



THE EUROPEAN UNION CROSS BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME



KLOS MUSEUM GUIDE

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PREFACE

MISSION

The regions of Pelagonija in North Macedonia and Diber in Albania have some of the greatest potential for the development of a dynamic and sustainable tourism offer in the CB area.

The possibility to capitalise on these cross-border assets is provided within the frame of the Cross-border Cooperation Programme between the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Albania, co-funded by the European Union–IPA 2 instrument and the Ministry of Local Self-Government of North Macedonia. Both Demir Hisar (MK) and Klos (AL) municipalities, are rich in tangible and intangible cultural heritage and diverse natural landscapes that are favourable for a variety of outdoor experiences for the visitor, especially as they are located within an hour's drive of the main destination hubs of Bitola and Tirana along the newly built Rruga Arberit highway.

The problem addressed by *Discovering hidden attractions* is the under-utilisation of the man-made and natural potential of the CB region as a means to increase the number of visitors to the territory of the two municipalities, and their length of stay and spending on various activities, thus engaging the local population in business activities, resulting in an increase in incomes and reducing youth unemployment.

Discovering hidden attractions focuses on developing consolidated travel packages across the border. Development of similar attractive destination factors in the two municipalities and products of active tourism, including hiking, cycling and local experience gathering delivered by locals, culminates in a joint CB travel package that motivates visitors to go beyond borders and explore untouched places offering a unique, single thematic destination in a two-country travel experience.

One of the most important components in this project is the construction of a new museum for Klos Municipality, Diber County, Albania, together with the capacities of the museum staff and the staff of the municipality with regard to the promotion of potential tourism in the region.

This booklet provides some background to the rich history of the region of Klos and its importance in the history of Albania.

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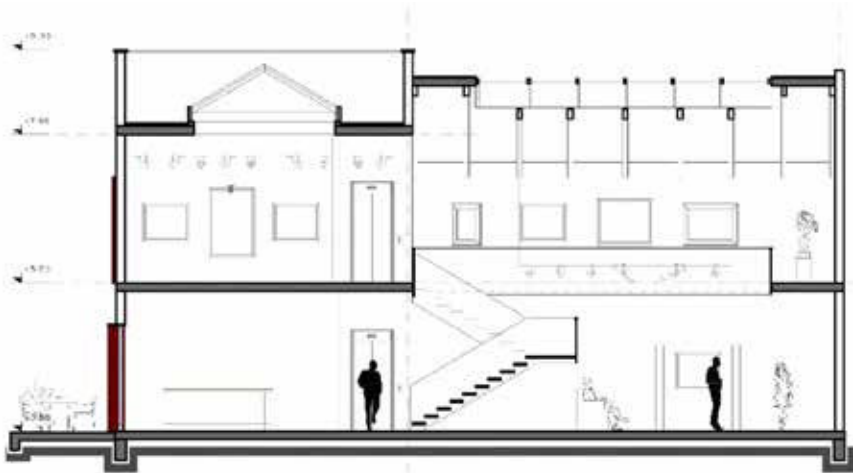


GUIDE TO KLOS

HERITAGE MUSEUM

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

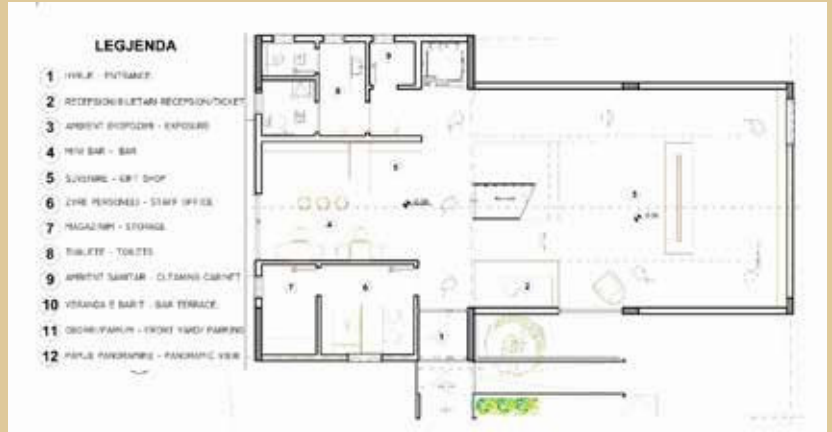
Klos heritage museum is located in south-west Klos on a hill that dominates the whole area and from where one can enjoy the stunning panorama of the municipality and its environs.



The building is designed with two floors.

The ground floor comprises the main entrance, reception hall, a small souvenir shop, mini-bar, and washroom facilities. The main hall is designed for exhibiting historical objects and archaeological artifacts, with explanatory panels giving information on the objects and the history of the area.

The first floor comprises the ethnography pavilion and exhibits cultural heritage objects from the area of Klos including traditional clothing and handicrafts, carpets, rugs, embroidered threads, agricultural tools, food and



cooking equipment, milk churns and grain mills. Handicraft equipment includes machinery for traditional gunpowder production, machines for grinding tobacco and for sharpening tools, anvils for ironmongery, carpentry tools, and others. The rich collection includes also cabinets, kitchen utensils, such as plates and spoons made from copper, bronze, mahogany and other types of wood, lighting tools such as candles, candlesticks, old weapons such as swords, bows, knives, rifles and their parts, hunting items including bows, guns, snares, traps, among others.

GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION



The Municipality of Klos lies in east Albania, in the west of Diber County, and has a territory of about 130 km². The municipality consists of the administrative unit of the city of Klos, which is also the centre of the municipality, and the thirteen villages of Bejne, Klos Katund, Shengjun, Plani i Bardhë, Fullqet, Dars, Fshat, Bel, Unjate, Pleshë, Cerrujë, Patin and Bërshi. The administrative unit of Xibër comprises the villages of Xibër Murriz, Petralbë, Shkalë, Xibër Hane, Gur i Bardhë and Ketë.





resources. Communal forests and pastures occupy a considerable area, and in addition to the vast resources of timber, there are also many medicinal plants. Another major potential source of income for the inhabitants of the region is mountain and historical tourism, as well as the chrome ore industry in the private mines of Ceruje. Klos has been and remains the main starting point not only of the ancient Rruge Arberit, but also of some of its many branches and other roads, which intersect at Bridge Bazaar.

The administrative unit of Suç comprises the villages of Kurdari, Kurqelaj, Skënderaj, Suç and Kujtim, while the administrative unit of Gurrë includes the villages of Belt, Gurrë e Vogël, Mishtër, Shulbatër, Dom and Gurrë e Madhe.

Klos is bordered to the north by the Municipality of Mat, to the west by the Municipality of Kruje, to the south-west by the Municipality of Tirana, and to the south-east by the Municipality of Bulqize.

Much of the topography of Klos Municipality is a plain, consisting of the Mat valley with pastures ranging from 240 metres to 600 metres above sea level. Klos is and remains a major node connecting Diber with Tirana. Its economy and influence are about to grow with the opening of the new Rruga Arberit.

Economy

The main branches of the economy are services, minerals and agriculture, for which a favourable climate allows the cultivation of all manner of cereals, vegetables, fruit and nuts, and livestock. Klos is rich in numerous natural, terrestrial, aquatic and underground

Population

According to the 2011 Census Klos has a population size of 16,618. Meanwhile, the Civil Registry records the municipality as having 20,281 inhabitants. (The difference is explained by the fact that many locals work abroad.) The municipality has a surface area of just above 357 km², with a density of slightly more than 58 inhabitants per km².

Climate

The climate in the Klos basin is similar to the average climate of much of Albania. It is part of the Mediterranean climate belt, with hot and dry summers, lots of sunshine, relatively mild winters in the valley but harsher winters at altitudes above 600 m.

The average annual temperature in the basin is about 15°C. In the hottest days of July, the temperature can reach 40°C, while the lowest temperature recorded is -14°C. Snow is common only at high altitudes.

A SHORT HISTORY

The name Klos is related to the word *Klisurë*. In the etymological dictionary of the Albanian language by Gustav Meyer, we find *Klisyrë (Klisura)*, a mountain gorge. Such gorges along the trade routes have played a role in today's customs.

In a Turkish notebook of 1467, we find Klos with the name of Kilas, while for the name Stragj, we find the origin in the word Struga, which is still used today in Klos.

The area around Klos is still known as the province of *Stragj*, the market, or tregu. You can even hear the elderly even today say: "I am going to Stragj". Some assert that the word Stragj derives from *strajce* (bag or purse).

Historically, an important principality in what is now Albania was the Principality of Arbër, named after one of the tribes in Illyria following its conquest by the Romans, and to which Rome had given the right of internal self-government. Ptolemy records the Illyrian tribe Albanoi in approximately the present-day territories of Mat. Illyrians were organised into tribal communities, taking the name of the province where they lived. One such community, with the name of Albanoi, inhabited the area of Klos, including the town. The historian Dhimiter Shuteriqi (*History of Albania, volume I, 1967, p. 170*) writes:

"There are opinions that the centre of Arber was Xibri or Guri i Bardhe, or a mountainous place in the valley of Mat, where there were fortified places, known since then, such as the Castle of Xibri, Dars or Petralba."

In the 11th century, the names Arbër and Arbëreshë were also mentioned abroad. Ana Komnea defined the geographical boundaries of Arbëria as focused on Arbër (*Arbanon, Albanoi or Albani*) and which included the area stretching between Durrës and the River Drin, where Ptolemy located the Albanian tribe in the 2nd century. This area is the location of the present Mat, Mirdita and Kurbin.



Emblem of the Principalities of Arber.
XII century

Various scholars, in an attempt to locate the principality of Arbër and its centre (*Alban*), present evidence that the principality included Mat and that the centre was Klos.

Again, in the History of Albania it is recorded that when the Arbëresh rose up to throw off the centuries-old Byzantine yoke, they collaborated with the recently arrived Normans. Describing the events around 1107 in the time of Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus, we read: ***"This emperor set up strong garrisons to defend the castles and gorges of Arberia, Kruje and Diber."***

To gain further insight it is necessary to study the historical and territorial continuity of the *Pirusts* (Illyrian tribe that inhabited the area of Lezha, Mirdita and Mat) with the Albanians, the state of Arbër and Gjon Kastriot, and the anti-Turkish resistance of Skënderbeu. The territory of Klos was during this period at the epicentre of the resistance.

FORTIFIED CENTRES

Illyrian City of Xibri

The earliest fortified town in the Kryemata (greater Mat) area, to the west, is the Illyrian town of Xibri, built on a flat rocky peak above Darsi Mountain, at an altitude of 963 m above sea level. Historical evidence indicates that the town was built in the VI–V centuries BC. Its peak of prosperity was during the IV century following which it was demolished and reconstructed. Reporting on the archaeological excavations of this fortress town, archaeologist Dilaver Kurti writes of a baked clay tablet and six coins, including one of silver from Apollonia inscribed with the name ÓÙÈÑÁÔÇÓ NIKÛÏÏÓ, and two bronzes from Dyrrah (present-day Durres) of the three legged Zeus type, which appear to be Roman.

Kurti writes: ***“These prove that the City of Xibri had economic relations with Dyrrah and Apollonia, especially in the IV–II centuries BC.”***

Xibri appears to have been destroyed during the Illyrian–Roman war of 167 BC, as one of the hotbeds of resistance against the Roman invaders.

Because of the key position on the main roads connecting all of Mat with Durres and Apollonia, and its favourable defensive position, this town fortress was rebuilt in the VI century. Towns were usually built on sites with natural defences. The castle served as a fortified protection for the town. In the complex a protected settlement for the population of the Stragjut valley was formed, where the defence was directed mainly to the west and against passage through the gorge from Qafa e Buallit and along the connecting roads.

Folklore is that Xibri Castle was the great castle of the Kastriots, and when its iron gates were closed the shudder was felt five miles away in Bejn. The demolition of this town most likely coincides with the defeat of the resistance of Gjon Kastrioti.

Petralba Castle

The ruins of Petralba Castle are located at 836 m above sea level, on top of Lezeder Hill. The locals call their village the ***“Peak of the City,”*** indicating that the remains of a town lie among the fields below the castle, beside the River Mat. Petralba (Latin) translates to **White Rock** (*Gur i Bardhe*). Part of the city stretched to the south and south-east, to Gureza of Gurit të Bardhë. Kurti writes:

“Our historiography connects the construction of the castle with the birth of the Albanian feudal principalities of the XIII and XIV centuries.”





The castle was constructed at an important cross-roads, with one arm starting in ancient Durrës, along Tujan Stair and Qafa e Murrizë, and dividing into two branches, one from Guri i Bardhë, Ura e Vashës and Plan i Bardhë (quarters of Klos) and from Qafa e Buallit to Dibra, and the other from Qafa e Shkalleja, the horn of the Illyrian fortress of Xibri, to Mat.

During the time of the Romans, this cross-roads was known as the station, with the name Mansaj, a neighbourhood of the present Guri i Bardhë.

The castle was built by the Kastriots.





Ceruja Castle

Above the Rrase quarter in Cëruja lie the ruins of a castle, known to the locals as Skënderbeu Castle. These ruins sit on the second terrace at a height of 600 m above sea level, between the stream of Cëruja and the stream to the north.

The castle hill dominates the land below, but does not have natural defences as strong as the two described above. It is part of a ridge that branches into two, one descending to the village of Ceruja.

The ruins of the castle follow the terrain in an east–west direction. Dilaver Kurti describes in *Illyrian–Arbërore Heritage* (p. 184) that during the 1960s, excavations established the remains of a



rectangular structure, perhaps a tower, in the east with external dimensions 9 x 7 m and internal dimensions 5 x 3 m, with two large rooms just to the west. To the north the contours of an arching perimeter wall of length 65 m were identified. The walls were massive, 2–8 m thick in places and were linked with another wall, 54 m long and 5 m wide. The structures and the surrounding walls were built of stone and lime mortar. Below the castle, on the two terraces by the stream and above the irrigation canal, traces of an Illyrian settlement have been found, along with numerous fragments of clay vessels.

In the Rrasa quarter there is an Illyrian mound, and at a place known as Villa, ceramic constructions of late antiquity have been found. It appears that the castle was constructed to defend this place and passage along the important roads that intersected at Bridge Bazaar.

HISTORY EXHIBITION (GROUND FLOOR)

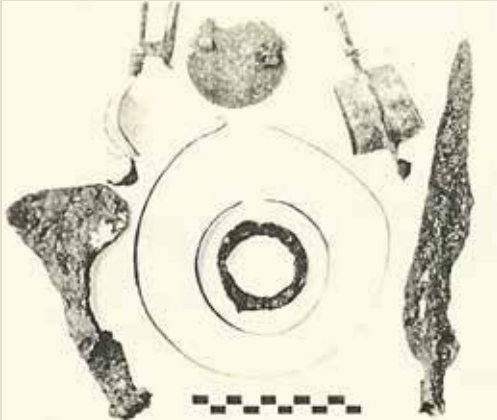
The Illyrian culture of Mat, and particularly of the Kryemata region, reached its peak with the creation of several towns and cities.

The Illyrian population that lived in the area was able to exist and survive without being assimilated by the Roman occupation, or other invasions. This continuation of life, culture and ethnicity continued until

the early Middle Ages, when the Illyrians become the Arbër.

There is ample evidence of Illyrian and early Albanian culture in the early medieval cemeteries. Traces of early Albanian culture have been discovered, particularly in the towns of Xibri and Petralba and at Cëruja Castle and the surrounding area.





In Klos, there are some ancient Illyrian tumuli. Most have yet to be investigated, though an early medieval tomb was uncovered beneath one such mound. The inventory includes a bracelet, a neck circlet, two fibulae, a bronze brooch, an axe, a spear, an iron circle, and a biconical bronze bead. It appears this was the grave of a man.

The spear resembles one found in the Illyrian fortress at Xibri. The blade is 15 cm long.

The two fibulae are made of bronze and are commonly found in this type of medieval cemetery. The bracelet resembles one found in

Arbër, and are typical of the type of bracelets found in the castles of Dalmatia and Kruje. It comprises a narrow bronze foil. At each end there are two holes joined together by a pin. The surface is decorated on the side with embedded dots, while in the centre there are zig-zag lines and dots. The circlet that was found is made of bronze.

The finds from Xibri are notable. They include a bronze fibula, arched and decorated with rings, two iron nails, three chisels that served as tools, an iron circle, a piece of surplus bronze wire from the works of decorative objects, a bronze needle and a prism-shaped bronze chisel, which resembles modern chisels used by blacksmiths to cut metal on an anvil.

The stone objects include a grindstone and a fragmented knife made of white stone. Other finds include a blue glass fragment with yellow and white zig-zag stripes, as well as the previously mentioned tablets and two others, one conical and another pyramidal, as well as a small clay roll with a hole in the middle, which seems to have been used to spin wool.

Local works include a small fragmented pottery bowl, an amphora handle with a palmette near the edge, a horseshoe-shaped handle painted with a layer of black varnish, and a fragment of a decorated vessel with triangles, showing that Illyrian motifs were widespread during the early Iron Age, and preserved until the present; today, these elements are often found in woodwork.

Cradles, forks and other wooden items, elegantly carved by local master craftsmen comprise motifs similar to the Illyrian ones, with concentric circles, rhombuses and triangles alternating with parallel lines, indicating continuity of a culture from the early Iron Age. In addition, among non-local objects, there is a *skiffos* (*scythos*; ceramic drinking bowl) fragment with black varnish, a middle amphora edge, and a braided object with black varnish. Eight coins have been found, two



of which are silver, one of Apollonia and the other of the Roman Emperor Vespasian, and four of bronze from Dyrrah, as well as two unidentified Roman coins.

The pottery collected at the site of Petralba Castle, although fragmented, testifies to its long existence, from late antiquity to the early Middle Ages. Finds from outside of the castle, in the two neighbourhoods of Petralba town and its outskirts, indicate a continuation of occupation. The ruins in Kodra e Pazarit, Majkishë, Lugun e Arrave, Vërrith, Gurëza and Murgatë, and the remains of churches with numerous archaeological finds, provide significant evidence for the Illyrian–Arberian heritage of the region and its role as the epicentre of the state of Arbër and, later, of the resistance of the Kastriots. An Illyrian open settlement under Cëruja Castle, with numerous archaeological finds, Illyrian mounds in Rrasa quarter, at the foot of the castle, and other mounds, finds at Villa near Cëruja from late antiquity are other evidence of such heritage.

The territory of Klos and the geographical area of Kryemata as a whole has been very little researched and many places wait to be explored.

CENTURIES LONG RESISTANCE



The Illyrian city of Xibri and the town of Petralba were, until the time when Gjon Kastrioti was finally defeated by the Ottomans, the focus of the organisation of resistance in Kryemata. Barleti writes that in Petralba, Skanderbeg housed 8,000 cavalry and 4,000 infantry. Not only the two neighbourhoods of Petralba, and Tanushaj e Fushatit and Gurëzat e Guri i Bardhë, but the whole area around the castle of Petralba, and below Cerujë Castle and Mount Thanë were significant places for the Kastriots and especially for Skanderbeg's army. Kuven Square, later Dardha Assembly, below Petralba and Kodra e Plakut in Fshat, were likely assembly points for mobilization against the Ottomans. These places near Petralba and Ceruja were tactically and strategically important to the army and the methods they used in combat.



The resistance continued after Skanderbeg's death. The craft of gunpowder production, which started at the foot of Petralba in the time of the Kastriots, continued in the area of Klos until recently, supplying gunpowder even beyond the borders of Albania. Also, the craft of making weapons was undertaken in the open but protected by the dense forests and impassable ravines, on the outskirts of Petralba, the town of Xibri and at the foot of Ceruja Castle. Folklore mentions the area as a place where tools and weapons were produced: rifles, swords, spears, bows, horseshoes, helmets and harnesses. The first mention is Gropa e Eshkës, between the peak of Kunora and the basin of Vasha Bridge, a truly strategic place protected greatly by the knife-edge slopes, impassable forests and straits, separated from the south by the cobbled road to Diber. The folklore is backed up by the numerous archaeological finds in the area, including ironmongery.

One of the most prominent people who represented the province in various assemblies was the Catholic priest and author Pjetër Budi (1566–1622), from Guri i Bardhë. Budi tried to secure military support from Rome to counter the Ottoman invaders. His resistance relied entirely on the free peasantry, especially the highlanders. Budi was lost in the waters of the River Drin on Christmas Eve 1622, and research of the archives indicates that it was the anti-Albanians who managed to eliminate him in. But, again the resistance continued.

The people of Klos, together with representatives of all the Matjans, participated in the great Mali assemblies of 1594 at the Monastery of St. Mary at Lis, and in the nationwide assembly held in the church of St. Alexander at Dukagjin. There, important decisions were taken for the unification of Albanian territories and the realisation of cooperation and provision of international support. These assemblies later became inter-Balkan assemblies, after which Mat and Klos became shelters for civil movements that were pursued in other parts of Albania. In 1879, the people of Klos, under the leadership of Dylejman Çela I, fought to protect Hoti and Gruda from the Montenegrins, sending tens of thousands to help the fighters of the Prizren League.



Klos in the Efforts for National Independence

On the eve of Albania's declaration of independence, the inhabitants of Klos were involved in the struggle for national liberation. Many participated in the Assembly of Suç of 1911, from which the centre of resistance emerged, the Forces Commission. On July 10, Beqir Meziri (Klos), Haxhi Miftari (Dars), Liman Kajaci (Fullqet), Shahin Kaceli (Beli), Riza Hoxha (Unjate), Met Dema (Hidri) were elected to the Commission. After the declaration of independence, these men were responsible for organising ambushes against the Serbs in, e.g., Thane and Qafe Bualli.

Klosians contributed to Albania's independence. The Matjans included Ahmet Zogu and Kurt Agë Kadiu, while the Klos representative was Riza beg Cela, who fought alongside Riza Hoxha (Unjatc), Beqir Meziri (also from Klos). In the same year, the Klosians met the Serbian invaders in the gorges of Qafa e Buallit and Qafa e Dushkut to prevent their forces from entering Mat. Many gave their lives in the service of Klos. The area also stood up to the foreign armies invading during the Balkan Wars of 1912–1914 and the First World War in which, as a result of reprisals, many Klosians disappeared without a trace, including Halil Lleshi.

Klos in the National Liberation War

The occupation of Albania by fascist Italy was greeted by the people of the Klos area with great anger and indignation. Early in April 1939, a large number of Klos villagers went to Burrel to look for weapons to fight the invaders. The commander of the Burrel garrison and the Fascist occupiers in the Klos area appeared in the spring of 1940. The barracks were set up at the intersection of Klos–Lin and Klos–Bulqize roads. A camp was set up at the Old Bazaar, where prisoners of war, mostly Montenegrins, were held. In Klos, protection cells, national liberation councils and guerrilla units immediately began to form. Until mid-1942, the resistance actions were undertaken by the guerrilla units, but once the Peza Brigade was established, on August 21, 1941, other brigades were formed around the country, including in Klos and Mat.

Under the leadership of commander Hysen Buzhiqui, deputy commander Hakik Fejzo and Commissar Spiro Bakalli, the brigade undertook several military actions. But on July 26, 1943, an assembly was held in Bruç i Matit where the need for the unification of people in the fight against the invaders took root. Mat had organised the assembly and took over the conducting of hostilities, mobilising some 3,000 volunteers, which, on July 31, 1943, attacked the fascist forces in Burrel garrison, the camp in Komsî, in Klos and Qafë Buall.

The popular uprising of Mat, both in terms of numbers, 3,000 fighters, and in terms of duration, was an extraordinary contribution to the national plan. And the fighting continued against the next invader, the German Nazis, until their withdrawal in 1944.





ETHNOGRAPHY EXHIBITION (FIRST FLOOR)

Around Klos

Kulla (Tower House)

Albania's characteristic tower homes have inherited some of the aspects of Illyrian and Arberian castles. They were built as fortresses, on high places, on hills where the terrain could be observed, threats detected and action taken in time to protect the family and the property. If necessary, help could be sought, and be found. This was mutual and based on the customs of the village and the canon of Leke Dukagjini. Thus the towers remained free and untouched, expressing the will of the highlanders not to submit but to remain free.

The oldest type of tower is one built of mud and wooden strips and with wide shelters, such as the towers of Doke and Selman Cupes in the village, the towers of Lleshi and Allushi in Klos Katund, Shahin, Gjish and Hysen Dedolli in Bejn. The newer type is of limestone, and without the shelters outside the wall.

In Kryemata such tower dwellings were numerous. It appears there was a kind of rivalry as to who could build the biggest, strongest, tallest, most beautiful tower, with more chimneys, etc. Towers, as a special type of popular dwelling, are distinguished for their specific character and protective function. They were usually built isolated and far from each other. When the terrain was unprotected by nature the inhabitants surrounded themselves with walls.



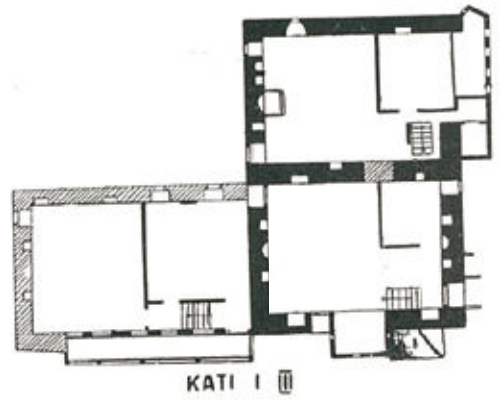


PAMJE KRYESORE



PAMJE ANESORE

KULLE NE KLOS



KATI I



There are some resemblances between these dwellings and the desire to live in an apartment: both have a protective character, dominate an area, designed to have unlimited view in all directions. Towers are gathered in particular areas, such as in Fshat, in Tanushë, the towers of Dokes, Cupes, Llekut, Bel-Unjate, Dars, Fullqët, and Bejn. Probably the phenomenon grew with the family, or tribe, maintaining a character and meeting the demand to be protected. Such requirements caused the master builders to construct towers with two or more floors. The corners, the arches of the entrances and windows, corners protruding for protection and the small turrets are worked and carved with rich techniques. The treatment of the walls and the arched entrance and few, small windows emphasize the character of protection and the originality of the *kulla*.

The first floor usually housed livestock, while

the upper floors were used for housing. The living quarters were simple rooms, furnished with woodwork, often carved with floral and geometric motifs. To the side would be characteristic chimney, large and with carved breast, typically a double-headed eagle, six or eight-pointed star, Turkish crescent, six, eight- or more petal rosettes, rhombuses, and wavy lines. The name of the master craftsman and the master of the house were written on the chimney plate. Adjacent to the chimney, on either side, were wall-mounted arched chambers carved in stone, or cupboards carved in wood. The interior was generally dark, illuminated only by small windows and protection turrets, which were on all four sides of the dwelling.

There are no accurate data on the origin of this type of dwelling, but as a protecting home it would have existed before the invention of firearms.





ETHNOGRAPHY OF KLOS

Friends, Tradition and Hospitality

The villages of the Klos area have a special tradition of hospitality. Every house would keep their door open for a friend, regardless of their situation. The saying Bread and salt of heart is rooted deeply in the consciousness of the locals, and even defined in the canon of Leke Dukagjini: *“The honour of a friend is bread and salt of heart.”*

Usually the houses were ringed on all sides by a fence. When a friend approached the gate he would call up. Greetings would follow and when he entered the house, the friend would hand his weapon to the master of the house, taking it back when he left.

As soon as they sat down, they were asked about their health and that of the family. The master would offer tobacco to roll a cigarette, and he himself would put the coffee-maker on the fire, make the coffee, and place it in front of his friend. He would try to create a relaxed atmosphere for his friend, who would feast on whatever was available. If there were a shortage in the house, food was borrowed from a neighbour, even plates, in order to provide as good a service as possible. When cattle were slaughtered, the friend was given the best part: the shoulder or a half of the head, with the other half usually kept for the master.

The arrival of a friend was a notable event: *“The friend comes with seven greetings, of which they leave six and take away only one,”* because their arrival makes the whole family eat and drink well. Out of respect, close neighbours would also appear, for dinner or after dinner to talk and create a pleasant environment. The next day would start with breakfast and coffee. When the friend left, he would be given bread, his pouch filled with tobacco and he would be escorted by the master or one of his sons, to where the village border ended. For anything that might happen to the friend as far as the border of the village, the owner of the house was responsible. If the friend were killed inside these limits, the owner of the house would pay for his blood. The expression *“The house of the Albanian belongs to the lord and the friend”* has been prevalent throughout the province.

Traditional Clothing

The men of Klos traditionally wore *shallvare* (type of trouser), *xhamadan* (short sleeveless jacket), *mitan* (shirt) and *xhulin* (woollen jacket). Characteristically, the shirt would be long and white with broad sleeves. The *xhamadan* was adorned with black braids and white cloth. The *xhulin* had a scarf draped over the shoulders, which could be lifted above the head when it rained. It also had two tassels on the sleeves and shoulders. *Guna* was a type of winter coat and covered the whole body. The *xhulin*, *shallvare* and *guna* were made of very compacted, strong felt (*shajak*) that was produced in the area. *Shajak* could resist rain for up to 24 hours and keep the body warm in times of frost and snow. The men wore a kind of white felt hat called *çilaf* (fez), on their legs woollen socks, and on their feet *opinga* (upturned leather shoes).

The women's clothing also consisted of *shallvare*, *mitan*, *opinga*, and woollen socks. The difference lay in decoration, more ornate in the women's case and with accessories. The head was covered with a scarf, usually white though this varied with age: young women typically wore dark scarves with colourful floral motifs.



Musical Tradition in Klos

Music and dance have been an integral part of family and social events and also of daily life in the Klos area. One of the characteristic types is that of the highland song. Often such songs have a social theme, sung about the wounds of a particular time such as blood feud or the defence of honour and property. Highland songs are sung during agricultural events such as harvest-time, pruning, provision of building materials, shearing of sheep, etc. Such jobs were performed mainly by men. Often a long line of sheep shearers was led by the singing shearer.

Klos, as part of Mat, has a wealth of musical instruments used since ancient times. The flute and pipe, drum, *çiftelia* (stringed instrument), tambourine and whistle have nurtured the musical heritage of this area. Often the instruments would have been produced by local artisans.



Klos Handicrafts

Klos is known for its rich tradition of precious handicrafts, created for centuries by master craftsmen, according to the characteristics and specifics of the different geographical areas, excelling in the aesthetic appearance of objects that are generally handmade. The works of wood, stone, metal, wool, silk, clay and pottery stand out and are symbols of the Albanian national identity. These values, passed down from generation to generation, always arouse great interest among local and foreign visitors and researchers, at various exhibitions or fairs.

In Klos, there was the Bridge Bazaar, where in addition to the villagers from the immediate vicinity of Klos, villagers from Xibri, Guri i Bardhë, Suç, Kurdaria, Martanesh, Bulqize, Zerqan came to trade. Sellers came from all over Diber County, Elbasan, Tirana, Kruje and Durres. At Bridge Bazaar, numerous agricultural and livestock produce and, importantly, salt would be sold. The produce would come from Durres through Qafë Murrizës, and would include kerosene, pottery, handicrafts, clothing and fabrics, including silks, which in Kryemata were sold wholesale, and other products prepared on looms: *shajak*, various fabrics, wool, furs, carpets, pendants and jewellery for women.

The most common wooden utensils included jars, jugs, vases and spoons. Household handicrafts in Klos occupied an important place in the material life and culture of the inhabitants; not only because they were a necessity, but also because they suited the social and natural conditions. Life based on an agricultural and livestock economy made necessary the need for processing wool typically sheared from sheep.



Women would weave a wide range of fabrics. Almost all mastered the use of the common machinery for weaving woollen fabrics: *tellare*. These looms (*avlemend*) would make woollen fabrics for clothing, carpets and rugs with beautiful ornaments and decorations. A huge range of products were made from wool, in addition to the linens (for shirts) and leather goods (shoes). The wool was lined and pressed with a tool called a *gerhane*, shaped by hand, placed on a spindle and spun with a needle and shaft according to the particular item to be made. The spinning was undertaken according to the type of material required. Spinning tools, forks and shafts were

made by local men, who engraved carvings and even made a range of types of fork, with two or three prongs.

After the weaving in the *tellare* was completed the resulting fabric was taken to the *valanica*, compacted further and finally take on the shape of the *shajak*. The printing of the shajak was typically done in the valley of Lic in Bejn and Bebe in Dars.

Klos had an early tradition in the production of natural silk through the cultivation of the silkworm. With the silk thread, high quality fabrics were produced which were in great demand, especially for bridal dresses. With the mass production of industrially produced fabrics, hand production of silk gradually decreased.

At one time in the villages of Klos, flax was planted and processed. The name *lintat* still in use today comes from the former use of linen cloth. The production of linen fabrics ended in the time of Zog, with the introduction of mass produced cotton fabrics made in Italy and elsewhere.

Opinga (*poulaine* or winklepicker shoes) were also in fashion and made from cowhide, for both men and women. A large needle was used to sew the *opinga*. A ring (a strip up to 50 cm long and approximately 0.5 cm wide) was inserted into a hole and the leather cut along the leg and sewn sideways, gradually turning it so that the toes turned upwards, beyond the tips of the toes.

Gunpowder Production

Gunpowder first began to be produced in Mat about 500 years ago. The colour is typically black and branded as Mat Gunpowder. The workshops for production were located in Kryemata below Petralba Castle and beside the nearby streams. Production was undertaken in simple workshops utilising the energy of water but also the strength of the arm. The workshops were called Gunpowder Dinga as a result of the sound made during the production. The gunpowder was used widely, for pistols and rifles, cannons, and breaking rocks, among others. The dinga comprised *vigu*, sheets that were set in motion by the flow of water, metal shafts, slats, pulleys and choppers, set in limestone slabs where the beating of the material took place. The raw materials comprised potassium nitrate (*gjyrgjylja*), 75%; sulfur, 10%; and charcoal, 15%. The gypsum and sulfur were usually imported from Italy though there was also some local production. The charcoal was produced from local willow, poplar and hazelnut wood. Mat Gunpowder was traded in the markets of Diber, Prizren, Gjakova, Shkoder, Durres, Elbasan, Tirana, Berat and as far away as Ioannina and elsewhere in the Balkans (*Rumelia*).







