

International TCA

Minority Languages Uniting in Diversity

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LINGUISTIC MINORITIES, PRECIOUS STONES OF
THE ITALIAN AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY
MOSAIC: ALBANIANS IN ITALY OR ARBËRESHË

THE PROTECTION OF LINGUISTIC MINORITIES



United in diversity

- In the countries of the European Union, there are groups of linguistic expression different from that of the majority of the population. In addition to the official language of their country, about 40 million citizens of the Union speak daily a regional minority language transmitted from generation to generation.
- These linguistic communities (over 50) are testimony to the richness of the cultural heritage of Europe.
- Minority languages are a value and not a problem for Europe.

THE PROTECTION OF LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

United in diversity



■ In Europe

- The European Parliament has adopted a Resolution on a community charter on regional language and culture and a charter of rights of ethnic minorities (adopted October 16, 1981)

■ The Council of Europe:

- The **European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML)** is a European treaty (CETS 148) adopted in 1992 under the auspices of the Council of Europe to protect and promote historical regional and minority languages in Europe. However, the charter does not provide any criterion or definition for an idiom to be a minority or a regional language, and the classification stays in the hands of the national state.
- Convention for the protection of national minorities, underwritten in Strasbourg on February 1, 1995

THE PROTECTION OF LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

■ In Europe

- The Treaty of the European Constitution (signed in Rome, October 29, 2004)
- Values of the Union concerning the rights of people belonging to a minority and equality between women and men

■ Article 1-2

The Union is founded on values of human dignity, of liberty, of democracy, of equality of respect for human rights, including the rights of people belonging to a minority. These values are common to the member states in a society founded on pluralism, on non discrimination, on tolerance, justice, on solidarity and on equality between women and men.

THE PROTECTION OF LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

The Italian context

■ The Italian Constitution

Article 3 “All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law without distinction of sex, race, language”

Article 6 «The Republic promotes linguistic minorities with necessary provisions»

■ Law # 482 of December 15, 1999: Provisions regarding the support of historical minority languages

THE PROTECTION OF LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

The Italian context

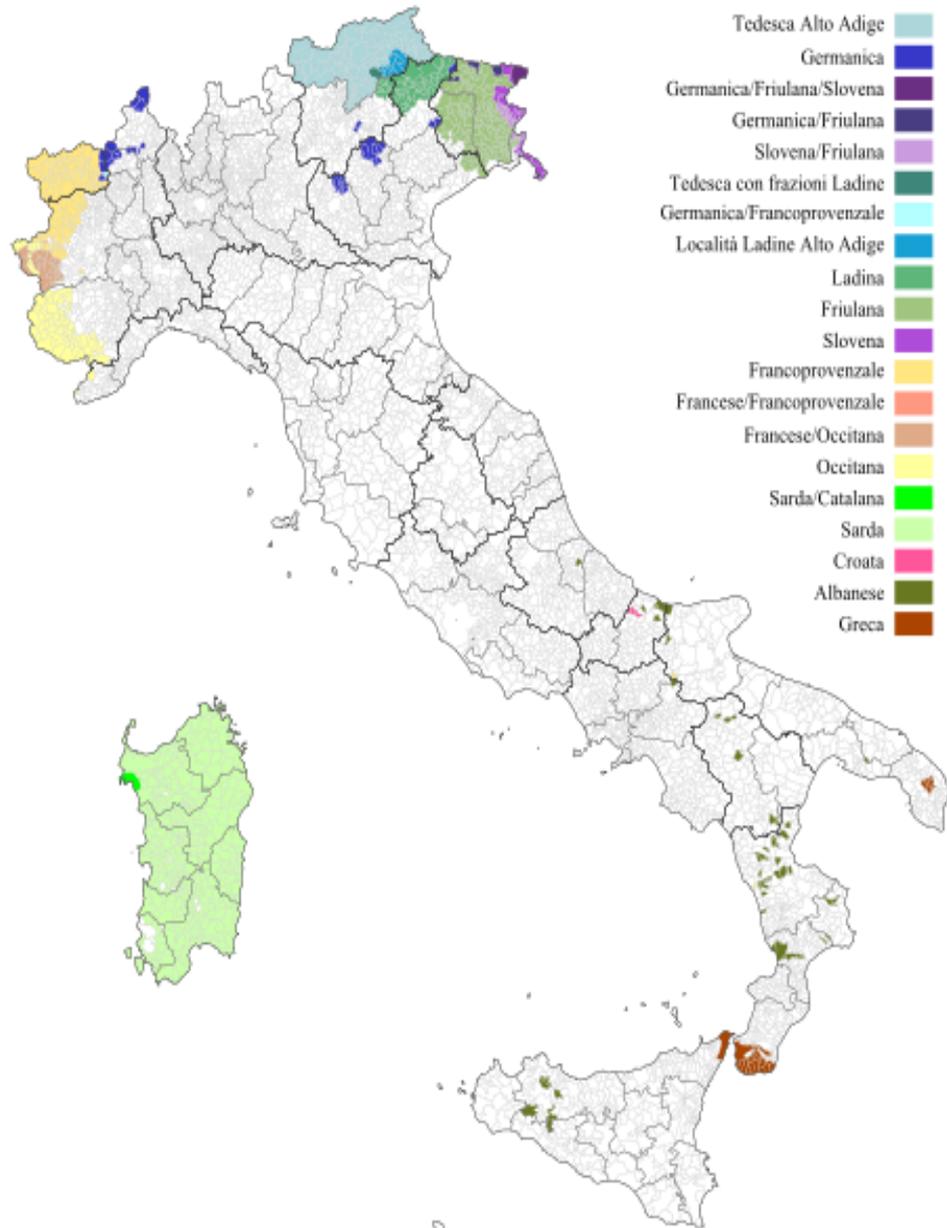
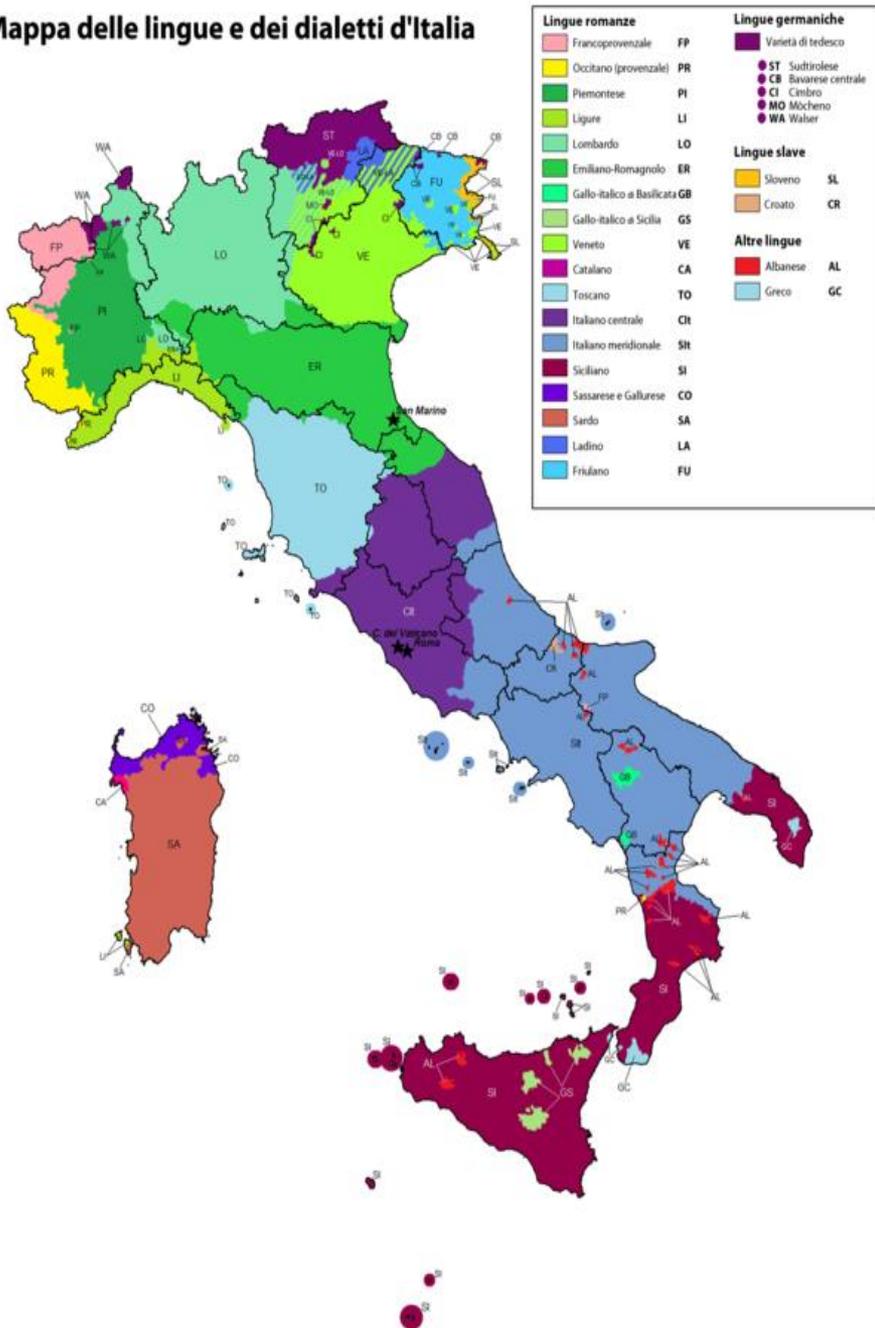
- Law #482 of December 15, 1999 recognizes 12 varieties of minority idioms that respond to the requirement of being tied to a territory and to a historical period; they are known as historical linguistic minorities

Law 482 brings out the problems of applying a territorial limit that links the support for these languages to a particular territory without taking into account the needs of the diffused minorities.

Historical Linguistic Minorities of Italy

Albanian - Greek - French
Catalan - Croatian - Franco-Provençal
Slovenian - Ladin - Friulian - German
Occitan - Sardinian

Mappa delle lingue e dei dialetti d'Italia



Comunità di minoranza

L. 482/99 e S.A. Prov. BZ/Sudtirolo



Historical Linguistic Minorities of Southern Italy

Albanian, Greek, Croatian, Occitan, Franco-Provençal

INEQUALITY AMONG THE DIVERSITIES REPRESENTED BY THE 12 HISTORICAL LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

For the minority languages recognized in our country by national law nr. 482/1999, two sets of issues are intertwined: 1) the protection of minorities (with political, legal, and cultural implications) and the promotion of their linguistic diversity, clash with a common condition, as they are largely Seriously Threatened Languages – some more so than others – and, in any case, in decline, as they are losing more and more speakers and areas of use, thus progressively reducing the vitality of their language and its scope of use, to the point of facing the risk of extinction..

2) It should be highlighted, however, that the existing situation among the different linguistic minorities is by no means homogeneous, for historical reasons, enjoying differentiated levels of protection, strongly conditioned by their geo-political positioning, but also by a linguistic awareness that is anything but homogeneous among the speakers of the various minorities, and particularly among the local administrators in the areas where the minorities are located, with very high levels of protection in some northern regions of the country and very low or non-existent in the central and southern regions.



Historical Linguistic Minorities of Calabria



Albanians
Greek
Occitans

Historical linguistic minorities of Calabria

THE REGIONAL FRAMEWORK

- **OLD REGIONAL STATUTE - Art.56, letter 'R'**
- "In relation to the objectives referred to in Art. 3 of this Statute" the Region, within the scope of its competencies and in collaboration with the State: [...]
- r) respecting its own traditions, promotes the enhancement of the historical, cultural, and artistic heritage of the populations of Albanian and Greek origin; encourages the teaching of the two languages in the places where they are spoken;
- **NEW REGIONAL STATUTE - Regional Law of October 19, 2004, no. 25**
Art.2, comma 2, lettera p):
- The Region particularly inspires its actions towards achieving the following objectives: [...] the protection and enhancement of the ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities present in Calabria, with particular regard to the populations of Albanian, Greek, Occitan, and Romani origin.
- **REGIONAL LAW 30 OCTOBER 2003, N.15**
"Rules for the protection and promotion of the language and cultural heritage of the linguistic and historical minorities (sic!) of Calabria"



Albanian (Arbëresh)
Linguistic
Minority
in Calabria

Arbëresh linguistic minority in Calabria

Territorial Minorities

- 31 Albanian language centers
COSENZA
(25 Municipalities + 6 Fraction)
- 2 Albanian language centers (1 Municipality + 1 Fraction)
CATANZARO
- 3 Albanian language centers (3 Municipalities) CROTONE
- Total population: 40,000 inhabitants

Diffused Minorities

- Urban centres (Cosenza, Rende, Crotona, Catanzaro, Corigliano C., Rossano C., Trebisacce, Castrovillari)
- Total population: 10,000 inhabitants

Arbëresh Linguistic Minority in Calabria

(in yellow those communities that, in addition to the language, also preserve the Byzantine religious rite)

■ **Municipalities in the Province of CS:**

- ACQUAFORMOSA /FIRMOZA
- CASTROREGIO / KASTËRNEXHI
- CERZETO /QANA
- CIVITA /ÇIVËTI
- FALCONARA ALBANESE /FALLKUNARA
- FIRMO /FERMA
- FRASCINETO /FRASNITA
- LUNGRO /UNGRA
- PLATACI /PLLATËNI
- SAN BASILE /SHEN VASILI
- SAN BENEDETTO U./ SHËN BENEDHITI
- SAN COSMO ALBANESE/STRIGARI
- SAN DEMETRIO CORONE /SHËN MITRI
- SAN MARTINO DI FINITA /SHËN MËRTIRI
- SANTA CATERINA ALBANESE/PICILIA

SANTA SOFIA D'EPIRO /SHËN SOFIA

SAN GIORGIO ALBANESE/MBUZATI

SPEZZANO ALBANESE /SPIXANA

VACCARIZZO ALBANESE/VALARICI

■ **Municipalities in the Province of CZ:**

CARAFFA DI CATANZARO/GHARRAFA

MAIDA (FRAZIONE VENA) VINA

■ **Municipalities in the Province of KR:**

CARFIZZI/KARFICI

PALLAGORIO/PUHERIU

SAN NICOLA DELL'ALTO /SHËN KOLLI

Greek linguistic minority

■ Territorial Minorities:

- 6 Municipalities (Condofuri, Galliciano, Roccaforte del Greco, Roghudi, Bova, Bova Marina)

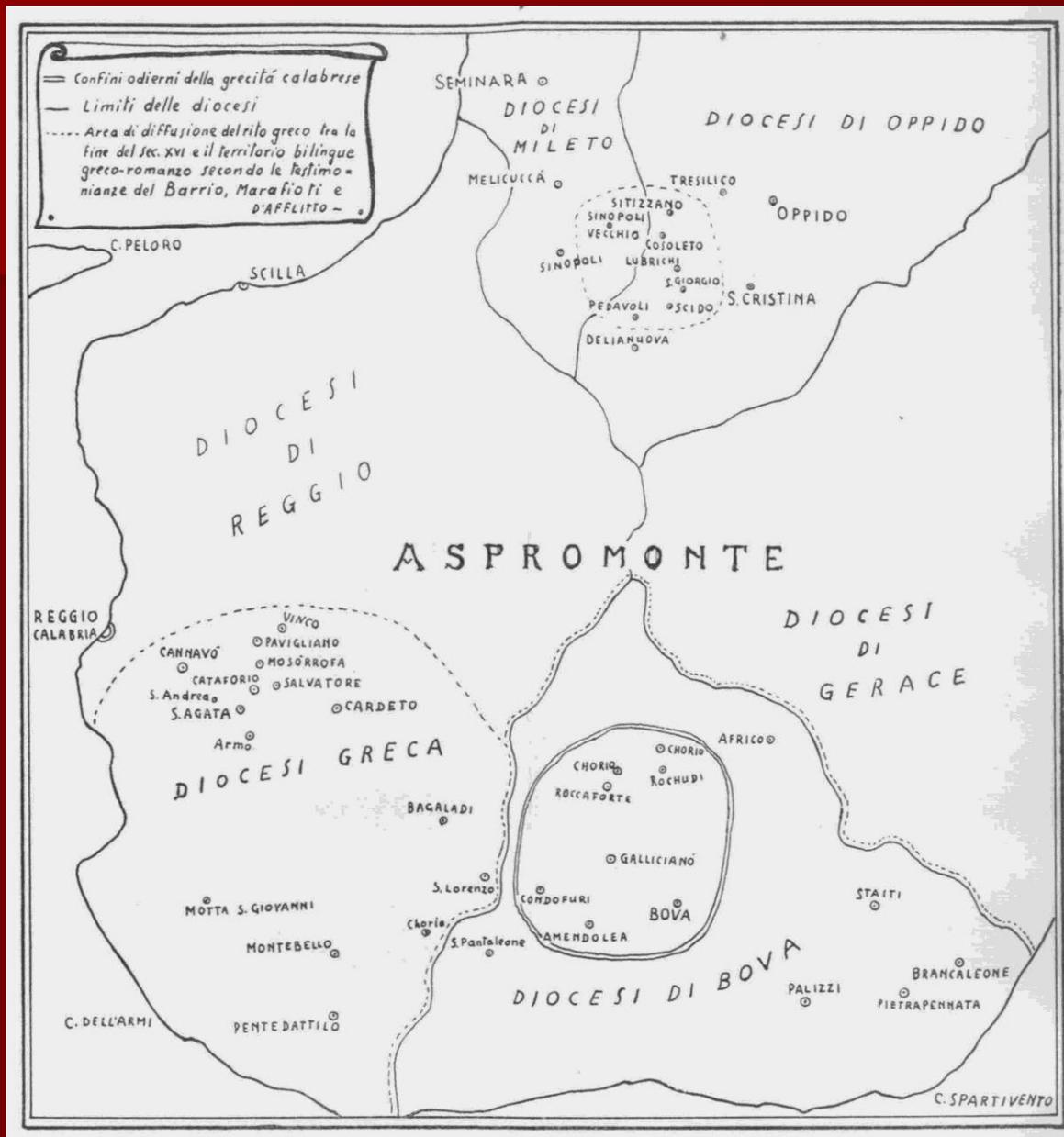
Greek-speaking population:
9%* = 1.009 abitanti

Total population:
11.211 inhabitants

*SOURCE: Antonio Romano, author of the entry
«greca, comunità» pp. 614-5 in IL VOCABOLARIO
TRECCANI, ENCICLOPEDIA DELL'ITALIANO, Roma 2011

■ Diffused minorities (non Greek-speaking):

- Centri urbani in area reggina:
Melito Porto Salvo, Reggio Calabria (Quartieri: San Giorgio Extra, Modena, Arangea e Sbarre)
- The Greek-Byzantine religious rite, previously used in the Greek-speaking communities of the Reggio area, was abolished in 1571, with the Council of Trent.



**Greek
 Linguistic
 Minority
 in Calabria**

Occitan linguistic minority

Territorial minority:

Municipality of Guardia Piemontese (Cosenza)

Occitan-speaking population: 300 inhabitants

Total population: 1926 inhabitants

Comunità occitana di Calabria: Guardia Piemontese

Guardia Piemontese is the last witness of what was the presence of the Occitan Waldensians in Calabria. Despite the centuries, the language of the “ultramontanes” who arrived from Piedmont is still spoken in the streets of this village mindful of a violent history, which dates back to the times of religious persecution and the ecclesiastical inquisition. It remembers the massacre of the Waldensians perpetrated in Guardia between the end of May and the beginning of June 1561.



COMMON PROBLEM OF CALABRIAN LINGUISTIC MINORITIES: THE DRAMATIC DEMOGRAPHIC DECLINE THAT CAUSES THE POPULATION DEPLETION AND AGEING OF THE REGIONAL ALLOGLOTTIC COMMUNITIES

	Population 1981	Population 2018	Population 2065	age index 2018
Albanian minority in Calabria	51.637 inhabitants	38.832 inhabitants	ca.20.000 inhabitants	254 old x 100 very young
Greek minority in Calabria	13.331 inhabitants	11.211 inhabitants	6.518 inhabitants	196,3 old x 100 very young
Calabria	2.061.182	1.947.131	1 489 518 -500.000	158,4 old x 100 very young
Italy	56,489,622	60,483,973	50, 496,777	168,9 old x 100 very young

Historical Linguistic Minorities: The Arbëresh

The Arberesh linguistic minority are among the historically rooted minorities like the Greeks, the Catalans, the Slavics, the Occitans which do not have a territorial continuity with the group of origin.

They are in fact true linguistic islands of ancient tradition that have transmitted orally over the centuries a rich linguistic, cultural and religious heritage.

It was recognized by the Italian state with law #482 of December 15, 1999.

The origins of the Arbëresh community

The first signs of migration of the Arberesh towards Italy date back to after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 by the Turks.

These migrations were determined mainly by economic and military reason.

Sporadic migrations of Albanians to Italy had already taken place between the 13th and 15th centuries.

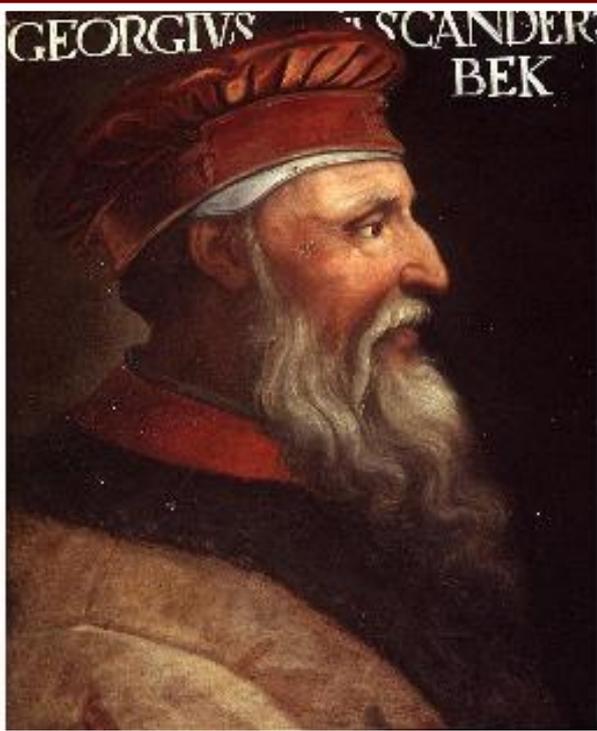
The origins of the Arbëresh in Italy

The first migrations of the Arberesh in Italy involved soldiers and not exiles.

In the 15th century, the king of Naples, Alfonso I d'Aragona, to put down the revolts by the local barons called in mercenaries from Albania.

In the 1400 Calabria, like Sicily, was part of the kingdom of Naples. The Albanians provided the military power to counter rebellions.

**George CASTRIOTA
SKANDERBEG (1405-1468),
albanian national hero and
among the protagonist of
the European anti-Ottoman
resistance**



- The most important migrations took place as a result of the Turkish invasion. In about three centuries, from the middle of the 15th century to the middle of the 18th century, there were many migrations which strengthened the Albanian minority in Italy.
- The last settlement of the Albanian community took place in Villa Badessa, in Abruzzo, in 1744.

The Origins of the Arbëresh community in Italy

Albanian emigration to Venice was due to tight political and commercial relations. The migrations then moved south into central and southern Italy due to geographical proximity but also due to the good relationship between the Popes and the kings of Naples of the house of Aragon.

In southern Italy, the Albanians were accepted either because disasters such as the pest and earthquakes such as that of 1456 had deprived the countryside of many inhabitants.

The origins of the Arbëresh in Italy

The Albanians in Italy founded or repopulated about one hundred communities of which the majority were in Calabria.

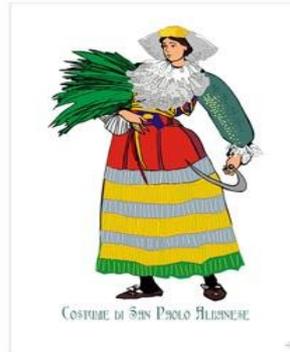
In order to encourage the integration of migrant people such as the Arberesh, the Kings of Aragon considered the extreme poverty of the migrants and provided many concessions, privileges and economic stimulants.

The arrival of Albanian immigrants coincides at the end of the 1400s into the middle of the 1500s with strong economic development and a shortage in labour.

The Arbëresh and oral literature

- Through folklore, oral literature, language and faith, the Arberesh community keep alive their distinct identity and cultural history despite living in small isolated rural pockets surrounded by the majority of the population which speaks a different language and values different traditions.
- The Arberesh have maintained a spirit of solidarity and a strong sense of their national identity. Their literature expresses their nostalgia for the land they left behind as well as recounting tales and legends of their cultural past and heritage.

Arbëresh oral literature



Shpend Bengu 2004



Arbëresh oral literature



Arbëresh oral literature



The arbëreshë: language

- The language spoken by the Albanians in Italy is *arbërisht*, a sort of archaic dialect of the Albanian language. It is close to the linguistic variant spoken in the south of Albania and in Greece from which the majority of the Arberesh originate.
- Today, the written language of Albania is based primarily on the linguistic variant used in the South -- *arbërisht* is still favoured after five centuries since its almost total separation from its origins.
- The lack of a written form of this language has not stopped the transmission through the centuries of the arberesh culture essentially through the oral tradition.

The arbëreshë: language

The arbëresh language spoken in Italy presents a certain cohesion and unity despite the differences between various Albanian dialects. It is a form of dialect that is not equal to any of the dialects from the country of origin. In some ways, it presents the phonetic, morphological, syntactical and lexical characteristics of the language of those ancient scribes of northern Albania of the 15th and 17th and in particular with the language of - Messale by Gjon Buzuku, published in 1555.

The arbëreshë: language

Further to these characteristics stemming from the mother country, the Albanian spoken in Italy is comprised of numerous linguistic innovations, especially with respect to vocabulary which are determined by the contact with Italian and its dialects. Italian and its dialects have been adapted perfectly to the phonetic and morphological structures of the Albanian language in Italy.

MINORITY LANGUAGE: before law 482/1999 community low code (oral only)



MINORITY LANGUAGE - such as Arbëreshe - once it has been recognised by national law 482/1999 becomes a LANGUAGE OF A MINORITY. It thus changes its status, requiring its transformation from a low code (only oral-community) to a high code (written and oral-intercommunity)



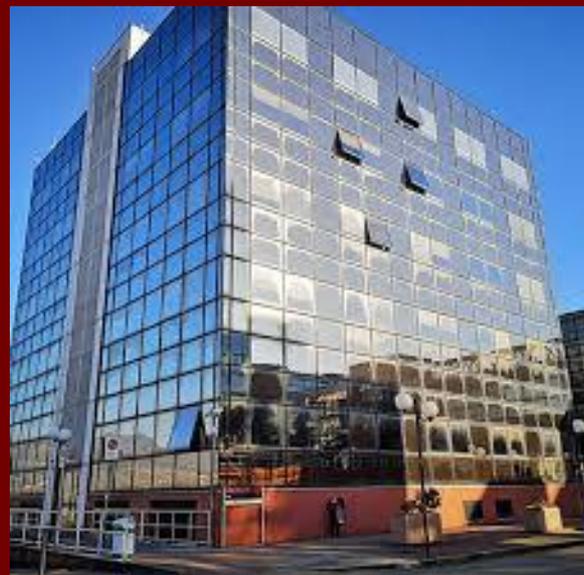
25 years after the approval of national law 482/1999, we are unfortunately still far from the desirable goal of making our and other minority languages co-official languages!



HISTORICAL LINGUISTIC MINORITIES, PRECIOUS STONES OF THE ITALIAN AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY MOSAIC

«The Italian national identity has proven to be rich and fruitful as the product of a thousand-year-old hybridization of peoples and cultures from all over the Mediterranean. In short, the history of the Italian identity demonstrates, more generally, that the definition of cultural identities cannot be isolationist, but must focus on complementarity, on exchanges between cultures, on a variable geography of "giving" and "having", of mutual inclusion. In Europe, and not only in Italy, the various ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups, present for millennia, have combined with each other with very long-term dynamics.

The individual European cultural identities were formed through processes of osmosis and exchange; each of them should not be defined "by distinction" from the others, but rather through the analysis of the elements that compose it, many of which are present in other cultures. Therefore, it is important to remember historical precedents, to understand that one's own culture includes significant elements that come from other cultures, and that it has contributed to defining the identity of other cultures, of other countries. This simple and incontrovertible fact transmits a message that our time absolutely needs: a message of openness and tolerance that comes from the very fabric of our history".



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