>1.10. Summary</b>	101
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	104
<b>2. CONTESTED HISTORIES</b>	
<b>2.1. Dividing People and Places</b>	107
<b>2.2. Mythohistories</b>	113
2.2.1. Oral Accounts	113
2.2.2. Written Accounts	115
<b>2.3. Different Views and Positions</b>	117
<b>2.4. Between the Contestations and Relations</b>	122
2.4.1. Illyrian or Epirote?	122
2.4.2. Trading Overseas	124
2.4.3. Roman and Byzantine Empire	126
2.4.4. Construction of National Hero Skanderbeg	128
2.4.5. “Permanent Struggle” – Resistance to Ottomans	131
2.4.6. Movements of People	133
2.4.7. Ali Pasha of Tepelena	135
2.4.8. “Western” Visitors	137
2.4.9. <i>Rilindja</i> - Revival	140
2.4.10. Formation of the Albanian Nation-State and the Protocol of Corfu (1914)	142
2.4.11. The First World War (1914-1918)	146
2.4.12. The Period of “Democratic Movements” (1920-1925)	152
2.4.13. Ahmed Zogu (1925-1939)	155
2.4.14. The Second World War (1939-1945)	159

2.4.15. Communism (1945-1990)	163
<b>2.5. Summary</b>	165
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	169
<b>3. THE SEA AND THE MOUNTAINS</b>	
<b>3.1. Stories and Story-Telling</b>	170
3.1.1. Remembering, Mapping and the Ongoing Reconstruction	171
<b>3.2. Stories of the Sea and the Mountains</b>	172
3.2.1. Stories of the Sea	172
3.2.2. Stories of the Mountains	176
<b>3.3. From Places to Spaces and Back Again</b>	178
<b>3.4. “Whereness” of Dhërmi/Drimades</b>	182
<b>3.5. Summary</b>	188
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	191
<b>4. NEGOTIATING RUBBISH</b>	
<b>4.1. Tourism on the Coast of Dhërmi/Drimades</b>	193
4.1.1. Cleaning the Coast	194
<b>4.2. Before the Summer Season</b>	195
4.2.1. Identification and Belonging	200
4.2.2. Manipulating the Citizenship	202
<b>4.3. The Summer Season</b>	204
4.3.1. Rubbish as a “Matter out of Place”	208
<b>4.4. Summary</b>	211
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	214
<b>Silent Stories of Communism</b>	218
<b>Contested or Related?</b>	219
<b>APPENDICES</b>	223
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	238
<b>SUMMARY/POVZETEK</b>	251

## ABSTRACT

The main subject of this thesis is the ongoing, unstable reconstruction of space and place in the village of Dhërmi/Drimades in Himarë/Himara area, Southern Albania. Particular consideration is given to the process of reconfiguration and redefinition of the meanings that pertain to the village and its people. Thesis focuses on local peoples' biographies, oral histories, rhetorical claims and their everyday discourses, through which it is shown how the meanings of the village are reconstructed through their interrelations with other people and places. The underlying theme of my dissertation is the continuity of movements and interrelations through which the local people of Dhërmi/Drimades recreate and reproduce the sense of locatedness of "their" village and themselves.

My research question is formed on the premise that the international, national and local policies, historiographers and other researchers define these people and places as if they had existed and belonged to nation-state "since ever". Through description of the village and its people (Chapter One) and through analysis of the contemporary historiography (Chapter Two) I show how the policies, historiographers, demographers and geographers in various ways and with various subjective interests conceptualise, categorise and locate the village and its people into a geopolitical map of the nation-states, as preordained and closed entities. In continuation (Chapter Three and Four) the local peoples' stories, their biographical backgrounds, rhetorical claims and management of resources are represented to illustrate the manners in which local people themselves redefine and reproduce the meanings of the nation-states as hegemonic concepts, which enables them to reconstruct their sense of belonging and locate the village in the geopolitical map of the Europe and the world. These processes of reconstruction are always in a state of be-coming and constitute the spaces and places, with its meanings on the one hand revealing the differences and contestations between them, while on the other hand also showing their mutual connections and sameness.

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Fundamental for this project was a two-year funding from the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport which enabled me to do the research in the villages of Himarë/Himara area. I am deeply indebted to my supervisors Borut Telban, Duška Knežević Hočevar and Sarah Green. All of them patiently guided me throughout the writing of my thesis. Sarah Green was especially helpful with her comments on my observations from the field, which I was sending her while on fieldwork. Through her pedagogic touch and understanding she always found the way to present her comments on the first drafts of my thesis in a stimulating, constructive way. Borut's critique and meticulousness made my argumentation stronger. And Duška always



found her time to listen to my sometimes very chaotic thoughts and helped me to spell them out and find the sense in them. I thank them all for their help, comments and suggestions.

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## NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION, PSEUDONYMS, KINSHIP ABBREVIATIONS

### Transliteration

Throughout my thesis the words in Albanian language are written in *italic*, the words in local Greek language are written in *italic and underlined* and the terms that signify Ottoman Turkish administrative units are underlined.

When transliterating the terms of the local Greek dialect I was guided by the pronunciation of the Modern Greek words as appear in the Oxford Greek Minidictionary (2002).

Aα	a	Ιι	i, e	Ρρ	r
Bβ	v	Κκ	c, k	Σς	s
Γγ	g	Λλ	l	Ττ	t
Δδ	d	Μμ	m	Υυ	i, e
Εε	e	Νν	n	Φφ	f
Ζζ	z	Ξξ	x	Χχ	h
Ηη	I, e	Οο	o	Ψψ	ps
Θθ	th	Ππ	p	Ωω	o

### Diagraphs

αι	ai	ου	ou	ντ	nd or d
αυ	av	γκ	g	ευ	ef or ev
ει	ei	μπ	b	οι	i or oi

When transliterating the Albanian terms I was guided by the pronunciation as it appears in the Albanian-English-Albanian Dictionary (Hysa 2004). The letters that do not appear in the English alphabet are pronounced as follows:

ç	ch as cherry	ll	ll as all	th	th as the
dh	dh as this	nj	ny	x	g as jail (j is soft)
ë	æ as girl	q	ch as cherry	xh	g as ginger
gj	j as jaw	rr	r (sharp r)	y	i as in this
l	L as like	sh	sh as shoe	zh	zh as measure

## **Pseudonyms**

To keep the anonymity of my interlocutors I changed their names as well as some of the information of their life-stories that are not important in the following discussion.

## **Note on Kinship Abbreviations**

I have adopted the following conventions:

B = brother

M = mother

D = daughter

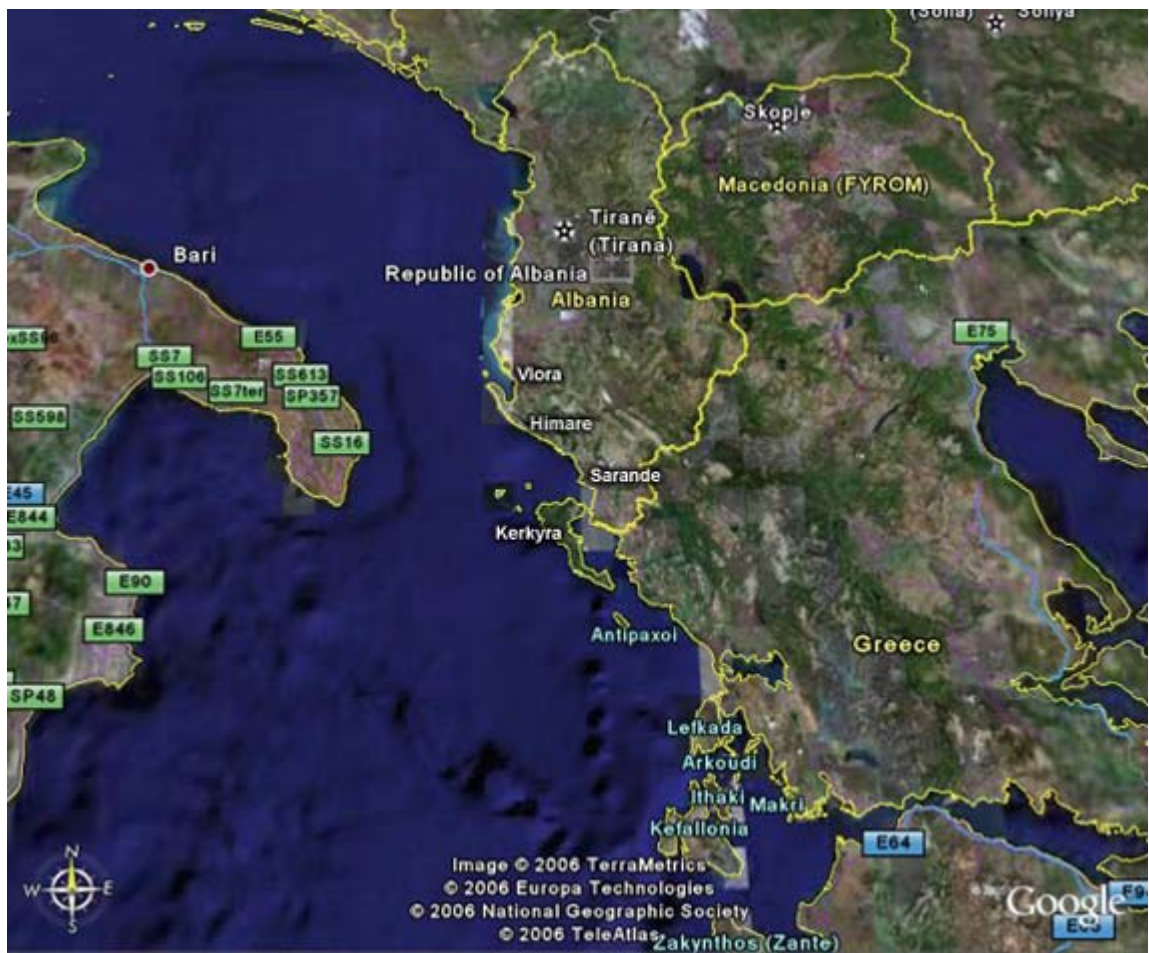
S = son

F = father

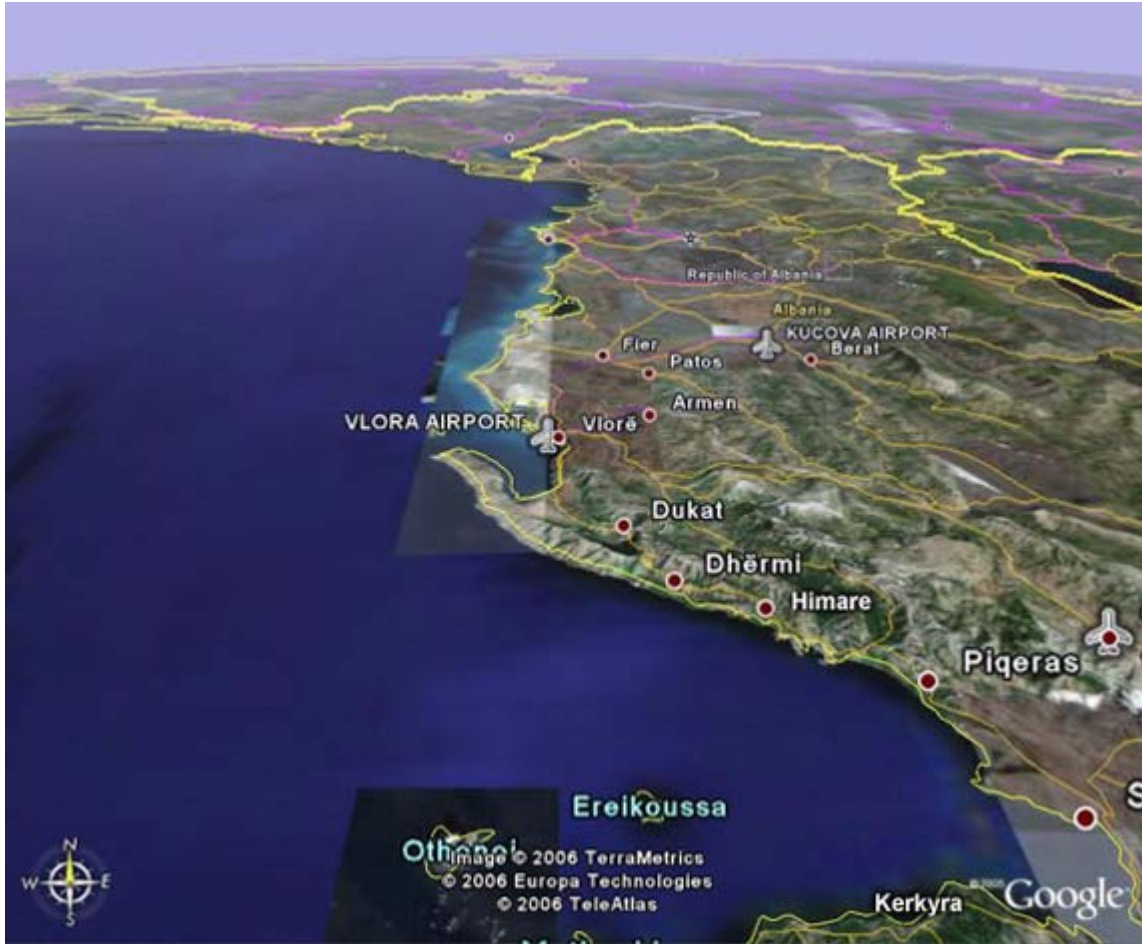
W = wife

H = husband

Z = sister



Map of Albania (National Geographic Society 2006)



Map of the Himarë/Himara Area (National Geographic Society 2006)



Dhërmi/Drimades (Foto: Daniela /rachel/ Vávrová, August 2005)

## PREAMBLE

*Anthropologists have become increasingly aware that ethnographic representations are not simply “about” such social processes as place making and people making but are at the same time actively involved in such constructions (Gupta and Ferguson 2001: 23).*

Gupta and Ferguson (2001 [1997]) suggest that the choice of the location of anthropological fieldwork constitutes and shapes the way of ethnographic representation and leads to the choice of theoretical approach for analysis of ethnographic data. Therefore I open my thesis with Preamble instead of Introduction. I will try to explain to the reader some of my personal experiences, especially from the earlier days of my fieldwork in Southern Albania and provide him or her with a closer look at the village and its people.

### **Preliminary Visit**

9<sup>th</sup> September 2004. On a sunny autumn day my interpreter Entela and I took a trip to the villages of Himarë (official, Albanian name) or Himara (local Greek name) area of the southern Albanian coast. Entela and I set off from the sultry and smoggy town of Vlorë late in the morning.

I was introduced to Entela by my colleague Sanila, a lecturer at the University of Vlorë to which I was affiliated during my research in Dhërmi (official, Albanian name) or Drimades (local, Greek name). I met Entela a few days before our trip to the Himarë/Himara area. According to Sanila she was one of her best students who had just graduated in English and psychology. Entela's decision to accompany me on my pre-fieldwork voyage to the villages of Himarë/Himara was rather exceptional as the majority of single women (i.e., over 18 years old) in Albania are generally not approved to wander around on their own or in the company of a “foreigner”. To my queries as to why this is so, many people offered an explanation that after the fall of communism and the civil war in 1997 people living in Albania became aware that nothing is safe and secure. Regardless of the social, political and economic changes that took place after the collapse of communism many things remained the same, that is “conservative” or as some Albanians would say *fanatikë* (fanatic).

Therefore, it was definitely not common for a single Vloran woman such as Entela to accompany me – a young foreigner – on my pre-fieldwork trip to the villages of the Albanian Riviera. Entela explained that a young single woman should always be accompanied by a relative and should certainly not be allowed to wander around with strangers in the evening. Entela went on to explain that it is very impolite to stop people on the streets, let alone shake hands with men. Due to these unwritten rules of “proper behaviour” her elder, unmarried cousin, decided to take us to Himarë/Himara in his black Mercedes-Benz, which happens to be the most common car on Albanian roads. His reasons for driving us were several. One that seemed quite important was that he was concerned about his cousin’s sexual chastity, very much related to his family’s honour. Namely, if Entela got involved with a man without later marrying him it would be extremely shameful for their *fisi*. Entela as a young single woman was not considered to be responsible for her own deeds.

Entela’s cousin drove fast along the winding coastal road covered with muddy holes. In this sense he was no different to the majority of Albanian drivers. He decided to take us on a “tour” through the remarkable landscape of Himarë/Himara. Sitting in the back of the newest model of Mercedes Benz I felt like a very important guest that was being led through the remarkable and in many ways still unspoiled beauty of the coastal *Bregu* area. Feeling a bit embarrassed by my “new role” I could not hide my joy while driving through the stunning landscape of the Dukati valley. After I spent several months in Dhërmi/Drimades I was told by the villagers that Dukati used to be a prosperous place where the Dhërmian/Drimadean women exchanged their various goods for wheat. Because in Dhërmi/Drimades – just as in the entire Himarë/Himara area – the quality of soil is relatively poor, people living there had often endured drought and famine. Therefore, the village women were forced to travel across the mountains in order to get some wheat which was scarce in their area. Nowadays, the village of Dukati, which is located in the valley, is divided into two parts by the Shushicë River. The old part is situated next to the river while the new part is located closer to the road.

Because of its location by the river, the old part of Dukati village is green and fertile. The surroundings boast with large brown patches of wheat and corn fields that had already been harvested at the time of our drive. The entire valley in which the village is situated is closed and “protected” by the mountains: the high Thunderbolt Mountains (*Malet e Vetëtimë* or *Acroceraunian* Mountains) on the east and the hilly green plains on the west. Its geomorphologic characteristics, relative closeness to Vlorë, and its isolation from the sea



were some of the reasons that the valley stayed relatively developed for millennia, and is today not as depopulated as other villages in the Himarë/Himara area are.

After a fast but pleasant drive through Dukati, the road began a slow ascent along twisting curves of the Çika Mountains. The curves multiplied and the road narrowed. Suddenly, after a few kilometres, a view opened toward green deciduous trees in the east and brownish-grey mountains in the west. At about 800 metres above the sea level a mountainous landscape covered with pines appeared in front of us. While looking at the pine trees I had a feeling that some of them were sculptured by an anonymous artist. We drove over the mountain pass called Llogara. The mountain road, which led us through the villages, had recently been paved. During the World War I (1914-1918), when the region was occupied by the Italians, the cobblestone path was strengthened by the work of the prisoners of war from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The road was paved later, during the period of communism in 1970, and repaired in 2000.

It was because of the good air at Llogara that the communist government decided to build a sanatorium for pulmonary diseases here in 1970's. In 2000, after the renovation of the road, the mountain pass gradually turned into a small tourist place. Because of its pastures that have been used over the past centuries, including the period of the socialist cooperative, the area is famous for its lamb meat. No wonder that Llogara is crowded by small restaurants offering fresh lamb meat and various dairy products. As the place became famous for its "eating pleasures" even the regional bus drivers established a regular stop here on their journeys.

As a newcomer to the area I could not be excused from this tradition. As I do not eat poultry and red meat, but only fish, I was not able to share the enthusiasm and gourmet pleasures over our meal, *bukë*, which also means bread in Albanian. Of course, the actual bread was only a side dish, while the rest of the meal contained large amounts of lamb and boiled rice or *pilaf*. I was pleased to see that they also provided large portions of green salad, grilled vegetables and delicious, home made sour cream. After this great feast we returned to the shiny-black *makina* (car) and drove further up the windy top of Çika Mountains. The pine forest that surrounded us all the way uphill slowly began to clear up and opened to the sun rays and views over the mountain peaks on the east and the shining blue Ionian sea on the west. The spacious view made me stare in amazement. At that moment I understood the descriptions of numerous renowned foreign travellers such as Byron (1891), Pouqueville (1825), Lear (1988 [1851]),

and Leake (1967) who were similarly amazed by the view over the *Bregu* area and devoted passages to it in their writings. Today, some of these writers are well known to the inhabitants of the Himarë/Himara area.

## **Dhërmi/Drimades**

11<sup>th</sup> September 2004. It was Friday morning when a local taxi brought Entela and me to Dhërmi/Drimades. As we settled in the Himarë/Himara municipality, we rented a taxi in order to be mobile and visit all seven villages in the area. Upon our arrival to the village the taxi driver dropped us off in the middle of the road. Wandering around and looking for the village centre we saw an old woman coming towards us. Entela asked me if we should stop her and inquire about the village and its people. As my command of Albanian language was very poor at the time, Entela took the lead and greeted her.

“Good morning lady. May we stop you for a second?” asked Entela in a gentle voice. The old woman, burdened with age and hardly walking, raised her head and looked at us. Instead of answering she asked: “Where are you from?” Entela explained that I am a foreigner from Slovenia and that she is from Vlorë. She went on saying that I am interested in people’s habits, culture and ways of living. The lady replied that she had no knowledge of such things and that it would be better to go to the school where people familiar with these things could be found. Although Entela told her that we were not interested in “that” kind of knowledge, the old lady insisted that she was far too old to know about such things. Entela translated her answers and commented: “Oh dear, she can hardly speak Albanian... I guess she speaks Greek like most of the people in Himarë!” She suggested that we should leave her alone, go to the school and see what would happen. I agreed. When we wanted to thank the lady for taking her time for us and say goodbye, Entela asked me if she could ask her about her origin. I agreed and Entela asked the old woman: “*Jeni e Shqiptarë apo Greke?*” (“Are you Albanian or Greek?”). The woman responded with a short “*Vorioepirot*”, bid us goodbye and left. Entela translated the lady’s words: “She said that she is Greek!” I commented that her answer had actually been *Vorioepirot* (Northern Epirot). In an agitated voice Entela explained that this meant the same as Greek.

## **Ethnographer, Naïve Visitor, Spy: Delving into Village's Spaces**

4<sup>th</sup> January 2005. Exhausted and furious from a day of stressful exploration, Maria (my new interpreter) and I finally returned to our apartment that I had rented from an old couple in Dhërmi/Drimades. It was one of those cold, rainy and windy early January evenings when I was still accompanied by Maria, a student of English language at the University of Vlorë. Entela, who accompanied me on my pre-fieldwork trip managed to get a job in Vlorë, so I had to find another companion for the early stages of my fieldwork. Maria lived and studied in Vlorë. Because her father comes from Palasa, the neighbouring village of Dhërmi/Drimades, where the majority of inhabitants speak the local Greek dialect, she was keen to hear and practice it<sup>1</sup>. Maria's father, however, had some difficulties with letting his 25 years old single daughter to spend her winter holidays with me.

Soaked by the rain and upset after a difficult conversation with the village teacher Andrea and his wife, who got suspicious about our arrival, Maria and I stepped into our apartment. Due to the electricity blackouts<sup>2</sup> it was cold and dark. Without saying anything we went to our beds which happened to be the only warm places in the apartment. As Maria lay down, I lit a candle that threw a weird, annoyingly oppressing light over our room. I felt strange, confused and insecure.

In my thoughts that evening I returned to our morning visit to Lefteria and her husband. As we did not know anybody in the village we visited Lefteria without making any previous appointment. This was not in line with village "codes of behaviour". Generally people are not used to unexpected visits by foreigners, especially young students of anthropology who pose strange and – from their perspective – suspicious questions. We knocked on Lefteria's blue

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<sup>1</sup> Because of her father's place of origin, which is along with other villages of Himarë/Himara area in the mainstream public opinion in Greece as well as by official Greek policy considered to be of Greek origin, Maria is the owner of a "Special Card for Aliens of Hellenic Descent" (issued by the Ministry of the Interior in Greece). This card, in contrast to the majority of Albanian citizens, gives her the right to cross the Albanian-Greek border and enter any European Union country that is located within the Schengen area (an agreement among 30 states which are part of European Union and three non-EU members – Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland – which allows for the abolition of systematic border controls between the participating countries). In 1998 (when she was almost 19) she moved to Athens where she worked as a housemaid in order to provide a financial support for her family in Albania. In 2000 she returned to Albania where she enrolled at University to study English Language and Literature. Since then she visits Greece every summer to work in one of the restaurants in Patra. During her stays in Greece (in Athens and Patra) she improved her Greek which differs from the local Greek dialect in Palasa, Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara.

<sup>2</sup> Due to the general energy crisis throughout Albania and because many users do not pay their electricity bills there are daily electricity blackouts lasting between four and six hours.

iron door situated in the middle of a big cement wall and shouted a greeting. When Lefteria came to the door she could not hide her surprise to find us there. As my command of the local Greek was very bad Maria introduced us and asked if she had time for a chat. She looked at us with distrust. Following the village customs she invited us inside. Hospitality represents an important part of the people's customary practices, even though they are nowadays not strictly followed anymore.

Lefteria invited us into the living room of her old house that used to belong to her father. As he did not have any male heirs he left it to her, his eldest daughter, who after thirty-six years of living and working in Tirana returned to Dhërmi/Drimades. We sat down on the old sofa which was similar to those in other houses. They were all made during the communist period. Lefteria sat on her bed positioned on the right side of our sofa. Her posture was in accord with the majority of village ladies of her generation: unnaturally straightened back, legs on the ground, slightly crossed, arms crossed in her lap. Neatly covered with a black scarf, tightened in a way typical for *Bregu*, Lefteria smiled and let us know that she was waiting for our questions. In proper Greek that sounded more Athenian than Dhërmian/Drimadean Maria explained my research interests. After five minutes of introduction she asked Lefteria if she minded us writing down her answers. Lefteria had nothing against and we began with the interview.

While Lefteria was explaining the reasons for endogamy within the village her husband returned home. Seeing his facial expression it was obvious that he was not thrilled with our visit. When he entered the room, Lefteria stood up and invited him to sit on the armchair that was standing next to the sofa, facing the doorway. When he sat down she went to their newly furnished kitchen, located in the same room. She offered us some sweets, traditional *gliko* (sweet fruits in syrup), and a glass of water. This kind of hospitality called *kerasma* is typical for some parts of the South Eastern Europe. *Kerasma* is always provided by the woman of the house, who serves the guests with sweets or *lokumi* (Turkish delight), *gliko* and drinks on a special tray decorated with a lace cloth. The drinks are either coffee and water or juice, liquor, brandy or *raki/tsipouro*.

This kind of assorted offer always confused me as I never knew what I was supposed to take first. I was taught by Maria to take the sweets first and then the plate with *gliko* and finish off with the glass of water. After she served us, Lefteria sat back on her bed and recapitulated the

purpose of our visit to her husband. He merely nodded. As I wanted to lighten our discussion, I asked him how the village men and women spend their day in the village. He answer was short: during the week most of the village men spend their time in *kafenio* where they chat, play cards and sometimes sing, while the women do the housework, cook and work in the garden. On Sunday they all go to church as they are very religious people. As I noticed that he was getting tense, I asked both what was their typical cuisine. At that moment Lefteria's husband stood up and said that he did not have time to answer our questions as he had other work to do. On his way out he grumpily commented that Enver Hoxha had also asked them what they ate but later he sent them to Spaç<sup>3</sup>.

Luckily, Lefteria was not, or at least she seemed not to be, as annoyed as her husband. She kindly allowed us to continue with our interview which developed into a relaxing and easy-going chat. After an hour we left. From the smells that were spreading through the narrow streets we concluded that it was "lunch time". It was one o'clock. On the way to our apartment we met two women carrying wood on their backs, tightened with a rope. Like most of the village women they were dressed in black and covered with black scarves. When they noticed us coming their way, they began to whisper to each other and by putting their hands in front of their mouths tried to make sure we did not hear them. We assumed that they had already been informed about our arrival in the village and that they were commenting on our strange and uncommon visit. When we came closer to them Maria and I greeted them and asked if they could stop for a second. Maria introduced us, explained our intentions, and asked if we could talk to them some day in their free time. The old ladies, whose faces were wrinkled from the wind and numerous years of work in the agricultural cooperative, looked older than they actually were (although they were 65 years old they seemed as if they were 80). Their immediate answer was that they were not interested in politics. Even though Maria told them that we were also not interested in politics, but rather in their habits and customs, we once again heard the sentences we had heard not that long ago: "Even Enver Hoxha said that he was not interested in politics and he asked us how we live and what we eat. But eventually he sent us all to prison!" The old ladies turned their backs on us and went away.

We silently returned home and made our lunch. A pleasant village lady had given us a delicious fish a day before. Contrary to the old ladies she welcomed us in her house and

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<sup>3</sup> In the period of communism Spaç was one of the worst state jails.

treated us warmly. “Days cannot be all the same” we comforted each other and hoped that the forthcoming evening with the village teacher and his wife would turn out to be a better experience. The teacher Andrea and his wife, whom I had already met on my preliminary visit to the village in September, invited us for a drink in one of the bars on the coast.

After the night fell, Andrea and his wife stopped at our place in their blue Mercedes-Benz and honked impatiently in order to get us out of the apartment. We put on our wind jackets in a hurry and just managed to jump into the car when Andrea speeded away through the narrow village streets, heading to the coast. He did not mind the slippery roads. The drive took us about one kilometre down from the village, which stretches on the hilly plain overlooking the entire coast. We felt quite good, smelling the coastal breeze and observing the waves crushing against the rocks. We were soon approached by a young shepherd-dog, guarding the property of its owner Behar. Behar came to Dhërmi/Drimadhes 30 years ago. During the period of communism he worked in the village cooperative, but after its fall he became the owner of a restaurant and a small hotel.

At the time, Behar’s little restaurant was completely empty, except for his family members. Behar stood at the counter, while his youngest son Romano, after whom the restaurant got its name, was enjoying the latest show of *Fame Stories* on one of the Greek TV channels. Behar’s wife and their older daughters were in the kitchen preparing supper. Andrea led us to one of the small rectangular tables in the corner and ordered drinks. “Ouzo for me and coffee for her”, he shouted in Albanian with an imposing stance, pointing to him and his wife. He took a packet of cigarettes from his pocket and asked us for our orders while lighting a cigarette. We ordered tea and he quickly passed the word on to the bartender, again ordering in Albanian. He put his jacket away and leaned towards us, now speaking in the local Greek dialect: “We are going to Athens next week to visit our children. We are planning to stay there for a couple of weeks... in order to finish a couple of things”. He paused for a moment, inhaling the cigarette smoke before asking me if I would be prepared to take over his teaching in the local school, substituting his history lectures with the lectures of English language.

I have to admit that I was quite pleased with his proposal, because I expected less favourable news when I noticed his serious attitude. I expressed my willingness to cooperate and said that this would be a great opportunity for me to learn Albanian. He then explained that my teaching would be a kind of a trial that would last until his return. After that he would

consider the pupils' reactions and reach a decision whether I should continue with teaching English or not.

While we were talking about this, Andrea's wife remained silent. She broke her silence a few minutes later. With a disagreeable expression, she turned to Maria and asked her where we had met before we came to the village. Maria was surprised to hear this kind of a question, but she willingly explained how we had met in Vlorë and had taken the bus to Dhërmi/Drimades. Andreas' wife looked at her husband in disbelief. He, in turn, told us in a slightly upset tone: "I know all about you! I have spoken with the dean of Vlorë University today and he told me! He told me that he knows all about you!"

Since I could not understand everything he said after that, I was more or less helplessly looking towards Maria, noticing that she was becoming increasingly irritated. Before she could say anything, Andrea's wife uttered another claim: "Didn't you meet at Llogara pass, where she was waiting while you were brought there in a black *makina*?" This remark caused Maria to become even more upset. In a flood of words she nevertheless explained all over again everything about our relationship. When she finished, the couple looked at each other in a meaningful way, and Andrea said: "Both of you were chosen very well! The one who chose you really made an incredibly good job!" I did not understand anything that was said until later, when Maria translated the conversation to me, but I could guess from the expressions, gestures and loud voices that this was turning into an unpleasant misunderstanding, which could end in an open quarrel.

At that moment the village councillor Kosta came through the door. Our tense scene immediately changed and so did Andrea's facial expression. He stood up and excitedly welcomed Kosta. Even before they sat down, Andrea was already ordering ouzo. "Ouzo for the boss!" he yelled to Behar, who was all this time standing behind the counter. I did not know Kosta at that time but was nevertheless happy to see him interrupt our painful situation. Maria and I did not have a clue about what was going on.

The flickering of the light awoke me from my reflections on the day's events. "Electricity is coming back!" said Maria cheerfully. But it did not last for long. Maria wrapped herself in a blanket and sat down on the bed. In the candlelight she again summarised our conversation with Andrea and his wife. This day was not really a day to be remembered. I did not know

what to say. My roaming mind was full of different questions: “What if these stories about spying are true after all? What if Maria is one of them, the chosen one?” Although such a thought seemed ridiculous, I could not let it go. I was going over the details of our trip, asking myself in doubt: “Is the purpose of my stay here really what I think it is, or is there something I am missing here?”

The candlelight responded to my thoughts and grew darker. I tried to convey my feelings to Maria, but I could not utter the words in a sensible way. They just did not want to come out. As if they were supposed to stay inside and slowly poison me, leading me towards more and more doubts.

## **Writing**

10<sup>th</sup> March 2006. Although I had read about these kinds of suspicions in many monographs (Herzfeld 1991: 47-49, partly also in Balinger 2003: 6, and Green 2005: 35-36, while her work was still in a manuscript) long before I set my foot on the field, my theoretical knowledge did not help me that evening. During the period of communism, and probably also during the reign of King Zogu (1928-1939), the word spy was very much part of the everyday life not only in Dhërmi/Drimades but also elsewhere in Albania and the rest of the world. Actually I heard the word *spiun* (spy) quite often during my stay in Dhërmi/Drimades. The villagers did not use it only for the people they did not know but also for other villagers who were at some point recognised as unpleasant or disagreeable. However, some of the suspicions were quite meaningful, at least in my view. For example, the conclusion reached by Andrea and his wife. Why had she suggested the Llogara pass as the rendezvous point for my meeting with Maria? Why was I “already there”, while Maria was brought in a black Mercedes-Benz? This did not seem to make any sense to me, as Vlorë would be a much better place to meet and carry out plans of this nature. I could not understand the meaning of her suspicions until much later when I learned about the villager’s perception of their landscape. In their eyes Llogara is more than “just” a mountain pass. It constitutes a natural border between “us” and “them”. This is how it was portrayed by numerous other local people. During my conversations with the villagers I noticed several different and antagonistic views and representations of their spaces, which often seemed to be imbued with land tenure issues, disputes over the construction of tourist facilities or allegations over suspected illegal



activities. These antagonisms led me to entitle my thesis *Contested Spaces and Negotiated Identities*.

## INTRODUCTION

I was led to the study of spatial concepts by a long path, grounded in my interest for the anthropology of Melanesia. As an undergraduate student (1996-2001) I conducted a short-term research in one of the villages of Oro province in Papua New Guinea. I continued with postgraduate studies, completing a bit longer fieldwork on the Goodenough Island of Papua New Guinea. At that time, during the writing of my M.A. thesis, I became interested in the conceptualisations of space and place following the land tenure conflicts that seemed to constitute the most important issue not only in Bwaidoga village but also elsewhere on Goodenough and Papua New Guinea in general. In trying to resolve their disputes over the landownership, people there often resorted to “customary” principles by recalling myths<sup>4</sup> and local genealogies, which were, due to the political, economical, social and cultural changes, reconstructed and appropriated anew. These relations between land conflicts and continuous reconstruction of peoples’ identity, belonging and locatedness stimulated my interest in the studies of spatial notions such as place, space, location and landscape.

Paths and tracks that a student takes throughout her/his doctoral research often collide with different entanglements and barriers before reaching the final point. The path of my doctoral research met such barrier in its very start, when I was trying to obtain a research visa to conduct a longer fieldwork in Papua New Guinea. In the middle of a difficult period, I shared my worries with a colleague from my student years. She asked me a crucial question: “Is it possible to do fieldwork somewhere else and maintain the same topic of your interest?” and suggested that I could do my fieldwork perhaps more easily in a number of other locations in “Albania, for instance, which was a completely isolated country no more than 14 years ago”.

Shortly after my discussion with a friend I went on a preliminary visit (September 2004) to different places in Albania, especially those in its southern part. It was then and there that I decided to follow my interest in spatial concepts and to conduct my ethnographic fieldwork in one of the coastal villages of the Himarë/Himara area. Between December 2004 and December 2005 I spent twelve months in Southern Albania. Why did I choose Himarë/Himara and, as it turned out, the village of Dhërmi/Drimades? There is no straight answer to this question. It seems that a combination of different factors guided my decision.

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<sup>4</sup> On myths and their relation to descent group's origins in Bwaidoga village, Papua New Guinea I discussed in *Bwaidogan Myths of Origin* (2003: 61-87).

Practical reasons included the vicinity of school that provided me with the opportunity to efficiently learn the Albanian language. Good traffic connections to the city of Vlorë and its archives were also important to me. Besides, my first impressions of the social landscape there were favourable, especially after I had met some of the villagers. For example, I could discern different conceptions and representations of place and its relation to the peoples' self-identification already during a short conversation with an old woman whom Entela and I met during our first visit to Dhërmi/Drimades (described in *Preamble*). Namely, a discussion between her and Entela showed how the origin and belonging of the people of Dhërmi/Drimades are related to language and territory and understood in terms of the nation-state and regionalism. The old woman's awkward use of the Albanian code and constant switching to the local Greek one provoked disapprobation in Entela and led her to question the woman about her belonging: "Are you Greek or Albanian?" Interestingly enough, the old woman chose none of two options. She declared herself as being a Northern Epirote. While she recognised this as a distinctive identity, Entela did not think of it as a kind of a Greek identity. This early meeting provided me with an example of how the peoples' way of identification can shift according to their location, which is always set to the background of a wider geopolitical and social context, and how it can be managed and contested in a particular social and cultural environment.

The ambiguity of a dual name Dhërmi/Drimades already implicates a social complexity that exists in this area. The official, Albanian name Dhërmi is mainly used by those inhabitants and seasonal workers who use the southern (Tosk) or the northern (Ghek) Albanian dialect. Many of these newcomers and seasonal workers moved to the village from other parts of Albania either during the period of communism or after it. In contrast to Dhërmi, the local, Greek name Drimades is mainly used by the inhabitants who are believed to "originate" from the village and who mainly use the local Greek dialect and partly the southern Albanian (Tosk) one. Spaces and places in which inhabitants live are ascribed with numerous meanings by local people, recent settlers, seasonal workers, local emigrants, historiographers, demographers, geographers, politicians, and others. These meanings are mutually related and continuously change within the processes of the local, regional and national (social, political and historical) construction and reconstruction of spaces and places. Therefore, the processes of ongoing and unstable construction of spaces and places in the village of Dhërmi/Drimades became my main concern here.

Many people of Dhërmi/Drimades travel back and forth not only between and within rural and urban places in Albania and Greece and elsewhere in Europe. When moving through and within different places the people of Dhërmi/Drimades reconfigure and redefine their own localities and the meaning of their village. In this process of ongoing reconfigurations the localities and the meanings of the village and its people are often ambiguous and lead to negotiations and conflicts over their belonging and locatedness. When faced with social (migration, depopulation), political (democracy) and economic (liberalisation of the market) changes, people of Dhërmi/Drimades situate their village on the geopolitical map, which includes Greece or European Union on the one side and Albania or the Balkans on the other. Peoples' movements are not something new, although they have been facilitated by a new road system, modern transportation and change in availability of passports. Migrations took place in Dhërmi/Drimades for many centuries due to considerable erosion of terrain, the lack of the land suitable for cultivation, and different economical, social, and political changes. While on the one hand these movements brought about multiplicity of connections between people and places, on the other hand the administrative (Ottoman period, from 15<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century) and political divisions (formation of the nation-states in the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century) brought about divisions of people and places according to different categorisations such as language, religion and territory.

The purpose of this work is to show the processes of establishment and reconstruction of meanings of place and space in Himarë/Himara area of Southern Albania, and in Dhërmi/Drimades in particular. These processes show the cultural, socio-political, and historical dynamics and fractality of the construction of places and spaces, which are always in the state of be-coming. While the meanings of places and spaces are on the one hand perceived through their differences and contradictions, they are on the other hand constructed through similarities and agreements between the national and the local levels. These wider social and political processes help the people of Dhërmi/Drimades to define their sense of belonging and locality.

## Theoretical Frames: The Construction of Spaces and Places

*Spaces receive their essential being from particular localities and not from 'space' itself.*

*Heidegger 1977: 332*

One of the first (West European)<sup>5</sup> studies of spatial concepts in social sciences and humanities dates back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century when evolutionists and functionalists such as Morgan (1881), Mauss and Beuchat (1979 [1904]), Durkheim (1915) and early structural functionalists such as Evans-Pritchard (1940) studied the interactive relationship between people and their built environment. These earlier notions of space and society that were based on a positivistic approach and coupled with functionalism were in 1970s critically rethought by human geographers (Tuan 1974 and 1977, and Relph 1976) and behavioural geographers (Lowenthal 1961, Brookfield 1969, Harvey 1973, Gould and White 1974, Gold 1980), and later partly also by the “new” archaeologists (Ingold 1993, Tilley 1994). Space and society were no longer postulated as separate and autonomous but as mutually related entities.

The neo-Marxist thinker Henry Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) analysed the space and its relation to society. He defined space as being always produced, never separated from its producing forces or the labour that shapes it. In his influential work *The Production of Space* (1991 [1974]), he conceptualized space as an interrelation between spatial practices (perception of space), reproduction of space (conception of space) and representational space (lived space). Moreover, Lefebvre suggested that space is always produced and representational. Therefore, it can not be viewed as absolute or “a space-in-itself”; nor does the notion of space contain a space within itself (1991: 299). He defined space as being inevitably social and cultural process. There is a dialectical relationship between space and society which merges them into a continuous, contingent and irreversible process. Instead of discussing what social space actually is, he examined struggles over the meanings of space and considered how relations across territories were given cultural meanings. In social relations various meanings are hidden. They define spaces through social contestations, disputes and struggles. Such struggles often lead to contradictory spaces, which were identified by Lefebvre as lacking consistency between different representations of space. The contradictions of space are inevitable and can evolve either into conflicts or may be resolved by “the rational organisation

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<sup>5</sup> The classical Greeks, the Romans, the Indus peoples and the Chinese developed diverse conceptualizations of space millennia ago.

of production and the equally rationalized management of society as a whole” (1991: 422). Lefebvre refused to differentiate between two notions: place and space. He argued that any kind of differentiation could be misleading as it would reduce the meaningfulness of spatial terms used in a particular local community.

While Lefebvre focused on notions of space broadly using Hegelian dialectics, Foucault (1975, 1980) took a different approach, which did not require the existence of an overarching entity or structure such as ‘society’ in order to understand the social construction of space and the power dynamics involved. Foucault examined the way power and control are distributed in space. He apprehended the concept of space through the spatial tactics which contribute to the maintenance of power and control of one group over another.

In contrast to Foucault, who focused on the spatial tactics of political power, Michel de Certeau (1984) centred his attention on individual resistance to spatial forms of social power. In his work *The Practice of Everyday Life* he explored what he called the “tactics” used by groups or individuals who are in some ways “already caught in the nets of ‘discipline’” (de Certeau 1984: xiv-xv). De Certeau stated that “space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it” (1984: 117). He studied space and place through spatial operations, such as walking, storytelling, remembering, writing and reading (1984: 91-115, 194-195). These operations refer to movement, which constantly transforms places into spaces and spaces into places (184:118). Although space and place are always in relation, de Certeau emphasized a distinction between them. While space (*espace*) is the effect of operations that “orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities”, place (*lieu*) is the “order (of whatever kind) in accord with which the elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence” (1984: 117). Place is an “instantaneous configuration of positions” (ibid.).

Tim Ingold (1993, 2000) looks at the construction of place from a “dwelling perspective”. In defining the concept of dwelling, he refers to the etymological meaning of the term, as it was proposed by Heidegger (Ingold 2000: 185). “To build” or in German *bauen* comes from the Old English and High German word *buon*, meaning “to dwell” (ibid.). Dwelling encompasses one’s life on earth, thus “I dwell, you dwell” is identical to “I am, you are” (ibid.). Cultivation and construction are part of the fundamental sense of dwelling. Dwelling thus means that “the

forms people build, whether in their imagination or on the ground, arise within the current of their involved activity, in the specific relational contexts of their practical engagement with their surroundings” (2000: 186). In this view humans “are brought into existence as organism-persons within a world that is inhabited by beings of manifold kinds, both human and non-human” (2000: 5). The “social” relations between humans are thus a sub-set of ecological relations. Already in his early work (1996) Ingold presented the notion of environment defined as culturally constructed, being both a “prelude” and an “epilogue” and as such not necessarily involving “explication” or “discourse”. The knowledge – which is defined as the generative potential of a complex process – of the environment is continuously formed alongside movements of a human being in the world (2000: 230). “We know *as we go*, not *before we go*” (ibid., *italics original*).

Following the above mentioned authors it could be said that the meanings of space and place are continuously reproduced and recreated through the processes of social relations, namely through perceived, conceived and lived spaces (Lefebvre 1991); through distribution of power that permeates all levels of society (Foucault 1975, 1980); through everyday practices and spatial operations of social agents, who never simply enact culture but interpret and reappropriate it in their own ways (de Certeau 1984); and finally through dwelling perspective, where knowledge about the environment goes along with the movement in the world (Ingold 2000)<sup>6</sup>. Differently to the above mentioned authors, who used various ways and approaches to discuss the open-ended processes of spatial production and reconstruction, Gupta and Ferguson (2001 [1997]) situate their studies of spatial construction within the contemporary context of migrations and transnational culture flows of the late capitalist world. They focus on the “ways in which dominant cultural forms may be picked up and used – and significantly transformed – in the midst of the fields of power relations that link localities to a wider world” (2001: 5). Gupta and Ferguson put emphasis on the “complex and sometimes ironic political processes through which the cultural forms are imposed, invented, reworked, and transformed” (ibid.).

In their edited collection *Culture, Power and Place* (2001) Gupta and Ferguson critically rethink the relations between space and power, which are intimately intertwined. They discuss

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<sup>6</sup> There are several other authors who looked at the processes of space construction through different perspectives: cognitions (Hirsch and O’Hanlon 1995), sensations (Feld and Basso 1996), identity and locality (Lovell 1998), memory and history (Stewart and Strathern 2003).

processes and practices of place making and emphasise the interrelations between the local settings and larger regional structures and processes. People and places are not enclosed homogeneities and their locality does not necessarily relate to the sense of being rooted to a particular place. Locality “is not simply that one is located in a certain place but that particular place is set apart and opposed to other places” (2001: 13). There is a mutual relation between the process of the place making and the process of construction of locality and identity. These processes, according to Gupta and Ferguson, are always contested and unstable and involve discontinuity, resistance and alterity. In parallel to the processes of place making, which are always contested, Gupta (2001: 17) points out the relations between places that continuously shift as a result of political and economic reorganisation of space in the world system. Moreover he argues that “dominant cultural forms” (2001: 5) that are being imposed are never simply enacted by social agents but are always reappropriated and reinterpreted by those agents. As such the notions of place and identity are socially constructed, and always in the process of becoming.

Although the scholars talked about the place and space as having different names and meanings, they all considered them as inevitably related. Place and space are not neatly separated by clear boundaries. In my thesis I will explore this relationship between space and place as conceptualized in everyday life of people from Dhërmi/Drimades. People do not use the same word when referring to place and space. Therefore, I will consider place and space as different but also related. I will generally use notion of place (*topos/vëndi*) in terms of social interactions, experiences and practices while the notion of space (*horos/hapsirë*) in terms of abstractions and wider social and political conceptualisations of people’s life-world.

### **Fieldwork Frames: Dhërmi/Drimades of Himarë/Himara Area**

How are the dynamic processes of construction and reconfiguration of space and place connected to the village of Dhërmi/Drimades? What are the relations between the village, migrations, and transnational cultural flows? Part of the answer already stems from the old woman’s identification of being a Northern Epirote. When Entela asks, “Are you an Albanian or a Greek?”, she considers the elderly woman’s identification in national terms. Differently



to Entela the elderly woman sees herself in local terms or in terms of ethnicity<sup>7</sup>, placing her identification in Northern Epirus. In this short example the individual identity is, along with other determinants such as language, religion and kinship, defined territorially. The identity is a mobile and unstable relation to difference which always includes the construction of space (Gupta in Ferguson 2001: 13). Therefore I will be mainly preoccupied with identification (a living process) rather than with identity as such (a fixed, often politically defined concept).

“Exactly where Northern Epirus begins and ends is another one of those contested issues involving drawing lines on the map” (Green 2005: 15). While for some the Northern Epirus straddles the Greek-Albanian border, for others it also includes a part of the Southern Albania, where predominantly the Greek-speaking population of Christian Orthodox religion lives; and there are also others, especially the Albanian people, for whom Northern Epirus does not exist at all. The widest geographical and historical region of Epirus is considered to consist of Southern Albania and Epirus in Greece, regardless of the Greek-Albanian border (ibid.). After the foundation of the independent Republic of Albania in 1913, Epirus was divided between Southern Albania and Epirus in Greece. According to the mainstream public opinion in Greece the Greek speaking people of Orthodox religion living in Southern Albania are called Northern Epirots (*Vorioepirotos*) (see Triandafyllidou and Veikou 2002: 191). According to the public opinion in Albania they are often referred to by Greeks or *Greku* or pejoratively *Kaure* (non-believers) or *Kaur i derit* (non-believer-pigs, i.e. Greek pigs).

Throughout the centuries people living in Northern Epirus have travelled to and from the area mainly because of trading, seasonal work, shepherding or due to their service in different armies (Winnifrieth 2002, Vullnetari 2007). In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the area of today's Southern Albania and Epirus in Greece was part of the vilayet with a centre in Ioannina. For purposes of a tax collecting system Ottoman administration divided all non-Muslim people in special administrative and organizational units, millets, which incorporated people according to their religious affiliation, regardless of where they lived, what language(s) they spoke, or what was the colour of their skin (Glenny 1999: 71, 91-93, 112, 115, Mazower 2000: 59-60,

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<sup>7</sup> In modern Greek language the term ethnicity derives from the word *ethnos* which virtually incorporate the entire range of terminology for nationhood and nationalism (Herzfeld 2005: 113, see also Green 2005: 266 fn. 12). Similar meanings the word ethnicity has among the people of Dhërmi/Drimades who predominantly use local Greek dialect and Albanian southern dialect in their day-to-day conversation. In order to avoid this semantic conflation that do not fully reflect the meaning of ethnicity as defined by Barth (1970 [1969], 1994), Eriksen (1993), Coen A. P. (1994), Knežević Hočevar (1999), Šumi (2000) et.al. in the continuing part of my thesis I do not use this term.

Duijzings 2002: 60, Green, 2005: 147). After 1913, the Ottoman principle of organizing people and places was replaced with the nationalistic principle, which categorized people and places according to their language and territory. Discordances between the Ottoman and nationalistic ways of dividing people and places led to tensions and territorial disputes, which since then continuously appear, disappear, reappear and blur (de Rapper and Sintès 2006, Green 2005: 148-149).

Politically raised tensions, which were mainly provoked by the pro-Greek party, began in different places where both Greek and Albanian speakers lived. In accord with the claims of the Greek speaking people, the autonomous republic of Northern Epirus with its centre in Gjirokastër was declared in 1914 by the pro-Greek party, which was in power in the south of Albania at that time. After the beginning of the World War I (1914-1918) the Republic soon collapsed (Winnifriith 2002: 130). When the war ended the tendencies to re-establish the autonomy of the territory known as Northern Epirus continued. In February 1922 the Albanian Parliament ratified the Declaration of minority rights proposed by Fan Noli. Declaration recognised the rights of Greek speaking people living in three villages of Himarë/Himara area (Palasa, Dhërmi/Drimades, and Himarë/Himara) and in the villages of Gjirokastër and Delvinë (Kondis and Manda 1994: 16, de Rapper and Sintès 2006: 22).

According to my discussions with the people of Dhërmi/Drimades the border between Albania and Greece was quite irrelevant to the people living in Southern Albania and Epirus in Greece as they continued to travel until the end of the World War II. The same irrelevancy was also expressed by the people of Pogoni, in Epirus of Greece (Green 2005: 57). Green notes that for many inhabitants of that area, Gjirokastër or *Argyrokastrò* was considered to be a lot wealthier than Pogoni itself in that time. Many people from Pogoni were regularly shopping in *Argyrokastrò* which was geographically closer than Ioannina (Green 2005: 57).

During the communist dictatorship (1945-1990), the road, *to dromo*, which lead to the state border and which was used by the people living in Southern Albania for travel and trade, was closed following the Hoxha's policy of suppression of a free movement across the state borders. In the period of Hoxha's autarky the minority status, acknowledged to the people living in Palasa, Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara in 1922, was revoked with the explanation that there are not enough Greek-speakers living in Himarë/Himara area (Kondis

and Manda 1994: 21). The districts of Gjirokastër, Sarandë and Delvinë were confirmed as “minority zones” (Kondis and Manda 1994: 21, de Rapper and Sintès 2006: 12).

Despite the restriction and control of even the in-country movements, Hoxha’s policy of unification and homogenisation of Albanian citizens forced many Greek-speaking people to move to the places in the northern or central part of Albania (Kondis and Manda 1994: 21, see also Green 2005: 227). Besides that, many of Greek names for people and places were replaced by Albanian ones and it was forbidden to use Greek language outside the minority zones (Kondis and Manda 1994: 21).

During the period of communism the minority issues and irredentist claims raised by the Southern Albanian pro-Greek party almost disappeared. They resurfaced again in 1990 after the declaration of democracy, opening of the borders, and massive migrations that followed (Hatziprokopiou 2003: 1033-1059, Mai and Schwandner-Sievers 2003: 939-949, Papailias 2003: 1059-1079). Nowadays, because of economic (capitalism), political (democracy, the rise of new nation-states and European Union), social and cultural (individuality) changes, these issues are reflected upon in a somehow different way as they were before. In Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara the main differentiation is advanced by the people who claim to be of the village or the area identifying themselves with the term locals (*horiani*) or “of the place” (*apo ton topo*). Except for some elderly inhabitants of Dhërmi/Drimades, like the old woman with whom Entela and I spoke, declaration of being a Northern Epirot is nowadays rarely used in daily conversation. Following massive migrations to Greece and the stereotypes created and spread through the national Greek media (Vullnetari 2007: 51, Green 2005: 229), which depict Albania as a backward place, filled with backward people, *Vorioepiotes* are by people in Greece often perceived as being no different from Albanians.

Emigration was especially apparent in the places such as Gjirokastër, Sarandë, Delvinë and Himarë/Himara, where the Greek-speaking population lives. In order to control and regulate massive migration of people coming from Albania and other post-communist countries (i.e. USSR), and in order to deal with immigrants claiming to be of Greek origin, the Greek government introduced the immigration law 1975/1991 (Triandafyllidou and Veikou 2002: 198). In one of its sections the law deals with the immigrants of Greek origin, namely Greek

Albanians or *Vorioepirotas* and Pontic Greeks<sup>8</sup>, or so called co-ethnic or *omogheneis*. According to the State Council<sup>9</sup> the Greek ethnic origin can be granted on the basis of cultural ancestry (sharing “common historical memories” and/or links with “historic homelands and culture”), Greek descent (Greek Albanians have to prove that the birth place of their parents or grandparents is in Northern Epirus), language, and religion (ibid.). By the Ministerial Decision the Greek Albanians are after the recognition and confirmation of their Greek origin granted with a Special Identity Card of *omoghenis – Eidiko Deltio Tautotitas Omoghenous* (Tsitselikis 2003: 7, Kondis and Manda 1994: 20-21). This provides them with an ambiguous but preferred status. They are people with Greek nationality and Albanian citizenship. Besides the legal status this special card gives them the right to reside in Greece, permits them to work there, grants them with special benefits (i.e. social security, health care, and education), and allows them a “free” crossing of the Albanian-Greek border.

While the Greek migration policy defines the Greek origin on the basis of language, religion, birth and predecessors from the region called Northern Epirus, the Albanian minority policy defines the Greek origin according to the language, religion, birth and predecessors originating from the areas once called “minority zones” (i.e. districts of Gjirokastër, Sarandë and Delvinë). As people who claim to originate from Himarë/Himara area do not live within the “minority zones” they are by the Albanian state not considered to be part of the Greek minority.

The contestations in Himarë/Himara area increased when the post-communist decollectivisation of property was made possible by Law 7501 on Land that passed in the Albanian parliament on 19 July 1991 (see Appendix). The law stated that the land, which was once taken from private owners by the communist government and managed by the agricultural production cooperatives, should be divided equally among the members of cooperative. This meant that each member of cooperative should get a portion of the land, with the size depending on the whole size of the land that used to belong to a particular agricultural production cooperative unit. The ownership, which existed before communism, was nullified. This kind of division was considered to be the fairest one by the new

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<sup>8</sup> In referring to Glytsos (1995), Triandafyllidou and Veikou define Pontic Greeks as “ethnic Greeks who either emigrated from areas of the Ottoman empire (the southern coast of the Black Sea in particular) to the former Soviet Union at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century or left Greece in the 1930s and 1940s for political reasons” (2002: 191).

<sup>9</sup> State Council (no. 2756/1983) is the Supreme Administrative Court of Justice in Greece (Triandafyllidou and Veikou 2002: 204).

democratic government of the right Democratic Party of Albania (*Partia Demokratike e Shqipërisë*). In the period between 13th and 15th century, except for some areas such as isolated mountainous places of northern Mirdita area and strategically important open coast of Himarë/Himara area, most of the places throughout Albania were governed according to the rules of the feudal system which was based on the existence of few large landowners, while the majority of population were peasants (Jacques 1995: 164-177). In these areas decollectivisation went smoothly, while in Mirdita (de Waal 1996: 169-193) and Himarë/Himara area, this was not the case. Here the land used to be owned by small proprietors whose successors nowadays object to the governmental distribution plans and claim back the land of their fathers (Bollano et.al. 2006: 217-241).

According to the official population registration from 2005, the village of Dhërmi/Drimades conjoins approximately 1.800 residents, one half of whom lives in the emigration in Greece or elsewhere (mainly United States and Italy). Because of the massive emigration of youth, mainly the elderly population (born before 1950) and only a couple of young families live in the village of Dhërmi/Drimades. Besides them, the village is nowadays also inhabited by a growing number of families and seasonal workers from other parts of Albania. They moved to Dhërmi/Drimades after 1990. While most of the year the place is rather desolated, in summer months it bustles with tourists, among whom prevail the emigrants originating from Dhërmi/Drimades and other places throughout Albania. Tourists arriving from Vlorë and the capital Tirana, from Kosovo and sometimes from other parts of Europe, however, can also be seen.

### **Dynamic Processes of Construction and Reconfiguration of Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara Area**

The previous section outlined peoples' movements which beside different social, political and economic relations and divisions refigured different locations (locatedness) of Dhërmi/Drimades and its wider area. Within such a dynamical process (see Lefebvre 1974, de Certeau 1984, Ingold 1993 and 2000, Gupta and Ferguson 2001) various "where's" were constructed (cf. Green 2005). The locations of Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara were defined in a relation to other places and people with whom local people got in contact during their movements. People travelled across the whole area of Ottoman vilayet and later across

Southern Albania and Epirus in Greece. While the state border did not present a real barrier in their life before communism, it became practically impassable after 1945. To the people living in the area a barb wire fence clearly defined its meaning.

Migrations of people, however, nevertheless continued. The movements on the road leading across the border were replaced with the movements on the roads that connected Dhërmi/Drimades with places in Central and Northern Albania. Movements thus continued; only the directions have changed. While the movements before communism were free in their nature and spread across the whole area of Southern Albania and Epirus, Hoxha's policies controlled their directions. In the name of unification of people of Albania, the relocation of Greek speaking people to the places with Albanian majorities was stimulated.

The movements of people from Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara area could according to de Certeau (1984: 118) be interpreted as ongoing traversals from place to space and back again. Individuals mapped the space with their movements from one place to another. This phenomenon held together the space called the region of Epirus until 1945. The movements towards particular destinations were then blocked and redirected to places in Northern and Central Albania. After the fall of communism and subsequent massive migrations to Greece and Italy, the spatial map changed its nature again and connected places in Albania with places in Greece, Italy and elsewhere.

All these movements, which took place in different historical periods, constituted and defined various locations of Dhërmi/Drimades in its wider geopolitical and social space. When the local people, national and international policies, or local and national historiographers try to "stabilize" and determine the "absolute and truthful" meanings of village's location, they come across oppositions, discontinuities and alterations. Many attempts to establish the boundaries in order to secure the "whereness" of Dhërmi/Drimades and to locate it either in Albania or Greece may be seen as attempts to establish a fixed location, bringing to a halt the processes of its ongoing reconstruction and re-appropriation.

The processes of shifting the meanings of people and places involve the ambiguity in names. Already the name of the village, Dhërmi/Drimades, discloses one of these ambiguities that constitute the "whereness" of the village. On the one hand, from the perspective of the legal policies and the mainstream public opinion in Greece, Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara

area are located in the region of Northern Epirus; on the other hand, however, from the perspective of the legal policies and the public opinion in Albania they are located in Southern Albania. These ambiguous locations lead further to the ambiguities in peoples' identification, where the Northern Epirot can mean both the Albanian and/or the Greek; and where the Greek speaking Christian Orthodox can be identified as the Albanian citizen of Greek nationality and/or the Albanian citizen and/or the member of the Greek national minority.

According to Sarah Green (2005: 12) the ambiguity "can be as hegemonic and subject to disciplinary regimes as clarity; confusion, lack of means to pin things down". She maintains that amongst the people of Pogoni these ambiguities are generated "as positive assertions and constructions of truth: 'This is the Balkans Sarah; what did you expect'" (ibid.). Contrary to the people of Pogoni the people of Dhërmi/Drimades do not explain the ambiguities, lack of clarity and confusions with a common place such as the Balkans, but ascribe them to Albania. Fluidity and indeterminacy of Albanian places are often described with the following words: "*Edo einai Alvania. Monoha pseumata. Simera lene etsi kai avrio anapoda*" ("This is Albania. Only lies. Today they say this and tomorrow the contrary").

In everyday conversations of local people Albania is defined in opposition to European Union. The latter is thought of as a cluster of countries of the Western Europe, where people of Dhërmi/Drimades locate Greece, Italy, Germany and Austria. In contrast to European Union, which is seen as ordered, fixed and stable, Albania is defined as disordered, mixed and unstable. The term "Balkans"<sup>10</sup> is used more in a political and media discourse than in the everyday talk in the village. Compared to the "ordered" Western Europe it carries rather a pejorative meaning (e.g. "turbulent Balkans" - cf. Todorova 1997: 45)

Today, following their emigration to Greece and regular returns to their natal village during the summer, the people of Dhërmi/Drimades redefine their place and map it onto a geopolitical map as the predominant way of organizing the space. They see the village side by side with Greece and European Union. For them the Albanian border is situated north of Himarë/Himara area. This kind of mapping continually produces a hierarchy of places, where power and place dynamically constitute each other, depending on historically contingent and politically shaped social context. I will question this kind of hierarchy throughout my thesis.

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<sup>10</sup> More on the notion of the Balkans and its discursive meanings see Norris (1999), Bjelić and Savić (2002), Todorova (1997, 2004); and for the Balkans as hegemonic concept see Green (2005).

Many scholars (Herzfeld 1991, Henry 1994, De Soto 2000, Bender and Winer 2001, Gupta and Ferguson 2001, Ballinger 2003, Low and Zúñiga 2003) argued that the dynamical construction of spaces and places involves instability and contestations. As this was anticipated to be the case in Dhërmi/Drimades, I focused my study around the question of contested spaces and places.

## **Contested Spaces and Places**

Quite a large body of literature emerged in recent years dealing with contestedness of spaces and places. Different authors approached the problem from different viewpoints within different social and cultural contexts. Let me give some examples, even if only in a condensed form. Based on her fieldwork in Kuranda of Northern Australia, Rosita Henry (1994) studied contested spaces by focusing on identity, which is just like space actively constructed, communicated and contested. Herzfeld (1991) focused on the history of the Rethemnos on the Island of Crete in Greece and showed how the materiality of this history is negotiated. De Soto (2000) studied competing discourses of two strategic groups in postsocialist East Germany. They promote different ideas for reconstructing the region by confronting its environmental problems. In their edited book Bender and Winer (2001) discerned five interrelated contexts of contested landscapes: promotion of tourism and management of cultural resources; landscapes of opposition, subversion, contestation and resistance; multiple forces of modernity that rework the landscape of particular place; voicing an ideological relationship with the landscape that is critical to group identity; and landscapes of movement and exile. Similarly to Bender and Winer, Ballinger (2003) too focuses on the landscape of exile and displacement in the region of Istria, which lies between Italy, Slovenia and Croatia. Ballinger analyses discourses of displaced people, as well as those of politicians and scholars of regional institutes and other associations, which are in various ways trying to constitute a singular “historical truth”. Shifting truths were entangled in discourses of purity and diversity “with the latter having often restated fairly exclusive notions in autonomist or regionalist guise” (2003: 266). In their edited book, Low and Zúñiga (2003) identify five interrelated contexts where the contestations might appear. These contexts include: language of sites or symbols that are communicated through condensed meanings and activated particularly during dramas of political events; production of urban sites of contestation; state hegemony and the memory of sites; tourist sites, which similarly to urban spaces “lie at the intersection



of diverse and competing social, economic, and political influences” (2003: 23); and the strategic construction of social identities articulated in terms of places or sites and represented in various discourses.

Most of the authors ground their discussions of contested spaces in particular social and cultural contexts situated in urban cities, tourist sites, places and landscapes of development, migration, displacement, exile or places that are subjected to postsocialist or postcolonial changes. They study the process of construction of place and space by focusing on the spatial representations of two or more social groups or communities which reconstruct and redefine their place through the negotiation of their identity, history, and power relations. In several studies authors describe social groups as homogeneous (e.g. Henry 1994, De Soto 2000, Bender and Winer 2001, Low and Zúñiga 2003) and only rarely (Herzfeld 1991, Ballinger 2003) do they expose the differences and contestations within a particular social group. Besides, in their studies of contested spaces (Low and Zúñiga 2003) or landscapes (Bender and Winer 2001) the authors query mainly about the contesting “nature” of their meanings rather than about “nature” of social practices and relations. In many cases they see contestedness as preordained and inevitable (Low and Zúñiga 2003).

In my study of construction of space and place in Dhërmi/Drimades I am interested in both the contexts that generate contestedness and those in which the dynamic reconstruction of space and place does not lead to disputes. I look at diverse and contested meanings from the perspectives of politics, law and demographics (Chapter One), historiography (Chapter Two), local people, emigrants, newcomers, and tourists (Chapter Four). I also focus on related meanings, which are disclosed in local people’s stories about the movement through and within various places over the sea and across the mountains (Chapter Three). Finally, I deal with the hierarchy of power, because it defines some spaces and places as being more salient and contested than others.

While analyzing my data I was faced with a question of how to analyze the processes of dynamical construction of space and place when they are not fixed and stable but unstable and porous. Following Appadurai (1996: 46) I decided to use the fractal metaphor of shaping cultural forms. He wrote the following about the transition of study from highly localized, boundary-oriented, holistic and primordialist images of cultural forms and substances to shifting, porous and complex images of cultural forms and substances:

What I would like to propose is that we begin to think of the configuration of cultural forms in today's world as fundamentally fractal, that is, as possessing no Euclidian boundaries, structures or regularities. Second, I would suggest that these cultural forms, which we should strive to represent as fully fractal, are also overlapping in ways that have been discussed only in pure mathematics (in set theory, for example) and biology (in the language of polytechnic classifications). Thus we need to combine a fractal metaphor for the shape of cultures (in the plural) with a polytechnic account of their overlaps and resemblances (1996: 46).

In my focus on the processes of construction of spaces and places I do not take these processes to be one-way oriented, leading, for example, from the core to the margins, but as processes that go both ways. A similar method was used by Ballinger (2003), who focused on reconstruction of history and identity in the Julian March. I am interested in complex and fractal<sup>11</sup> processes of construction of space and place in the present day Dhërmi/Drimades. I therefore describe different perspectives on and representations of the village and its people (Chapter One), place them in a historical context of historiographers, who use a similar discourse but follow different interests in their attempts to reconstruct the history of the village (Chapter Two), analyse peoples' narratives about the sea and the mountains through which they voice and reconstitute the meaning and location of their village (Chapter Three), and present contestations and negotiations which nowadays take place around the question of rubbish disposal on the coast (Chapter Four). It was the latter issue that emerged as one of the most important subjects around which the people of Dhërmi/Drimades not only construct their coastal place but also locate their belonging.

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<sup>11</sup> For detailed exploration of the fractal phenomena in ethnographic and theoretical treatments in anthropology see also Strathern (1995 [1991]), Wagner (1991), Green (2005).

# Chapter One

## THE VILLAGE AND ITS PEOPLE

### 1.1. The Area

Dhërmi/Drimades is one of the villages of Himarë (official, Albanian name) Himarë/Himara (local, Greek name) area. The area stretches about 25 kilometres along the southern Albanian coast and is known as *Bregu i Detit*, meaning the coastal area. Himarë/Himara administratively belongs to Vlorë Prefecture<sup>12</sup> and presents an important part of Ionian littoral situated between the cities of Vlorë (the capital of the Prefecture) and Saranda. The area lies 42 kilometres away from the northern city of Vlorë and about the same from the southern city of Saranda. The Albanian-Greek border is 60 kilometres south. The Thunderbolt Mountains or *Malet e Vetëtimë*, also called Acroceraunian mountain range, enclose the area on its northern and north-eastern side. The area opens up on its south-western side with the mountain of Çika and descends towards the Ionian coast and the Greek Islands of Othonas and Corfu in the distance.

Besides the social and geographical area Himarë/Himara is also the name of a small town, appointed as a regional municipality in 2000<sup>13</sup>. Many local people<sup>14</sup> as well as some historians explain that this name dates back to antiquity. Heimarra or Himarra is believed to be its original name. Some local historians suggest that the name Himarra derives from a Greek word *himarros* and means a small torrential river. They can be found in abundance in

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<sup>12</sup> The Republic of Albania is divided in 12 Prefectures or regions which are the territorial and administrative units, usually comprising several communes and municipalities “with geographical, traditional, economical and social links and common interests. The borders of a region correspond to the borders of the comprising communes and municipalities, while the centre of the region is established in one of the municipalities. The territory, name and centre of the region are established by law” (see Albanian Association of Municipalities, 2001: 5 and 17).

<sup>13</sup> From 1992 (since the first local elections after the demise of the communism) till 2000 Himarë/Himara area administratively belonged to a commune. According to the law on local government system (Law no. 7275 – The Law on the Functions and the Organisation of the Local Governments) commune represents territorial-administrative unity of rural areas with exceptional urban areas (see Albanian Association of Municipalities, 2001: 18). Though Himarë/Himara area does not conjoin the urban areas which is one of the leading conditions for it to be approved as a municipality, the leading local administrators achieved the status of municipality in 2000. One of the main arguments for attaining this status was that Himarë/Himara is a potential tourist area. With this change, Himarë/Himara area became administratively more independent in economical, urban planning and partly in decollectivisation processes.

<sup>14</sup> During my fieldwork most of the people who claim to originate from Himarë/Himara area have declared themselves as *horiani* (pl.), meaning locals. Throughout my thesis I will refer to them with the term “locals of Himarë/Himara area” or simply as “locals”.

Himarë/Himara area (see Koçi 2006: 14). Others suggest that the name derives from the mythical beast called Chimara, a Greek mythological symbol that conjoins contrasts<sup>15</sup> (Spirou 1965). The third explanation states that the name Himera derives from *Ymera* or *Hydra* or *Ydra* where *hy-u* means divinity. The suffix *dra* or *dre(q)* means bad or evil. Thus *Himera*, *Hydra* or *Ydra* could be translated as bad divinity (Bixhili 2004: 19). Nowadays, these explanations are often imbued with local, regional or national meanings.

According to the official population registration (INSTAT 2004) Himarë/Himara area is populated by 11.257 residents among whom 5.418 people are said to reside in the town of Himarë/Himara. The rest live in seven villages of Himarë/Himara area (see Appendix 1). Throughout the centuries, Himarë/Himara area has been subjected to continuous movements and migrations of its population. This has created a discrepancy between the number of residents and the number of inhabitants in some of Himarë/Himara villages, the fact which was repeatedly expressed by several villagers with whom I talked during my preliminary field research in September 2004. Many village inhabitants told me about their feelings of abandonment, which are present also among the residents of other areas of Albania as well as some areas of Greece (e.g. Pogoni of Northern Epirus, see Green 2005: 7). Whilst the discrepancy between the number of inhabitants and the number of residents will be discussed in more detail in the following section of this chapter, let me continue here with a brief description of Himarë/Himara villages.

Throughout the history the size of Himarë/Himara area has been continuously changing. The number of villages has varied from 8 to 50. From 15<sup>th</sup> until 18<sup>th</sup> century the area conjoined around 50 villages that were scattered throughout the south-eastern plains of Labëria and the southern Ionian coast. In the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, during the period of Ottoman Empire, Himarë/Himara area was reduced in size. Because of the islamisation process of Labëria it comprised only 16 villages that were spread along the Ionian coast from Palasa to Saranda. A century later, in the period of Ali Pasha (1830) the area got the configuration which was kept until present, extending from Palasa to Qeparo (see Sotiri 2004: 263-264, Duka 2004: 64-66, Bixhili 2004: 12, Frashëri 2005: 9-10). Nowadays some of the local people are trying to conjoin the Himarë/Himara municipality with the commune of Lukova on the south and

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<sup>15</sup> In Greek mythology Chimera is a fire vomiting monster. It is made from the parts of different animals. Descriptions vary – some say that it has the head of a lion, the body of a goat and the tale of a serpent or a dragon. Other descriptions state that it has the head of a goat and a lion, etc. Sighting of Chimera was a sign forecasting storms, shipwrecks and natural disasters (particularly related to active volcanoes).

declare it as an administratively independent region or prefecture (see Marko 2006: 195). (see Appendix 2).

Most of the villages of Himarë/Himara area, such as Palasa, Dhërmi/Drimades, Ilias/Lates, Vuno, Qeparo/Kiparo, are scattered along the national coastal road while the other two villages, Pilur which is located on the foothills of Çipthit Mountain and Kudhes situated on the foothill of Gjinvlashi Mountain. Coming from Vlorë, after the mountain pass of Llogara (1025 metres) the national road opens to a great view on the first two villages of the area, situated on the hills that stretch behind the Çika Mountain. The first village of Himarë/Himara area is Palasa, which was according to the local people originally called *Palesti*. The legend tells us that somewhere in the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century, pirate attacks drove the “autochthonous” population to flee from their coastal settlement *Meghalihora* (Big space) and settle in the inland *Palesti*. Throughout the time the population of Palasa grew and moved further along the coast to other villages.

One of these villages is Dhërmi/Drimades, situated one kilometre south of Palasa. Similarly to Palasa the village lies on the hills that extend about 150 and 200 metres above the sea level. On its south-western side it opens up into gravel beaches that together with the beaches of Himarë/Himara and Vuno represent the main tourist attraction in the summer months. Nowadays tourism provides the main income for the village beside remittances.

Narrow coastal road leads further south to the village of Ilias, which lies behind the mountain of Mjegulloshi, a kilometre away from Dhërmi/Drimades. Many locals say that its name derives from the word Lates which is said to be the name of the patriline that founded the village. Nowadays Ilias is known by the legend of Saint Kosmas who passed the village on one of his missions through Himarë/Himara area in 1778 and 1779 (see Bixhili 2004: 160). Because of the water shortage the villagers could not offer him any when he asked them for it. Insulted by their arrogance Saint Kosmas condemned the village and its people to have no more than 39 houses ever since. Many locals believe that this is one of the main reasons that the village stayed relatively small, populated nowadays by only 118 inhabitants (population registration 2005 of the Municipality of Himarë/Himara). When people of Himarë/Himara area list its villages they often skip Ilias with the explanation that the place is too small to be called a village. Therefore they often conjoin it either with Dhërmi/Drimades or Vuno (cf. INSTAT 2004), both of which are its neighbouring villages.

Vuno is the next village extending on the hills next to the national coastal road. It is said that because of its location on the hills which ascend to about 300 metres the village is called by the term for a mountain, *vuno*. Like Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara, Vuno boasts with gravel beaches that attract many tourists in the summer season (from the mid of May to September). In the past few years one of the Vuno's beaches, called Jaliskari, became a well known summer resort especially for the foreigners, coming from America and Western Europe and working for different NGOs based in Tirana.

From Vuno the road curls further south, through the municipal town of Himarë/Himara, and leads to Qeparo. It is the last village situated near this road. The oral as well as written historical accounts (Leake 1967: 79) suggest that the original name of the village was *Kiepero* or *Kiparos*, which derives from the word *kipos*, meaning a garden. Nowadays Qeparo is divided in two parts. The old part is located on the hill and ranges from about 300 to 400 metres above the sea level. The new part extends along the coastal road and slowly descends to the coastal sandy beaches. The latter are less attractive for the tourists, than other coastal places of Himarë/Himara, Dhërmi/Drimades and Vuno mainly because of the bad infrastructure and its distance from Vlorë.

The last two villages Kudhes and Pilur are situated a couple of kilometres away from the coastal road. Because of their geographical position they are socially and economically quite isolated. Kudhes lies on the mountain hills of Gjivalashi, through which a small creek winds, bearing the same name as the village. One of the local interpretations states that the village got its name after the first settlers who found their shelter here in the period of Ottoman conquest in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is said that the settlers originated from the Kurvelesh area, located behind the Thunderbolt Mountains. At that time many people from Kurvelesh as well as from some mountain places in Northern Albania moved to Himarë/Himara area where people never fully submitted to Ottoman rule in contrast to many other areas in central Albania<sup>16</sup> (Winnifrith 2002: 104). Pilur is situated on the hills behind the municipal town of Himarë/Himara. Its name is said to derive from the word *pile*, meaning the top and referring

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<sup>16</sup> In his history of southern Albania Winnifrith writes that in 16<sup>th</sup> century the coastal villages of Himarë/Himara the Vlach villages near Voskopojë in the east, the village of Dhrovjan near Sarandë and villages of Metsovo (nowadays in Greece) gained special privileges such as some degree of independence, privilege and freedom from taxes (Winnifrith 2002: 104).

to village's uphill location. Like Kudhes, Pilur is also believed to be founded during the Ottoman period.

## **1.2. Geomorphological Story**

The southern coast is a part of Dinaric Alps mountain range that stretches from the north-west to the south-east of Albania. The coast from Vlorë to Dhërmi/Drimades consists of rocky wave-cut cliffs. The coast continues in narrow plains with gravel beaches that present one third of the Himarë/Himara coastline. After the collapse of communism some of its beaches, such as Livadhi and Potami of Himarë/Himara, Gjipe, Jaliskari and the central beach of Dhërmi/Drimades, and Jala of Vuno became tourist centres.

Towards inland the gravel beaches change into the landscape of evergreen vegetation, filled with olive terraces and citrus orchards. The terrain quickly elevates from the sea for about 50 to 80 metres inland, towards hilly plains where the villages of Himarë/Himara area reside. The area relief is typical karst. The quality of the soil is relatively poor due to the presence of the limestone rocks (see Kabo 2004: 21). This condition has resulted in fragmented landholdings and limited agricultural productivity of the region. Therefore the area is more suitable for sheep and goat breeding, cultivation of olives, oranges, vines and corn in addition to the fishing by the coast.

The climate is Mediterranean. The average winter temperatures range from 10 to 12 degrees with the coldest month in January. The average summer temperatures vary from about 25 to 37 degrees with the hottest month in August (from Pano, Thodorjani, Mustaqi, et.al. 2006: 108).

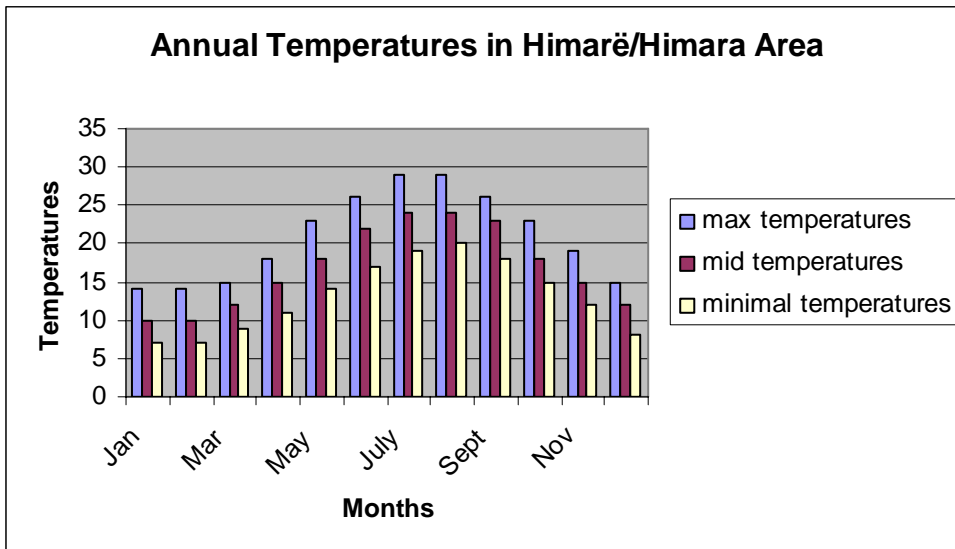


Figure 1. (from Pano, Thodorjani, Mustaqi, et.al. 2006: 108)

The annual rainfall ranges from 1442 millimetres to 1571 millimetres. Around 70% of the rain falls during the winter period, from January till March. In summer months the quantities of rain fluctuate only around 60 to 80 millimetres per year. The survey of the rainfall reports that Himarë/Himara area has approximate 91 rainy days. Precipitations often result in strong showers that may cause severe floods. In October 1964, for example, it was noted that within 24 hours around 313 millimetres of rain fell; and in February 1935 even more, around 350 millimetres (Pano, Thodorjani, Mustaqi, et.al. 2006: 108).

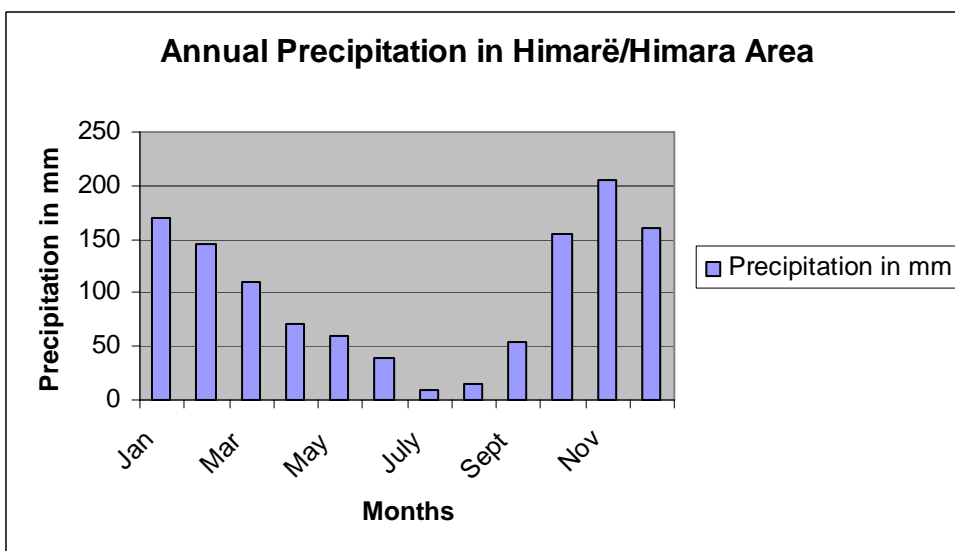


Figure 2. (see Pano, Thodorjani, Mustaqi, et.al. 2006: 109)

The vegetation of the area is comprised mainly of Mediterranean shrubs, *Macchia Mediterranea*. The areas ranging from 600-800 meters above the sea level are overgrown by



the trees such as different kinds of oak (*Quercus valonae*, *Quercus liex*, *Ceratonia siliqua*) and the wild cotton (*Gomphocarpus ruticosus* and *Euphorbia dendrioder*) (see Nasi, Prifti et.al. 2004: 22). To a certain extent, in most of the area the vegetation is damaged as the result of building of terraces, fires and goat overgrazing.

The dominant minerals are calcium and other carbonates. The rough relief is imbued with many streams and torrents that disappear in the summer and reappear again in the late autumn and winter. Rainy winters provoke the runoff and sediment loss caused by the precipitation. The area is tectonically active. According to the report on the conservation of wetland and the coastal ecosystems in the Mediterranean region “tectonic movements and shifting sea-bed morphology determine cliff erosion, creating recesses along the coast in the form of caves and canyons. Weather and the assailing forces of waves from the open Ionian Sea cause basal cliff erosion to the karstic limestone rocks” (1999: 13 United Nations Development Programme Global Environment Facility).

Mountainous terrain and the seasonally wet Mediterranean climate are two main reasons for erosion and land degradation in Himarë/Himara area as well as elsewhere on the southern coast and in the Alpine area of the northern Albania (see Dedej 2002:12). Throughout the centuries in some areas the extent of erosion became greater as it was accelerated by unfavourable human activities such as over-cultivation and use of fertilizers<sup>17</sup> (present since 1970), deforestation, creation of artificial water reservoirs and dams, extraction of the inert material like gravel and sand, diverting of rivers from their natural streams, irrational tourism, etc.

### **1.3. Dhërmi/Drimades**

Dhërmi/Drimades stretches for about three kilometres along the national coastal road and is divided in three hamlets: Kondraça, Gjilek/Gjilekates, and Dhërmi/Drimades as the village centre. As people say, Dhërmi/Drimades or the centre (*e qëndra* or *o kendros*) was founded sometime in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when the population of *Paleti* (nowadays Palasa) expanded and moved further on to the neighbouring hills of today’s central hamlet of Dhërmi/Drimades.

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<sup>17</sup> According to the research report on Soil Survey in Albania the usage of fertilizers in Albania began in 1970s with the construction of two factories: one for the nitrogen and another for phosphate fertilizers (Zdruli 2004: 43).

About a century later the second hamlet Gjilek (official name) or Gjilekates (local name) was formed. And finally after a big earthquake in 1930 the third hamlet of Kondraça was founded. Because of a big damage caused in the central hamlet as well as in Gjilek/Gjilekates some of the families whose houses were destroyed moved downhill to the green plains of Kondraça. In the period of communism, with the opening of the village cooperative in 1957, the hamlet widened and then enlarged when the system of cooperatives ended. Many of the local people of Dhërmi/Drimades that nowadays live and work in Greece began to build new houses which are mainly used as holiday houses in summer months. With the growth of new houses the hamlet of Kondraça was divided in two neighbourhoods, Kondraça and Kallam (official name) or Kalami (local name). Many people explain that the neighbourhood *Kallam/Kalami* (reed) got its name from the reed that grows in the neighbourhood (see Appendix 3).

In 1946 the process of the land collectivization took place in Albania following the agricultural reform. Until 1967 most of the private land throughout Albania was collectivized (see de Waal 1996: 171). Based on Hoxha's ideology to build a self-sufficient country (especially after the break of alliance with the former Soviet Union in 1961) the communist party aimed to increase the agricultural production and reduce the investment industry. Between 1950 and 1989 massive terracing, marsh draining, irrigation works and desalination projects took place and the length of the arable land throughout the country doubled (ibid.).

After 1958, when Dhërmi/Drimades became a part of the agricultural cooperative, the land previously owned by individual proprietors (gardens and olive terraces) and patriline (pastures and forests) went over to the state cooperative. The cooperative system also brought several other novelties such as water supply, electricity, infrastructure and extension of arable land area<sup>18</sup>. On the coastal plains the members of cooperative (the local inhabitants and a few settlers originating from other parts of Albania) extended the olive and orange terraces which the local people plant after the Second World War (1945-1955) (see Nina 2004: 132). Later on (after 1980, when the private houses too could become owned by the cooperatives) the cooperative took four private houses located by the road in the central hamlet of Dhërmi/Drimades. Two of them were used as warehouses, one as the cooperative main office and another one as the cultural house (*Shtëpia e Kulturës*). Whilst the owners of one house

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<sup>18</sup> Along with communist ideology to build equality (at least in theory) between the regions the area of the arable land extended. This was promoted by the slogan: "Let us take to the hills and mountains, and make them as beautiful and fertile as the plains" (de Waal 1996: 175).

(which was later used as a warehouse) were relocated to Tirana, the other three houses were taken by the cooperative because they were empty. Their owners died and their children – due to the educational reasons – requested for a relocation to Tirana and Vlorë<sup>19</sup>. In Kondraqa the members of the cooperative built an olive-oil factory. The communist Party of Labour transformed two buildings which used to serve as warehouses and were situated by in the central hamlet by the national road, into local stores. One of them was selling food and the other was offering general goods such as garden equipment, clothes, etc. The workers hired by the state built health centre and the cooperative house. In the hamlet of Kondraqa they built a three-grade primary school with a kindergarten<sup>20</sup> and an apartment block for the state workers and their families (such as constructors, teachers, doctors, policemen, directors of local shops, hotel managers) who moved to Dhërmi/Drimades after 1957. By the coastal plain the constructors hired by the state built *Hotel Dhermiu*, the government villa or *vila tou Enveri* and the Camp of Workers or *Kampi I Punëtoreve*<sup>21</sup>. All these buildings were in state ownership<sup>22</sup>. In fulfilling the Hoxha's directive of militarisation of Albanian landscape

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<sup>19</sup> In the period of communism the in-country movements were strictly controlled and one needed a special permit from the local authorities to be able to do this. The permit was called *pashaportizim* and was particularly difficult to obtain for rural-to-urban movements. Part of the party's policy was to keep the population forcibly in the rural areas. However, young men and women were invited to join in working for big projects such as constructions of major railways, bridges, hydro-electric power plants, factories etc. A good number of people working in these projects were volunteers. After the project was completed, they could stay on if they wanted to, provided they had applied for the right kinds of official permits. So a substantial part of rural-to-urban movements took part in the 60s and 70s and many young men and women went to work in places such as Berat, Korçe, Koman etc.

At all times certain professionals could move from one city to another. These included officers in the army and other personnel working for the ministries or for the highest local government authorities. Of course their movements have included their families too. In many cases people were not given an opportunity to choose a place where they were appointed to work. This was particularly the case for the people who worked as public servants (e.g. bureaucrats, teachers and doctors, etc.). Along with their occupation of being a public servant they had to accept to move wherever they were appointed. On rare occasions they could make a preference on the location of their appointment.

Students from all parts of Albania studying at the University of Tirana, had tried to find work while studying, so that they could make sure to stay in Tirana after completing their studies. Of course not all of them succeeded. Most movements reflected the post-1990 movements, i.e. from all other parts of Albania towards the coast, with Tirana as a favourite destination (Julie Vullnetari, Sussex Centre for Migration Research, University of Sussex, personal communication).

<sup>20</sup> After three years of schooling in Kondraqa the children continued their education in the primary school Gjika Bixhili (built in 1850 by the initiative local man Gjika Bixhili [see Languages, section Language and Education]) in the centre of Dhërmi/Drimades.

<sup>21</sup> For more detailed information see Negotiating Rubbish.

<sup>22</sup> In the rural areas where the agricultural reform took place the communist property could be differentiated between two types. The first type was the cooperative property that was managed and controlled by the head of the cooperative (*Kryetari i Kooperatives*) who was elected by the members of cooperative. They were paid according to their product, the price of which was determined according to the normative amount (so called *normativa*) of the daily productivity (e.g. 250 old Lek per 50 kilos of olives [which is about 2,07 Euro according to the exchange rate 1 Euro is 120,822 Leks, from August, 2007]). In Dhërmi/Drimades, for example, it was a practice that the members of cooperative were usually paid daily, with the amount estimated according to the previous year. When their productivity overreached the normative amount and the cooperative had a profit they could receive extra payment. According to several discussions with the ex members of cooperative, this rarely

mushroom-like bunkers were placed on the hilly and coastal part of the village. Bunkers are nowadays still in place all over Albania. Most of these structures are now, after the end of communism and massive emigration of local population, desolated and left to decay similarly to old family houses in the village.

The village is nowadays led by the village councillor and the village council that conjoins five village men. All of them are elected by the local community on the local elections that use to be held every five three years and after 2006 every four years. The village councillor, after consulting the village council, decides about the important village issues such as land claims and improvement of the village infrastructure and disputes. When important matters arise, e.g. national elections or land tenure issues, the councillor assembles the village council and then the meeting of the whole village is announced. When I lived in Dhërmi/Drimades these meetings always took place in the courtyard of one of the main churches in the village, *Ag. Haralamb.*

#### **1.4. Ambiguous Name**

The ambiguity of a dual name Dhërmi/Drimades already indicates some of the social boundaries that permeate the village spaces. A number of inhabitants, especially those who believe to originate from the village or the Himarë/Himara area and declare themselves as locals or *horiani*, believe that the original name of the village is Drimades and that it derives from Greek language. They explained that the name Dhermi was introduced later, sometime during the period of King Zogu (1924-1939), and became the official name during the communist regime. On the other hand, the interpretations of Albanian historians and politicians state that the name Drimades was brought into use by Greek traders when the villages of the Himarë/Himara area (as well as other parts of southern Albania) were part of a Greek colony already in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (see Memushaj 2003, Bixhili 2004, Frashëri 2005).

This inconsistency of historical data is partly related to several attempts to rewrite history during various periods in the past. The puzzles from the Himarë/Himara area remain unsolved

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happened as the normative amount continuously grew according to general ideology of the maximal productivity. The second type was the state property that was managed and controlled by director who was nominated by the Communist Party of Labour. Director and the workers had a fixed salary.

even today. This creates disagreements that are unlikely to be solved in the near future. Due to the constant nationalistic tendencies of the Greek and Albanian states it is hard to objectively determine when the names Drimades and Dhërmi truly appeared. There were a few foreign travellers who passed through Dhërmi/Drimades and mentioned it in their published works that could be taken as more objective historical sources. Hobhouse (1813) and his companion the famous poet Byron (1891), Pouqueville (1825), Leake (1835), Lear (1851), Hammond (1967), et. al., are some of the writers who talked about Himarë/Himara or Dhërmi/Drimades and wrote the names in a slightly different manner. Lord Byron (1891) described the fighting spirit of the Albanian people and the revengefulness of the Himarë/Himara people. In his poem Child Harold he wrote the following words:

Shall the sons of Chimara who never forgive  
The fault of a friend, bid an enemy life?  
Let those guns so unerring such vengeance forgo?  
What's mark is so fair as the breast of a foe? (1891: XX)

Besides the famous Byron Himarë/Himara and its people were also mentioned by the Belgian historian Pouqueville (1825) who like Byron failed to mention Dhërmi/Drimades. In his work entitled *Travels in Northern Greece* (1967) the English historian Leake who travelled throughout Epirus in 1804 mentioned Dhërmi/Drimades as *Dhrymádhēs* about which he jotted the following words:

At Corfu I met a certain Count Gika, of Dhrymádhēs, who described that place as very picturesque, with a river running through it: [...] (1967: 88).

In the later years these places were visited by the English landscape painter Edward Lear (1812-1888), who left us his drawings of Dhërmi/Drimades besides his travel notes, both of which were published in the book *Journals of a Landscape Painter in Greece and Albania*. Lear mentioned the village by the name of Dhrymadhes, when he wrote:

Anastasio fired off his pistol at the last point of the rock where the town was visible, and I went on my way to dine and draw at Dhrymadhes, which I reached half past ten [...] I drew constantly till noon, the magnificence of this place being inexhaustible (Lear 1851: 147).

A century later the English historian Hammond referred to Dhërmi/Drimades by *Dherm* or *Zrimazes* and wrote about the village the following words:

From Himare I walked through the Greek-speaking villages, taking three hours via Vuno and Vijates to reach Zrimazes (350 houses) below which Roman remains are

reported<sup>23</sup>. At Zrimazes I spent a night, rendered hideous by the women keening for a young man killed by vendetta (Hammond 1967: 125).

There are generally not many sources that would allow a consistent conclusion regarding the name of the village, which is an issue that is becoming increasingly important if one takes into account the current land tenure debate between the villagers and the political elite (see Bollano, Milo et.al. 2006). Foreign travellers' accounts seem to be more valid than the various nationally oriented notes of historians, for they embraced the local people's declarations, in spite of their tendencies to discover the "exotic other". Nevertheless, the meaning of the name Dhërmi/Drimades is still dubious and ambiguous. Nowadays with the raising land tenure issues in Dhërmi/Drimades (as well as in the Himarë/Himara area) the ambiguity of the village name that appears in the local representations, history books, media reveals the contestation that constantly oscillates between conflict and consensus.

Various interpretations of the village origin stand behind different diametrically opposed interpretations of two names. In short, I could divide them into pro-Greek and pro-Albanian explanations, each of them using different political aspirations in order to interpret the meaning of the village name. One of the pro-Greek interpretations states that the name derives from the word *drima-dhes* for which the local people say that it meant "an oak tree" in ancient Greek and that it used to be typical for the village vegetation. The second also a pro-Greek explanation states that the name derives from the word *dhromos* which means "a road" or "a path" close to which the village is situated. The third interpretation explains that the name is related to the word *drimos*<sup>24</sup>, "a creek". The fourth explanation says that the name derives from the Albanian word *dhe-mih* which means "to dig the land". The latter is supposed to be connected to the influence that the local land degradation has for the village economy. Petro Marko who originates from Dhërmi/Drimades offers a different interpretation of the name Dhërmi/Drimades. In his story for teenagers entitled *The Cave of Pirates (Shpella e Pirateve)*, published in Tirana in 1998, Petro Marko described the movement of the local population from the so-called place of *Vreke* to the caves called *Qendrushe* (*qendra* centre or *qendrim* sojourn). At *Qendrushe* there is *e madhe* (big) *dhri*. While Petro Marko did not offer an explanation for *dhri*, Foto Bixhili, another local historian originating from Dhërmi/Drimades, who recently published his work on the history of the Himarë/Himara area and its villages,

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<sup>23</sup> In his history book Hammond refers to Philippson and Kirsten (1950) who quoted Lampros saying that a Roman bath was found bellow *Zrimazes* (Hammond 1967: 125).

<sup>24</sup> A similar word, *drimus*, can also be found in the Oxford Greek Dictionary (1997), meaning "pungent" or "sharp".

offers an explanation of Agim Shehu. He translated the word *dhri* as a vine that grows on the slopes above the caves (Bixhili 2004: 41). When Bixhili referred to Shehu, he did not offer a detailed reference (year of publishing and page) on Shehu's book. Bixhili continued that besides olive terraces and oak trees (which are these days rather scarce) the village of Dhermi is characteristic for *madhe* – big *dhri* – vines (ibid.). He also leaves the reader in doubts, for he does not explain whether *dhri* derives from Albanian, Greek or any other language. The word *dhri* does not exist – even as a prefix – in the modern Albanian–English dictionary (Ramazan Hysa 2005), in the modern Albanian dictionary (*Fjalor I Shqipërisë së sotme* 1980), or in the Oxford Greek Dictionary (1997). In the modern Albanian dictionary of the Albanian Academy of Science there is a word *drim* which marks the first twelve days of August or the last three days of March when it is according to the folk believes a bad weather.

In his book *Drimades of Himara (Drimades tis Himaras)* published in Athens another local historian Kosta Dede explains that the word *dhrimadhe* derives from the word *dhrimos* which meant “forest” in ancient Greek, while in Modern Greek it denotes a natural park (Dede 1978: 10). Along with these interpretations there are several others: literal, scientific and folk. All of them, however, are usually coloured with the political content of different national interests, either pro-Greek or pro-Albanian. It is important to note that most of the explanations are burdened with national or regional/local explanations that point towards historical and social mapping of the area. Therefore the contexts in which these interpretations appear and the ways in which they are used in everyday village discourse are of a much greater interest for an ethnographer than their historico-linguistic origins.

## 1.5. Shifting Localities

Considering the everyday use of the names Dhërmi and Drimades, there seems to be a distinction between those inhabitants, whose predecessors originate from Dhërmi/Drimades and declare themselves as locals, *horiani* or *Drimadiotes*, and those inhabitants and seasonal workers who moved to the village from other parts of Albania, either during the period of communism or after it. While the latter inhabitants almost exclusively use the name Dhërmi, the former often use both. The use of different names does not depend merely on the origin of the speaker, but also on the language he uses at the time. Thus whenever local inhabitants speak to their fellow locals in local Greek dialect, they mainly use the name Drimades, and when they talk in the Albanian dialect, they use the official name Dhërmi.

### 1.5.1. Shifting of the “Local”

When asked about the meaning of the term *horianos* (the local), many people of Dhërmi/Drimades explained that *horianos* means *apo ton topo*, “of the place”. The indicative “of the place” relates to the referent’s origin which has to be from Dhërmi/Drimades or the Himarë/Himara area. In the colloquial language numerous villagers differentiate between those *horiani*, who originate and live in the village most of their lifetime, those who originate from the village but have lived for most of their life in other places of Albania and/or Greece and recently returned to their natal village, those who originate from the village but live in other places in Albania or in emigration in Greece or United States, those who originate and live in one of the villages of the Himarë/Himara area, and finally those who originate from one of the villages of the Himarë/Himara area and live either in Albania or in emigration in Greece or US.

These categorisations often come forward whenever locals discuss the history of their village and its past spaces. For example, eighty-five years old Luka, who was born in Dhërmi/Drimades and has spent most of his lifetime in the village, declares himself as *horianos* as opposed to those locals who returned to the village during the last few years. He often refers to them as *kseni* or foreigners. When asked if these foreigners are any different from the recent settlers and seasonal workers who originate from other places in Albania, Luka explained that they are *kseni* because they forgot “the village” and its “history”. They are not familiar with the “old” village places and the names of now desolated neighbourhoods, abandoned fields and pastures in the village’s outskirts, etc. Like many other elderly locals Luka noted that those locals, who moved to the village during the last few years, got “deprived”, *halase*, while living elsewhere in Albania and/or in Greece. *I halase to kozmos edo* “the people got spoiled/are deprived”, explained Luka and nostalgically, “in those times people in the village were in friendly relations. In those times there were rules. Today people are in dispute with each other and they gossip all around!” A different view from Luka’s was declared by forty-eight years old Spiros and his four years younger wife, both of whom originate from the village but spent many years in Vlorë (25 years) and Athens (5 years). They returned to Dhërmi/Drimades only a few years ago. Urania and Spiros declare themselves as *horiani* though they are considered by Luka as *kseni*. Similarly to Luka, Urania and Spiros have talked about village’s past, according to which, as Herzfeld suggests, they generated images of “spurious equality” and eradicated memories of group differences



(Herzfeld 1991: 77). But whenever asked about something they were not familiar with, they suggested that I should ask those elderly locals who have lived in the village for all their life.

The given examples show that *horianos* or “the local” does not mean the same for the people whose local identities are often questioned. Moreover, being “of the place” does not necessarily refer to the “physical” place. Based upon Luka’s distinctions between him and Janis and Urania I suggest that the meaning “of the place” also refers to the knowledge of place which is in Dhërmi/Drimades related to different reconstructions of the past. The latter become important in reconstructing the local identities which are continuously negotiated in the course of re-establishing the “single” and “true” history of the village and its people.

### **1.5.2. The “Local” and the “Other” – Distinctions and Interrelations**

The above mentioned categorisations of the “local” become negligible when the locals refer to recent settlers and seasonal workers who originate from other places in Albania. In their day-to-day conversation, the locals often differentiate between “us”, that is *horiani*, *Drimadiotes*, and “them” or *kseni*, that is outsiders, “newcomers” or foreigners. The locals also use pejorative names such as *Turkos* or *Alvanos*, which according to them mark the differences in language skills, religion, financial position, social status and the possibility of unrestricted crossing of the Albanian – Greek border. During my fieldwork locals often warned me of *kseni* whom they often accused of stealing and cheating. In these warnings they differentiated between those few *kseni* who migrated to the village in the period of communism and those *kseni* who migrated afterwards. In the last group of “outsiders” are seasonal workers (e.g. constructors and other physical workers) who live in the village only temporarily.

The “newcomers” who moved to Dhërmi/Drimades mainly originate from the villages of Labëria (such as, for example, Vranisht, Sevaster, Bolenë, Shales) in the south-eastern part of Albania, villages around the city of Vlorë (Dukati, Peshkepi, Selenice, Ballsh) in the north-east, villages in the north-west such as Lushnja, while some even came from Mirdita area in the far north, close to the border between Albania and Montenegro. Together with their young families they moved to Dhërmi/Drimades largely due to economical reasons. Only a few families (five of all) moved here in the period of communism and most of them (about forty families) moved after its end. Because the young locals are going out of the country and moving mainly to Greece, there is a need for a young working force in order to help the

elderly who stayed behind. Those who came to the village in the period of communism used to work in the agricultural cooperatives. Nowadays some of them are shop or cafe owners, while others work as seasonal workers. The rest of “newcomers”, who settled here after the collapse of communism, either work as construction workers or perform other physical work (such as working in the gardens, picking olives, grapes and oranges, working in local restaurants and bars on the coast), that is everything that pensioners are not capable of doing anymore. Many of them, especially if they were not born too far, visit their birthplaces, where most of them are still registered as residents. These “newcomers” often declare themselves according to the place from where their patrilinear ancestors originate. Throughout my fieldwork I have never heard them referring to themselves as villagers or *fshatarët*.

In a number of conversations with the “newcomers” I often asked them about the locals’ attitude towards them. At the beginning of our talks they were usually rather reserved. Later on, however, most of them expressed negative feelings towards the rude attitude of the *fshatarët* (villagers), referring to them as *njerëz të këqinj* (bad people) and *racistë* (racists). One of my companions was Enkeleida, who moved<sup>25</sup> to Dhërmi/Drimades from Mallakstra (a place north-east of the Himarë/Himara area) together with her family (husband, daughter and son) in 1984. At the beginning she said that when they moved to the village they did not have any problems. “The locals accepted us warmly” she noted. But through the hours of our conversation Enkeleida became more talkative and when describing her work in the agricultural cooperative she said:

When I moved here I did not know any Greek. I often cried as I couldn’t understand the language of my co-workers. But after a while I learned their language and today I can speak Greek.

Later on Enkeleida noted:

Although I have lived here for twenty-five years, people still perceive me as being Turkish. Most of them are racist like the Serbs in Kosovo. Still, I could say that those who returned to their native village after a number of years in emigration are quite different from those locals who never migrated.

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<sup>25</sup> Similarly to other citizens who migrated within the country, the migration of Enkeleida and her family was – following their application – approved by the Communist Party or the so-called Party of Labour of Albania (PLA). They were decreed to move to Dhërmi/Drimades, where they worked in one of the largest agricultural cooperatives in the coastal (Bregu) area. A few years after the collapse of communism, Enkeleida’s youngest son immigrated to Italy, where he is studying economy, while her oldest daughter moved to Vlorë and got married there. Five years ago Enkeleida and her husband bought an old house in the village centre, which they are now slowly renovating with the money they earn during the summer in their fast-food kiosk on the beach. Throughout the year Enkeleida’s husband earns money performing occasional jobs in the village and its surroundings.

Although Enkeleida tried to remain respectful in order not to offend her village friend – married to a “local” by birth – who was accompanying me, she explicitly showed her dislike for the locals’ attitude. Later on, when I spoke to some other inhabitants who moved to Dhërmi/Drimades during the era of communism or later (referred to as “newcomers” further on), they expressed certain doubts regarding the locals’ “Greekness” and their “racist” attitude, which has recently become an important issue.

The majority of the “newcomers” explained that the reason for locals to sympathise with the Greeks could be found in the fact that those locals whose predecessors originate from the Himarë/Himara area are receiving the so-called *pension Greke* (Greek pension) provided by the Greek government. Most of the inhabitants who originate from other places throughout Albania and have moved to Dhërmi/Drimades, bear a grudge against those who in their view only simulate their Greekness. A primary school teacher, who originates from one of the villages in Labëria and has, together with her husband, moved to Dhërmi/Drimades about forty years ago, angrily explained: “They are not Greeks and they never were Greeks. They only pretend to be Greeks because of the money they receive from the Greek government<sup>26</sup>”, and continued: “If they were Greeks their women would sing in Greek language, especially in the hardest moments such as a death taking place in their family. Himarë/Himara women express grief and sing lament songs in Albanian language and not in Greek. A number of historians wrote about this. And this is the main argument that proves that the locals from Himarë/Himara are Albanians. Most of them learned Greek while living and working in Greece following the end of communist regime.” During this explanation her otherwise gentle and peaceful face showed an angry and distressed expression wanting me to follow her arguments for which she was convinced to be the truth.

During the later phase of my fieldwork I interviewed numerous village inhabitants who moved to the village from other places in Albania. I also spoke with Albanian tourists who were visiting the village coast during the summer. They confirmed these observations, but they also drew my attention to the local Greek dialect<sup>27</sup> used on the day-to-day basis of numerous local people, for which they said is incorrect one, because it includes numerous

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<sup>26</sup> The majority of the local pensioners of Dhërmi/Drimades and the Himarë/Himara area receive pensions from the Greek government following the Ministerial decision of the Greek Republic No. 106841/1983 (see Tsitselikis 2003: 7).

<sup>27</sup> When discussing about the local Greek dialect, let me note that most of the tourists, emigrants, seasonal workers and recent settlers coming from other place in Albania, referred to it as Greek language.

words that do not exist in Greek. A seasonal cook in one of the coastal hotels owned by the local complained about their “broken Greek”. She originally came from the village close to Fier, a town situated approximately seventy kilometres north-east of Dhërmi/Drimades. As her sister lived and worked in Greece for several years, the cook considered herself to be familiar with the Greek language. “For example”, she explained in an upset and agitated manner, “the word *okso* which according to the locals means “out” does not exist in the Greek language. It is *ekso* and not *okso* as they pronounce it.” I offered her the explanation that some of the locals stated that *okso* is an archaic Greek word preserved in the local Greek dialect. From the beginning of the communist rule in 1945 the Albanian borders were closed for forty-five years and because the Greek schools in the Himarë/Himara area were also closed, people stuck to their language, which slowly became archaic and no longer functional when they emigrated to Greece after 1990. The cook did not want to accept this explanation saying that this is merely the locals’ excuse. According to her opinion, those who are “really Greek” are people from the recognised Greek minority, living in the villages around Saranda, Gjirokastra and Delvina. Her opinion that only the “standard language” is “real” while any other dialect or idiom<sup>28</sup> is “false” is shared with not only the seasonal workers or “newcomers” but also with the local people of Dhërmi/Drimades<sup>29</sup>.

While the “newcomers” see the villagers’ *pension Greke* as the main reason of disparities forming between them and the *horiani*, the latter consider their pensions as assistance from the Greek government. Following the Ministerial decision of the Greek government, the local people of Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara area are given the right to attain dual citizenship<sup>30</sup> along with other members of Greek minority. This allowed them to retain their

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<sup>28</sup> I use the term dialect as synonymous to idiom which is defined as “neutral concept that is superior to all the units that are part of the unity of various languages. The concept of idiom includes language, dialect, local language system and any other sociolect (Škiljan 2002: 12, fn.6).

<sup>29</sup> For a more detailed discussion on language and dialects see subchapter 1.6. Languages.

<sup>30</sup> According to Greek constitution the law of naturalisation gives the aliens of Greek descent (of which the members of Greek minority living in Albania are part) possibility to attain dual citizenship. “Naturalisation is the principal process by which an alien may acquire a Greek nationality and thus attain dual citizenship. Potential candidates for dual citizenship in Greece are aliens, whose country of origin tolerates dual citizenship: 1. Repatriating Greek emigrants or refugees who have acquired the citizenship of their host country; 2. Members of Greek minorities who emigrated to other countries and are now ‘returning’; 3. Non-ethnic Greek immigrants; 4. Spouses and children of mixed marriages (Greek and alien), and 5. ‘Repatriating’ *homogenies* from countries of the former USSR... According to article 2-2 of Law 2910/2001 on aliens and naturalization, ‘Persons, who have multiple nationalities, including Greek nationality, are considered Greek nationals and have the rights and obligations of Greek citizens... According to the article 31 paragraph 1 of the Greek Civil Code, ‘if the person in question is multinational and one of the nationalities he/she possesses is Greek, than Greek nationality is applied as deciding factor of nationality’. Thus, a Greek judge considers the person in question to be a Greek national and will apply Greek law in the case examined, regardless of whether the multinational person in question is actually related to Greece” (Tsitselikis 2003: 5-6).

ties with their birthplace and natal country. According to the dual citizenship rules the members of Greek minority in Albania (as well as in Turkey and Egypt) who lived and worked in Greece at least for some years, are eligible to receive Greek pensions after they retire. This system allowed the elderly people of Greek minority to apply for the Special Identity Cards of Greek Descent, which according to the Albanian policy excluded the locals of the Himarë/Himara area, to return to their natal country after their retirement. Most of them live with their Albanian pensions (from 50 to 100 Euro) and partly from their Greek pensions (218 Euro in total), while they invest the remaining of Greek pensions or their other savings and remittances sent by their children working in Greece in repairing of old, decaying houses or building of new ones. For this purpose they hire the constructors and other physical workers who moved to the village after the end of communism.

Thus, for example, in 1998 when Dimitris approached his 65th year he returned to his natal village of Dhërmi/Drimades. In 1990 he emigrated to Greece working there as a physical worker in agriculture. In 1992 his wife, who also originates from Dhërmi/Drimades, and children who were already married, joined him. A year later children emigrated to United States. Since then Dimitris has lived together with his brother and his family in Ioannina. In 1998, upon retirement, he acquired the farmer's pension from Greece as an Albanian refugee of Greek descent working in agriculture, amounting to 218 Euro monthly, provided by the Agricultural Insurance Organisation (OGA) in Greece. As a dual citizen Dimitris was allowed to retain his Albanian citizenship. Therefore after his return to Albania he began to receive the Albanian partial pension too, amounting to around 50 Euro per month. Back in the village he decided to build a new house on the parcel of land situated next to his parents' house. The latter initially belonged to his brother who lives and works in Greece and visits the village only in the summer months. During the months he was building this new house, he was living in his brother's house. Being on his own, he decided to hire a young family to take care of him and to do the necessary housework. When querying around, he was told by his colleague from Lushnja, with whom he worked in the cooperative, about a reliable and hard-working couple living in Lushnja, who were searching for a job. Behar, originating from Shkodra, and Ana, originating from Lushnja, responded to Dimitris' query and came to Dhërmi/Drimades in 1999. They moved in his partly constructed house which was built with the savings he earned in Greece and remittances sent by his wife and children. He hired constructors from Mirdita which were in that season living in Dhërmi/Drimades and constructing houses for some other locals. He spent around 15.000 Euro to build the first floor (around 5.000 Euro he

paid to the constructors for their 5 months of work while the rest he spent for materials, transport, arranging the water supply, electricity etc.). Since Behar and Ana moved in his house, Ana was doing all the housework while Behar was helping Dimitris with construction and other physical work. With the help of his Greek pension, economized throughout years and with remittances sent by his children and wife, Dimitris completed the second floor of their house, where they nowadays live. For this he spent another 15.000 Euros. To the hired constructors, people explain, he paid again around 5.000 Euro for five months of work. As he was now helped by Behar and his in-law who moved with his family to Dimitris' house in 2002, he also gave them some extra money (around 500 Euros each). At present Ana, Behar, their two years old son and their in-laws are living in a separate part of the Dimitris' new house. Whenever Behar and his in-law are not helping Dimitris, they are doing occasional work for other elderly villagers, who usually hire them for one to five days and pay them with the money from their Greek and Albanian pensions. For their physical work Behar and his in-law are paid around 10 to 15 Euro per day, like the rest of the new coming workers. Behar spends a part of the earnings for his living costs, economizes the other part, while some of the money occasionally goes to his or Ana's family in Shkodra and Lushnja. Dimitris has a very good opinion about Behar and Ana and they also speak respectfully about him. Though many of the locals do not agree with Dimitri's cohabitation with "Albanian family", they respect Behar who is perceived as a good and fair worker, "not like other Turkos who came here to steal from the locals and take advantage of them".

It seems that monthly pensions that the majority of the locals receive from the Greek government help to create well-being in the daily practice of the inhabitants of Dhërmi/Drimades. They allow easier return for those elderly villagers who lived and worked in Greece for some period and they also give young families originating from other places of Albania a possibility of employment in their home country.

Distinctions between locals and outsiders or "newcomers" are also a constructive and constitutive part of the identification process along with different categorizations and continuous hierarchizations of the notion of "local". As Gupta and Ferguson suggest, the term "local" is not something separate from regional, national, international or global. The perception of locality is not given but is discursively and historically constructed together with the community (Gupta and Ferguson 2001: 6). Gupta and Ferguson suggest that instead of studying what locality is, it is better to focus on how it is formed and lived in all its

differences and sameness. The meaning of locality does not relate to similarities as much as it relates to various forms of exclusion and construction of otherness (Gupta and Ferguson 2001: 13). In Dhërmi/Drimades the constructions of the “other” relate also to the differences within the group of those who declare themselves as being local and not only between those who are local and who are not. For example, a local man Luka, who lives in the village all his life beside the “newcomers” (such as Ana and Behar) and seasonal workers (cook from Fier), perceives Urania and Janis, who actually originate from Dhërmi/Drimades, as *kсени*. In contrast to Luka, Urania and Spiros moved out of the village in the period of communism and returned only couple of years ago.

Moreover, in the Gupta and Ferguson’s view “construction of difference is neither a matter of recognizing an already present commonality nor of inventing an ‘identity’ out of whole cloth but an effect of structural relations of power and inequality” (2001: 14). Power, place and identity are intertwined. Rather than homogeneous and based on equality, place and identity are continually contested domains (ibid.). In congruence with their words, Luka’s construction of differences between him, Urania and Janis reflect the configuration of his power. According to Luka’s definition, the inequality between him and Urania and Janis is based on the knowledge of the village’s past. Following Luka’s conceptualization, being “of the place” or. *horianos* means to have power which is ascribed to those who lived in the village for all of their lifetime.

## 1.6. Languages

Language is one of the important characteristics upon which the local people of Dhërmi/Drimades claim their distinct locality. In their day-to-day conversations locals of Dhërmi/Drimades, Palasa and Himarë/Himara mainly use a local Greek dialect<sup>31</sup> and partly a southern Albanian (Tosk) dialect, while the locals of Ilias, Vuno, Qeparo, Kudhes and Pilur mainly speak the southern Albanian (Tosk) dialect. In spite of a short distance between the villages which are the subjects of language diglossia<sup>32</sup>, the accents of the dialects are

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<sup>31</sup>The local people of Dhërmi/Drimades refer to their local dialect or idiom as dialect or sometimes language. The scholars (Sotiri 2001, Hatziantoniou 2002) who studied the dialect of Himarë/Himara area refer to it as being a dialect. I will follow the same categorisation throughout my thesis.

<sup>32</sup> According to linguistic theories different dialects and modes of speaking co-exist in many societies, often named as language “registers”, “styles” or “codes”. Contemporary linguistic scholars argue that differences between particular dialects should be understood in terms of the social differences at large. Ferguson (1959) introduces the term diglossia, which is defined as situation when two varieties of a language are spoken by the

different. When explaining these differences, some of the locals as well as Albanian scholars see the parallels between the dialect of Himarë/Himara and Crete Island and between Dhermian/Drimadean and Palasa dialect and the dialect of Corfu Island. A local historian Bixhili suggests that the reasons for such similarities are the long existing trading relations, seasonal migrations and marriage links between inhabitants of Himarë/Himara, Dhërmi/Drimades and Palasa and other Greek places in the period of Greek colonies (see Bixhili 2004: Sotiri 2004: 264).

- [1a] Rotiše eki, prin nambiš tiš ambulanca. Otan periš to štrofi kei paš eci eftja apano meria.  
Ask there, before you reach the health post. After the curve go left and turn uphill.
- Dhërmi/Drimades [2a] Šikonete I mana tu ke t'cipe: Kalimera Šhpiruuuuuuu! Poš' ekšimerošes' jetat x'manaš.  
His mother wakes up and says to him: Good mornnig Spiro! Did you sleep well (lit. how did you wake up) my son (lit. the life of mother)?
- [3a] No'mu pšiha nero jetat x'manaš.  
Give me a bit of water my son.
- [1b] Rotiš'e eki, prin nambiš' ti š' ambulanca. Otan periš' to š'trofi kei paš' eci eftja apano meria.
- Palasa [2b] Š'ikonete I mana tu ke t'cipe: Kalimera Š'piruuuuuuuu. Poš' ekš'himeroš'eš' jetat x'manaš'.
- [3b] No'mu pš'iha nero jetat x'manaš'.
- [1c] Rotiše eki, prin nambiš tiš ambulanca. Otan periš to štrofi ke paš eci eftja apano meria.
- Himarë/Himara [2c] Šikonete I mana tu ke t'cipe: Kalimera Špiruuuuuuuu. Poš' ekšimerošes' jetat x'manaš.
- [3c] No'mu pšiha nero jetat x'manaš.

The examples given illustrate the differences in writing of the local dialect spoken by the people who originate from Dhërmi/Drimades, Palasa and Himarë/Himara, which represent the

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members of the same community. Ferguson explains that diglossia is “associated with a division of social life into sets of institutions or activities (domains) in which... one of the languages ... is expected or appropriate or obligatory” (see Grillo 1996: 327). He differentiates between H(igh) language which might be used in education and L(ow) language which is used in family conversations. Ferguson notes that two languages are interrelated (ibid.).



places with language diglossia. In these villages the phoneme /s/ is pronounced in a slightly different way: in Dhërmi/Drimades as a soft /s'/; in Palasa as a half-hard /š'/ and in Himarë/Himara area as a hard /š/. Moreover, the people who originate from Himarë/Himara pronounce /k/ as /ç/ (as in cherry). These pronunciations of the phonemes /s'/, /š'/, /š/ and /k/ can be mainly heard by the elderly inhabitants (born before 1950). In contrary many of the younger generation (born after 1950) do not use the hard accentuations anymore. In the period of communism many members of the younger generation applied for relocation and lived in other places throughout Albania. After the fall of communism they migrated to Greece, where they largely adopted the Athenian accent or *Athenika*.

The examples [1a,b,c and 3a,b,c] illustrate the code-switching which is a common strategy used by the bilingual speakers when they alternatively use two or more languages (Grosjean 1982: 145, Hamers and Blanc 1989: 148; cf. Petrović 2006: 57). The statements [1a,b and c] show that local dialect conjoins together with Greek words (*rotiše eki, prin nambiš tiš*), also the Albanian words such as *ambulance*, meaning “the health post”. In statement [2, 3] the compound *jetat x'manaš* or “life of the mother” is usually used by mother or grandmother to express her love and attachment to her children or grandchildren. *Jeta* in Albanian language means “life” whilst *mana* means “mother” in Greek and is mainly heard by the elderly mothers. The example [2a,b,c] shows the way of calling or shouting (probably because the villages are located on the hills). In *Šhpiruuuuuuu*, for example, the intonation of the last syllable is accentuated higher than the first one. The example [3 a,b,c] presents some words, which are typical for the local dialect. They are used mainly by the elderly people (*no'mu* or Greek *dino mou*, “give me”; *pšiha*, or “little”).

### 1.6.1. In Search of the “First Language”

Similar to etymological interpretations of the villages' names, the explanations about the “first” language of Himarë/Himara area are also based on numerous polemics that are often imbued with national issues. Here I could again differentiate between pro-Albanian and pro-Greek interpretations. The supporters of the former one argue that the “first” language of the “autochthonous” inhabitants is the Albanian language, with the Greek language being introduced in the period of trading relations with the Greek-speaking people from neighbouring Islands (Memushaj 2003, Bixhili 2004, Frashëri 2005). Diametrically opposed are pro-Greek explanations, the supporters of which argue that Greek is the “first language” of

“autochthonous” inhabitants, who primarily dwelled on the coastal plains of *Meghalihora*. Albanian language was according to this account introduced around 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century, when some of the inhabitants of Kurvelesh moved to what is nowadays known as the Himarë/Himara area (see Dede 1978, Rusha 2001 and Koçi 2006).

In order to support their presumptions, many scholars of pro-Albanian as well as pro-Greek orientation turned their attention to questions about the “first civilization” which is believed to have inhabited the southern coast. Thus the question on Illyrians and Epirotes weaves the debates of numerous scholars. Those who are in favour of pro-Albanian interpretations argue that this first civilization were Illyrians, who are reckoned to be the predecessors of later “civilization” and those in favour of pro-Greek interpretations promulgate the idea of Epirote tribes being the predecessors of the Greek “civilization”. British historian Winnifrith rejects both explanations in his work *Badlands – Borderlands, a History of Northern Epirus/Southern Albania*:

We are left with the vexed question as to what language these Epirote tribes spoke. Greek scholars, followed by the most people in the West, would have them speaking Greek in spite of Thucydides and Strabo. Albanian scholars would have them speaking Illyrian in spite of Strabo’s careful distinction. Thanks to Greek colonies on the coast and to Illyrian influence on the north, some Epirotes probably spoke Greek or Illyrian or both. It is not uncommon in the Balkans to find people fluent in two or three languages, especially in Southern Albania [...]. But the bilingual speakers were clearly a rare category, and it is more likely that the distinguishing mark of an Epirote was not that he spoke Greek and Illyrian but that he spoke neither (Winnifrith 2002: 47-48).

Furthermore, Winnifrith notices that Illyrian and Epirot tribes also continuously shifted places where they dwelled and through which they travelled. Both the historical studies of those languages that date back to the first century and historical geography based on different measures due to different technology (no aerial photography, satellite shots etc.) and different mapping<sup>33</sup> systems are grounded on primordial and static nature. Winnifrith gives a neutral opinion again by suggesting that the speech of the ancient people who inhabited Himarë/Himara area has been difficult to draw.

As one neutral observer has put it, there is a little evidence for the speech of the ancient Epirotes, [...], but there has been a great deal of chauvinist propaganda, both ancient and modern. Such chauvinism flies in the face of writers like Thucydides, who says that the Epirotes are barbarians, and Strabo who distinguishes Epirotes from both Greeks and Illyrians. Regrettably such chauvinism continues in the history of next

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<sup>33</sup> For example Winnifrith refers to the English historians Leake and Hammond who wrongly mapped Amantio and Antigoneo, important cities of antiquity (Winnifrith 2002: 33).

centuries, when the quantity, but not the quality of evidence suddenly increases (Winnifrith 2002: 49).

A need to rewrite history appeared in the post communist Albania too. Within this discourse numerous scholars are trying to solve the dilemma of the first language in Dhërmi/Drimades and the rest of the villages in the Himarë/Himara area. This seems to be particularly evident during important political moments such as local or national elections. For example, before and after local elections in 2002 and national elections in 2005, several works were published, written by local intellectuals and “national” historians, with different aims but similar arguments trying to explain the theory of the “first” language and objective history of Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara area (see local intellectuals of Dhërmi/Drimades Bixhili 2004, Jorgji 2006, Gjipopulli and Prifti 2006; of Qeparo Rusha 2002, Sotiri 2001 and 2004, Koçi 2006<sup>34</sup>; and “national” historians Memushaj 2003, Frashëri 2005, Nasi, Prifti, Onuzi and Duka 2004).

### **1.6.2. Language and Education**

Besides opposing views, the authors listed above also have some common ones. One of them refers to education. The scholars defending pro-Albanian issues see education as one of the agents that introduced and consolidated the Greek language among the people living in Dhërmi/Drimades as well as in Himarë/Himara area. The scholars defending pro-Greek issues, however, claim that education only strengthened the Greek language which was “already in place”. In spite of these differences in opinions, both sides agree that the first school of Himarë/Himara area was initiated by the Bazilian missionary Neofit Rodino, whose lessons in 1627 were held in Greek language. Some years later the school was closed down and reopened again in 1633 – this time not only in Himarë/Himara, but also in Dhërmi/Drimades and later in Palasa in 1663 (see Sotiri 2004, Jorgji 2006, Gjipopulli and Prifti 2006). From there on, with some pauses during the following years, the Greek lessons intended only for boys were held till 1760. At the beginning these lessons took place in the Church of St. Thanas. In 1850 they were moved to a new school situated close to the village road, which by now became the main coastal road. Scholars do not agree about the dates

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<sup>34</sup> Let me expose here that though the mentioned authors originate from Himarë/Himara area, they differ in opinions. Whilst Dede (1978) and Gjipopulli (2006) stand on the pro-Greek side, Bixhili (2004) mainly supports pro-Albanian side. In contrast to them Sotiri (2001, 2004) and Rusha (2002), stand between both interpretations, followed by Koçi (2006) and Jorgji (2006) who introduce a novel idea of local distinctivity.

when the lessons stopped being held in Greek. The retired village teacher from Dhërmi/Drimades, Marko Gjipopulli, suggests that the lessons in the Greek language were held until 1945 while the linguist Natasha Sotiri of Qeparo argues that they lasted until 1921, when Albania under the leadership of Ahmed Zogu strengthened its central administration and prohibited any education in languages other than Albanian (Gjipopulli and Prifti 2006: 268). The discrepancy of both accounts leaves gaps, which are filled up with various politically motivated interpretations, which lead to contestations about the “first language” and the constant struggle of its “preservation”. Nevertheless, in the period of totalitarian leadership the Albanian language became the official language of the state. With the exception of the areas populated by the official Greek minority, where teaching was held in Greek and Albanian language, in all other areas of Albania including Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara area lessons were taught only in Albanian language. At present, fifteen years after the end of communism, a need appeared in circles of the local intellectuals to open a Greek school. After many years of efforts this need was realised when a private Greek school was opened in the Himarë/Himara municipality in spring of 2006.

Today there are 54 pupils in the primary school of Gjika Bixhili in Dhërmi/Drimades. Five of them come from the neighbourhood village of Palasa, where the primary school was closed down due to the lack of pupils<sup>35</sup>. The rest of the children live in Dhërmi/Drimades. Among them are seven children whose either one or both parents originate from the village, while other 49 pupils are children of newcomers, originating from other areas of Albania. Due to the small number of pupils the classes are coupled. The first grade is thus coupled with the second, the third with the fourth, etc. In 2005, a system of nine-year schooling was introduced, while before that they had eight years of schooling. There are eight teachers in this school. One of them teaches on the pre-school level, two teachers take care of the first four grades of the primary school and five of teachers teach in the next five grades of the primary school. One teacher lives in Palasa while the others live in Dhërmi/Drimades. Four among them declare themselves as *horiani*, three (female) teachers are married to *horiani* and one is a newcomer. One of the in-married teachers and all four *horiani* speak the local Greek dialect with the Athenian accent besides the southern Albanian dialect. This is so because they

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<sup>35</sup> Similarly to the primary school in Palasa (413 residents), the school in Pilur (536 residents) was also closed down due to the lack of pupils while the children of Ilias used to visit the primary school of Gjika Bixhili in Dhërmi/Drimades. According to Gjipopulli and Prifti, the Himarë/Himara municipality conjoins the secondary school “Spiro Gjikhuri” with 95 pupils beside the primary school “Spile” with 270 pupils. The primary school of Vuno (486 residents) has 14 pupils, Qeparo (1591 residents) 45 pupils, and Kudhes (904 residents) 19 pupils (Gjipopulli and Prifti 2006: 185).

all spent some years in emigration, acquiring the Athenian accent. When talking to each other during the school time they mainly use Albanian, but after the school when they meet on the village streets, in the church or *kafeneio* they often shift between two languages.

During the breaks mainly Albanian language can be heard on the corridors and the courtyard of the school. As they keep company with the rest of the pupils who speak only Albanian, those pupils (five among seven children whose one or both parents originate from Dhërmi/Drimades or Palasa) who speak both languages (Greek and Albanian) use the local Greek only on rare occasions. When I was learning Albanian and giving the lessons on English language (to pupils from fifth to eighth grade) I encountered insults and stigmatizations only in one class, aimed at a girl in fifth grade, who recently moved to Dhërmi/Drimades together with her mother, who originates from the village. Before that the girl was living in Ioannina, where she completed first four grades of the primary school. As her command of Albanian was not fluent, she was often teased by her schoolmates with pejorative expressions such as *Kaur*<sup>36</sup> (non believer) and *Greku i derrit* (a Greek pig). As she was not accepted by the majority of her schoolmates, she kept company with few pupils of the first and second grade, whose parents originated from Dhërmi/Drimades like her mother. According to my observations as well as conversations with the teachers, two of the bilingual children did not have problems with understanding Albanian language and their level of knowledge of Albanian language was similar to their performance in rest of the subjects like math, history, etc. Three of the bilingual pupils – among whom one attended the first grade, one the second grade and one the fifth grade – had some problems with understanding Albanian, while in other subjects their teachers did not perceive any problems. All five bilingual pupils have spent either months or years in Greece. Except for the pupil in the fifth grade all of them returned to the village some time before entering the primary school.

### 1.6.3. Spoken Languages

Most locals use Greek dialect combined with Albanian words in their everyday speech, used on streets, and in *kafeneias*, local shops and churches. Besides typical words in Dhermian/Drimadean dialect (like *okso* - outside, *psiha* - some, *ortha* - chicken), the local vernacular often includes the Albanian words for numbers, months, seasons, measures, the

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<sup>36</sup> For more details about the word *kaur*, see Chapter Two, Contested Histories; subchapter 2.1. Dividing People and Places.

names of the official institutions and other words such as *bashki* - municipality, *pashaporti* - passport, *kufi* - state border, *partia* - political party, *krujeplak* - village councillor, etc.

The knowledge and use of the local dialect usually correspond to which generation the speaker belongs to. Elder generations born between 1920 and 1940 mainly use the local Greek dialect in their day-to-day conversation. Some of the residents, who were born in the 1920s later attended Greek school and can therefore also read and write in Greek. This is not the case with the generation born between 1945 and 1960, majority of whom moved out of the village in their early youth. Many of those who migrated to other places in Albania created their future life there. After the demise of the communism some of them migrated to Greece, while others stayed in Albania. Those who have lived in Greece for some years and later returned to the village, use Greek language in their daily conversations. They are also well skilled in reading and writing in Greek. The other locals, who stayed in Albania, are relatively bad in their command of local Greek or they cannot speak it at all. A great majority of the last generation, born from 1960 onwards still live in Greece now and only come to visit their parents in summer months. They all speak Greek on day-to-day basis. Because they use Albanian language quite rarely, their knowledge of it is moderate. In contrast to them their children know very little or nothing of Albanian as they were born and socialized in Greece.

#### **1.6.4. Language as the Permit to “Enter”**

When I moved to the village, my command of Albanian and Greek languages was very poor. Though I learned each of two languages for a couple of months before leaving to do fieldwork, I had many problems with understanding both dialects. Maria, a student of English and literature helped me with translations in the first couple of weeks, and after she left I began to learn the Albanian language in the village primary school and local Greek with one of the village ladies. She was married to a local, but originating from one of the villages in Gjirokastra, where the Greek minority lives. During the first three months I had lessons of both Albanian and Greek every day, except for the weekends. In about two months my command of the local Greek improved to the stage that I could use it on a basic level. Some months later I was able to understand most of conversations but my speaking capability was still very basic. As the majority of my closest friends were locals, my knowledge of local Greek improved faster than Albanian. I was also more familiar with this language because of its use in scientific discourse (e.g. with the meanings of different words like *anthropos*,

*gineka*, *andras*, etc.). In the last months of my fieldwork I was quite confident when using local Greek dialect. Several locals took my knowledge of the local language as a proof for their “Greekness”. I often felt that my proficiency in Greek – in contrast to Albanian – was a kind of a permit that let me enter their personal lives.

## 1.7. Religion

### 1.7.1. Religion in Albania

According to the CIA factbook (2006) it is estimated that Albania is populated by 70% of Muslims, 20% of members of Albanian Orthodox Church and 10% of Roman Catholics. It is noted that percentages are only approximate because they were compiled after the research done in 1989 (<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/al.html>). One of the main reasons for the uncertainty in estimation of percentages is related to the atheism promulgated by Enver Hoxha since 1967.

In spite of the formation of the Albanian Autocephalous (autonomous) Church in 1936, which was founded by Fan Noli, there have been only a few translations of the religious literature<sup>37</sup> (see Winniffrith 2002: 135). There is Albanian translation of the New Testament, used in Greek minority areas and all other areas that had managed to keep the Christianity under the threat of Islamisation in the Ottoman era. In contrast to the areas of officially recognised Greek minority and Himarë/Himara area, where the liturgy is held only in Greek language, in other areas populated by the Christian communities the liturgy is held partly in Albanian and partly in Greek.

In 1967 the totalitarian leader Enver Hoxha, inspired by China’s Cultural Revolution, declared Albania as an atheist country. Hoxha strictly forbade any kind of religious practices, and closed down or destroyed numerous churches and mosques. Again in contrast to many other areas throughout Albania, the churches of Dhërmi/Drimades as well as of other places in Himarë/Himara area were preserved, especially those that date back to 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> Century. Some of them like *Panayia Pano*, *Panayia Kato* and *Ag. Stephanos* were even protected as national heritage. The church doors, however, remained closed and sealed at that time, and no one of the locals dared to enter. Many local priests were put under special survey as they

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<sup>37</sup> The only translations of the religious literature were done between 1910 and 1940 (Jacques 1995: 313-315).

were not allowed to perform any of the religious practices. Locals told me that important religious feasts such as Easter or Christmas were nevertheless secretly celebrated.

During my fieldwork I attended church service almost every Sunday. Numerous villagers have accepted my presence in a positive way. According to some peoples' opinion my weekly attendance of the church service proved me as being *kali kopela* (good or good hearted girl). Along with the language, sharing of the religious practices provided me with another "permit" for entering the daily lives of the local people. The question of my religion or better "if I am a Christian" was one of the constants, which accompanied me throughout my fieldwork. My answer that I grew up in the catholic tradition was accepted approvable by most of the locals, who added that both traditions, Orthodox and Catholic, are of the same origin. Regardless of their approval, there was a period, especially during the first months of my stay in the village, when many local ladies paid permanent attention to my acts and behaviour in the church. In particular, they smirked about my way of crossing, which was typical for Catholics and thus different from their own.

### **1.7.2. Churches of Dhërmi/Drimades**

When the villagers describe their village they often expose the large numbers of small churches and chapels that are scattered all over the village. There are more than 30 of them, the most historically important being the three churches dating back to 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century: *Panayia Pano* (St. Mary uphill) is located on the hill overlooking the central hamlet, *Panayia Kato* (St. Mary downhill) and *Ag. Stephanos* (St. Stephan) are situated by the coast. Whilst these small churches are mainly in use on their name-day party, the churches of *Ag. Haralamb* and *Ag. Spiridonas* are in the regular use almost every Sunday and on the feast days. Besides the churches the monasteries also enjoy important status in the village. One of them *Ag. Thodoros* (St. Thodorus) is situated on the coastal crag at the end of the village and the other one, *Stavridi* (Cross), is located in the mountain valley. On a mountain pass in Thunderbolt the Mountains is located a small church *Ag. Pandaimonio* (St. Pandemonium).

In every neighbourhood (*ghitonia*) of the central hamlet of Dhërmi/Drimades there is a small church that was built by its inhabitants. People in neighbourhoods belong to a cluster of patriline. They hold masses in these churches, usually on name-days of saints after whom the specific church or one of the members of the patriline is named. Massive emigration has



caused many neighbourhoods in the central hamlet *Qëndra/Kendros*, such as, for example, the neighbourhood of Vretej, as well as the neighbourhood *Pangalades* in the nearby hamlet *Gjilek/Gjilekates*, to be left to the ravages of time. Despite this, the small churches are partly preserved in comparison to their surroundings within these neighbourhoods, which are overgrown with weed. This is so because a few village ladies and one female teenager<sup>38</sup> take care of the churches. Usually they clean them a day before or on the same day of their patron saint's name feast.

There are two Christian Orthodox priests in the village at the present, both of whom originate from Dhërmi/Drimades. Due to the lack of priests in other villages of Himarë/Himara area, the priests of Dhërmi/Drimades perform their religious service also in the neighbouring village Palasa and in other places of Himarë/Himara municipality. In contrast to Palasa and other places, the church service in Dhërmi/Drimades is performed regularly every Sunday and on all feast days. Usually it is held in one of the churches of *Ag. Haralamb* or *Ag. Spiridonas*. Part of the ceremony is sung in old Greek, followed by the interpretation in the local Greek dialect.

Usually the Sunday liturgy lasts for an hour and a half and it often merges into whispering of the women sitting at the back of the church where their place is according to the rules of church's spatial organisation. Besides the back women also have a place on the left side of the church, looking towards the *iconostasis* or the wall of icons. In contrast to women the men are situated on the right side of the church looking toward *iconostasis*. The latter links the nave, the holy place, with the sanctuary, the sacred place. While in the nave is the place for the people, the sanctuary is the place for the "holy of holies". The priest who stands in front of the *iconostasis* connects the people with God or *Theos*. A few children, teenagers and a couple of middle aged women sit on the balcony at the back of the church, from where they observe and comment upon the happening below them or calm down restless children who are running up and down the stairs at the back of the church. The service is usually visited by 100 to 150 people, among whom the women are in majority (from 80 to 100 women and from 20 to 50 men). In the period of feasts the number of people raises to about 160 to 180. Almost all the visitors are from Dhërmi/Drimades.

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<sup>38</sup> A month after my departure (December 2005) from Dhërmi/Drimades she married a local emigrant and moved to Greece.

### 1.7.3. Religion and Everyday Practices

Forty-five years of living under the communism has influenced the religious knowledge and practices of people throughout Albania. Because of the absence of religious education over the period of several decades, numerous locals of Dhërmi/Drimades are not really acquainted with the content of the Bible. With the exception of the main prayers and some religious songs they are also not familiar with quite some of the prayers. More than through prayers and their knowledge of the Bible, however, the villagers' affiliation to Orthodox Christianity may be observed in their religious practices. The latter embrace both the practices performed in the church and those performed outside. The practices inside the church include crossing, kissing and bowing to the icons, lighting candles, ways of walking in the church, offerings of *kollyva* (a large plate of cooked wheat, sweetened and mixed with resins and sometimes walnuts) during memorial and name-days' services of their deceased relatives, and offerings of *prosphora* (the bread) during the name-days' services of the living relatives. The practices which take place outside of the church, in profane places, include fasting and feasting and, of course, different social activities.

Despite of the imposition of strict atheism in the period of communism many of these practices, especially those pertaining to the profane places, were hiddenly preserved over generations. Nowadays, following social (massive migrations) and political changes (democracy, religious freedom), liberalisation of the media (broadcasting of Greek and Italian TV channels), numerous religious practices in the village have been redefined and reconstructed. On Sunday mornings one can often hear the Psalms singing from some of the village houses, where their owners are listening and/or watching live transmissions of Sunday Liturgies from the Mega Television Channel in Greece. Besides Mega, several other Greek Channels (such as Alpha, ERT 1 and ERT 2 – *Elliniki Radiofonia Tileorassi*, offer various TV series and soap-operas which religious ceremonies such as church wedding, baptisms, name-day feast, etc<sup>39</sup>. While watching the TV the villagers are able to see, compare, and reflect upon the religious life generally. Besides, there are numerous local emigrants who visit the village during the summer months. They continuously compare what they believe is a “proper” religious behaviour in Greece with an “inadequate” religious behaviour in the

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<sup>39</sup> Nowadays, watching TV became part of the villagers' habitual practices as except for the hours of electricity cuts, television is kept on almost all the time.

village. They try to instruct their relatives about how to become “a good Christian” (*Kalos Hristianos*). Thus, for example, at one of the Sunday liturgies during the summer season Katerina, who lives in Greece together with her husband already for 12 years, told her cousin Eleni and me about the “proper” behaviour in church by criticizing the elderly women who were chatting during the liturgy: “In Greece everyone is quiet in the church. Nobody is chatting. Not like here, where the women’s chatting is louder than the priest’s preaching”,..., “Psssst...”, she tried to quiet down their whispering, but without any success.

The villages of Dhërmi/Drimades follow the calendar of the Christian Ortodox Church, together with important religious feasts such as Easter (*Pascha*), Assumption festivity or Small Easter (*Mikri Pascha*) and Christmas (*Hristughenia*) the name-days of Saints and Apostles are also celebrated. Almost every second or third day in the week the name-day of one of the Saints or Apostles is celebrated. Some of the villagers carry same names. Especially in the winter when the village is relatively deserted, widows and elderly couples celebrate the name-days of their husbands, sons and grandsons. According to the village custom the women’s name-days are seldom celebrated. A day before the feast an elderly woman or a widow cleans her house and sweeps the courtyard. If she celebrates the name-day of an already deceased relative, she cooks *kollyva* in the evening hours. But when the relative is still alive, she bakes *prosfora*. On the very next day in the early morning hours (around 6.30 am) she takes *prosfora* or *kollyva* to the church, where it is handed over to one of the assistants in the church. In the final part of the Liturgy the memorial food *kollyva* and the holly bread *prosfora* are blessed and distributed among the visitors. When the liturgy is over the woman who celebrates the name-day of her relative usually invites her friends to her house for a coffee and a chat<sup>40</sup>.

Religious practices influence daily activities of women and partly also of men. On the days of religious feasts such as *Pascha*, *Mikri Pascha* and *Hristughenia*, on Sundays and the name-days of important Saints (for example *Ag. Thoma*, celebrated a week after *Pascha*) the village women avoid working on the garden, around or in her house, and on olive plantations. The exception is the summer season when some village women help their husbands and/or sons who run their small tourism businesses on the coast. Their work becomes a subject matter of the women’s gossip in which they passionately reject this kind of behaviour.

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<sup>40</sup> Besides the liturgies such visits represent the core of women’s sociability in the village. While drinking coffee and having a snack of *ghliko*, *kadaif*, cookie or candy, they are chatting about the village matters.

Several elderly women respect the fasting before important religious feasts. Fasting includes abstention from alcohol and particular food such as meat, oil, dairy products and eggs. Abstention from meat is observed at least once per week, most frequently on Fridays, while the general fasting is most frequently practiced in a week before Easter and Christmas. It could be said that except for the priests, who are supposed to follow this kind of behaviour, the men more rarely abstain from eating meat and dairy products than the women.

Religion also influences the way of dressing. Before they attend the church liturgy the village women take care of their own and their husbands' outfit, which has to be clean and neat. According to the mourning habits the majority of elderly women are dressed in black following the death of one of their closest relatives: husband, son, daughter, parents, siblings or in-laws. Their black outfit includes wearing black stockings throughout the year and a black headscarf pulled well forward over her hair.

In Dhermian/Drimadean day-to-day conversation God (*Theos*) and St. Mary (*Panayia*) are often used in the words<sup>41</sup>. They regularly appear as formulaic expressions: when somebody expresses hopes and desires for the future, he says: "Glory to God" (*Doksa tou Theu*) or "If God wills it" (*"Ean thelei o Theos"*) or "First God" (*Prot' Theos*). Women appeal to the Virgin Mary whenever some shocking news reach the village or when expressing a surprise over a particular event or an individual.

#### **1.7.4. Religion and Gender**

Religion plays an important part in construction and reconstruction of gender roles. Juliet du Boulay (1968) notes that, religion is indispensable in understanding the gender roles in Greece, while Dubich (1983, 1989) and Hirschon (1983, 1989) write about the abundance of religious duties which women have to fulfil. Duties consist of lighting the lamps in front of family icons, praying for children and "close" relatives, taking care of churches and graves. Dubisch and Hirschon suggest that in performing such duties women connect their families with the spiritual world (see also Dubisch 1991: 41).

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<sup>41</sup> For a similar situation in Ambeli in North Euboea see du Boulay (1991: 47-57).

Just like on the Island of Tinos Aegean (Dubisch 1991: 42) in Dhërmi/Drimades too the men control and perform the key rituals such as the liturgy, baptism and marriage. Thus all those who perform their part in the church are men. From the priests to the economist who besides his assistance to the priest collects money for candles, the Psalm singers and the priest's assistant who collects and cuts *prosfora* or *kollyva*. While male activities are performed in front of the audience (i.e. church visitors) female activities usually stay behind.

### 1.7.5. Religion and Locality

Similarly to language religion is also important constitutive agent of local people's "Greekness". Common to other people originating from the Himarë/Himara area the locals of Dhërmi/Drimades declare themselves as *hristiani*, the followers of Christian Orthodox Church. Along with the rise of migrations of people originating from central and northern Albania that began after 1990, the religious picture of Dhërmi/Drimades has also changed. In contrast to the local inhabitants, most of those who moved to Dhërmi/Drimades perceive themselves as being Muslims while some declare to be atheists. Those who declare themselves as Muslims only rarely participate in the religious feasts and many of them have never been in a mosque. Because of the generalised contempt of the locals, who often refer to them with pejorative connotations such as *Turkos* or *Musliman*, it seems that their Islamic religion remains somehow concealed. Numerous people who denominate themselves as Muslims have realised that their religious faith is "closing their doors to Greece and elsewhere". Therefore, some recent settlers, who had Islamic names, took up Christian names in order to raise their chances of migrating to Greece or Italy. They did this also because they wanted to be accepted by the locals of Dhërmi/Drimades. Many of those who got Christianised take part in the church services on important religious feasts. The local opinion about the converts' behaviour varies: some of them find their new Christian practices positive, while others see in their conversion to Christianity only a confirmation that "the Muslims are people without *besa*<sup>42</sup> and pride".

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<sup>42</sup> Martin Berishaj defines *besa* in his work *The Hidden Word of Besa*, where he discusses the Kanun of Leke Dukagjini, as an "ethical moral category, the basic value of the Albanian common law. *Besa* used to function as a mediator of social relations in the Albanian traditional society" (Berishaj 2004: 15). Berisha relates it to keeping of one's promise, dignity and pride, and keeping of faith in the extended family. According to my conversations with the locals *besa* was a synonym for pride and faith.

## 1.8. Population: Shifting Numbers

Upon the Albanian INSTAT population registration 2004, the village of Dhërmi/Drimades has 1791 residents among whom 717 officially reside in the central hamlet and Gjilek/Gjilekates, and 1074 in the hamlet of Kondraça. In the population registration of Himarë/Himara area there is a discrepancy between the number of residents who are registered and the number of inhabitants who actually live in the village. According to the local people's and municipality's estimations there are about 300 people who live in the central hamlet and the hamlet of Gjilek/Gjilekates and about 600 people who live in the hamlet of Kondraça.

There are several reasons for difference between those who inhabit Dhërmi/Drimades and those who are registered there. One of them refers to the local returnees who originate from Dhërmi/Drimades and are not registered in the village. During the communism they moved to some other place in Albania and after its fall they migrated to Greece. When they retired they returned to their natal village Dhërmi/Drimades. Although they nowadays live here they continue to be registered in the place where they moved to during the communism.<sup>43</sup> Another reason for discrepancy between inhabitants and residents is that many of those residents who during the communism lived in the village and worked in the village cooperative, moved to Greece after the fall of the communism. Although they are registered in Dhërmi/Drimades they have never returned to the village since then. Additional reason is administrative as many of those who are already dead are still registered as if being alive. Their death was never reported and recorded. Yet another reason for the discrepancy between the number of residents and the number of inhabitants' lies in those who live in the village only seasonally and are not registered in the census. Some of them are locals who spend their winters in Greece while in summer they settle in the village where they run local bars and restaurants or rent out rooms and small apartments on the coast. The other seasonal inhabitants are the people originating from other areas of Albania who work in the villages of Himarë/Himara area as constructors or physical workers.

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<sup>43</sup> According to the population census I conducted in Dhërmi/Drimades among 89 couples (usually a couple that is more than 50 years old) 75 couples applied for relocation in the period of communism and migrated to Greece after its collapse (see Appendix).

The officials working in the Himarë/Himara Municipality are aware of such discrepancy between the number of residents and “actual” inhabitants and as one of the officials noted they are trying to improve the situation which is becoming an important issue for them:

There are two main reasons that I found out. The first one is that some people like Aspasia, for example, hm [...] sister of Aghatula, you know her [...] she has her papers in Tirana. Before 1990 it was something special to live in Tirana. It was very difficult to get the papers to move to Tirana. People living there were considered like people living in the castle. Like the higher rank of the society. So they have this nostalgia, probably [...]. Because she had everything in Tirana. Because of the nostalgia of being somebody important, of being somebody living in Tirana, in the big city rather than in the village like Dhermi, they are living their papers there. The second reason is that I am trying to get the papers of my uncle [...]. Foto. My uncle who died. Now his wife and kid asked me to arrange this and for approximately three or four months I am trying to bring the papers here from the municipality in Vlorë. And it is as if nobody worked in Vlorë. I went there twice and until now nothing has changed. So this is another thing why people do not bring their papers to Himara municipality. First thing is hmm [...] how you say [...] the mentality or the nostalgia of living in big cities at that time and the second is the birocracy. There are other reasons as well but I noticed these two main reasons [...].

I asked him if he thought that he could improve the situation. The official answered:

I will tell you [...]. Before, in order to get your papers in Himara, you had to pay 1000 Lek<sup>44</sup> to the government and 3000 Lek to the Bashkia (municipality). Now you have to pay half because you still have to pay to the government. So in this way we help people to bring their papers to Himara. But still it is not right. Before we were cca. 10.000 and now we are 11.322. There is cca. 1.000 more people in two years. 10%, this is not bad! And most of these people that used to live in Dhermi (during communism) live nowadays in Greece. They are not interested in Dhermi. While those who used to live in other areas and now live in Dhermi are much, much more interested, like my father Andrea, Spiros, Jorghos [...] most of the people [...]. Most of the people who lived in Dhermi until 1990 are less interested in Dhermi than those who lived outside the village. Those people who used to live here do not care. They are not interested. They do not live and vote in Dhermi.

I asked: But how you are going to deal with them as they are still somehow important for you, at least in the times of elections?

I think it has to do with the mentality and their education. Because most of them used to work on the farm (in cooperative). They are not aware of anything. As they cannot think that they can change things they have expectations only from themselves.

In the words of the official the Himarë/Himara municipality is trying to reduce the discrepancy between the numbers of those registered and those that actually inhabit the place by lessening the costs of registration from the side of municipality. The situation, however, improved only slightly. One of the reasons is a long process of registration at the Municipality of Vlorë. Another reason lies in the people themselves. The official assumes two motives for the people’s indifference. One of them might be nostalgia or yearning for the times of

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<sup>44</sup> 1000 Lek is 8.19 Euro according to the exchange rate from August 11, 2007.

communism when they lived in places that provided them with a higher social status and a privilege of being a citizen. In the period of communism this privilege was very much conditional on economical well-being as there was significant difference in living between rural and urban areas. In the rural areas people had no other possibility but to work in agricultural cooperatives. There was also a shortage of goods. Many people complained that often they could not even get bread. In the city, especially in Tirana, the opportunities were greater, although there too the availability of goods was to some extent restricted. Another motive for people's indifference is that they are not interested in "community" matters but keep their extensive involvement in those related to their families. This should be the consequence of their poor education and their history of working in the cooperative. People do not believe that they can change things simply by reregistrating themselves at the place where they nowadays live and by participating at local elections. In the words of the official: the "uneducated farmers" are unfit for political engagement.

One of the reasons why the municipality of Himarë/Himara is trying to encourage re-registration of local people who nowadays live in one of the villages of Himarë/Himara municipality but who in the period of communism lived in other places of Albania is to improve the number of people living in this area and enlarge the number of the potential voters who are important especially at local elections. As it can be noticed from population graphs given in the appendix (see Appendix 4) the overall number of people increased only slightly after 1990 mainly because of the incoming population originating from other areas of Albania. Local people often express their feelings of abandonment as most of the youth migrated to Greece. Besides, they are anxious about the newcomers and they express fear that they are going to "die out". Some of their fears are connected to the landownership that might come into the hands of the newcomers. The increasing number of the newcomers is also worrying from the political point of view as they are not going to support the local politicians and the Human Rights Party<sup>45</sup>, which is supporting the Greek minority in Albania.

Different kinds of official counting in Dhërmi/Drimades, which include some people and not others, suggest how different statistical perspectives shape what the particular people and places are believed to be. For example, from the state's perspective the number of residents shapes an image of depopulation in Himarë/Himara area. From the perspective of the local

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<sup>45</sup> In 2002 the candidate Vasilis Bollanos of the Union of the Human Rights Party won the local elections in Himarë/Himara (KEAD).



municipality this number reflects the discrepancy between the number of residents and the number of inhabitants and shows the gaps filled with the municipal effort to encourage the re-registration of the inhabitants by lessening the costs of re-registration. In terms of Sarah Green this shows how the statistical accounts are the “outcome of negotiations, where one version of how things seem wins out another version”<sup>46</sup> (Green 2005: 161). Green points out that “how things are made to seem through statistical accounts can have a direct effect on how things are made to be” (Green 2005: 161).

Various ways of counting also shape the numbers of members of the Greek minority in Albania, which again include some people and places and not others. The Albanian law on minorities acknowledges the rights of Greek minority to those people who live in the areas which are recognised as minority zones according to the “latest” census of the Population and Housing Census of the Statistic Department from 1989 (later renamed as the Institute of Statistics INSTAT in 1993). The minority zones at that time conjoined 40 villages of the district of Gjirokastrë, 35 villages of Sarandë district, 16 villages of Delvinë district and 3 villages of Përmet district (see *Minorities: The Present and the Future* 2003: 11-12 and *Demographic Atlas of Albania* 2003: 99). As the census was done in the period of communism (four years after the death of the communist leader Enver Hoxha and during the presidency of Ramiz Alia, 1985-1992), it included only the numbers on the officially acknowledged Greek minority at that time. In 2001 the population census was repeated, but questions on the nationality and religion were not included (see First report submitted by the Republic of Albania, under article 25, paragraph 1, of the Council of Europe, 2001). There are large discrepancies between minority population numbers estimated by the Albanian statistics and the Greek organisations (Kondis and Manda 1994: 16-18, Bos and UNPO Mission 1994: 1-2, Pettifier 2001: 5-6, *Minorities: The Present and the Future* 2003: 12, partly also Green, 2005: 170, de Rapper & Sintès, 2006: 37). For example, while the general census of 1989 counted 58.758 inhabitants living in minority zones, the Greek organisation Omonia counted about 150.000 to 200.000 minority members (*Minorities: The Present and the Future* 2003: 12, see also the CIA Factbook <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/al.html>, last viewed September 3, 2007). The reason for such differences is that

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<sup>46</sup> At this point Green adds that “there will always be other versions available, so whatever reality the accounts currently show is inherently contested and could be overturned tomorrow” (ibid.). She continues that statistics is often embedded by “nonstatistical elements” that once again constitute these accounts “as always already embroiled with other things” (Green 2005: 162).

the Albanian statistics took into account only the inhabitants of Greek “nationality” living in 99 villages which were part of the defined “minority zones” , while the Greek figures include all people who declared their religious affiliation as Christian Orthodox (Pettifier 2001: 5-6, de Rapper & Sintès 2006: 37).

## **1.9. Family, Lineages and Clans**

In this chapter I will address the village kinship organisation, which I do not define as fixed and stable but as continuously changing with regards to socio-cultural, historical, political, and economic context. But in spite of that, numerous local people presented their kinship as if being fixed and strictly determined while in their daily practices they often shifted and managed it in the ways they found appropriate and/or useful.

My field data are based on the population census, which I conducted in 86 households of the central hamlet in Dhërmi/Drimades, 5 in Gjilek/Gjilekates, 9 in Kondraqa and 29 in Palasa. According to the genealogical memory most of the local people can trace their descent back to the third, rarely to the fourth generation of ancestors. They provided me with insight into the local representations of their marriage and hereditary systems. With at least one of the members of each household I held a longer conversation about: the lives of their family members, their travel and movements, their problems and hopes. With some of the people, particularly those whom I befriended, discussions were repeated, on many occasions evolving from spontaneous chats. In contrast to what people said about themselves, most of what they really did was revealed to me during twelve months of my sojourn in the village. Being part of their everyday life, people’s multiple activities and their deeper meanings often seemed to me as being hidden behind the curtains of their daily routine. But yet again, whenever I left the village for at least some days, when I went either to the neighbouring village of Palasa or to the nearest city of Vlorë, where I was conducting a smaller part of my research, I became quite aware of differences as well as similarities in the rhythms of daily life in these places compared to those in Dhërmi/Drimades.

While the literature on kinship structures in Greece is extensive (e.g. Campbell, 1964, Peristiany 1965, du Boulay 1974, Herzfeld 1985, Iossifides 1991, Just 1991et.al.) this is not the case with the studies of kinship in southern Albania. In their works, many classic (e.g.

Durham 1909, Hasluck 1954, Whitaker 1976 and 1981), as well as contemporary scholars (e.g. Sotiri 2001, Rusha 2001, de Waal 2005) either only describe or briefly mention the kinship in Albania. While Durham, Hasluck and Whitaker mainly talk about kinship in northern Albania, other scholars listed above do not put any particular attention to its analysis and/or comparison between the regions. One of the main reasons for this is the view that 45 years of communism with its methods of collectivisation of the land, enhancement of controlled movements in the areas inhabited by the Greek-speaking population, suppression of religion, planned industrialisation, and with the communist ideas of unity and equality of Albanian citizens, caused numerous terms of kinship terminology (such as *ikoyenia/familje*, *soi/fis*, *çeta/varka*) either changed gradually dissapered.

### 1.9.1. *Ikoyenia or Familje*

In my discussion about the kinship structure in Dhërmi/Drimades I mainly refer to ethnographical studies of the neighbouring regions with which, according to both historiography and people's personal accounts, the inhabitants of Dhërmi/Drimades used to have contacts. I refer to studies from Northern Epirus (Campbell 1964, Iossifides 1991), Crete (Herzfeld 1985), Inner Mani (Seremetakis 1991) as well as to some other parts of Greece (Just 1991). Dhërmian/Drimadean kinship classification in theory corresponds to that of Inner Mani, where the inhabitants maintain bilateral kinship classification with a strong patrilineal bias. The matriline is regarded as a weaker bond.

Following from my conversations with several local people, the basic unit of Dhermian/Drimadean social organisation is the family *ikoyenia/familje*. The question "*piounou eisai;/e/i kujt je ti?*" (whose are you) is one of the questions that the villagers frequently ask the "stranger" for whom they anticipate that are coming from the village (for a similar account in southern village of Epirus see Iossifides 1991: 137; and for Rrenshen in northern Albania see de Waal 2005: 99). This kind of a question is posed in order to identify somebody with the particular *ikoyenia/familje* and its pertaining social, economic and political position in the village with which the person's identification seems to be closely connected.

The etymological meaning of *ikoyenia* derives from the word *ikos*, meaning a house or household, and *yenia*, meaning birth, generation or lineage (see Iossifides 1991: 137). Theoretically, in Dhërmi/Drimades the meaning of *ikoyenia/familje* conjoins the house or

household (*ikos* or *spiti*) with the name of the father's lineage (*yenia*). Particularly in the past but also nowadays, the child is considered to belong to his father's *ikoyenia/familje*. Ideally, the latter is embraced a married couple, their children, husband's parents and his unmarried siblings. They live under the same roof, share meals prepared by the women, goods and money brought and earned by the working members of the *spiti* (house or household). Nowadays, due to the massive migrations *ikoyenia/familje* usually conjoins only the elderly couple living under the same roof. Two of them share meals prepared by her and money which they both acquire from pensions and remittances. They receive the latter from their children who live in emigration. The child who sends them money is usually their son who is going to inherit their house. He visits his parents at least once per year or once in two years (depending on his and his wife's vacation possibilities) and takes care of them. When they get sick, they come to Greece to see their doctor and they live together with their son, daughter in-law and grandchildren for that time. There are some cases when an elderly couple is taken care of by more sons or sometimes by a son and a daughter of whom one or both live in emigration. In these cases all of them are potential heirs. Whereas one meant is going to inherit the house the other will inherit a plot of land. Sometimes the children will share the house. When an elderly couple does not have male heirs but only female ones, one of the daughters and her husband usually take care of her parents and inherit the house when they die. In the above mentioned cases the elderly couple often, though not necessarily, considers their children who are taking care of them and are going to inherit the house as being part of their *ikoyenia/familje*. They recognise that their children can live a more prosperous life in emigration.

As Just (1991: 124) suggests, the meaning of family is context-sensitive and "sloppy". In its narrower sense in Dhërmi/Drimades *ikoyenia/familje* implicitly refers to the members of household who coinhabit the house (*spiti*). As it has already been said *ikoyenia/familje* nowadays also refers to the members who once shared the same household, but have, because of better economic opportunities left. They nevertheless still financially take care of each other. The meaning of family "always escapes the boundaries of the household" (ibid.). Dhërmi/Drimadean man would never consider his parents or brothers and sisters to be outside his family only because they do not reside together. In practice the term *ikoyenia/familje* often includes one's bilateral and affinal kin, down to the second or third cousin. In order to illustrate the shifting meanings of *ikoyenia/familje*, let me give some examples.

Ksenofon, born in 1955 has been living in his natal village of Dhërmi/Drimades for all of his life. When he was 29 years old, he married a 10-years younger Krisanthis born in Palasa. After they were married, Krisanthis moved to the *spiti* of Ksenofon's father where she lived together with her husband (*andras*) and her in-laws (*petherika*). Ksenofon's elder brother (*adelfos*) lived with his wife and children in Vlorë while his sister (*adelfi*) lived in the neighbouring hamlet together with her husband and *petherika*. In 1985 Krisanthis delivered their first son and three years later their daughter Eleni. Soon after Eleni's birth Ksenofon's father (*pateras*) died. In 1991 Ksenofon's brother and sister migrated to Greece together with their spouses and children. Ksenofon, his mother (*mitera/mana*), wife (*ghineka*) and children (*pedia*) stayed in the village. In 1998 they moved to a new house, which was built next to the old one where Ksenofon's mother still lives nowadays. The houses share the same courtyard. Though they live separately, Krisanthis and Eleni take care of Ksenofon's mother, who is ill and needs assistance. Besides that, Krisanthis and Eleni took care of Krisanthis' parents (*zgonis*) and Eleni's grandparents (grandfather *papus* and grandmother *yava*) who live in Palasa on their own. In the autumn of 2005, when Krisanthis' father got sick, her brother, his wife and the child returned to Palasa in order to take care of both of their parents (see Figure 3). After Krisanthis' father will die, her brother is going to inherit his house. In January 2006 Eleni married a co-villager and moved to his *spiti* in Greece, where she now lives together with her husband and *petherika*. Their marriage was arranged between Ksenofon and the groom's (*ghambros*) father. Since Eleni moved to Greece, she calls her parents on the phone at least once per week. In summer season she visits them together with her husband, whose parents have a house in Dhërmi/Drimades. Ksenofon's son is still single and lives on his own in the guesthouse, which Ksenofon built on the coast in 1997. Although he lives on his own, he still eats meals together with his father, mother and grandmother. Ksenofon expects him to marry in the nearest future and take care of him and Krisanthis just as they are taking care of Ksenofon's mother now.

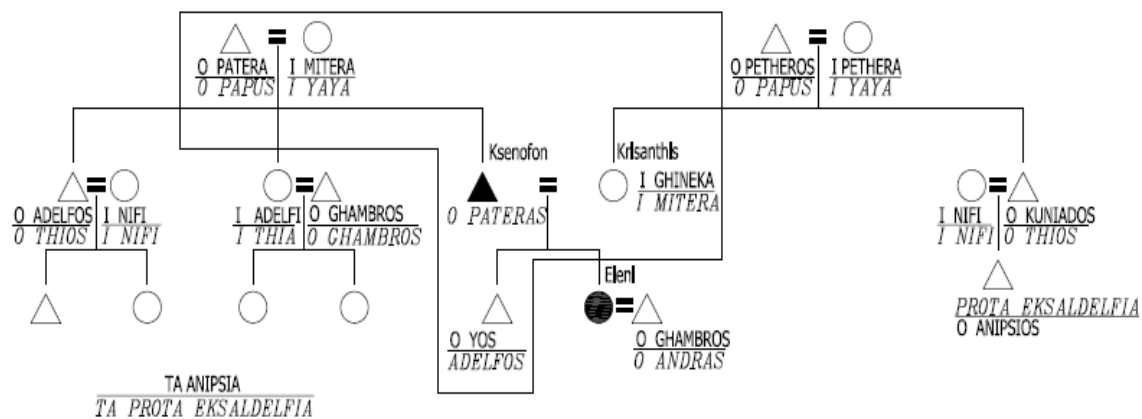


Figure 3: Family. The underlined words are the referent names of Ksenofon. The words in italics are the referent names of Eleni.

Ksenofon's uncle, thios Vasilis (Ksenofon's FB), born in 1928 in Dhërmi/Drimades and Vasilis' wife Urania, born in 1932 also in Dhërmi/Drimades are living now in a new house on their own. They built it together with their son Vangjelis who is married and lives in emigration in Greece. Besides Vangjelis, they have two daughters who are married and live in Greece too. Vasilis and Urania moved to Dhërmi/Drimades in 2002 when they started to build a house. Before that they lived in Greece where they moved together with their son yos, daughter in-law nifi (literally bride) and grandchildren (eghonia) in 1992. After 10 years of living in the same apartment (spiti) in Athens together with Vangjelis, his wife and children, Vasilis and Urania decided to return to Albania, while others stayed in Greece. Vangjelis and his wife are not planning to return to Albania at least until their children grow up. Vasilis and Urania know that and approve their decision, as they are aware that life in a desolated village cannot offer their son, daughter in-law and grandchildren good prospects for the future. They talk to Vangjelis, his wife and children on the phone at least twice per week. They often talk to their daughters and their children too. Whenever Vasilis and Urania get sick, they hire a taxi that drives on the route between Himarë/Himara villages and Athens at least twice per week and go to stay with their son in Athens, where they see their doctor. During their stay in Greece, Vangjeli and his wife are taking care of them. Though Vasilis in general considers Vangjelis, his wife and children as one ikoyenia/familje, with whom he shares the ownership of the house and from whom he occasionally receives the money to do additional work on the house, he also sees them as an independent family with different values and aspirations than he had when he was younger. In reply to my question if he expects his son to return, after he and his wife will not be able to take care of themselves anymore, Vasilis said that Vangjelis is

the owner of his house and he will do whatever he will think to be appropriate for him, his wife and children. Whenever Vasilis and Urania's daughters come to Albania, they visit their parents. Before their daughters got married, Vasilis and Urania considered them as part of *ikoyenia/familje*, but now they are considered as belonging to their husband's *ikoyenia/familje* (see Figure 4), together with their children. In theory the children of Vangjelis and children of Vangjeli's sisters are not allowed to marry as they are considered to be first cousins and one *ikoyenia/familje*. In practice this rule extends down to the second, rarely to the third cousin, which means that it includes the children of Vangjelis and his sister's children.

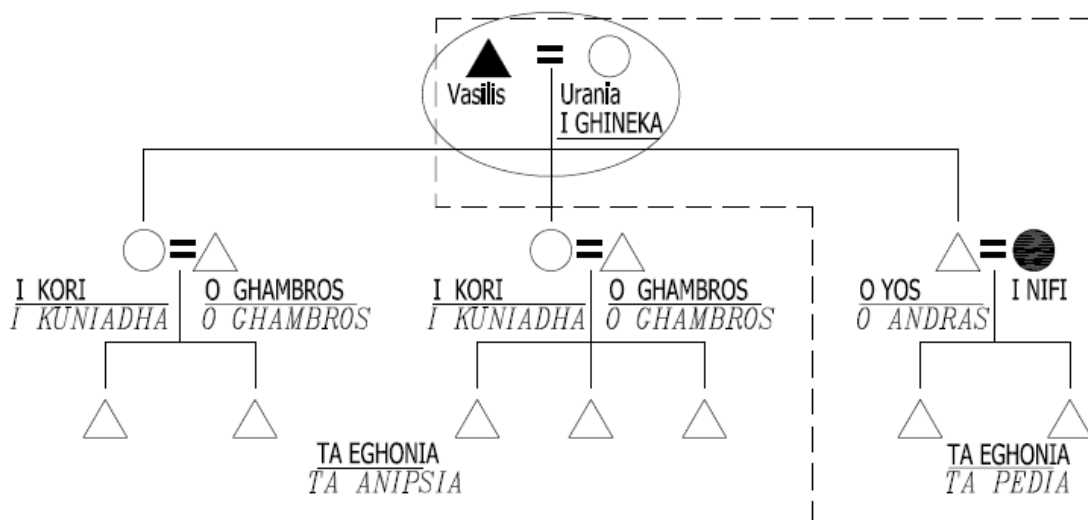


Figure 4: Shifting families. The underlined words are the referent names of Vasilis. The words in italics are the referent names of *i nifi*.

The given examples illustrate how the meaning of *ikoyenia/familje* can shift. Vasilis on the one hand considers his son Vangjelis, his daughter-in-law and grandchildren, who are living in Greece for several years as independent *ikoyenia/familje*. On the other hand, when he discusses the property and heritage of the house he built together with Vangjelis, he defines them as being part of his *ikoyenia/familje*. According to Vasilis statements, belonging to same *ikoyenia/familje* is on the one hand defined by locations of one's residence and by shared property on the other.

In contrast to his uncle, Ksenofon lives in the village for all of his life. Together with his wife they live in a new house, located next to his old house, where his mother (*mitera/mana*) lives alone. Ksenofon's son lives in the guest house on the coastal part of the village. Although

they live in separate locations in the village, they share common meals prepared by Ksenofon's wife (*ghineka* or *sizighos*, spouse) and money earned by Ksenofon, his son and wife. Thus Ksenofon considers them as same *ikoyenia/familje*. Not a long time ago Ksenofon's daughter (*kori*) Eleni was considered to be a part of his *ikoyenia/familja* too. As Eleni now holds her husband's (*andras* or *sizighos*) second name and lives in his household together with her in-laws in Greece, Ksenofon does not consider her to belong to his *ikoyenia/familje* anymore. Eleni is now related to them more in terms of obligation (feeling that she has to do it), as she is keeping regular contacts with them by the phone and during the occasional visits. In a similar manner her mother, Krisanthis, who holds the second name of Ksenofon's *ikoyenia/familje* is in terms of obligation related to her parents (*zgonis*) and brother who lives in Himara. In the period when her brother was in Greece, Krisanthis took care of her parents, with Eleni often helping her. When Krisanthis' father or Eleni's grandfather got sick, Krisanthis' brother returned to his natal village. Krisanthis' brother, his wife or (Krisanthis' *nifi*), and child (Krisanthis' nephew *anipsios*) are affinal kin to Krisanthis' husband and thus they are in particular contexts (such as a possibility of unwanted marriage, for example) considered to belong to extended *ikoyenia/familje*. Krisanthis' daughter is thus not supposed to marry her first cousin (*proto eksadelfos*). In a similar way Krisanthis' and Ksenofon's daughter and son cannot marry children of Ksenofon's brother.

### 1.9.2. *Soi* or *Fis*

Whenever people of Dhërmi/Drimades discuss about clusters of *ikoyenia/familje* which share the same second name, they use the term *soi/fis*. Although the mentioned terms are used interchangeably and have the same meaning, they are defined differently in the studies of other authors. In classic article on Greek kinship Campbell (1963 and cf. 1964: 36-58), who worked among Sarakatsani in Greece, defines *soi* as bilateral kindred. In a similar manner *soi* is defined by du Boulay (1974: 144fn.) in Ambeli. In Glendi of Crete Herzfeld (1985) notes that *soi* is used synonymously to patrigroup, while in Spatohori *soi* is defined agnatically and conjoins two or more people who share common surname but do not know precisely the nature of their relationship (Just 1991: 121).

While the meaning of *soi* is often related to patriline or patrigroup, *fis* is defined as a clan. In Mirdita of Northern Albania de Waal (2005: 158, 210) defines *fis* as a clan that conjoins the cluster of brotherhoods (*vllazni*) who share the same name. The local scholar Spiro Rusha



(2001: 119) of Qeparo, mentions *fis* as a cluster of brotherhoods (*vëllazërisë*) while the linguist Natasha Sotiri (2001: 5) notes that in their day-to-day conversation people often refer to brotherhood *vellazëri* or neighbourhood *mehallë*, its meanings corresponding to that of *fis*.

According to my conversations with the local people of Dhërmi/Drimades, *soi/fis* consist of patrilineal descendants who share the common ancestor, surname, the “same blood” or *ena ema*<sup>47</sup>, and some plots of land such as forests and pastures. The meaning of *soi/fis* can be initially compared to *yenia* of Inner Mani, which includes “all patrilineal descendants of an apical ancestor as well as other blood and fictive kin assimilated into the line of descent” (Seremetakis 1991: 25).

According to my census data, the central hamlet Dhërmi/Drimades nowadays conjoins 39 *soia* (pl.) or *fise* (pl.). The largest *soi/fis* includes eight *ikovenia/familje*<sup>48</sup>. Because of migrations many *soia/fise* cannot be exactly traced in the village anymore. The village hierarchy only partly corresponds to the number of families that comprise particular *soia/fise*. Its social capital is more related to the village hierarchy than its size.

Especially in the past different *soia/fise* were situated in the same neighbourhood. Thus even nowadays many neighbourhoods of the central hamlet Dhërmi/Drimades as well as Gjilek/Gjilekates conjoin houses belonging to at least three *soia/fise* (neighbourhood *Ag. Strongli* or *Zhupa/Zhupej* conjoins the houses of Zhupa, Kuçulli and Dimitri *soia/fise*; neighbourhood *Vreto/Vretej* embraces Vreto, Treko, Kumi, Leka, Ramo, Tavaj, Gjipopulli, Gjoni, Stramarko, Caci and Boi *soia/fise*). When the majority of houses of a particular neighbourhood belong to one *soi/fis* the name of the neighbourhood can bear one, two or even three names: the name of the church (*Ag. Strongli*) and a particular *soi/fis* (*Zhupa/Zhupej*) that is prevailing; the name of the church (*Ag. Dimitris*) and its topographical characteristic (*Qëndra* centre); topographical characteristics alone (*Rruga Tashtme*, nowadays road, or *Katomerat*, downhill, or *Shanes*, particular grass).

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<sup>47</sup> The “same blood” is explained as analogous to the blood flowing in the veins of all male members and their children of particular patriline. The opinions about the role of the female blood are not united. When questioning about the meaning of the blood and its relatedness to a male or a female kin group one of the locals gave an interesting answer. He explained that the man is the one who gives to his son “genes” and blood while the woman gives him only the blood. Furthermore, he offered a comparison between a man and a woman whereby the former is the creator and the latter only a carrier.

<sup>48</sup> One *soi/fis* of the central hamlet Dhërmi/Drimades conjoins 8 *ikovenia/familje*, one *soi/fis* has 4 *ikovenia/familje*, 4 *soia/fise* have 3 *ikovenia/familje*, 5 *soia/fise* have 5 *ikovenia/familje* and 6 *soia/fise* have 2 *ikovenia/familje*.

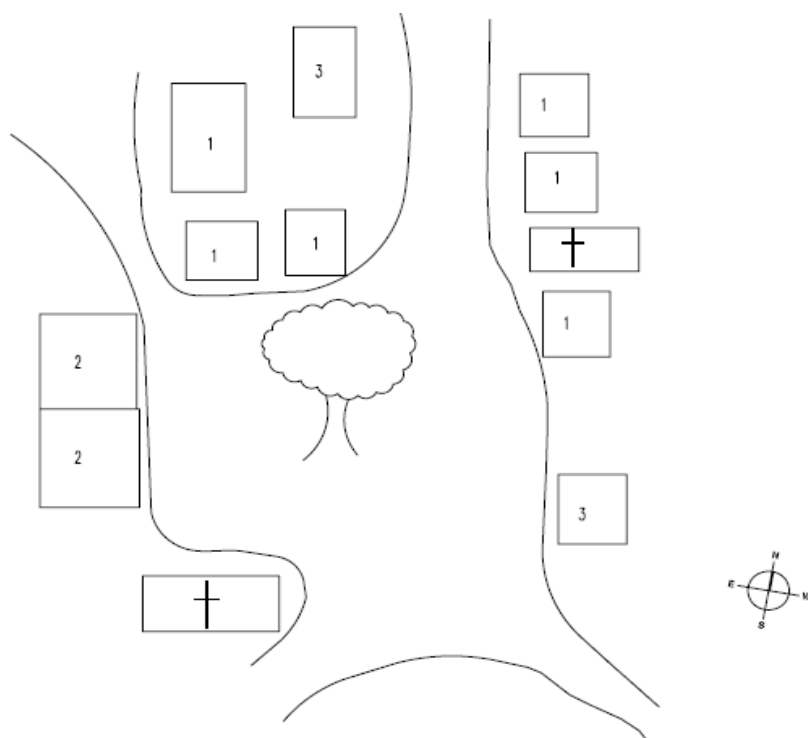


Figure 5. Part of a sketch-map of *Zhupa/Zhupej* or *Ag. Strongli* in Dhërmi/Drimades as it was in 2005. Numbers indicate *soi/fis*. Key: 1. Zhupa; 2. Kuçulli; 3. Dimitri.

In the past few years many new houses were built in Dhërmi/Drimades with the help of remittances. Most of them were built by elderly couples (born between 1920 and 1940), who had for some years lived in emigration in Greece and partly also by the emigrants (born after 1945) who continue to live in Greece. They were put up mainly in the neighbourhoods situated in the outskirts of the village and left uninhabited. For example, the neighbourhood Allonja in the central hamlet, which used to be uninhabited, nowadays conjoins many new houses, built by elderly returnees. Similar are Asfaqija and *Rruga Tashtme/Katomerat/Shanes*, where used to be fields before a few houses were built in the seventies. Nowadays they conjoin several new houses (Asfaqija 15 houses and *Rruga Tashtme/Katomerat/Shanes* 8 houses). Differing from the old neighbourhoods of the central hamlet (Ag. Dimitri, Zhupades/Zhupej or Ag. Strongli, Gerzina, Vretades/Vretej), where the houses of particular *soi/fis* are located next to each other, the houses in the new neighbourhoods (Asfaqija, *Rruga Tashtme/Katomerat/Shanes* and Allonja) are spread around and do not follow the *soi/fis* pattern of old times.

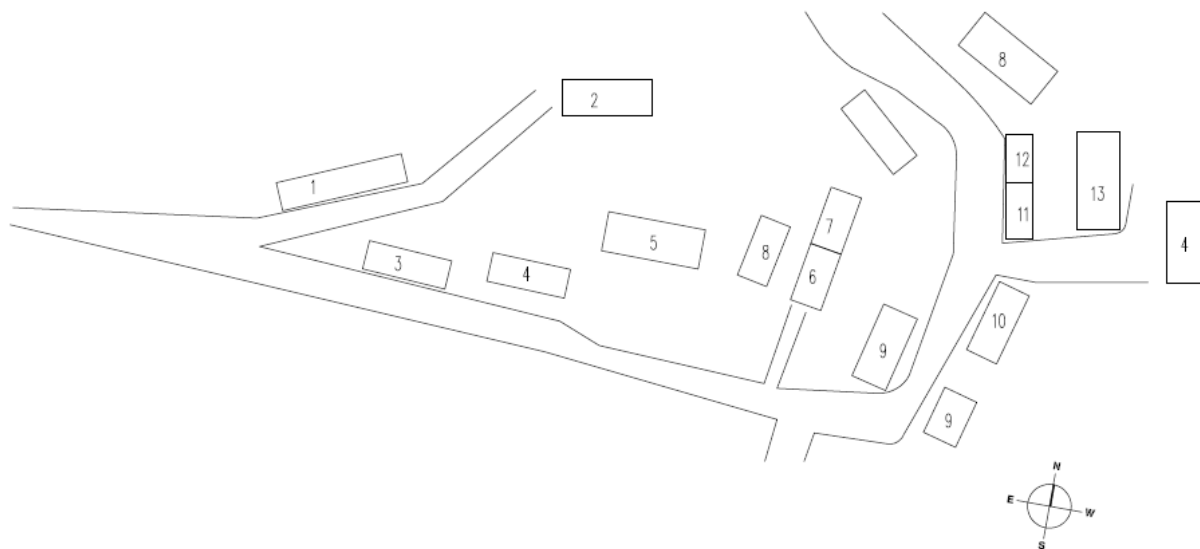


Figure 6. Part of a sketch-map of *Asfaqija e Siperme* in Dhërmi/Drimades in 2005, sketched by Marko Gjipopulli. Numbers indicate houses whose owners belong to a particular *soi/fis*. Key. 1. Beli; 2. Kumi; 3. Dhrako; 4. Bixhili; 4. Stramarko; 5. Iliadhi; 6. Ramo; 7. Jorgji; 8. Vreto; 9. Dhima; 10. Gjoni; 11. Çulla; 12. Ruci.

### 1.9.3. *Çeta* or *Varka*

In Dhërmi/Drimades *soi/fis* is a part of a larger “conglomerate” called *çeta* or *varka*, which tends to be locally dispersed. Literally *çeta* means a military troop, while *varka* means a boat. When asking about the local meanings of these terms, some villagers offered an explanation related to Albanian language, saying that *varka* should be actually pronounced as *barka* which means the same as its Greek counterpart. Other villagers noted that *varka* refers to *barku*, the belly. Considering all local explanations together it is most probable that the meaning of *çeta/varka* corresponds to that of a clan<sup>49</sup>, bearing the name of a common ancestor, to which many of the locals cannot trace direct connections anymore. Many villagers noted that *çeta/varka* tends to be exogamous.

<sup>49</sup> In my thesis the meaning of a clan coincides with the lineage theory which defines it as a descent group that is linked to a common apical ancestor though its members do not know their precise links to the ancestor (see Seymour-Smith 1986: 38).

Martin Berishaj in his work *The Hidden Power of Besa*, uses the term tribe instead of the term clan (Berishaj 2004: 23). The former is defined according to the Skenderbeg’s Kanun that is valid mainly in the North of Albania (cf. Elsie 2001, de Waal 2005, Vickers 2001). In southern Albania, especially in the area of Labëria, it is valid the Kanun of Labëria (Elezi 2006) and the Kanun of Papa Zhuli (Backer 2003). Whilst Elezi notes that in Himarë/Himara area prevails the Kanun of Labëria, Jorgji writes that in Himarë/Himara rules the Kanun of Papa Zhuli (<http://www.himara.eu/dhermi/guide-al.html>). In contrast to Kanun of Labëria that issued recently (in 2006) there is no written account on the Kanun of Papa Zhuli. As there is a general absence of the comparative literature, I will mainly use local terms and explanations of them as they appear in local discourse and practice.

On several occasions the local people could not even recall the name of their *çeta/varka*. Among 86 *ikoyenia/familje* of the central hamlet, by which I spoke with at least one member, representatives of 40 *ikoyenia/familje* could recall the name of their *çeta/varka*, representatives of 41 *ikoyenia/familje* could recall only the names of *soi/fis* grouped in their *çeta/varka*, while they could not recall its name. Only representatives of 5 *ikoyenia/familje* have never heard for the term. While asking about the names of *çeta/varka* 7 names were mentioned, namely: Muçulkates, Koknates or Kokdedates or Thodorkoknates, Buates, Draknates, Alades and Gjiknates. When people tried to classify their *soi/fis* in a particular *çeta/varka*, they were often not united in their opinions. They could not agree which *soi/fis* belongs to a particular *çeta/varka*. Therefore it seems that this kind of social group does not represent an important part of the village organisation anymore. The claim about the exogamy of *çeta/varka* seems to be a rhetorical one, because numerous villagers cannot recall the name of *çeta/varka* or the names of *soia/fise*, which compose it. Considering that, the exogamy is probably hardly being performed at all in the village practice.

In other villages of Himarë/Himara area like Palasa and Qeparo, the term *çeta* does not even appear in local discourse. When asked about *çeta/varka*, the majority of people from Palasa never heard about it, while only four of them (4 villagers of 51) recalled the name of *çeta/varka* of their own *soi/fis*. Slightly different situation was in Qeparo, where the villagers used the term *mëhalla* (the word derives from a Turkish word, which means a neighbourhood) instead of *çeta/varka*. According to their explanations, the meaning of *mëhalla* is similar to that of *çeta/varka*. Some of the villagers from Qeparo explained that *mëhalla* was formed in times when Ottomans tried to conquer the villages of Himarë/Himara area for several times. It is said that different *soia/fise* that lived in vicinity joined together and formed *mëhalla*.

## ÇETA/VARKA: MUÇUL KATES

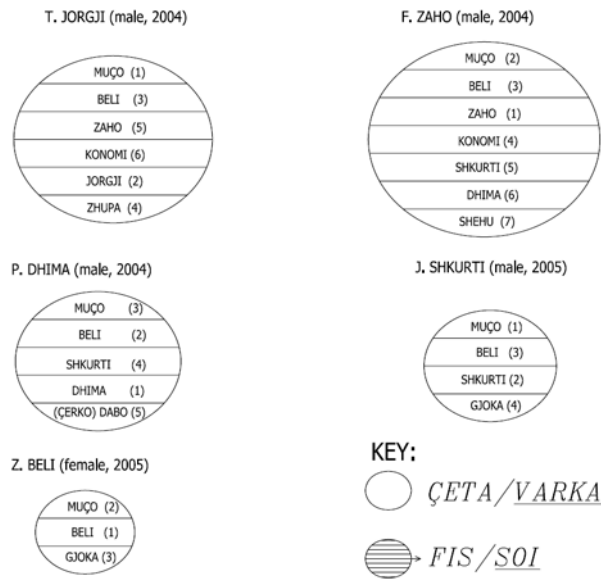


Figure 7. *Çeta/varka* Muçulkates

The size of the circle indicates the number of *soia/fise* and the length of *çeta/varka*. The names listed within the circle indicate particular *soi/fis*. The numbers in the brackets standing next to the names of *soi/fis* indicate the order of precedence according to which the individual listed the names of *soia/fise*.

The Figure 7. illustrates the names of particular *soi/fis* that belong to *çeta/varka* Muçulkates according to local people's testimonies (T. Jorgji, F. Zaho, P. Dhima, L. Shkurti and Z. Beli). I spoke with the people listed above between the years 2004 and 2005. They listed different numbers and partly also different names of *soia/fise*. Only two names, Muço and Beli, were recalled by all of them. This illustrates that villagers are not united in their knowledge about which *soia/fise* form parts of particular *çeta/varka*. The numbers in brackets indicate the order of precedence of particular *soia/fise*. Among the first names the villagers recalled were the names of their own *soia/fise*, or the one carrying the prefix of the Muçulkates *çeta/varka*, or the one called Beli *soia/fise*. T. Jorgji, who listed 6 *soia/fise* and L. Shkurti, who counted 4 of them, firstly recalled Muço *soia/fise*, secondly their own one and thirdly Beli *soia/fise*. F. Zaho recounted 7 *soia/fise* too. The first one was his own, the second Muço and the third Beli *soia/fise*. P. Dhima, who recalled 5 *soia/fise*, also listed his own *soia/fise* first, followed by Beli, Shkurti and Muço. Finally Z. Beli recalled 3 *soia/fise* with the first one being her own, the second Muço and the last Gjoka.

The given cases illustrate how villagers have forgotten which particular of *soia/fise* form constitute a particular *çeta/varka*. It seems that during 45 years of communism, which promoted homogenization of all the citizens of Albania, some kinship and social terms no

longer played a significant part in the social, political and economic life of the villagers. Terms such as *çeta/varka* were seldom used in their day-to-day talk. The numbers and names of *soia/fise* that form Muçulkates *çeta/varka* differ according to the individual asked. Each one lists different numbers and names of *soia/fise*. Moreover, the Figure 7. also shows that besides their own *soi/fis* the villagers were able to recall the name of *soi/fis* which constitutes a part of the *çeta/varka* name (e.g. Muço – Muçolkates).

#### 1.9.4. Marrying Within the Village

In the past, especially before the period of communism, the marriage in Dhërmi/Drimades tended to be endogamous, with the incest prohibition extending to the second or third cousin of bilateral kinship. When asked about the issue of endogamy within the village, people say: *Paputsia apo ton topo sou kai as enai balomenos*<sup>50</sup>, “shoes from your own place, even though they are patched”. The meaning of this saying denotes that it is better to marry a woman who originates “from the groom’s place” (*apo ton topo*) even if she is not a virgin. Marrying a virgin was once a highly preferred choice for each groom’s parents. The locals described that after the first night that the newlyweds spent together, the groom’s mother would check the bride’s bed sheets in order to see if there was any blood on them which would prove her virginity. The young couples often put the blood of a chicken or some other animal in order to avoid the shame and provide the necessary proof. The saying denotes that it is more important than virginity that the bride and the groom originate from the village and Himarë/Himara area, and are both of Christian Orthodox faith.

In communism, when the collectivisation of private property and the foundation of agricultural cooperatives in 1957 took place, numerous locals did not see any future in staying in the village and working for the cooperative. A good number of them enrolled in a technical school in Vlorë and got educated for mechanics, while others went on to study on the Universities of Tirana or Shkodra, as this was almost the only opportunity for migrating into urban cities. Because of these movements within the country, the number of intra-village marriages declined.

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<sup>50</sup> Also a panhellenic saying (see Herzfeld 2005: 232n)

Nowadays, with the growing number of village's youth emigrating to Greece and with landtenure issues becoming important, the number of intra-village marriages is on a rise again. Many of these marriages take place in Greece, where young couples continue to live after the wedding. The majority of them do not consider a permanent return to their natal village, because they do not see any future for their children there. The main reasons for this are the lack of jobs, bad education, undeveloped infrastructure, daily water and electricity cuts, etc.

Theoretically, after the marriage the woman joins her husband's household and adopts the second name (surname) of his patriline. I noticed also some cases when after marriage the man moved to the house or the land of his wife's father (in 5 of 86 *ikoyenia/familje*). If the woman originates from Dhërmi/Drimades and marries within the village, the villagers in their day-to-day conversation often refer to her by her maiden name or the surname of her patrigroup. Despite that she adopts the surname of her affinal group, she is never considered as fully belonging to the affines. Household members of her affines refer to her as *nifi*, the bride, for all her life, even after she delivers children. She is believed to come from *ali plevra*, the other side, to originate from other *ikoyenia/familje*. As I suggested in the subchapter on religion, her position is liminal and ambiguous, always divided between her affinal and paternal group. Particularly in the past, she had to be subordinated to her husband, his male agnates, and her mother-in-law (*i pethera*) and other female affines (*kuniadha*). In the past *nifi* did not bring a big dowry or *prika* to her husband's household. Her *prika* often consisted of a wooden chest or *kashela*, in which she usually put some new clothes and some items for her new bedroom (table cloths, bedclothes, curtains and sometimes a rug). I heard only about rare occasions when woman brought some land to her affinal group.

### 1.9.5. Inheritance

#### Tote/Përpara<sup>51</sup>

Most of marriages within the village are decided upon pre-marriage agreements between the male members of two *soia/fise*. These decisions are based on the need to keep the ownership of the land within the village and to preserve the Christianity of the area. Whilst the house and the agricultural land used to be inherited by the partible inheritance (in the cases of one male

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<sup>51</sup> In those times.

heir he inherited everything whilst in cases of two or more heir one of them got the house and the others were given parts of the land), the pasture land and small forests were inherited by the impartible principle (all the men of one *soi/fis* inherited a part of the land together). It is said that in the period before the communism a woman could not inherit the land, even when a man did not have any male heirs. In these cases the land went either to the church or to the deceased proprietor's brother and his sons. Regardless of this "rule" there were some cases when the bride "brought" the land to her husband's family. This was the case when her father did not have any male heirs and when her husband's parents either had many male heirs or did not have a lot of property.

According to the law

Nowadays the locals of Dhërmi/Drimades and other villages of Himarë/Himara area strive for decollectivisation of the land and other immovable property to be possessed according to the local consensus. After the acceptance of the Law on land in 1991 (Law No. 7501 on Land, 19 July 1991, see Appendix 5) it was decided that the land, which in the period of communism used to be national property and managed by the cooperatives, should be divided equally between the members of the cooperative. Thus every member who once worked for the cooperative should own a proportionate piece of the land. Its size should be conditioned by the size of the whole area where cooperative operated. In contrast to many other post-communist countries (Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic<sup>52</sup>) the decollectivisation in Albania was not resolved in terms of giving back the land to the previous owners. Five hundred years of domination of the Ottomans in most of the areas of Albania established the system of *çiftlik* or feudalism<sup>53</sup>. During the Ottoman domination some areas of Northern Mirdita and southern Albania (Himarë/Himara, Saranda, Delvina, Gjirokastra and partly Korça) managed to keep their autonomy in local administration and religion in exchange for paying taxes. Therefore the land of Himarë/Himara area remained in the hands of local population. In 1945, following the process of collectivisation and foundation of cooperatives, their land was taken away by the communist government. Between 1960 and 1970, in the period of in-country movements from

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<sup>52</sup> See Hagedorn (2002: 7-8).

<sup>53</sup> At the beginning of the 19th century the system of landownership used was the *çiftlik* or feudal land tenure system that was introduced by the Ottoman Empire. Within this system the majority of population was peasant-like. They were working either for private landlords or state and religious institutions who owned most of the land (Cungu and Swinnen 1999: 1).



rural to urban areas many of the local youth – in order to find a better future – moved out of the village. After 1990 several locals, both those who during the communism worked in the village cooperative and those who moved to the urban cities, migrated to Greece. Most of those who stayed behind and worked in the village cooperative have never returned to Dhërmi/Drimades.

The village of Qeparo is the only village in Himarë/Himara area where the Law on land 7501 was implemented. In other villages of Himarë/Himara area the law was implemented “in a creative manner” by returning the land to its previous proprietors (Çakalli, Papa, Dhima, Milo and Jorgji 2006: 217-36). This led to several conflicts within the families, *soia/fise* and the village community. A group of local intellectuals (Çakalli, Papa, Dhima, Milo and Jorgji 2006) comments that the law 7501 on the property in Albania leads to paradoxes<sup>54</sup>. According to the law the land should be given to the members who used to work in a cooperative. If the land was not given back (because it used for a public good) than it should be compensated by some other land of similar value than the previous one<sup>55</sup>. In practice, however, this case evolved several deviations. If a member of the cooperative, for example, used to own three kinds of properties before collectivisation – e.g. a house, agricultural land and pasture land – the law prescribed that he was given back only the house or the house and the pasture land whilst the agricultural land was given for the compensation to some other member of the cooperative (Çakalli, Papa, et.al. 2006: 229-230). As an answer to the growing problems considering the decollectivisation the government accepted the Law on restitution and compensation of the property (Law no. 9235) resulting in severe opposing views.

The local intellectuals provide three explanations to illustrate that the Law no. 9235 is not suitable. They explain that the law did not take into consideration: that Himarë/Himara was subjected to in and out-country movements throughout the centuries; that the members who entered cooperatives in 1957 tripled because of the pro-natalist policy in communism (see de Waal 1996: 171); and that the classification of the land (e.g. agricultural, pasture and coastal land or “free land”) legally changed its meaning (see Çakalli, Papa, et.al. 2006: 217-36). Because of incompetence of this law the Association of Himara Community together with the local intellectuals and Himarë/Himara municipality decided to abrogate the Law on land (no.

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<sup>54</sup> Similar anomalies and their consequences are noted by de Waal who conducted research on landownership in Mirdita of Northern Albania (de Waal 1996: 169-192).

<sup>55</sup> The compensation of the previous land proprietors can be financial or be done in nature. In case it is done in nature the previous land proprietor is compensated with the land of the equal value.

7501), amend the Law on restitution and compensation of property (no. 9235) and implement the consensus created by the population of Himarë/Himara area.

#### Kosta and Andrea: A Case Study

The late Kosta who was born in 1885 married within the village of Dhërmi/Drimades. His wife Maria (born 1890) who after the wedding moved to his house had only one sister Sofia (born 1875) and no brothers. Kosta and Maria had three children, two sons, Lambro (born 1909) and Mihailis (born 1911), and one daughter Eftihia (born 1913). Maria got seriously sick and Kosta spent a lot of money for her doctor. Kosta was forced to sell his house to a local man and they moved to Maria's father's house. Since 1920 they lived there together with Maria's sister Sofia whose husband died in 1915. Then she also moved back to her father's house.

Eight years after Maria's and Kosta's re-settlement Maria died. Kosta's first son Lambro married a local girl Katerina (born 1943) who moved to Kosta's house which was from then on signed to Lambro and his future heirs. Lambro and his wife took care of Sofia and Kosta until their death. Kosta's second son Mihailis also married a local woman and built a house of his own on the land that he inherited from Kosta which used to belong to Kosta's father. According to the local tradition Kosta's only daughter Eftihia did not inherit anything and after her wedding she moved to the house of her husband and her in-laws.

Besides Maria's father's house which was left to Lambro and the land that was given to Mihailis, their father Kosta also owned 800 square metres of arable land, located in vicinity of the house of his wife and 2000 square metres of non-arable land by the coast. The arable land was assigned to Lambro whilst the land on the coast remained a common propriety of both Lambro and Mihailis. By the end of the Second World War and at the beginning of communism Lambro's and Mihaili's land became a part of the national property which later in 1956 became managed by the agricultural cooperative. Both Lambro and Mihailis and their wives became members of the cooperative and worked there until their death. Lambro died in 1970. Thirteen years later his brother Mihailis was also dead.

Lambro had eight children, five sons and three daughters. In the 1960s Lambro's sons went to study to Tirana. After completing their studies they began to work in different places in

Albania. One stayed in Tirana, two went to Permet, one to Tepelena and another one to Saranda. Although they lived away from their natal village three of them married the women from Dhërmi/Drimades. Two sons married the women originating from other villages with Greek minority: Kosta, who held his grandfather's name, lived in Tepelena and married a woman from one of the villages of Gjirokastra and Janis who lived in Saranda married a woman from there. Lambro's three daughters married in the village and later, except for the eldest one, moved to Tirana.

Mihailis had four sons and one daughter. One of the sons died when he was twenty. The others followed the sons of his brother Lambro and went to study: the eldest went to Tirana and the other two to Vlorë. The daughter who was the youngest child stayed behind until she married one of the locals who studied in Tirana. After he applied for a job she moved to the capital. Mihailis' son who studied in Tirana got a job and also married a village girl. After their wedding she followed him to Tirana. The other two sons stayed in Vlorë where they married the girls of Muslim religion.

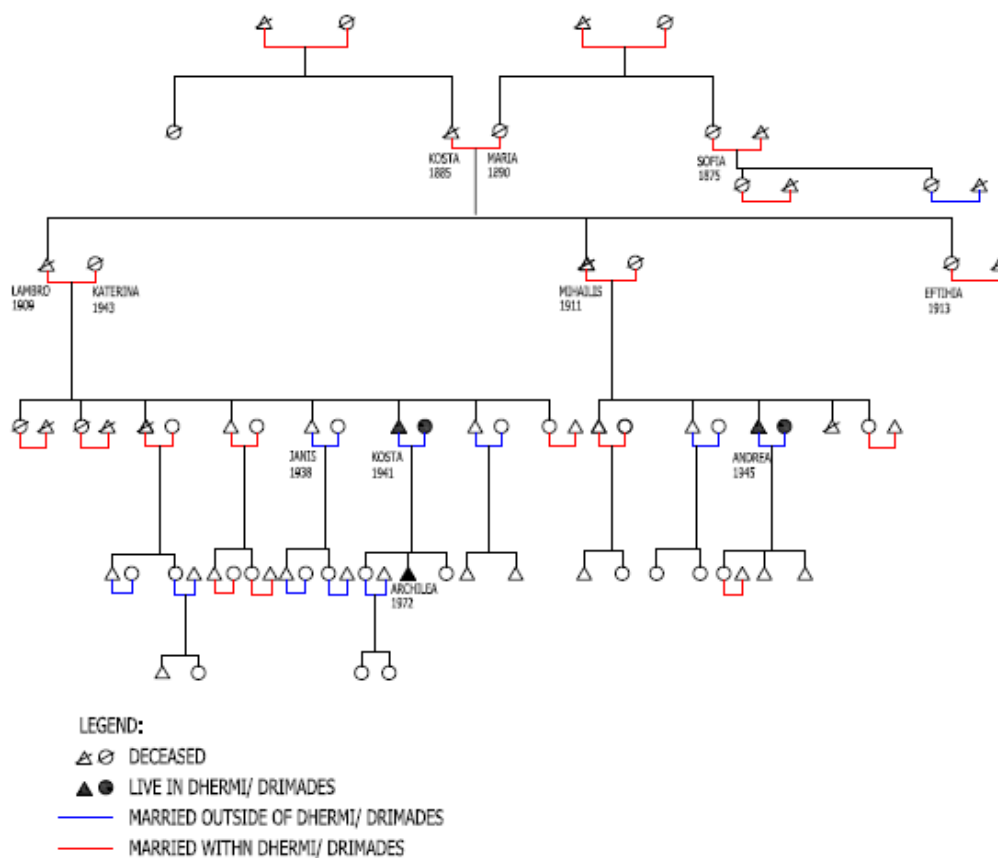


Figure 8. Kinship chart of Kosta and Andrea

After the demise of communism all children (male and female) of the late Lambro and Mihailis moved to Athens where they worked as physical workers. Within some years Mihailis' children gradually returned to Albania. One of them, Andrea, moved to Dhërmi/Drimades. The other two brothers and a sister settled in Tirana. In 2000 Andrea and his wife settled in Andrea's father's house which they share together with Andrea's brothers whenever they come to the village to spend their holidays. Following the agreement they divided their father's house in two parts. One part belongs to Andrea and his two sons who are still single. In winter they live in Greece, and in summer they live in Dhërmi/Drimades. The other part of the house belongs to Andrea's elder brother. The third brother agreed that he has the right to use all the houses whenever he comes to the village. In 2001 Andrea and his two sons decided to build a bar on the land that Andrea's father once owned together with his brother Lambro. Although the coastal land was not part of the decollectivisation process Andrea nevertheless built a bar there.

In 2003, Andrea's cousin Kosta, the son of Lambro, returned to the village. He came together with his wife Ariadne. Later on their only son Archilea (besides Archilea they have two daughters who both live in emigration) joined them. They settled in Maria's house which upon the agreement between five brothers belongs to Kosta's elder brother Janis. As Janis continues to live in Greece he allowed Kosta and his son Archilea to use the old house until they build a new one on the arable land (800 square metres) that used to belong to their father. Whilst one of the brothers died in Greece the other renounced the property as he had together with his children migrated to the United States. When Kosta returned to the village he claimed back half of the 2000 square metres of the coastal land where his cousin built a bar. Similarly to Andrea, Kosta and Archilea too had aspirations to build a bar on the coast and earn some money from tourism. Andrea was therefore forced to pull down his bar. Soon after that he built a small hotel on the half of the land that he owns together with Kosta. This was the reason for dispute between Kosta and Andrea in the first year (2003) of Kosta's return. During later years (in 2005) they became friends again, because of the political events and processes of decollectivisation and compensation of the property. They realised that it is better to settle a dispute within their own *soi/fis* than to leave it to the government and lose everything.

Kosta and Andrea decided to call their brothers and discuss the compensation which could be paid to their brothers after they earned enough with their business on the coast. In 2005 they both arranged the documents on land ownership at the Municipality of Himarë/Himara. Until now their case is settled but they are both aware that the future is uncertain. They know that they can be left without property on the coast either because the government is going to use it for compensation or because one of their brothers' heirs will claim the property back.

## **1.10. Summary**

This chapter led us through various kinds of shifting of people and places, their names, self-declarations, languages, religions, population numbers, social relations, lineages and heritage systems. All of them relate to a “single” place – the village of Dhërmi/Drimades. Different perspectives on and representations of the village are continuously formed and lived in the junction of social, political and historical events. The latter constitute meanings of places that appear sometimes as opposing and contested, sometimes as related and sometimes as blurred.

As many scholars (Lefebvre 1974, de Certeau 1984, Ingold 1993 and 2000, Gupta and Ferguson 2001, Green 2005) who studied unstable construction of space and/or place suggested, people and places are always constituted in a dynamic interrelation with other people and places. Or in terms of Green: “People are never alone with their places anywhere in the world; they never constitute places *as* places on their own” (Green 2005: 90, italics original). Throughout the history of spatial studies it has been shown that places are not characterized by their homogeneity but by a set of relations with various people and places. This chapter provides an insight of how the village of Dhërmi/Drimades is represented through various perspectives – official, local and even anthropological – that shape stories about the village and its people. These stories are formed around different perspectives through which the meanings of Dhërmi/Drimades are continuously reconstructed and re-arranged.

The chapter begins with the story of Himarë/Himara area, which has continually changed in size throughout the centuries. For example, from 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century it conjoined 50 villages, in the middle of 18<sup>th</sup> century 16 villages and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century only 8 villages. Besides the number of places, their names and population changed too. In the story about geomorphology

we learn about the village's placement between the coastal plain and the mountain range and about relatively high level of land degradation in the area. The latter has together with the historical, social and political events indicated continuous movements of people and places.

The story of land degradation is followed by with the story of shifting names which nowadays have their meanings imbued with different national and local interests: pro-Greek, pro-Albanian and pro-local. In their various attempts to define the "first" name of the village, the national and local historiographers and the village inhabitants promulgate the idea of their place as if it "originally" belongs either to Greece or to Albania. Both explanations actually represent their ideas about the nation state as being something "natural" and "authentic" and not as something ascribed.

Along with the various kinds of naming, the self declarations of the village inhabitants whose one or both parents originate from Dhërmi/Drimades or Himarë/Himara area are negotiated too. Different conceptualizations about who is local (*horianos* or "of the place"), who belongs to the place and who does not, are constituted through the processes of exclusion, othering, and generating the differences. The latter are grounded in people's relations and represent a part of the process of continuous reconfiguration of power relations. Thus, for example, the distinctions between Luka, Urania and Spiros are constructed upon their contacts with each other and are continuously reconfigured and negotiated. Differences and othering are on the one hand emphasized and generated in people's self-representations. On the other hand they are "set aside" in the course of a continuous process. For example, from the perspective of local people's representations and construction of differences Behar and Ana are considered as "newcomers" while from the perspective of everyday practice they are part of the village life.

The story of language denotes that throughout the millennia of people's movements and different rulings of the area (Iliryan and Epirot tribes, ancient Greeks, Romans, Byzantine, Ottoman, the kingdom of Zog, the Republic of Albania), different languages were said to be spoken (mainly Albanian and Greek) at different levels – when trading overseas, in school and church, at home, etc. According to English historian Winnifrith, it is hard to provide valid evidence for the first language of Dhërmi/Drimades and its area (2002: 47-48). But in spite of that, the national and local historians, politicians and village inhabitants are trying to

determine the “first” language of the people living in Dhërmi/Drimades and define their place and their belonging.

Like the language, religious practice with small churches and chapels defines the village place too. More than thirty small churches and chapels that are scattered around the village place show the traces of the village past and people’s religion. The latter is nowadays with the flow of social changes (emigration of young generation and immigration of Muslim families coming from different places throughout Albania) and political (from communism to democracy) becoming an important part of the processes of identity formation.

Different representations of the population number in Dhërmi/Drimades as well as different kinds of counting of the minority members give an insight in how some representations of people and places are politically constituted and how they shape the ways things are. Besides the people’s categorizations where some people and places stay undefined or “erased”, the variety of accounts on population numbers illustrate how the representations of people and places are constantly negotiated.

The last account about family, lineages and clans illustrates the differences and relations between what people say and what they do. In the course of social, political, economic and historical events, different comings and goings to and fro influenced local forgetting, reconstructing and negotiating of genealogies. The example of Kosta and Andrea illustrates how in a given political and economic situation (attempts for compensating the outsiders with the coastal land) people who either live or are continually returning to Dhërmi/Drimades create their space within which they define their property and belonging.

While the given chapter illustrates how unstable, shifting, but interwoven perspectives constitute place of Dhërmi/Drimades, the following chapter emplaces them in the historical context. In such a way it reveals to us something more about the “where” of this place.

## Chapter Two

### CONTESTED HISTORIES

[...] the world of humankind constitutes a manifold, a totality of interconnected processes, and inquiries that disassemble this totality into bits and then fail to reassemble it falsify reality. Concepts like ‘nation’, ‘society’, and ‘culture’ name bits and threaten to turn names into things. Only by understanding these names as bundles of relationships, and by placing them back into the field from which they were abstracted, can we hope to avoid misleading inferences and increase our share of understanding (Wolf 1997 [1982]: 3).

With these words, Eric Wolf comments how the “big concepts” have often been objectified and then turned into separate entities (such as West, Christian Europe). These “bits” have then been seen as homogeneous and fixed units by various scholars in social sciences and humanities. In doing so, scholars differentiate them from other entities and constitute the schemes of linear development where history often becomes a story of moral success of a particular entity. They create the world as a model or as a “global pool hall” in which the entities spin off each other like hard and round billiard balls (Wolf 1997: 5). Instead of differences that are often put forth and explored by contemporary scholars, it would actually be more revealing to explore the relations between cultures, societies, and histories. After all, “we all inhabit ‘one’ world”, where the contacts, direct or indirect, are inevitable. Societies, cultures and histories are not closed systems but “bundles of relationships”. They are continuously constituted by, while they at the same time continuously constitute, multiple networks of relations (see Wolf 1997: 19).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, alongside the spread of nationalisms and the formation of nation-states, the meaning of nation as a closed and homogeneous entity that conjoins people of the “same” language, culture and habits arose in the social, political and scientific discourse in Europe. With development of press various intellectuals – historians, folklorists, poets, writers, politicians and economists – played a crucial role in the process of homogenisation of the nation-states (see Anderson 1995: 54, cf. Kalčić 2006: 65-66). They have defined the nation-state as if it would have existed “since ever”.

According to Hobsbawm (2002 [1983]: 7) the bases of the nation-state are grounded in the reconstruction of the history and invention of tradition. History is part of the knowledge and



ideology of nation-state and is thus often used as a “legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion” as well as a symbol of struggle (Hobsbawm 2002: 12). Regardless of their objectives, historiographers often dismantle and reconstruct the images of the past which are part of scientific research as well as part of a broader public and political sphere.

In his book *Ours Once More* Herzfeld (1982) illustrates how the early Greek folklore studies constructed cultural continuity in order to promote the national identity. They assembled what they considered to be relevant cultural material and used it to state their national position. Folklore studies provided intellectuals with the “ammunition” for the political process of nation building (see Herzfeld 1982: 4-8). In one of his later works Herzfeld (1991) shows how folklore and history are understood by the local community living in the village of Rethemos on the Cretan Island. He suggests that people “consume” history and recast it with their own distinctive meanings (see Herzfeld 1991: 12). Such recasting pertains to “all the histories”, “official” historiography and oral history. Histories are continuously reconstructed, reconsidered and mythologized. “Histories range from highly personal and subversive to some that are broadly and obviously hegemonic. The contest among them is written in inhabited space” (1991: 13). Herzfeld shows how the past is often contested and how people “use their images of the past to constitute or reinforce the present positions” (1991: 55). All the histories are invented, yet one bearer might have the ability of enforcing one history over the other. In this manner Herzfeld discusses “multiple” histories, where the questions of “truth(s)” often lie in the realm of power relations.

Similar by Herzfeld, Ballinger (2003) too argues that power relations play an important part in the understanding of the histories. The power relations are caught in the ongoing process of reconfiguration and as such they continuously fluctuate regardless of the centre and periphery. Based on her field research in Julian March (on the borders between Italy, Slovenia and Croatia) Ballinger illustrates this ongoing reconfiguration of the past which constitutes a particular “terrain of historical production”, where in the given social, political and historical situation one configuration of meanings dominates the other and subordinates the alternative understandings of place (2003: 45). In particular social and political contexts the invention of history might imbue traces and material relicts which are “there” (2003: 26). Dead bodies, censuses, monuments, diaries, archaeological traces and other artefacts are often central to various claims of “continuity” and “autochthony”. Ballinger suggests that material relicts and

traces often reflect the ongoing history of contestations over the place which “continues to shape historical narratives and political claims to both purity and hybridity” (ibid.).

Claims of purity and hybridity also pertain to the contemporary historiographies in Albania. The idea of “purity” of the Albanian nation was promoted and disseminated already in the period of communism. The national historiographers of that period were rather nation-centred than interested in the world history (Schwandner-Sievers 2002: 14). Schwandner-Sievers (2002: 17) notes that the totalitarian project of passionate nationalist historiography constituted and recreated many myths of continuity, equality and uniqueness of people living within the territory of the Albanian nation-state. Any kind of objections against these myths would pertain to the “enemy of the people” in those years. Every national historiography, Albanian included, is thus often grounded on mythohistories<sup>56</sup> (Schwandner-Sievers 2002: 12-20) which try to create an ideal image of the past, present and future in order to re-enact the authority and power of the state’s policy. Mythohistory emotionally connects people in a group and provided them with feelings of moral satisfaction, belonging, pride and followership. Mythohistory is often crucial in the process of constitution, demonization and exclusion of the Other and different (see Schwandner-Sievers 2002: 20, Kalčić 2006: 66). After the collapse of communism and during “transition” period, previously neglected local mythohistories, oral stories and individual memories gained new significance. A single, mythohistory gradually dispersed into plurality of mythohistories with all of them in their own way conveying the continuity, homogeneity and uniqueness of particular people and particular places. Many mythohistories became contested and the difference between the oral and the written became blurred and porous. In this hybridity of mythohistories there is a scope and choice when the individuals and groups appeal or not appeal to a particular myth, because they have their own rationales for different ways in which distinctive identities are presented as if relevant in different periods and circumstances (Schwandner-Sievers 2002: 17).

Schwandner-Sievers (2002: 12) adds that there may be “truth” in every mythohistory. Though in difference to the “objective history” the nationalist historiography uses particular narrative techniques which include the use of metaphors and “ironic trope” in attempt to establish the distance to the object. Mythohistories produce historical and political maps which are often

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<sup>56</sup> A term mythohistory is also used by Gingrich (1998: 110) who defines it as a version of history that reduces complex historical interactions to a »one-dimensional tale«. In order to clarify its point and interest, mythohistory systematically denies other, alternative narratives.

based on political and economic positions and views about the nation-state of the local or national historiographers and other intellectuals. Many historiographers forget or ignore that the nation-state appeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and that there were no state borders before that. Before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, people and places were divided and categorised in a different administrative manner, which was not based on the policy of passports, visas and other documents needed to pass the state-border. In the first sub-chapter I describe the division of people and places before the actual formation of Albanian nation-state. It begins in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the power of Ottomans was gradually declining and the idea of the national awakening was spreading in many areas of “Western Europe”.

## **2.1. Dividing People and Places**

In order to establish control over the areas populated by non-Muslim people and introduce taxation system, the Ottoman administration grouped non-Muslim people into special administrative and organisational units called millets, which divided people according to their religious belonging (see Glenny 2000: 71, 91-93, 112, 115, Mazower 2000: 59-60 and Duijzings 2002: 60). Muslims and those who converted to Islamic religion were excused from taxes and therefore many people living under Ottomans adopted it, although they kept their Christian habits in their daily life (Mazower 2000: 64-80).

Some scholars (Glenny 2000: 71, Blumi 2002: 49, Duijzings 2002: 60) argue that millet system provided the basis for the formation of the nation-state while other (Todorova 1997: 121-127, 163, Mazower 2000: 63, Green 2005: 147) note that such a system was only one of the tools of administrative division and organisation of people and places. It was “unsuited for an easy transformation into a ‘nation-state’” (Green 2005: 147). Upon the millet system the Ottoman administrators formed divisions between the Muslim and non-Muslim population using the name kaur or kaurin for the latter, meaning non-believers. Ottoman administrators also used a general term Greeks in contrast to Turks, separating again non-believers from those who were faithful to Allah or who converted to Islam. At that time, being Turk or being Greek had no ethnic connotation, for their meaning referred only to differences in religious affiliation, regardless of what language they spoke, where they lived or what was the colour of their skin (ibid.).

Millets were led by the Orthodox patriarchs who were appointed by the Ottoman Porte. Upon their command the patriarchs collected taxes and had the right to ask for the attendance of Turkish soldiers (see Mazower 2000: 60). Between 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, wealthy and educated Greek families who lived in Constantinople and were known by the name Phanariotes enjoyed distinguished positions in the Ottoman administration. Many educated Phanariotes worked as dragomans (translators) for the Ottoman administration (see Mazower 2000: 61). Phanariotes often named themselves Greeks, the name implying prestige, wealth and reputation in the service of Sultan (see Mazower 2000: 61). The term rayah (literally “members of the flock”) gradually came into use in the discourse of the Ottoman administrators. The term included Christians and Jews who were taxed to support the state and the associated “professional Ottoman” class. Besides rayah the word kaur or kaurin was also used to differentiate the Christians as non-believers from the Muslims as true followers of Allah (see Jezernik 1998: 180, 182, Mazower 2000: 60, Glenny 2000: 664).

These religious distinctions were mainly important for the Ottoman administration, while they were much less present in people’s day to day conversation (see Mazower: 71-74). Because of the movements and trading between and within particular administrative, political and demographic units or vilayets, such as Ioannina<sup>57</sup> for example, the territorial affiliation or the question “where does someone come from” did not matter much. The same was true for the perspective of the Ottoman administration, which did not categorize the people according to their sense of “rootedness”, the language they spoke and the colour of their skin (see also Green 2005: 148). The Ottoman system was based on different connections and divisions of people than the system of the nation-state which was established decades later.

Alongside the industrialization and development of press in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the language – along with the territory and the formation of ethnonationalist groups – became one of the important factors for disseminating the idea of nationality, homogeneity, and unity of people living within a particular place. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the intellectuals, who due to political or economic reasons lived in emigration in Constantinople, Romania, Bulgaria, Egypt, Greece or United States, played the crucial role in the formation of the nation-state

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<sup>57</sup> In the second half of the 19th century the area of today's Albania was divided into four vilayets: Kosova, which conjoined a small part of Southern Kosova and north-eastern Albania; Ioannina which included territory once known as Northern Epirus; Monastir which included a part of Macedonia near south-eastern Albania; and finally Shkodra with north-western part of Albania and a part of present Monte Negro (see Blumi 2002: 49).

(see Jacques 1995: 287, Malcom 2002: 72). In 1878 during the Congress held in Berlin<sup>58</sup>, the Albanian representatives of the League of Prizren<sup>59</sup>, Abdyl Frashëri and Mehmed Ali Vrioni, proposed the declaration of the Albanian nation-state. Their proposal was dismissed with Bismark commenting that “there is no such thing as a nation without a written language” (Grameno 1925: 58, Jacques 1995: 257). The Frashëri brothers (Abdyl, Sami in Naim)<sup>60</sup> took Bismark’s comment seriously and began to spread the written word by establishing the Albanian language in schools. Frashëri and other intellectuals, Fan Noli<sup>61</sup>, Faik Konica, Konstandin Çerekezi and Kristo Dako<sup>62</sup> who lived in emigration, decided to develop the Albanian language and justify it as the language of their independent nation-state (see Polo and Puto 1981: 118-121, Jacques 1995: 258, Winniffrith 2002: 122-123, Malcom 2002: 71).

On 28 November, 1912 Ismael Qemali announced Albanian independence in Vlorë, his natal town. Because the first Balkan War was still in progress and the Turkish rule in Ioannina on the south and in Shkodra on the north of Albania was still prevailing and finally because of

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<sup>58</sup> The Congress in Berlin took part in the period of formation of the nation-states. On 13 June 1878 the members of “The European Powers” met, lead under the presidency of Bismarck (ministerial president of Prussia 1862-1890) in order to discuss about the reduction of the Russian influence in the Southern Europe and declaration of nationhoods for Serbia, Montenegro and Romania.

<sup>59</sup> On 10 June 1878 under the presidency of Abdyl Frashëri 300 delegates met in Prizren to discuss Albanian national issues. They agreed that their nationality should be based on the autonomous self-government, the official use of the Albanian language, the establishment of the Albanian language in schools, and the formation of the national militia for self-defence. The league representatives were immediately dispatched to the Congress in Berlin (see Jacques 1995: 256-257).

<sup>60</sup> Whilst the first brother Abdyl was a prominent politician, the second brother Sami was a linguist and the director of a periodical *Drita* (Light) that was published in Turkey since 1884. Third brother Naim Frashëri was a literate, poet and promoter of Bektashism (see Jacques 1995: 290, Winniffrith 2002: 122-123). Naim’s poems still occupy an important part in the Albanian text books at the primary school level (for example, Naim Frashëri’s poem *Shqipëri, o jetëgjatë*, Albania, long life is published on the first pages of *Leximi 4*, Reading-book 4).

<sup>61</sup> Fan S. Noli (1882-1965) was born near Adrianople, Turkey, to the parents originating from the present Albanian territory (see Jacques 1995: 304). He had an important role in the foundation of the Orthodox Church in Albania. It was founded on 10 September 1922 during the Clergy-Lay Congress in Berat (see Kondis and Manda 1994: 19). On 24 June 1924 Bishop Fan Noli was declared the prime minister of Albania. His democratically oriented party overthrew previous government of autocratic Ahmed Zogu. An American Evangelical missionary and historian Jacques notes that Noli’s democratic program proved to be too radical for those times. In his goal to eradicate the feudal system he proposed an agrarian reform and sharp reduction of bureaucracy. Noli’s reign did not last long as he was in a couple of months overthrown by the Zogu government. On 26 December 1924 Noli fled to Italy. Soon he moved to Germany where he lived until 1932. In his writings and translations of the classics into Albanian language he promoted the Albanian literary renaissance. In 1932 he returned to Boston where he resumed his duties as the leader of the Albanian Orthodox Church in America. There he began to publish a newspaper Republic (see Jacques 1995: 380-381, Winniffrith 2002: 134-135). An Albanian historian Peter Prifti marked Fan Noli as an “Apostle of the Albanian Renaissance; he was a clergymen, writer, historian, poet, translator, journalist, orator, statesman, diplomat, musician, and outstanding in each of these roles” (Liria 26 November 1976, 9 in Jacques 1995: 381).

<sup>62</sup> Besides the Frashëri brothers and Fan Noli, Faik Konica, and Konstandin Çerekezi also had important roles in disseminating the idea of the nation-state. Both scholars lived in the United States, where they got a degree from Harvard and lived in Boston for most of their lives (see Malcom 2002: 71). Kristo Dako, the chief editor of the *Vatra* newspaper, lived in Boston too (The Pan Albanian Federation of America in *Dielli* (The Sun), 1913).

the revolt that took place in the villages of Himarë/Himara area (people insisted on joining Greece), it took a year before Albanian Republic was recognized by the Great Powers in London (see Winnifrith 2002: 129). In December 1913 the present boundaries of Albania were approved by the agreement signed in Florence. This opened many political issues between the neighbouring countries. The Great Powers divided people and places regardless of who these people were. They differentiated them only according to their location. In order to fit them to the territory they “transformed” them into nationals (see Green 2005: 149). Green notes that these transformations were made in variety of ways: “Nationalist logic attempted to generate a fit between people and place by either moving the borders, or moving people, or killing people, or changing people’s names and the language they spoke” (ibid.). The Great Powers together with the campaigners for independence disseminated the idea of nationalities “as self-evident and authentic truths about who people are, and the morally correct way in which they should be governed and should develop their collective futures” (Green 2005: 149-150).

In March 1914, when the First World War broke out, the pro-Greek party that was ruling the Southern part of Albania declared the autonomous Republic of Northern Epirus. The latter was confirmed by the Great Powers during the Congress of Corfu in May 1914. The Republic, however, soon became worthless because of the political issues that ensued from the war (see Winnifrith 2002: 130).

The division of people and places followed the First and the Second World War. The land was divided according to the nation-states that were often treated in the public discourse as separate entities upon which the differences according to the language, territory and ethnonational groups were constructed and generated. After the Second World War and the spread of communism the idea of nationality and the nation-state became even more important. The national history, archaeology, Albanian language, “culture” and tradition have played a crucial role in ideology of Enver Hoxha’s communism. In order to control the population Hoxha limited people’s movements within the country and forbade any kind of movements over the Albanian state borders. This ban was an efficient strategy for breaking off of political contacts with other countries and spreading the idea of homogeneity and unity of the citizens of the Albanian Republic.

In 1950 Enver Hoxha declared that Albanian people are for descendants of Illyrians and promoted this idea as an official historical fact (see Lubonja 2002: 96). Behind this idea was the omission of differences between the ancient past and the present days (see Malcom 2002: 79) and the promulgation of Albanians as “the first civilization” in Europe who has “always” and “since ever” lived on the present state territory. Hoxha exalted the partisans whose victory was accompanied by reappropriation of the myth of Skenderbeg: a national hero courageously fighting against Ottomans for about 500 years. In communism Skenderbeg was the only national hero whose heroism was allowed to be praised with a similar respect to that of Enver Hoxha (see Lubonja 2002: 96). In 1967, when Hoxha declared Albania as an atheist country, he promoted the myth of religious indifference of Albanian people.

Religious reform especially influenced the areas of Greek-speaking population, which was the only minority acknowledged by the state in the period of communism (see Kondis and Manda 1994: 16). In order to establish control over the areas populated by the Greek minority, Enver Hoxha soon after 1945 declared the so called “minority zones” or *zona e minoritarëve*. The provinces of Gjirokastrë, Sarandë and Delvina were declared as minority zones, conjoining 99 villages (ibid.). They did not include those villages or towns where both the Greek and the Albanian speaking population lived. Among them were villages around Vlorë and Himarë/Himara where the use of Greek language was forbidden in school and other public places (see Kondis and Manda 1994: 21 and Pettifier 2001: 97). Some authors (Kondis and Manda 1994: 22, Pettifier 2001: 97) report that many inhabitants of “minority zones” were forcibly resettled to the places in the mid or northern Albania. This resettlement was done alongside with the communist population policy and its strategy of uniting the differences among the people living in the north and the south. According to Hoxha’s policy of assimilation of the “other” he ordered to replace Greek place names with Albanian ones, referred to the archaeological findings from antiquity as if they were Illyrian and forbade baptising children with Christian personal names (Kondis and Manda 1994: 21).

Alongside with the collapse of communism, introduction of liberal democracy and sudden economic and socio-cultural changes, many Albanian historiographers and other intellectuals began to re-write the “Albanian historiography”. On one mythohistory that was promoted during times of communism, several different mythohistories were generated. They conjoined various views and interpretations of the past which in particular socio-cultural and historical contingences were posed as contested (see Schwandner-Sievers 2002: 17). Schwandner-

Sievers suggests that in contemporary Albania one can discern national and local mythohistories which are interwoven and related because they are used by the politics in both ways. Both national and local uses of myths have the capacity to transfer the ideological pressure for conformity from central settings to a plurality of new settings and back again (ibid.).

In the following pages I present oral and written mythohistories that address the origin of the people of Himarë/Himara and their past. Both oral and written mythohistories are nowadays providing an important substance for the local people as well as by the contemporary historiography. Debates and negotiations of Himarë/Himara people's origin can often be heard in *kafeneia*, where the elderly village men gather every day. I, as a young married woman, a foreign resident (*Slovena*) and *anthropologos*, considered to be interested in the local customs, habits (*ta palia enthimata*) and "history" (*istoria*), was granted only a limited access to *kafeneias* (pl.), known as men's places (cf. Campbell 1964, Herzfeld 1985, and partly Cowan 1991), where the only woman usually present was the waitress. The village women avoided entering *kafeneia*. They came in only occasionally, when they had to buy some goods (bread, for example) or if they wanted to fetch their male relatives. After a couple of months in the village I befriended the daughter of the coffee-shop owner and often accompanied her on visits to her father's *kafeneio*, where we discussed different matters with her male relatives. I collected most of the stories from the past during my visits to different households, when I also collected census data. Other stories were told to me during occasional chats with the villagers whom I met on the streets or in the cafeteria<sup>63</sup> on the coast, where I worked for of some weeks in the summer.

In the first part of the following subchapters I juxtapose the oral and written accounts in order to show how the differences between them are vague and porous. In the second part I present an additional perspective of the written accounts of contemporary historiographers and other scholars, who discuss the past, customs and habits of Himarë/Himara municipality and its villages. By presenting the accounts of local (coming from Dhërmi/Drimades or Himarë/Himara area) and national scholars (coming from other places throughout Albania) I illustrate how their views about particular significant events from the history of Albania and

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<sup>63</sup> In difference to *kafeneia* or coffeeshops that are like elsewhere in Albania, Greece and "Eastern" Europe regarded as men's places where the "manhood is performed" (cf. Campbell 1964, Herzfeld 1985, Cowan 1991) cafeterias are considered a modern version of bars that appeared in Dhërmi/Drimades after 1990. While the *kafeneia* are generally populated by men, cafeterias are mainly visited by youth and young couples.



Himarë/Himara in particular (such as the period of Illyrians and Epirote tribes; the period of the Byzantine Empire; Skenderbeg's revolts; Ottoman conquests, etc.) are on the one hand diametrically opposed while on the other hand paradoxically quite alike in several important ways. Namely, both local and national scholars portray respectively either the local community or the nation as natural, homogeneous and bounded entity that possesses unique and mutually exclusive identity, culture, history and territory. Generally, each group of scholars, local and national, grounds its arguments on different positions, where the former defends the local perspective and the latter the national one, which is either pro-Albanian or pro-Greek. The two positions are not fixed, but shift according to the context, often being based on economical and political interests of individuals and groups.

My aim is not to challenge the factual basis of various local and national scholars or to judge the accuracy of their accounts. My intention is more oriented towards illustrating the nature of their discourse and facing their various, but nevertheless similar positions through which they reconstruct and represent the past of Himarë/Himara area.

## **2.2. Mythohistories**

### **2.2.1. Oral Accounts**

On a hot July noon Spiros and I sat in an open cafeteria owned by Spiros' cousin. As it goes for the majority of the facilities situated on the coast, the cafeteria is open only during the summer season (from the mid of May till the mid of September). I worked in it as a waitress for some weeks in July. As it was before the peak tourist season there were not so many guests present and I had plenty of time to chat with Spiros, who was a regular guest of his cousin's cafeteria. Spiros, born in 1939 in Dhërmi/Drimades, is a widower and nowadays lives in Tirana. In 1957 he moved to the capital to study agronomy. After completion of his studies he married within the village and later on returned to Tirana together with his wife. In 1990 they migrated to Greece together with two sons and a daughter. In 2001 they returned to Tirana where they bought a house and Spiros started with business. Two years later Spiro's wife died. Every summer – in July and August – Spiros comes to Dhërmi/Drimades where he owns a house that he inherited from his father. Occasionally he goes to Greece in order to visit his children. They were all married within the village of Dhërmi/Drimades. When talking about the first settlement he said:

A long time ago, about 300 B.C., the first inhabitants lived by the sea. The area was called *Meghalihora* (big space) and its inhabitants were known as the Chaonians. They were wild people who ate raw fish. Sometime later these people moved to the hills because they were constantly threatened by pirates who came from the sea. The pirates were stealing women and material possessions. Therefore the first inhabitants were forced to move to the hills where they built houses from the stones collected in the mountains. This was around 12th or 13th Century A.D[...].

A similar story was recalled by a widower Nikola, who was born in 1921 in Dhërmi/Drimades. Nikola married within the village, where he lived for all his life. During the times of communism he worked as a shepherd in the village cooperative. Nowadays he lives alone in the house of his father that was rebuilt with the financial help of his three sons (one of them died a few years ago) in 2000. Nikola has seven children, among whom one lives in Dhërmi/Drimades and the rest in Greece. One August afternoon I met Nikola in front of his house. He was on his way to the village *kafeneio*, where he is a regular guest every morning and evening. Soon our chat evolved into a debate about the village and its people in the past. Nikola told me the following:

In 600 B.C. people used to live down by the sea. They were autochthones who called their settlement *Meghalihora*. They had problems with pirates, therefore they moved to the hills, to somewhere where the small village of Ilias begins. Through generations they multiplied and moved to other places where they founded the villages that are a part of the Himara. At that time there were 56 villages, but because of the Turks only seven remained till the present time [...].

The above mentioned accounts are just two of many which I had the opportunity to listen to and record during my stay in the village. Regardless of different biographical backgrounds of Spiros and Nikola, the main points of their stories are practically the same. Both describe the origin or the ethnogenesis of the people of Dhërmi/Drimades which they locate in the Big Space or *Meghalihora* where the life of people was supposedly harmonious. Spiros said that *Meghalihora* (today called Dhraleo) used to be settled by the Chaonians, one of the Epirote tribes whose origin represents an important part in debates and polemics of contemporary scholars.

The contents of both stories put forth the ideas of primacy, autochthonism and homogeneity of the village people and describes their linear and continuous development throughout the centuries. While recounting the story of origin, Spiros and Nikola construct the place of their origin which they describe as big and spacious and as place of their belonging. After the resettlement of the “autochthonous” people from the coastal plains up to the hills the unity and spaciousness of the place diminished and gradually dispersed into many smaller places on

the hill. When the narrators place their stories in a specific time (3<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.), they give them legitimacy upon which they equate these stories with other historiographical narratives.

### 2.2.2. Written Accounts

In the following section I will discuss mainly the words published in the new millennium. Between 2000 and 2007, shaded by the political events such as the local, parliamentary and presidential elections in Albania, twenty-five books<sup>64</sup> along with numerous newspaper essays and polemics appeared in the press. When presenting these works I will especially focus on those which were most often commented or mentioned to me by the villagers. In 2006 some members of the Community of Himarë/Himara set up an Internet website ([www.himara.eu](http://www.himara.eu)). The website provides general information about the villages of Himarë/Himara and their history, offers tourist facilities and a possibility for blog discussion, and gives basic information about visa application for moving to USA. The information is given in three languages: Albanian, Greek and English.

In 2001, before the parliamentary elections (on June 24 and repeated on August 19) took place, the local intellectuals of Qeparo, Pirro Polo and Natasha Sotiri, published their books discussing the history (Polo) and the language (Sotiri) of Qeparo and Himarë/Himara area. In the same year the history of Himarë/Himara town was published by Spiro Rusha, the father of Natasha Sotiri. In the year of the local elections in Himarë/Himara in 2003, when the Human

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<sup>64</sup> 1. Andoni, Kleanthi (2001): *Himara në breg të detit*. Shtëpia Botuese Baça; 2. Rusha, Spiro (2001): *Himara në stuhitë e shekujve*. Shtëpia Botuese Arbri; 3. Nikollori, Aleks (2001): *Dëshmoj për të vërtetën*. Shtëpia Botuese Erik; 4. Polo, Pirro (2001): *Qeparoi historik dhe turistik i kapedanëve*. Shtëpia Botuese Dita; 5. Jahhaj, Idaje (2001): *Kur çelnin shkronjat*” të Shtëpia Botuese Toena; 6. Gjoni, Minella (2004): *Se jam nga Bregdeti*. Botimet Milosao; 7. Jahhaj, Idaje (2001): *Shtatë detet e Himarës*. Shtëpia Botuese Toena; 8. Rrapo, Aleko (2002): *Historia e Himarës*. Botimet Afërdita; 9. Pali, Janko Ll. (2003): *Historia e Qeparoit*. Shtëpia botuese Albin; 10. Bala, Nasho Pano (2003): *Piluri –Ballkoni i Bregdetit*; 11. Zeqo, Moikom (2003): *Himara pa eklips*. Botimet Floriment; 12. Memushaj, Rami (2004): *Himara ne dritën e të dhënave historike, gjuhësore dhe etnollogjike*. Toena; 13. Nasi, Lefter, Kristaq Prifti et.al. (2004): *Himara në shekuj*. Akademia e Shkencave; 14. Pali, Janko (2004): *Feniksi i Himarës – Neço K. Muko*. Botimet Albin; 15. Nina, Foto (2004): *Dhërimadhes*. Dhimiter, Athina; 16. Nasi, Lefter, Kristaq Prifti et.al. (2004): *Himara në shekuj*. Akademia e Shkencave; 17. Tatë, Leonidha Veno (2005): *Identiteti himariot dhe ballkanik*. Shtëpia Botuese Triptik; 18. Bixhili, Foto (2005): *Jipet e Epirit – Hmariotët*. Botimet Toena; 19. Bixhili, Foto (2005): *Himara në optikën e Kohës*. Botimet Toena; 20. Rusha, Spiro (2005): *Qeparoi – Historia dhe kultura popullore*. Shtëpia botuese Botimpex; 21. Frashëri, Kristo (2005): *Himara dhe përkatësia etnike e Hmariotëve*. Botimet Toena; 22. (2006): *Ndërtimi i te ardhmes se Himarës -Punimet e Konferencës PanHmariote*. Botimet Flesh; 23. Bollano, Priamo (2006): *Himara –Potencialet ekonomike dhe sfidat e Zhvillimit*. Botimet Julvin; 24. Koçi, Jano (2006): *Himara –arkeollogji, histori, kulturë – Himara sot*. Gent-grafik; 25. Gjokopulli, Marko (2006): *Historiku i shkollës Gjikë Bixhili i Dhërmiut*; 26. Gjoni, Minella (2006): *Bregdeti dhe Ali Pashë Tepelena*. Botimet Milosao (here I am particularly grateful to Kristaq Jorgji who provided me with this list of books).

Rights Party (*Partia Bashkimi për të Drejtat e Njeriu*)<sup>65</sup> won the elections, Rami Memushaj, lecturer at the Department of History and Philology, University of Tirana, published a book which discusses the history and ethnicity of Himarë/Himara area. The same topic was addressed in a series of essays published in daily newspaper *Korrieri* in December 2004, a year before the parliamentary elections. Their author was Kristo Frashëri and his essays were soon gathered in a book entitled (Himara and the Ethnic Belonging of Himariotes) *Himara dhe përkatësia ethnike e Himarjotëve*, published by an acknowledged Publishing House Toena in 2005. In the months before the parliamentary elections, three additional books discussing the area were issued. One of them was written by a local author of Dhërmi/Drimades Foto Bixhili, who discusses the history of Himarë/Himara villages. Another book was also written by a local man Foto Nina of Dhërmi/Drimades who nowadays lives in Greece. The book is biography of Nina's family and is written in Greek and Albanian language. It was published in Athens (2004). The third book that discusses history, language, and customs of Himarë/Himara area was published by the Albanian Academy of Science (*Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë*). In response to Frashëri's essays published in the *Korrieri* newspaper, a local of Dhërmi/Drimades Kristaq Jorgji, who lives in Tirana published his essays in the *ABC* daily news (April, 2006: 4-6 and April 8, 2006 18). That year another book was edited by the Association of the Himarë/Himara Intellectuals who organised a conference in Tirana. At the Panhimariot conference (between 16 to 17 December, 2005) the participants discussed land tenure issues, tourism and its development, management of resources, education, literacy and health in the Himarë/Himara municipality. In 2006 a tiny book was issued by a local archaeologist Jano Koçi of Qeparo, who at present lives in Greece. In the same year the local intellectuals (the web-site administrators), who either live in Albania or in emigration in Greece and United States, established websites about the villages of Himarë/Himara municipality ([www.himara.eu](http://www.himara.eu))<sup>67</sup>.

The authors listed differ in their representation of the past of Himarë/Himara area. Their views are often grounded in positions which could generally be divided into those which

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<sup>65</sup> In 1992, on the Albanian parliamentary elections, OMONIA was not represented because the Law on Political Parties (passed in July 1991) disqualified parties with religious, ethnic or regional aspirations. Because of this the Union of Human Rights Party was founded in 1992 protecting the rights of the Greek minority along with the rights of other national minorities and ethnic groups in Albania (Bos & UNPO Mission 1994: 2)

<sup>67</sup> Moreover, in the time of writing PhD thesis (2006 and 2007) there appeared two more books on Himara area. In 2007 a book written by Marko Gjokopulli of Dhërmi/Drimades was issued, entitled *The School of Gjika Bixhili, Dhermi - The History (Shkolla "Gjikë Bixhili"- Dhërmi –Historiku)* and a book of Priamo Bollano, *Himara, the Potential for Economic Development (Himara – Potencialet ekonomike dhe sfidat e zhvillimit)*.

represent national positions, either pro-Albanian or pro-Greek, and those that are closer to local positions based on the idea of establishing a distinct locality of Himarë/Himara area. In what follows I will present the ways in which the historiographers and other intellectuals discuss their views about the past of Himarë/Himara area. I will pay a special attention to books and essays that were published in the years of and after my fieldwork in Dhërmi/Drimades.

### **2.3. Different Views and Positions**

The book of the local intellectual Foto Bixhili was published in 2004, but it came on the shelves of the bookshops in Vlorë and library of the primary school Gjika Bixhili of Dhërmi/Drimades in 2005. His book made a stir among local people who criticized it for the inaccuracy of data which he used to argue for the national, pro-Albanian interpretation of history. In the *Torrents of Epirus, Himariotes (Jipet e Iperit. Himariotët)* (2004) Bixhili states that the local people's belief that they derive from *Meghalihora* is a local legend. In his opinion first settlers actually lived on the hills from the very beginning, somewhere in between Dhërmi/Drimades and its neighbouring village Ilias. "The settlement of the first inhabitants was Gjondushe [...], a place hidden from the eyes of the pirates who often visited these places" (Bixhili 2005: 44, translated by Alketa Karafilaj). Such historical interpretations by Foto Bixhilli, who lived away from the village in different parts of Albania and later for a number of years in Greece (like numerous other locals), are considered disputable by many people living in Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara area. In their opinion, his interpretation represents indoctrination by the former communistic regime.

Two months after Bixhili's book the book edited by the Albanian Academy of Science entitled *Himara through the Centuries (Himara në Shekuj)* was published. It came on the bookshelves of bookshops and libraries in Vlorë, Tirana and other bigger cities. Similarly to Bixhili's book this book too was criticised by numerous local people of Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara area. The situation was different in other places such as Vlorë, for example, where readers, mostly academics and politicians, accepted it with great position and approval. On March 10, 2005, the Technical University of "Ismael Qemali" in Vlorë organised a press conference where prominent university professors, social scientists of the Albanian Academy in Tirana, artists from Vlorë, journalists of the national and local newspapers and television, and some students of the Vlorë University gathered. At the press conference the authors

presented abstracts of their essays. Foto Bixhili was invited as a special guest among presenters to tell something about his book and the history of Himarë/Himara villages.

The book of the Albanian Academy of Science initially came on the market in March 2005. It conjoins 24 essays, followed by English or French summary. The essays present geography and archaeology of Himarë/Himara area, its history from the Late Bronze Age till the end of the Second World War, the organisation of the land, language, culture and habits, mythology and polyphonic songs. The content of many essays promotes the idea that Himarë/Himara area and its people belong to Albanian nation-state.

In this tone Muzafer Korkuti presents archaeology of Himarë/Himara area and its villages, some of which are said to be populated in the Late Bronze Period (1600-1200 B.C.) and Iron Age (1200-700 B.C.). Korkuti describes a fortified system of settlements in the area of today's Himarë/Himara and Sarandë that used to be settled by Chaonians whom Korkuti identifies as being part of the "Illyrian society". He describes the material relics that were found in Himarë/Himara area and writes the following:

The construction of a series of pre-urban fortified settlements during the Bronze and Iron period in the Albanian territory as Badher [between Himarë/Himara and Borsh], Karos [close to Borsh], Kalivo [close to Butrint], etc., is related to the important changes happening in the Illyrian society [*sic*] (Korkuti 2004: 40).

Analogous to Korkuti, Emin Riza discusses the architectonics of the Himarë/Himara castle:

The urban and architectonic ensemble of the Himarë Castle is a rare example, which is still preserved, as it is the Berat Castle too. This historical and cultural treasure is an example that represents the values of the Illyro-Albanian history during the centuries [*sic*.] (Riza 2004: 409).

In the introductory part of his paper discussing administration after 1913, Archilea Bërxfholi briefly describes the history of the area. While referring to archaeology he writes:

Archaeological sources show that geographic-cultural area of Sea Side (Himarë-Sarandë) has been inhabited since early times. It makes up a common area of all Albanian ethnic land, being inhabited by the same population in continuance, the Albanian one [...] [*sic*.] (Bërxfholi 2004: 238).

While Korkuti, Riza and Bërxfholi talk about archaeology and architectonics of Himarë/Himara area, Kristaq Prifti gives an overview of the archival and historical documents which are related to Himarë/Himara area:

In the archival sources, not only Ottoman, but even the European countries (Austro-Hungarian, French etc.), many documents having as object the analysis of the national constitution of the population of the vilayet of Janina (of South Albania) – there is no doubt the Albanian nationality of the Himarë population and of her villages. In the documents of the XVI-th – XIX-th centuries, presented in this study, it is witnessed clearly its Albanian ethnic belonging and it is accepted without any doubt, the use by the Himariots as mother tongue of the Albanian language [*sic.*]( Prifti 2004: 188).

In the later part of his essay, Prifti sees the strategic position, vicinity of the Greek Islands and the gradual development of trading relations as the main reasons for introducing the Greek language in the villages of Himarë/Himara area. Prifti goes on saying that the use of Greek language was also promoted through church and education in the period of the Byzantine Empire (13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century) (ibid.).

Shaban Sinani also, sees the strategic position of Himarë/Himara area as one of the reasons for development of trading relations. Sinani writes that with trading relations Himarë/Himara people oriented themselves to the “West, initially to ask for the political salvation [...]” (Sinani 2004: 349). While writing about “ethnotype” of the Himarë/Himara people, Sinani notes:

The ethno-regional contraction, differently from the hinterland, led to an argumentation of the marine time activities. In historical circumstances, after the complete placement of the Ottoman regime, the region of Himarë was constrained, and step by step the Thunderbolt Mountain (*Mali i Vetetimes*) received the importance of the frontier between the Laberia and the coast, something which cannot be proved for the earlier periods, at least not until the Tanzimat Reforms. The local population turned its eyes to the Holy See and to the kings of the West, put its hopes to these powers, reoriented its life towards the see and connected it with the sea, with the commerce, fishing, and with the other communities ethnically different from itself. If the first led to some unimportant differentiations in the character of the Albanian ethno-type (e.g. the Islamization of Laberia, the conservancy of the Christianity by the Himariots who had greater hopes) the second led also to some following cultural impact, which can be proved with the introduction of the Greek language as working means of communication [...] [*sic.*] (ibid.).

With a somehow similar discourse, but different political positions as the narrators of stories of *Meghalihora* origin of the Himarë/Himara people, the authors listed above discuss about their origin and relate it to the “Illyrian Society” (cf. Korkuti). Based on archaeological findings and the architectonics, the origin of Himarë/Himara people represents an important part of the “Illyro-Albanian history” (cf. Riza). As Bërxfholi notes, Himarë/Himara area has been populated “since early times” and this proves that the area is part of the “Albanian ethnic land”. Along with the mentioned scholars, Prifti also follows the idea of continuity and unity

of the people living in Himarë/Himara area, who are all of “Albanian nationality”. Based on the analysis of the archival sources Prifti argues that Himarë/Himara people belong to the Albanian nation-state, their “first” language being Albanian. In their writings scholars constitute a direct link between Illyrians and Albanians and perceive the notions of nationality and ethnicity as having existed “since ever”.

Similar to story-tellers, historiographers also describe a linear passage from unity and homogeneity of the local population to heterogeneity and dispersal into separate villages of Himarë/Himara area. While the oral stories describe this passage as a consequence of invasions of the pirates to *Meghalihora*, which triggered the resettlement of the local population on the hills, the historiographers see this linear passage as being caused by an expansion of trading relations with Greek Islands in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Let me now turn the attention to Sinani, who defines the trading contacts or “marine time activities” between Himarë/Himara and Greek Islands as the main reason for reorientation of Himarë/Himara population “toward the kings of the West”. “The local population turned its eyes to the Holy See and to the kings of the West, put its hopes to these powers, reoriented its life towards the see and connected it with the sea, with the commerce, fishing, and with the other communities ethnically different from itself” (ibid.). In the paragraph quoted earlier Sinani positionally describes the mountains and the sea and defines the latter as a “frontier” between the coastal area or Himarë/Himara and Laberia or Albania. In the first part of the quoted paragraph Sinani notes that trading of Himarë/Himara people and their autonomy resulted in the “ethno-regional contraction” and formation of the boundaries. On the one hand Sinani defines the Thunderbolt Mountains (*Mali i Vetetimes*) as the ones that impose a division between Himarë/Himara and Albania, while on the other hand he describes the sea as a bridge that connects the local population with the Christian authority, wealth and prosperity.

An acknowledged Albanian historiographer of Skanderbeg, Kristo Frashëri, talks about the Albanian nationality of Himarë/Himara people in a similar way. In his book *Himara and Ethnic Belonging of Himariotes, a Dialogue with the Greek Historians (Himara dhe perkatesia etnike e himarijoteve, bisede me historijonet Greke)* which was published in 2005, Frashëri wrote the following:

It has been a long time since the daily press in Greece or in Albania wrote on the issue of the inhabitants of Himarë area. According to Hellenic writers these inhabitants belong to the Greek nationality while according to the other group they belong to



Albanian nationality. Both groups bring forth their own view points without examining or mentioning the arguments of each other. This is not a coincidence as it is not easy to confront the both views. But presenting only one way of arguments without mentioning the others is not a scientific debate. This kind of a problem remains unsolved today. In order to bring the solution I wrote this monograph titled Himarë in the Historical Documents where I present and confront both arguments. In this book I am publishing a summary of the main issues. As you will see, I draw the conclusion that the inhabitants of Himarë belong without any doubt to Albanian nationality [...]. Sometimes the people of Himarë, in order to soften the objection of the Albanians, try to introduce the viewpoint that people of Himarë were neither Greek nor Albanian, but they are Himariotes and their political problem does relate neither to Greek nor to Albanian country. Their aim is to create another small state or ethnicity that will be the “little Republic of Himarë” that will include 7 or at least 10 or 12 villages (Frashëri 2005: 5 translated by Juliana Vera).

In his response to Frashëri’s essay a local intellectual Kristaq Jorgji criticized the writer’s purpose to conjoin both views. Jorgji published his essays in a daily newspaper ABC in April, 2006 and later also on the website of the Association of Himarë/Himara ([www.himara.eu](http://www.himara.eu)). He reproached Frashëri’s partial view of the history and ethnicity of Himarë/Himara area and noted that Frashëri actually failed to confront “both views”. According to Jorgji, Frashëri’s representation of the past of Himarë/Himara area misleads its readers as the work is meant to promote the pro-Albanian position:

My first question while reading the paper of Mr. Frasherri was to whom this paper was directed to? I would guessed that Mr. Frasherri as a historian should be directed to the general public, including that of Himara, for clarifying some hot questioned topics. It obvious for those who knew something about the debate, that there are different standings even contrary ones, and he could choose as target of his work as recognized professional to give explanations (including here the option that this topic should be enlighten even further). Another option was to address the question by the nationalistic rhetoric perspective, not understand yet that the Himariotes will not accept whatever other people declare them to be. The second choice would have been less preferable for any historian, as the Himariotes can and will write their own history after they will be convinced by the facts, like they were doing it all these years (*sic.*) (Jorgji 2006: 2 and 2006c: <http://www.himara.eu/articles/004-en.html>).

Jorgji’s criticism of Frashëri’s writing is grounded on his argument of local distinction which he defines with the following words:

[...] in difference with all the rest of the regions in Albania [Himarë/Himara] stayed independent; who in difference to other regions suffered alone the assault of the three most mightiest Turkish Sultans (including Suleiman the Law-Giver – during which reign the Ottoman Empire reached the maximum of power); that unlike other regions of Albania continued to keep their ancestor’s religion; which opened the first school in today’s Albanian territory; that opposed the first communistic election in 1945 as no other region of Albania [*sic.*] (*ibid.*).

Regardless of the difference in their positions, with Frashëri arguing that Himarë/Himara people belong to the Albanian nationality, while Jorgji defends the local distinctiveness of Himarë/Himara people, both of them define Himarë/Himara area and its people as a distinct entity. Both scholars describe the Himarë/Himara area as territory, labelled either as a part of the nation-state or as a part of the “locality”. In spite their criticism about one-sided interpretations of historical data and their promises to their readers of not doing the same mistake, they nevertheless generate similar one-sided interpretations which they base either on the national or local perspective. While Frashëri concludes that “inhabitants of Himarë/Himara belong without any doubt to Albanian nationality” (Frashëri 2005: 5), Jorgji states that “in difference with all the rest of the regions in Albania,” Himarë/Himara “stayed independent” (Jorgji 2006a: 2).

Besides the debates about the Himarë/Himara people’s belonging, there are several other debates discussing and negotiating their origins, movements, trading, fighting, religion, autonomy, etc. They are part of the contemporary historiographers’ and other scholars’ accounts, which are on the one hand opposed and contested, while on the other hand related.

## **2.4. Between the Contestations and Relations**

### **2.4.1. Illiryan or Epirote?**

According to the historical accounts, the coastal part of today’s Southern Albania, including Himarë/Himara area, was supposed to be settled by the Chaonians in the 11<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (Jacques 1995: 27, Winnifrieth 2002: 46). The belonging of Chaonians is a subject of dispute among the local and national scholars, who try to define and set them in a wider socio-geographical and historical context. Numerous historiographers, who represent the locally oriented positions, define the Chaonians as being a part of the Epirote (Rusha 2001: 11, Koçi 2006: 13), as people who lived in the area of today’s Himarë/Himara sometime from 7000 B.C. onwards. Jano Koçi, an archaeologist from Qeparo, is one of rare scholars who take into account the tectonic movements that shaped Himarë/Himara area throughout the centuries. Koçi suggests that in the period of Cainozoic the coastal part of today’s southern Albania used to be united with today’s Greek Islands like Corfu, Ereikoussa and Othonas, with its inhabitants holding trading relations (Koçi 2006: 9-10). In contrast to Koçi, historiographers who represent the national position argue that the tribe of Chaonians belonged to Illyrians

(Ceka 2005, Frashëri 2005: 17) or Pelasgian tribes (cf. Bixhili 2004). They settled in the area of today's Himarë/Himara in the period of Mesolithic (8000 B.C.) (Gjipali 2004: 60-61).

Foreign scholars (Jacques 1995, Vickers 2001, Winnifrith 2002), whose arguments are based neither on pro-Albanian, pro-Greek nor local positions, note that the demarcation line between Illyrians and Epirotes is a matter of dispute. Their research points out that there are not enough valid documents, dating from the early centuries, which would confirm the assumptions that Albanians are Illyrian descendants (Jacques 1995: 30, 45). American historian Miranda Vickers (2001:1) states in a similar manner that this assumption was constituted as a historical fact during the time of the communist rule.

Contemporary scholars describe the number of tribes who at one time occupied much of the Balkan peninsula as far north as the Danube as 'Illyrian'. But whether Greeks or Illyrians inhabited much of the southern region of present-day Albania, known as Epirus, remains a highly controversial issue. Most probably, both Greeks and Illyrians were originally interspersed in this area much as they are at the present day (ibid.).

British historian Winnifrith promotes a similar position, when he defines the language of the Epirote tribes (2002: 47-48, see Chapter I, p. 27). While the scholars defending the local position argue that the language of Epirote tribes used to be Greek, the scholars who argue for the national position try to prove that it was Illyrian, from which Albanian originates.

The accounts presented above illustrate how the historiographers, despite their national and local positions, define the inhabitants of Himarë/Himara area as unitary and "closed" entities which belong either to Greek or Albanian nation-state "since ever". In their works they often equate the ancient tribes with the present nation-state. Thus for example, Rusha who represents the local position and Ceka, Frashëri, and Bixhili who argue for the national, pro-Albanian viewpoint, place the Chaonians on the map of the present Republic of Albania. They consider the state-borders as the "natural" boundaries that are "there". They take no notice of the assumptions presented by Koçi who, for example, argues that in the period of Cainozoic the geographical map of Himarë/Himara area was very different from the one existing today. The local and national authors write about the ancient tribes as being a part of the evolutionary model, which develops from the tribal to the nation-states system.

In the paragraphs quoted above both Winnifrith and Vickers place Albania in the Balkans, meant as a synonym for variety, mixture, ambiguity and contestations. Vickers for example writes: "Contemporary scholars describe the number of tribes who at one time occupied much

of the Balkan Peninsula” (2001: 1); whilst Winnifrith notes, “It is not uncommon in the Balkans to find people fluent in two or three languages, especially in Southern Albania...” (2002: 47). Todorova (1997) as well as other authors (Norris 1999, Bjelić and Savić 2002, Green 2005) illustrate how the term Balkans, which was until the 19<sup>th</sup> century used as a socio-geographical term for the mountain range linking the Black Sea and the Adriatic (Todorova 1997: 25), became gradually filled with political, historical and cultural meanings. In the contemporary literature Balkan is often used as a synonym for mixed, fragmented, multiple, hybrid, ambiguous and contested. In the same manner, Vickers and Winnifrith use the word Balkans, to which they ascribe multiplicity and mixture because of which they cannot find a clear or single answer about belonging of Illyrian and Epirote or “Greek” tribes. Green suggests that “the idea that you can never get to the bottom of it, that it will always be either too complicated or too meaningless to ever be understood [...] constitutes the essence of the current hegemonic concept of the Balkans: that in political, intellectual, historical, cultural, and even topographical terms, the Balkans are fractal” (Green 2005: 140). Green notes that this fractality is hegemonic construction where things are not too complex or fragmented but too much related.

#### **2.4.2. Trading Overseas**

According to the American Evangelical missionary Jacques (1995: 94-95) and the British historian Winnifrith (2002: 42) the first trading relations in this area took place at the end of 7<sup>th</sup> and beginning of 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., when Greek merchants established trading posts and colonies such as Epidamnus (Durrës) and Apollonia (Pojan), Butrint, Finiq and Lissus (Lezha) along the Albanian coast. Later, around the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C., the area of today’s Himarë/Himara together with a large part of today’s southern Albania fell under the reign of Molossian kings that were historically a part of the Epirote realm which existed as a federal republic until the Roman times (Jacques 1995: 78-79, Winnifrith 2002: 47). According to accounts of the ancient historians, such as Strabo and Thucydides in particular, Epirote is referred to as an ethnical term and a name for the tribe and not the territory (Winnifrith 2002: 47).

In his description of trading relations, local archaeologist Koçi (2006: 25) refers to the findings of ceramics that date back in the period of late Neolithic. Together with Rusha (2001: 32-33) they both list names of ports or sites with trading relations, such as Panormë

(*Panormus* or *Panormus Limen*), Spilesë (in Himarë/Himara), Gjipe (between Dhërmi/Drimades and Vuno) and Jaliskari (in Dhërmi/Drimades), which were formed in that period. List of ports is also given in the works of Hammond (1967: 125) and Winninfrith (2002: 96), where among the already listed names they also mention the coastal plain Grammata, situated close to Dhraleo, where signs of sailors, who found their shelter from the storm on the sea, are recorded on its rocky crags.

The archaeologist Ilir Gjipali (2004: 60) is one of rare scholars defending the pro-Albanian positions, who like the local historiographer Koçi dates trading relations between Himarë/Himara and today's Greek Islands in the period of late antiquity:

From the examination of the ceramics especially those coming from the archaic classic and Hellenistic period is clearly seen the presents of the imported pottery which comes mainly from important sites of Greece and Italy and also from Apolonia in Albania. In these periods Himarë seem to have been a small inhabited centre but being in a strategic position in the Ionian Coast had contact with important trade centres like the Sopot small town (Borshi) in the south [*sic.*] (ibid.).

Sinani is another author in the edited book published by the Albanian Academy of Sciences, who defends the pro-Albanian or national position. He sets the trading relations with the Greek Islands in the period of the Ottoman conquests, between 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. As noted in one of previous subchapters – Different Views and Positions – Sinani sees the strategic position of Himarë/Himara area as one of the main reasons for development of trading relations with the neighbouring islands, which connected people from Himarë/Himara with “the West” (Sinani 2004: 349). Prifti, another scholar from the Albanian Academy of Science, sees besides trading also the Greek Ortodox Church and the Greek language in schools as reasons for strengthening of Greek influence in Himarë/Himara area. Moreover, Prifti sees the consolidation of the Greek language as a consequence of a decree of the Ottoman authorities that did not allow the usage of Albanian language in schools.

The activity of the Patriarchies, of the church where the sermons were held in Greek, and of the Greek schools, extended in the main towns and villages of South and Central Albania was considered by the contemporaries as the main factor in the spread of the Greek language in this region. Just after this period of the XIX century the Greek language was introduced more widely in the villages of Himarë. This spread of the Greek language was favoured because the Ottoman government had prohibited to the Albanians the teaching and learning of the Albanian language, for the reason that lacked the schools in Albania [*sic.*] (Prifti 2004: 188).

Winnifrith writes about the period of Ottoman conquest that the boundary between Greek-speakers and Albanian-speakers was continuously shifting and therefore it was difficult to define the “exact” delineation (2002: 107). In spite of the Ottoman dominancy, strong faith in Christianity that was prevailing in the villages of Himarë/Himara, Sarandë, Gjirokastër and Delvina was an important reason for keeping the Greek language, which was also the language of trading (2002: 108).

### **2.4.3. Roman and Byzantine Empire**

While the trading relations across the sea started already in the antiquity, trading over the mainland began sometime in the period of Roman Empire, from about 27 B.C. until 476 A.D. (Hammond 1967: 699). In order to gain the access to ports and protect the coastal part of the area which used to be political and administrative unit, the Roman administration built the cobblestone road named *Via Egnatia*. The road connected the ancient Apollonia, situated close to today’s Levani, with Rogozine and Dyrrachium (see Hammond 1967: 235). Though nowadays *Via Egnatia* is hard to determine, many of the contemporary historians place it along the river Shkumbin, which presents a demarcation line between northern Gegs and southern Tosks (see Jacques 1995: 134). Besides *Via Egnatia*, the Roman administration ordered the building of coastal road, connecting the ancient Apollonia with Valona (Vlorë), Llogora (Lloghora), Chimaera (Himarë/Himara), Phoinike (Finiq), Vuthrotum (Butrint) and the inland road connecting Vlorë with Amantia, Antigonea, Dodona, Ambracia and finally Nicopolis (see Hammond 1967: 699-700 and Appendix 6).

In order to control the new province of Macedonia in the north, Roman administration established military posts and a chain of fortifications along *Via Egnatia* (see Jacques 1995: 134, Winnifrith 2002: 67). The road brought trade, travellers as well as military forces. Later on larger communities were established there (see Winnifrith 2002: 67) and large cities such as Apollonia, Dyrrachium, Amantia, and Byllis, which were situated south from *Via Egnatia*, had flourished throughout the years. Further south from *Via Egnatia* harbours like Oricum and Onchesmus (Sarandë) became important (Winnifrith 2002: 67).

In the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. missionary Saint Paul travelled along *Via Egnatia* and spread the Christian Gospel. He gave an initiative to build the chain of churches along the ancient highway. A century later the name Epirus, which marked the administrative province,

relatively independent from the Roman rule, started to be used more commonly in discourse of the Roman politicians (Winnifrith 2002: 69). According to Winnifrith, many people living in this province spoke Greek at the time (1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.) though a couple of Latin manuscripts can also be traced from that time (ibid.). Sometimes in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Diocletian divided Epirus into two administrative units, *Epirus Vetus* extending from Nicopolis to the Acroceunian mountains and *Epirus Nova* that included Greek cities such as Dyrrachium and Apollonia (Winnifrith 2002: 70). The boundary between *Epirus Nova* and *Epirus Vetus* is nowadays unclear although many contemporary Greek scholars seek to push the boundaries as far north as possible (ibid.). In their arguments they refer to Strabo, who defined the river Shkumbin as dividing line between both administrative units.

Sometime in the 5<sup>th</sup> century the Roman Empire was gradually succeeded by the Byzantine. From this period onwards *Via Egnatia* facilitated the eastward movements of the Normans and the Crusaders, westward invasions of Goths, the Bulgarians, the Byzantines and later in 16<sup>th</sup> century the invasions of the Ottomans (Jacques 1995: 134-164).

Between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century, along with the enforcement of the Byzantine Empire and the spread of Christianity the first churches were built in the area of today's Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara. The inscriptions found in some of these churches present another issue of dispute between contemporary scholars. Frashëri writes the following about the inscriptions:

The inscriptions found in 1751 in the church Ipapandis in Dhermi, which disclose two inhabitants of Dhrimadhes prove, that the inhabitants of this area are not Greeks. The names of the persons inscribed on the church wall are priest Papa Ilia Leka and Andon Starat Gjika. Both names are undoubtedly of Albanian anthroponomy [*sic.*] (Frashëri 2005: 77, translated by Juliana Vera).

As an answer to Frashëri's conclusions the local intellectual Jorgji writes:

I believe that Mr. Frashëri refers to the names Leka and Gjika when he calls them as an Albanian onomastics.

We should make clear first that Dhrimadhes, where this argument comes from, has (if I am not wrong) more than 30 churches and in the town of Himara there have been more than 80 churches. To argue that the inhabitants are Albanian, because in one church out of 30 churches there is an inscription that could tell for Albanian inhabitants, is very wrong [*sic.*](2006c: <http://www.himara.eu/articles/004-en.html>).

Jorgji continues that there were eight other inscriptions found in different churches of Dhërmi/Drimades:

Considering the names such as Lek, Gjon, Gjike as pure Albanian is not correct, admitted even from Albanian scientists (see Androkli Kostallarin) that define these names as adapted and with Christian origin. Perhaps we should remind that Illyrian/Albanian names are such as Bardhyl, Teuta, Dardan, ect. I have an impression that Mr. Frashëri has been too fast coming to these conclusions [*sic.*] (ibid.).

Unlike Frashëri and Jorgji who argue about the national belonging of the names inscribed on church walls, the British historian Winnifrith notes:

Greek records are scanty, and this is unfortunate if we are interested in the survival of Greek speaking communities in such areas as Himarë, Pogoni and the district near Sarandë. Here there is evidence in the shape of oral tradition and interesting old churches with Greek inscriptions, but neither form of evidence is entirely reliable in proving what seems probable, that in scattered and remote parts of Southern Albania Greek held on after the double disaster of the Albanian invasion of the fourteenth century and the Ottoman occupation in the fifteenth (Winnifrith 2002: 102).

Along with language and belonging, the place names and personal names also represent a subject of dispute amongst scholars defending either local or national positions. From the sections above – Trading Overseas and Roman and Byzantine Empire – one can clearly see that behind the contestations about Himarë/Himara people's belonging there are continuous economic, political, demographic and geomorphologic changes which ensued with people's movements, various incursions of different tribes or groups (such as Normans, Bulgarians and Ottomans), tectonic movements, changes of administrative and political divisions of people and places that happened in the area of today's Himarë/Himara. But the continuity of these movements is often not discussed by the scholars who instead of movements put forth their nationalist or local perceptions within which they talk about on the nation-state or locality building issues.

#### **2.4.4. Construction of National Hero Skanderbeg**

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century the movements of people from Himarë/Himara area and elsewhere continued along with the spread of the Ottoman power and islamisation of non-Muslim population living in South Eastern Europe. In spite of ongoing incursions of the Ottoman army in places of today's Skodra, Lezha, Durrës, Vlorë, Himarë/Himara and Sarandë people kept trading relations with the Venetian Republic. Some of them were professional soldiers of the Venetian army, joining forces in resistance against the Ottoman power (Jacques 1995: 172).



The period of 15<sup>th</sup> century is in the contemporary history of Albania known by the acknowledged hero George Kastrioti Skanderbeg, who fought against the Ottoman leadership between 1443 and 1468. The popularity of Skanderbeg was particularly promoted in the period of communism when the nationalist writers provided him with a national significance and built his image of a defender of Albania and its people (see Misha 2002: 43). “His figure and his deeds became a mixture of historical facts, truths, half-truths, inventions and folklore” (ibid.). By ignoring some non-Albanian historiographers (cf. Jacques 1995: 187-188) who write about Skanderbeg’s affiliation with Islam, Christian Orthodoxy and Catholic Church in Rome, the national historiographers promote his religious “neutrality”. They write about Skanderbeg’s affiliation with the ideas of nationalism and “Albanianism” (see Frashëri 2005: 29-38, Malltezi 2004: 111-112, 123).

In such a way Skanderbeg’s association with Christianity and his attachment to the Venetian Republic are eliminated from the Albanian historiography. In the period of communism the transformation of Skanderbeg into a national hero served to build up national cohesion and promoted the idea of Albanian independence from the “Ottoman past” (see Glenny 2002: 43). While on the one hand this brought the affinity for Europe to the Albanian citizens, on the other hand it served to win the sympathy and support of the European Great Powers (Glenny 2000: 43 and Winnifrieth 2002: 101).

In the book edited and published by the Albanian Academy of Science, Luan Malltezi writes:

The Himariotes took an active part in the anti Ottoman war of XV century that the Albanians did over the lead of Skanderbeg. Songs to the death of Skanderbeg and their leaders were kept saved generation after generation by the Himariotes. Himariotes are Albanians who kept in their popular memory that they are the followers of the Alexander and of Pirro. The follower of Pirro calls himself also Skanderbeg and together with him all the Albanians of XV century [*sic.*] (Malltezi 2004: 123).

In his description Malltezi recognizes the people of Himarë/Himara as important warriors in the Skanderbeg’s army who fought against the Ottoman dominancy which later led to the formation of the Albanian nation-state. While on the one hand he points out the equality between Himarë/Himara people and Albanians (“Himariotes are Albanians who kept in their popular memory...”), on the other hand he suggests that there are differences between them which have to be united. In the last sentence of the paragraph, Malltezi mentions the loyalty of the Himarë/Himara people whose “Albanianess” is being kept in their folk memory.

Therefore they stayed devoted to Alexander the Great and Pyrrus, who is in the accounts of foreign historiographers (cf. Winnifrit 2002: 22) known as the King of Epirus<sup>68</sup>. Regardless of debates by numerous scholars<sup>69</sup> who discuss and contest the belonging of Alexander the Great and King of Pyrrus<sup>70</sup>, Malltezi links these two heroes as forefathers of Skanderbeg, both of them belonging to the Albanian nation-state.

Slightly different interpretation of the role of Himarë/Himara people in their battle against the Ottomans can be found in the description by the local historian Spiro Rusha:

Himara served to the army of Skanderbeg. In 1444 Himara fought in Torivoli. It fought against the army of the general Sultan Murad II. This was the first bloodshed of Himara people among whom was also their commandant [Skanderbeg]. Himara men devotedly fought under the leadership of Skanderbeg. After his unexpected death in 1468, Himara fell into the war with the Turkish army that wanted to occupy the region (Rusha 2001: 41-42, translations mine).

Both Malltezi and Rusha define the people of Himarë/Himara as important warriors of the Skanderbeg's army. But unlike Malltezi who sees their fighting spirit aimed at defending their "Albanianess", Rusha sees it as crucial in keeping the autonomy and distinct locality of the Himarë/Himara people and their area. If viewed from Malcom from the perspective of ongoing struggles (2002: 73), both Malltezi and Rusha, constitute a myth of permanent struggle against the Ottomans and promote unity of the people of Himarë/Himara<sup>71</sup>.

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<sup>68</sup> Malltezi defines both heroes as if they belong to the Albanian nation-state. Alexander the Great is supposed to be the relative of Pyrrus, the King of Epirus, sometime in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. (Winnifrit 2002: 22). The King of Pyrrus was also known as the eagle because he often referred to his soldiers as the "sons of the eagle" (Jacques 1995: 116).

<sup>69</sup> For more details see Danforth (1995: 33-38, 43-48).

<sup>70</sup> George Kastrioti Skanderbeg's father Gjon Kastrioti unsuccessfully opposed the early incursion of Ottomans, for which Sultan obliged him to pay tribute and give him his three sons as hostages. Being raised on the Sultan's court George Kastrioti Skanderbeg attended the military school and led many battles of the Ottoman army to victory. His military brilliance was compared to that of Alexander the Great for which he received the title Arnavutlu İskender Bey or Lord Alexander. Later Skanderbeg revolted to Ottomans. One of the prominent biographers of Skanderbeg's life Martin Barleti his book *The Story of Life and Deeds of Skanderbeg, the Prince of Epirotes*, which was printed in Rome sometime between 1506 and 1510 and translated to Albanian in 1967.

<sup>71</sup> On the web site Youtube several video clips can be found contesting the origin of Skanderbeg, who is claimed to be of Greek origin (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2VcMfNDXYkI&mode=related&search>) or of Albanian origin (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5h0vUhZNNc&mode=related&search>), Skanderbeg is named as "another" Alexander the Great (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgPO3jRbaeo&mode=related&search>). Program series *Portokalli* (Orange) shown on the Albanian TV is a parody of these contested debates ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4\\_j7-yYay8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4_j7-yYay8)).

#### 2.4.5. “Permanent Struggle” – Resistance to Ottomans

In 1468 Skanderbeg died and in the following years most of today's Albania submitted to the Ottoman power. The exceptions were people living in the isolated mountainous places of Mirdita in the north and some places in the south of Albania. In spite of the ongoing struggles against the Ottoman dominancy, most of today's Southern Albania was divided in administrative units named vilayets as documented in defters (cadastral tax census) (see Winnifrith 2002: 99). The Ottoman administration distinguished between vilayets of Gjirokastër, Sopot, Klisura, Belgrat (Berat), Tomorince, Iskrapar, Pavlo, Kurtik, Çartalos and Akcahisar. The vilayet of Gjirokastër was additionally divided in nahiyets<sup>72</sup> of Sopot, Himarë/Himara, Vagaynetia and Lahtakasou (southern Pogoni) (ibid.).

While some scholars defend the local perspective (Rusha 2001: 56-57, Jorgji 2006a: 4-6 and 2006b: 18) other remain under the spell of national position (Polo and Puto 1981: 88-89, Thëngjilli 2004: 147). There are also those whose writings are considered neutral (Winnifrith 2002: 104-105), regardless of their position, all historiographers describe Himarë/Himara area and its people as autonomous.

Winnifrith writes about the Himarë/Himara people's autonomy in the following way:

In Albania three areas, it is claimed, gained a special status. All are now inhabited by Greeks or Vlachs. They are the villages near Himarë on the coast, the Vlach villages near Voskopojë in the east, and the village Dhrovjan near Sarandë. In these cases the evidence is a little more dubious, but all three districts have an impressive range of churches that seem to indicate some degree of liberty and wealth. It would also make sense for the Ottomans after the war against Skenderbeg, when danger came in mountain passes and from reinforcements along the coast, to win over by kindly treatment the inhabitants of mountain passes and coastal villages (Winnifrith 2002: 104).

After 1537, when the Himarë/Himara men won the battle against the army of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, the autonomy of Himarë/Himara was strengthened. Albanian historiographers Polo and Puto (1981: 88-89) write that the army of Suleiman was led by Grand Vizir Ayez Pasha, who received orders from Suleiman to massacre every single men of Himarë/Himara in order to get the strategic access to Italy. Moreover, the authors describe the courageous fight of Himarë/Himara men in battles that went on for all the summer, until

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<sup>72</sup> Nahiye is the smallest administrative unit in the period of the Ottoman leadership (Pollo and Puto 1981: 291).

September when the Ottomans ceased their efforts (Polo and Puto 1981: 89). Likewise Himarë/Himara, the places around Dukagjin, Mirdita, Shpat and Labëria also won autonomy and the right to keep their *venomes*<sup>73</sup> (the right of self-government). Along with the people of Himarë/Himara they were not obliged to follow the long list of obligations prescribed for *rayah*, though they had to pay the *haraç*, a tax that symbolised their submission (ibid.).

The local writer Spiro Rusha (2001: 57) provides some additional data about autonomy that was recognized only for the inhabitants of eight villages of Himarë/Himara area: Palasa, Dhërmi/Drimades, Ilias, Vuno, Himarë/Himara, Pilur, Kudhes and Qeparo. These villages kept their autonomy until the Second World War (1941). Later on Rusha describes the rights which included: local government led by the elderly and respectful men; right of *kapedans* or the war leaders to carry the arms and the permission to visit Sultan of Delvina and Vlorë; free navigation with their own ships; right to export goods without taxes; and finally the right to have a representative in the government of Istanbul. Besides the rights autonomy also included different obligations such as *haraç*, a tax which was paid by the *kapedan*; and the obligation to fight, under their own flag, for the Ottoman army whenever they were asked for (ibid.).

Thëngjilli, another scholar in the edited collection published by the Albanian Academy of Science, sees the economic benefits as the reason for later military cooperation of Himarë/Himara people with the army of Naples as well as with the armies of other countries:

Though the Himariots won the position of self-governing provinces, they strove to exploit any circumstance internationally favourable, addressing to the Catholic Powers, such as Spain, Naples, Austria, Russia, etc. [*sic.*] (Thëngjilli 2004: 147-148).

Thëngjilli (2004: 149) argues that this kind of collaboration was based on the goal of “driving the Ottomans out of the Balkans”:

Himariots have expressed the willingness to participate in all the actions for driving the Ottomans out of the Balkans, in many cases they have trusted in the promises, but they have found themselves alone in front of the Ottomans, and in a few cases, they have secured collaboration and their victories have been apparent (ibid.).

All scholars in this section agree that Himarë/Himara people were in the 16<sup>th</sup> century autonomous. Their writings, again, differ regarding the national and local interpretations of

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<sup>73</sup> *Venome* or the unwritten law on which the local administration of the particular area was based (Pollo and Puto 1981: 293).

their autonomy. Winnifrith is a representative of the third, neutral position. He sees the language and numerous churches as the main marker of Himarë/Himara people's distinctiveness. Polo and Puto continue to describe Himarë/Himara people as brave warriors who fought for autonomy against the Ottoman powers. Rusha describes autonomy as the continuity of a set of rules which the people of Himarë/Himara kept until the Second World War (1941). Last but not least Thëngjilli has a contrary opinion and interprets autonomy as the consequence of their constant fight against Ottomans, which they undertook in order to keep their Christianity.

#### **2.4.6. Movements of People**

In the writings of the “foreign” scholars (see Mazower 2001: 26-29, Winnifrith 2002: 103) the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century are both documented as the periods of various movements to places overseas as well as in the mainland which included movements from the northern to the southern part of today's Albania and vice versa (Winnifrith 2002: 103). In this period, as noted in Chapter One, the number of villages was remarkably reduced.

The local scholar Rusha (2001: 43) writes about numerous movements in Himarë/Himara area. Many fled to Sicily and settled in Palermo in the neighbourhood called *Piana dei Greci* (in Italian The Greek Street). The name was related to its inhabitants, the followers of Greek Orthodox Church, who used to declare themselves as being of Greek nationality (Derhemi 2003: 1017). Throughout decades the area was renamed to *Piana degli Albanesi* (The Albanian Street). It is nowadays inhabited by the Arbareshs who speak a variety of southern Albanian dialects with a number of Greek and Sicilian lexical items (see Derhemi 2003: 1021-1022). Many historiographers define the Arbareshs as the ancient inhabitants of Albania. Rusha (2001: 43), however, is the only one who notes that their neighbours in Palermo were the people from Himarë/Himara area. They lived in the street called Himariotes.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century many inhabitants of Himarë/Himara area joined the military school in Naples and later worked there as vocational soldiers. In the official notes from the year 1670, the British reporter Corner writes that the army of the Kingdom of Naples conjoined about 200 soldiers of Himarë/Himara. All of them were paid. After they had retired they returned to Himarë/Himara where they were receiving monthly pension until their death (Corner 1670 in

Zamputi and Pulaha 1990: 399). A British writer and traveller Leake (1967:12) mentions that there were about 100 of such inhabitants in Himarë/Himara area in the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>74</sup>.

Whereas some people of Himarë/Himara moved to Sicily, others moved to the north of today's Italy where they served in the Venetian Republic's army. In 1685, the Italian scholar Contarini wrote about the Venetian encouragement of Himarë/Himara people for fighting against Ottomans:

Venetians were encouraging Himara people to fight and to rise up against the Ottomans and not submit to the Sultan but pay him a small haraç and allow Venetians to enter the Ottoman territories. This was very important to the people of Himara as their area was not very productive. By serving to Venetians they could provide themselves with the necessary things which they needed for their living. Himara people kept their relations with Republic of Venice as they had some people of Himara area serving as soldiers to Venetians. Besides that Himara people kept their trading relations with Corfu which was in those years under Venetian ruling (Contarini 1685 in Zamputi and Pulaha 1990: 350, translated by Enea Kumi).

Similarly to Contarini, Cardoni (1685) writes:

Venetians recruited many of the Himariotes which almost cost them lives but they were protected by Venetians. The latter obey and trust their properties to the locals because they used to trade for many years with the Corfu which is situated in their vicinity. Because of the promises of the Venetians the Himariotes were encouraged to collaborate with Venetians and fight against the ruler of Delvina who had 1.500 knights and 400 horses. Himariotes won the battle with them. In order to prove their victory they brought the heads of their enemies to the general/kapedan (leader) (Cardoni 1685 in Zamputi and Pulaha 1990: 350, translated by Enea Kumi).

Rusha (2001: 49) writes that in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the numerous fights of Himarë/Himara inhabitants against the Ottoman power led to a great hunger and starvation, which forced the people of Himarë/Himara to eat roots as nothing else was available. Because they cooperated with Venetian army in their battles against Ottomans, their help was asked in this period of great poverty, hoping they could join the Venetian Republic. But in spite of their hopes people from Himarë/Himara never joined the Venetian Republic.

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<sup>74</sup> Leake writes: "There are about 100 pensioners of the King of Naples in the town, officers included, who are paid by Capt. Zakho, for which purpose he visits Corfu every year to receive the pay from Neapolitan consul, whose agent he is. He receives a pension of twelve ducats a month for his own military services, four more for consolatory or agency, or eight ducats for the widow of a son who fell in the service. So handsome provision after a short personal service can only be considered as intended to secure an influential agent in the place, for Zakho-Ghiorgji is looked up as the chief man in Khimara by all except those who side with the Lyganates, and who, of course, consider Alexodhemo the chief" (Leake 1967: 12).

Besides the Venetians the Himarë/Himara people also asked the Austrian Monarchy for help in 1785 and they also collaborated with General Orlov and Russia. Thëngjilli (2004: 148) writes about their request for help and willingness to collaborate with Russia:

The spread of Islam had narrowed a lot the extension of Himarë and had weakened a lot the cohesion of the anti-ottoman insurrection. In this period, we have only demands of the Himariots for aid, addressed to Tzar Elizabeth (1759), the Austrian Emperor (1785), etc. in 1750, they had reached an agreement with Venice and had liberated even the Castle of Sopoti, but Venice left them in lurch. Seeing the willingness of the Himariots, the Russian General Orlov, in the interest of Russia, in 1770, managed to encourage the Christians of the Southern Albania, Himarë included, to fight the war, but Himariots got nothing in return [*sic.*] (Thëngjilli 2004: 148-149).

The scholars listed in this section discuss movements, resettlements and collaborations of Himarë/Himara people with various armies in Naples, Venice, etc. which ensued because of the ongoing clashes with Ottoman army during 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. But in spite of this, scholars such as Rusha and Thëngjilli, interpret these events with regard to their own positions. Thus, Rusha describes the resettlement of a number of Himarë/Himara people to Palermo, where they founded the neighbourhood *Piana dei Greci* and briefly mentions the Venetian Republic's rejection of Himarë/Himara people's plea to join them. Thëngjilli describes this event in a slightly sarcastic way, saying that "Venice" [the Venetian Republic] left the Himarë/Himara people in "lurch".

#### **2.4.7. Ali Pasha of Tepelena**

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the central power and control of the Ottoman Porte slowly began to decline and many small principalities came into existence. In the mid of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the area of today's Albania was divided in two pashalics<sup>75</sup>, Shkodra and Ioannina. With the formation of the pashalics the Albanian feudal class was constituted, which was independent from the Turkish feudal class. This division brought about a conflict between the Albanian feudal lords and the central Ottoman government (Pollo and Puto 1981: 94-95).

Pashalics were relatively autonomous units, controlled and led by its rulers. In the historical accounts the pashalic which had its centre in Ioannina extended throughout the area of today's Southern Albania and Epirus in Greece. The pashalic of Ioannina came under the rule of Ali Pasha of Telelena, who could hardly speak Turkish. As he was seen as "dangerously"

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<sup>75</sup> Pashalic is the land administrated by the authority of Pasha during the Ottoman leadership. Pashalic did often not correspond to the area covered by the Turkish state's administrative unit (Pollo and Puto 1981: 291).

autonomous, he was disliked by the Ottoman authorities in Constantinople (see Jacques 1995: 249-250).

In the second part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with demise of the Ottoman Empire, the autonomous pashalic disintegrated into four vilayets of Shkodra, Kosova, Monastir and Ioannina. Vilayets were governed by separate administrations that were further subdivided into sandjaks (military districts) and these to kazas (city with its surrounding villages). Instead of the feudal military leadership the Ottoman Porte recognized the feudal latifundia (large estates) which had developed rapidly in the period of pashalic (see Polo and Puto 1981: 104). Along with the political and the administrative divisions, movements of people continued. These movements were mainly based on trading relations, seasonal work and indentured labour.

Some of the elderly villagers of Dhërmi/Drimades can recall their grandfathers' narratives about Ali Pasha's resettlement of disobedient villagers from Dhërmi/Drimades to Salaora<sup>76</sup> in the Gulf of Arta in Greece in 1810. Ali ordered Salaora to develop as the main port in the Gulf of Arta. In that period people of Salaora were suffering from Spanish flu<sup>77</sup> and many of them died. In spite of his cunning attempts to doom people of Dhërmi/Drimades and let them die of Spanish flue, some of them managed to survive. After the fall of Ali Pasha's government, next generations of people of Dhërmi/Drimades moved to the mountains of Pogoni in Epirus where they founded a village with the same name, Drimades.

Systematic resettlement ordered by Ali Pasha is also mentioned in the works of local authors like Kristo Dede and Foto Bixhili, and in the tourist guide of Himarë/Himara area, available on the website ([www.himara.eu](http://www.himara.eu)) of the Municipality of Himarë/Himara and Himara Community. Referring to Dede, Foto Bixhili describes this event with the following words:

In the period of large displacement and emigrations the systematic movement of the inhabitants of Nivitsa and St. Vasil in Himarë region took place. Ali Pasha gave a command to resettle them to Trikala and Thesaly. In spring 1810 Ali Pasha ordered to resettle the people of Dhermi who had to move to the marshland of Salahora, situated close to Parga. According to Dede around 2500 people were moved to Salahora. Many

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<sup>76</sup> Hammond (1967) writes that in the times of Ali Pasha Salaora used to be an island.

<sup>77</sup> Spanish flu or Influenza pandemic was caused by an unusually severe and deadly Influenza A virus strain between 1918 and 1920. By far the most destructive pandemic in history, it killed between 50 and 100 million people worldwide in just 18 months, dwarfing the bloodshed due to World War I (1914-1918). Many of its victims were healthy young adults, in contrast to most influenza outbreaks which predominantly affect juvenile, elderly, or otherwise weakened patients (<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs211/en/>).



of them died of malaria. Those who survived moved to the mountains of Pogon, after Ali died. In order to keep the memories on the old village of Dhrimade they named the new settlement by the same name. In October 1822 there lived around 700 people of whom there were 180 women (Bixhili 2004: 84, translated by Juliana Vera).

In the tourist guide of Himarë/Himara area ([www.himara.eu](http://www.himara.eu)) the systematic resettlement is only briefly mentioned:

Ali Pasha tried with all means at his disposal to conquer Himara, drawing a noose ever tighter around the region, taking and destroying the villages of Himara, exiling their inhabitants to Salaora, near Arta, building the castle Panormos, on the ruins of an older castle and a monastery to control the Himariotes.

The content of this section reveals various people's resettlements that were undertaken by the Ottoman administration in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In contrast to the authors defending the pro-Albanian position, those defending the local one note the Pasha's resettlement of the local people to Salahora.

#### **2.4.8. "Western" Visitors**

The first chapter – *The Village and its People* – already mentioned some of the first travellers through this area, such as the Romantic poet Byron, English writer Leake and painter Lear, who passed through Epirus between 1809 and 1810. According to Todorova (1997: 62-63) the travel literature was one of the sources that often constructed prejudices, extreme views, generalizations and shaped the public opinion about the different and the Other amongst the Western readers.

The writings of the British travellers Lear (1988 [1851]) and Leake (1967) too, could be viewed from her viewpoint as those upon which their "Western readers" could construct prejudices about the "Himariot Other". But in spite of that these works are often quoted and variously interpreted by different contemporary scholars in Albania. Before I focus on their interpretations, let me pause by Lear's and Leake's passages cited by contemporary authors. In order to understand their meaning I will set them in a slightly broader context:

All this domestic crowd, joined to a great variety of nephews and cousins, were waiting to receive us as we entered a courtyard, from whence we ascended to a spacious kitchen, where the females of the family saluted me with an air of timidity natural to person who live in such Oriental seclusion (Lear 1988:136).

It would be most interesting for a person well versed in Romaic (which nearly all here speak, or at least understand) to travel through Khimára and by remaining there for

some glean detailed accounts of the habits of life among these primitive people; as for me, I could only arrive at snatches of information by means of Italian, which many of the Vuniote men speak. Only my asking Anastásio if his wife and mother were not coming to dinner, he replied that the women never eat with the men, but his wife Marína, would come and wait on us at supper, as by that time she would have less '*vergogna*' of a stranger, an uncommon sight to Khimáriote females (Lear 1988: 139, italics original).

The houses of Khimára are all of dark stone, and bear signs of having seen better days; on every side are heaps of ruin, and a great extent of rubbish, with walls of different dates, proclaims this remarkable Acropolis to have been once a considerable place. The people of Khimára are all of Greek origin, and speak Romaic, though those of the towns I have passed on my way, although Christian, are all Albanian with the exception a few families such as Kasnétzi. The Khimáriotes of this place declare that the town contains vestiges of sixty-two churches (Lear 1988: 144).

The golden age of Khimára's liberty seems to have been in the days of the Pashás of Avlóna, before Alí had swallowed up all Albania; but since his reign this restless race are withered and broken. 'We serve the Sultan', say they; but if asked whether they are Albanians, Christians, or Turks, they say—'Neither; we are Khimáriotes' (Lear 1988: 147-148).

The name Khimára is generally applied to the whole of the ancient *Acroceraunian* ridge, from Cape Kefalí to Cape Glossa, including the valley of *Oricum*. The towns are in the following order from south to north: Nívitza, Lúkovo, Pikérnes, Sopotó, Kieperó, Khimára, Vunó, Dhrymádhēs, Palása and Dukádhēs [...]. All these towns have nearly the same semi-barbarous manners and customs. The Greek language is spoken by almost all the men, and Italian by those who have lived abroad; but the women in general know little of any language but the Albanian (Leake 1967: 88).

Nívitza is inhabited by Musulman Liapē, and is described as situated on the peaked rock, surrounded by deep ravines and torrents, where considerable remains of ancient walls are preserved, and the castle particularly an entire door. It is agreed by all who have seen these walls that they exactly resemble some pieces of Hellenic work, which now serve as foundations to several of the modern houses of Khimára. The masonry approaches to a regular kind not any of the blocks of stone having more than five sides. These relicts, together with the name, leave no question that Khimára stands upon the exact site of the ancient Chimæra, which I believe is noticed only by Pliny (Leake 1967: 89-90).

Rami Memushaj is one of the scholars, who interpreted Leake's words according to the national, pro-Albanian position:

'The Greek language is spoken by almost all the men, and Italian by those who have lived abroad; but the women in general know little of any language but the Albanian' (Leake 1967: 88). With the expansion of Islam the number of Himarë villages gradually shrank to 14 and later on 7 Orthodox villages. Seven villages of Himarë were subject of hellenization that was based on the introduction of the Greek language in the church and school. After the Bazilian missionaries left Himarë the patriarch and despotisms did not impede the local people to open their own schools. That was the period when in the villages of Himarë, especially in Himarë, Dhermi, Palasa and partly in Qeparo began the expansion of the Greek language that was used in the church, school, trading overseas and even in the everyday bases [*sic.*] (Memushaj 2003: 169).

Same quotations are used by Frashëri who in one of his essays, first published in newspaper *Korrieri* (December 2004) and later in his book (2005), interprets Lear within the pro-Albanian position:

There are three opposing views among the Albanian and Greek historians. According to the first the inhabitants of these three villages [Palasa, Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara] belong to Albanian nationality and Greek is their second language. According to Hellenic writers people living in these three villages belong to Greek nationality and Albanian is the second language. Secondly, according to the first the Greek idiom of these three villages has penetrated them from the outside nowadays; according to the second they have an ancient origin. Thirdly at least the first has belief in the observation of the British writer W.M. Leake who after his visit of Himarë villages in 1804 says: ‘The Greek language is spoken by almost all the men, and Italian by those who have lived abroad; but the women in general know little of any language but the Albanian’. While the second have not opposed to the Leake’s sentence who says clearly that in those time the Greek language was not a mother tongue (Frashëri 2005: 15, translated by Juliana Vera).

Local intellectual Kristaq Jorgji has an opposite view. In his responds to Frashëri, published in the daily newspaper *ABC* (April 1, 2006a) he writes:

The phrase [of Leake] is rightly cited. And it should be taken in consideration. This is important as Leake, in contrast to Edward Lear, knew some Albanian. In fact, he even has published a study of an Albanian language. I would like to draw attention to the fact that Leake stayed only one day in Himara and according to the habits of those years, women were not shown in front of the guests. Lear writes later more about this habit. ‘*Only my asking Anastásio (Lear’s companion from Vuno KVJ) if his wife and mother were not coming to dinner, he replied that the women never eat with the men, but his wife Marina, would come and wait for us at supper, as by that time she would have less ‘vergogna’ of a stranger, an uncommon sight to Khimáriote females*’. Therefore it would be hard for Lear to know what women speak. Of course it might be possible that Leake heard the women’s conversation in the kitchen as there is also a possibility to doubt in his saying that women spoke mainly only Albanian [...]. One thing is clear from the reading of the Lear’s and Leake’s memories - both Englishmen testify that the people of Himara have spoken Greek language. But, there is one but. It should be noted that although they might be good observers, they spent a very short time in Himara. Lear slept there only 4 nights (24, 25, 26 and 27 of October 1848 – of which three nights in Vuno and one night in Palasa); while Leake has slept in Himara only night (on 11 September 1804). Therefore, the two Englishmen’s testimonies should be taken in consideration with the necessary precautions, especially if we have other reports [...] (Jorgji 2006a: 5, italics original; translated by Juliana Vera).

In the continuing part of his discussion, Jorgji refers to the Italian missionaries Nilo Borgia and Schiro:

The third report from 1730-1735 says: ‘*Himara, the province of Epirus that stretches*

*from Vlorë and Delvina, above the abyss where many villages are situated, through the bishopal city of Himara (after which the whole region is called), Dhermi or Drimades and Palasa that are inhabited by Greeks, while the other are Albanians obeyed by the Ottoman rule’.*

[...] Schiro is not only passing by Himara - he lived there and for a long time. Schiro came first in 1716 to Himara and stayed there until 1729 - almost 13 years. Later, he returned and stayed five additional years, from 1930-1935. Here we could see that Schiro has a long term experience, which cannot be skipped that easily as Mr. Frashëri does with his phrase ‘that it cannot be explained’ (*‘nuk eshte ne gjendje te shpjegohet’*). Schiro’s relations to Holly See should be taken in consideration seriously as Schiro had a contact with the people of Himara for a period of time that is 1,000 times longer than that of Lear and 5,000 times longer than that of Leake. I believe that we should stop arguing any longer [...] (Jorgji 2006a: 5, italics original; translated by Juliana Vera).

Leake’s and Lear’s notes from their travels are mainly gathered during their short conversations with the local people, while some of them are supported with references to the Antic scholars (cf. Pliny). Their accounts, which describe landscape, architecture, language, culture, belonging and people’s origin, are often used in the contemporary scholar’s writings to support their arguments based on various positions. When Memushaj and Frashëri use Leake’s description about the local people’s language, they take it out from its context and ignore the rest of Leake’s explanation that follows in the continuation where he describes Himarë/Himara’s Hellenic architecture. Jorgji who defends the local view criticizes Frashëri for manipulating the Leake’s quote and gives additional arguments in order to support his local view. Overall, all three authors do not refer to the period of various movements, resettlements and different divisions of people and places in the period of Ottoman coquets, which eventually resulted in these diametrical oppositions and contestations that are forming parts of their present writings.

#### **2.4.9. Rilindja – Revival**

During the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when a need to form the Albanian nation-state, appeared among the Albanian intellectuals who lived in the emigration most of today’s Albania as well as the South Eastern Europe was still under the Ottoman domination. Series of defeats of the Ottoman army made its government administratively, economically and military weak. In order to strengthen control over the areas of its dominancy and to make tax

systems more rigorous, the Ottoman administration introduced tanzimat<sup>78</sup> reforms in 1839 (see Vickers 2001: 25). In those years the vilayet of Ioannina was divided into five sanjaks: Ioannina, Preveza, Gjirokastër, Berat and Larissa (Winnifrith 2002: 121). As the consequence of the tanzimat reforms the Ottoman administration also established millets or administrative units, which served to categorise the people according to their religious belonging: Christian Orthodox, Catholic, Jews and Vlachs (see Winnifrith 2002: 122).

In the edited collection of essays published by the Albanian Academy of Science, Prifti defines vilayets as the territory upon which the Albanian nationality was founded.

In the archival sources, not only Ottoman, but even in the European countries (Austro-Hungarian, French etc.), many documents having as object the analysis of the national constitution of the population of the vilayet of Janina (of South Albania) – there is no doubt the Albanian nationality of the Himarë population and of her villages. In the documents of the XVth-XIXth centuries, presented in this study, it is witnessed clearly its Albanian ethnic belonging and is accepted without any doubt, the use by the Himariots as mother tongue of the Albanian language [*sic.*] (Prifti 2004: 188).

The local intellectual Jorgji criticises such assumptions and writes:

In the papers of many historians, it is often felt the smell of modern times. Here I mean those scholars who perceive Turkish or the ancient world as if it is a state with borders, passports and visas. This is very superficial point of view. We should recall in our mind that up to the 18<sup>th</sup> century there the nation-states have not existed. Even the ancient Greeks were united every four years when they had Olympic games. After the games were over, Sparta, Athens, Thebe, Megara that were friends during the games became the enemy again. In a like manner they were enemies to Persians.

In the book “*Albanian–Illyrian Observations*” (“*Vezhgime Iliro-Shqiptare*”) written by Ludwig Van Thalloczy, translated by Mustafa Merlika of Kruja, it is quoted: “*until 1726, the name of Albania was unknown in the region of Shkodra and till now we do not have proofs that have been known in any other region of Albania*”. As Castellan writes “*It will be oversimplifying to imagine, as did in the 19 century the nationalist historians, solid ethnic blocks in order to justify the untouchable modern borders*” [*sic.*] (Jorgji 2006a: 5, *italics original*; translated by Juliana Vera).

Ottoman administrative divisions of people and places are interpreted on different bases in the contemporary historiography. One of the interpretations relates to the concept of the nation-states. As noted in the introductory part of this chapter (Dividing People and Places) various scholars (Glenny 1999: 71, Blumi 2002: 49, Duijzings 2002: 60) define the millet system as the pre-formation of the nation-states. Prifti, however, argues that such pre-formations were vilayets. Prifti’s account illustrates the way in which the meaning of nationality can be generated and reconstituted by interpreting the past. Such approach is criticized by Jorgji,

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<sup>78</sup> Tanzimat are reforms introduced by the Ottoman leadership and inaugurated by the Hatt-i Shereef of Gulhane (Pollo and Puto 1981: 292).

another scholar who writes that the area of today's Albania did not have any state-boundaries in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century so therefore we cannot speak about nationalities in that period.

#### **2.4.10. Formation of the Albanian Nation-State and the Protocol of Corfu (1914)**

On 28 November 1912, when Ismael Qemali declared Albanian independence, the autonomous state of Albania was founded. This declaration, which took place in Qemali's hometown Vlorë, happened in the time of the First Balkan War between Greek and Ottoman armies (1912-1913). In May 1913, when the First Balkan War ended, Greek troops occupied Ioannina and most of today's Southern Albania. Shkodra was taken by the Montenegrin troops (Winnifrith 2002: 129). In the period between the First (1912-1913) and the Second Balkan War (1913), which was provoked by the invasion of Bulgarian army to Serbia and Greece, people living in the area of today's Albania generally held different opinions about their future (ibid.). Some of them wanted to remain under the Ottoman government while others felt connected to Greece. Amongst the latter were mainly the people living in Southern Albania. In 1913, when the present Albanian state-borders were confirmed by the Great Powers (France, Russian Empire, British Empire and United States), people of Himarë/Himara and its neighbouring places protested against this declaration and expressed their wish to join Greece.

In October 1914 Greek troops officially entered Southern Albania and established their administration in districts of Himarë/Himara, Gjirokastër and Korça (see Jacques 1995: 359). While Winnifrith (2002: 131) reports that people living in the occupied areas of Southern Albania seemed to accept the Greek administration quite willingly, Jacques (referring to Grameno) describes the brutality of the Greek army towards the local population. Soon after these events the Protocol of Corfu was signed and the autonomous Republic of the Northern Epirus was declared. The latter included Himarë/Himara area, Gjirokastër and today's Epirus of Greece. The new Republic was approved by William the Weid, the German prince to whom the Principality of Albania was given for a short time between February 21 and September 3, 1914. The Republic of Northern Epirus had blue-and-white colour flag, surmounted by a double-headed black eagle (pointing ambiguously both to Skanderbeg and Byzantium). It appeared only on few postage stamps (ibid.). The Corfu agreement did not last long, because it was interrupted by the World War I which initially began in July 1914.

After 1912 the state-border between Albania and Greece was a matter of numerous national and international negotiations and disputes. The “provisional” government of Albania aimed to join parts of the Epirus with Albania, while the Greek political leadership insisted on annexing the area to Greece (Winnifrith 2002: 130). On the Municipality of Himarë/Himara and Himara Community website the administrators over shaded the history section about the proclamation of the Albanian independency in 1912, with a discussion about the local hero Spiro Milo. He is described as a brave warrior with a great fighting spirit, who liberated Himarë/Himara and Albania from the Ottoman dominancy and reassured the autonomy of the Himarë/Himara area.

On the 5 November 1912 Major Spyros Spyrosmilos from Himara in charge of a force of Himaran volunteers and Cretan gendarmes made a landing liberating Himara. Over the following days he would liberate the entire country [*sic.*] (www.himara.eu).

Frashëri’s essay mentions Spiro Milo too. But he does not describe him as the liberator of Himarë/Himara but as a skilful and hardened soldier of Naples. About Spiro Milo, he writes the following:

One of the officers of the regiment was the captain Spiro Milo, a man of Himarë, who graduated from the Military Academy in Naples and received an award from the army of Naples. Spiro did not learn Greek very well. After he finished his studies he went to Greece, together with some of other volunteers from Himarë, Dhermi, Palasa and other villages in the neighbourhood. After some years of fighting, Milo returned to his natal village, where he was receiving a Greek pension along with the rest of his colleagues who served the army. Only a few men returned to their natal place. Those who returned were awarded by the Greek army. For some period Himarë was a place where you could hear three languages: Albanian as the native language, Greek and Italian as the second language (Frashëri 2005: 94, translations mine).

In his respond to Frashëri local intellectual Jorgji brings forth the book of memories of Eqerem Bej of Vlorë, *Memories (Kujtime)*, which were published after his death. Jorgji quotes the treatise written by Eqerem Bej of Vlorë, a son from the aristocratic family and a good colleague of Ismael Qemali. Eqerem remembers Spiro Milo with the following sentences:

Meanwhile, I wrote another letter to the commandant of the Greek army in Himara, Colonel Spiro Milo, who without any remorse called himself the leader of Himara (*Arhegos tis Himara*). I knew him personally very well and his clan that still lives in Himara and I can affirm that we had a kind of friendship. We were divided by the political viewpoints and there we were opponents. Spiro Milo’s point of view is on the side of Greek nationalist for whom the religious backwardness always tried to join Himara to Greece. On the other side I was Albanian nationalist, but at the same time even a loyal follower of the Ottoman – Turkish state’s principle. Despite this, I can say that I respected Milo’s family, because they were known for their loyalty towards their friends, bravery and persistence. I knew very well that my letter in these circumstances

wouldn't have any influence. Despite this, I wrote it saying that Albanians whether they are Orthodox or Muslims, are brothers. I mentioned the Albanian origin of his (Spiro Milo) family and begged him not to cause bloodshed between populations of the same country, otherwise we would attack. Of course, I received no answer. Instead of that, a strong Cretan-Himariote detachment assaulted the pass (Bej Vlorë 2001: 307 in Jorgji 2006a: 6, translated by Juliana Vera).

In the continuation of his essay Jorgji comments that Spiro Milo sent a letter of reply to Eqerem Bej of Vlorë after all. But this is not known to contemporary Albanian historiography. The letter was published in the work of the Italian author Cassavetti (1914) in the book titled *Hellas and the Balkan Wars*. In his letter to Eqerem Spiro Milo writes:

You say that Italy and Austria will settle the Albanian principality. We are waiting for its rise and we shall celebrate such an event. Even if we prove our brotherhood in this principality we will keep our noble sentiments which will always stay the same. We will not forget that you are our brothers who were separated from us since you denied our religion. It seems really necessary to remind the inhabitants of Kuçi that they used to be Christians 90 years ago and have relatives among the inhabitants of Himara. The very name of Gjoleka indicates the religion to which Shefqet Bey's ancestors belonged. As for your threats I believe you refer them neither to Spiro Milo nor to the inhabitants of Chimara, for even the children of Gjoleka know that we are used to Mausers and Martini rifles in the same way as they are. It is not the other who threatens and hides himself behind, but that other has never fought before nor have his ancestors. Somebody is fighting for him. But this somebody is fighting neither for himself nor for his forefathers (Cassavetti 1914: 237-239 in Jorgji 2006a: 6, translated by Juliana Vera).

In the collection of essays published by the Albanian Academy of Sciences the national historian Muin Çami links the local hero Spiro Milo to the separatist's movement in Himarë/Himara, which contributed to the formation of the autonomy in this area. In 1914 this autonomy was confirmed with the Protocol of Corfu, signed by the Great Powers. Çami writes that in this period the people of Himarë/Himara had ambiguous attitudes towards nationality:

The people of Himarë were divided in two groups. The first and the largest group supported the decisions made by the parliament in Vlorë, while the second group adopted the separatists (pro-Greek) attitude. The group of separatists was led by Spiro Milo who proclaimed the autonomy of the area. Spiro Milo was an important figure of the separatists' movement in southern Albania (Çami 2004: 210, translations mine).

While to many local intellectuals the Protocol of Corfu represents the confirmation of the local people's Greekness, in the national historiography this agreement is scarcely mentioned (cf. Frashëri 2005) or its interpretation is often grounded on different positions (cf. Çami 2004: 196, Prifti 2004: 190). Prifti, for example, gives an account about the protest of Himarë/Himara people against their association with Greece:



After the outbreak of the Balkan War by the “Balkan Alliance” against Turkey in October 1912, the Greek army occupied the island of Sazani, and at the end of November landed in Himarë, which was occupied together with some villages around. The Greek fleet blocked Vlorë and put it under menace[...].

The population of the region of Himarë did not subjugate to the pressure of the Greek agents who aimed at detaching it from the Provisional Government of Vlorë and supported it. On March 14, 1913, the Council of elders of the Region of Himarë, gathered in Vuno, sent a letter to the “government in Vlorë” in which greeted the appeal of the Assembly of Vlorë, the hoisting of the national flag and the formation of the free Albania, which was evaluated also as a blow to the plans of the Greek “Ethniki”.

Despite the resistance of the population and the efforts of the Provisional Government of Vlorë (1912-1913) for the expulsion of the Greek occupiers from Himarë, Greece continued to hold it occupied even after the decisions of the Conference of the Ambassadors of London (of 22 March and 13 August 1913) for the borders of the Albanian Independent State. But its effort to annex this region failed [*sic.*] (Prifti 2004: 190).

The administrators of the website give us a completely different account. Instead of the protest of the people of Himarë/Himara they write about them gaining autonomy.

On 9 February 1914 the people of Himara reacted against the plans of the Great Powers to include the town within the boundaries of the Albanian state, up to 1921 Himara was successively autonomous, under Greek Administration, Italian military occupation and once more autonomous [*sic.*] (<http://himara.eu/index-en.html>).

The paragraphs above illustrate the different interpretations of Himarë/Himara people’s belonging. According to the authors defending the local position the area of Himarë/Himara is described as autonomous or a part of Greece, with people courageously fighting to gain this position of autonomy that is more related to Greece than Albania. Somewhat different descriptions are given by the authors who defend the national position. Thus, Çami, for example, points out the divided opinions about the annexation to Greece: whilst those who supported the nationalist’s aims were in majority, the rest who supported the separatist’s movement were in minority.

Moreover, the paragraphs also illustrate how the particular events from the past, namely the Corfu Protocol, can be put aside in the writings defending the pro-Albanian perception or put forth in the writings supporting the local perceptions. For example, authors defending the pro-Albanian interests do not mention the Corfu protocol at all. They also have different attitudes towards the local hero Spiro Milo, whose actions they interpreted from different perspectives too. Administrators of the website, who defend the local perspective, describe Spiro Milo (or

Spyro Spyromilos) as the liberator of Himarë/Himara from the Ottoman dominancy. Though defending different, pro-Albanian perspective, Çami gives a similar description of Spiro Milo and defines him as the leader of separatists' movement. Unlike the administrators, Çami points out the divided attitudes of Himarë/Himara people, majority of whom were supporting the nationalist visions whilst the minority was on the side of the separatists. Frashëri, who defends the national perspective, gives a somewhat different description of Spiro Milo. In contrast to administrators and Çami he does not point out his separatist intentions and the struggle for autonomy, but describes him as a professional soldier of Greek army who received the military pension from the Greek government after his retirement. Jorgji, who supports the local interests, criticises Frashëri's writings which like the rest of Albanian historiography favours only particular kinds of data and disregards all other. As an example Jorgji presents the correspondence between Eqerem Bej of Vlorë and Spiro Milo.

The exchange of letters between Spiro Milo and Eqerem Bej of Vlorë illustrates the discord considering the Himarë/Himara people's belonging. Though Bej of Vlorë mentions Spiro Milo's pro-Greek attitude, he defines the people of Himarë/Himara as being part of the Albanian nation. Contrary to Bej of Vlorë, Milo points out the Himarë/Himara people's distinct locality and writes, "even if we prove our brotherhood in this principality we will keep our noble sentiments which will always stay the same". Both, Bej of Vlorë and Milo agree in brotherhood between the people of Himarë/Himara and the rest of inhabitants of Albania. But nevertheless they define their brotherhood on different foundations. Bej of Vlorë defines it on the national basis, whereas Milo defines it on the religious basis. The main reason for splitting of their brotherhood they put forward the treacherous nature of each other. Eqerem Bej of Vlorë projects it in Milo's and Himarë/Himara people's religious backwardness while Milo projects it in those Albanians who accepted Islam.

#### **2.4.11. The First World War (1914-1918)**

In 1914, the Italian government without yet entering the war sent troops across the Adriatic in order to land on the uninhabited and rocky Island Sazano. On Christmas day the Italian army seized Vlorë and explained its deed as temporary, in order to protect the territory of Vlorë from the Greek army which had to retreat from the territory of Southern Albania (see Jacques 1995: 360).

In March 1915 the Italian government made a secret agreement with the allied countries of Great Britain, France and Russia. Three weeks later, in April 26, 1915 the Italian military forces joined the war on the side of the allies. By signing the agreement the political leaders of the allied countries promised the Italian government to get a part of the Southern Albania (Vlorë, the Island of Sazano, the area of Vjosa river all the way to the north and east and finally the Himarë/Himara area to the south) by the peace treaty in the near future (see Polo and Puto 1981: 165-166 and Jacques 1995: 360-61). On May 4, 1915 the Italian army entered the war and the Greek administration under the Protocol collapsed (see Jacques 1995: 359). Italian troops, which were already based in Vlorë, blocked the entire Albanian seacoast, what resulted in a general economic crisis and led to the starvation of people living in this area. Because of hunger the emigration in Himarë/Himara and other places throughout Southern Albania continued. In the period of the Italian occupation the Austro-Hungarian war prisoners under guard of the Italian army widened the road through the Llogara pass towards Himarë/Himara town. This improved the connections between the city of Vlorë and the villages of Himarë/Himara area.

In 1916 the Austrian army defeated the Serbian and Montenegrin troops that were occupying Northern Albania. Following this victory Austria occupied Northern and Central Albania as far south as river Vjosa (Jacques 1995: 362-363). The Italian forces kept Vlorë and Gjirokastër district while the French army moved to Korça. The boundary between the former republic of Northern Epirus and the rest of Albania became the battle front between Austrians on the one side and Italians and French on the other (see Winnifrith 2002: 131). In 1917 the Greek government, which was neutral to this point, decided to join the allied forces. Soon after that the Greek army regained control over Ioannina and the area around Salonika. Almost till the end of the war the Greek army governed the area of former Northern Epirus. Before the war ended in 1918 Epirus came under the Italian and French administration (see Winnifrith 2002: 132).

In 1918, when the First World War was over, the borders of today's Albania which were initially determined in 1913 became part of negotiations again. The Greek government insisted on the autonomy of Northern Epirus and amalgamation of fragments of the Byzantine Empire. The Italian government similarly aspired to keep Vlorë and its neighbourhood while Serbia and Macedonia tried to get the north of today's Albania (see Polo and Puto 1981: 175, Jacques 1995: 366-367, Winnifrith 2002: 132-133).

Italian and Greek interests led into the signing of the secret agreement between the Italian and Greek ministers, Tittoni and Venizelos, where both committed to support each other's claims to regain control over some of the areas of today's Albanian territory (see Polo and Puto 1981: 175). The Italian minister recognised Greek rights to control Gjirokastrë and Korçë while the Greek minister recognised Italy the right to claim the area of Vlorë (ibid.). The Great Powers almost ratified this agreement which raised great polemics and resistance amongst the Albanian nationalists.

In spite of that the opinions of people living in Albania were divided. Besides the new generation of the Albanian nationalists who strove for independence, there were some who preferred Italy, others United States and others who claimed to belong to Greece. Regardless of such divided opinions the people joined demonstrations organised in Vlore, protesting against the harshness of the Italian military administration in 28 November 1919 (Polo and Puto 1981: 176).

In order to establish the Albanian independency, the nationalist leaders organised the Congress of Lushnja on January 21, 1920. The delegates of the Albanian Republic re-confirmed the state-borders determined in 1913. They also discussed the financial conditions in Albania, dismissed the provisional government and elected a new one (see Jacques 1995: 367-368). The elected government conjoined officers amongst whom there were also Sulejman Bey of Delvina, Alfred Zogu and Sotir Peci (ibid.). The new government aimed to solve the issues regarding the military administration of French troops in Korçë and Italian troops in Vlorë. While the French troops withdrew from Korçë in a relatively short time (in May 1920), Italian troops stayed in Vlorë until the massive uprising of the Albanian population which led into the battle of Vlorë (see Polo and Puto 1981:178, Jacques 1995: 371).

The battle of Vlorë represents an important part of the Albanian national history upon which the patriotism, unity and heroism of the Albanian nation are constituted. The battle started in June 1920 in Vlorë and besides the army of Vlorë conjoined hundreds of other villagers and compatriots. The battle lasted until the the Albanian and Italian governments signed an agreement about the withdrawal of Italian troops by 2 September that same year (see Polo and Puto 1981: 179).

In the years between 1920 and 1925 the question of the borders between Greece and Albania was opened again. *Meghali Idea* of Greece and its aim to re-establish the independent state of Northern Epirus were once more denied at the Conference in Florence in 1925. The borders defined at this conference were less favourable for Greece as those defined in 1914 (see Winniffrith 2002: 132-133). The Italian delegates insisted on the state-borders agreed in 1913, whereas the delegates of Great Britain and France suggested the border that followed demands of the Northern Epirus with Voskopoja in Albania. The delegates of the United States were in favour of the compromise according to which Greece should get the territory south of Himarë/Himara all the way to Tepelena with the border running by river Vjosa (ibid.). Winniffrith adds that the American solution could be the best one, although “many Albanian-speakers and some Albanian sympathizers in Greece, and some Greek-speakers and rather more Greek sympathizers in the Korçe area of Albania” would be left out (Winniffrith 2002: 133).

In his book on the history of Himarë/Himara the local writer Foto Bixili (2004: 253) reports about the local man Spiro J. Koleka from Vuno who was amongst the elected representatives of the Congress in Lushnja. According to Bixhili Koleka was an important hero and initiator of the battle in Vlorë which resulted in the final retreat of the Italian troops from Vlorë and the Albanian territory in general in June 1920.

In January 20, 1920 the Albanian parliament gathered and established that “Albania is an independent country which since November 28, 1912 did not submit to any of the foreign government’s” (Ermenji 1986: 396) [...]. In the first government elected by the parliament collaborated a man of Vuno, Spiro J. Koleka. Together with his colleague Osman Haxiu and Qazim Kuculli, Spiro J. Koleka organised the battle in Vlorë. Afterwards the events developed rapidly. The agreement that was signed between Tittoni and Venizello in July 22, 1920, a few months later, on August 2, 1920, failed. The Count Mazoni [Italian minister] finally declared the independency of the Albanian territory with its state borders stipulated in 1913.

The reason for the failing of Tittoni and Venizello’s agreement was neither friendship nor personal sympathy between the ministers of foreign affairs Sforca [Italian minister of foreign affairs] and Mustafa Qemali [Albanian minister of foreign affairs]. The agreement failed because of the courage, decisive character and fidelity (*vendosmeria*) of the Albanian army that won the battle which resulted in the retreat of Greek troops from Trikupi of Viglica and Kapshtica [in Southern Albania] in May 15, 1920 (Jeorgjiu [*the year not given*] 277-278). After this retreat the Italian government recognized the government of Tirana and withdrew its pretensions (Bixhili 2004: 253, translations mine).

Çami too, describes Spiro Koleka as being an important hero in the history of Vlorë and Albania in general. He writes the following words about him:

By the end of the First World War the Albanian leaders gathered at the Congress of Lushnja. Among them was also Spiro Gogo<sup>79</sup> Koleka whose presence influenced the future development of the events in Himarë area. At that time Koleka lived in Vlorë where together with his friends, Osman Haxhia, Jani Minga, Halim Xhelo and others organised the revolt against the Italian troops. Koleka and his compatriots wrote numerous letters to Great Powers or namely to the US president Woodrow Willson and British premier David Loyd George and others. In their letters Koleka and his colleagues described the intentions and the will of the inhabitants of Vlorë to liberate the city from the Italian occupiers and regain control over it.

In this period (1919) a political debate developed about the inclusion of the Albanian state in the Italian protectorate. But Albania did not agree with Italian plans as it aspired for the independency. Debates between Albania and Italy also reached the Himarë area. Following these events brothers Koleka of Vuno decided to rise against the idea of Italian protectorate. They reported this to American consul Josef Havel and the representative of the Great Powers on his visit in Himarë. After the First World War the members of the Congress in Paris decided that Albania will come under the Italian administration. In May 1920, three to four months before the Congress in Lusnja, a member of the Albanian Council Spiro Koleka opposed this decision and together with his compatriots formed the army and revolted against the Italian forces [...].

[...] The battle in Vlorë started when the Italian army was slowly moving from the inner part of Albania towards the harbour town of Vlorë. The troops from Vlorë, Tepelena and Himarë were waiting in the ambush for the Italian forces to come.

Spiro Koleka collaborated in the war as a man of Himarë. When the war was over he publicly stated that he fought and won the battle in the name of their culture and brotherhood. Koleka was the first who declared a manifest during the war of Vlorë where he “presented himself to the world as an Albanian citizen who was like a razor blade”. Together with his compatriots he was an important figure “not only for the destiny of Vlorë but also for the destiny of all Albania” (*Gazeta “Mbrojtja Kombëtare, Vlorë 14 October 1920 in Çami 2004: 205-206, translations mine).*

The local intellectual Rusha discusses the importance of Koleka from a different position than Çami:

Throughout the First World War and later in 1920 and in the period when the parliament of Durrës gathered at the Congress in Lushnja, where it formed the cabinet of Sulejman of Delvina with its centre in Tirana, and even after the battle in Vlorë which resulted in the final retreat of the Italian troops from Vlorë (that were occupying the area since 1914) and Albania, Himarë remained independent. Its independency and the privileges won in the bloody war with Ottomans were kept also during the period of the Balkan War between 1912 and 1913 though there were several tensions arising in Vlorë region. In order to solve the tensions, the Albanian government and the leaders of Himarë signed preliminary agreement. Upon this agreement the people of Himara area were represented in the Albanian parliament by their delegate Spiro G. Koleka. In the parliament Koleka demanded and obtained the following rights for Himara area:

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<sup>79</sup> Foto Bixhili (2004: 253) refers to Spiro Jorgo Koleka. Gogo is a shorter name for Jorgo.

- I. Keeping the old *venomes*.
  - II. Religion: complete freedom and keeping the wealth of churches.
  - III. Language: obligatory Albanian language as official language while the Greek language was taught freely as the second language if the people express such will.
  - IV. Military service: like in other countries training should be obligatory to take three times monthly. Military service for Himara area started from the river Shkumbin in the south. In the period of war these rules should be followed by everybody.
  - V. Prefecture: the prefect and the police commissioner of Himara area should be Christians but not Himariot.
  - VI. Magistrate: a small magistrate should have a major who is Christian but not Himariot.
  - VII. Deputy: regardless of the number of the population the people of Himara have a right to be represented by two deputy members in the parliament.
  - VIII. Amnesty: to keep in mind the situation of abnormal times when the area was apologized of penalty.
  - IX. Outline: to appoint the general commission of the inhabitants.
  - X. The delegates should be appointed by the people of Himara.
- Vlorë, June 2, 1921.  
The delegate, Spiro Koleka (Rusha 2001: 121-123, translations mine).

Some demands presented by Koleka in the parliament of Vlorë are also mentioned in the proceedings of the Pan-Himariote Conference in Tirana which was organised in December, 2005:

It is the government of Sulejman of Delvina which first took into consideration the people of Himara. He used the mediation of a distinguished man of Himara Spiro Koleka (the first) who drew the attention of the Albanian government by initiating the agreement between the local people and the government. Upon this agreement Koleka demanded the rights noted bellow and described in the book of S. Rusha:

- Acknowledgement of the old law *venome*.
- 2. Religion: complete freedom and keeping the wealth of churches.
- [...]
- Himara has the right to appoint two deputies in the parliament, regardless of its number of the population (Bollano, Milo, et.al. 2006: 226, translations mine).

The British scholar Pettifier mentions Spiro Koleka in one of the footnotes in his report on the Greek minority in Albania:

Some important Albanian communist leaders were wholly or partly Greek, like long-serving Politburo member Spiro Koleka, who came from the predominantly ethnic Greek town of Himara (Pettifier 2001: 18).

In summary, this subchapter discloses the political aspirations of Italian, Greek, French, and Austrian governments to establish their dominance over particular parts of the Albanian territory after the First World War. Along with their aspirations the Albanian national movement was formed aiming for independency of the Albanian nation-state. In describing

the period of national movements the authors construct the myths of homogeneity, unity and equality of members that are according to them defined either as a part of the nation-state or a part of the local community. Moreover, the scholars' accounts also construct the characteristics of the hero Spiro Koleka. The nationalist historians present him as a national hero who originates from Himarë/Himara and courageously fights for the freedom and independency of Albania. To the contrary, the local scholars represent Koleka as the leader of Himarë/Himara and the warrior for the local unity and homogeneity. Both kinds of authors, in order to support their arguments, set Koleka in different political contexts. Those who argue for the pro-Albanian view link him with the renown Congress of Lushnja which led to the battle in Vlorë and the liberation of Albania from the Italian occupation. Those who defend the local view set Koleka in the local background and define him as the initiator of autonomy of Himarë/Himara.

#### **2.4.12. The Period of “Democratic Movements” (1920-1925)**

Some months after expulsion of the Italian troops from Vlorë the cabinet of Sulejman Delvina resigned and Ilias Vrionini was appointed as the head of the new government. In the same year the Bishop Fan Noli who lived in emigration in the United States for several years, returned to Albania. His political activity in Boston was based on the promotion of the Albanian language (see Jacques 1995: 373). In February 1922 the Albanian Parliament ratified the declaration of minority rights proposed by Fan Noli. These rights included the Greek-speaking people living in the villages of Gjirokastër , Sarandë and three villages Dhërmi/Drimades, Palasa and Himarë/Himara. The other villages of Himarë/Himara and Konitsa stayed out of the minority areas (see Kondis and Manda 1994: 16).

In 2December, 1922 the minister of interior Ahmed Zogu was appointed as the prime minister. Because of the corrupted election campaign in December 27, 1923 Zogu and his cabinet resigned in January of the following year. The members of the High Council appointed Ilias Vrioni as the prime minister. In June 1924 “democratic revolution” broke out, first in Berat and later spread throughout Albania (see Jacques 1995: 380). Ahmed Zogu fled to Yugoslavia and the democratic government of Fan Noli came to the power. His government introduced many reforms such as the establishment of progressive democracy, eradication of feudal system, radical agrarian reform and reduction of bureaucracy (ibid.). Despite Noli's democratic visions he did not sympathize with the Greek language used in



schools and churches in Albania. He was one of the leading founders of the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania, which was declared by the Clerical-Lay Congress in Berat in September 10, 1922 and finally approved by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in April 12, 1937 (see Kondis and Manda 1994: 17-18, Jacques 1995: 397). Noli's government did not last long. On December 14, 1924 Zogu entered Tirana with his army. Five days later Noli announced a state of siege and in December 26 he fled to Italy together with his closest political colleagues (see Jacques 1995: 380).

Winnifrith (2002: 134) writes that the Greek historiographers sympathised neither with Zogu as he was Muslim nor with Noli who was fighting for Albanian independence during his stay in America. The Albanian historiographers of the communist era, however, represented Noli as a positive figure in spite of his attitude towards religion. Unlike Noli, who in the period of communism received a better treatment because he supported Hoxha's regime, Zogu was represented as the leader of the evil regime (ibid.).

In the contemporary historiography relating to Himarë/Himara area both Noli and Zogu are represented in a rather negative manner. The local author Bixhili, whose work is closer to the pro-Albanian position, describes the reforms of Noli as the core reason for the revolt in Himarë/Himara in 1924:

In these years two men had played the key role in the destiny of the area, Theofan Stelian Noli (Mavromati) and Ahmed Zogu. In the year of Noli's presidency the people of Himarë and of some other areas in Southern Albania revolted. The first revolt, which took place between August and September in 1924, was against the Noli's control and taxation of income and outcome. The same revolts repeated in 1932 and 1934-1937[...]. All the revolts broke out because the people of Himarë demanded the same privileges as they enjoyed under the Ottoman legacy and later as the Greek-speaking population. They demanded to be declared a part of the Greek minority (Bixhili 2004: 267-268, translations mine)

The local author Rusha gives more detailed account on the revolt in Himarë/Himara:

After democratic revolution in June 1924, when Ahmed Zogu fled to Yugoslavia, the government of the patriot Avni Rustemi introduced democracy led by Fan S. Noli. But the government of F. Noli was not that clean although it was promising to bring democracy. When Noli was the right hand of the parliament he caused an incident in the area [of Himarë/Himara] and suppressed democracy what gradually led to the fall of his government. One of these incidents was caused by the legal authorities Azis Çami and Qazim Koculli who were the commandants of the Vlorë region (Rusha 2001: 123, translations mine).

Moreover, Rusha continues that both, Noli and Zogu were responsible for incidents in Himarë/Himara. Rusha describes a tragic incident which happened after the inhabitants denied paying land taxes or xhelep and the crop taxes ordered by Fan Noli. Therefore:

Azis Çami ordered gendarmes to use force and prohibit the women of Himara to work in the vineyards. Women opposed the prohibition and revolted with the billhooks. Gendarmes killed two women while the women wounded two gendarmes and its leader. This had happened on October 3, 1924 (Rusha 2001: 124, translations mine).

In the continuation Rusha gives an account of a folk song, which describes the resistance and murder of two local women. Rusha comments on this song with the following words:

The murders in Himara resulted in a revolt not only against Azis Çami, Qazim Kuculli who were the initiators of this act but also against the democratic party of Fan Noli (Rusha 2001: 126, translations mine).

This incident is also mentioned in the edited proceedings of the Pan-Himariot Conference:

In 1924 the government of Noli established democracy and tried to abolish the system of *venome*. Besides Noli there were also two other men who were important in the history of this area, the prefect of Vlorë Qazim Kuculli and the commandant of the gendarmerie of Vlorë region, Azis Çami.

The majority in the party of Fan Noli held an opinion that in this unique country/area (*shtet unik*) [Himarë/Himara] the autonomy is not possible. The main argument that is important nowadays as it was 80 or 50 years before is that the democracy of Fan Noli was not experienced democracy at all.

Noli's Democratic Party used the police force over the local people. On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1924, gendarmes killed two women and women wounded two gendarmes and one officer. As a result of that the government raised its hands from the area. This event is also described in the folk song of Himarë (Çakalli, Papa et. al. 2006: 226, translations mine).

The Albanian historiographer Muin Çami – who has (incidentally) the same surname as one of the initiators of the revolt in Himarë/Himara, Azis Çami – in his essay in the edited collection of the Albanian Academy of Science gives a slightly different view on the political situation in Himarë/Himara. Instead of the incident he writes about the disunion and ambiguity of the Himarë/Himara people:

In the period between 1921 and 1924 the people of Himarë were divided between two groups. One supported progressive forces and democratic, anti-feudal leadership [Fan Noli], while the other was on the side of the conservatives [local elders of Himarë/Himara] who insisted on the recognition of the particular rights that they enjoyed in the past [the unwritten law *venome*] (Çami 2004: 210, translations mine).

The paragraphs above confirm the Schwandner-Sievers' point on mythohistories, which are constructed by exposing some events and avoiding the others in order to support current

interests. Paragraphs also illustrate how a particular event, such as the incident in Himarë/Himara, mentioned by local authors (see Rusha 2001 in Çakalli, Papa et. al. 2006), is mythicised and used to illustrate the fighting spirit and distinctivity of the people of Himarë/Himara. Namely, when describing the incident the scholars present their idea of a permanent struggle, first against Ottomans and later against the Albanian nation-state and emphasize the region's autonomy. Similar discourse but in a different context use those scholars who defend the pro-Albanian position when they describe the people of Himarë/Himara as heroes whose fighting spirit they see as important for the Albanian nation-state in general.

#### **2.4.13. Ahmed Zogu (1925-1939)**

Soon after Ahmed Zogu was appointed as the prime minister, Albanian state was proclaimed the republic. In January 31, 1925 the Albanian convention unanimously elected Zogu for the president. Albania was declared an independent republic, with its own red flag with the double-headed eagle, Albanian as its official language and Tirana as the capital city (Jacques 1995: 382). The centralist government of Zogu, which was based on the unification of differences between the northern and southern part of Albania, introduced the unified system of taxes for all Albanian citizens. Besides this Zogu's government aimed for modernisation of agriculture, development of economy, improvement of national education system and finally introduction of atheism (see Jacques 1995: 386). In 1928 Zogu declared himself the king. During his eight years of kingdom he tried to standardise the Albanian language and rebalance the differences between the Northern and Southern dialects (Geg and Tosk). In this manner he introduced the reform of unifying the education system all over the county. He closed down Greek, Romanian and Turkish schools and the American School in Korcha (see Jacques 1995: 382-393).

Along with the intellectuals such as the Frashëri brothers, Pashko Vasa, Andon Çako, Çajupi and other distinguished leaders of the Albanian renaissance who lived in emigration, Zogu also urged for omission of religious distinctions and unification of the population throughout Albania. But in contrast to the mentioned intellectuals, whose visions were more democratically oriented, Zogu's visions were strictly conservative and based on feudalism (see Jacques 1995: 397-398).

The religious distinctions that were once introduced with the Ottoman administration became visible again. This time these distinctions were not categorised and divided in administrative units (e.g. millets) but were united under a single label called the nation-state. In the population census of Albania from the 1930, which was ordered by Zogu and included questions about religious adherence, it is reported that about 70% of population declared themselves as Muslims, about 20% as Orthodox Christians and about 10% as Roman Catholics<sup>80</sup> (see Jacques 1995: 396). Jacques notes that these religious differences gradually became part of the people's representations. Thus, those people who proclaimed themselves as Christians represented "Muslims" as betrayers who "became Turks"; those who declared themselves as Muslims despised "Christians" as "idol-worshippers", "pig-eaters" and often called them kaur or infidels; and finally those who identified themselves as Catholics were convinced that "all Muslim stink" (see Jacques 1995: 396). Above all, these social differentiations and stratifications, based upon the religious distinctions and the source of different administrative powers, became reappropriated and generated through people's rhetoric (ibid.).

In his book on the history of Himarë/Himara, Rusha does not discuss the Himarë/Himara people's attitudes towards the unification of religious differences. But he comments on the local government which had to be abolished under Zogu's centralism. Namely, the latter forced the people of Himarë/Himara to abolish the venomes, or unwritten laws that were in place and regulated by elderly chiefs of the soia/fisi or gerundhia, of the particular local community:

Under the mischevious pretence to establish a modern state he [Ahmed Zogu] declared unique laws for the entire territory. This forced Himara region to abolish venomes. Himara region had to be united with the rest of the regions as these were not the times of Turks anymore (Rusha 2001: 127, translations mine).

The abolition of venomes in Himarë/Himara area resulted in two larger revolts of the local people who demanded the independency of their area and the declaration of Himarë/Himara as Prefecture:

During the regime of Ahmed Zogu the people of Himara revolted twice in order to win the privileges of the prefecture, in 1927 and 1932. Both revolts were suppressed by his

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<sup>80</sup> In this major division the census also registered a few Jews, Protestants, atheists and very few who identified with the category "others" (see Jacques 1995: 396).

[Zogu] authority. In one of his visits of Himara area, Zogu stated: “Himara is like Mati<sup>81</sup> to me” (Rusha 2001: 128-129, translations mine).

In a similar manner the authors (Bollano, Milo et.al.) in the Pan-Himariot Conference proceedings write:

Zogu did not let Himara to be autonomous. He successfully suppressed the first revolt of Himara people in 1927 and later in 1932. In 1935 he visited Himara where he stated “Himara is like Mati to me”. It is interesting to put our attention to his life in exile from where he sent a letter to the editor of the Albanian daily press, Mehdi Bej Frashëri, in which he wrote:

Dear Mehdi Bej,

I hope that you and your family are well. As for us we are fine. I have begun the preparations for the memoirs. Of course I have notes but I would like to ask for an authority to explain me in detail what had happened considering the internal affairs. If possible I would like to ask you to give me as much detailed information as possible about the issues regarding:

1. The acts of international commission of Corfu in 1914
2. The way of paying taxes in Himara
3. The acts of the Commission of the League of Nations in southern Albania
4. The acts of borders and about the commission of their division
5. The murder of General Telin
6. Quarrelling and the result of Saint Naumi and Vermosh

I ask you to write me a report as I would like to know the person who can perform this service. Wishing you well, to Nyre Hanmit and all the family.

Cann, 20 January 1960, Zogu (signature) (Çakalli, Papa et. al. 2006: 227, translations mine).

Besides abrogating *venomes* Bixhili also writes about Zogu’s introduction of school reform and reports about the inhabitants’ division in two groups, the red and the white:

“With the law of education that was introduced in December 1933, Zogu announced the nationalisation of all the schools. According to the paragraph 206 and 207 he decided to imitate the obligatory education for all Albanian citizens, regardless of their sex and religion. Zogu ordered all private schools to close down” (Spiru 1966: 180).

With this law the government of Zogu forbade education in Greek and Italian language and closed down all the schools that taught in any other language than Albanian. Besides that he also closed the Catholic School in Shkodra.

This rule was enacted also in three villages of Himara region, in Dhrimadhe, Palasa and Himara villages, where in the period of Fan Noli in the first years of education Greek was taught for three hours per week (Marko 1959: 43). In those years Himariots were divided in two nationalistic groups “the red” and “the white”. The red were the Albanians while the white were the Greeks.

Between 1934 and 1935 parents who belonged to the “whites” reacted to this law and as a sign of the protest did not send their children to the school (Bixhili 2004: 281-282, translations mine).

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<sup>81</sup> Mati is the region in Albania over which Zogu’s family had a feudal authority.

Whereas the local authors comment on the educational reform and other consequences of Zogu's centralism, Viron Koka's essay published in the edited collection of the Albanian Academy of Science mentions irredentist movements of the local population that were initiated by the propaganda of the Greek politics:

Between 1920 and 1930 several tensions considering frontiers between Albania and Greece appeared. These tensions were evoked by the Athens' propaganda about Northern Epirus which was successfully refused by the government in Tirana. Zogu's government supported by the League of Nations rejected the Athens' aim for joining the southern Albania to Greece. Despite strong Greek propaganda and general economic crisis, Greece did not succeed in joining Himarë with the Greek state. Although the three villages of Himarë were bilingual (people also spoke Greek) the policy of the Ahmed Zogu forbade using Greek language in schools [*sic*]. (Koka 2004: 222, translations mine).

The local scholar Rusha (2001: 129) mentions trading kept by some large and wealthy families of Dhërmi/Drimades during the reign of King Zogu. Because of economic crisis and political situation many of the inhabitants migrated to Greece and some to Italy. But these accounts can be heard mainly in the oral stories of the elderly people who live in Dhërmi/Drimades today, while the accounts of the contemporary scholars do not mention this. Many people of Dhërmi/Drimades I had the opportunity to talk to recalled their stories about various movements to and fro. Many local men worked as labour migrants in Ioannina, Lavrio or other towns of Epirus, Corfu in Greece, France, Italy and United States in the period between the First and the Second World War (1919-1939). Many of those who worked in Greece, Italy, France or elsewhere in Europe returned to their natal village after they retired, while many of those who worked in United States did not return at all. Besides the mentioned sea trading the local people also used the mainland trading routes, where mainly Lorries were used for the transport. Some villagers can recall that there were around 60 Lorries in the village (see also <http://www.answers.com/topic/himar-1>).

Above all, the policy of King Zogu promoted the equation of the differences regarding the language, religion and territory, which were formed in past centuries surfaced again. People generated and reappropriated these differences according to their own social and cultural backgrounds. They were neither the same replication of insinuated political ideas nor the subject of the people's own creativity (cf. Herzfeld) but rather the not-quite-replications (cf. Green 2005) of them. Thus, for example, in this social, political, cultural and historical contingency the understandings of politically insinuated differences became represented in some people's irredentist tensions to join Greece and in others' aspirations to stay within the Albanian territory.

#### **2.4.14. The Second World War (1939-1945)**

Though Zogu's policy was politically independent, it was economically very dependent on the Italian government and its sizable loans. It is estimated that Italian government lent Zogu about 60 million US dollars which were invested in building infrastructure such as roads, buildings, schools, medical facilities and armed forces. It is also reported that Zogu built a personal fortune from that loan, amounting to about 4 million US dollars which he deposited in French and Swiss banks (see Time 17 April 1939: 20 in Jacques 1995: 404). In return for these loans Mussolini (1922-1943) demanded a monetary and customs union and the free placement of Italian troops in Albania. Though Zogu rejected this ultimatum the Italian troops entered Albania on April 7, 1939 (see Jacques 1995: 404-405). Soon after that King Zogu fled to London (see Jacques 1995: 405, Winnifrith 2002: 136).

Unlike in the First World War, this time the Italian troops used the Fascist strategy which promoted economic and cultural aggression (cf. Jacques 1995: 410-414). The Italian educators took control over the Albanian education system, while Italian newspapers and films flooded the country. The Italian army took care of the economic and infrastructural issues such as the system of piping drinking water in bigger cities and towns, building bridges, repairing old roads and engineering new ones, as well as flooding the local shops with the Italian goods, etc. (see Jacques 1995: 414).

As a response to such manipulation of the Italian leadership the National Front or *Bali Kombëtare* (BK) was formed in May 1939. The front was headed by the progressive landowners and Orthodox intellectuals. Their democratic way of leadership aimed for the expulsion of the Italian troops and tried to unify the ethnic Albanians of Kosova that were under Yugoslavia and Chameria that was under Greece into Albanian state. In the same year the National Liberation Movement (NLM) of the Communist Party was founded. The movement conjoined dissident groups that were formed in the period of Zogu's leadership. During the war NLM became the dominant resistance movement that aimed for expulsion of Italians and for the establishment of the communist system. BK and NLM were not in good relations as their ideologies were based on different visions. While the former supported democracy the latter aimed for communism.

After 1943 when the Italian military force capitulated and German troops took control of the Albanian territory, NLM strove not only for the expulsion of the German troops from the Albanian territory but also for the extermination of the BK. In the same year NLM received the support of the British government, which continued to supply NLM with weapons although it was familiar with the inner clashes between NLM in BK (cf. Jacques 1995: 442-424). In 1944 NLM was renamed into the National Liberation Front; its distinguished commander became Enver Hoxha. A month later, in June 1944, Hoxha launched an offensive against German troops whose power gradually faded. On 29 November, 1944, a day after the Albanian independence, Enver Hoxha triumphally marched to Tirana with his troops and took control of the Albanian territory.

The Italian army occupied the villages of Himarë/Himara area in 1940. In order to make an ambush for the Greek troops they set a base in the villages of Palasa and Dhërmi/Drimades. The Italian army forces ordered the villagers to move out of the village and compensated them with a sum of approximately 8000 Leks (or 65,52 Euros) per adult family member. The majority of the villagers resettled temporarily to Vlorë, Narta and Durrës where they lived together with their distant relatives or friends for the period of seven to eight months.

Except for the local man Foto Nina (2004: 129-130), the works of contemporary scholars presented above do not discuss broadly about this resettlement. In his family biography Foto Nina does not mention the payment that the people of Palasa and Dhërmi/Drimades received from the Italian army for their resettlement. Instead of that he reports:

In this period the inhabitants of Palasa and Dhermi were violently resettled by the Italian army. The refugees of our family settled in the village of Narta in Vlorë, where they lived for 7 to 8 months (October or November 1940 until April or May 1941). About this sing two nice poems of Nartiotes that describe their friendship with the people of Dhërmi/Drimades (ibid.).

After Nina family returned to the village, everything was destroyed. The houses were demolished and fields were devastated.

Other scholars, such as Rami Memushaj and the essayists of the edited collection of the Albanian Academy of Science, who defend the pro-Albanian issue, and Jano Koçi, who favours the local issue, do not write about the period of the Second World War at all. Whereas Memushaj's book about the culture, habits, history and ethnicity in Himarë/Himara closes its



chapters with the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and the account on the formation of the Albanian nation-state, the contributors to the edited collection conclude their discussion in the year of 1930 when the reign of King Zogu began to fade. The local writer Koçi concludes his book about the history and archaeology of Himarë/Himara area with the year of 1868 and the confirmation of the autonomy in the area.

Except for Bixhili and Nina, other authors who are presented in these sections mention the period of the Second World War briefly, with few sentences. Kristo Frashëri, another pro-Albanian writer, briefly mentions the Second World War in one of the final paragraphs of his book. In order to confirm the national belonging of Himarë/Himara people, he states:

In this view the customs, songs, dances, way of dressing, legends, mentality and the laws such as the kanun of Himarë area are neither similar to the Hellenic customs, nor to those of Greek minority living in Albania. The customs and habits of Himarë people are similar to the Albanian ones, particularly those that are typical for Laberia. Because of this the people of Himarë, with some exceptions, declared themselves as Albanian citizens, after the Second World War. This proves the voting list of Greek minority which since 1945 does not include the people of Himarë area. But in spite of this, even nowadays some political circles in Greece insist on their fanatic claim that Himarë people are part of the Greek minority. The Greek politicians insist that this should be in the legal act of Albania and the people of Himarë should have the rights of minority and they should have the right for Greek education and Greek flag (Frashëri 2005: 95-96, translated by Juliana Vera).

Rusha too, describes the period of the Second World War only in a few sentences. Unlike Frashëri, Rusha sees this period as one of the important historical moments for the people of Himarë/Himara. Rusha describes people's fighting spirit with the following words:

The warriors' tradition, the battles and the freedom of Himara people played an important role also during the Second World War, when Himara men fought against the Italian and German Fascists and when many of them lost their lives [...]. This is why these seven villages, extending from Qeparo to Palasa had privileges that lasted until the end of the Second World War. The people of Himara were united and they were famous for their bravery, morality and laws that were followed in all the villages of Himara area, which once extended from the north of Dukati to Tepelena and onwards to Saranda (Rusha 2001: 149-150, translations mine).

In a small tourist guide, which can be downloaded from the website [[www.himara.eu](http://www.himara.eu)], the battles between Greek and Italian troops which took place in Himarë/Himara area are mentioned in the section on history:

During the 1940-1941 war between Greece and Italy, important battles took place in the region around Himara. On December 22, 1940 the Greek army entered Himara and the citizens welcomed them with enthusiastic celebrations ([www.himara.eu](http://www.himara.eu)).

Besides Himarë/Himara area the Greek army also occupied a large part of today's southern Albania and Epirus of Greece (Winnifrith 2002: 136). Foto Bixhili, who describes the period of the Italian and Greek occupation in one of his last chapters, puts forth the fighting spirit of Himarë/Himara men and lists the troops that were formed by the local people during the Second World War. Bixhili also notes the names of some individuals who were taken in internment by the Italian army. Moreover, he describes the battle between Italian and Greek troops, the liberation of Himarë/Himara and Albania and the formation of the independent Republic of Albania. When describing the fighting spirit of Himarë/Himara people, Bixhili writes:

In the years of the war the Italian Fascists fought against Greeks on the Albanian land that was occupied by Italians. Himariotes collaborated with the Greek army not as one of them but as the Albanians on their own land. They were arrested by the Italians as Albanians who helped Greeks, as Filogreeks (Bixhili 2004: 303, translations mine).

In the continuing part Bixhili (2004: 302-311) describes the invasion of the German army to Greece which forced the Greek troops to retreat from Southern Albania. Almost all the Albanian territory came under the control of Italian troops again. Later in 1943, when the Italy capitulated, the Albanian territory came under control of German troops. Bixhili lists the names of several local men who died in the battle against the occupation and concludes his chapter with praising of the local people of Himarë/Himara:

This [the period of the Second World War] was a hard period with many perturbations. The Himariotes, however, had the strength and they fought with their faith in "nation", they responded as the son of nobody, as the crafty Byzantine with a big heart, patiently and as the mature men who had characterised the century [...]. (Bixhili 2004: 314, translations mine).

In 1944 part of Southern Albania was liberated by the British troops (see Winnifrith 2002: 136-137). After this event the question of the state-border between Albania and Greece became a part of the political negotiations again. In 1946 the political discords between Albanian and Greek politics reached its "peak" when the Greek government ordered deportation of Chams (*Tsams*), the Albanian-speaking population and members of Muslim religion, from Igumenica to Albania (see Winnifrith 2002: 136-137). Dispute about the state border between Albania and Greece was mainly a political one, whereas in the people's daily practice the border was passable and tensions were less observable. This lasted until the end of the Second World War and the introduction of the communist dictatorship of Enver Hoxha, who gradually broke off all the contacts with other countries. In 1948, when the contacts with

Yugoslavia as the last neighbouring state were broken off, Hoxha closed national-borders and strictly forbade their crossing. Albania became invisible again.

#### **2.4.15. Communism (1945-1990)**

When reading the works of contemporary historiographers and other intellectuals one can see that unlike the periods of the “distant past”, such as Antique, Roman Empire, etc. which are largely discussed and polemized, the period of communism or the “near-past”, stays almost unmentioned. Despite the political, social and economic changes which took place after the fall of communism, it seems that in the local and the national historiography as well as in the oral accounts the period of communism stays either undisputed or hidden from contemporary historiography because of negative personal experiences of authors in question.

While the sections above presented debates and polemics of contemporary scholars about particular events of the distant past, the following section illustrates the way in which debates about the period of communism are absent or only briefly mentioned. Almost all the works of the local and national scholars, such as Prifti, Çami, Sinani and other essayists of the edited collection of the Albanian Academy of Science as well as Bixhili, Frashëri, Rusha, Memushaj, and others, open with a debate and polemic about the ethnic belonging of the Illyrian and Epirote tribes. Discussions, unlike the beginning, end in different periods. The national historiographer Rami Memushaj and the local authors such as Jani Koçi and the scholars of the Pan-Himariote conference proceedings end their works with a description of the autonomy of Himarë/Himara people and their liberation from the Ottoman dominancy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The scholars of the edited collection of the Albanian Academy of Science conclude their debate a century later, precisely in 1930, with the reign of King Zogu. Frashëri closes his discussion with a brief mentioning of the Second World War. Foto Bixhili ends his book with the end of the Second World War. Foto Nina is the only author amongst all listed who discusses the period of communism. In his family biography he gives a couple of accounts about people’s life in the period between 1945 and 1955. Nina reports about hunger and poverty that were striking the people of Himarë/Himara after the end of the Second World War.

Nina writes that after the Second World War the villagers did not have the access to primary goods such as bread, sugar, coffee, etc (2004: 130). The United Nations Relief and

Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) which donated goods to Albania (see Jacques: 426-427), also supported the Health Centre in Himarë/Himara (Nina 2004: 131). Whilst between 1924 and 1945 the birth-rate in Himarë/Himara area rose, it fell again between 1945 and 1955. In order to survive, the inhabitants of Himarë/Himara area joined their strengths and made a big field in Kallami of Kondraça where they grew olives, lemons, oranges and mandarins. Besides that they worked on the old plantations of olives that were destroyed during the war. They exchanged the old roots of citrus trees and olives with hundred roots of a plum tree, fig and pomegranate. Nina writes:

To complete this work the people worked from dusk till dawn. They had one small break in-between to eat little food. In order to accomplish this work my family, along with the majority of the villagers, was camping in Kallami where they worked on the garden from the early May until winter. They slept under huge tent where they also kept all their produce (Nina 2004: 132, translations mine).

These produce people sold in Vlorë and elsewhere, earning together about one million Leks per half a year of work. Villagers received approximately 5.000 Leks per person, which was relatively a big amount for that period. Thus brothers Duni, for example, built their house near Kallami next to where Nina's family built their storage (Nina 2004: 135). Nina ends his narrative with the death of his grandfather Foto who died in 1955, two years before the foundation of the village cooperative in Dhërmi/Drimades.

Besides Nina, who describes his personal experience of his natal village, the administrators of the website [www.himara.eu] also mention the period of communism. But only with a few sentences which are related to the local people's protests against the presidency of Enver Hoxha:

In 1945 the people of Himara refused to participate in the plebiscite that would legalise the regime of Enver Hoxha. Many locals were arrested. The man behind this movement was Andreas Dimas who was buried alive. The regime went on, shut down the Greek school, the Akrokeravnia School and took away all minority rights from Himariotes [*sic.*] (<http://himara.eu/index-en.html>).

This silence about the period of communism is present only in the national and local historiography regarding the Himarë/Himara area. Namely, one can read a lot about the communism in the works of the contemporary historiographers (Pashko 1993, Kasoruho 1996, Qesari 2000, Konomi 2001, Pepa 2003) who write about Albania in general. It seems that the period of Enver Hoxha's dictatorship, which left many dead people, ruins and remains of the communist architecture (bunkers, military bases, communist villas, etc.), does not

represent a terrain of contested histories but a terrain of silenced, invisible histories in the accounts of contemporary historiographers and in Himarë/Himara people's memories. Perhaps these memories were put aside in the daily life of individuals and at present still do not represent a part of the contested story of their past.

## **2.5. Summary**

This chapter reveals contradictions and contestations regarding the past of Himarë/Himara area. Like in many postcommunist (or postsocialist) countries (such as the countries of ex Yugoslavia, Romania, ex Soviet Union, etc.) in Albania too the need appeared to re-write history, which was once written in favour of the communist leaders. Schwandner-Sievers (2002) talks about mythohistories, which construct an ideal image of the past, present and future in order to re-enact the power of the state's authority. She argues that nowadays, with the rise of democracy instead of only one "single" mythohistory, one can discuss about many mythohistories. Although the contents of mythohistories of the Albanian past varies, all of them, as proposes Malcom (2004), convey three myths: the myths of priority, homogeneity and permanent struggles for independence. The mythohistory of Himarë/Himara area is nowadays dispersed into numerous versions and stories which are mythicising the past. As seen from the accounts of the scholars listed above, their interpretations are based either on the national or pro-Albanian interest or on the local interest. Nowadays the past of Himarë/Himara area, which was once unimportant part of the Albanian history, became highly negotiated and contested.

Places and voices which define the past of Himarë/Himara area are thus, in Herzfeld's (1991) terms, multiple and multi-voiced. All of them have a common denominator which constructs cultural continuity and reconstruct the past. Thus, for example, in Herzfeld's view, Nikola's and Spiro's stories have the same legitimacy as the essays of the edited collection of the Albanian Academy of Science (2004) and the works of other national historiographers, such as Memushaj (2003) and Frashëri (2005), or local intellectuals, such as Rusha (2001), Jorgji (2006a, b, c), Koçi (2006), and others. These works represent various perceptions of the past of Himarë/Himara area where each of them is presented as legitimate and "true". Despite their variety they all try to define the origin and belonging of ancient tribes, Illyrian or Epirote, as the cornerstone of their perceived nationality.

But from the view of a particular local community or the scholars listed above, the histories are not perceived as multiple as proposed by Herzfeld or based on myths as suggested by Schwandner-Sievers. For them the histories are “real”. Therefore, the ways in which they are managed, negotiated and contested should be studied more than the multiplicity and variety of histories. These ways namely disclose the ongoing construction of power relations, where the centre and periphery are continuously changing, as suggested by Ballinger (2003). The “truths” about the past of Himarë/Himara area are reconstructed in this way. The power relations continuously define which “truth” will prevail over another. Simultaneously the prevailing “truth” defines the power relations. The latter are conditioned by the narrator’s or writer’s social and cultural background as well as by the wider social, political and historical contingencies. Thus, for example, after the fall of communism and the following social, political and economic changes, Spiros and Nikola construct and manage their own “historical truth” of the local people’s origin and neglect the “historical truths” as recounted by Foto Bixhili (2004) and other essayists of the edited collection of the Albanian Academy of Science (2004). Spiros and Nikola see Bixhili’s and essayists’ accounts as irrelevant and unimportant. In a similar manner, Foto Bixhili and the essayists construct and manage their own “truths” about the history of the people’s origin too. They criticise the local people’s presumptions, such as Spiros’ and Nikola’s, which argue that the inhabitants of Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara area originate from *Meghalihora*.

The power relations, however, draw differences as well as similarities between the local and national positions and interpretations. While differences can be seen in contradictions and contestations between the local and national positions, the similarities can be seen through their discourse. Both the local and the national scholars, conceptualize nation-state or local community as if they were isolated entities not having any relations and connections with each other. Many local scholars (Rusha 2001, Jorgji 2006a, b, c and partly Nina 2004) emphasize the idea of locality and distinctivity of the people and the villages of Himarë/Himara area. This distinctiveness is defined in contrast to other places throughout Albania. In a similar manner, those scholars who defend national interests (Memushaj 2003, the contributors to the edited collection of the Albanian Academy of Sciences 2004, Bixhili 2004, Frashëri 2005) talk about the Albanian nation-state as a homogeneous entity where the localities are part of the nation.

Movements and relations that are discussed in the scholars' accounts again reveal that people constitute their place in interrelation to other people and places. Various administrative organisations, Ottoman and national, for example, introduced different divisions and categorisations of where and how people and places "belong" to. Lack of accordance between Ottoman and nationalistic ways of organisation resulted in political tensions and territorial disputes, continuously appearing and disappearing, reappearing and blurring since then (cf. Green 2005). These categorisations as well as tensions were gradually, throughout the centuries, generated and reappropriated in people's daily lives within the new social, historical and political contexts. Thus, for example, the religious differences introduced by the Ottoman administration were not really significant in the daily lives and discourses of people living in southern Albania. In the period of nationalist movements from late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century the religious differences became visible again. This time, however, they were politically promoted as the differences which should be surmounted in order to unite the Albanian speaking population in one single nation with a common territory and culture. Several Albanian intellectuals living abroad began to promote the Albanian written language in different media. The language soon became the key issue of identification and homogenisation of the Albanian nation. This idea of homogenisation continued in the period of communism, which besides the language and territory also promoted the common history. The tensions considering the state-border between Albania and Greece that were present since 1912 were suppressed by Hoxha's decision of closing the state borders and cutting off political relations with other countries. The communist organisation of place (communist architecture, building of military bases, bunkers, etc.) and strong propaganda permeated people's daily life and their practices. After the fall of communisms and the ensuing uneven social, political and economic changes, the tensions considering the state-border and the differences between the people and their places reappeared again, but this time within a different socio-political context and with a different meaning than before. Instead of the idea of a homogeneous nation-state, particular people in particular places generated the idea of homogeneous and distinct localities.

While Chapter One illustrated how unstable and shifting but related perspectives and representations of the village construct the "where" of Dhërmi/Drimades, this chapter shows how the ongoing debates, negotiations and contestations between the historiographers and other intellectuals construct the "when" of Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara area. Although the views of numerous scholars are contested, they all describe ongoing movements

and contacts between people and places that were subjected to different administrative divisions and categorisations throughout the centuries. These different administrations lay out how people and places were located in relation to the spatial hierarchy, which as Green suggests “resulted from continual exercise of power” (Green 2005: 89). That power was exercised at different moments shifting configurations of spatial relations and separations.

The authors who interpret the past of Himarë/Himara area either from national or local perspectives reconfigure the Himarë/Himara area’s place in history and in the present. The latter is imbued with land tenure issues and claims of local autonomy. The historiographies are one of the mediums of the ongoing construction of power. Those which support the pro-Albanian view locate the people and villages of Himarë/Himara area within the Albanian territory while those defending the local interests locate and define them as an autonomous locality which is related to Greece and/or to the European Union.



## Chapter Three

### THE SEA AND THE MOUNTAINS

*“Our character is similar to our place and its climate. On the one hand it is cold and wild such as the mountains while on the other hand it is mild and hospitable as the sea”.*

(Dimitris, field notes)

Especially in the first months of my fieldwork, a number of villagers of Dhërmi/Drimades used similar words as Dimitris to describe their character and relate it to their natal village. Later on I realised that this kind of ambiguous mapping of their place, which is claimed to be coherent with their character is important for the understanding of the process of construction of spaces and places in the village.

While previous chapter (*Contested Histories*) presented different “where” of the village, as seen through viewpoints and interests of local and national historiographers, this chapter will lead the reader on paths and places, constructed by story-telling, remembrances and biographical contexts of local residents of Dhërmi/Drimades. Although these oral stories seem to be less audible than historiographies in the wider socio-political and economic context, they can nevertheless to some extent – similarly to historiographies – convey roots, boundaries and belongings. Therefore, as suggested by Bender (2001: 5) the anthropologists should be alert to the question of “whose stories are being told” as well as to the fact that these stories “naturalize” particular kinds of social relations (ibid.).

In this chapter I discuss stories recounted by the elderly people (born between 1926 and 1945) who claim to originate from Dhërmi/Drimades. All the stories were jotted down during the conversations and supplemented with details later in the day when I was working on my fieldnotes. I will focus here on the nature of social relations as described by movements of people in the stories and on networks of connections between individual places which construct the spatial relations. The question here is how different meanings of space, created by individual stories, construct the “whereness” of Dhërmi/Drimades.

The “underlying trope of movement” and distinctions between places as discussed by Green (2005: 89) are particularly pertinent here. These distinctions between “here” and “somewhere else” were among Green’s interlocutors in Kasidiaris, on the Greek-Albanian border, discussed in terms of differences in status and power: the power “to ascribe different meanings to places”, the power “to ignore some places altogether”, and the power “to enable, force, or constrain movements across, through and between places” (ibid.). The very process of exercising such powers, which are based on political, economic and bureaucratic “forces”, defines the shifting people’s and places’ “whereness” (Green 2005: 216). Throughout the history the drastic flow of changes induced various movements, divisions, separations and reorganizations of people and places. On the basis of these movements and spatial divisions plurality and diversity of “whereness” of places and people were constituted. Green points out that “it is the *where*, not the who, that is important” (Green 2005: 16, italics original). Compared to the situation at the state border between Albania and Greece, “the where” in Dhërmi/Drimades is similarly related to the “manner in which people travelled or failed to travel”, to the distance between Albania and Greece, to “the aesthetics of topography and landscape, or the way the places were subdivided, appeared, and disappeared in administrative accounts of the region” (ibid.). In order to explore different forms of marginality and ambiguity, Green questions “how the where is constituted and how that it is both different and the same across a range of scales (geographical, temporal, metaphorical, disciplinary)” (ibid.).

Following the above mentioned similarities between two areas, which lie only about 60 kilometres apart, I explore differences and resemblances of the “where” in Dhërmi/Drimades, and question both how the “where” defines the spatial hierarchy and how the spatial hierarchy defines the “where” of the village. While I address this question in the second section of this chapter, in the first section I present theoretical background for the analysis of individual stories.

### **3.1. Stories and Story-Telling**

For the analysis of people’s stories I will, besides the general approach that goes hand in hand with writings of Tilley (1994) and Ingold (2000), rely upon de Certeau’s (1984: 115-130) and his concept of spatial operations. Spatial operations such as story-telling and remembering, for example, are disclosing the ongoing transformation of places into spaces and vice versa.

Stories for de Certeau are spatial trajectories that involve temporal movements and spatial practices. “Every story is a travel story—a spatial practice” (de Certeau 1984: 115). These practices include everyday tactics such as the use of spatial indications (“Over there is Greece. From here we see Corfu and Othonas.”), place names (“Jaliskari, which means the port [...] They passed *Ag. Pandeleimona*”), adverbs of time (“when the state closed the road [...] there was great poverty in the period between both wars”), memories (“It used to be a port where my grandfather kept his ship [...] I remember her telling us stories [...]”). These “narrated adventures” (de Certeau 1984: 116) simultaneously produce the geographies of actions which organise spaces. These spaces are continuously transformed into places and back to spaces again. Through such a process the space is continuously recreated and thus it is never the same as the one shortly before.

Following de Certeau I will focus on this kind of transformations, differentiating between space (*espace*) and place (*lieu*). Space occurs as the effect produced in operations. It “is like the word when it is spoken, that is, when it is caught in the ambiguity of an actualization, transformed into a term dependent upon many different conventions, situated as the act of a present (or of a time), and modified by the transformations caused by successive contexts” (1984: 117). In contrast to polyvalent space, place is more ordered. It is an “instantaneous configuration of positions” constituted by a system of signs (*ibid.*). In de Certeau’s view story-telling continuously oscillates between text or narrative which he calls the place and reading or narrating which he calls the space.

Short biographies of our four story-tellers map their migration paths through different places in Albania and Greece and their continuous returns to the natal village of Dhërmi/Drimades. Biographies disclose their memories of ancestral paths which include travels over the sea and the mountains. Through remembering of their ancestors’ movements and winding the stories around their paths the local people reconstruct the village space and create a sense of self and belonging.

### **3.1.1. Remembering, Mapping and the Ongoing Reconstruction**

Between 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century maps were shaped according to itineraries and travels (de Certeau 1984: 120–121). Today, with the advancement of technology (aerial and satellite photography, global positioning system), cartographers do not need to travel across places to

map them, because they can do that without actual physical movements. Modern cartography, while relying heavily on political and geographical maps, excludes the movements of people and thus creates an impression that the structure of the map depends solely on the structure of material world (Ingold 2000: 234). Ingold uses an expression “cartographic illusion” (ibid.) when arguing that modern maps create an illusory impression of stability of places and borders. In this manner modern cartography is actually moving away from the peoples’ daily practices, physical movements and dwelling habits (ibid.).

An opposite term to cartography or mapmaking (showing a certain structure and excluding movements) is the term mapping. A traveller or a story-teller, who doesn’t create or use a map, is “quite simply, mapping” (Ingold 2000: 231). The essence of mapping is a process which never ends, which leads us over places, simultaneously differentiated and connected, and thus creating spaces. In Greek language and in a local Greek dialect of Dhërmi/Drimades the word *istoria* means at the same time “story” and “history”. Numerous *istories* (pl.) about the sea and the mountains speak about the history and people’s remembrances. They uncover things long gone or in de Certeau’s terms the “presences of diverse absences” (1984: 108).

Similarly to de Certeau, Tilley (1994) notes that “memories continually provide modifications to a sense of place which can never be exactly the same place twice, although there may be ideological attempts to provide ‘stability’ or perceptual and cognitive fixity to a place, to reproduce sets of dominant meanings, understandings, representations and images” (1994: 27-28). In Ingold’s terms memories are forged with words. They are not only represented and passed on in oral accounts, but they are also practices of remembering, embedded in the perception of the environment (Ingold 2000: 148). Ingold suggests that remembering is a process through which memories are generated along with the individual trajectories which each person lays down in the course of his or her life. These trajectories are never laid down solely by the people themselves but are always embedded in a historical and political context.

## **3.2. Stories of the Sea and the Mountains**

### **3.2.1. Stories of the Sea**

I remember the words of Frosina, born in 1934 in Dhërmi/Drimades, in a conversation during one of those early January evenings when we were experiencing an electricity shortage. We

stood on the terrace of her house and tried to keep warm catching the last rays of sunlight. We looked into the distance of the Ionian Sea and towards its islands blinking in front of us. She said:

Over there (*eki pera*) is Greece. From here (*apo edo*) we see Corfu and Othonas. My uncle used to sail there (*eki*). He owned a sailing boat. Othonas is not a big island and it has only a few houses. My uncle used to trade with Corfu and Italy. He sold *valanidi*<sup>82</sup>, from which the Greeks made leather for bags and jackets. Besides *valanidi*, people also used to trade in *kitro*, which is a special citrus that is now already extinct. My uncle also traded with olive oil. As he was a trader, he owned a local shop that was situated in the centre of the Saint Dimitris (*sto kendro tou Aghios Dimitris*)[*the name of the church*]. The shop was a part of a big shopping centre. But this was before the time of Enveri (*ton kero tou Enveri*)<sup>83</sup>. My father was a fisherman. He fished with dynamite in the same way as the famous village fisherman, Niko Dabo. Have you ever heard of Niko Dabo? A local writer from this place (*apo ton topo*) wrote about him in one of his books entitled *The Caves of Pirates (Shpella e Pirateve)*. Niko Dabo was a courageous fisherman, who lost his eye because he fished with dynamite. People said that in the times of Enveri when the *Partia* [*the Albanian Party of Labour*] took his property, he responded: “Take everything; just leave me hundred metres of the seascape by the Avril where I always fish” and he pointed towards the sea, where he spent most of his life. He was fishing for all of his life...

We observed the wavy sea and the lights in the distance. Soon it got cooler and Frosina invited me into her old house, partly rebuilt after she inherited it from her father. She was one of two daughters who survived among the five children born to the couple originating from Dhërmi/Drimades. Both of her parents were working in the cooperative during the communism. Her father was a fisherman and mother worked in agriculture. In 1954 Frosina married a fellow villager. Some months later they were relocated to Tirana where her husband was trained for the job of a mechanic. From 1954 until 1990 he worked as a mechanic while Frosina worked in a baking factory. Nowadays their four children have already grown up and except for one they are all married. One of their sons lives in Tirana; he is married to a woman from Vlorë. The other son is married to a woman from Tirana and lives in Italy. Both daughters are in Greece. One of them is single and the other is married to a fellow villager. In 1990 Frosina and her husband returned to Dhërmi/Drimades. According to her words, when they returned the village was nearly empty as numerous villagers fled to Greece. Frosina and

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<sup>82</sup> *Valanidi* or *velanidhia* (*Quercus aegilops*) is also mentioned by Hammond (1967: 123) who noted that the valley above Kudhes, a village of Himarë/Himara, is wooded by fine trees, particularly *velanidhia*.

<sup>83</sup> According to Evans-Pritchard, “perceptions of time, in our opinion, are functions of time reckoning, and hence socially determined” (1939: 209). In Dhërmi/Drimades like in many other places in Albania and elsewhere, time often relates also to the past events that have importantly marked a particular period, in this case relating to the political system. Likewise many people living in Dhërmi/Drimades as elsewhere in Albania refer to past events with temporal boundaries which are divided according to the period of communism. They often use “times before the system of Enveri or Partia”; “times of the system, Enveri, Partia” whenever they refer to the past and “time of freedom or democracy” when they refer to the period after the collapse of communism.

her husband did not immigrate to Greece, saying that they are too old to move as they had already retired from work. They nevertheless go there almost every year in order to celebrate Christmas and New Year together with their grandchildren.

I met Pavlos, born in 1938 in Dhërmi/Drimades, in the summer when I was helping in one of the cafeterias situated on the coast. Pavlos is a widower who nowadays lives in Tirana. In 1958 he moved to Tirana to study geodesy. His father, who lived in the village and worked in a cooperative, arranged him a wedding with a woman originating from the village. After their wedding they both moved to Tirana. They lived there until 1990, when they immigrated to Greece together with their two sons and a daughter. In 2001 they returned to Tirana where they bought a house and Pavlos started a business. Two years after their arrival Pavlos's wife died. Every summer – in July and August – Pavlos moves to Dhërmi/Drimades where he owns a part of his father's house which he shares together with his brother. Occasionally he goes to Greece in order to visit his children who were all married within the village of Dhërmi/Drimades. As he lived for some years in Athens he told his story of the sea and trading in a more “Athenian” accent:

Can you see those rocks over there (*eki*)? [*He pointed towards big rocks stretching in the distance which were connecting the coast and the sea*]. Those big rocks which stick out from the sea?

I said yes and asked him how they are called. He answered:

Jaliskari<sup>84</sup>, which means the port. It used to be a port once (*tote*), where my grandfather kept his boat. But nowadays *i Alvani* (the Albanians) spoiled everything and turned it into a bar. They really have no taste!

Muço, Papajani, Duni, and Zhupa were some of the prosperous *soia* (pl.) who used to own large boats. In Drimades boats were rare. There were approximately three or four of them. They were wooden and imported from Greece or Italy. Because of the Jaliskari port, there were also some warehouses built on the coast. People used to keep *valanidi*, *kitro* and olive oil over there. It was very hard to bring the imported goods up to the village. They were carried either by donkeys or by the village men. A cobblestone path, made by the village women, led from the coast to the village. The women were the main collectors of stones for the village paths and houses. The Himara women are known as extremely hard working. They worked a lot. They took care of the family, the house and the garden, they brought water and collected stones for building new houses; above all they did all the cleaning. To a certain extent this remains the same today. Except that today they are old and tired and cannot do everything. But still they are of a hard working nature. They worked all the time, while their men used to sit in the shade of the vine leaves or in the *kafeneio*, playing cards and drinking *raki*. Some of them were fishermen and those who originated from rich families traded with the outside world (*ihan kani emborio oksa*). We have always had

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<sup>84</sup> The Greek word *Jaliskari* written as *Gialiskari*/Γιαλίσκαρη is compounded from two words: *γαλός/gialos* that means seashore and *σκαρη/skari* which means port.

contacts with the outside world. Therefore we are more *civilizuar* than the people living in other parts of Albania. Our forefathers have seen a lot of other places in Greece and Italy. Compared to the rest of the places to the north and to the east, we were wealthy (*plusii*). However, later during the times of the system (*kero tou sistema*), when the state closed the road (*otan o kratos eklise to dromo*), we were forbidden to move around.

Aghatula was born in Dhërmi/Drimades in 1944. At the age of 15 she enrolled in the pedagogical school in Elbasan. Four years later she returned to Dhërmi/Drimades from where she was relocated to Himarë/Himara, working there as a teacher for three years. In 1966 she married a fellow villager with whom they were relocated again. This time they moved to Saranda, where her husband, who was trained as a mechanic, was given a job while she was employed as a teacher. Frosina gave birth to four daughters with whom they immigrated to Athens in 1993. At first she and her husband lived together with their daughters who in 2000 went to live on their own. Three years later Aghatula and her husband returned to the village, where they have built a new house on the land where Agathula's father in-law used to have a garden. Aghatula and her husband built the house with their savings from Greece and the pension they have been receiving from the Greek government. Their daughters who are married – two within the village and two within Himarë/Himara area – still live in Greece and visit them only in the summer months. Aghatula and her husband visit them almost every year, usually for Christmas and New Year holidays or on occasions when they have to prolong their Special Cards of Ethnic Descent<sup>85</sup>. In one of my visits to her house, where we often sat on the terrace with a view over the village's coastal plains, Aghatula described me her memories about the past with the following words:

*Bregu* women are known by their working spirit; especially our mothers who worked a lot. They worked in the house and the garden while the men sat in *kafenja* (pl.) or went fishing. We were really poor at that time. The only good food we ate was fish and rarely meat. But we had some nice things from outside (*okso*) that my uncle who left on a boat to America between the wars, has sent to my family. He sent a nice veil (*barbuli*) for my aunt's wedding. Later I inherited it. It was a really a nice *barbuli*. Besides, we also had some furniture in our house, which my grandfather, who traded with his ship, brought from Greece. We had very nice cupboards, a table and chairs. Similar furniture could also be found in other houses. Although we were often hungry, we were *civilizuar*. Do you understand what I am saying...

Therefore I was quite shocked, when I attended the practical training for teachers in Elbasan. As a student I stayed with the teacher's family. I was shocked as I had to eat on the floor, from the same pot as the rest of the family, for they did not have any plates. We slept in the same room as we ate; all together in a single room, on the pillows that the house-lady laid on the floor. There were no beds. At that time I

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<sup>85</sup> Until 2004 Special Cards of Greek Descent were valid for the period of five years and after 2004 for ten years.

realised what sort of poverty could be found there. We were poor, but we had certain possessions (*pramata*). We had them because our fathers and grandfathers traded with Corfu and Venice.

### 3.2.2. Stories of the Mountains

In the late afternoon in August, Aspasia and I sat on a grass hill, a couple of metres away from my home, where she usually pastured her goat every day. Aspasia, who was born in 1933 in Dhërmi/Drimades, was remembering the mountains with the following words:

Yes, yes, my mother went up there (*ehi pai apo apano*) on a number of occasions. Sometimes she would go with her fellow locals, sometimes on her own and sometimes together with my sister. Those times... there was poverty, my daughter. They went all the way up there [*she pointed her finger towards the mountains*], to the places behind the mountains (*piso apo ta vuna*). They passed *Ag. Pandeleimona*... Have you ever been there?

I answered negatively and added that I heard about the chapel from my friend Dimitrula who promised to take me there one day.

Oh, you know... Yes, our mothers used to walk to the places behind the mountains... They walked up there *zhalomenes* (burdened) with goods that they wanted to exchange. They carried olives, olive oil, oranges, clothes and sometimes some pieces of furniture or souvenirs which our fathers or uncles brought from outside. They used ropes to tie these goods and carried them on their backs; in rain, cold or snow... It did not matter as there was great famine. Especially in areas that are not fertile enough to grow wheat. In those times we only ate corn bread; without yeast. It was hard to eat. Therefore we often wanted to eat the normal bread from wheat which we could only get by exchange in the places behind the mountains (*piso apo ta vuna*). Women sang old songs while they were walking through the mountains; to feel at ease. Many of these songs have since been forgotten. What things they had to go through. Sometimes they came back empty-handed because they were robbed on their way back. There was poverty everywhere and people living behind the mountains stole food in those days... They were bad people!

Aspasia lived in the village for all of her lifetime. She married relatively late to a ten year older widower, who originated from the same village. He already had four children with his first wife. After their marriage her husband moved to the house where she grew up. This house originally belonged to Aspasia's mother. Aspasia delivered two sons. During the communism both she and her husband worked in the agricultural cooperative. Today she is a widow and lives on her own, as her sons live in emigration in Greece. The eldest married within the village and the youngest within the Himarë/Himara area. Feeling lonely, Aspasia bought a goat, which she usually pastures on the land that used to belong to her *soi*.



Aspasia's story is similar to the story told by Olgha, who was born in 1944 in Dhërmi/Drimades. She spoke to me in the presence of her ill and weak mother:

You know, whenever I look at my mother, I cannot believe that she is still alive. After all that she has suffered. Our family was really poor. This house (*afto to spiti*) was built with her hands and in her sweat in 1954. She collected most of the material for it – the stones which she carried from the hills in the neighbourhood. While she was building this house our father was away. The *Partia* [*The Albanian Party of Labour*] sent him to Yugoslavia in 1947. He left my mother with three children – me and my two sisters – alone in the village. Can you imagine that she took care of *ta petherika tis* (her mother and father in-law) and three daughters all by herself? Later, when our father returned from Yugoslavia, she gave birth to another five children. There were eight of us, six daughters and one son. After the war [*after the World War II*] we were experiencing great famine. With other locals she crossed the mountains to Vranisht or Trubaç in Labëria to exchange olives, salt and sometimes clothes for some wheat and other food. Even today I remember her stories about people standing on the roadside and asking for food. There were even robbers among them. Sometimes a village woman was robbed on her way back to our village. How sad that was [...].

Contrary to Aspasia, Olgha's life was quite difficult and she told a story of her family's poverty and suffering in a bitter voice. Soon after their marriage she and her husband, who also originated from Dhërmi/Drimades, applied for relocation to Tirana, where she found employment in a furniture factory, while he worked as a plumber. She lost him in a traffic accident at the age of 35. Currently she, her son and his family all live in Tirana. As she has to take care of her blind and deaf father and ill mother, she often returns to Dhërmi/Drimades.

It was a summer afternoon when I spoke to Thodoris, born in 1928 in Dhërmi/Drimades. We were standing on the terrace of his new house, talking about *Ag. Pandeleimona*. This chapel is located on the hills of Çika Mountains. My plan was to visit this area one day. When I asked him if he had ever gone to see the chapel, Thodoris recalled the following story:

I used to look after the sheep in those mountains (*sta vuna eki*). I used to know all the paths. I was a shepherd when I was around 13 years old. My brother was also a shepherd. That's how we earned our daily bread as our family was very poor in those times. Because our father died when I was twelve and my brother was ten, we were forced to earn some money. Our mother was not capable of taking care for three boys. The eldest stayed at home, but my brother and I left. We worked as shepherds for the wealthy families, here in Drimades. Our father died very young because he got a lung disease, because he worked in the mine in Lavrio for almost twenty years. That is where he met our mother and they got married. Our mother is Greek. But at the time there was a Spanish flu epidemic in that area, therefore my father and his new wife returned to Drimades. They did not have a house of their own and they had to live with his brother until they built a new house close to his birth house. It was around 1940 or 1941.... Yes, 1941 when I was 13. I remember I left home and went to work as a shepherd. I was working for one of the richest families in the village. They were

very good to me and they have never left me hungry. They were nice and educated people. They had a huge house next to the road. But in those days it was not paved and it was narrower. I used to look after the sheep down by the coast during the winter and up in the mountains during the summer. I remember that I used to go up there in August when it was very hot. I was there, far away in the mountains, close to the church of *Aghios Pandeleimona*. In those days I used to sleep up there as it was the only cool space around.

In 1946 Thodoris married to a couple of years' younger wife, also originating from the village. After the marriage Thodoris went to serve the civil service in Elbasan. A year later he returned to his natal village, from where he and his wife applied for relocation to Vlorë. Thodoris worked there as a mechanic and was later promoted to a job of a driver. His wife was a sewer in one of the state factories. They have three children, two daughters and one son. While the eldest daughter and the youngest son married Orthodox Christians from Vlorë, the middle one married a fellow villager. In 1994 Thodoris and his wife immigrated to Athens, where they lived together with their son and his family. They took care of their grandchildren. In 1999 they sold their apartment in Vlorë and began to build a house in Dhërmi/Drimades. Besides the money they received from selling their apartment, they built the house with the money saved from pensions they received from the Greek government and the money sent by their son to whom the house will belong in the future. They moved into the new house in 2000.

During my stay in Dhërmi/Drimades I heard only three stories from village men about pasturing the sheep. According to their memories there were not many sheep in the village in the past, although some written sources contradict their recollections. They claimed that there was not a lot of demand for shepherds and that this kind of work was done either by young boys from the poorer families or by newcomers from Labëria or villages in the vicinity of Vlorë. It was more common for them to work as shepherds during communism, when they took part in the work performed within the cooperative, than between the world wars (1918-1939) or during the Second World War (1939-1945). Women used to pick up medicinal and other herbs in the mountains, such as, for instance, herbs for *çaj mali* [the mountain tea].

### **3.3. From Places to Spaces – Movements and Pause**

*“[...] if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is a pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place” (Tuan 1977: 6).*

The stories, which refer either to the sea or the mountains, show that locations of conversations and the contents of stories define remembrances of story-tellers. Frosina and Agathula, for example, who during our conversation sit on their house terraces overlooking the sea, and Pavlos, who sits on the terrace of the beach restaurant, talk about the sea. Aspasia, who during our talk stands on the hill, Olgha, who sits in her mother's house, and Thodoris, who is questioned about the chapel of *Ag. Pandeleimona*, all talk about the mountains.

These story-tellers tell us about actions, movements, and travels: trading, fishing, transporting and exchanging goods, sailing and walking. Through these actions they establish connections between different places and map the paths. Stories in this kind of association represent a series of paths, which connect Dhërmi/Drimades with different places (Athens, Lavrio, Elbasan, Vranisht, Trubaç, Labërija), islands (Corfu, Othonas) and countries (United States, Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia and Albania). Connections establish the space which stretches between places located “over the sea” and “behind the mountains”. The constant transformation from place to space, as discussed by de Certeau, is particularly relevant here.

Stories unfold in places or locations of their story-tellers. Their memories lead through spaces, occasionally stop at particular places, and then move through the space again. Frosina starts her story in Greece, which is defined as a place “over there”. “Over there is Greece”. She defines “over there” in opposition to “over here”, which defines the village of Dhërmi/Drimades. “From here we see Corfu and Othonas”. She describes her uncle's sailing, which maps the path “from here” (Dhërmi/Drimades) to “over there” (Corfu and Othonas in Greece) and in such a way creates the space. This space is described as: “Over there is Greece. From here we see Corfu and Othonas. My uncle used to sail there”. From the remembrance of her uncle's sailing situated in space she returns to place again, when she mentions the island Othonas. “Othonas is not a big island and it has only a few houses”. Then the place gives way to the space, mapped by a trading route between Dhërmi/Drimades and Corfu and Italy. “My uncle used to trade with Corfu and Italy”. While describing different practices such as sailing, trading and fishing, which reach over the sea and define the space, she locates this space in the time before communism or “before the time of Enveri”. Frosina's memories slowly pass into “the time of Enveri” or the time of communism (1945–1990) and collectivization of land ownership. At that time the Workers Party (*Partia e punës*) or *partija*

collectivized or nationalized all private land in Albania. Frosina describes this period with the example of the fisherman and local hero Niko Dabo, who asks for “hundred metres of the seascape by the Aril” and thus defines the sea space as a place where his fishing area is situated. “Take everything; just leave me hundred metres of the seascape by the Avril where I always fish”

The story of Pavlos starts from a place, which he describes as “those rocks over there”. By determining this position (“Those big rocks which stick out from the sea?”), by naming it (Jaliskari), by explaining the name (“[...] which means the port.”), and by placing it into the past (“It used to be a port once [...]”) Pavlos defines the place. By naming the wealthy *soia*, which had their boats anchored in Jaliskari, he continues to determine the place, namely the village. “Muço, Papajani, Duni and Zhupa were some of the prosperous *soia* (pl.) who used to own large boats. In Drimades boats were rare. There were approximately three or four of them.” With the description of boats, which were “[...] imported from Greece or Italy”, he connects the village port of Jaliskari with places over the sea, with Greece and Italy. Later on he recalls the path which leads from the coast to the village. “It was very hard to bring the imported goods up to the village.” He maps the village space again by mentioning this path and different activities associated with it (transporting goods, paving it with stones). “A cobblestone path, made by the village women led from the coast to the village. The women were the main collectors of stones for the village paths and houses.” Descriptions of working village women and their different activities (such as taking care of the family, gardening, bringing the water, washing, and collecting the firewood and stones) “take” Pavlos into the village and its pub. There are men, in contrast to their working wives, seating, drinking and playing cards. In the last part of his story he mentions fishermen (“Some of them were fishermen”) and trading done by men from wealthy families (“[...] those who originated from rich families traded with the outside world”) and so returns back to the shore, to trading with places over the sea, which are seen as being “outside”. In contrast to the “outside”, there are places that are “in”, that is, inside the village. In his opinion, the connections with places “outside”, in Greece and Italy, make villagers more civilized than other people in Albania. By demarcating Dhërmi/Drimades from other places in Albania Pavlos conceptualizes civilization as social and economical development. His story, therefore, continues to distinguish people of Dhërmi/Drimades as being richer than people in the north and east of Albania. Similarly to Frosina, Pavlos also ends his story with the period of communism (or “[...] the times of the system [...]”), when the “state” (the communist party) of Enver Hoxha

strictly forbade any crossing of state borders. Any attempt at unlawful crossing was harshly punished. The road, which enabled trading and movements of people for centuries, was in 1913 firstly confined – when the borders of Republic of Albania were formed – and later, in times of communism, made impassable. In his own words: “[...] later during the times of the system when the state closed the road we were forbidden to move around.”

In her story Aspasia recalls memories about her mother. It takes the reader to places “[...] up there, to the places behind the mountains.” It was there where her mother used to walk together with other village women. Aspasia locates the village in opposition to the mountains and places behind them. Women in her story map the paths between the village and places behind the mountains. With their journeys recalled in the narrative they construct the space. Aspasia mentions great poverty as the main reason for journeys across the mountains. Then she “returns” from the description of space to the description of the place in mountains: *Ag. Pandeleimona*, named after Saint Panteleimon. “In those times [...] there was poverty, my daughter. They went all the way up there to the places behind the mountains. They passed *Ag. Pandeleimona*.” From the church the story maps the path further on, to the places behind the mountains. By describing their actions (“They carried olives, olive oil [...]” and exchanged the goods for food) the story strengthens the old paths, which lead across the mountains. The series activities and pertaining paths then return back to the place, to the village. In the last part of her story Aspasia, similarly to Frosina and Pavlos, focuses on the description of the village, where wheat does not grow as well as it does in places behind the mountains. “In those times we only ate corn bread; without yeast. It was hard to eat. Therefore we often wanted to eat normal bread from wheat which we could only get by exchange in the places behind the mountains.” In conclusion Aspasia ascribes a negative value to the places behind the mountains. Bad people, who often robbed the village women during their journeys back to the village, are located there. “Sometimes they came back empty-handed because they were robbed on their way back. There was poverty everywhere and people living behind the mountains stole food in those days... They were bad people!”

Olgha tells me her story in the house of her parents. By describing the tiring work of her mother during the building of the house (“This house was built with her hands and in her sweat”) she maps the path between the house in the village and surrounding mountains, where her mother used to gather the stones for the house. The space is again constructed through these connections. “She collected most of the material for it – the stones which she carried

from the hills in the neighbourhood.” She mentions the absent father, who was sent to Yugoslavia by the Workers Party in the period of communism. Her memories of childhood, the family and times of famine in the village additionally determine the space. “While she was building this house our father was away. The *Partia* sent him to Yugoslavia in 1947. He left my mother with three children – me and my two sisters – alone in the village [...], we were experiencing great famine.” Olgha states, similarly to Aspasia, that famine was the main reason for women to walk across the mountains to places behind them. She names some of these places in the region of Labëria, which puts the story back on the map: “we were experiencing great famine. With other locals she crossed the mountains to Vranisht or Trubaç in Labëria to exchange [...]” These places are again determined by trading of the goods, which were then often taken from women by robbers on their way home. Olgha also mentions the approximate time of these events: before and during the World War II (1918-1945).

When the stories above are analysed according to de Certeau’s theoretical framework of stories as spatial practices, his notion of “geographies of actions” is confirmed. Stories continually organize and transform the space into places or “stops” and vice versa. Stories are thus not a passive illustration of spatial transformations, but are actively involved in the transformations of spaces, places, paths and borders.

The sea and the mountains are defined as spatial boundaries, which simultaneously separate and connect the village with other places in Greece, Italy, United States, Yugoslavia and Albania. The memories of story-tellers about their ancestors’ paths construct the social maps. Village is represented as a central place in them with all other places related to it. These spatial arrangements are distinct and redefine and shift the village’s “whereness”.

### **3.4. “Whereness” of Dhërmi/Drimades**

The picture below shows the construction of space in Frosina’s story. She moved to Tirana in times of communism and returned to the village after its end. She defines the “whereness” of the village in its relation to Italy and Greece, and the islands of Othonas and Corfu in particular. The space she creates through her story, situated in time of *prin to kero tou Enveri*, comprises the village, Greece and Italy, and excludes Albania. The “whereness” of the village was differently experienced and thought of during communism because of the closure of

borders, ban on trading relations and travels across the sea, and collectivization of land. This has influenced also the experience and perception of space generally, which was reduced only to Albania. The space was defined by the absence of connections and travels to Greece and Italy and by nationalization of individual land in the village. This not only changed the “whereness” of the village, but also the “whereness” and belonging of the people, who were in Frosina’s story defined as being neither Greek nor Albanian.

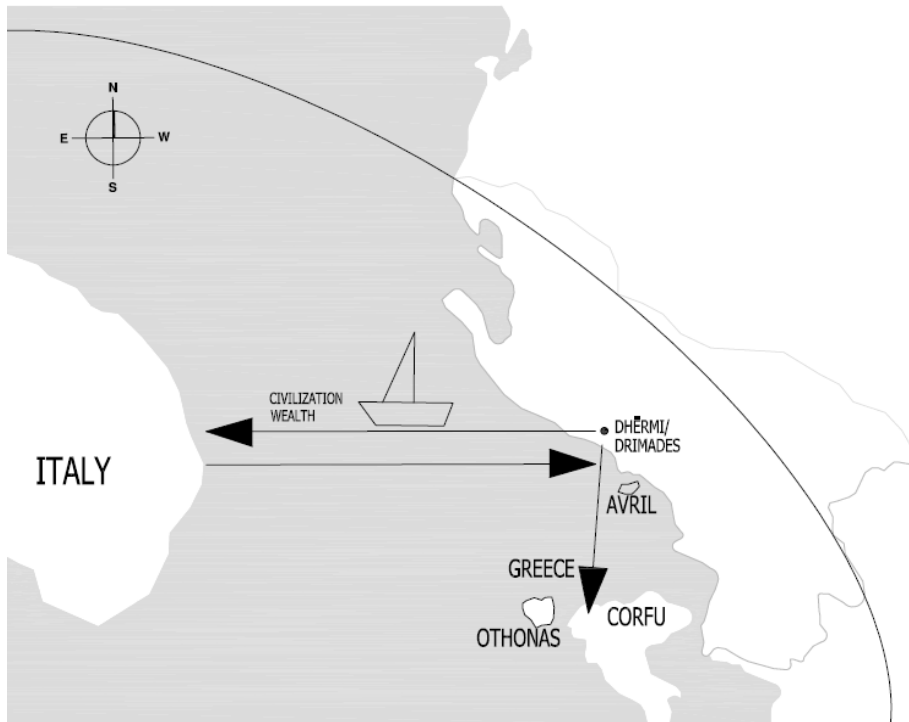


Figure 9: Paths and places from the story of Frosina, born in 1934.

The space of Pavlos’ story is slightly wider than Frosina’s. It includes the village’s space beside the sea strait. Pavlos maps the space similarly to others, mapping the locations around different time points: before, during or after the communism. He begins his story with a critique of transformation of the village’s anchoring place, *Jaliskari*, to a beach bar, which is now owned by the Albanians. He sees a difference between the “*Alvani*” and the locals (*horiani*). His story continues to map the space into the period before communism, when seaways used to lead to places in Italy and Greece. All these places are in relation to Dhërmi/Drimades in the “outside” (*okso*) position, while only the village is thought of being “inside” (*mesa*). By describing the transport of imported goods over the cobblestone path, Pavlos continues to map the *mesa* part of the space, placing the “whereness” of the village in between the coast and surrounding mountains. The meanings of different “whereness” are constructed according to spatial hierarchy. The “outside” places are important, and powerful

in economical and social sense, while places “in Albania” are weak, uncivilized and poor. The village stands in between, and it is in this regard ambiguous, similarly to its position in Frosina’s story. Pavlos attempts to break down this ambiguity and to pin down the “whereness” of the village by relating it with Italy and Greece, with civilization and richness. In doing so his narrative differentiates and separates the village from Albania. This conceptualization stands in contrast to later periods, when during the communism the “whereness” of the village was no longer constructed through overseas connections, due to restrictions of movements inside the country and over its borders.

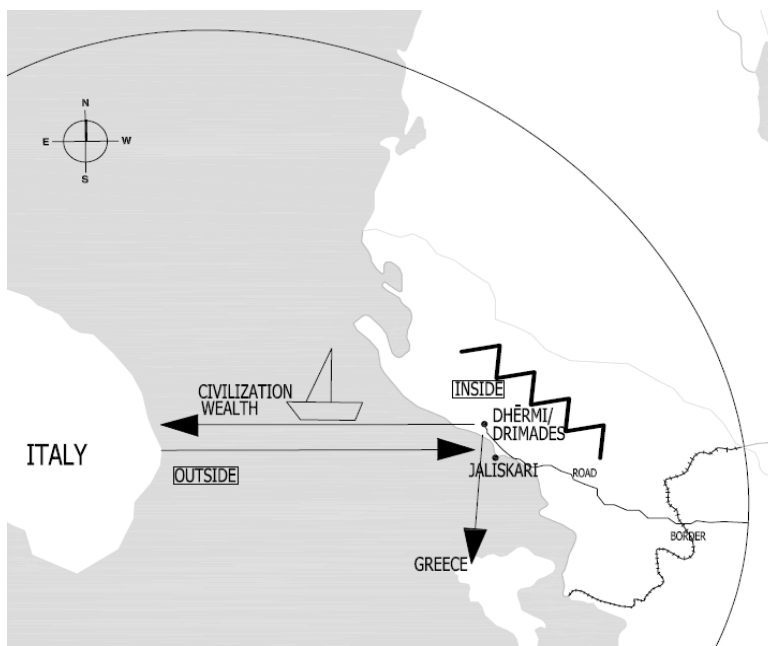


Figure 10: Paths and places from the story of Pavlos, born in 1938.

Agathula’s biography is much richer considering the number of places included in her itinerary, through which she moved during her lifetime. She locates the village according to her grandfather’s trading relations with Corfu and Venice and her uncle’s immigration to United States between two World Wars. All these places are located “outside” (*okso*) and understood as a connection to civilization and wealth. When describing the poverty which prevailed after the World War II, during communism, she situates the “whereness” of Dhërmi/Drimades according to its relation to Elbasan in the central Albania, where she performed her practical work during her studies. She again ascribes meaning to “whereness” in accord with spatial hierarchy, relating “outside” places with economical and social power and places in Albania with weakness. The “whereness” of the village is again placed in the middle, between wealth and poverty.



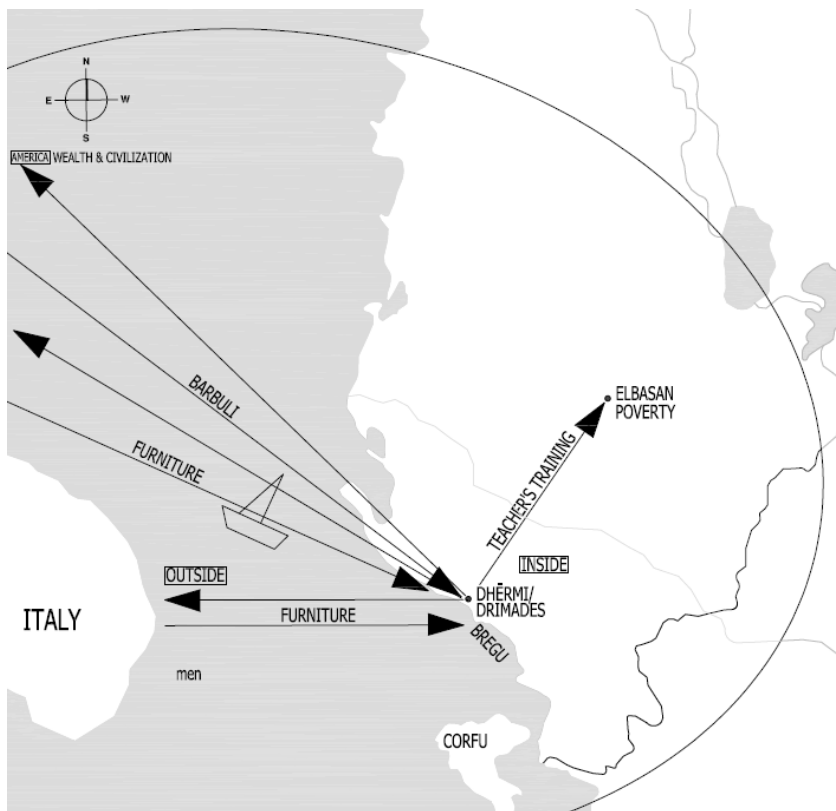


Figure 11: Paths and places from the story of Aghatula, born in 1944.

Stories about the sea primarily locate Dhërmi/Drimades according to relations of village men with people and places in Italy, Greece or United States, while stories about the mountains rely on connections of village women with places “behind” the mountains.

Aspasia has lived in Dhërmi/Drimades for all of her life. She maps the village according to her mother’s travels in “those times” (*tote*), when poverty prevailed in the village. Aspasia especially differentiates the village from the places behind the mountains where she locates the “bad” people. Her story again constructs the village’s “whereness” according to spatial hierarchy, which is this time conceptualised more in social than economical terms. People behind the mountains are, despite wheat and other food, considered in a negative light because the village women had often been robbed of their produce.

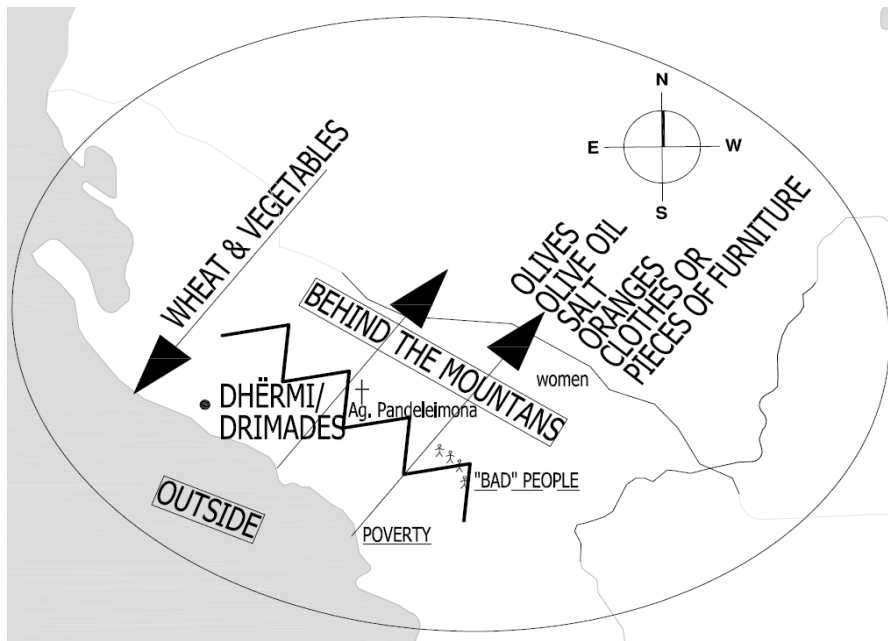


Figure 12: Paths and places from the story of Aspasia, born in 1933.

Olgha is younger than other story-tellers. She moved to Tirana during the period of communism. She regularly returns to the village to take care of her ill parents. The mapping of her story is similar to others. “Whereness” of Dhërmi/Drimades is located in relation to places behind the mountains: Trubaç, Vranisht and Labëria. As some women who went there to exchange their goods for wheat happened to be attacked by robbers, these places are identified with danger and badness. The contacts with these places are in her story limited to the time after the World War II. She puts another place on the map, Yugoslavia, where her father was sent by the Labour Party of Albania.

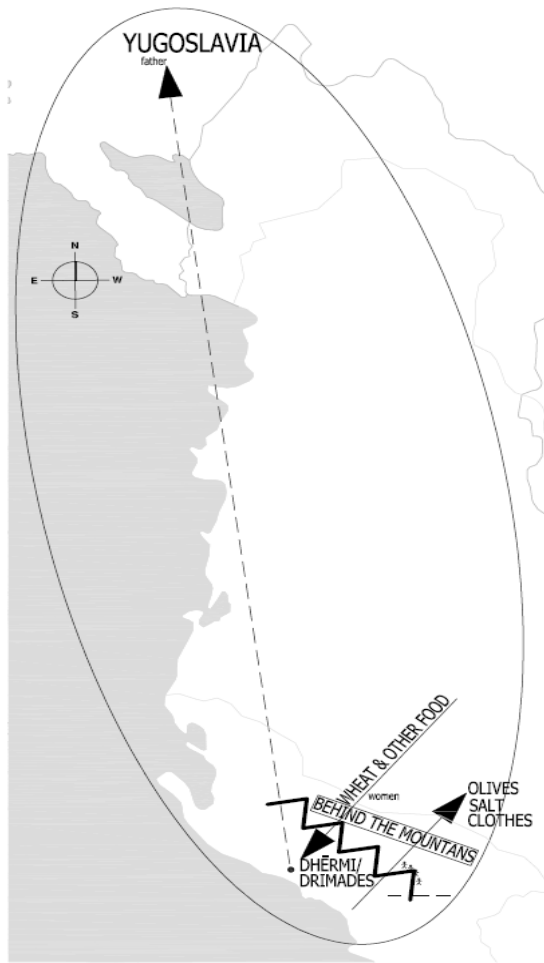


Figure 13: Paths and places from the story of Olga, born in 1944.

The last figure shows the mapping of space in Thodoris’ story. During childhood he used to work as a shepherd in the mountains, taking care of the sheep. His experience places the “whereness” of the village according to his journeys up to the mountains and down to the coast. His mapping includes Lavrio and Greece, where his father met his mother when he was working as a contract worker. Because of the flu epidemics they moved to the village shortly after their marriage.

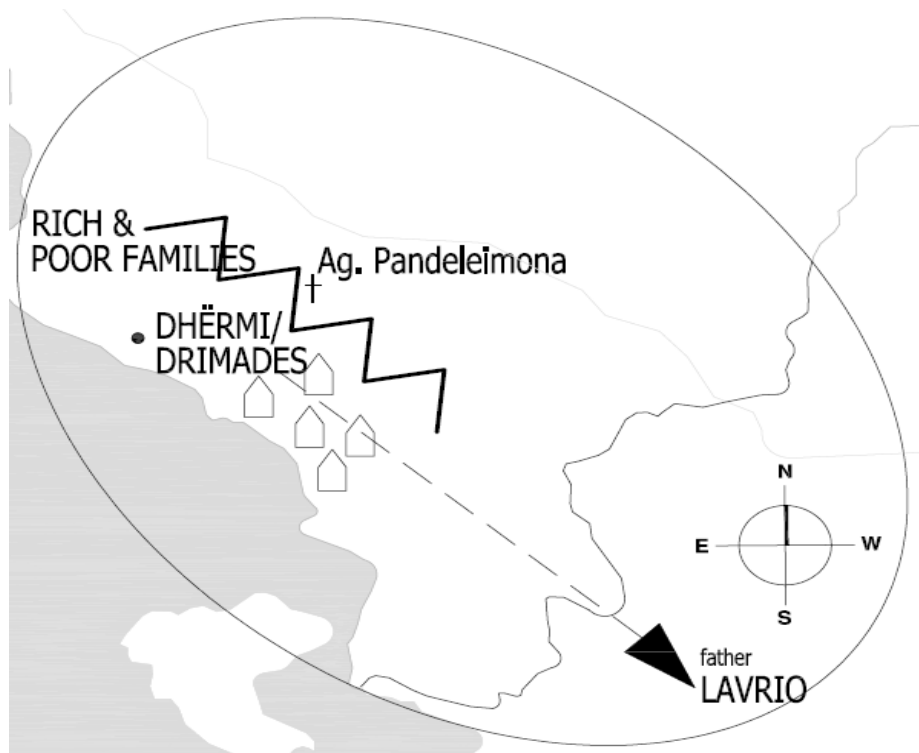


Figure 14: Paths and places from the story of Thodoris, born in 1928.

The maps drawn above illustrate how people in their stories perceive and conceptualize the “whereness” of their village. This “whereness” is constructed according to their own and their predecessors’ movements and restrictions during the times of communism, to geopolitical divisions, and to topography of landscape. When dealing with sameness and difference that both constitute and are constituted by this “whereness”, the maps show the direction of movements and the position of places, which are taken into account in the constitution of “whereness”. The emphasis on difference is present when looking at the relationships between the villagers and the people and places “outside” or “behind the mountains”. On the other hand, it is the emphasis on sameness that comes forward when the “whereness” of the village is placed on the geopolitical map of the nation-states (e.g. Italy, Greece, Albania, etc.).

### 3.5. Summary

In the stories and remembrances recounted by the elderly people the sea and the mountains are enclosing the village and defining it as an intermediate space, characterized by its ambiguities. It seems that Dhërmi/Drimades is at the same time a place of manhood and a place of womanhood, wealth and poverty, civilizedness and uncivilizedness. These ambiguities concur with Dimitris’ statement that the sea is hospitable and mild while the

mountains are cold and wild. As I suggested in the introduction, the ambiguities are the basis for the construction of “whereness” of Dhërmi/Drimades, which is, as shown in the figures, changeable and vague.

The stories illustrate how the political and economical divisions and the social generation of differences contributed in placing the village on the geopolitical map of Europe and the world. As the stories and historiography show (Chapter Two), people of today’s Southern Albania, Epirus and Corfu in Greece traded among themselves in the times before communism and so created a common space between them. The closing of the borders in 1945 stopped these travels and changed the perception of the space, which began to be redefined by planned relocations across Albania and emigrations of people to Greece, Italy and elsewhere. Villagers experienced the state border between Albania and Greece (or the “road closure” in Pavlos’ words) as a delineating mark which defined who and what belongs to the Albanian nation-state or to the Greek nation-state. After the end of communism, when the “road” was opened again, at least for Greek speaking Orthodox Christians, massive migrations shattered again the perception of borders. Differences reappeared again. They were no longer defined on the basis of nation-states, but also on the basis of global economy and politics, which are today the major forces that define the power and hierarchy of places. In the scope of this kind of hierarchy, some places and states are considered as the “West”, “civilized”, “developed” countries, while others get labelled as the “East”, “uncivilized”, countries of the “Third World” or “the Balkans”.

The stories also describe how story-tellers use the hegemonic geopolitical and economical hierarchy of places and states to construct and redefine their own private hierarchies, which influence their sense of the “whereness” of Dhërmi/Drimades. The names of the places in Albania thus get omitted, except in the stories of Olgha and Agathula. Thunderbolt Mountains define the boundary between the places behind them (*piso*) and the village in front of them (*brosta*). Instead of places in Albania, story-tellers speak about countries and places outside Albania, which are located outside (*okso*) of the village and represent its connection with civilization and wealth. This means that the sea strait is seen as another border, which is in contrast to the mountains perceived in a positive way. The village thus stands in between. Stories try to resolve this ambiguity by relating the village to its connecting places.

In overall, the story-tellers use the remembrances of their ancestors’ paths to reconstruct the past and recreate the present, which serves to define their belonging to the place – the village.

This constant reconstruction is troublesome nowadays, because the social, cultural and political changes, accompanied by rewriting of history, differences in population counts, minority issues, land tenure conflicts, global economy and geopolitical divisions in the world cause new contradiction and conflicts in this area, which will be the subject of Chapter Four.

## Chapter Four

### NEGOTIATING RUBBISH

The contents of the previous chapter described the remembered ancestral paths and movements through which the elderly villagers reshape their present spaces within which they locate their village and themselves. This chapter addresses the problem of rubbish on the coast of Dhërmi/Drimades through which local people manage and control the sources, form their identity and constitute their belonging. People's dealings with rubbish are on the one hand very much a reflection of historically contingent, political, economic and social relationships in the village, region and country at large. On the other hand, rubbish negotiation became one of the vital subjects in the process of construction and reconstruction of these relationships and the social space in general. The chapter is comprised of two interconnected parts. In the first part I present my discussions with local tourist workers just before the main season in August. In analyzing these discussions I focus especially on the question of how people experience the place and how they manipulate with it in order to gain certain advantages. In the second part I present different stories by tourists and coastal tourist workers which exemplify how rubbish produces spatial ordering and classifies what and who are either "out of place" or "of the place".

The accounts presented illustrate people's never ending negotiations of who is responsible for the dumping of rubbish and who for it not being removed. When talking about these issues people delineate multiplicity of contradictions and shift the responsibility from "state" to "locality" and from "locality" to "state", from communal to individual and from individual to communal, from foreigners to locals and from locals to foreigners, from themselves to their neighbours and from neighbours to themselves. All these conceptualizations and transpositions are quite complex and depend on the social and cultural background of the individual speaker. With expansion of tourism and consequent growth in the number of tourist facilities' owners, seasonal workers, emigrants and tourists in recent years, the questions about who or what is "dirty" and "disordered" and who or what is "clean" and "ordered" (who or what is "of the place" and who or what is "out of place") became even more relevant.

In one of her well-known works *Purity and Danger* (2002 [1966]) Mary Douglas has already shown how the meaning of dirt and filth is socio-culturally conditioned. The meaning of dirt cannot be understood as a unique and isolated phenomenon, but as a deviation from the ordering. Dirt is a “matter out of place” (Douglas 2002: 44). It is the “by-product of a systemic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements” (ibid.).

On the coast of Dhërmi/Drimades dirt and rubbish could also be understood as by-products of social and spatial ordering. Thus in this chapter I place the emphasis on how the owners of tourist facilities, seasonal workers, emigrants and tourists debate and negotiate who is responsible for rubbish and who should clean the coast. Through their debates and negotiations about the rubbish as well as through other practices, people express their views about tourism and continuously construct the tourist coast. I will argue that while the tourist coast serves as the source for these negotiations, the negotiations themselves construct the same coast on which people who claim to originate from Dhërmi/Drimades place their locality and belonging.

Gupta and Ferguson (2001: 13) already emphasized the mutual relation between the process of the place making and the process of constructing locality and identity, which are unstable and often contested. Locality does not imply a “rootedness” to a place. It is continually reconstructed through interrelations as well as differences between people and places. Thus locality is a constitutive and constituting part of the process of social changes; and simultaneously the social changes such as tourism on the coast of Dhërmi/Drimades for example, are constitutive and constituting of locality and formation of the local identities. Referring to Hall, Gupta and Ferguson suggest that “identity is a ‘meeting point’ – a point of suture or temporary identification – that constitutes and re-forms the subject so as to enable that subject to act” (2001: 13). On the coast of Dhërmi/Drimades people form and redefine their identity upon their links or “meetings” with other people on the coast. Local entrepreneurs, newcomers, emigrants and tourists thus refigure the differences between “them” as being “of the place” and “others” as being “out of place”. The sutures of differences are points of their temporary identification, which allow them to act in the place. Moreover, the differences between those “of the place” and others being “out of it”, are not based only on the recognition of commonality or invention of identity, but they are also an effect of the structural relations of power and inequality. Therefore I am concerned not only



with interrelations and differences between people, but also with these structural relations of power between them, which contribute towards generation of differences and similarities.

#### 4.1. Tourism on the Coast of Dhërmi/Drimades

The beginnings of tourism on the Dhërmian/Drimadean coast date back in the 1960s, when the communist Party of Labour transformed some of the old buildings that used to serve as warehouses for storing *kitro*, *valanidhia* (pl.), olive oil and olives, and built *Hotel Dhërmiu*, the government villa or *vila tou Enveri*, and the Camp of Workers or *Kampi i Punëtoreve*. While the hotel served the members of the Communist Labour Union<sup>86</sup> to whom special tickets were given (*Fletë Kampi*) to spend their summer holidays there, the villa used to be a holiday resort for the political elite. In 1997, after the fall of Albanian pyramid investment schemes and the great economic crisis which ended with the loss of state control, *Hotel Dhërmiu* was robbed by rioters who broke in and destroyed the communist property. The only building that remained preserved to this day is the government villa, which is still owned by the state, together with the old and decaying *Hotel Dhërmiu*. After the fall of communism, *Kampi i Punëtoreve* was gradually abandoned. Its location is now occupied by another *Hotel Dhërmiu*. Although the camp no longer exists, its name is still present in people's discourse. They refer to the coast as *Kampi*.

In the first few years after the collapse of communism (1990) and the beginning of privatisation, the state buildings and the land that used to be owned by the Communist Labour Union were contracted to the people who came from other places of Albania. Later on, in the years after 1997 and more evidently after 2000, when the Himarë/Himara area was acknowledged as a municipality and when the national road from Dukati to Palasa was renewed, the tourist facilities on the coastal plains of Dhërmi/Drimades enlarged in number. The owners originating from other places of Albania built nine new buildings which are nowadays used as guest houses, room rentals, a bungalow site, hotels and a disco bar. Except for one (the small hotel), all of them are situated on the northern side of the small stream *Potami* (literally "stream") that flows into the sea. After 2000 the local people also began to build their tourist facilities, which are mainly located on the southern side of *Potami*. They built nine facilities, such as guest houses, small hotels, a bungalow site, a fast-food restaurant

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<sup>86</sup> These were mainly workers, doctors, teachers and bureaucrats who worked in public service. Farmers who worked in the agricultural cooperatives or state farms were not members of Labour Unions.

and a night club. The majority of locals who run tourist facilities used to work in emigration in Greece for at least few years. Three of them still live in Greece for most of the year, returning to the coast of Dhërmi/Drimades only in the summer season. Another three local owners of the tourist facilities live in bigger towns such as Vlorë and Tirana in Albania and are present here only during summer months. The last three owners live in the village permanently.

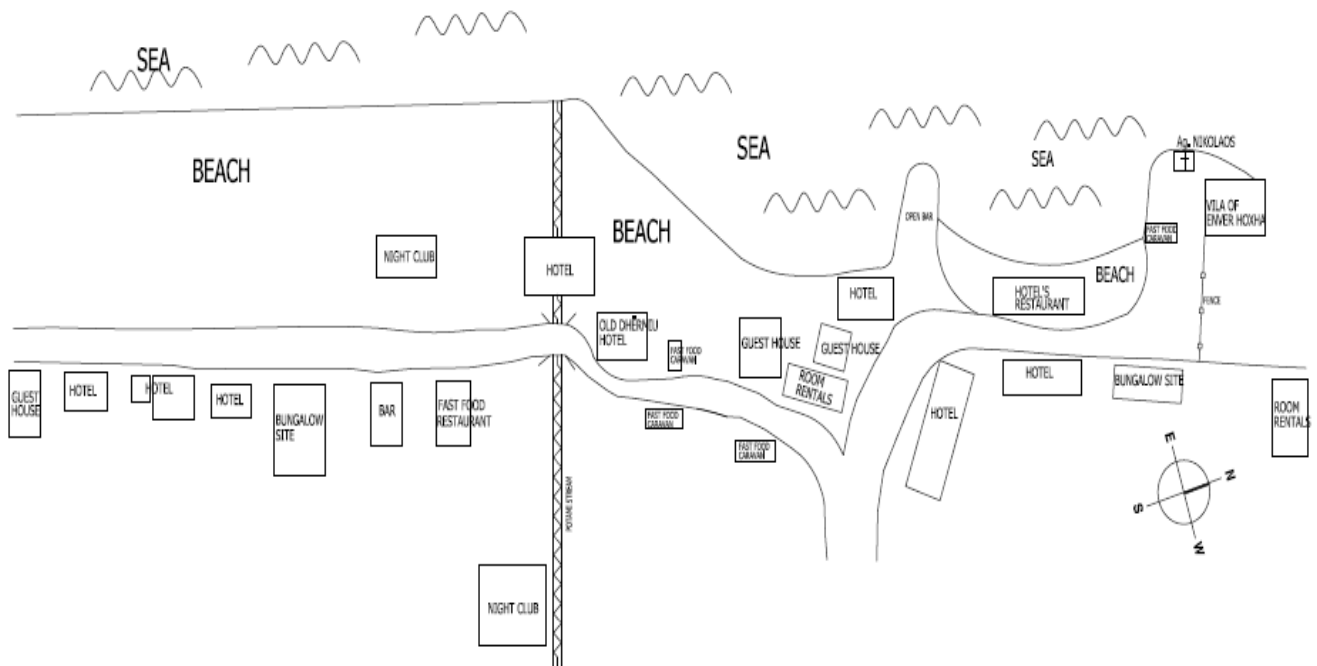


Figure 14: The spatial division of the owners of tourist facilities on the coast of Dhërmi/Drimades in 2005. The northern (the right) side mainly conjoins the owners of tourist facilities from Albania while the southern (the left) side conjoins the local owners.

#### 4.1.1. Cleaning the Coast

In the period of communism, the practices of cleaning the surroundings were often organised with the aim to build up unity and equality between urban and rural inhabitants and to evoke responsibility in people. The aim of such actions was therefore to stimulate the people to cooperate and contribute to the “communal good” of “their place” and the “state”. In 1990 these actions were abandoned. Because of the economic crisis which took place throughout Albania (Sjöberg, 1992), care about the disposal of rubbish and the organisation of dumpsites in the outskirts of towns and cities was neglected. In the past few years, due to the opening of

state borders, many of the low-degradable materials such as plastic, cans, batteries, etc. flooded the Albanian market. Several of American organisations such as USAID and the World Bank as well as some NGOs addressed the issue of the organised landfills and rubbish disposal in Albania. In 2005, with the implementation of the World Bank project for cleaning up the coastal zones in Vlorë, Sarandë and Himarë/Himara (including Dhërmi/Drimades with four other coastal villages; see Albanian coastal zone development and cleanup program), the meaning of rubbish and its disposal in Dhërmi/Drimades became a subject of various contestations.

In May 2005, just before the national elections were held in June, the municipality of Himarë/Himara used World Bank funds to provide villages with small trash containers (measuring at 1 x 0.5 m) which were in Dhërmi/Drimades placed mainly in the centre near the coastal road while four of them were put in the interior near a smaller village street. Additional funds were used to organise the collection of garbage during the peak summer months (June to August) by seasonal workers using a newly bought truck, all employed especially for this purpose. During August, they collected garbage every day and transported it to the rubbish dump near the neighbouring village Vuno. Despite their effort, the problems with garbage were still not sufficiently solved and remained a cause of discontent among tourists and tourist workers on the coast.

What should be done with the rubbish? Who is responsible for it? Who should be held responsible? Who is the major polluter? These are questions that continue to occupy the thoughts of the majority of the locals as well as some of the tourists. I will show below how this matter influenced the discourse and dealings of local tourist facilities' owners before and during the summer season, when the coast suddenly became crowded, almost beyond its limits, by a large number of tourists.

## **4.2. Before the Summer Season**

In one of the late mornings in early June, Ariadne, born in 1943 in the Greek-speaking village of Sarandë, and I were standing on one of her gardens that is located behind their fast food restaurant. To prevent it from the soil erosion Kosta (see *Chapter One, Kosta and Andrea: A Case Study*) situated it on a higher level, bounded with a stony enclosure that was made by the

seasonal workers in the spring. Similarly to the previous years, Kosta and Ariadne brought extra soil from the area between Vuno and Himarë/Himara, where some patches of fertile soil can be found.

Ariadne was proudly showing me some large, unripe tomatoes and onions which we planted together in early April. “Do you remember how we were in hurry because Kosta had to go urgently to the village?” she said and plucked a big onion out, showing it to me and adding that our efforts were not in vane. In the same instance she bent again and began to pick up weeds and small stones. “Stones, stones, nothing but stones is all we have here.” I noted that vegetables grow fine in spite of the stony soil. “Of course they grow”, said Ariadne in an upset manner, “but this would not happen if I and Kosta have not brought additional soil every spring and put some Soulo’s<sup>87</sup> fertiliser in it.” She admitted that this year’s produce is plentiful and that all tomatoes, onions, garlic, cucumbers, pumpkins and potatoes quite suffice for seasonal needs in their summer fast-food restaurant. They have sandwiches, *suvlaki*, *shish-kebab*, seasonal salads and French fries on their menu.

Ariadne continued to remove weeds and stones with quick movements, throwing them over the fence in the field overgrown by olive trees and evergreen vegetation, planted in times of cooperative (1957-1990). She explained how it was hard and time-consuming for them with Kosta to change the back of the place into a fertile garden. “Look at these hands!” she exclaimed and showed her wrinkled palms, red from the clayey soil. Then she pointed at the plaster on her right index finger and told me that due to the cold temperatures she got a small ulceration, which would not heal because she constantly works on the garden and uses washing powder in cold water. “Now look and tell me, are these the hands of a teacher?” she asked again.

Without waiting for my answer, she started to tell a story about Kosta’s cousin Andrea, who used to dispose bottles in the place of the present garden. Andrea used to have a bar and a night club on Kosta’s land two years ago (in 2003). He had to tear it down, when Kosta and Ariadne returned from Greece. When I asked her how he reacted to their request, she angrily

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<sup>87</sup> Soulo is a nickname of Soulejman, the local vegetable and fruits seller, who originates from Mallakstra, a small town to the north of Vlorë. He brings his goods every Wednesday and Friday to local restaurants in Llogara and villages of Himarë/Himara area. Besides fruits and vegetables he also sells smaller articles like flour, sugar, candles, matches, vinegar, sunflower oil, candies, cookies, pasta, toilet paper and napkins. Occasionally he brings dishes and glasses, and in spring the fertiliser, which is packed in white bags weighting 50 kilos each.

replied, that he had no choice, as there was no doubt about their ownership of the land. She and Kosta had to put a lot of effort in removing bottles and disposing them away from the village. When I asked her where they left the bottles, Ariadne replied impatiently: “Probably on one of the curves of the road between Drimades and Vuno. I don’t know for sure”, and continued with a critique of local officials who should in her opinion took care of the garbage disposal long time ago. Although they put the rubbish containers by the village road they are definitely too small for the rubbish the villagers produce. Besides she cannot be sure if the local communities are going to keep their promise and organise regular rubbish disposal for the summer months when the coast is full of tourists, who leave a large amount of rubbish behind them. “They only promise while often they do not do anything... What do you think! *Afto einai Alvania. Mono ha pseumata. Mia mera etsi ali mera anapoda*”. At that point she found a piece of broken glass and nearly cut herself. This caused another outburst of anger directed to the Albanian government and Kosta’s cousin. “How bad and dirty they are”, she continued, describing the cousin’s irresponsibility as he did not take care of rubbish that was left behind his bar. Her flow of angry words was interrupted by Flutura’s two and a half years old son Dimitris, who came to see us at the back of the fast food restaurant.

Dimitris’ mother Flutura and father Lolo<sup>88</sup> just arrived at the restaurant together with their seven year old daughter Sofia. Flutura was born in 1969 in Vlorë. She originates from the family of Christian Orthodox religion. She cannot speak or fully understand the local Greek dialect. In 1998 she moved to Dhërmi/Drimades, from where Lolo originates. They live in a house of Lolo’s elder brother, who together with his other siblings lives in Greece. Flutura teaches in the village’s primary school, while Lolo is unemployed because of his health problems. Lolo’s father was born in Ioannina and moved to Dhërmi/Drimades when the “Spanish flue” epidemics affected Ioannina. Consequently, Lolo was eligible to apply for a Greek passport in 2004. Thus Lolo and his children have Greek passports, while Flutura still has the Albanian one. He showed me this proof of his Greek nationality in one of our first encounters and jokingly added that he and his children are Greeks while his wife is Albanian, smirking at Flutura, who smiled in a somewhat ashamed way. His joke was not so much about the mixture of nationalities in his young family, but more about the value of Albanian nationality, being in his eyes perceived as inferior to Greek.

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<sup>88</sup> Lolo is a shorter name for Theodor. As small children cannot utter Theodor, they use Lolo.

Upon the arrival of young Dimitris, Ariadne's anger abruptly stopped. She kindly greeted the boy and asked him about his parents. Ariadne threw the weeds over the fence, washed her hands and told us to stop chatting and join Flutura and her husband who were sitting at the front of the open fast food restaurant, partly covered with *kalami* (dry grass). We went there and sat next to Flutura and her husband. They were talking to Kosta, who was washing the stone tiles with a rubber hose and explaining all the novelties in the restaurant that he and son introduced that year. During Kosta's talk, Ariadne interrupted Flutura and inquired about her well being. At the same time she wondered whether there were any guests on the *kseni meria* (foreigner's side) which Flutura and Lolo passed on the way to the fast food restaurant. Flutura's answer was negative; she added that Romano (the owner of a restaurant on the northern part) had some tourists last week but they have left by now. Ariadne noted that she heard about that and commented that *kseni meria*, by which she meant the northern part of the coast that was mainly populated by the tourist facilities built by newcomers, always had more tourists than the local side or *meria tou horiani*. She added that the main reason for this are more attractive offerings on the *kseni meria* side, where the major hotels are situated and the guest houses are generally bigger.

Meanwhile little Dimitris, who roamed around with his elder sister, came to Flutura and with sad eyes, holding his hand on his bottom tried to tell her something. When Flutura turned to him, she smelled that he had voided in his pants. Slightly annoyed she looked at Dimitris and yawned that she had forgotten to take another pair of shorts for him. She asked Kosta if he can pour some water from the hose to clean his dirty legs and the floor. While washing the floor he tenderly and with a smile on his face explained to Dimitris that next time he needed to go to the toilet he should talk to his mother first. Flutura removed his pants and took him to the sea to wash him more thoroughly. Little Sofia took my hand, looked at me beseechingly and asked if we could join them. She was all the time looking forward to swim in the sea.

The gravel beach, situated 30 metres down from the restaurant was almost empty. Besides some children who were playing and shouting in the far distance there were only two families with young children on the beach. The couples in their mid thirties were resting on colourful mattresses under the blue and white umbrellas. Their two girls and a boy were playing in the sea.

Sofia put her small towel on the ground couple of metres away from the young families and sat down, while Flutura took Dimitris to the sea in order to wash the excrement off his bottom. When one of the ladies noticed this she shouted in Albanian, “We have children here and we don’t want them to swim in the shit!” Flutura blushed and without a comment took Dimitris further down along the wide and open beach. Meanwhile the lady turned towards her husband and in Greek language furiously condemned Flutura’s manners. Sofia, who had already taken off her clothes, asked me to go with her and swim in the sea. Flutura and Dimitris soon returned. Flutura left him with us while she returned to the fast food restaurant. She complained that she could not stand sitting on the hot sun. We were playing and laughing and before long the children of the young couples joined us. When they heard me speaking Greek with uncommon accent the woman who had been shouting at Flutura asked me where I was coming from.

My answer that I came from Slovenia stirred up their attention and they invited me to sit with them under their umbrella. They all originated from Dhërmi/Drimades. When they were still very young, however, their families moved to Vlorë where they grew up. Kiqos, born in 1969, said the following:

We return to Drimades every year. As we originally come from here we love this place. Our parents live here and we visit them as often as we can. Unfortunately we can visit them only during the summer and sometimes for *Pashka* (Easter holidays). Our children really enjoy their stay here. They can run around and spend the entire day in nature. It is impossible to do this in Athens as it is a very large city.

We always stay on this side of the beach, with the rest of the locals. The other side is for foreigners, we don’t feel comfortable there. It is very nice here during the summer. You can meet almost everybody from the village, even those who work in Greece. During the year, we all work hard and have no time to meet. This is one of the reasons why we enjoy returning to Drimades, to its beautiful coast. It is a pity that the Albanians pollute our beach. They throw garbage everywhere. Drimades has the most beautiful coast around and it is a great shame that the Albanians are polluting it. They behave like pigs. Did you see that Albanian, who was washing this child’s [pointing on Dimitris] trousers full of shit in the sea? Right in front of our children, who were having a swim. Disgusting!

I noted that the lady was married to a village man and Kiqos continued:

Yes, yes [...]. What have we come to! Yes, a lot of the locals married somebody from the outside. What a pity this is! There is more and more *Turki* living here. Soon there will be more of them than *horiani*. *O kratos* [the state] tries to make this place Albanian. But this place is Greek, because it has Greek *toponimia* [toponymy]. Do you know the name of that nice beach that you can see from Lloghara? *Meghalihora*. And do you know the place before *Meghalihora*? It is *Grammata* and than *Meghalihora*. After that is *Jaliskari* [...].

Vangjelis who was sitting next to Kiqos disagreed:

No, you are wrong! First comes *Grammata* then *Voroskopo*, *Kondratsa*, *Jaliskari* and down there, further on lies *Alevra*.

When I asked them about the meanings of the names, they replied that their fathers used to know this, while they forgot everything. Both Kiqos and Vangjelis were blaming the communism for disappearance of social memory, because it indoctrinated many people and taught them false things and ideology. While Kiqos and Vangjelis were discussing about the toponyms, their wives began to pack the things as they were getting late to prepare lunch for their in-laws and themselves. While they were collecting the towels, mattresses, toys and the food, one of them left the rubbish on the beach, but the other one picked it up and put it into the sack. She turned to me and said: “We always take care of our garbage, we like our village”.

#### **4.2.1. Identification and Belonging**

According to Tilley (1994: 15) the meaning of place stems out of human experience. Places can be experienced and defined at any number of spatial levels – from personal space to community space, a regional one and so on (Tilley 1994: 17). Elderly people (born between 1926 and 1945, whose remembrances were presented in Chapter Three), who returned to the village after years of living in other Albanian and/or Greece places, experience the coast through memories about paths and movements of their ancestors. Different to them are the younger generations (born after 1950, comprised of local emigrants, seasonal workers and tourists) which experience the coast mainly as a touristy place which is either the source of their financial income or the place where they spend their holidays. The village coast, therefore, bears different meanings to them than to the elderly population. It has an economic meaning for Ariadne and Kosta because it represents the source of their income. To Flutura and Lolo it has a meaning of a domestic place, where they can spend their free time and socialize. It bears a similar meaning for the local emigrants like Kiqos and Vangjelis and their families, who annually return to the village coast. They experience the coastal place through leisure and social activities. By naming its locations with Greek names they consider it as a part of Greece. This shows that along with their movements people experience place through their personal biographies, their management of sources (such as land), goals and aspirations.



According to Tilley (1994: 18) people live in the place and thus they have a sense of it being a part of them. He suggests that place is fundamental in the process of formation of individual identity. Ariadne stresses how she and Kosta work on their garden, managing the erosion and fertility of the soil. They have placed the garden on a higher ground and enriched it with an artificial fertilizer. Their success in gardening determines the prosperity of their fast-food restaurant. Ariadne shows her injured hands and contrasts her present position with her past work as a teacher, which was considered a privileged societal role in the communist regime. The monolog about her work on the garden helps her to form her identity and define her belonging to the coast and the village. Opposite to Kosta, she originates from Sarandë and has moved to the village only a couple of years ago from Greece, to where she emigrated shortly after the end of communism. Their settlement in the village was made possible when Kosta inherited his father's house. Later on Kosta and his son built a fast food restaurant on the coast which now represents all of the family's income. Ariadne has no prior memories about the village, so she defines her place and belonging in connection with her work and management of the land.

Later in her talk Ariadne forms her identity also through the distinctions between her and the "others", which are shown in her attitude towards supposedly inadequate handling of trash. She sees local municipal officials as careless and irresponsible. They were supposed to establish an organized system for trash disposal years ago, but have not fulfilled their promise. The inadequacy and instability of government's attitude towards villagers is revealed in her statement: "This is Albania. Only lies. One day they say this, another day the opposite." She refers to the hegemonic ways of the state and exposes her way of generating the meaning of Albania as a synonym for instability and inadequacy.

Her identity is also formed in contrast to Kostas' cousin, who is now also her neighbour. He used to have a bar on their land, but was forced to remove it after their claim. He left behind all the garbage, which she had to clean together with Kostas. While cursing the irresponsible cousin she again stresses her conscientiousness regarding the garbage disposal problem. Considering Gupta and Ferguson (2001) she forms her identity constantly by suturing the oppositions between her and the "others" (i.e. the state and Kostas' cousin) to justify her presence in the village. Gupta and Ferguson (2001: 14) see this dynamism in the process of individual's identification as clearly representing the relationship between place and power. In accordance with the spatial organisation of tourist facilities and their owners, Ariadne defines

the spatial differentiation of the coast. She places the foreign side of the coast (*kseni meria*), populated with the owners who originate from other places of Albania, in opposition to the local side (*meria tou horiani*), where she finds herself, Kosta and his cousin. Although the cousin is held responsible for the trash (which is considered a “matter out of place” by Douglas), he still belongs to the “local place” when compared to the people on the “foreign side”. Identifications are therefore dynamic with shifting distinctions and defined spatially. The meanings of a living space can be shifted too, in line with the alterations in identification. A similar contextual dependence and relativity of spatial delineations can be seen in the criticism of Flutura’s actions by Kiqos and his wife. Kiqos is disgusted by Flutura cleaning Dimitris’ excrement in the proximity of his children. He relates her doing to the irresponsibility of “other Albanians” who pollute the coast. Albanians are thus considered as being responsible for all the dirt, for everything that is “out of place”. In such a way he restates his own position of being “of the place”. Although he lives in Greece, he identifies himself with the coast and the village from which his parents and relatives originate.

#### **4.2.2. Manipulating the Citizenship**

Similar features of identification and its spatial dependence can be observed in Lolo’s views too. When he teases his wife Flutura about her Albanian citizenship he perceives the latter in terms of the ideology of nation-states. His position of having a Greek passport and permanently living in Albania reveals the hierarchy of citizenships, with Greek being superior to Albanian. On the one hand Lolo acknowledges hegemonic discourse surrounding “*Alvanos*” that is present in the media and the economic and political circles in Greece and elsewhere (for negative attitude and stereotypical discourses in the media of Greece see Kretsi [2002], de Rapper [2002], Mai and Schwandner-Sievers [2003]). On the other hand Lolo’s irony and his own example of changing the citizenship after the fall of communism illustrate his manipulation of the citizenship within the bureaucratic norms and constraints of international politics.

His understanding could be interpreted through Herzfeld’s definition of social poetics, for which he states that “norms are both perpetuated and reworked through the deformation of social conventions in everyday interaction” (2005: 37). In the light of Herzfeld’s view, Lolo’s irony shows how the concept of the citizenship, which is constructed through the state ideology, is generated and managed by Lolo. Moreover, within the interplay of political,

bureaucratic and economic mechanisms of both nation-states (Albania and Greek) Lolo manipulates his citizenship in the way that brings him utility<sup>89</sup>. The meaning of the citizenship is neither fixed nor stable. But in spite of that, his way of managing the citizenship is done within the framework of the state ideology. Thus, looking from this point of view Lolo does not reconstitute Greek and Albanian citizenship in a creative manner – in terms of Herzfeld’s conceptualisation creativity, which implies changes. Although Lolo manipulates his citizenship in the way that brings him advantages (free crossing of the Albanian-Greek state border, free education for his children, health care and other social benefits he enjoys in Greece, for example) he still lives it and does not change it in a “creative” manner, regardless of what he thinks about it.

In the part of her Notes on the Balkans, where Green (2005: 124) discusses the cynicism and the nation-state ideology in Pogoni, she suggests that people reproduce the state’s ideology, not despite of cynicism but *because* of it. Green suggests that when contradictions and oppositions are messily constituted in everyday life, the notion of Herzfeld’s poetics is often insufficient to explain the change in one’s attitude towards the state. The state’s ideology – “definitional” and “legalistic” – is insinuated through its political, bureaucratic, and economic “teeth”. Lolo’s irony shows the way in which he reproduces the state’s ideology of citizenship. In his joke he acknowledges this ideology as “fantasy”. The way he lives and reproduces it, however, illustrates how in his everyday life this “fantasy” has “teeth”.<sup>90</sup>

The hegemonic understanding of the “state” (*kratos*) can be discerned also in Kiqos’ differentiation between *horiani* who are *apo ton topos* “of the place” and *kseni* who are “out of place”. Kiqos is convinced that marriages should take place between the local people, people “of the place”. Marrying outside the village represents a danger for the village to become more “Albanian”. He sees his natal village as a place that will be in the near future populated mainly by “*Turkos*” (pejorative for Albanians). He considers the “state” as the main authority and the main force behind these intentions to make Dhërmi/Drimades more Albanian. Similar to Lolo, Kiqos equates the citizenship with nationality and defines it as the elementary, basic prerequisite in construction of individual identity. By conceptualizing identity alongside with nationality, Kiqos evokes nationality as something “that has existed

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<sup>89</sup> As the Greek citizen and registered farmer in Greece Lolo will after retirement receive the farmer's pension according to OGA social system rules.

<sup>90</sup> For an extended discussion on the state’s ideology as “fantasy with teeth” in Greece see Green (2005: 124-125) and in Turkey see Navaro-Yashin (2002).

since ever”, even before the nation. Along with the state’s ideology Kiqos reproduces the nationhood as something “natural”. His way of reproduction of the state’s ideology is thus another example of reproduction of “fantasy” with political, bureaucratic and economic “teeth”.

In the same manner he recalls the names of the neighbouring bays and stony planes which he considers to be Greek. Consequently, one could assume that the whole coastal area belongs to Greece. When Vangjelis provides some additional names and corrects him by putting the toponyms in a new order he exposes the discrepancies in his account. In their discussion, however, both Kiqos and Vagjelis reconstruct the coastal area according to their own identity and belonging, which are nevertheless guided by the ideology of a nation-state.

### **4.3. The Summer Season**

During the summer months the life in the village turns upside down. This usually happens at the beginning of August. The main road from the border pass Kakavia to the village of Dhërmi/Drimades is suddenly jammed with cars. A number of people return from Greece to spend August on Dhërmian/Drimadean coast, to rest and enjoy their vacation and to celebrate the Assumption Festivity (*Panayia* or *Mikri Pashka* on August 15), while the restaurant and bar owners try to earn as much money as possible. Their earnings (estimated at 15.000 – 20.000 Euros per summer season individually) during the summer season enable the owners of tourist facilities on the coast to live throughout the year and continuously improve their facilities.

Those emigrants-tourists, of whom one or both parents originate from Dhërmi/Drimades, mainly populate the southern side of the small stream *Potami*, where the gravel beach is wide and open. Among them one can find a few other tourists coming from different parts of Albania, while the majority of them nevertheless occupy small bays on the northern side of *Potami*. With the growing number of tourists and the absence of communal service, the number of dumpsites along the roads and clearings<sup>91</sup> rises and the rubbish becomes an important issue.

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<sup>91</sup> In Dhërmi/Drimades dumpsites are situated mostly near inhabited areas, on the sides of the roads, in empty building plots, near streams or in bush clearings. People burn the garbage approximately two to four times per

One summer afternoon I spoke to Athina, who was born in 1948 in Tirana and is married to a local man originating from Dhërmi/Drimades. Athina and her husband Andrea met in Tirana where they studied Pedagogic. Until January 1991 they lived in Tirana and worked as primary school teachers. Later they migrated to Athens together with their two sons and a daughter. The first three years they lived together with Andrea's elder brother and his family. The men worked as construction workers and women as home cleaners. When Athina and Andrea earned some money, they bought a small apartment in the suburbs of Athens. They moved there together with their sons while the daughter got married and moved to live with her husband whose both parents originate from Dhërmi/Drimades. In 2000 Athina and Andrea returned to Albania while their sons stayed in Greece. Athina and Andrea settled in Dhërmi/Drimades in the old house of Andrea's father. A year later, with the help of their savings from Greece and remittances sent by their sons, they built a small hotel on the coastal plains of the village. Athina told me the following about the rubbish on the coast:

In the previous years the municipality received money from the state so that they would take care of this problem, but they didn't do anything. Following numerous arguments and appeals for something to be done about the garbage removal, they finally set up a service that collected the garbage from the hotels and restaurants on a daily basis. As there was no service in the previous years, my husband drove the garbage away in our car. Every morning he collected all the trash, put it in black bags, drove off and threw them away somewhere on the outskirts of the village. Where else could he leave it? The road to our small hotel was built with our money. Can you imagine how this place used to look like? The road was not asphalted, holes and rocks everywhere. You couldn't drive down the road with a car. So we had to hire workers to level the road with their machines. Their work was expensive, but what were we to do? We were among the first to offer tourist services on the coast, so the expense was practically all ours. Now we share the costs with our neighbours. If possible, of course. Who will help us, if we, the locals (*i horiani*), do not help ourselves? We cannot expect any support from the state. Regarding the municipality of Himara, they would have to deal with their envy first, then we could maybe expect some help. Regarding tourism, Drimades became their competition during the last two years, so they obviously decided to give us a hard time. Last year they cut us off from electricity in the peak of the season, stating that there was a system overload. They refused to collect the garbage saying that this kind of municipal service is too expensive for Drimades. Now when a number of locals revolted against this, they have taken a step back and become more helpful.

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year. At those times plastics and other low-degradable materials cover the village with a foul smelling smoke. Dumpsites on the coast are located similarly as those in the village.

Anastas, whose parents originate from Dhërmi/Drimades, also owns a tourist place on the coast. His understanding of the responsibility for the rubbish disposal was rather different from Athina's. Anastas was born in 1970 in Korçe. In December 1990 he immigrated to Greece together with his parents and two sisters. The first couple of years they lived in Trikala where they all worked as gardeners. In 1994 Anastas moved to Athens where he studied tourism and management. After completing his studies he worked as a tourist agent in the tourist agency in Patras. In 2000 he moved to Dhërmi/Drimades.

Because Himara is a politically problematic municipality (*zona e problemeve*), the state policy is not to invest into its infrastructure. This is the reason why the roads are full of holes and rocks. It is a similar case when it comes to electricity and garbage disposal. We also lack a proper medical service in this area, thus we can not guarantee safety to our tourists. Another problem is the unreliability of the public transport system. Traffic safety is also an issue. These are all important reasons why we cannot offer our place and services to foreign tourists. Basically, the municipality of Himara never gets sufficient funds from the state budget, thus we cannot afford to develop proper tourist facilities and services. The money we get is not sufficient to deal with all of the problems at the same time. The development initiative is left down to us, *i horiani*, it depends on our work and cooperation. I prefer to cooperate with my troublesome neighbour than let the state take my land away from me. I hope that better times will come soon, as we are promised help from certain international institutions. For example, in 2007 the World Bank plans to implement a pilot project of renovating old houses in Drimades. We cannot expect this kind of help from the state, as they don't like us because we are Greeks. This is something they cannot tolerate.

Fjoralba met her husband in Elbasan where they both studied agronomy. In 1997 they tried to immigrate to Italy and join Fjoralba's brother in-law and his family who lived there since 1991<sup>92</sup>. Because they had problems acquiring visa they had to stay in Albania. In 1995 they moved to Berat where they rented a restaurant. Because of a low income they had to close it down. Later they decided to try their luck on the coast of Dhërmi/Drimades.

I feel very strange here! I am in Albania, but I feel like a fugitive. I do not know what is wrong with these people, but they speak Greek all the time. Besides, they only listen to Greek music and they want to serve foreign tourists only the Greek food – such as Greek salad and *tzatziki*. It is terrible and shameful that they cannot offer tourists some typical Albanian dishes. For example, when foreign tourists wanted to try something typical for this area, I couldn't offer them anything, as the owner of this restaurant does not want me to cook traditional Albanian food. I was embarrassed, when tourists

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<sup>92</sup> Fjoralba's brother in-law immigrated to Italy during the first mass emigrations of Albanian citizens to southern Italy in March 1991. The Italian authorities accepted 25.000 Albanian emigrants as refugees and settled them in various parts of the country. A few months later, after the first democratic elections in Albania, the second mass movement of Albanian citizens followed. This time most of them, around 20.000, were sent back to Albania as the Italian authorities no longer recognized them as refugees (cf. Vullnetari 2007: 32).

asked me if Greek and Albanian cuisines are the same. Of course they are not. But here people love everything that is said to be of Greek origin.

People here are really strange, for they behave as if they were very important. Especially men, who do not work at all, like our barman for example. He is asleep all the time and whenever guests arrive, I have to serve them with drinks. But now I decided that I will no longer support his laziness. These men (the men from Dhërmi/Drimades) are only capable of sitting, smoking and drinking, while their women have to work. I really cannot understand this! If they do not feel like working, why do they run such businesses? I do not understand their strange and not even slightly civilised character. *Fshatarët* (peasants)! Besides, they are very dirty. Did you see where they throw their garbage!? Into the bushes on the other side of the road. Just like pigs! If I was a tourist, I would never eat in this restaurant. It is disgusting to eat near somebody who is throwing garbage behind your back. I really regret coming here. I do not feel well here and I can't wait to leave this place at the end of the summer season.

During my stay in Dhërmi/Drimades I also met some tourists from other parts of Europe. Apart from a group of tourists from Israel, who spent two days in Dhërmi/Drimades, I also met one tourist from Germany, two from Hungary, and six from England. In the village I met a couple from France who were looking for the church of Saint Mary which was mentioned in a tourist guide they bought in one of the book shops in Vlorë<sup>93</sup>. They enjoyed travelling around Europe, considering it as a kind of a hobby. They were told about Albania by their friends who work in one of the NGO's based in Tirana. The husband said:

I like the Southern Albanian coast, especially the villages in Himara area. My wife and I stayed in Saranda for a few days, but we did not like it as much as we like it here. It is greener here and it is not as crowded with big hotels and restaurants like in Saranda. You can stay on the beach and enjoy swimming or take long walks along the coast and see some of the churches. If you want, you can go up to the village and see the magnificent old houses and churches with wonderful frescoes. The only bad thing here is the rubbish. I have noticed that the locals are careless regarding this issue; they throw it just about everywhere. Amazing! [*smiling*]

A group of young people, two women and three men with whom I spoke while they were on the beach, had a different view on the rubbish and pollution issue. All of them were in their early twenties and born in Greece to emigrant parents originating from the village. None of them could speak Albanian. They were students of economy, construction engineering and pharmacy. One of the girls explained her views with the following words:

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<sup>93</sup> The original title of the tourist guide in English is "Vlorë. Itinerary, Services, Beaches, Mountains, Caves, Mysteries and Unknown Stories, the People and the Food". The guide was edited by Renato Novelli and published by Italian Cooperation UNOPS-PASARP.

We really enjoy our visits to the village in which our parents were born and our grandparents live. As we love our village it is unfortunate that we cannot come here for longer than twenty five days. We have spent our summer holidays here since ever, although we live in Greece. Drimades has a gorgeous beach and fabulous sea. But there are more and more *Alvani* here every year. We are not used to this, because it was not so long ago that only *horiani* spent their holidays on the coast. Now there are more and more of Albanians. Look at them (pointing towards a group of young men sitting next to us)! *Mavri san gifti* (black as Gypsies). They throw their rubbish everywhere and they pollute our beautiful sea. They are not ashamed about that at all.

#### **4.3.1. Rubbish as “the matter out of place”**

During the month of August, when with growing numbers of population also the quantity of rubbish increases, debates and negotiations over who is responsible for the rubbish and who should clean the coast become an important issue. Through these debates, the narrators like the ones presented above reconstitute and reorder the social space of Dhërmi/Drimades in an even more contested way than Ariadne, Kiqos and Vangjelis do.

Following Douglas, dirt and rubbish on the coast of Dhërmi/Drimades are part of the social and spatial ordering and classification that is based on rejecting the “inappropriate elements”, which are considered to be “out of place”. Along with the definitions of what is “inappropriate”, the “appropriate” or “of the place” is being formed. Debates about dirt and rubbish that went on in summer 2005 illustrate how the meanings of “out of” and “of” the place continuously shift according to the social and cultural context of the speaker.

Following her past experiences in Greece, Athina, who originates from Tirana and is married to a “local” man from Dhërmi/Drimades, emphasises the contradictions between local people, the “state” and the local municipality. Similar contradictions are described by Anastas, the official of Himarë/Himara municipality, who returned to his parents’ natal village after some years of living in Greece. Anastas considers the “state” or the Albanian government as responsible for the inappropriate cleaning of the coast. Anastas finds one of the reasons for the government’s irresponsibility in ethnic tensions of the local people and the government’s disapproval of their pro-Greek feelings. The seasonal worker Fjoralba of Berat discusses the issue of rubbish from a somehow different viewpoint. In contrast to her expectations to earn some money on the Albanian coast, she is faced with the Greek-speaking people among whom she is not welcome. Following her negative experiences with the local owner of the hotel where she works, she criticises the local peoples’ use of Greek language and their



“inappropriate” treatment of foreign tourists to whom they serve Greek food and play Greek music. When complaining about the “locals” whom she calls “peasants”, Fjoralba defines the locals as the people “out of place” in contrast to her and other Albanians who are perceived as the people “of the place”. The tourists from France come from a different social and cultural environment and in contrast with the rest of my co-speakers do not refer to this kind of differences. The coast of Dhërmi/Drimades is only one of the stops on their travel through southern part of Albania. In prizing the beauty of the Dhërmian/Drimadean coast they see the rubbish and the coastal people’s carelessness as inappropriate and as a matter “out of place”. Last but not least the group of local emigrants who live in Greece and spend their holidays in the village where their grandparents live, blame the “black” and “dirty” “Albanians” who are throwing rubbish on “their” coast. Following their life experiences from Greece where they are bombarded with stereotypes about improper behaviour<sup>94</sup> of Albanian emigrants, which are promulgated by the media and in the public life in general, the local emigrants constitute differences between them as the “locals” and the others as “Albanians”.

Debates and negotiations over dirt and rubbish on the coastal plains of Dhërmi/Drimades illustrate that the social differences between *horiani* and *kseni* and the split between them are complex and contingent. Namely, the narratives show that being *horianos* or being a *ksenos* is a rhetorical claim about one's position within a network of social relations. Thus for example Kiqos’ critique of Flutura’s actions shows how he considers her as a dirty and careless *ksenos* while Kosta and Ariadne consider her as one of them. Though they would not refer to her as *ksenos*, they definitely do not consider her as dirty as Kiqos does. Ariadne and Kosta are in contrast to Kiqos good friends of Flutura and her husband.

In a similar manner the group of young emigrant-tourists can claim to be *horiani* in contrast to the Albanian tourists who are considered to be dirty. A different categorisation of the term local is expressed by tourists from France who see not only emigrant-tourists and other tourists from Albania and Kosovo but also tourist workers and owners as careless locals who are dumping rubbish everywhere. In terms of Gupta and Ferguson being local is a relational achievement, a part of the process and construction of community and its place. The differences between *horianos* and *ksenos* are not fixed as the meanings of these very notions continuously shift according to the social situation.

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<sup>94</sup> See, for example, Georgia Kretsi (2002), Gilles de Rapper (2002), Mai and Schwandner-Sievers (2003).

Dirt and rubbish have history. As illustrated in the chapter about the history, Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara area were subjected to various divisions of people and places throughout the centuries. These divisions were enforced by different political administrations, which were gradually reproduced and mediated through the peoples' daily life. A lack of fit between different ways of categorisations (especially Ottoman and national) resulted in ongoing discords that are nowadays presented by the local people of Dhërmi/Drimades in their claims for local distinctiveness. The debates presented above show how the concept of locality is relational, contextual and constituted in opposition to the concept of the "foreigner" who is considered to be "out of place". Namely, local emigrants define themselves as locals who belong to the coastal places to which they return almost every summer. In opposition to the "locals" who are regarded as being "of the coastal place" they put the "foreigners", the "Albanians", who do not belong to the coastal place.

Besides the "local" and the "foreigner" the meanings of dirt and rubbish on the coast of Dhërmi/Drimades involve contradictions – in terms of responsibilities – between the local community and the individual and between the state and the local community. The contradictions between the communal and individual responsibility for the rubbish can be explained by the process of transition from the collective cleaning actions promoted during the times of communism and the individual responsibility for these "actions" after its fall. The collective cleaning activities (such as cleaning of streets, paths, city-centres, villages, etc.) that were initiated by the Labour Party were based on promoting the unity and homogeneity amongst the individuals as well as on creating their feeling of engagement with and responsibility for "their" neighbourhood and country. Cleaning activities were one of the means of the "state apparatus"<sup>95</sup>, which was promulgating the idea of the "national homogeneity". While on the one hand this idea was based on the unity of people and places, on the other it presupposed the differences between them<sup>96</sup>. After the fall of communism and

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<sup>95</sup> See Althusser (1980 [1977]).

<sup>96</sup> Thus, for example, based on the Enver Hoxha's idea to elide the difference between "developed" south and "undeveloped" north of Albania, the autocratic leader enhanced the population movement between the north and south of Albania. Though the in-country movements were strictly controlled and directed (while the movements outside the state-borders were strictly forbidden and any kind of violations were punished) numerous people of Dhërmi/Drimades moved to bigger cities (Julie Vullnetari, Sussex Centre of Migration Issues, personal communication). Movements were more easily allowed to young and preferable single Greek-speaking individuals for the purposes of the education of youth that took place in the volunteering working projects (building Railways, bridges, hydro-electric power plants, etc).

introduction of democracy this ideological hegemony of national unity and equality, for many continued to be generated and mediated through representations and practices of people's daily life while for others it became questionable. Thus, for example when Athina and Anastas and partly also Ariadne complain over the careless "state", which does not take care for the rubbish disposal, they put forth their own, individual responsibility for the cleaning of the coast. Neither Athina nor Anastas do not expect and hope for a financial help from the "state" and rather see a solution to their problems in their individual responsibility as well as in international funding sources such as The World Bank.

The co-speakers also emphasize the contradictions between the "state" and the "local community". Their debates, which are grounded in their different social and cultural backgrounds, show how the unity and homogeneity that were promoted in the period of communism are generated through their understandings of the "state" and the "local community". Both are debated as if they were entities defined upon the common language, territory, customs and habits of the people living within these entities. For example, when agitated Fjoralba complains about the local peoples' use of Greek language and their serving of Greek food and music to tourists from abroad, she constructs the meaning of "Albanianess" as a homogeneous entity *per se*. When expressing her feelings of disgrace over the local owners who throw the rubbish into the bushes, she sees the local owners as people "out of place". Anastas and the group of young emigrants represent their "locality" in a similar way to Fjoralba's understanding of "Albanianess". They equalise it with "Greekness" of the people of Dhërmi/Drimades and define it as a homogeneous entity too. Overall, both narratives illustrate that in their views and representations of the rubbish on the coast Fjoralba and Anastas generate and mediate the ideas of equality and homogeneity of members, grouped either under the concept of the nation-state or under the concepts of "locality" and the locals (*horiani*).

#### **4.4. Summary**

This chapter illustrates how debates and negotiations about rubbish disposal are based on the interactions between the people who construct the differences that sometimes evoke the contradictions between local people, emigrants, seasonal workers, Albanian and foreign tourists. These social differentiations are constructed along with the spatial boundaries.

Together they define the meaning of the tourist coast of Dhërmi/Drimades. The coast is divided between its northern and southern part. The former leads to the north of Albania and mainly conjoins the owners of tourist facilities and other tourists from Albania and abroad. The latter leads towards Greece and conjoins the local owners and emigrants. The same spatial boundaries are also constructed through ongoing debates of who is “out” and who is “of” the place or better who is foreign and does not belong to the coast and who is local and belongs to the coast of Dhërmi/Drimades.

Spatial and local reconfigurations on the coastal plains of Dhërmi/Drimades indicate that “tourist place”, “tourism”, “tourists” and “locals” are not immutable categories. Rather they are relational configurations as people in the given historical, political, economic, social and cultural contingency continuously negotiate and shift their meanings. The encounters between locals, tourists, visiting emigrants, and others – along with their fierce debates over dumping – point towards the raising claims and negotiations over who is “of” the place and who is “out” of it. As I have already argued the tourist coast of Dhërmi/Drimades is the place where these very same claims and negotiations construct the tourism and tourists’ landscape which has to the people who claim to originate from Dhërmi/Drimades simultaneously become the source of their spatial belonging and locality.

Similarly to the stories about ancestors’ travels over the mountains and the sea (see Chapter Three), continuous negotiations and contradictions about dumping of the rubbish also show how the “whereness” of the village is constituted according to spatial hierarchy and vice versa. As I have mentioned in the Introduction and later, different administrative, political and economical delineations of people and places have influenced their lives over centuries and they have also continued to reproduce them themselves. With the opening of the Albanian-Greek state border and the ensuing massive migrations these delineations were exposed not only in terms of national differences but also in terms of economical and infrastructural differences between both countries. The latter were generated by and throughout people’s lives on the both sides, the Greek and the Albanian. As Green (2005: 228) suggests: “Since Albania had been communist and Greece had not, Greece was axiomatically more ‘Western’ than Albania. An elision between ‘modernization,’ ‘Westernization,’ and capitalism, as if each axiomatically implied the others, led to the widespread assertion that Greece was more ‘modernized’ than Albania”.

These differences between the “modern” Greece and “backward” Albania can also be observed in people’s negotiations over the rubbish on the coast. Moreover, the very same differences serve as the basis for local tourist facilities owners and emigrants to construct the spatial hierarchy, which defines the locatedness of Dhërmi/Drimades and forms their identity. Lolo’s and Flutura’s example shows how this hierarchy is lived and enacted even in marriages where spouses hold different citizenships. While this seem of no significance in everyday life (except on rhetorical level, e.g. Lolo’s cynicism), it becomes quite important when Flutura wishes to cross the border together with her husband Lolo and their children in order to visit their relatives in Greece. In her wish to cross the border with her family she becomes a subject of the state control. In this way the state asserts its power to name people and to control their movements in a transnational world.

## CONCLUSION

*Complexity is intrinsic to both the ethnographic and comparative enterprise. Anthropologists are concerned to demonstrate the social and cultural entailments of phenomena, though they must in the demonstration simplify the complexity enough to make it visible. What appears to be the object of description – demonstrating complex linkages between elements – also makes description less easy.*

*(Strathern 2005[1991]: xiii)*

The central aim of my thesis was to illustrate and explore the complexity which arises from continuous construction of space in the village of Dhërmi/Drimades in Southern Albania. Studying this subject from a close perspective shows that the meanings of the village are complex, diverse and multi-layered. They depend on historical and political eras, social relationships, and people's self-identification within them. The erosive terrain, "uneven" topography, ambiguous demographical data, numerous versions of names of people and places, contested historiographies, people's expression and suppression of memory revealed through their narratives, their daily practices and frequent movements, all map the village space in plurality of ways. Local people, historiographers, demographers, geomorphologists, lawyers and politicians try to resolve many ambiguities and pin down the "facts". This "common truth", however, is soon questioned and seemingly solid entities are either quickly discarded or strongly opposed by some other, also seemingly solid entities. They spin off each other like hard and round billiard balls (Wolf 1997:5).

The meanings of notions such as the "local" (*horianos*) and the "foreigner" (*kseños*), the "Greek" and the "Albanian", outside (*okso*) and inside (*mesa*), in front (*brosta*) and behind (*pišo*), "of the place" (*apo ton topos*) and "out" of it, are changeable, contextual and contingent. Something that is considered local can in the next moment and in a different context quickly become foreign and vice versa. Greek can become Albanian and Albanian can become Greek. What is "of" the place can also be "out" of it. The rhetorical claims of people living in the village and those returning to it illustrate how the meanings of the village, defined through their everyday practices, perceptions and conversations, are multivoiced.

These multiple voices are revealed through people's stories presented in Chapter One. They tell us about how the size of Himarë/Himara area has changed through centuries; how names of the villages and people have always been ambiguous and changeable; how people's self-declaration can change; which languages were present and how they were intertwined; how numerous the chapels and religious practices are; how population can be counted and categorized in opposing ways; and how understanding of kinship, its inclusion or exclusion, can also change. All these stories are similar to the remembrances of older villagers: they map different kinds of village locatedness. The stories are caught in a continuous process of (be)coming. Therefore, they escape fixed and closed categories, which different political and economical administrations or even people themselves, are trying to impose.

Chapter Two tries to uncover the history in order to relate this unpredictable changeability to its historical context. The history is today, in post-communist Albania, redefined through a process of re-writing the past. All of the ambiguities regarding people's names and place names, minority issues, belonging and locatedness of the village become in this way a part of single-mindedness, a subject of unifying view of the past, which serves to reach the goals of the present time. An overview of historiographers' works (especially those published during last seven years), which either represent a pro-Albanian, pro-Greek or pro-local points of view, shows us how these historiographers try to situate the village on a historical and geopolitical map of nation-states. Their discourse shows that they conceptualize nation-states as solid entities, which divide people according to their language, territory, and national belonging since ever.

Changeable numbers, self-declaration and village names find their unity and singularity in national categories, which were enforced upon people's lives during the times of communism. The three-meter high, high-voltage fence has at that time clearly marked the state border, not only on the political map of Europe, but also in everyday life of the people, who were exclusively defined as either Albanian or Greek. When the state border cut the road in half the movements and travels between both parts of the area were firstly obstructed in 1913 and then completely stopped after 1945. Although peoples' movements continued, they changed their direction towards the interior of the country.

I have shown throughout my thesis that the construction of space is continuous and irreversible process. People of Dhërmi/Drimades themselves participate in this construction

with their movements, story-telling, remembering, and management and manipulation of different issues such as land ownership or rubbish disposal. The biographies of most of my interlocutors show rich itineraries of migrations to different places, firstly in Albania and then in Greece or elsewhere. Chapter Three shows how movements and migrations of story-tellers are in many ways a duplication of their ancestors' movements. Through their remembrances, which are in Ingold's (2000) words forged with words and embedded in the perception of the environment, people constantly reconstitute the environment and at the same time their own memories. Ingold defines the environment as "the world as it exists and takes on meaning in relation to me [*the human, NGB*], and in that sense it came into existence and undergoes development with me [*the human*] and around me [*the human*]" (2000: 20). In his view the stories reveal the story-tellers' perception of the environment and themselves in it. Stories are constituted in this interrelation and "find their way" (develop) together with the environment and the story-teller.

Referring to de Certeau (1984), Ingold suggests that story-teller maps the process of (be)coming in the very act of recounting the story. I tried to exemplify this process of (be)coming through the stories told by the elderly villagers. To show the continuity and irreversibility of the process I analysed them according to de Certeau's theoretical perspective of continuous transformation of places to spaces and vice versa. I also tried to analyse the process of (be)coming and the construction of places and spaces through Green's (2005) conceptualisation of spatial hierarchy and its interrelation with "whereness". The figures were drawn in order to illustrate the ways of mapping the village and other places in time and space. The figures show different variations of "whereness". The "whereness" of places appears changeable, with borders and boundaries being porous and fuzzy. This goes for local boundaries which map the landscape, as for the state borders, which divide Albania, Greece, Italy, United States or Yugoslavia. Story-tellers consider mountains as the boundary between the village and Albania and the sea as the boundary that opens and leads towards Greece. They condition the national understanding of borders with the spatial understanding of boundaries and vice versa.

The interweavement of space and place in relation to hegemonic understanding of the nation-state is illustrated in Chapter Four. I focus on younger generation comprised of local tourist facilities' owners, emigrants, and tourists, who come to the coast of Dhërmi/Drimades in summer months. The social and spatial boundaries here are constructed around the practical



or technical issues of rubbish disposal. When people shift the responsibility for this on the neighbours, “Albanians”, “locals”, local community, municipality or the nation-state, they at the same time construct these boundaries. This process creates a kind of order, within which people place their agency. Contradictions and conflicts, seen as both products and producers of differentiations between “us” and “them”, are part of power relations, where each individual tries to assert his understanding about the meaning of place and in such a way determine the “where” of the village. This process results in formation of spatial hierarchy, which significantly contributes in formation of individual’s identity. The latter is then either located in the village or removed from it.

The chapter shows complexity and fragmentation of power relations between individuals on the coast. In general we can discern two related perspectives: one on “micro” and another on “macro” level. When the local emigrant Kiqos, for example, differentiates between him and the “Albanians”, he creates the “order” on the “micro” level. He emphasizes individual and partly local responsibility for dirtiness of the coast and the village. He forms his identity through this process of differentiation between “Albanians” and *horiani* and places it on the spatial map of the coast, asserting his right of ascribing the meaning to the village and the coast. He declares himself to be a local, *horianos*, a concept akin to “Greekness” and opposite to “Albanianess”. Simultaneously with the formation of his identity, he constructs the village and the coast. By using toponyms, for which he claims are of a Greek origin, he locates the village on the geopolitical map of nation-states. This is the “macro” level of his understanding of space and place. His understanding of the latter is on the one hand generated through his biography and on the other hand reproduced according to political, economical and administrative “forces”, which shape the borders and the view of the world at large.

Considering the statements and stories told by elder generation of villagers (Chapter Three) and younger generation of local emigrants and tourist facilities owners (Chapter Four), it seems that the meanings of the village and its locatedness – or the “where” of the village – are redefined through individual experiences and people’s perception of the state border between Albania and Greece. Elderly people in this regard redefine the “whereness” according to closure of the road and/or prohibition of travel over the border. In contrast, younger generation redefines the “whereness” of the village according to the later times and the reopening of the border.

## Silent Stories of Communism

Historiographers' notes and my informants' stories imply that the closure of the state border has somehow also closed the access to the communist past in Dhërmi/Drimades. When I summarise the historiography of this period for the area of Himarë/Himara (Chapter Two), illustrate the content of the stories about the paths of the ancestors, recalled by elderly villagers (Chapter Three), or look at negotiations about the responsibility for trash disposal on the coast (Chapter Four), one thing emerges: the absence of recollections from the period of communism. On the other hand, however, if I analyse this absence, the presence and impact of communism can be seen and read between the lines of written and oral accounts and statements. It seems that communism was and continues to be powerful in its presence exactly because of its absence on the surface. The absence is only a latent one. Communism is mapped into the landscape in a more silence manner, telling its story through visible objects from that period: mushroom-like bunkers, destroyed buildings (e.g. Hotel Dhërmiu), abandoned plantations of citruses and olive trees, and fading inscriptions "*Pionirët e Enverit*" on some of the walls. The bitter story of communism lies behind all these witnesses of the past; it can be glimpsed at in statements such as those of Lefteria's husband and elderly ladies: "Even Enver Hoxha said that he was not interested in politics and he asked us how we live and what we eat. But eventually he sent us all to prison!" Stories of communism also show their traces in particular places mapped by story-tellers, in negotiations over rubbish disposal, and in Anastas' story about the lack of modernization.

The absence of stories from the period of communism indicates how the era of closure and repression is still alive in the minds of especially older villagers. The power of communist authority, enforced by the figure of Enver Hoxha, permeating people's daily routine (prohibition of movement outside the state borders and control over movements inside them, collectivization of land, national homogenization and unification of people), is now replaced and represented by the ruling political party. Although its power to certain extent influences people's everyday praxis, it is nevertheless disclosed in a quite different way. Today villagers have to face repeating electrical blackouts and water supply shortages, numerous migrations, minority issues and regionalisms such as locality, special policies regarding the issuing of visas and Special Cards for aliens of Greek origin, denationalization and collectivization of those parts of the coast, which look promising for the development of tourism, constant

demands for the acknowledgement of the need for a local Greek school, etc. Although more than a decade has passed since the changes occurred in the political system and globalisation (or glocalisation) became visible in majority of larger cities like Tirana and Durrës, it seems that the feeling of no control, poverty, uncertainty, and lack of trust in political elite or the “state” (*to kratos*) remains. Although political power has dispersed from the singular autarchic authority to plurality of ruling political elite, the old autocracy is still present in minds and experiences of ordinary people in the village. There is a feeling that nothing really changed, although the system itself experienced a radical change from communism to democracy. The “eye” or the “eyes” of political, economical and bureaucratic control are still “up there” (*apo apano/nga larg*), where elderly villagers see the ruling political elite. These panoptical eyes, to use Foucault’s (1975) expression, linger. They control and “spy” upon their everyday life.

The system has changed. Some people moved out, other came in. But the powers, which divide and categorize people and places, remain. People of Dhërmi/Drimades have a feeling of permanent intrusions of different kinds of power into their lives. This is probably the main reason why stories about communism are still absent at the present. I could notice this myself when my “eyes” too were considered to be the eyes of the state or perhaps of some other international institution, at least at the beginning of my fieldwork.

### **Contested or Related?**

The aim of my analysis was to show the process of unstable reconstruction of space and place in Dhërmi/Drimades, which produces on the one hand differences and contestations and on the other hand similarities and interrelations. Some authors (Bender and Winer 2001, Low and Zúñiga 2003) have in their studies of this process of unstable, messy and fragmented construction found that spaces and places are inevitably contested, negotiated and subjected to revolts. As I have suggested in Introduction and shown later on through examples of remembrances of elderly villagers, demography, religion and kinship, the meanings of spaces and places are not so much contested as they are ambiguous. In their ambiguity these meanings are continuously shifting according to the context and those involved. Contestedness only appears when different forces – political, economical or social – try to categorize these ambiguities and define them as clear and firm entities. The unstable construction of space and place is therefore not always contested; its contestedness is not

inevitable or predefined, as some authors suggest. In my view it is more appropriate to examine spaces of contestations or contradictions. Spaces and places are not contested by themselves and in themselves, but always by somebody and for somebody, while somebody else lives and perceives them as perfectly reconciled. For example, the “Greek pensions”, which the majority of elderly people in the village receive, may seem disputable to the village teacher who comes from Labëria, while the local people see them as welcoming assistance from the Greek state, which enables them to survive in these places (Chapter One).

The contestations and contradictions, which define spaces, places and people in the process of their constitution, are part of the process of (be)coming, which beside differences also reveals connections between people and places. As shown in the chapters, people define spaces and places in interrelation with other spaces, places and people. The endless movements and travels of villagers throughout their history define the village and differentiate it from spaces and places that lie across the sea and over the mountains, in Albania, Greece, Italy and United States.

The contestedness and connectedness of spaces and places in Dhërmi/Drimades has three major contexts. The first is related to movements and migrations of people through places; the second to distinctions and divisions of people and places; the third to power relations, which define places and people. For the people of Dhërmi/Drimades movements, travels and migrations are constant activities throughout their history. Only their direction, frequency and dynamics change. These factors are influenced by administrative, political, economical and social delineations of people and places, which form the relations of power, constructing the spaces and places for people who then form their identities within them. According to Lefebvre (1974), de Certeau (1984), Ingold (1993 and 2000), Gupta and Ferguson (1997), who replaced the study of spaces and places perceived as closed entities with the study of processes of their construction, space and place have no clear centre. They do not follow the logic of Euclidian rules. Centres and peripheries change their positions and constantly reconfigure themselves. As Appadurai (1996: 46) suggests, today’s world is fundamentally fractal, it lacks Euclidian boundaries, structures and regularities. Instead of that, irregular fragments fluctuate from centres to peripheries, which can change their positions (cf. Green 2005).

I have shown in my thesis how the delineation of the state border in 1913 has affected local peoples' lives only when borders were finally closed 32 years later. The period of communism was important for the people of Dhërmi/Drimades. The power of the autarchic leader and his state redirected all outside movements to movements within the country and changed their tactics and dynamics. The villagers' movements or lack of movements were no longer based so much on economical relations, but more on enforced homogenization of population and the spread of the idea of one nation and one nation-state. When 1990 brought a reopening of the borders, movements and migrations reappeared again, especially over the land border with Greece and across the sea border with Italy. Dynamics of migrations in this area has changed too, with massive migrations leaving desolated villages behind them. Transnationalism, globalisation and regionalism, promoted by the model of supra-states – such as the European Union – are now inseparable from the understanding of the processes of construction of space and place in Dhërmi/Drimades. Emigrants keep their ties with their natal places and influence the construction of “whereness” of the village every time they return to the village. This “whereness” is defined according to spatial hierarchy, which in the present times gives priority to economical influences. The “Greekness” is in this view related to modernity and “Albanianess” with modernisation (with yet absent modernity but with discussions about the need to modernise) (cf. Green 2005: 230). As Kiqos' example shows, the configuration of power is changeable and contextually contingent.

It has already passed 123 years since Nietzsche (1884) wrote the famous statement that “God is dead”. This was supposed to signify a break from traditional structures and laws to a process of (be)coming. In this kind of flow of change power is no longer established according to a principle of stable centres and peripheries, but changes according to the principle of fractals. The main principle, which underlies the relations of power and configurations of spatial hierarchy in today's villages, towns, and cities across Albania, Europe, and many other parts of the world, is probably the principle of economical well-being and the capital that precedes the logic of the nation-states.

My thesis has attempted to show how the “where” and the “who” of Dhërmi/Drimades vary according to the historically, politically and economically shaped context. The period of post-communism and its socio-economic changes with mass migrations have exerted a significant influence on the reconstruction of people's sense of “home”, their belonging, locality and locatedness in relation to Dhërmi/Drimades. Individuals on the one hand manage and

manipulate ideological divisions of the nation state, while on the other hand they reproduce and redefine them through their narratives and rhetorical claims. This is how they construct societal and spatial divisions (e.g. sea vs. mountains or *horianos* vs. *kseños*). In present times, the process of reconfiguration of named divisions is additionally influenced by the globalised economy, development of informational technology, and the appearance of geo-political economical ideology of the “supra-state” (the European Union). Following these kinds of changes, local people no longer define themselves so much in terms of the nation state – as being Greeks or Albanians – but more in terms of regional identities within the framework of European Union, which favours regionalisms against nationalisms (Harvie 1994, cf. Green 2005: 219). According to this, many local people of Himarë/Himara and Dhërmi/Drimades in particular declare themselves as Himariotes, belonging to Himarë/Himara as an independent and distinctive place, which they try to situate on the geopolitical map of European Union (e.g. see the website [www.himara.eu](http://www.himara.eu) ).

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1



The villages of Himarë/Himara municipality: Palasa, Dhërmi/Drimades, Ilias, Vuno, Qeparo, Kihës and Pilur.

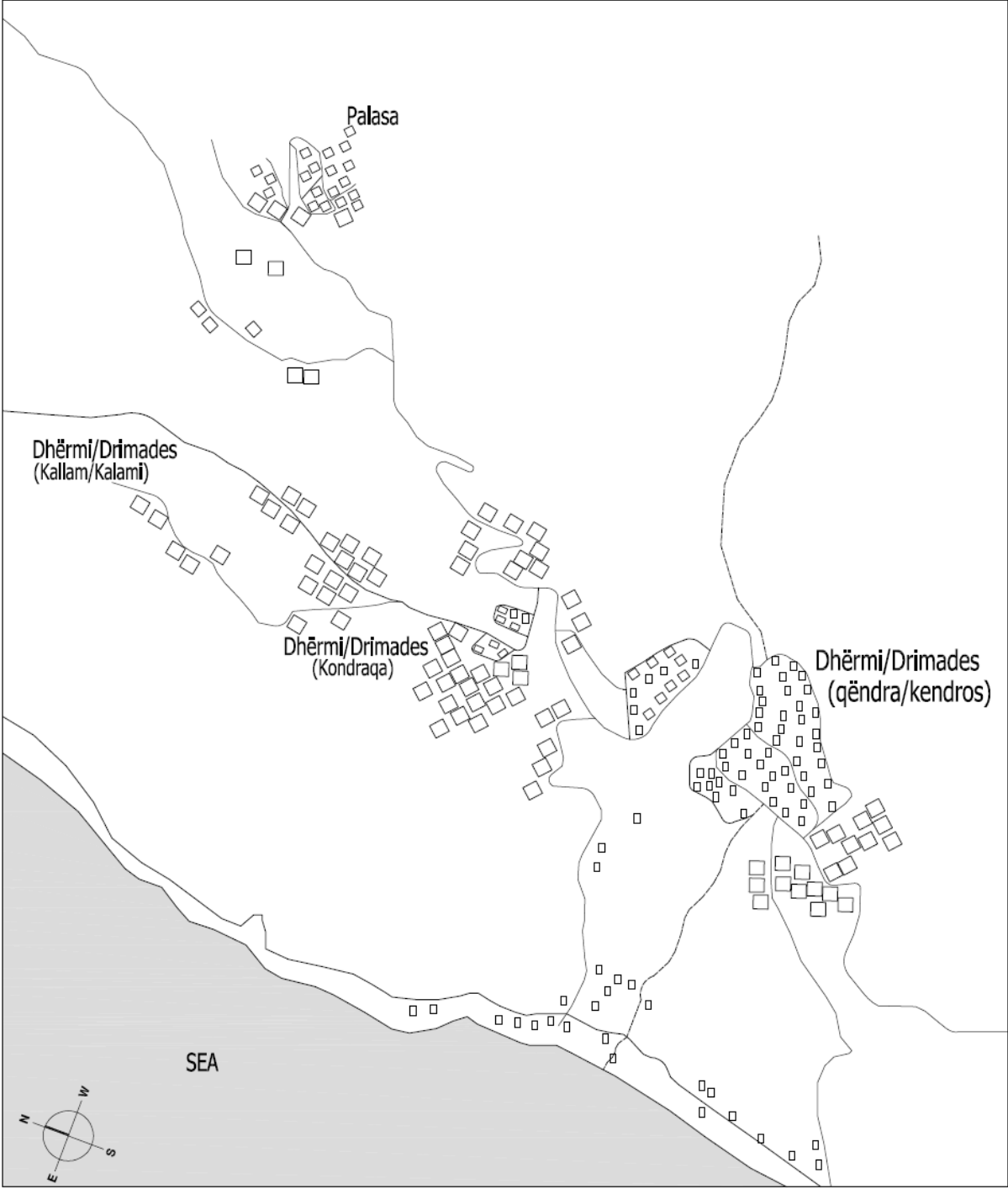
## Appendix 2



Himarë/Himara municipality with the commune of Lukova ([www.himara.eu](http://www.himara.eu)).



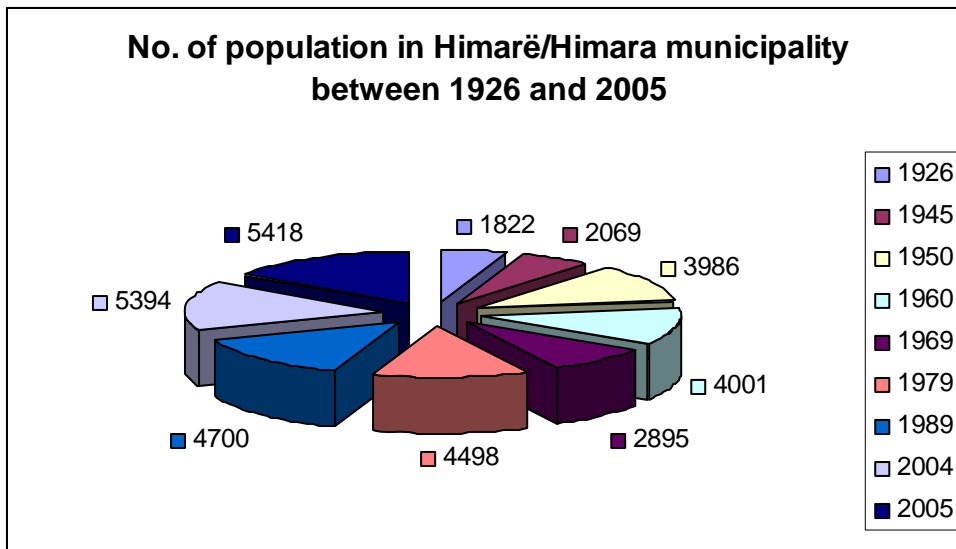
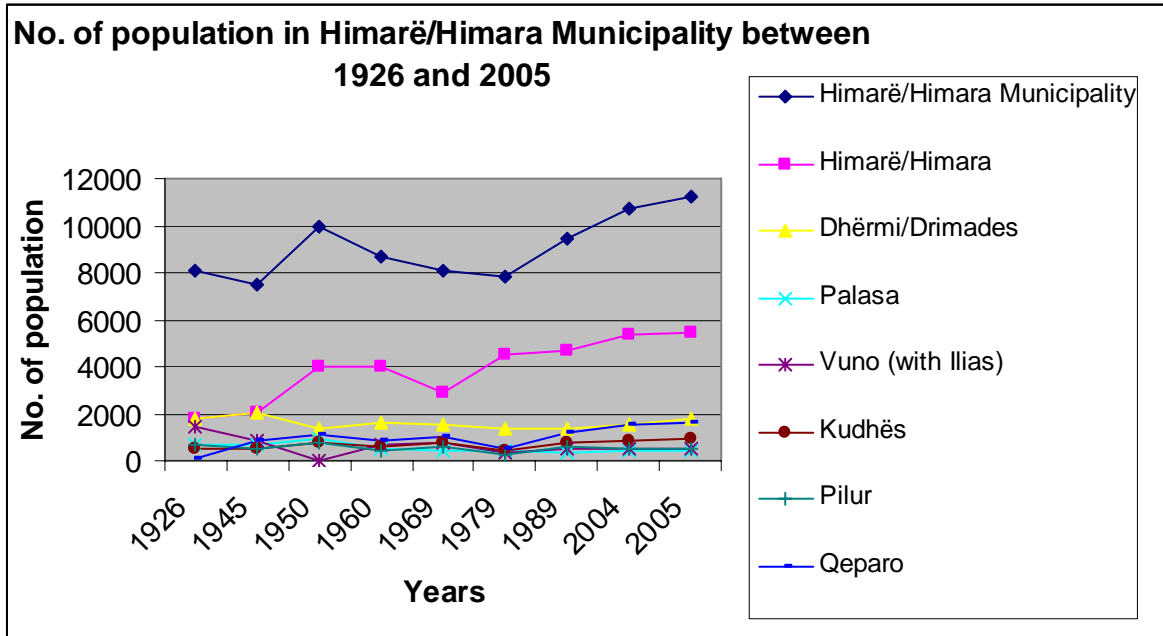
Appendix 3



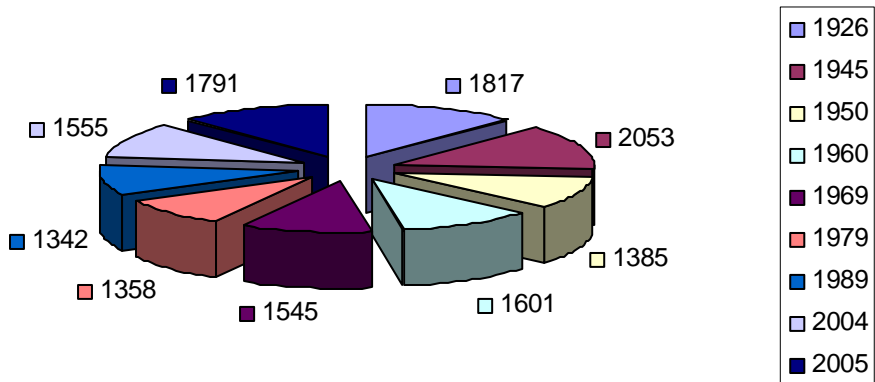
The neighbourhoods of Dhërmi/Drimades: Kallam/Kallami, Kondraqa, Qendra/Kendros.

Appendix 4

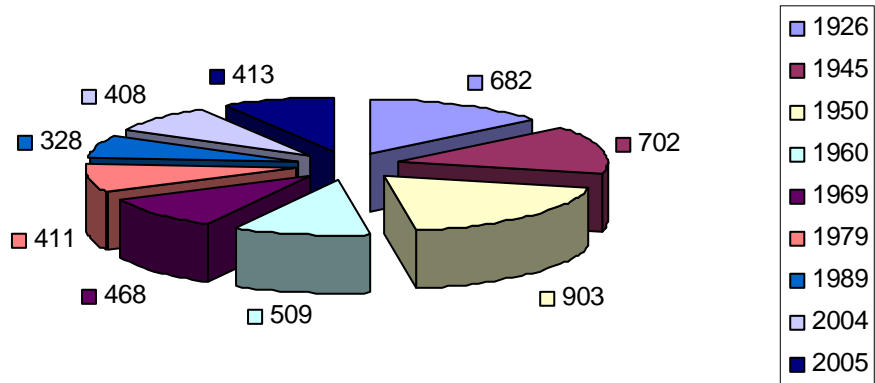
Number of Population in Himarë/Himara Municipality between 1926 and 2005 (INSTAT 2005).



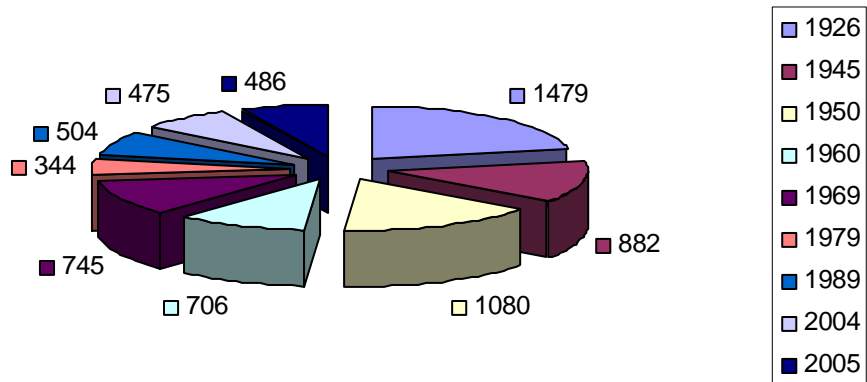
**No. of the population in Dhërmi/Drimades between 1926 and 2005**



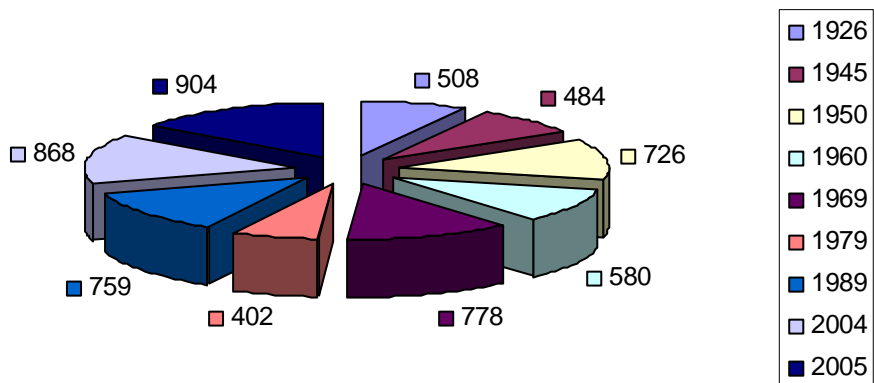
**No. of the population in Palasa between 1926 and 2005**



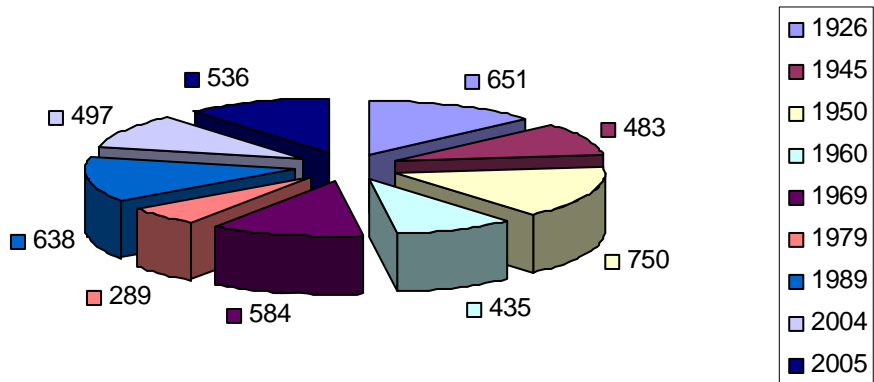
**No. of the population in Vuno and Ilias between 1926 and 2005**



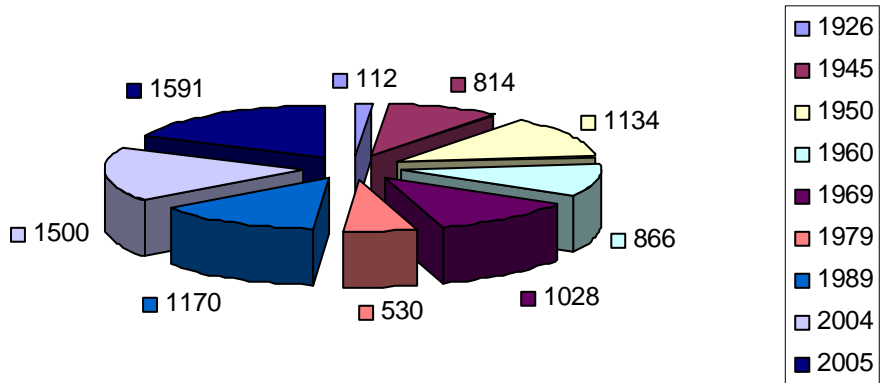
**No. of the population in Kudhës between 1926 and 2005**



**No. of the population in Pilur between 1926 and 2005**



**No. of the population in Qeparo between 1926 and 2005**



**LAW no. 7501, dated July 19, 1991**

**ON LAND**

- Updated through Law 7983, dated 1995 -

On the basis of Article 16 of Law no. 7491, dated April 29, 1991, "On the Main Constitutional Provisions", upon proposal by the Council of Ministers,

**PARLIAMENT**

**OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA**

**DECIDED :**

**Article 1**

Land in the Republic of Albania is classified as follows:

- a) Agricultural land occupied by field crops, fruit plantations, vineyards, and olives wherever they may be and irrespective of size, in the countryside, in the cities, or other residential centers.
- b) Land occupied by forests, pastures, and meadows.
- c) Non-agricultural land occupied by economic and socio-cultural buildings, military units and the area around them; land occupied by dwelling houses and their courtyards, land for general use (streets, highways, airports, railways, squares, parks, gardens, sports grounds, cemeteries); rocky areas, coastal sandy areas, beaches; water areas (lakes, reservoirs, ponds), various canals, rivers, streams, river-beds, swamps; areas with historical or archaeological buildings and monuments, and all the other lands not included in points "a" and "b" of this article.

**Article 2**

The State gives land to physical or juridical persons. They enjoy the right of ownership on land and all other rights envisaged in this Law.

**Article 3**

Agricultural land is given in ownership or in use to national, juridical or physical persons without remuneration.

**Article 3a**

Owners of agricultural can rent land to local or foreign physical or juridical persons.

When renting agricultural land, the provisions of Civil Code regulating the lease contracts must be applied.

#### **Article 4**

Foreign individuals or legal entities can rent land to build on and for other economic activities. The purpose and terms of use are defined by special contract.

The rent of the land is to be established upon assessment of the purpose of use, location and other economic conditions, in conformity with the criteria set by the Council of Ministers.

#### **Article 5**

Upon division of the land, families that have been members of the agricultural cooperative have the right to secede and operate on their own, becoming owners of the agricultural land pertaining to them from the organization of which they were members. The Land Commission defines the size and location of this land.

In the hilly and mountainous zones where peasant families cannot get the necessary minimum of agricultural land, the State shall take measures to guarantee them other sources of livelihood through subsidies, increase in investments for the employment of people, social assistance, and the legal movement of people based on a program established by the Council of Ministers.

#### **Article 5a**

Community Land Commissions must submit the land distribution documentation to the District Cadastral Land Office, according to the provisions and criteria specified.

#### **Article 6**

Families that reside in the countryside but are not members of the agricultural cooperative, as well as those that work and live in agricultural enterprises, have the right to receive agricultural land for use, the size of which is determined by the Council of Ministers.

#### **Article 7**

Account Government Land Commission attached to the Ministry of Agriculture, land commissions at the district council, land commissions in communes, and land commissions in villages are set up for the distribution of land in ownership or for use to juridical or physical persons, and for the elimination of the recently created confusion in this field.

The Council of Ministers shall define the rights and duties of these commissions.

#### **Article 8**

Size or boundaries of land given as ownership or for use to juridical or physical persons under prior collective ownership arrangements are no longer recognized.

### **Article 9**

The Cadastral Office in each district is the state agency specialized in the registration of all information regarding land.

### **Article 10**

Land that is given as ownership or for use to any juridical or physical person is registered at the Cadastral Office. Any change after the first registration is also registered in the Cadastral Office.

When the issuance of a land tapi in a village is completed and a physical or juridical person refuses to receive it, that person shall be officially notified in writing within 15 days from the completion of issuance of the tapi to present and receive it. If, in one month after the date of receipt of notification, that person refuses to take the tapi, or takes it but declares in writing the dispossession of land, that person shall lose the right to have the land as ownership or for use. In these cases the land shall be made available to the State.

### **Article 11**

Physical or juridical persons who have received or will receive arable land in ownership or for use are required to use it solely for agricultural purposes, to preserve and increase the productivity capacity of land, and to systematize and build constructions for protecting land.

### **Article 12**

The owners and users of agricultural land are obliged to protect the irrigation and hydroelectric projects, their installations and equipment. No owner or user has the right to prohibit other owners and users from using these installations and equipment.

Agencies of local government institutions have the right to settle disagreements.

### **Article 13**

Dwelling houses, economic, social, cultural, and any other type of facility shall be built within the yellow bordering lines defined by city planning.

Land for construction shall be given with or without remuneration according to the criteria set forth by the Council of Ministers.

It is prohibited to build any type of project outside the settlement boundary lines without a special decision of the respective authorized institutions.

The value of the land is included in the total value of construction and assembly.

### **Article 14**

The construction of buildings and other projects for agricultural and livestock purposes is allowed on agricultural land according to the rules set by the Council of Ministers.



### **Article 15**

Any juridical or physical person who has received land for use and does not use it for purposes of agriculture or raising livestock within one year is deprived of his right of use of the land.

### **Article 16**

When any juridical or physical person, who receives land as ownership or in use for purposes of construction or for other economic activities, does not respect the term of the completion of the project according to the prior agreement, that person shall be obliged to pay an amount equal to the average annual rent of the land.

### **Article 17**

Any industrial refuse, mineral refuse, or water with a chemical content harmful for agriculture must be channeled and gathered in special places in order to protect the land and the plants, prevent the pollution of water, and so as not to endanger the life of the people, animals, and birds. The location of such places and the area where a project is to be built needs prior approval. If such approval is not given, no construction or functioning of the project shall begin.

The depositing or burying of any type of locally produced or imported waste is prohibited.

### **Article 18**

When a draft proposal and area of construction is approved by the respective agency, the land is considered given as ownership or for use to those who carry out the construction, but not before three (3) months of work has begun. The change in the cadastral entry shall be made when construction work begins.

### **Article 19**

The State may deprive any juridical or physical person of the right of ownership or use of agricultural land when the State needs to use it for different purposes, on the basis of approval by the respective agency. When the State occupies land, which is the property of juridical or physical persons, the State is obliged to replace it with another equal parcel of land or, if this is not possible, to recompense the investments made and the real value of the land. The court has the authority to resolve disputes relating to the amount of money that must be reimbursed.

### **Article 20**

Individuals or entities that cause damage to fruit plantations, olive trees, vineyards, or agricultural crops in economic, social, cultural, or other buildings shall compensate the owner. The amount of compensation shall be set by the executive committee of the district people's council on the basis of the real value of damage.

The court shall settle disagreements on the amount of compensation.

## Article 21

Agencies of local governments shall prohibit, within their respective jurisdictions, the occupation or usage of land that is in contravention with this Law or other respective sub-legal acts.

The eldest of the village, the land distribution commission for the time it is functioning, cadastral officials, urban planning officials, and police officers are all required to make denouncements when they observe physical or juridical persons occupying, damaging, or constructing land contrary to this law.

Owners and users of land who have already received the tapi for the land have the right to make denouncements concerning violations of the Law.

Denouncements are made by declaration submitted, within 2 days, to the council of the commune or municipality wherein the violation has taken place.

The council of the commune or municipality must then be assembled within 15 days after receiving such denouncement, to decide for either:

- a) the release and return of land to its former condition within 3 days;
- b) the destruction of the object constructed illegally within its territorial land and the return of the land to its former condition within 5 days;
- c) a fine of 5 lekë per square meter; or
- ç) compensation for the economic damage caused, to the physical or juridical person who owned the land or had been lawfully given the land for use.

Items "a" and "b" must be applied in situations where there is a modification of the cadastral item as agricultural land. In these situations, the offender has to meet the expenditure for the return of the land to its prior condition. Items "c" and "c," must be applied in cases of illegal occupation of land for agricultural purposes.

When this land has not been distributed, the compensation is given to the municipality or commune.

The decision of the council for the commune or municipality is a final executive order.

For the execution of the council's decision according to points "c" and "ç", when the offender does not pay the fine voluntarily, the enforcement office at the district court is charged to make the execution of the decision within 15 days.

Institutions of public order, in their respective jurisdictions, are obliged to execute the decision of the council of a commune or municipality within 5 days.

When the offender is a resident of another jurisdiction, then the bailiff of the court of the district where the offender is resident is required to execute the decision.

The Ministry of Justice is obliged to hire enforcement officers as needed in each district in order to properly execute decisions.

When the offender ignores the decision made according to the administrative measures provided by this article, the council of the commune or municipality shall take the case to the district's court.

### **Article 22**

When a third person occupies or damages land, the owner or user of that land has the right to appeal to the court.

### **Article 23**

Persons who act in contravention of the dispositions of this law and the special dispositions of the acts of the Council of Ministers on this question; who do not take protective measures; who do not bring the land back to use within the term set in the contract; or do not inform the land survey office on time regarding the changes in the state of the land they own or use without justified reasons, shall be charged by the head of the land survey office in each district a fine ranging from 2000 to 5000 lekë for administrative offense, unless these violations constitute penal acts.

An appeal may be lodged against the sentence within 10 days from its proclamation or notification to the head of the executive committee of the district people's council, the decision of which is final.

Persons who, in contravention of legal dispositions, occupy, damage or misuse land in any form, shall be prosecuted according to the dispositions of the Penal Code.

### **Article 23a**

When a Land Commissions member acts in contravention to article 5a of this law and other legal and sub-legal acts for the completion of land distribution documentation, all members of the community Land Commission shall be charged with an administrative offense and be subject to a fine ranging from 2000 to 5000 lekë, depending on the level of responsibility, unless these violations constitute penal acts.

The head of District Council, as the chairman of District Land Commission shall determine the fines. This decision is indisputable.

The District Land Commission has the right to indict for criminal action the chairman or secretary of the community land commission if they fail to submit the proper documentation after the administrative punishment.

### **Article 24**

The Council of Ministers has the authority to define criteria for the division, registration, change, transfer of ownership, evaluation, and leasing of land; as well as tasks of the Cadastral Office.

### **Article 25**

Agricultural land given as ownership on the basis of this Law is inherited according to the legal dispositions on inheritance, forthcoming.

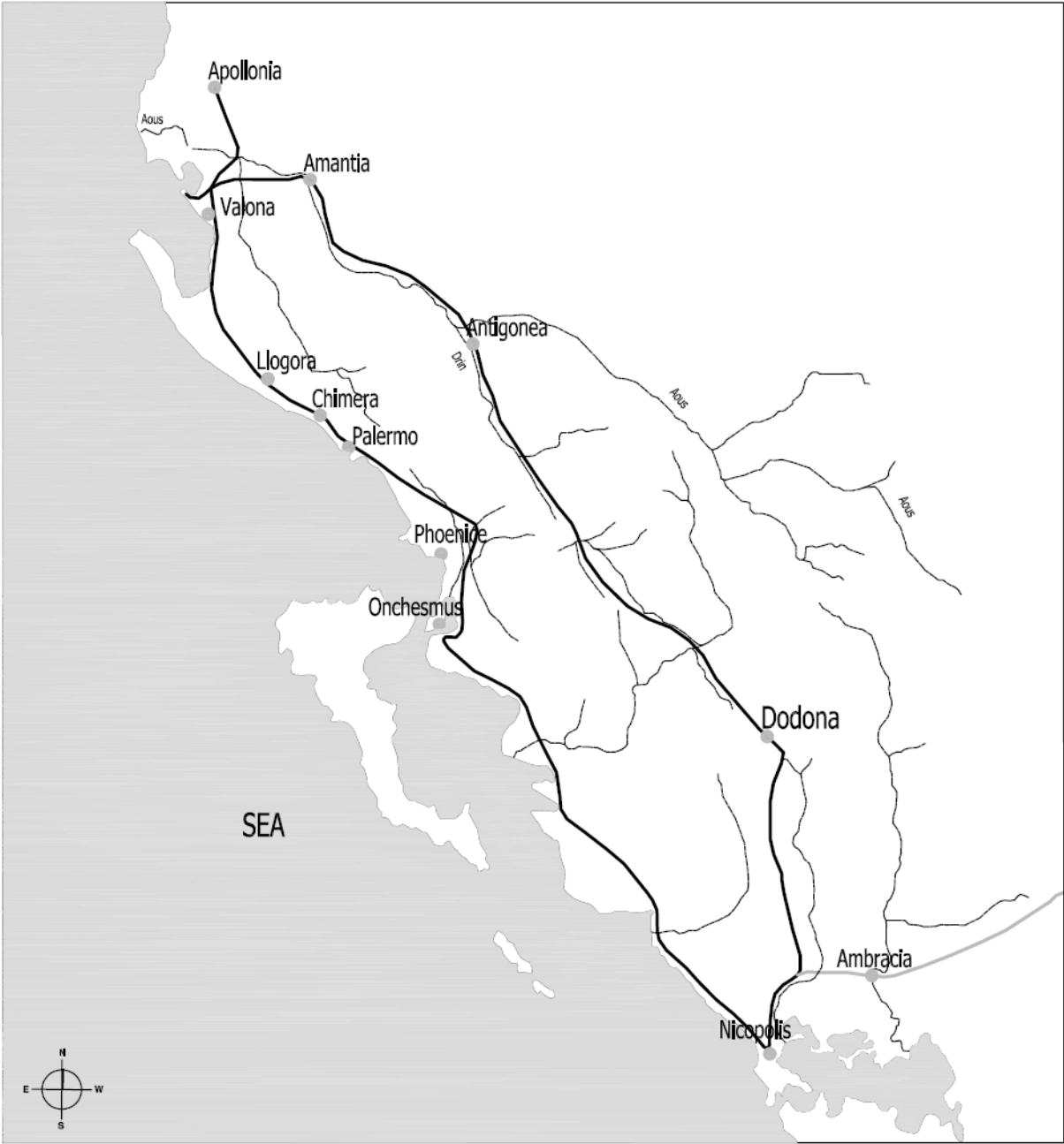
### **Article 26**

Law no. 5686, dated Feb. 21, 1987 "On Protection of the Land", as well as all other sub-legal provisions in contradiction to this Law are repealed.

### **Article 27**

This law comes into force immediately.

Appendix 6



The road *Via Egnatia*.

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## SUMMARY

## POVZETEK

### **Sporni prostori in vzpostavljanje identitete v vasi Dhërmi/Drimades občine Himarë/Himara, južna Albanija**

V pričujoči doktorski disertaciji obravnavam nenehno in nestabilno rekonstrukcijo prostora ter kraja v vasi Dhërmi (uradno, albansko ime) ali Drimades (lokalno, grško ime), v občini Himarë/Himara v južni Albaniji. Delo temelji na enoletnem (od decembra 2004 do decembra 2005) etnografskem terenskem delu v omenjeni vasi. Vsebina naloge raziskuje procese rekonfiguracije in redefinicije pomenov, ki se nanašajo na vas ter njene prebivalce. Skozi biografije lokalnih prebivalcev, govornjene zgodbe o preteklosti vasi, retorične izjave in vsakdanji diskurz, raziskava prikaže, kako je pomen vasi in lokalnih prebivalcev rekonstruiran skozi njihova gibanja in stike z drugimi kraji in ljudmi. Eno izmed osrednjih vprašanj dane raziskave obravnava, kako ljudje skozi proces nenehnega potovanja, selitev in stikov z drugimi ljudmi in kraji poustvarjajo in reproducirajo pozicijo vasi, njihovo umeščenost v vas ter nenehno vzpostavljajo svojo identiteto.

Že samo dvojno ime Dhërmi/Drimades razkrije prva dvoumja, ki prepletajo vaški prostor. Uradno, albansko ime Dhërmi je večinoma v rabi pri tistih prebivalcih in sezonskih delavcih, ki v vsakdanjem pogovoru pretežno uporabljajo albansko južno (tosk) ali severno (gek) narečje. Številni med njimi so se v vas preselili z drugih območij Albanije v obdobju komunizma (1945–1990) in še posebej po njegovem razpadu. V nasprotju z uradnim imenom pa je lokalno ime Drimades večinoma v rabi le v vsakdanjem pogovoru vaščanov, ki glede na njihove opredelitve “izvirajo” iz vasi. Slednji pretežno uporabljajo lokalno grško in deloma tudi južno albansko (tosk) narečje. Lokalni prebivalci, povratniki, izseljenci, priseljenci, sezonski delavci, zgodovinopisci, demografi, geografi, politiki in drugi pripisujejo vasi in nje prebivalcem različne pomene. Le-ti, so med seboj povezani in se skozi procese lokalne, regionalne ter nacionalne (družbene, politične in zgodovinske) konstrukcije in rekonstrukcije prostorov ter krajev neprestano spreminjajo. Zaradi tega procesi nenehne in nestabilne konstrukcije prostorov in krajev v vasi Dhërmi/Drimades predstavljajo temeljno izhodišče pričujoče disertacije.

Tako danes, kot tudi v preteklih tisočletjih, so se na območju današnje občine Himarë/Himara vzpostavljale selitve in potovanja. Relativna erozivnost terena, pomanjkanje rodovitne zemlje,

ekonomske, družbene in politične spremembe, so bile v preteklosti in tudi danes ostajajo temeljni vzrok selitev. Ena izmed redkih razlik, ki se vzpostavlja med preteklim in današnjim načinom potovanja je, da se slednja poslužujejo modernih prevoznih sredstev, so pretežno uravnavana s pomočjo potnih listov in viz ter potekajo preko geopolitičnih meja. Na eni strani potovanja in selitve prinašajo številne povezave med ljudmi in kraji, na drugi pa preko administrativnih (na primer razmejitev v obdobju Otomanov od 15. do 19. stoletja ali Schengenski sporazum med polnopravnimi članicami Evropske unije v 21. stoletju) in političnih delitev (na primer formacija nacionalnih držav v 19. stoletju ali pa pojav sodobnih regionalizmov, ki jih promovira Evropska unija) ljudi in krajev (na kategorije, kot so na primer jezik, religija in teritorij), prinašajo tudi številne razlike. Namen naloge je prikazati kulturno, družbenopolitično in zgodovinsko dinamiko konstrukcije prostorov in krajev, ki so vselej v procesu nastajanja. Medtem ko se na eni strani pomeni prostorov in krajev porajajo skozi razlike in nasprotovanja, se na drugi vzpostavljajo skozi stike in podobnosti med nacionalnimi in lokalnimi, pa tudi med širšimi družbenimi procesi, skozi katere lokalni prebivalci Dhërmija/Drimadesa opredeljujejo svojo pripadnost in lokalnost.

V prvem delu **uvoda** naloga izpostavi vrsto teoretskih pristopov pri študiji prostora, ki so v zadnjih letih zaznamovali družbene vede in humanistiko. V svojem pristopu še posebej sledim avtorjem, kot so Lefebvre (1991 [1974]), de Certeau (1984), Ingold (1993, 2000), Tilley (1994), Appadurai (1996), Gupta in Ferguson (2001) idr. Slednji pojmujejo prostor in kraj kot neprestano proizvedena in poustvarjena ali skozi zaznave, razumevanje in živeti prostor (Lefebvre 1991), ali skozi prerazporeditev moči, ki prežema vse družbene ravni (Foucault 1975, 1980), ali skozi vsakdanje prakse in prostorske operacije družbenih akterjev, ki ne le izvajajo temveč tudi interpretirajo ter si prilaščajo kulturo na sebi lasten način (de Certeau 1984), ali pa navsezadnje skozi bivanje, kjer je védenje o okolju enako gibanju v svetu (Ingold 2000)<sup>97</sup>.

Za razliko od naštetih avtorjev, pa Gupta in Ferguson (2001 [1997]) umeščata študij prostorske produkcije in rekonstrukcije v današnji svet poznega kapitalizma, številnih selitev in transnacionalnih kulturnih tokov. Avtorja zanimajo načini, v katerih so prevladujoče kulturne oblike izbrane in uporabljene znotraj polja odnosov moči, ki vežejo določeno lokalno

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<sup>97</sup> Poleg omenjenih avtorjev so tudi še številni drugi avtorji, ki opredeljujejo prostor kot proces nedokončane konstrukcije. Ta proces obravnavajo skozi različne zorne kote, kot so: kognicija (Hirsch in O'Hanlon 1995), občutki ali zaznave (Feld and Basso 1996), identiteta in lokalnost (Lovell 1998), spomin in zgodovina (Stewart in Strathern 2003).

skupnost s širšim svetom (Gupta in Ferguson 2001: 5). V študiju pomena kraja in moči poudarjata “kompleksne in včasih ironične politične procese, skozi katere so kulturne oblike vsiljene, umišljene, predelane in preoblikovane” (prav tam). Gupta in Ferguson poudarjata, da sta prostor in moč vzajemno prepletena. Potemtakem, ljudje in kraji niso zaprte in homogene entitete ter da njihova lokalnost ne more biti opredeljena kot ukoreninjenost v določenem kraju. Lokalnost pomeni, da je “nekdo umeščen v določen kraj in da je pomen tega kraja različen in nasprotujoč pomenom ostalih krajev”. (Gupta in Ferguson 2001: 13). Med procesi konstrukcije kraja, lokalnosti in identitete se vzpostavlja vzajemni odnos. Po njunem mnenju so procesi konstrukcije vselej sporni in nestabilni, saj vključujejo diskontinuiteto, odpor in spremembe. Pomeni kraja in identitete družbeno konstruirani in zato so vselej v procesu nastajanja.

Vaščani Dhërmija/Drimadesa v vsakdanjem diskurzu različno poimenujejo prostor in kraj. Zato ju obravnavam kot različna, a hkrati tudi povezana procesa. Koncept kraja (*topos/vëndi*) uporabljam tedaj, ko se nanašam na družbene interakcije, izkušnje in prakse, medtem ko koncept prostora (*horos/hapsirë*) uporabljam v terminih abstrakcije ter širše družbene in politične konceptualizacije življenjskega sveta posameznikov.

Naenehne selitve, povezave in administrativne delitve ljudi in krajev so konfigurirale različne pozicije Dhërmija/Drimadesa in širše okolice. Imenovane pozicije so definirane v interelaciji z drugimi ljudmi in kraji, skozi katere lokalni prebivalci potujejo in se selijo. Tako v obdobju otomanske administracije, kot tudi kasneje s formacijo albanske nacionalne države so se ljudje selili in potovali, sprva širom otomanskega *vilayeta* Janina in kasneje širom teritorija južne Albanije in Epirja v Grčiji. Medtem ko pred obdobjem komunizma državna meja ni predstavljala dejanske ovire v njihovem načinu potovanja in selitev, je po letu 1945 postala za prebivalce Albanije pojmovana kot bariera. Predvsem za prebivalce, ki so živeli v območju še danes veljavne državne meje, je bodičasta ograja, ki je zapirala in “varovala” državno mejo, jasno sporočala njeno neprehodnost. A kljub temu so se selitve ljudi skozi posamezne kraje nadaljevale. Medtem ko so prej potekale preko državne meje, so bile v obdobju komunizma nadomeščene s selitvami znotraj albanske meje. Selitve so ostale, spremenila se je le njihova smer, ki je tokrat potekala znotraj državne meje.

Selitve in potovanja, ki so se odvijala v različnih zgodovinskih obdobjih, so vzpostavila in definirala različne pozicije Dhërmija/Drimadesa in širšega geopolitičnega ter družbenega

prostora. Ko lokalni prebivalci, nacionalni in mednarodni politiki, lokalni in nacionalni zgodovinopisci skušajo "utrditi" in določiti "absolutno in resnično" pozicijo vasi, naletijo na dinamičnost, premakljivost, spremenljivost pozicije vasi. Številni poskusi vzpostavitve meja in določitve pozicije vasi, ki se nahaja bodisi v Albaniji bodisi v Grčiji, bi lahko bili opredeljeni kot neuspešni in pogosto sporni poskusi vzpostavitve statične lokacije, ki bi le »navidezno« ustavila proces rekonstrukcije in poustvarjanja pomenov prostora.

Dandanes zaradi množičnih izseljevanj v Grčijo in vračanj v rojstno vas lokalni prebivalci Dhërmija/Drimadesa znova opredeljujejo in umeščajo vas na geopolitično karto sveta. Na ta način lokalni prebivalci reorganizirajo svoj prostor. Vas umeščajo na družbeni zemljevid, kjer se nahajata Grčija in Evropska unija. V nasprotju z Evropsko unijo pa opredeljujejo in umeščajo Albanijo, katere mejo pomikajo severno od območja Himarë/Himara. V tovrstnem kartiranju se nenehno vzpostavlja hierarhija krajev, kjer se moči in kraji dinamično in vzajemno konstituirajo v odvisnosti od zgodovinsko naključnega, politično oblikovanega in družbenega konteksta. Prav tovrstno hierarhijo in način njenega vzpostavljanja, ki v Dhërmiju/Drimadesu pogosto iziva neskladja in spornost pa obravnava vsebina disertacije.

V drugem delu uvoda v strnjeni obliki predstavim nekatere avtorje (Herzfeld 1991, Henry 1994, De Soto 2000, Bender in Winer 2001, Gupta in Ferguson 2001, Ballinger 2003, Low in Zúñiga 2003), ki trdijo, da dinamična konstrukcija prostorov in krajev vključuje nestabilnost in spornost. Njihove predpostavke temeljijo na spornih prostorih, ki se porajajo v različnih družbenih in kulturnih kontekstih. Ti konteksti se večinoma nanašajo na urbana mesta, kraje in pokrajine v razvoju, na selitve, razmestitve, izgone ali kraje in pokrajine, ki so predmet postsocialističnih ali postkolonialnih sprememb. Študije procesov konstrukcije kraja in prostora naštetih avtorjev se osredotočajo na prostorske reprezentacije dveh ali več družbenih skupin, ki rekonstruirajo in redefinirajo kraje v neposredni povezanosti s formacijo identitete, ponovnega pisanja zgodovine in rekonfiguracije odnosov moči. Številni avtorji opredeljujejo družbene skupine kot homogene (prim. Henry 1994, De Soto 2000, Bender in Winer 2001, Low in Zúñiga 2003) in le redki med njimi (prim. Herzfeld 1991, Ballinger 2003) izpostavijo razlike in spornosti, ki se porajajo znotraj posamezne družbene skupine. V študijah spornih prostorov (Low in Zúñiga 2003) ali pokrajin (Bender in Winer 2001) se avtorice sprašujejo le o njihovi sporni "naravi" in se ne osredotočajo na "naravo" družbenih praks in odnosov, ki se vzpostavljajo in so hkrati vzpostavljajoči del prostorov in pokrajin. V nekaterih primerih sta

avtorici (prim. Low and Zúñiga 2003) opredeljevali spornost kot že vnaprej dano, določeno in neizogibno.

V pričujoči obravnavi konstrukcije prostora in kraja v Dhërmiju/Drimadesu me predvsem zanimajo konteksti, v katerih se konstruirajo spornosti, pa tudi konteksti, v katerih dinamična rekonstrukcija prostora in kraja ne vodi v spore. Dano delo se poleg ukvarjanja z raznolikimi in spornimi pomeni, ki jih različni družbeni akterji pripisujejo krajem in prostorom, osredotoča tudi na med seboj povezane pomene, ki jih lokalni prebivalci razkrivajo v svojih zgodbah o selitvah in potovanjih skozi in med različnimi kraji preko morja in gora (tretje poglavje). V študiju družbenih in prostorskih interelacij se vsebina dela osredotoča tudi na procese konstrukcije in distribucije hierarhije moči, zaradi česar so določeni kraji in prostori v danem družbeno-kulturnem, zgodovinskem in političnem kontekstu opredeljeni kot bolj »glasni« in sporni, medtem ko drugi ostajajo v ozadju.

Namesto statičnih, v meje usmerjenih in rigidno strukturiranih oblik prostora in kulturnih oblik, naloga raziskuje dinamiko, kompleksnost in nestabilnost nenehnih procesov konstrukcije prostora in kulturnih oblik. Pri tem se nasloni na Appaduraijevo fraktalno metaforo oblikovanja kulturnih oblik. V skladu z Appadurajem procese konstrukcije prostorov in krajev ne obravnavam kot enosmeren temveč kot vzajemen in obojestranski proces.

V **prvem poglavju** naloga predstavi različne poglede – uradno, lokalno in celo antropološko – na vas in njene prebivalce, ki poustvarjajo pomene prostorov in ljudi. Ti pogledi v določenih družbenih, političnih in zgodovinskih kontekstih delujejo kot sporni in nasprotujoči, v drugih tovrstnih kontekstih pa kot povezani in včasih celo zabrisani in nejasni. Ljudje nikdar niso sami v svojih krajih in nikoli ne konstituirajo krajev kot krajev samih po sebi (prim. Green 2005: 90). Študije prostora in kraja so pokazale, da krajev ne določa njihova homogenost, temveč celota njihovih odnosov z različnimi ljudmi in kraji.

Poglavje se začne z zgodbo o območju Himarë/Himara, katerega velikost se je skozi stoletja neprestano spreminjala. Med 15. in 18. stoletjem je območje združevalo 50 vasi, sredi 18. stoletja 16 vasi in nenazadnje v 19. stoletju pa le še 8 vasi. Poleg števila krajev so se spreminjala tudi njihova imena in število prebivalcev. V zgodbi o geomorfologiji spoznamo položaj vasi med obalno ravnico in gorsko verigo ter izvemo za relativno visoko stopnjo

degradacije in erozije zemlje na tem območju. To je eden od razlogov ob številnih drugih zgodovinskih, socialnih in političnih, ki so botrovali nenehnim gibanjem ljudi in krajev.

Sledi zgodba o spreminjanjih imen, katerih pomeni so danes prežeti z različnimi nacionalnimi in lokalnimi interesi: progrškimi, proalbanskimi in prolokalnimi. V svojih številnih poskusih, da bi določili “prvo” ime vasi nacionalni in lokalni zgodovinopisci skupaj z lokalnimi prebivalci promovirajo ideji, da je njihov kraj “izvorno” pripadal bodisi Grčiji bodisi Albaniji. Obe razlagi v bistvu kažeta na njihovo pojmovanje nacionalne države kot nečesa “naravnega” in “avtentičnega” in ne kot nečesa družbeno in politično določenega.

Ob različnih načinih imenovanja se izpogojujejo tudi lastne opredelitve tistih lokalnih prebivalcev, katerih eden ali oba starša izvirata iz Dhërmija/Drimadesa ali območja Himarë/Himare. Različne konceptualizacije o tem, kdo je lokalni prebivalec (*horianos* ali tisti, ki je “iz kraja”), kdo pripada kraju in kdo ne, se oblikujejo v procesih izključevanja, konstrukcije “Drugega” in generiranja razlik. Te temeljijo na medsebojnih odnosih med ljudmi in predstavljajo del procesov nenehnih rekonfiguracij odnosov moči. Razlike in konstrukcija Drugega so po eni strani poudarjene in generirane v lastnih opredelitvah ljudi, po drugi strani pa so odrinjene ob stran v toku vsakdanjosti.

Zgodba o jeziku nam pove, da so prebivalci območja Himarë/Himara skozi tisočletja premikov ljudi in menjav oblasti (plemena Ilirov in Epircev, antični Grki, Rimljani, Bizantinci, Turki, kraljevina Zoga, Republika Albanija), v vsakdanjem pogovoru uporabljali različne jezike (večinoma grščino in albanščino), glede na različne priložnosti – med prekomorskim trgovanjem, v šoli in cerkvi, doma ipd. Glede na zapis angleškega zgodovinarja Winnifritha (2002: 47-48) je težko podati veljaven dokaz za izvorni jezik v Dhërmiju/Drimadesu in širšem območju vasi. Ne glede na to pa lokalni in nacionalni zgodovinarji, politiki in prebivalci nadaljujejo z iskanjem izvornega jezika in tako definirajo svoj prostor in pripadnost.

Tako kot jezik definira vaški prostor tudi religiozna praksa z malimi cerkvami in kapelicami. Več kot trideset jih je raztresenih po vasi in kažejo sledi vaške preteklosti ter verovanja njenih prebivalcev. Tudi verovanje danes ob toku socialnih (izseljevanje mlade generacije lokalnih prebivalcev in priseljevanje muslimanskih družin iz različnih krajev Albanije) in političnih



sprememb (prehod iz komunizma v demokracijo) postaja pomemben del procesov oblikovanja posameznikove identitete.

Prvo poglavje ponazori raznolike poglede na število prebivalcev v Dhërmiju/Drimadesu in prikaže razlike v štetju pripadnikov grške manjšine. Prav to pa opisuje, kako so reprezentacije krajev in ljudi tudi politično pogojene in kako vplivajo na poglede v vsakdanjih praksah ljudi. Poleg kategorizacij posameznikov, v katerih nekateri ljudje in kraji ostajajo nedefinirani ali so "izbrisani", tudi ta množica pogledov na številčnost populacije pove, da se pomeni in reprezentacije ljudi in krajev nenehno pogajajo.

Zadnji razdelek prvega poglavja, o družinah, sorodstvenih linijah in klanih pa govori o razlikah in odnosih med tem, kar ljudje rečejo in tem, kar počnejo. V toku socialnih, političnih, ekonomskih in zgodovinskih dogajanj, so različni prihodi in odhodi ljudi vplivali na pozabljanja, rekonstruiranja in pogajanja o lokalnih genealogijah. Na tem mestu navedem primer Koste in Andree, ki pokaže, kako v določeni politični in ekonomski situaciji (ob namerah države, da z dodelitvijo zemljišč ob obali povrne lastnino upravičencem, ki ne izvirajo iz tega območja) ljudje, ki ali živijo v vasi ali se vanjo nepretrgoma vračajo, ustvarjajo svoj prostor v okviru katerega definirajo svojo lastnino in pripadnost.

**Drugo poglavje** razkriva neskladja in spore, ki se nanašajo na preteklost območja Himarë/Himara. Tako kot v številnih drugih državah bivšega komunizma ali socializma (kot so na primer države bivše Jugoslavije, Sovjetske Zveze in Romunija itn.) se je tudi v Albaniji porajala potreba po ponovnem pisanju zgodovine, ki je bila v obdobju diktature naklonjena komunistični ideologiji in njenim predstavnikom. Na tem mestu Schwandner-Sieversova (2002) razpravlja o mitozgodovinah, ki zavaljo uveljavitve državne avtoritete ustvarjajo podobo idealne preteklosti, sedanjosti in prihodnosti. Avtorica trdi, da je dandanes z vzponom demokracije, namesto ene same mitozgodovine mogoče razpravljati o množstvu mitozgodovin. Kljub temu, da so si mitozgodovine, ki se nanašajo na albansko preteklosti medseboj različne, so si podobne v njihovem nanašanju na tri temeljne mite, ki po mnenju Malcoma (2004) združujejo: mit o prvosti in prioriteti, homogenosti in mit o nenehnem boju za neodvisnost. Mitozgodovina območja Himarë/Himare je dandanes razpršena na številne verzije in zgodbe, ki mitizirajo preteklost.

Poglavje predstavi dela sodobnih zgodovinarjev, ki v luči različnih interesov – bodisi proalbanski, progrški bodisi prolokalni – opisujejo preteklost območja Himarë/Himara. Medtem ko je slednja v obdobju komunizma predstavljala “nepomemben” del albanske zgodovine, je dandanes postala del pogajanj in številnih spornosti med zgodovinarji, politiki, kakor tudi med lokalnimi prebivalci.

Iz vidika Herzfelda (1991) so potemtakem kraji in glasovi, ki definirajo preteklost Himarë/Himare mnogovrstni in mnogoglasni. Skupni imenovalec vsem je kulturna kontinuiteta in ponovno vzpostavljanje preteklosti. Ustni zgodbi Nikole in Spira, ki ju predstavim v uvodnem razdelku drugega poglavja, sta tako enako legitimni kot zapisi posameznih avtorjev zbornika Albanske akademije znanosti (2004) in drugih avtorjev (Memushaj 2003, Frashëri 2005, Rusha 2001, Jorgji 2006a, b, c, Koçi 2006) predstavljenih v nadaljevanju poglavja. Kljub določenim vsebinskim raznolikostim, vsa našeta dela razpravljajo o izvoru in pripadnosti plemen Ilirov in Epircev na podstati nacionalnih držav.

Nasprotno kot predlaga Herzfeld, iz vidika določene lokalne skupnosti ali pa iz vidika obravnavanih avtorjev zgodovina vsekakor ni obravnavana kot mnogovrstna in mnogoglasna in prav tako ne temelji na mitih, kot predlaga Schwandner-Sievers. Za lokalne prebivalce in zgodovinarje zgodovina razgrinja “resnico”. Zato je namesto mnogovrstnosti in raznolikosti zgodovin bolj smiselno raziskovati načine, na katere posamezniki upravljajo, prilagajajo, pogajajo in se prepirajo o preteklost. Slednje namreč razkriva nenehno konstrukcijo odnosov moči kjer se, kot predlaga Ballingerjeva (2003), center in periferija neprestano premikata in menjata. Na ta način so “resnice” o preteklosti Himarë/Himare rekonstruirane in poustvarjene. Odnosi moči stalno opredeljujejo, katera “resnica” bo prevladala nad drugo, hkrati pa tudi prevladujoča “resnica” določa odnose moči. Ti odnosi so pogojeni z družbenim in kulturnim ozadjem pripovedovalca ali pisca, kot tudi s širšimi družbenimi, političnimi in zgodovinskimi naključji. Tako na primer, po padcu komunizma in kasnejšim družbenim, političnim ter ekonomskim spremembam, Spiros in Nikola konstruirata in upravljata njuno lastno “zgodovinsko resnico” in pojmujeta zgodovinarje avtorjev zbornika Albanske akademije znanosti kot nepomembna in “neresnična”. Podobno pa tudi avtorji zbornika konstruirajo in upravljajo njihove lastne “resnice” o zgodovini območja ter kritizirajo predpostavke lokalnih prebivalcev, ki jih pojmujejo kot nepomembne in “neresnične”.

Odnosi moči vzpostavljajo razlike in hkrati tudi podobnosti med lokalnimi in nacionalnimi stališči ter interpretacijami preteklosti. Medtem ko so razlike vidne skozi nasprotovanja in prepire, so podobnosti razvidne skozi diskurz pripovedovalcev in zgodovinopiscev. Tako lokalni kot tudi nacionalni avtorji opredeljujejo nacionalno državo ali pa lokalno skupnost kot izolate oz. entitete, ki niso medsebojno povezane in odnosne. Številni lokalni avtorji (Rusha 2001, Jorgji 2006a, b, c in deloma Nina 2004), poudarjajo idejo o lokalnosti in distinktivnosti ljudi in vasi območja Himarë/Himara. Njihova distinktivnost pa je opredeljena v nasprotju z drugimi kraji in ljudmi širom Albanije. Podobno pa tudi avtorji, ki zagovarjajo nacionalni interes (Memushaj 2003, avtorji zbornika Albanske akademije znanosti 2004, Bixhili 2004, Frashëri 2005) razpravljajo o nacionalni državi Albaniji kot o homogeni entiteti, kjer lokalnosti vselej pripadajo albanski naciji.

Gibanja in povezave o katerih razpravljajo avtorji ponovno razkrivajo, kako ljudje konstituirajo svoj kraj v medsebojni povezanosti in odnosu z drugimi kraji in ljudmi. Različne administrativne organizacije kot na primer, otomanska in nacionalna, so uvedle delitve in kategorizacije glede na prostorsko in družbeno pripadnost ljudi. Kot posledica neskladja med otomanskim in nacionalnim načinom organizacije so se porajale politične napetosti in teritorialni spori, ki so se nenehno pojavljali, izginjali in poustvarjali (prim. Green 2005). Posamezniki so postopoma, tekom stoletij, skozi vsakdanje prakse imenovane kategorizacije in neskladja poustvarjali in jih znova opredeljevali v okviru družbenega, zgodovinskega in političnega konteksta. Tako so na primer, razlike glede na religiozno pripadnost, ki jih je uvedla otomanska administracija, tedaj niso igrale pomembne vloge v vsakdanjih praksah prebivalcev južne Albanije. Šele kasneje v obdobju nacionalnih gibanj, poznega 19. in zgodnjega 20. stoletja, pa so omenjene religiozne razlike postale pomembne in vidne. A tokrat so bile vzpostavljene in pojmovane kot razlike, ki naj bi bile zavoljo zedinjenja in enotnosti albanske nacije, presežene in izenačene. V skladu s tem so številni albanski intelektualci v izseljeništvu širili in uveljavljali albanski pisni jezik v različnih medijih. Jezik je postopoma postal ključ identifikacije in homogenizacije albanske nacije. Ideja o homogenosti nacije pa se je nadaljevala v obdobju komunizma, ki je poleg jezika in teritorija tudi širil zavest o skupni zgodovini. Neskladja in napetosti glede državne meje med Albanijo in Grčijo, ki so predstavljale perečo problematiko vse od leta 1912, so bile zatrite s Hoxhevo odločbo o prepovedi prehoda državne meje in prekinitvijo političnih odnosov s sosednjimi državami. Komunistična organizacija kraja (komunistična arhitektura, gradnja vojaških oporišč, bunkerji, itn.) in propaganda sta pronicali v vsakdanje življenje in prakso

prebivalcev Albanije. Po padcu komunizma in pojavu družbenih, političnih ter ekonomskih sprememb, so se nasprotovanja in težnje glede državne meje ter razlike med ljudmi in kraji, ponovno porajale. A tokrat v drugačnem družbeno-političnem kontekstu in v različnem pomenu kot poprej. Namesto idej o homogeni nacionalni državi, so določeni ljudje v določenih krajih poustvarjali idejo o homogeni in distinktivni lokalnosti.

Prvo poglavje prikazuje, kako nestabilni, spremenljivi in premakljivi a vendarle povezani vidiki in predstave o vasi konstruirajo pozicijo (ali "kje") Dhërmija/Drimadesa. Pričujoče poglavje pa predstavlja nenehne debate, pogajanja in prepire med zgodovinopisci in drugimi intelektualci, ki konstruirajo preteklost in hkrati sedanjost ter prihodnost (ali "kdaj") Dhërmija/Drimadesa in ga s tem umeščajo v čas. Kljub temu, da so pogledi mnogih avtorjev sporni, prav vsi opisujejo nenehna gibanja in stike med ljudmi in kraji, ki so bili tekom stoletij subjekt različnih administrativnih delitev, razmejitev in kategorizacij. Tovrstne razlike pa so osnovale način na katerega so ljudje in kraji umeščeni glede na prostorsko hierarhijo, ki je kot predlaga Greenova "rezultat nenehnega uveljavljanja moči" (Green 2005: 89). Moč, bodisi politična, ekonomska, birokratska, se uveljavljala v različnih momentih premakljivih konfiguracij prostorskih odnosov in ločevanj.

**Tretje poglavje** pa bralca popelje skozi poti in kraje, ki jih lokalni prebivalci Dhërmija/Drimadesa konstruirajo skozi pripovedovanje zgodb, spominjanje in skozi svoje biografske kontekste. Kljub temu, da se v širšem družbeno-političnem in ekonomskem kontekstu ustne zgodbe lokalnih prebivalcev zdijo manj slišne kot zgodovinopisja, zgodbe podobno kot zgodovinopisja pripovedujejo o zakoreninjenosti, razmejevanju in pripadnosti posameznikov. Potemtakem, kot predlaga Benderjeva (2001: 5), bi morali biti antropologi bolj pozorni na vprašanje, "čigave zgodbe so pripovedovane", kakor bi se tudi morali zavedati, da te zgodbe "naturalizirajo" določene družbene odnose (prav tam).

V tretjem poglavju predstavim zgodbe, kot so jih pripovedovali starejši lokalni prebivalci, rojeni med leti 1926 in 1945. Njihove zgodbe sem tekom njihove naracije zapisala v terenski dnevnik in jih kasneje dopolnila z vsemi podrobnimi informacijami. V analizi lokalnih zgodb se osredotočim na družbeno naravo potovanj in selitev glavnih protagonistov, kakor tudi na njihove mreže in povezave med posameznimi kraji na osnovi katerih pripovedovalci ustvarjajo prostorske relacije. Ključno vprašanje tega poglavja je, kako in na kakšen način

različni pomeni prostora, ki so ustvarjeni skozi zgodbe posameznikov, konstruirajo pozicijo oz. “kje” Dhërmi/Drimadesa.

Zgodbe opisujejo morje in gore, ki oklepajo vas in jo definirajo kot “vmesni” prostor, od koder vznikajo dvoumja. Zdi se, da je Dhërmi/Drimades hkratni prostor moškosti in ženskosti, bogastva in revščine, civiliziranosti in neciviliziranosti. Imenovana dvoumja pa nenehno umeščajo Dhërmi/Drimades, katerega pozicija je premakljiva in nejasna. Slednje prikazujejo posamezne skice, ki sledijo zgodbi vsakega pripovedovaca.

Ko pripovedovalci zgodb opisujejo politične ter ekonomske delitve poustvarjajo družbene razlike. Le-te, dandanes umeščajo vas in njene prebivalce v geopolitični zemljevid Evrope in sveta. Kot pripovedujejo zgodbe in opisuje zgodovinopisje, so pred obdobjem komunizma prebivalci današnje južne Albanije, Epirja in otoka Krfa v Grčiji trgovali in potovali širom imenovanih območij ter na ta način ustvarjali skupni prostor. Po letu 1945, z zaporo albanske državne meje, so bila omenjena trgovanja in potovanja ljudi prekinjena. Posledično se je spremenila percepcija prostora, ki ni bila opredeljena le skozi nadzorovana in načrtovana gibanja ljudi širom Albanije temveč tudi skozi prepoved teh gibanj v Grčijo, Italijo in drugam. Skozi pojmovanja in prakse lokalnih prebivalcev je državna meja med Albanijo in Grčijo, ki jo nekateri pripovedovalci imenujejo “cestna zapora”, razmejila in redefinirala “kdo” in “kaj” pripada albanski ter “kdo” in “kaj” grški nacionalni državi. Po razpadu komunizma, ko se je iz vidika grško-govorečih pravoslavnih kristjanov “cestna zapora” med Albanijo in Grčijo ponovno odprla in ko so se porajala množična izseljevanja, se je pomen državne meje med Albanijo in Grčijo ponovno zamajal. Porajale so se razlike, ki niso opredeljene le na osnovi nacionalnih držav, temveč tudi na temelju globalne ekonomije in politike, ki dandanes predstavljata pomembni sili in definirata moč ter hierarhijo krajev. V okviru tovrstne hierarhije so nekateri kraji in države geopolitično in ekonomsko označeni in označevani kot “Evropa”, “Zahod”, “civilizacija” in “razvite države”, medtem ko so drugi kraji in države označeni in označevani kot “Balkan”, “Vzhod”, “necivilizacija” in “države v razvoju”.

Zgodbe ponazarjajo, kako pripovedovalci v hegemonični, geopolitični in ekonomski hierarhiji krajev in držav poustvarjajo in redefinirajo njihove lastne (oz. zasebne) hierarhije, glede na katere pripovedovalci nenehno umeščajo pozicijo vasi Dhërmi/Drimades. Družbeni zemljevidi, ki jih kartirajo posamezne zgodbe pogosto izključujejo imena krajev v Albaniji. Gorovje Strel razmejuje med kraji za njimi (*piso*) in vasjo oz. kraji pred njimi (*brosta*).

Namesto krajev v Albaniji, pripovedovalci naštevajo države in kraje “zunaj” Albanije, ki povezujejo vas s civilizacijo in bogastvom. Ti kraji in države so v razliki z vasjo, ki je “znotraj” (*mesa*), umeščeni “zunaj” (*okso*). Tudi morska ožina razmejuje med vasjo in kraji “zunaj”, le da je v nasprotju z gorsko verigo opredeljena pozitivno. Vas je potemtakem ponovno opredeljena kot vmesni prostor. Njena vmesnost ali dvoumnost pa skuša biti razrešena skozi zgodbe, ki neprestano premikajo pozicijo vasi glede na stike z drugimi kraji in ljudmi.

Pripovedovalci skozi spomine na poti njihovih prednikov rekonstruirajo preteklost in poustvarjajo sedanost, na podlagi katere opredeljujejo svojo pripadnost kraju oz. vasi. Nenehna rekonstrukcija prostorov pa zaradi družbenih, kulturnih in političnih sprememb, ki jih spremlja ponovno pisanje zgodovine, različna štetja prebivalcev, manjšinjska vprašanja, zemljiški spori, globalna ekonomija in geopolitična razdelitev sveta dandanes postaja vse bolj pereča in vodi v nasprotovanja ter spore, ki jih deloma obravnava četrto poglavje.

Zadnje, **četrto poglavje** se torej naslavlja na spornost smeti in drugih odpadkov na obali Dhërmija/Drimadesa, skozi katere lokalni prebivalci upravljajo in nadzirajo sredstva, oblikujejo identiteto ter vzpostavljajo svojo pripadnost. Na eni strani je lokalni odnos do smeti odsev zgodovinsko naključnih, političnih, ekonomskih in družbenih odnosov v vasi, regiji in državi nasploh. Na drugi strani pa so pogajanja o smeteh postala pomemben del procesa konstrukcije in rekonstrukcije teh odnosov in družbenega prostora. Poglavje je razdeljeno na dva, med seboj povezana dela. V prvem delu predstavim pogovore z lokalnimi lastniki turističnih uslug pred obdobjem poletne sezone, ki se prične meseca avgusta. V analizi pogovorov, se še posebej osredotočim na vprašanja, kako posamezniki doživljajo kraj in kako z njim upravljajo. V drugem delu pa predstavim zgodbe lastnikov turističnih objektov kot tudi turistov in sezonskih delavcev na obali, ki ponazarjajo kako pomeni smeti producirajo prostorski red in klasificirajo, kaj in kdo je zunaj kraja ter kaj in kdo spada vanj.

Pripovedi posameznikov ilustrirajo njihova nikoli dokončana pogajanja, glede vprašanja, kdo je odgovoren za smeti in kdo za njihovo odstranitev. Ko se posamezniki pregovarjajo in prepirajo glede smeti, konstruirajo nasprotovanja in neprestano prelagajo odgovornost z “države” na “lokalno skupnost” in obratno; iz skupinske na individualno odgovornost in obratno; ter navsezadnje s tujcev na lokalce in obratno. Kategorizacije, kot so na primer “država” v nasprotju z “lokalnostjo”, skupinska v nasprotju z individualno odgovornostjo in

tujci v nasprotju z lokalnimi prebivalci, so kompleksne ter odvisne od družbenega in kulturnega konteksta posameznih sogovornikov. V zadnjih nekaj letih, z razvojem turizma in rastjo števila turističnih ponudnikov, sezonskih delavcev, izseljencev in turistov, postajajo vprašanja kdo ali kaj je “umazan(o)” in “neurejen(o)” ter kdo ali kaj je “čist(o)” in “urejen(o)” (oz. kdo ali kaj je “spada” v vas in kdo ali kaj je “zunaj” nje) postajajo vse bolj pomembna.

Mary Douglas je v enem med njenimi znanimi deli, *Čisto in nevarno* (2002 [1966]) prikazala, kako je pomen umazanije družbeno in kulturno pogojen. Po njenem mnenju ne gre toliko za samoopredeljujoč in neodvisen fenomen, temveč ga definira kot odklon od reda. Umazanija je stvar “zunaj” kraja, “stranski produkt systemskega urejanja in klasifikacije stvari, v kolikor to urejanje vključuje zavračanje neustreznih elementov” (Douglas 2002: 44).

Na obali Dhërmija/Drimadesa so umazanija in smeti prav tako lahko pojmovane kot stranski produkt družbenega in prostorskega urejanja. Ne gre torej za nedejavne, temveč produktivne kategorije, ki pogosto odražajo družbena neskladja. Poglavje prikazuje, kako se omenjena neskladja pogosto naključno vzpostavljajo, obenem pa analizira tudi načine, kako so različna pojmovanja čistega in umazanega, domačega in tujega pogojena z življenjskimi izkušnjami posameznih sogovornikov. Med njimi so lastniki turističnih objektov in ponudniki turističnih storitev, sezonski delavci, emigranti in turisti, ki nenehno debatirajo in se medsebojno pogajajo, kdo je odgovoren za smeti in kdo mora počistiti obalo. Skozi tovrstna nasprotovanja posamezniki pravzaprav izražajo svoje poglede na turizem in na novo vzpostavljajo pomen turistične obale. Sama menim, da podobno kot je turistična obala vir tovrstnih pogajanj, prav ta pogajanja tudi konstruirajo in rekonstruirajo njo samo, s čimer posamezniki, ki trdijo, da izhajajo iz Dhërmija/Drimadesa, dobijo možnost umestitve svoje lokalnosti in pripadnosti.

Gupta in Ferguson (2001: 13) poudarjata vzajemni odnos med procesi konstrukcije kraja, lokalnosti in identitete, ki so spremenljivi in sporni. Avtorja pojasnujeta, da lokalnost ne pomeni “ukoreninjenosti” v posamezni kraj. Lokalnost je nenehno rekonstruirana skozi medsebojne odnose in razlike med ljudmi in kraji. Potemtakem je lokalnost konstitutivni in konstituirajoči del procesa družbenih sprememb; kakor so tudi družbene spremembe, kot na primer turizem na obali Dhërmija/Drimadesa, konstitutivni in konstituirajoči del lokalnosti in oblikovanja identitete. Sledeč Hallu, Gupta in Ferguson predlagata, da je “identiteta 'točka srečanj' – točka prešitja ali začasne identifikacije – ki vzpostavlja in preoblikuje subjekt na način, ki mu omogoča delovanje” (2001: 13). Ljudje na obali Dhërmija/Drimadesa oblikujejo

in redefinirajo identiteto, na temelju njihovih povezav ali "srečanj" z ostalimi ljudmi na obali. Lokalni lastniki, prišleki, izseljenci in turisti potemtakem rekonfigurirajo razlike med "nami" kot tistimi, ki "spadajo" v kraj in "drugimi", ki so "zunaj" njega. Prešitje razlik je točka njihove začasne identifikacije, ki jim omogoča delovanje v kraju. Razlike med tistimi, ki "spadajo" v kraj in drugimi, ki so "zunaj" njega ne temeljijo le na skupinski zavesti oz. namišljeni identiteti, temveč so tudi posledica strukturnih odnosov moči in neenakosti. Zaradi tega me ne zanimajo le medsebojni odnosi in razlikovanja med posamezniki, pač pa tudi strukturni odnosi moči, ki se vzpostavljajo med njimi in vodijo v produkcijo razlik in hkrati enakosti.

Četrto poglavje ilustrira, kako debate in pogajanja o smeteh ter njihovem odstranjevanju temeljijo na interakcijah posameznikov skozi katere konstruirajo razlike ter razmejevanja, ki včasih vodijo nasprotovanja med lokalnimi prebivalci, izseljenci, sezonskimi delavci, albanskimi in tujimi turisti. Imenovana družbena razmejevanja so konstruirana vzporedno s prostorskimi. Oba načina razmejevanj definirata pomen turistične obale v Dhërmiju/Drimadesu, ki je razdeljena na severni in južni del. Medtem ko severni del, ki vodi proti Albaniji večinoma združuje lastnike turističnih storitev in turiste iz Albanije ter tujine, južni del, ki vodi proti Grčiji, združuje lokalne lastnike in izseljence. Enaka prostorska razmejevanja se vzpostavljajo tudi skozi nenehne debate o tem, kdo je "zunaj" kraja in kdo "iz" njega ali bolje, kdo je tujec in ne pripada obali in kdo je lokalci in pripada obali Dhërmija/Drimadesa.

Nenehno prostorsko in lokalno rekonfiguriranje obale Dhërmija/Drimadesa nakazuje, da kategorije "turistični kraj", "turizem", "turisti" in "lokalci" niso natančno definirane in nespremenljive, temveč so vzpostavljene relacijsko. Namreč v določenem zgodovinskem, političnem, ekonomskem, družbenem, kulturnem in naključnostnem kontekstu se posamezniki neprestano pogajajo in premikajo njihove pomene in razmejevanja med njimi. Domačini, turisti, izseljenci in drugi – v prepirih glede (ne)odgovornosti za smeti in odpadke – izražajo težnje in pogajanja o tem, kdo je "iz" oziroma "znotraj" kraja in kdo je "zunaj" njega. V skladu z argumentom, predstavljenim v uvodnem delu, je obala vasi področje, kjer debate in pogajanja glede smeti konstruirajo pomen turizma in opredeljujejo vas kot turistični kraj, kamor posamezniki, med katerimi prevladujejo izseljenci, ki so se vrnil in ki izhajajo iz Dhërmija/Drimadesa, umeščajo svojo pripadnost in lokalnost.



Podobno kot pripovedovanja zgodb, ki opisujejo potovanja prednikov preko morja in gora, tudi nenehna pogajanja in nasprotovanja o smeteh in njihovi odstranitvi kažejo, kako je pozicija vasi vzpostavljena glede na prostorsko hierarhijo in kako je prostorska hierarhija vzpostavljena glede na pozicijo vasi. Različna administrativna, politična in ekonomska razmejevanja ljudi in krajev so vplivala na življenje ljudi v vasi in okolici. Ljudje so skozi svoje življenjske prakse, v okviru birokratskih norm nadalje reproducirali imenovana razmejevanja. Po razpadu komunizma, ko je albansko-grška državna meja postala ponovno prehodna in ko so se porajala množična izseljevanja, razmejevanja niso temeljila le na nacionalnih razlikovanjih, temveč tudi na ekonomskih in infrastrukturnih razlikah med obema državama. Razlike so se porajale skozi življenjske prakse posameznikov, ki so naseljevali obmejni del Albanije kot tudi Grčije. Greenova (2005: 228) zapiše, da odkar je bila Albanija del komunizma, Grčija pa ne, je bila slednja za obmejne prebivalce obeh strani, aksiomatično pojmovana kot bolj “zahodna” v primerjavi z Albanijo. Povezava med “modernizacijo”, “zahodnjaštvom” in kapitalizmom, ki se aksiomatično vzpostavlja v razliki do “drugega”, vodi v “splošno” prepričanje prebivalcev obmejnega področja, da je Grčija bolj “moderna” kot Albanija.

Omenjena razmejevanja med “moderno” Grčijo in “nerazvito” Albanijo so tudi razvidna iz posameznih vsebin prepričanj in pogajanj o smeteh na vaški obali. Na temelju tovrstnih razmejevanj lastniki turističnih storitev, izseljenci, sezonski delavci in drugi turisti vzpostavljajo prostorsko hierarhijo, ki neprestano določa in pozicijo Dhërmija/Drimadesa in oblikuje posameznikovo identifikacijo.

**V zaključku** sklenem, da pomeni niso odvisni le od zgodovinskih in političnih obdobij, družbenih odnosov in posameznikove samoidentifikacije znotraj njih. Raznoliki pomeni prostora in kraja so tudi odvisni od erozivnosti terena, “razgibane” topografije, dvoumnih demografskih podatkov, številnih različic imen, spornih zgodovinopisij, izraženih in potlačenih spominov ljudi, vsakdanjih praks in pogostih gibanj ter selitev, ki različno kartirajo vaški prostor in vzpostavljajo kompleksnost in dvoumja njegovega pomena. Lokalni prebivalci, zgodovinopisci, demografi, geomorfologi, pravniki in politiki poskušajo razvozlati kompleksnost in “pripeti” dvoumja na “trdna tla” ter jih opredeliti kot enopomenska “dejstva”.

Naloga prikazuje, kako so pomeni pojmov kot so “lokalec” (*horianos*) in “tujec” (*ksenos*), “Grk” in “Albanec”, zunaj (*okso*) in znotraj (*mesa*), pred (*brosta*) in za (*piso*), “iz” kraja (*apo to topos*) in “izven” njega spremenljivi, kontekstualni in naključni. Tako lahko tisto, kar je pojmovano kot lokalno, v naslednjem trenutku in drugem kontekstu postane tuje in obratno. Grško lahko postane albansko in albansko lahko postane grško. Kar je “iz” kraja je lahko tudi “izven” njega. Retorične izjave prebivalcev vasi kot tudi povratnikov opisujejo, kako so pomeni vasi, ki so definirani skozi vsakdanje prakse, percepcije in pogovore ljudi Dhërmija/Drimadesa, mnogoglasne.

Mnogoglasja so razkrita skozi zgodbe ljudi, ki so predstavljene v prvem poglavju. Le-te pripovedujejo, kako se je obseg območja Himarë/Himara spreminjal skozi stoletja, kako so imena vasi in ljudi vselej premakljiva in spremenljiva, kateri jeziki so bili prisotni in kako se med seboj prepletajo, pripovedujejo o številnih kapelicah in religioznih praksah, o nasprotujočih načinih štetja in kategorizacije prebivalcev ter o tem, kako je razumevanje sorodstva ter z njim povezanega vključevanja in izključevanja posameznih članov premakljivo. Te zgodbe, podobno kot spominjanja starejših vaščanov, kartirajo različne pozicije vasi, ki so vselej ujete v proces nastajanja in na ta način uhajajo statičnim in zaprtim kategorijam, ki jih pozicijam vasi jih skušajo vsiliti različne politične, ekonomske in druge sile, kakor tudi ljudje sami.

Da bi nepredvidljiva spremenljivost našla svoje mesto v zgodovinskem kontekstu, drugo poglavje razkriva zgodovinopisja vasi. Slednja so dandanes, v postkomunistični Albaniji redefinirana skozi proces ponovnega pisanja preteklosti. Dvoumja imen posameznikov in krajev, dileme o manjšinskih vprašanjih, pripadnost vaščanov in pozicija vasi postanejo del enoumja in subjekt vzpostavljanja enega samega pogleda na preteklost, zavoljo dosege ciljev v sedanjosti. Pregled sodobnega zgodovinopisja (predvsem v zadnjem sedemletju), ki zagovarja proalbanska, progrška ali prolokalna stališča, prikazuje način, skozi katerega skušajo zgodovinopisci umestiti vas v historični in geopolitični zemljevid nacionalnih držav. Njihov diskurz razkriva, kako zgodovinopisci pojmujejo nacionalne države kot jasno določene in nespremenljive entitete, ki obstajajo »že od vselej« in razmejujejo ljudi glede na jezik, teritorij in nacionalno pripadnost.

Premakljiva števila, samopripisi in imena vasi najdejo svojo enotnost in singularnost v nacionalnih kategorijah, ki so se v življenju in izkušnjah ljudi uveljavile z uvedbo

komunistične diktature. Visoka električna ograja, ki se je razprostirala na obmejnih prehodih, je tedaj vidno zaznamovala državno mejo, ne le na političnem zemljevidu Evrope, pač pa tudi v vsakdanjem življenju ljudi v Albaniji, ki so bili "jasno" definirani kot Albanci. Vzpostavitev meje je razpolovila »cesto«, ki je potekala preko nje, na dva ločena dela. Gibanja in potovanja, ki so se po njej odvijala tekom preteklih tisočletij, so bila po letu 1945 povsem prekinjena. A kljub temu so selitve in potovanja ljudi ostala, spremenila se je le njihova smer: ta je bila v času komunizma usmerjena v notranjost države.

Vsebina poglavij prikazuje, kako je konstrukcija prostora in kraja del kontinuiranega in ireverzibilnega procesa. Ljudje Dhërmija/Drimadesa skozi gibanja in selitve, pripovedovanje zgodb, spominjanje, kakor tudi upravljanje in manipuliranje s sredstvi, kot so zemlja in smeti, konstruirajo prostor in so tudi sami del te konstrukcije. Biografije večine sogovorcev razkrivajo bogate itinerarije selitev in gibanj preko različnih krajev in v njih, sprva v Albaniji in kasneje v Grčiji ali drugje. Tretje poglavje prikaže, kako se gibanja in selitve pripovedovalcev zgodb na nek način podvojijo v gibanja in selitve njihovih prednikov. Skozi spominjanja, ki so v terminih Ingolda (2000) "skovana skupaj z besedami in vtisnjena v posameznikovo percepcijo okolja", ljudje nenehno poustvarjajo imenovana okolja in svoje spomine. Ingold definira okolje kot "svet ki je in obstaja ter ima pomen v odnosu z menoj [*s posameznikom*] in zato se je tudi pojavil in gre skozi spremembe skupaj z menoj in okoli mene" (2000: 20). Glede na njegove opredelitve zgodbe razkrivajo pripovedovalčeve poglede na okolje, kakor tudi na njih same v okolju. Zgodbe so konstituirane v interelacijah med okoljem in posamezniki in se skozi tovrstne interelacije dalje razvijajo.

Izhajajoč iz de Certeauja (1984) Ingold pravi, da pripovedovalec kartira proces nastajanja v trenutku, ko pripoveduje zgodbo. Ta proces nastajanja sem skušala ponazoriti skozi zgodbe starejših vaščanov. Da bi prikazala kontinuiteto in ireverzibilnost procesa, sem zgodbe sprva analizirala glede na de Certeaujevo predpostavko nenehne transformacije iz krajev v prostore in nazaj. V nadaljevanju sem proces nastajanja in konstrukcije krajev in prostorov raziskovala s pomočjo koncepta prostorske hierarhije, kot je opredeljen po Greenovi (2005). Tu sem se še posebej osredotočila na medsebojno povezanost med prostorsko hierarhijo ter pozicijo določenega kraja. S pomočjo skice posameznih zgodb sem prikazala raznolika kartiranja vasi in drugih krajev ter njihove pozicije v prostoru in času. Skice prikazujejo številne različice pozicij, ki so premakljive in spremenljive glede na družbeno-kulturni kontekst. Njihova premakljivost ponazarja, kako so razmejevanja ljudi in meje krajev porozne in zamegljene.

Premakljivost in spremenljivost gre pripisati tako razmejevanjem, ki jih ljudje skozi spomine in pripovedi vpisujejo v pokrajino, kakor tudi državni meji, ki razmejuje Albanijo, Grčijo, Italijo, Ameriko in Jugoslavijo. Ko pripovedovalci opisujejo gore, zamejujejo prostor med gorami oz. Albanijo in vasjo, ko pa opisujejo morje, pa razmejujejo med vasjo in morjem. S tem nacionalno razumevanje razmejevanj in mejnosti pogojujejo s prostorskimi pojmovanji in obratno.

Prepletenost prostora in kraja v povezavi s hegemonističnim pojmovanjem nacionalnih držav pa prikazuje četrto poglavje. Slednje se osredotoči na mlajšo generacijo, med katerimi so lastniki turističnih storitev, emigranti in turisti, ki se v poletnih mesecih zadržujejo na obali Dhërmija/Drimadesa. Družbena in prostorska razmejevanja se vzpostavljajo okoli praktične in tehnične problematike, t. j. okoli smeti. Ko ljudje prelagajo odgovornost za nasmetenost obale na soseda, "Albanca", "lokalca", lokalno skupnost, občino in navsezadnje na nacionalno državo, sočasno konstruirajo družbena in prostorska razmejevanja. V procesu razmejevanja sogovorniki konstituirajo red, znotraj katerega umeščajo svojo tvornost (*agency*). Nasprotovanja, neskladja in spori, ki so tako produkti kot tudi producenti razlikovanj med "mi" in "oni", so del odnosov moči, kjer vsak posameznik skuša uveljaviti svoje pojmovanje kraja in na ta način določiti pozicijo vasi. Na podlagi tega procesa, se ponovno izrisuje prostorska hierarhija, ki pomembno prispeva k formaciji posameznikove identitete. Slednja je bodisi umeščena v vas bodisi je iz nje izvzeta.

Četrto poglavje prikazuje kompleksnost oz. fragmentiranost odnosov moči med posamezniki na obali. V grobem bi lahko odnose moči opazovala z dveh med seboj povezanih perspektiv: z mikro- in makronivoja. Tako na primer izseljenec Kiqos, ki prihaja iz Dhërmija/Drimadesa, v razlikovanju med seboj kot "lokalcem" (*horianos*) in "Albanci" (*Alvanos*), na mikronivoju vzpostavlja red. Kiqos poudarja individualno in deloma tudi lokalno odgovornost za nečisto obalo in vas. V razmejevanju med »Albanci« in *horiani* Kiqos vzpostavlja svojo identiteto in jo umešča na vaško obalo. Opredeljuje se kot lokalce, koncept, ki ga pojmuje kot sorodnega "grškosti" in različnega "albanskosti". S tem ko oblikuje svojo identiteto, Kiqos konstruira tudi obalo in vas. V poimenovanju toponimov, za katere trdi, da so grškega izvora, umešča vas v geopolitični zemljevid nacionalnih držav. To pa predstavlja makronivo Kiqovega razumevanja prostora in kraja. Na eni strani ju razume skozi svojo biografijo, na drugi pa ju reproducira glede na politične, ekonomske in administrativne sile in moči, na osnovi katerih ustvarja razmejevanja in konstruira svoj pogled na svet.

Glede na izjave in zgodbe starejše generacije prebivalcev vasi kakor tudi mlajše generacije lokalnih emigrantov in lastnikov turističnih storitev, se zdi, da so pomeni vasi in njene pozicije – ali “kje” vasi – redefinirani skozi posameznikove prakse in percepcije državne meje med Albanijo in Grčijo. V tem pogledu ostareli vaščani redefinirajo pozicijo vasi glede na »cestno zaporo« in prepoved prehajanj preko državne meje. Nasprotno pa mlajša generacija redefinira pozicijo vasi glede na ponovno odprtje državne meje med Albanijo in Grčijo ter množične migracije, ki so se porajale kot posledica tega odptja ter ekonomske in politične situacije v Albaniji.

Iz vsebine zapisov zgodovinopiscev in pripovedi sogovorcev se zdi, da je zapora državne meje na nek način zaprla tudi dostop do komunistične preteklosti v Dhërmiju/Drimadesu. Na osnovi zgodovinopisja, ki se nanaša na območje Himarë/Himara v obdobju komunizma, in na osnovi vsebine zgodb starejših vaščanov, ki opisujejo poti prednikov, ter navsezadnje na osnovi pogajanj in debat o smeteh na obali se izrisuje odsotnost zgodb o komunizmu. A kljub temu se v nadaljnji analizi te odsotnosti med vrsticami posameznih pisnih in ustnih virov nakazuje latentna prisotnost in vpliv komunizma. Tako se zdi, da je komunizem bil in še vedno je močno prisoten, prav zaradi njegove navidezne odsotnosti. Ideologija komunizma “tiho” kartira pokrajino in pripoveduje svojo zgodbo skozi vidne objekte svojega časa: gobasti bunkerji, uničene stavbe in drugi objekti (e.g. Hotel Dhërmiu), zapuščeni nasadi citrusov in oljk, obledeli komunistični napisi “*Pionirët e Enverit*” na zidovih nekaterih stavb. Grenke zgodbe, ki opisujejo komunizem in pričajo o preteklosti, so prikrite in se “skrivajo” v ozadju. Slednjim je možno prisluhniti v nekaterih izjavah lokalnih prebivalcev. Vpliv komunizma mogoče tudi razbrati iz debat o problematiki smeti, še posebej ko se odgovornost prelega iz skupine na posameznika.

Odsotnost zgodb iz obdobja komunizma nakazuje, kako to obdobje izolacije in represije še vedno živi še posebej skozi predstave starejših vaščanov. Moč komunistične “avtoritete”, ki je bila uveljavljena skozi figuro Enverja Hoxha in je prikrito posegala v vsakdanjo rutino posameznikov (prepoved gibanj zunaj državnih meja in nadzor gibanja znotraj njih, kolektivizacija zemlje, nacionalna enotnost in zedinjenje posameznikov) je dandanes zastopana in reprezentirana skozi ideje in normative trenutno vladujoče politične stranke. Kljub temu, da njena moč do določene mere vpliva tudi na vsakdanje prakse posameznikov, se dandanes razkriva na nekoliko drugačen način kot v preteklosti. Danes je vsakdan vaščanov obarvan z nenehnimi izpadi električne energije in vode, z množičnimi izseljevanji v

Grčijo, Italijo in drugam, manjšinsko problematiko in regionalizmi (na primer lokalnost), denacionalizacijo in kolektivizacijo obalnih predelov, ki so obetavni za razvoj turizma, ipd. Kljub temu, da je minilo že več kot desetletje od padca komunizma, in kljub prisotni globalizaciji (oz. glocalizaciji), ki je sledila takoj po njem in je vidna predvsem v večjih mestih (npr. Tirana in Drač), se zdi, da so se nekateri dejavniki, na primer državni nadzor, pomanjkanje, ekonomska negotovost in nezaupanje v politično elito ali tako imenovano “državo” (*to kratos*), še vedno ohranili. Potemtakem se je politična moč, ki se je do danes od singularne moči avtarka prerazporedila na množstvo moči vladajočih političnih strank, v življenju in izkušnjah ljudi ohranila. Namesto ene osebe in glasu je moč dandanes zastopana skozi več glasov, ki jim predvsem starejši vaščani pripisujejo avtoriteto in moč. Prav to pa ustvarja občutek, da se kljub radikalni spremembi sistema iz komunizma v demokracijo stvari niso drastično spremenile. “Oko” ali bolje “oči” političnih, ekonomskih in birokratskih sil nadzora so, kakor menijo starejši vaščani, še vedno umeščene “tja gor” (*apo apano/nga larg*), kamor po njihovem mnenju sodi trenutno vladujoča politična elita. Te “panoptične oči”, če si izposodim Foucaultov izraz, še vedno ostajajo in na nek način še vedno “špijonirajo” za vsakdanom vaščanov.

Sistem se je spremenil, nekateri ljudje so se izselili, drugi so se priselili. A moči, ki nenehno razmejujejo in kategorizirajo ljudi in kraje, ostajajo. Tako imajo prebivalci Dhërmija/Drimadesa občutek trajnega vsiljevanja različnih moči, ki vplivajo na njihovo vsakdanje življenje. To pa dandanes domnevno predstavlja enega izmed razlogov za odsotnost zgodb iz obdobja komunizma. Slednje sem izkusila tudi sama, saj so bile tudi moje “oči”, vsaj v prvih mesecih mojega terenskega dela, s strani marsikoga pojmovane kot oči “države” ali pa morda kake mednarodne organizacije.

Namen pričujoče analize je bil prikazati proces nestabilne rekonstrukcije prostora in kraja v Dhërmiju/Drimadesu, ki na eni strani ustvarja razlike in spornosti, na drugi pa razkriva podobnosti in medsebojne odnose. Nekateri avtorice (prim. Bender in Winer 2001, Low in Zúñiga 2003) so v raziskovanju procesa nestabilne, neurejene in fragmentirane konstrukcije prostorov in krajev opredeljevale kot neizogibno sporne in problematične. Kot predlagam v uvodu in prikazujem v nadaljevanju skozi spominjanja starejših vaščanov, demografijo, religijo in sorodstvo, pomeni prostorov in krajev niso sporni, temveč so dvoumni. V svoji dvoumnosti se ti pomeni stalno premikajo in spreminjajo glede na kontekst in glede na tiste, ki so vanj vključeni. Spornost se poraja le tedaj, ko politične, ekonomske in družbene sile

skušajo kategorizirati dvoumja in jih definirati kot »jasne« in »stabilne« entitete. Nestabilna konstrukcija prostora in kraja zato ni nujno razlog za neskladja pomenov prostora in kraja. Prav tako pa ni njihova neskladnost in spornost neizogibna in vselej vnaprej določena, kot predlagajo omenjene avtorice. Zato menim, da je bolj kot o spornosti prostorov (o kateri govorijo navedene avtorice) smiselno govoriti o prostorih spornosti in neskladij. Prostor in kraji niso sporni sami na sebi in v sebi, temveč so vedno sporni zaradi nekoga in v zvezi z njim, medtem ko so za drugega živeti in dojeti kot povsem pravni.

Neskladja in spornosti, ki vzpostavljajo in opredeljujejo prostore, kraje in ljudi so del procesa nastajanja, ki poleg razmejitev in razlik razkriva tudi povezave med ljudmi in kraji. Kot je opisano v poglavjih, ljudje vzpostavljajo in opomenjajo prostore in kraje v medsebojni povezanosti z drugimi prostori, kraji in ljudmi. Nenehna gibanja in potovanja vaščanov skozi njihovo preteklost opredeljujejo in hkrati razlikujejo vas od drugih prostorov in krajev, ki se nahajajo na drugi strani morja ali gora, v Albaniji, Grčiji, Italiji in Ameriki.

Spornost in povezanost prostorov ter krajev v Dhërmiju/Drimadesu je vpeta v tri osrednje kontekste. Prvi se navezuje na gibanja in selitve ljudi skozi kraje; drugi na delitve in razmejevanja ljudi in krajev; tretji pa na odnose moči, ki vzpostavljajo kraje in ljudi. Za prebivalce Dhërmija/Drimadesa gibanja, potovanja in selitve predstavljajo stalnico, saj se vzpostavljajo skozi zgodovino. Spreminjajo se le njihova smer, pogostost, dinamika in način. Na slednje poleg tehnološkega in gospodarskega razvoja vplivajo tudi administrativne, politične, ekonomske in družbene delitve ljudi in krajev, v okviru katerih se konfigurirajo odnosi moči. Ti vzpostavljajo prostore in kraje, v katere se posamezniki umeščajo in v njih oblikujejo svojo identiteto. V skladu z Lefebvrom (1974), de Certeaujem (1984), Ingoldom (1993 in 2000), Gupto in Fergusonom (1997), ki se osredotočajo na procese konstrukcije prostora in kraja, sta slednja razsrediščena. Potemtakem ne sledita evklidskim paradigmam o urejenosti prostora. Centri in periferije menjajo svoje pozicije in se na ta način neprestano konfigurirajo. Kot zapiše Appadurai (1996: 46), je današnji svet v svojem bistvu fraktalen, kar pomeni, da ne ustreza evklidskim mejam, strukturam in pravilom "urejenosti" sveta. Namesto tega neurejeni fragmenti fluktuirajo od centra do periferije in neprestano menjajo svoje pozicije (prim. Green 2005).

V disertaciji sem prikazala, kako je očitranje državne meje leta 1913 vplivalo na vsakdanje prakse in življenje ljudi šele 32 let kasneje, ko je bil prehod čez državno mejo zaprt in

prepovedan. Obdobje komunizma je bilo pomembno za lokalne prebivalce Dhërmija/Drimadesa. Moč avtarkičnega vodje in nacionalne politike je preusmerila gibanja preko državne meje v gibanja znotraj nje in s tem spremenila njihovo smer in dinamiko. Gibanja lokalnih prebivalcev oz. odsotnost teh gibanj, ni več temeljila na ekonomskih odnosih, temveč na ideji o homogenizaciji in enotnosti albanske nacije. Po letu 1990, s ponovnim odprtjem meja, so se gibanja in selitve preko albansko-grške meje ponovno pojavile. Znova se je spremenila njihova smer in dinamika, ki je vodila v množična izseljevanja, še posebej iz vasi z grško govorečim prebivalstvom. Transnacionalizem, globalizacija in regionalizem, ki ga podpira in pospešuje model supradržav (npr. Evropska unija), so postali del konstrukcije prostora in kraja tudi v vasi Dhërmi/Drimades. Ko izseljenci ohranjajo vezi s svojo rojstno vasjo in ko se nenehno vračajo v vas, vedno znova konstruirajo pomene in pozicijo vasi na družbenem zemljevidu. Pozicija je definirana glede na prostorsko hierarhijo, ki daje prednost ekonomskim vplivom. S tega vidika je “grškost” povezana z modernostjo, “albanskost” pa z modernizacijo (modernost je, kljub prizadevanjem za njeno vzpostavitvev, še odsotna) (prim. Green 2005: 230).

Nietzsche (1884) je že pred 123 leti zapisal znameniti stavek: “Bog je mrtev.” Slednji naj bi zaznamoval prelomnico med klasičnimi strukturami in zakonitostmi in procesi nastajanja. V teh procesih odnosi moči niso več vzpostavljeni glede na princip trdnih centrov in periferij, temveč glede na princip fraktalov. Zdi se, da ta princip, ki dandanes diktira odnose moči in konfigurira prostorsko hierarhijo v vaseh, krajih in mestih širom Albanije, Evrope in sveta, vse bolj poudarja ekonomski dobrobit in kapital in vse manj logiko nacionalnih držav.

Pričujoča naloga je skušala prikazati, kako sta pojma “kje” in “kdo” odvisna od zgodovinskega, političnega in ekonomskega konteksta. Obdobje postkomunizma, družbenih in ekonomskih sprememb ter množičnih izseljevanj je pomembno vplivalo na rekonstrukcijo posameznikovega občutka za “dom”, njegove pripadnosti, lokalnosti in umeščenosti v vas Dhërmi/Drimades. Posamezniki na eni strani upravljajo in manipulirajo z ideološkimi razmejitvami (prim. *horianos* vs. *kseños*), medtem ko jih na drugi skozi svoje zgodbe in retorične izjave reproducirajo in konstruirajo prostorska razmejevanja (prim. morje vs. gore). Dandanes na procese reprodukcije omenjenih razmejevanj vpliva globalna ekonomija, razvoj informacijske tehnologije in pojav geopolitične in ekonomske ideologije »supradržave«. Sledeč tem spremembam se lokalni prebivalci ne opredeljujejo več toliko v terminih nacionalnosti – kot Grki ali pa Albanci –, temveč v terminih regionalnih identitet, ki jih



umeščajo znotraj prostora Evropske unije, saj ta daje prednost regionalizmu in jih postavlja pred nacionalizme (prim. Harvie 1994, Green 2005: 219). Tako se številni lokalni prebivalci območja Himarë/Himara in še posebej Dhërmija/Drimadesa opredeljujejo kot Himarioti, ki pripadajo območju Himarë/Himara kot neodvisnemu in distinktivnemu kraju, ki ga skozi svoja ideološka pojmovanja skušajo umestiti v geopolitični zemljevid Evropske unije (prim. [www.himara.eu](http://www.himara.eu) ).