



THE EUROPEAN UNION'S CROSS BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME

THE IMPACT OF THE HOUSE-MUSEUM OF THE WRITER STERJO SPASSE IN THE COMMUNITY OF PUSTEC MUNICIPALITY IN TERMS OF CULTURE, TOURISM AND ECONOMY.



Author

Enea Jani student

Guided by

Dr.Ermiona Braholli

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ABSTRACT

What makes a place authentic, what differentiates it from any other place, makes it unique, and puts it on the map? Besides the natural features, the elements of the physical world, are the culture with its values the main trait which makes it known to the world. Culture is best represented by its figures, by its titans, those who leave a mark in the world and carry with them the values of the place from which they came. Through them, a place is best acknowledged and evaluated. Their bonds with their home are so strong and intertwined sometimes, which makes it impossible to think of one without the other. Such a figure is Sterjo Spasse for the village where was born and raised, the village of Gollomboch, and for the entire Prespa Region. He is without a doubt one of the most important figures of this area, who through his work and actions contributed to making known and elevating the culture of the area and in the process, became the embodiment of the whole area's identity. When someone mentions Prespa, the mind goes immediately to Sterjo Spasse and when someone mentions Sterjo Spasse, immediately comes to mind Prespa. Therefore the reconstruction of the old school of the Gollombochi Village and its adaptation as a House-Museum in the honor of Sterjo Spasse is the first step in praising and uplifting this figure and with him the cultural heritage of the area.

The perspective from which the residents of Gollomboch village along with all other villages of Pustec municipality, view the writer Sterjo Spasse, and evaluate the construction of the house-museum constitutes the core of this study. The knowledge they have of Sterjo Spasse as a writer and a member of this community, as a connecting bridge between Albania and Macedonia is an aspect of the study. The construction of the house museum and the impact this object has brought on cultural awareness in the area is another element of this study. How this has affected the residents from the cultural perspective, their connection with the writer, the traditions of the past, and the cultural heritage, in general, are some of the questions that reveal in deep their awareness and evaluation of the existence of such a museum. What is the impact of the house museum on the increase of visitors and tourists and how do they affect the economy of residents of Gollomboch village, as well as all other villages in the area, are some of the topics that will be analyzed in detail. The study is brought alive through the words and opinions of the residents themselves, by creating a general opinion on the matter, as well as differentiating some better-formulated opinions from a few of the residents, in order to create a more vivid study and a better understanding of the current reality. In absence of concrete statistics collected on certain matters, where such statistics are non-existent the study is focused on qualitative data, in which case such opinions turn out to be most useful.

Key words

Sterjo Spasse, house museum, area of Prespa, the village of Gollomboch, writer, residents of the area, visitors, tourist impact, cultural heritage, economic impact, community, evaluation, perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage is the heritage of objects, artifacts, language, religion, and other traditions, of a group of people, a region, or an entire society, which is inherited from previous generations to the present ones. This heritage is most important because it holds in itself the knowledge and the ways of the past, makes it known to the present and through it to the future generations.

Cultural heritage includes: The material heritage which is touchable and the spiritual heritage which cannot be touched. The material culture includes buildings, museums, monuments, clothes, landscapes, books, artworks, document archives, and other objects. The spiritual culture, includes language, religion, traditional knowledge and ways of operation, behaviour, songs, tales, and all other folklore. Natural heritage is another very important aspect, which includes important natural landscapes containing irreplaceable cultural values.

The area of study is the municipality of Pustec and its cultural heritage with the village of Gollomboch at the center, where the house-museum of Sterjo Spasse is found. The municipality of Pustec is part of the Prespa Region, and Korca District. Is located in the southeast of Albania, on the borders with the neighboring countries of North Macedonia to the northwest and east and Greece to the south. Meanwhile to the west is bordered by the municipalities of Pogradec and Maliq. The area in the study consists of a hilly and mountainous terrain where the lake is the main asset, extending to the east of the Dry Mountain, and to the west and southwest of the Great Prespa Lake. The municipality of Pustec consists of nine villages with a population of Macedonian nationality of 5100 inhabitants.¹ Centre of the municipality is the village of Pustec, 25km from the city of Korca. Other villages of Pustec Municipality are Lajthiza, Zaroshka, Cerrje, Diellas, Gollomboch, Small Gorica, Big Gorica, and Kallamas.

The village of Gollomboch, is found at a small bay alongside the Big Prespa Lake, between the villages of Small Gorica to the north and Diellas being the closest village to the south. It is a small village lying on the side of a hill. In a house above others with a view overlooking the lake in this village, was born Sterjo Spasse on 14 August 1912 (not 1914) to Spasse and Mara Niço. His first lessons, he took at the old school of the village, which is now the house museum, bearing his name. He was a student here for only one year. The next one went to Nivice to study for another year because the school in Gollomboch was closed due to a lack of students. The first two years of his studies were in Greek. After that, he moved to Korca where he continued his studies as an excellent student. With the help of his teachers here he continued his studies further to Elbasan “Normalja e Elbasanit”. He worked for a while as a teacher in the Dropull region and after that went to Florence Italy to study pedagogy. Later he even pursued a master's in literature in the Soviet Union. Among his first writings, are some short stories such as “Ne krahet e nje femre” (In the arms of a woman), “Nusja pa duvak” (Bride without veil), and two others. While serving as a teacher in Dropull, he started to write his first novel “Pse” (Why) in 1932, published in 1935 in Korca. This novel holds a special place, being the first philosophical novel in Albanian literature. The other novels after, having an Albanian nationalist theme, give him the importance of a strong connecting bridge! For all his works he deserves his place in the constellation of Albanian writers. It is, for this reason, the construction of the house museum (2019-2021), holds such a special place for both countries.

¹ <https://www.bashkiapustec.gov.al/pustec-info/>

METHODS

The realization of this study was concluded through straightforward research on the field. The gathering of the information has been achieved through pre-prepared questionnaires consisting of a number of open-closed questions. The interviewing of the residents has been done face to face, wherever they have been found, in their houses, on the fields, along the lakeshore, at work, or in their businesses. Some of the interviews with farmers, beekeepers, shepherds, fishermen, or workers have been brief, and some others with the intellectuals of the area have lasted for over an hour.

From the questions included in the questionnaire, only a few of them have been closed questions with the purpose of gathering statistical data, regarding the number of residents who are familiar with the life and work of the writer Sterjo Spasse, and how many of them have visited the house-museum. Most of the questions are open, intending to gather detailed information regarding the knowledge the residents have of the writer, the house museum, their opinions about the material exhibited there, and the cultural impact this museum has had on their lives and that of the whole area. What is the tourist impact of the house museum, what is the economic impact it has brought to them, and what are the perspectives for improvement in the future.

The general objective was to gather as much information as possible on all aspects, that this study intended. Statistics take second place before the opinion of the residents.

The material gathered has been viewed carefully several times. Each questionnaire has been observed with close attention, grouping the information according to the study topics and analyzing it. The opinion of the residents has been chosen carefully according to each topic in order to present a more realistic reflection of reality.

Regarding the cultural impact, was taken into consideration the age criterion, classifying the residents into 5 groupages.

- Age up to 20 years old, which makes up 18.2% of the interviewees;
- Age 21-30 years, which makes up 3.5% of the interviewees;
- Age 31-40 years, which makes up 16.5% of the interviewees;
- Age 41-60 years, which makes up 38.8% of the interviewees;
- Age over 60 years, which makes up 23% of the interviewees.

As expressed in the female/male ratio, 41.8% are female and 58.2% are males.

Regarding the tourist and economic impact of the house-museum, was taken into consideration the criterion by villages.

The interviews completed in each village, have been random, with individuals meeting coincidentally. The number of individuals interviewed for each village has been random as well. So were their age, gender, background, and profession. The conclusions and recommendations given by the residents themselves have been included in their originality of thought, as expressed by them. This is the basis for the preparation of the main material.

DISCUSSION

Events developed at the house museum of the writer Sterjo Spasse

25 March 2022

Thanks to the support of the European Union, through the project SMART CUL TOUR, a project involving both Prespa Municipality and Bitola Municipality, funded by the European Union, as part of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme between North Macedonia and Albania, on 25 March 2022, took place the inauguration of the house-museum of the writer Sterjo Spasse, in the village of Gollomboch.

Through this project, the Museum of the writer Sterjo Spasse was built in the village of Gollomboch, Prespa Municipality and at the same time has been reconstructed the infrastructure around the archeological site of Heraklea Lyncestis in Bitola.

Participants in this activity:

- Macedonian ambassador to Albania Dancho Markovski
- Prefect of Korce District Dhoris Spirollari
- The Chairwoman of Korce District Council Ana Verushi
- Mayor of the Pustec Municipality Pali Kolefski
- The son of the writer Mr. Iliden Spasse, who also promoted the book "My father Sterjo"
- The wife of Mr. Ilinden, Ms. Maria Spasse,
- The daughter of the writer Ms. Aferdita with her husband and other guests.
- Invited media and journalists.

4 April 2022

On this date, the house museum of Sterjo Spasse was visited for the first time by students of the ninth grade from the school in the village of Belorta, in Albania.

During this visit took part students and teachers as well as Mr. Vasil Sterjovski a former deputy of Prespa Municipality. He was invited by this school and during the visit spoke to the students (22 in total) about the life and work of the writer Sterjo Spasse.

24 May 2022

On May 24 it was the Pustec Municipality the one which organized a celebration on the occasion of May 24th, the remembering day of the Byzantine brothers Cyril and Methodius the devisors of the Glagolitic Alphabet in the ninth century.

This activity was organized by the Macedonian society "Sonce", University "Fan Noli" Korce, and the association for literature and culture "Maskovo" from Ohrid North Macedonia

On this date took place the promotion of the book “Harmonious integration of the Macedonian minority in the Republic of Albania”, inside this museum. The case of the Macedonian minority in the area of Prespa and Vernik.

Participants in this activity:

- Croatian ambassador to Albania Zlatko Kramaric
- Macedonian ambassador to Albania Dancho Markovski
- Prof. Dr. Jonela Spaho, dean of the Faculty of Philology and Education "Fan Noli" University in Korce
- Prof. Dr. Katerina Todoroska from the Institute of National History of Skopje
- Prefect of Korce District Nertil Jole
- The Chairwoman of Korce District Council Ana Verushi
- Mayor of the Pustec Municipality Pali Kolefski
- The representative of the Macedonian community, near the committee for the national minorities Marjana Kostofski
- Prof. Dr. Gjergji Pendavinji
- Prof Eris Rusi
- Prof. Dr. Maria Dojce author of the book
- Director of the “Thimi Mitko” Library in the city of Korce Jorida Tollkuchi
- Vasil Sterjovski
- As well as other Albanian, Macedonian, and Croatian guests.

The promotion was made possible by the Macedonian association "Sonce" (The Sun).

This day commemorated the 4th anniversary of the death of Spase Mazenkovski a poet, writer, journalist, and publicist. One other most important figure of the area.

27 May 2022

On this day the Croatian ambassador Zlatko Kramariq and the Macedonian ambassador Danko Markovski to Albania visited the house-museum Sterjo Spasse.

31 July 2022

On July 31, the ”MIK FESTIVAL” has taken place for the third year in a row on the Island of Maligrad and this year in the house museum of Sterjo Spasse as well. In this festival has participated the known Albanian vocalist Inva Mula and a group of singers and instrumentalists. The goal was to promote the cultural, touristic and natural beauty and values of the Prespa region. This initiative was supported by the “Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Prespa” project.

29 October 2022

On 29 October as part of the literature month will be held another activity in the museum house of Sterjo Spasse. This is an activity being organized by a group of students and professors of the “Raqi Qirinxhi” high school in Korca. The idea was to organize a drama about Sterjo. This will include young pupils from the area, just as was observed during filming and rehearsals in September.

The Cultural Impact of the house museum of Sterjo Spasse

What makes a place authentic, what differentiates it from any other place, makes it unique, and puts it on the map? Besides the natural features, the elements of the physical world are a culture with its own values the main trait which makes it known to the world for its uniqueness. Is the people who adapt to the natural elements, to the cold, the heat the humid, and the arid, and make a place their home. Build their culture around that place and add to it from one generation to the other in order to create something unique to be remembered by future generations as a legacy and as a way of life.

Even though culture is the sum of the activity of each and every one of its people, visible in every act, from everyday simple things to the most crucial and important of traditions, it is represented best by its figures, by its titans, by those who leave a mark on the wheel of time and carry with them the ladder of values by which they climbed the heights of recognition. Through them, the place from which they came, is best acknowledged and evaluated. Their bonds with their home are so strong and intertwined sometimes, which makes it impossible to think of one without the other. Such a figure is Sterio Spasse not only for the village in which he was born and raised, where he learned to speak, read and write, where he got the first lessons of life and first studies, the Gollomboç Village, but for the entire Prespa Region and beyond. For those who knew him, who read his works, who meet him in person, ate with him, drank with him, and were motivated and inspired by him, is impossible to speak without emotion in their voices while outing his name. He is without a doubt one of the most important figures of this area, who through his work and actions contributed to making known and elevating the culture of the area and in the process, became the embodiment of the whole area's Identity. This goes as far as when someone mentions the name Prespa, the mind goes immediately to Sterjo Spasse and the other way around when someone mentions Sterjo Spasse, immediately comes to mind Prespa. Therefore the reconstruction of the old school of the Gollomboç Village and its adaptation as a House-Museum in the honor of Sterio Spasse is the first step in praising and uplifting this figure and with him the cultural heritage of the area.

This study is the result of the information gathered over a period of around 3 months through surveys, interviews, and conversations with the residents of the area from different backgrounds, ages, professions, and qualifications, be that commoners, intellectuals, businesses, or the local government, as well as domestic and foreign visitors, met in the area during this time. The study is focused on three Principles, the cultural aspect, the tourist aspect, and the economic impact. The reconstruction of the House-Museum of Sterio Spasse in Gollomboç village is an initiative that has sparked cultural awareness among the residents of the Prespa Municipality from a cultural perspective and not only. Besides the cultural aspect the building has had its own impact on the visitors as well and through them it has affected some subjects in the area toward economic growth. The details of these will be analyzed one by one, reflecting a truthful reality with its ups and downs, good and bad, and possible

perspectives on what may be improved in the future. The main objective is to present in all truthfulness an adequate resemblance of the current situation as seen from both a resident's and a foreigner's point of view, as with all its treasures and problems. There are some issues and key problems in the area which are "Must Be Understood" key features in order to have a clear view of future programs and investments in the area. Only through knowing and understanding this physiognomy of Prespa Municipality as discovered through the interviews with the residents, is shown another perspective that reflects upon the current reality and the future of the area. By understanding this physiognomy and its connection with the Sterjo Spasse house museum, are we able to understand at its core some key elements that prevent initiatives from reaching their full potential and maximizing their outcome. The house museum seen as part of this reality still needs time to reach its maximal potential as a place of knowledge, cultural awareness, tourist attraction, and economic growth. In this light is easier to understand how to improve these elements in the future, how to increase the number of visitors, attract more tourists and improve the economic impact this object and others might bring in the future.

Recognition and evaluation of Sterjo Spasse by the residents

From the material gathered throughout the 9 villages of the Prespa Municipality, it is clear to conclude the awareness of the residents on the reconstruction of the house-museum and the evaluation of Sterjo Spasse as a figure. Out of all the people being asked and interviewed, there is none who hasn't heard of Sterjo Spasse or doesn't know at least a thing about him. While most have come to know Sterjo as a figure of literature, for the residents of Prespa, he is much more than that. For them, he is a multi-dimensional figure.

The young generation has heard of Sterjo from their parents and elders or has come to learn something about his writings at school (in the literature text in Macedonian) and the activities that have been organized in the Gollomboch village. Even those young children who still haven't read anything about him yet, have seen the statue of the writer at the village of his birthplace, as they so happily declare. Through stories from the adults have learned the importance of the writer in their community. Those other children who still study in the area, of a more mature age who are capable of speaking both Macedonian and Albanian languages, have read at least a fragment or two in their textbooks in school from the writings of Sterjo. They have also seen the house museum as part of school activities. From the first to the fifth grade in school, the children are introduced to a few fragments of his writings in the Macedonian language. From the sixth grade up to high school, there is not a single piece from the writings of Sterjo included in the literature textbooks in the Albanian language. This is an issue which from the interviews with the literature teachers in the area, has resulted to have been raised in meetings with the editors of the publishing house (Albas) who prepares the textbooks of literature. They have asked that a fragment from the writings of Sterjo be put in textbooks so the introduction with the writer would be better not only for the students of the area but for a larger audience of all those young children who study with the same books in Albania.

So far the students of the united school of Liqenas- Gorice e Vogel have been part of three activities in Gollomboch. For the first time they have been included in the "Promotion activity" being organized before starting the reconstruction of the House-Museum. The second activity was a promotion of the writings and books of Sterjo Spasse in October 2020 which was organized near the statue of the writer at the center of the village, while the reconstruction was still going. With the invitation of one of the literature teachers in the area (M.J. 57 years old),

on this activity was present Mr. Ilinden Spasse, the son of the writer Sterjo Spasse in honor of the activity being held for his father. The third activity was organized by the Regional Directorate of Cultural Heritage of Korçë, as a promotion of the cultural heritage of the area. The objective of this activity was to introduce the students and the young generation in general to the cultural heritage of the Prespa Region. This was organized inside the house museum, now a part of the cultural heritage. At the same time, this was one of the first activities being held in this building. Since then have been organized a number of other activities outside the school program in this building, involving children and students of the area. Overall this shows that the young generation is not left behind in knowing the writer Sterjo Spasse.

The ones on whom the reconstruction of the house museum has had a greater impact are the older generations. To them, Sterjo Spasse is not just a writer. To them, he is a multi-dimensional figure. While not all of them have read his writings or have a deep knowledge of the writer's intellect, inner world, and contribution to the world of literature, without a doubt they know Sterjo. Even those who have not had the privilege to study or read know something about him, have seen him, have met him, or have some memories of him from their youth. When you ask them about Sterjo, they all have something to say, and you learn is not just some dry opinion they might have heard in the media or in an article no! They speak about memories and experiences from their past or that of their parents and grandparents. They speak about Sterjo as if he was a part of their family.

While it is the intellectuals on whom the writer has had a greater impact, the rest of the population is no less touched by him. They talk about him not only as a writer but as a humanist most of all. They talk about him as their brother, their friend, their teacher, and their key to solving problems. For the common people, he was a great writer, an influential figure whose voice had weight and was heard even in the higher ranks of power at the time. For the youth, he was a father figure who was pushing and inspiring them continuously toward knowledge, school, and qualifications. He was putting them on the path of bettering themselves and becoming somebody in life as many of them proudly say today.

Through the words and memories of the residents themselves is better to understand a full biography about the figure of Sterjo Spasse, unlike any put in a novel yet. By talking to each and any one of them, one may gather countless stories that would be enough to write a biography about the writer from another point of view. Piece by piece the stories they tell create a puzzle that shows you a bigger picture about Sterjo Spasse, far beyond that of which most readers may be aware. A perspective of Sterjo beyond the writer, which touches his very being as a humanist above all else. A perspective that unfortunately may belong to oblivion when the old generation is gone.

An old man around 74 years of age, from the village of Cerrje, when asked if he knew anything about Sterjo Spasse, would move slightly from his chair, control his emotions for a few seconds and while collecting his memories from the days of his youth, would start telling his story. He was a young man when he was called to Tirana to serve his duty in the military in 1964-65. It was his first time moving out of Prespa, all alone and without any knowledge or anyone to help him and guide him in the capital. Not only didn't he have anyone in Tirana, but he had a hard time stabilizing in the beginning. As he states the sister of Sterjo was married in Cerje and the writer would go there very often with his son Ilinden. Fortunately, the nature of Sterjo to meet

and know people would get him in conversation with people of all ages from elders to the young generation to whom he would pay special attention. Thus while in Tirana through unknown circumstances, the writer recognized him and treated him with kindness and respect. The old man says Sterjo took me to his house where I stayed for a couple of days, ate at his table with his family, and helped me as long as I got to stabilize in the city. I and others from Prespa would go there at his house he continues very often and even though sometimes we would feel a bit ashamed for staying too long and feel within ourselves as if we had overstayed a bit, Sterjo would look at us in the eye and state that he would be sad if we didn't visit him. We were always welcomed there.

Another resident, a lady from the Gollomboch village would state that it was Sterjo who helped their family in Tirana when a member of her family was sick and needed to travel to the capital, while they did not know anyone there. It was he who opened the doors of his house, sheltered them, and helped them with whatever they needed. One might think that a public figure, someone of influence would have a more reserved behavior, a bit more locked up inside their world but this doesn't seem to be the case with Sterjo Spasse. He preferred a simple life full of joy as another resident of the Small Gorica states. Almost every time he would come from Tirana back to the village, he would visit many people and while he was in Small Gorica he would meet my grandfather with whom he had an old friendship, would come to our house and bring many others with him, quite often other writers and people of influence of that time. One time he says Sterjo brought with him another known writer Shefqet Musarai, they meet with grandpa and engaged in conversation which lasted for hours while sitting on the balcony and enjoying dinner. I as a child, while playing with my friends near the shore of the lake which at that time was much closer than today to our house, would see them there with no idea who they were, only with the words of people ringing in my head "Sterjo Spasse has come". Much later in life would I understand who Sterjo Spasse truly was!

Stories such as this are common to hear from the elders in the area and from the generation of their children. This is how people of the Prespa Municipality remember Sterjoo Spasse, not only through a book, an article, or through someone else's opinion and reviews about the writer. They remember him through memories and experiences. Sterjo was not distant from them, even when he was not there, his heart was there as most of the intellectuals of the area proudly say today.

It is them, the young generation from the time Sterjo was writing his novels the ones who were inspired most by him. It is those who continued their studies to the highest levels of education, who became someone, as Sterjo wanted them to be, the ones who today remember him best. That generation speaks with such a fire and passion that may continue for hours when it comes to talking about the writer. It is from these people that one might get the greatest values. As previously said he was paying close attention to the young generation and was pushing and supporting them to reach new heights in life by truly becoming somebody. To him, those who were taking the path of school and knowledge had a special place. There is not a single one from all those who took this path today, who didn't have contact or hadn't met Sterjo at least once in their lives. To many of them, he was a force ever present to be found while needed. As many proudly say he was passionate about helping young students from Prespa to continue their university studies, he would offer shelter at his house, help them with what they needed, gather them for dinners and give them a hand in difficult times. Saturdays, Sundays, and especially the holidays when it was impossible to go back home and celebrate with their

families, were days they would spend with Sterjo at his house and celebrate with his family as a part of it.

Among many conversations, there are a few that struck and deserve attention. One such story is that of an intellectual (A.K.), once a stomatologist serving in Small Gorica, who for two decades lives in Skopje but during the summer returns to Pustec to his birthplace. He was once a student who knew Sterjo personally and got to spend a lot of time with him, and on a few occasions even had to travel with him. During this time he says I understood that the young ones had a special place for Sterjo. As Sterjo himself would often say “I try to stay close to the young ones because they are the foundation for the future of this country”. He was always interested in the youth studying hard and asking more from themselves. Therefore the doors of his house were always open. We as young students at that time had to spend a lot of time with his children as well and built strong bonds with them which are still lasting. He remained simple and kind, unlike the proudness of others, especially people from Korca. But even they respected him deeply unlike other people whose origin was from a village and were seen as less at that time. While traveling with him, I have seen he had a special interest and curiosity toward the old people as well. Often in his travels, he would spark conversations with them and get to dig deep into their culture and traditions. Information that later he would use in his writings. From our conversations together, he would often say to me “The area is poor, the people have lived poorly and hard lives for a long time, but someday the time will come when it will be evaluated. Perhaps not in my time, perhaps not even in yours but I assure you the situation will not always be like this”. And while talking in this spirit, he was constantly questioning us in order to pull to the surface our visions for the future and capability for critical thinking.

Another Intellectual of this village, (L.I.S.) a professor of History-Geography who is currently concluding a detailed study of Prespa’s Geography states that as a student he would go quite often to his house in Tirana and knew him personally quite well. He states “At the time I was studying, from our area, we were very few students who were studying in Tirana and Sterjo knew all of us, kept contact with us, and quite often invited us to his house”. When we came back from home after the vacation to continue with our studies, he would ask in detail about everything happening in Prespa. He would ask about everyone, who got married, who had been born and where, who had died, and so on.

His impact on the community was great, greater still it was on the people of his own village Gollomboch. His own nephew (Gj.K.) today a retired professor still living in the village remembers the times when Sterjo would come back home and bring with him so many friends, great figures of literature. He would often write letters to him and other teachers, providing guidance and inspiration for the students and teachers alike. It was he who insisted I go to school, taught me the Albanian language, and helped me to continue my higher education. The same he did to whomever he could at that time, no matter if he was not related by blood to them.

The same opinion holds (E.M.), another Intellectual, a man of oratory and beautiful speech interviewed in this village. To him, Sterjo holds a special place. It is not exaggerated to say Sterjo was one of his childhood heroes. He sees the writer as a colossus, as a magnetic person who attracted everyone around him. He brought new ideas and ideals from Tirana with him. He brought a vision for more educated and cultured people in Prespa. He also brought back a lot of his friends many times. But those friends, those figures were the titans of the pen and paper back in those days. He brought many colossi of the pen to the village. For us as children

playing by the shore of the lake, seeing Sterjo Spasse, Nonda Bulka, Petro Marko, Dhimiter Shuteriqi, Jakov Xoxe, Fatmir Gjata, Dritero Agolli, and others walking by the shore and discussing ideas, were as if the whole thought of Tirana had come to the village. It felt as if it was here and we could grasp some of it as if we could touch it. It is hard for me to put on paper all the memories of those great souls and minds of the thought. All we could do was watch them and be inspired by them. In this spirit, we grew with those visions in our minds.

Some of the people mentioned above are some of those who at the dawn of the new era raised their voices for the evaluation of the figure of Sterjo Spasse, the novel "Pse" (Why), and the reconstruction of the writer's house as a museum! Their original idea was to find support to transform into a museum the house where Sterjo was born and raised not the school. However, in their eyes, this project concludes the realization of an undertaking that should have been done a long time ago by the government or the residents themselves. On this matter speaks best another retired professor (M.N.), who along with 15 other intellectuals of the area created a Society called "The Society of Intellectuals Sterjo Spasse" as early as 1991. In the years to come, they organized meetings and held symposiums demanding the evaluation of the novel "Pse", putting it for reprint after the fall of the communist regime which had it banned. They demanded the evaluation of Sterjo Spasse as a figure and his writings given the place they deserve in the history of Albania among other well-known figures. Another idea was to transform the writer's birth house into a museum. These were the main objectives of this society under the leadership of (M.N.), which relentlessly since 1991, 1992, and so on through the years raised their voice wherever they could. They organized meetings with ministers of culture, of different governments in Albania through the years, and organized meetings with prefects of Korca District and other officials, where those in the chair at the Prespa Municipality were quite often. Among their achievements was the re-evaluation of the philosophical novel "Pse", and the evaluation of Sterjo with titles "Honor of the Prespa Municipality", and "Honor of Korca District". Other achievements of their activity were the approval by the local government for the given title of "Sterjo Spasse" to new writers inside Korca District and the celebration of 100 years in memory of Sterjo Spasse in 2014.

In this contest, the reconstruction of the old school at the center of the village in Gollomboch is an achievement that concludes old attempts by people of culture and intellect in this village as well as other villages of the Prespa Municipality. In the cultural aspect, this is an old dream come true and fortunately, many of those who set out on a journey for Sterjo more than three decades ago got to live to see it fulfilled.

According to the opinion of all the people interviewed all over the area, the house museum is the embodiment of the greatest evaluation that could be done to Sterjo Spasse for all he achieved in his life and all he did for them. Through the stories they tell from their memories and experiences may be better understood the position they hold toward the writer. This is the best way to understand the connection they still have with him. Only this way one may truthfully grasp their point of view toward this house-museum today.

The evaluation of the house museum by the residents

There is not a single resident in the Prespa Municipality whether those who live there or those who have migrated to other countries, who are not conscientious about the existence of the house museum. While it is true many have not yet seen the building neither from the inside nor from the outside the same may not be said for the impact it has had on them. While they mention other figures in the area who deserve attention and evaluation, for their works, none more than Sterjo do so. They feel both proud and honoured for its existence and the values this building holds. From the results concluded through the interviews and surveys the number of people who have visited the house museum until now is about 50%. In both cases there is plenty to be learned.

Those who have not seen it yet are usually people who have migrated to other countries and have not been in their homeland in a long time. People in the area who have not visited yet have done so due to lack of time, long working hours and economic problems. In this context is worth mentioning that most of the residents in the area belong to the third age. It is hard to find young people or even those of middle age still living in Pustec municipality. The economic problems have pushed the young generation to move away in search of more opportunities. Even those who still live in the area usually work in the neighbouring countries in seasonal or daily jobs. The reasons are plenty, but the facts remain this opens a scar in society. Taking into consideration, the lack of economic stability and the old age of the remaining people in the area, their priorities are better understood. As I myself have witnessed they spend most of their time with their day-to-day unending work, whether on the field, in the mountain or at home taking care of food, dealing with their animals and other routine jobs. Those few of the younger generation who may still be found in the area, are concerned about their families' welfare and other economic troubles which leaves little time to spend on other activities. Nevertheless, some of them declare they have seen a video or article about the museum on Tv or social media, while their interest in visiting it in person remains great

Those who have actually seen the house museum have a lot to say about it. Obviously, the reviews differentiate between the groupages and their background. Pupils of the area who have seen the museum through organised school activities share their opinions about it. They like the way it has been built, to them, it looks like an old house but clean and beautiful. They like the material inside, the old objects, as some of them say is a good thing to see them up close.

To their parents and grandparents, the house museum holds much more value. The residents of Gollomboch village, to begin with, state that first of all is an aesthetic building, beautiful to the eye. The old school abandoned and half-ruined as it was, was turned into a warehouse for wheat, wood and other objects for a long time. Being at the centre of the village as it was, this reflected a very bad look on the whole village. From the architectural point of view, the reconstructed building holds in itself many elements from the old school. Some consider it an exact replica while others state the connection between rocks is linked better with cement, compared to the old school which was built at a time of poverty and the absence of such an element. However, they all appreciate the outer look of the building. The walls of stone, the stone structure at the bottom circulating the building, the windows, the small balcony and the porch behind are composed of a dark-coloured wood found within the area, and the roof and gutters are all well-chosen elements. Quite interesting is the sign put on the side of the wall with the face of Sterjo carved in profile inside a question mark (?) adapted from the novel "Pse" (Why).

The inside of the house museum is organized into two separate floors, each with a separate entrance, not connected directly to one another. The ground floor with an entrance that faces the lakeside, is organized into a meeting room complete with chairs, a video projector, a big screen, and a small screen in one corner. On each side of the walls are to be found in total 5 photos of Sterjo Spasse during different years of his life. In one picture, is Sterjo as a young man, on another Sterjo on top of a camel in the desert of Mongolia, in two others is Sterjo in the Red Square Moscow and at the Tretyakov Art gallery of Moscow accompanied by others. The last photo is that of Sterjo as an old man. On one end of the room is found an old drawing made by an unknown school student around 1920, a few years after the school was first opened. The picture depicts the building in its original appearance. This was discovered in November 2020 while the restoration process began. The present balcony as restored in 2020 was based on this old drawing. Under the drawing is a table (of contents) explaining the history of the drawing in three languages Albanian, English, and Macedonian, illustrated with some photos of the time of reconstruction when the discovery was made. On the other end of the room are to be found two old traditional costumes of the area, one for each gender. This space has been used for conferences, school activities promotions, and other activities.

The museum is on the first floor, above the conference room. This is the main room of the building with an entrance on the back of the house, inside the porch. Once you enter the room in front is to be found the small door of the balcony. Starting to the left side of the door on the wall starts a series of pictures and activities of Sterjo. Starting with a photo of Sterio's parents, the set of photos continues with a few events from his early life and activities in Gollomboch village, Sterjo at his wedding, some pictures of him as a young man during his studies in primary school in Korca, during his study of Italian language in Pisa Italy, in Sofje Bulgaria with some friends. The set of photos continues with Sterjo during his years as a teacher in the academy of Voskopoja, in Korce, in China, in Sweden, and more. This story is accompanied by the years from each event presented in the photos in chronological order.

Under the pictures are to be found two small screens for further information and on the opposite wall next to the door of the balcony, is presented a table of contents of his works with the publishing years of each one. At one end of the room in the shape of a book is a table that shows moments from life and the work of the writer in three languages. At the center of the room are to be found two display tables covered in glass, where are exposed some original writings from his works. Some handwritten, others by a typing machine, a few books with their original first edition print covers, a journal, and a price he was given in 1958 "The Price of Republic" for his creations in the field of literature.

On the right side from where you enter the room is designed in the shape of a studio with shelves in the form of a library at the back and an old fireplace in between them. Above the fireplace is a painting of Sterjo and in front at the center a working desk with a typing machine which he used, as well as a chair he used to sit. On the shelves at the back are to be found a death mask of the writer, some books, certificates, and different medals which reflect his achievements. On the right side between the entering door and the shelves, are exposed a series of drawings, all of them portraits of others done to him. In front of the wall are two small display tables, where are shown personal objects from the life of the writer, such as an old radio, two watches, and a pair of glasses. In front of them on the opposite side of the room, on two more tables are shown other personal objects from his life, some passports and an old leather camera he once used. In general, this is all the material shown in this museum.

The opinions of those who have seen the house museum are complex and differ from one another. To many of them, the material exposed is good, well-chosen, and enough. However there are many voices that point to a thing or two, which deserves close attention, needs changing or there is something more to add. When it comes to Sterjo for those who knew him there is always something more to add, enough is never enough. Such opinions go beyond the circle of intellectuals to a lot of common people in the area. However, here will be pointed out some of the most crucial comments gathered that truly deserve attention.

In the eyes of the pupils who study in the area and have seen the museum, it is a thing of curiosity that captures their attention. It gives life to what they have learned in primary school and have heard from their parents and elders. They are curious to see old objects, such as the typing machine, the old camera, the old radio, gold medals, old documents, and writings. The history presented in the pictures has seemed to have captured their curiosity as well. Many of them declare they have learned a lot about the writer's life through the photos exposed on the walls and have liked the old objects and books exposed there. A young girl in the ninth grade from the village of Kallamas, says that she really likes the museum but she would like to see more books and a few more objects about the personal life of Sterjo. The same opinion comes from a classmate of hers who says she appreciates the existence of this house-museum as a building and as a place of education. It makes a contrast in the area where the only other places of entertainment are bars and clubs. What I like the most she continues is that from the outside looks like an old traditional house, while the inside is a museum.

A similar opinion comes from the high-school students who study in the area in the high school of Pustec. A girl, a student of this high school, during interview, says that all the materials exposed reflect not only the life and works of Sterjo Spasse. At the same time, they reflect the way of life, of the people of the area as well. The photos show clearly the traditional clothes people used in those times and some of their activities. Another student says he gives the highest rate to this museum. Another says the museum is an example of exposing and making known to us as future generations, the important figures of the area, and the old traditions. The area is rich in traditions which would be good to be preserved, and I see the construction of this museum as the starting point toward the construction of other museums. Another student states that from all the objects inside the museum he appreciates most the personal objects of Sterjo Spasse. They let me know he was a simple man as I have been told in the family. Another one praises the museum itself as an important treasure, part of Prespa's heritage. The museum has been built with care. Nevertheless among the students, some are of the mind that more objects being exposed would be even better. One of them is of the opinion that it would be better to expose more books and another would prefer to see some more objects from the personal life of Sterjo.

From the groupage 21-30, the residents in the area are very few in numbers because most of them have left for other countries Macedonia and Bulgaria most usually, to study or work as mentioned before. A few of them live in Korca. Even those few who still live in the area are hard to find due to their occupation with work almost all the time during this period. From the gathered information they work in daily or seasonal jobs in Macedonia. Therefore the opinions and reviews from this age group are few. Those who have been interviewed have appreciated the reconstruction of the house museum as the first of its kind in the area. The building contains many values of cultural heritage which makes them feel proud and valued. Among them, two young men interviewed in Pustec, 20 and 23 years old, have not seen the museum yet, not out

of lack of desire but due to lack of time. They have said they are in the move the whole time and have to move again soon in search of a job. Two other young men from the village of Kallamas had not seen the museum because their interests lay elsewhere. Their attempts to build a business failed and they were planning to go out of the country. From all the interviews in this village, only a young man 25 years of age who lives and works in Tirana says he had seen the museum twice. He evaluates the museum as a Pearl in the area. What has been done is important in preserving the tradition and culture of the area. It is important not only for us but for our children as well to be familiar with the tradition before it disappears he says. Until now the material exposed there is enough to give the first information about the life and work of Sterjo Spasse.

Another young man from the village of Pustec of 27 years old has rented a restaurant in Zaroshke from a friend of his who for a better life has gone to Germany. He has visited the museum a few times. At the inauguration ceremony for the reconstruction of the house museum, he has been as part of the dancing group. He knows and evaluates the figure of Sterjo deeply. He evaluates him as the pride of the area but raises the concern that the young generation does not concern themselves with the cultural aspect but only with the economic aspect. In his opinion, the museum should be exposed all of the writers' literature not only some of them. The other materials being exposed there should be authentic, original to the area not newly made he says.

Among the young ladies of this groupage the only one who has seen the house museum and has agreed to give a review is the museum guide (28 years old) She sees it on a daily basis and is able to give her review both as a resident and as an employee. As a resident in her opinion, everything is excellent, exactly as it should be. In her opinion some changes must be done outside the museum, the road around it is one of them. As an employee, she provides some more information regarding some of the activities being held there, and the nature of the people visiting the museum, be they individuals, families, or organized groups.

From the groupage of 31-40 years old, there are more people to be found in the area in rapport with the previous groupage, however, even they are a minor group in rapport with the population of the area. From the interviews with this group, the conclusion is that something over 50% have seen the house museum so far. From those who haven't seen the house museum so far, the conclusions are the same. Most of the time they are working out of the country in Macedonia. The females are working in retail in the neighboring country, while most of the men are working in construction. A few of them who still live in the area occupy themselves with other work such as fishing, farming, etc. Due to lack of time they express themselves they have not seen it, something they desire to do so at the first opportunity they get. The appreciation for the figure of the writer remains great. Those who have seen it are people who work in the area, be that as a teacher, a worker in the local administration, etc. They have visited the museum individually and as part of other organized activities from the city hall and through school activities.

Their opinions are positive. They evaluate the reconstruction as a well-done job. They appreciate the seriousness with which the house museum has been organized. According to the head of the city council (V.V.) 40 years old, the material exposed is good enough to tell a full story about the life and work of Sterjo Spasse. Even to the eye of a tourist, somebody who is not familiar with the writer is good enough to give a good introduction to the writer. It is a good beginning but there is always space to add something more in the future. The museum itself is

an aesthetic building at the center of the village. The rest of the residents share the same appreciation. To them it does justice to the figure of Sterjo Spasse, even though we haven't seen and met him personally, he is an important figure close to us, they state. Among these intellectuals, (S.T.) a teacher in the area, is a passionate individual in the matter of cultural heritage, who has transformed his old house into an ethnographic museum. His museum reflects a good part of the old tradition, in the matter of traditional clothing, old working tools, old cutleries, books, old pottery, coins, an old loom, and many more objects once used by the people of the area. His work is a reflection that the initiative by the people in the area is not missing when it comes to cultural heritage. The problem is the absence of support by the institutions for individual initiatives in the area. He's problem stands in the promotion of his museum.

Groupage 41-60 constitutes the majority of the interviewed residents. They are the most present throughout all the villages. They have been interviewed in all sorts of different places. In the fields while farming, in the hills while watching over their livestock, in their vineyards while harvesting the grapes, in their businesses, in their homes enjoying a glass of wine some cheese, and homemade bread offered in kindness. Some others have been interviewed in those few bars and restaurants in the area by offering them a cup of coffee or a drink as a sign of gratitude for their time and opinions. And fewer still have been interviewed in the institutional offices of the local government. The

The conclusion even for this groupage is the same. The statistic gathered show over 50% of the residents has seen the house museum at least one time. Some of them have seen it more than one time. They evaluate the reconstruction of the old school and its transformation into a museum. It is a good thing done for Sterjo Spasse. For the common people, the general opinion is positive, everything is as it should be. The teachers view the house museum as a good place for the education of the young generations. They are of the opinion there should be organized plenty more activities there, such as literature competitions among students, reciting, book analysis, etc. Some of them are of the opinion that the space on the ground floor may be a suitable place for exposing more original materials connected to education and the history of the old school. One such opinion comes from one of the teachers (V.T. 54 years old), who is ready to offer a copy of a first edition Primer ever printed in the Macedonian language. This was the first Primer "bukvar" used in this school and it would enrich the museum if a copy resided there according to her opinion.

Another teacher from the village Gorice e Vogel (V.V.) evaluates the museum as a place of learning and introduction to the young generation with the values of the past. The information exposed provides good knowledge about the life and work of the writer, where he studied and worked, however, in the future, the museum must be enriched with more material from the life of the writer. A good idea would be to find and expose something about the writer's inner world. She is one of those intellectuals of the area who has participated in symposiums and in the celebration of the 100 anniversary of the writer and has spoken loudly about his figure. Her concerns are related to the Big Question "Do we know if Sterjo Spasse was happy with what he wrote, taking into consideration that the communist regime suppressed his thoughts. The novel Pse, his first novel is philosophical at its core. After getting censored by the regime, he wrote according to the limited freedom the communist regime allowed him to do so. The other novels in the coming years have a different topic from his first creation, so the question rises. Was he happy with what he wrote and did he express his full potential? Perhaps at a different

time, his writings might have been totally different and he would have been a world-class writer". There should be exposed something to touch curiosity regarding this subject in the museum.

Another resident from the Gollomboch village, states that the museum holds immense value however the greatness of Sterjo surpasses it. The overall look and exposed material are worthy of a cultural museum. Among the interviewers another resident (O.K. 43 years old), states he is both proud and privileged, first of all, because he undertook the project for the statue of Sterjo Spasse and secondly because he was employed as a worker with his digging machine during the reconstruction of the house-museum.

Two interesting contradicting opinions that come to light from some of the residents in the area of this group age, have to do with the authenticity of the costumes exposed in the conference room on the ground floor and the naming of the building House-museum. The opinion regarding the authenticity of the costumes is raised as an issue by (E.V. 52 years old), an ex-student of art, who has worked for a long time with the culture of the area. According to his opinion, the costumes exposed are similar but, not authentic to the area. In their place should be exposed to older, more authentic traditional costumes. The other opinion is that the name "House-Museum" for this building is wrong. The building in itself is not the house of Sterjo Spasse, the house where he was born and raised but the old school of the village. The name in itself is misleading as one of the residents (A.S.) states!

The groupage above 60 years old constitutes a considerable number of the interviewed people in the area. Something interesting about this groupage is the fact that these are the people being moved spiritually and emotionally deeper by the construction of the house museum. These are the people who knew better Sterjo Spasse, the people who knew him personally and were in contact with him. There are to be found many treasures among them. Even their words are outed with a rare passion. There is not a single individual interviewed among them who doesn't know Sterjo, but in reality, only around 40% of them have actually seen the museum. Those who haven't seen it yet, get emotional for not having done so. For them, this looks like an act of treason done to Sterjo and his work. The reasons differ based on their old age, distance, diseases, work occupation, and because they usually live alone due to their children having migrated. Another reason is as they so declare they feel forgotten is because nobody has invited them, to any event, being held at the museum. This is a major concern especially mentioned by the intellectuals.

From the elders in the area and especially the intellectuals there are treasures to be found, even from those who have not seen the museum. An old man from Gorica e Madhe 79 years old, who hasn't seen it yet, evaluates the museum as something the writer deserved. This should have been done a long time ago by the government. As I see it this figure is somehow forgotten by the government. The key value of the museum consists of the knowledge of the museum by other generations. He expresses the desire to visit the museum, for he knew Sterjo and his family up close. Among a variety of opinions from the general population is worth mentioning another resident from the village of Zaroshka, (P.A. 65 years old, and ex-Mayor from the years 2000-2007). He is a pioneer of the writers with his novel "Pse"! The novel is very actual to this day. He is of the opinion, this museum should be seen as a starting point for others in the area. The outer appearance is seen as a well-done job by the eyes of another resident from

Gollomboch village, who for a long time lived in Greece with his family. To him, the museum has a few new elements, but this stands good in the visual appearance, in accordance with the traditional style of the old buildings. It is the best thing to see it transformed into a museum instead of the half-demolished warehouse it once was turned into.

Among the elders of this generation, someone discovers pearls. They are a generation of scholars and professors left forgotten, who hold within their manuscripts immense treasures. Treasures of the field of geography, history, education, and culture from the area of Prespa. Interviews with them last for many hours. They have a lot to talk about and do it with such passion. Among them, three such individuals deserve close attention. A professor of history and geography (L.S. 62 years old) from Pustec Village is finishing a detailed book about the Geography of Prespa. The other is a retired professor from the village of Lajthiza (Z.T. 80 years old) who through the years has gathered information since the XIX century regarding the history of his village Ljathiza. He has written the history of the village in a book, which until this day is still unpublished. At the same time the professor (Z.M. 74 years old) from the village of Pustec, has written a complete history of education in the area of Prespa, starting as early as 1850. The book titled "Prespa ne rrugen e dijes"(Prespa in the path of knowledge) is a 200 pages study with rich elements in the history of education and culture. A chapter in this history book is dedicated to the school which today is the Sterjo Spasse house-museum, and another to the writer himself. With all the attempts to find support in publishing their studies, while they are still alive and the knowledge does not belong to oblivion, so far they have not succeeded. Their voices and cries for help have been pushed back in their attempts for financial support. They are modest in their requests. All they have asked is small support, enough to publish a few copies to leave behind for future generations as part of the cultural heritage of the area before this knowledge is forever lost. These are the people who represent best the legacy of Sterjo Spasse. The ones who took to heart his messages for the future of Prespa.

The ones who have seen the museum, have done so by themselves, individually, with the exception of those who are related to the writer. These people have been invited to different activities. The general opinion of this groupage is positive as well. Among many reviews will be mentioned some of those stand out over others, especially those of three Intellectuals, residents of the Gollomboch village as mentioned above.

Professor (Gj.K. 71 years old) nephew of the writer, highlights that the house museum evaluates beyond Sterjo, their family, and the village as well. He has seen all the proces of reconstruction and is aware of all the material exposed. From this, he points out that the traditional clothes inside the museum are not traditional in the area at all. The traditional costumes in real life are quite simple, a reflection of the poverty of that time in the area. The ones exposed, are beautiful but not original. An issue remarked by others as well as previously mentioned. The other material exposed is good, but it would have been better to expose the whole series from his works. The original works were first published in Kosovo, so it's from there that the original prints might be found. One of the most important values of Sterjo was the fact that in nationality he was Macedonian, but wrote in Albanian as an Albanian. This makes him a connecting bridge between the two countries.

The professor (M.N. 72 years old) confesses that the figure of Sterjo is multi-dimensional. The content of his work is complex. Sterjo is a villager, a citizen, a partisan, a philosopher, and not only a writer. There are so many other aspects of his life that should be exposed for a more complete material in this museum. The material exposed is good as a start but definitively must

be enriched in time. The matter of the traditional costumes being exposed is touched once again. To the knowledge of this Intellectual when the museum was opened, was done so in a hurry, and the matter of the costumes was not paid close attention to. They put there whatever they could but those are not traditional of the area. As previously mentioned the attempts the creation of a museum in honor of this figure has been present for more than three decades. The original vision was to transform the birth house of the writer into a museum. This is a vision still unfulfilled that might be re-evaluated in the future. Anyway, the transformation of the abandoned old school into a museum is a successful attempt at the evaluation of this figure. On the other side, he sees the museum as the first attempt to raise more awareness among the younger generations in the area to pay more attention to its values and old traditions. This should be taken as an omen for further investment and the opening of other museums, for which the residents themselves should contribute more. In his own words “This is a beginning with a continuation”

For the intellectual (E.M. 65 years) a public orator from the same village, the reconstruction of this building holds values beyond the museum. In his opinion, the revitalization of the house has brought back to life the memories of those times when Sterjo lived in this village. A time when the man would gather under the porch and discuss the problems of the village. For him, the material exposed is a living matter, bright shining light for future generations, and important value for those who would come after us. According to him when it comes to Sterjo is hard to contain this colossus inside four walls but if there is to be found something else for the exposure it must be an interesting form of expressing another aspect of the writer. The matter regarding the originality of the costumes exposed inside the museum is touched once again. In conclusion, the ones exposed are not traditional of the area.

Regarding the costumes of the area speaks better a retired professor and former director of the school “Rezistenca e Goricareve” in Small Gorica. She explains that in the area exist two different cultures as appear in the clothes as well. One culture is that known as the “Macedonia of Vardar” and the second the “Macedonia of Aegean”. The traditional clothes and costumes in the villages Big Gorica, Small Gorica, Gollomboch, and Diellas are connected to the culture “Macedonia of Aegean”. This costume originates from the village Gjermano which resides along the shores of the Big Prespa Lake on Greece. Only the village of Kallamas is connected to the culture of “Macedonia of Vardar”. The costumes exposed inside the museum show no traits of any of these cultures, therefore they are not authentic. Aside from this, her opinion toward the other material exposed there is in her own words a great beginning. To her Sterjo is a connecting bridge between two countries, conveying to the community love and affection between Macedonians and Albanians, a thing that manifests itself clearly in the words we have integrated from the Albanian language. In this field of study (lexicology) she is pushing forward her third book for publishing.

A conclusion from the interviews with the Intellectuals, especially of this group age who have contributed to the development of the area in the cultural and educative aspect is their concern for being forgotten and forsaken. Many of them have not been invited in activities and events. Their opinions are not being taken into consideration. In their words, the activities are only being held for the cameras, by the people of the institutions for the people of the institutions. Many of them express the desire to be included and not only as one more number but as a thought and a voice.

The tourist impact of the house-museum

One of the main objectives is to draw some conclusions regarding the impact that the house-museum has had on the growth of visitors and tourists in the area. Among other questions the residents have been asked if there is an increase in the number visitors and tourists in their place of residence or in the whole area. To their knowledge, if there is such a thing, is that as a direct result from the house-museum? How much information do they have about the tourists and visitors who come to the area? Where do they come from and what contacts do the residents have with them if any? What are their opinions regarding the orientation of the tourists in finding and reaching the house-museum? What should be improved regarding the promotion and orientation toward the house-museum? What are their opinions regarding the impact the house-museum will have in the future in the matter of tourist attraction?

From the material gathered throughout all the nine villages of the Prespa, it can be seen that the three villages Cerje, Big Gorica and Diellas (Shulin) are affected very little by the visitors and tourists in general and much less from the impact of the house-museum. The main reasons that cause this phenomenon are directly related to their geographical position. These villages are further from the main road and a bit distant from the main tourist attractions, hidden among the hills. These villages do not lie on the edge of the lake which is the main attraction.

The village of *Cerje* is the most isolated village out of all of them. This village is to be found among mountains, due east of the village of Zaroshka. The infrastructure is missing. The road is not paved with asphalt, and looks more like a goat path. To a foreigner is hard to figure that there even is a road and much less that a village lies hidden in the mountains. For these reasons the village has been abandoned through the years. Today there live only six people in total or three old couples said differently. For these reasons the tourist impact in this village is almost zero and that as a result of the museum is absolute zero. Even if there is some free spirit who loves the wilderness there would be no one to see them.

The village of *Diellas (Shulin)* is to be found atop a hill behind the village of Pustec. This village is visible to the eye from the main street as soon as someone crosses the neck of Zvezda and sees the lake. Once nearing the village, where one has to take the secondary road to enter it, this village is barely visible, hidden among the trees on the other side of the hill. The infrastructure from the point of taking the secondary road is in no good condition. Therefore this village does not attract many tourists. From the interviews with the residents there are not many tourists visiting this village. There has not been any tourist impact from the house-museum at all until now. There has not been anyone who has visited the museum and has gone to visit this village after that, nor anyone who has visited the village and has declared to have an interest to visit the house-museum. In aspect of tourism this village does not have any bar or restaurant, much less a guesthouse or a hotel. These are some major reasons preventing the interest for visiting it.

The village of *Big Gorica* is the third village in the area to which the tourist impact is smaller than others. This village even though very close to the border with Macedonia, close to the main road, is hidden behind a hill. This makes it invisible from the main road. For entering this village serves a secondary road of no good quality. The investments on this village are small as well. Even here is no bar, restaurant or guesthouse to be found. These are some of the reasons for which the tourist impact is very small. As the residents say even some of the tourists that may come from time to time, do so only for a few hours and then move on. Basically these are

passive tourists whose main reason to visit the area is nature. The natural isolation of the village has pushed a lot of families to move toward the Small Gorica and the space in between them along the years, close to the main road. The houses build one after the other on this area have created a neighbourhood to which unofficially people refer to as the Middle Gorica. The only business activity found here is a mechanic.

Somehow different the situation appears to be in the other villages where the residents have declared to have seen an increase in the number of tourists recently. It should be taken into account that the Covid-19 pandemic has played a major role into the drastic decrease in the number of the visitors especially the foreigners since 2019. This year has been somehow better they all say compared to the previous year, however the situation is not the same as that before the pandemic. Hopefully it will go there in the future they say. The main advantages of this villages are their position on the edge of the lake and access to the main road.

The village of *Kallamas (Bezmisht/Tuminec)* is the first one visible on the left side of the main road when entering from the Albanian territory from Gorica Customs. Although the village is distant around 1km from the main road, it is all visible while it lies on the side of the hill by the lake. The area around the village is of great interest by the visitors, due to its numerous cultural assets. The field of Kallamas between the village and the lake is an archaeological site that dates since the Neolithic times. Beside that on the rocky part of the coast, north-west of the village are to be found a series of old churches inside the rock. The monastery of Holy Mary or Saint Marena as the residents most commonly refer it and the Church of the Eremite. Another old church is that of the Saint Demeter inside the graveyard in the village however the other ones are the main attractions. The path alongside the lake that leads to this important objects of the cultural heritage is a place suitable for resting during the summer, preferred mostly by the foreigner tourists.

The residents have seen tourists in the area, mainly during the summer but also near the end of spring and beginning of autumn. A resident fisherman in profession, mentions that June is one of the month when area gets most visitors. The main reason for visiting the area are the churches on the rock. Another fisherman (J.T. 42 year old) who moves along the shore quite often says that he sees quite often tourists parking their caravans along the shore and sometime stay there for days. Their interests are the nature, lake, hills, mountain and sometime the churches. You see them during all summer. Another resident, professor in profession declares he has seen tourists often visit the area in groups of 3-4 people he has seen them in the hills above the village, along the shore of the lake and in the village. The issue here is the communication. The residents of this village belonging mostly to the middle or old age have a problem communicating with the tourists in the area. They just say Hello usually by signs when they come face to face and the minimal information they get is the origin of the tourists. They say many come from Germany, Austria, Netherland, Belgium, British, Polish etc. As I have seen from all the interviews in this village the residents do not engage in conversation with the foreign tourists in the area and discuss with them the values and treasures of cultural heritage of Prespa. Therefore is hard to conclude if the foreigners have any knowledge of the house museum or curiosity to learn more about the history and culture of the region. There are two small coffee-bars in this village, one of them most of the time closed and the other who declares the foreign tourists when they come might just drink a coffee of soft drink. Even here the communication is minimal. To their knowledge the only ones who show interest toward the museum-house are their relatives whom have moved outside the area, the visitors from

Macedonia whom the residents do not consider as visitors, and visitors from Albania Korçe, Tirana, Durrës etc.

The village of *Small Gorica* positioned above a hill on a small peninsula is close to the main road and one of the villages with most potential for development in all aspects. Near the school, on both sides of the road in front of one-another are found two bar restaurants hotels. These are the easiest destinations to reach, either for a drink of traditional food. These are the most visited places in this village where one is always full, and the other not so much for not saying empty. Even as a hotel the first one gets much more customers which makes a difference. Both these businesses have seen an increased number of visitors and tourists as a direct result of the house-museum. The first one has a better marketing and promotion but that is not all, as it will be analysed further in this study.

The owner of one of these restaurants (V.J. 63 years old), declares that people from Macedonia, Albania and those who once lived here but have moved in other countries show interest to visit the house-museum of Sterjo Spasse. The visitors are most of the time families who come back to their birthplace with their children and relatives and visit the house of the writer as well. The others are people who come in Prespa for other reasons, but have heard something about Sterjo and visit the house-museum. There are also those who are familiar with the figure and work of Sterjo and have come from Tirana or other cities from Albania or Macedonia just to visit the house-museum and after that have enjoyed the traditional food of the area. He also mentions two cases where organised groups of visitors after visiting the museum have dined at his restaurant. One was the group with the students of the school from the village of Belorta in Albania, and the other was a group consisting of elders from the village of Menkulas, the birthplace of Dritero Agolli another great writer of literature and friend of Sterjo Spasse. They had visited the house-museum and had turned for dinner after that.

Other people in this village say, the number of tourists has increased a little lately but is not to the levels of a decade ago. Among them there are two residents, both intellectuals one a teacher (V.V.) who has experience as a guide and the other (E.V.) a guesthouse owner, who have something more to say. According to the owner of the guesthouse the tourist activity was better some years ago. To his guesthouse has stayed the Swedish ambassador to Albania with his family for a week, as well as other Swedish. There have stayed people from all over the world, from Italy, Germany, Austria, Japan etc. His guesthouse has been the place where have stayed the Albanian and French archaeologists while working in the field of Kallamas and many more. Today the situation is not the same. The tourists, have no longer the interest to stay for a long time in the area. Most of the time they come and go within the day. As he states the main issue preventing further development is the terrible infrastructure. This pushes people away as soon as the first rain drops and the mud on the roads makes it hard to walk by foot or by car. If the situation would have been as before, certainly those who stayed in his guesthouse and others for that matter would have been shown more from the treasures of the area, and certainly the museum as well. The teacher (V.V.), is at large of the same opinion. The number of tourists was better before, with some signs of increasing this year only. The ones who visit the village lately are mostly Scandinavians. She remarks the necessity for the organised tourist-groups who visit the area by traveling agencies, to do so accompanied by a local guide inside the Prespa. Someone who knows the values and key locations in the area would show them better a lot more. Another idea would be to include the house-museum and other locations in Prespa on tours organised by Travel agencies. The cooperation with local guides would be a key

element in improving the development of Cultural Tourism, and where better to introduce them with the values of the area than the house-museum of Sterjo Spasse!

The village of *Pustec*, at the same time the centre of the Local Government, geographically is located at a favourable location on the side of the lake, visible after the crossing of the neck of Zvezda and viewing the lake. This village appears to have more movement than others however both the roads reaching this village are old and left unreconstructed. The number of tourists meet here has been greater than other villages. This village has two coffee-bars and a few small grocery stores but no restaurants. The coffee-bar in front of the church has more visitors and clients favoured by its location. Two guesthouses are to be found here as well, along with an ethnographic museum. The reason for finding more tourists here is as a result of the small island of Maligrad. From this village the tourists, take the boat to visit the small island. Tourists from Germany, Austria, France and other countries have come here during all summer, in a weekly basis.

From what the residents say the general opinion is the same as that of the other villages. The number of tourists and visitors in the area has starting to increase only recently this year after the pandemic. The tourists here, as seen, only stay for a coffee and then continue with their itinerary. Sometime those who come with their caravans, park somewhere and stay around for a couple of days and then move on. To the knowledge of the residents it is not possible to say if any of them have seen the house museum or are here as a direct result of it. The main reason for visiting this village is the access to the island of Maligrad. After that the interest in nature and the lake remain some of the most common reasons for visiting it. After the cancellation by the government of the trips to the island since early August this year, the interest especially by the foreigners seem to dwindle. (According to an agent of Balkan Tours)

During an interview with a resident of this village, a retired professor of history-geography who owns a guesthouse and at the same time is licenced to take visitors to the island with his boat, the island is the main attraction of the village. The cancellation of the trips toward it have paralysed tourist interest. The tourists coming to his guesthouse are mostly French, who come in the area yearly for community works. People who prefer the accommodation of a traditional house of the area while staying and dining with the local community. This is his own achievement through connections with agencies in Tirana. The occasional tourism in the area is not organised, guided or oriented. There does not exist any information centre or an online page to promote the values of the area, traditional foods, and orient the tourists toward the local businesses. Most of those who visit Prespa by accident do not know the house-museum even exists. To his information the main visitors so far have been those people who knew it in advance, and planned to visit it. On the other hand the infrastructure is not good, it does not favour enjoyable traveling around the area, from one village to the next.

A teacher in this village, is of the opinion tourists come in Prespa not only for nature and food but to know its traditions and cultural heritage as well. There have been many tourists from Greece, Italy, Germany and France this year. A beekeeper in this village, someone who once had a growing business in this field, and has sold honey to tourists, states the same opinion of the numbers increasing only this year. From the contacts and the conversations he has had, the foreign visitors from Western Europe, be them Germans, Italians French or other nationalities, are neither familiar with the figure of Sterjo Spasse, the house-museum, nor do they know it even exists. The ones who show interest are people from Albania or Macedonia who know or

have heard about the writer and have a general opinion regarding the existence of the house-museum. People who have come in Prespa for different reasons, vacation, work and have seen the museum. There are even those who have come specifically to visit it. Most of the people he has met are from Tirana, Durres, Korca, but he doesn't say with certainty they might have seen the museum. The other residents of this village who have some idea of the situation, are of the same opinion.

The village of *Lajthiza* is smaller in contrast with the others, located only less than 2km next to the village of Pustec. Through this village passes the road which leads to Pustec and further on to Zaroshka. The tourist interest here is low. The passing of the road through this village is the only reason it gains some attention, but all the visitors in general just pass through without much interest. The only business in the village is a gas station, the only one in all Prespa Municipality, which has a small coffee-bar as well. According to the owner of this business, the tourists just pass by sometimes there appears to be a flux of them and other times is somehow quiet. The ones who visit the house museum are only those who know the writer, while others, do not even know the museum is there. It needs further promotion and road signs. With some more promotion and investment in infrastructure the museum will have some more interest and will contribute in the local businesses. In 100 visitors even if 5% of them show interest, is positive, but firstly they have to be informed.

While the general population pays no attention to the people passing by, and where they come from, a retired professor (C.K.) is of the same opinion gathered so far among other villages. There is some movement lately but not as it should have been. From his contact the Primal interest for visiting the house museum is from Macedonians, those who know the values of both the writer and the house-museum represents. He puts weight as well to promotion and road signs.

The village of *Zaroshke*, recently rated as 1 of 100 tourist villages in Albania. This village is a gastronomic tourist destination. Due to its presence of three restaurants, two of which are hotels at the same time, it has more visitors. There is not much information to be gathered through the elders of the village whom have difficulty in communication. All they know is what they hear. They learn in conversations that Polish, Czech, German or French tourists come and go time after time. The ones with a more formulated opinion are the Intellectuals of course and the businesses.

An professor of this village (S.T.) 73 years of age, once chairman of the council of Pustec municipality, a figure inspired by Sterjo, who knew him in person, is of the opinion that in the matter of the tourism in general and the house museum specifically, should be orchestrated a well calculated plan to promote the values of the area. The museum should be a part of guide tours in Prespa, where should be included other interesting natural sites and those of the cultural heritage. The museum will have success in attracting more visitors as a part of the all Prespas interesting sites, not as a separate element. The ones who have visited the museum so far are those with previous knowledge, mainly from Albania and Macedonia. Above all justice is needed from the institutions, currently this is absent. All I see is a monopoly, which leads to disappointment. It has been invested a lot more than the end result shows.

As mentioned there are to be found three restaurants in this village. The competition among one-another has pushed them to improve and increase their standards continuously. This has given them a name beyond Prespa Region, in Korca District and beyond. Two from the three

declare they have received clients who have dined there after visiting the Sterjo Spasse house-museum. The visitors have been organised groups. The owner of one of the businesses confesses they have dined in his restaurant by the orientation of someone from the village of Gollomboch. At the meantime the other one declares he has not received a single visitor from the house-museum. Meanwhile the owner of this business has declared he is more than ready to expose leaflets containing a presentation of the museum at the entrance of his hotel, (as it happens at most hotels everywhere in the world), in order to caption the attention of the tourists residing there. This presented idea has been welcomed by the other businesses as well.

Last but not least, the village of **Gollomboch** is the village of the cultural tourism. This is taking another perspective recently. In this village have been organised activities, events and promotions years before the starting of the reconstruction of the old school and the plans for turning it into a museum. Before the existence of the museum such activities have been held near the statue of the writer at the centre of the village. His figure has always attracted cultural visitors. The other visitors are those who pass through to climb the hill and reach the balcony atop the hill near the telephone antennas. It is obvious as all the residents state the number of visitors here has increased since the museum was opened early in 2022. They say what they have seen and met. There have been visitors from Netherland, Austria, Germany, basically from all-over Europe where those from Macedonia and Albania take a special place. However it is impossible to calculate statistically how many people have visited the house museum until now because there is no record system in the museum and the guide (the key-holder for the museum at the same time) does not possess a complete data system.

From the data kept by the employee the results are as follows:-

Month	Date	Number of visitors
April	3	2
	4	1
	9	20
	10	6
	13	2
	17	4
	24	4
	25	3
June	2	40
	17	4
	19	7
July	7	5
	20	3

From April 3 up to 20 July, has been 101 visitors, according to the data the employee has written down in a notebook. In the absence of a digitalised system database, the data regarding this matter is not complete. By the information observed on the official site of Pustec Municipality, during this time have been organised a number of events, which automatically means the number of visitors has been higher. During these events the visitors have been in considerable numbers. Some events have been held even after July 20, which means there have been other visitors as shown on this site. The other difficulty consists in knowing the origin of the visitors. The visitors have been from different social and cultural backgrounds, residents,

citizens, teachers, students, prefects, ministers, ambassadors etc., as mentioned before (in the events).

The residents in the area have seen many busses with visitors, coming to visit the house-museum. A lady who lives next church says to have seen many busses with visitors from Bitola and Prilep among them. The visitors have been organised groups most of the time elderly or students. The intellectual thought remarks there is impossible to conclude statistics on this matter. There are people coming and going all the time. A professor says there have been visitors from Presheva, Serbia. The Dominant are those familiar with Sterjo, his work and life. The intellectual (E.M.) states that among visitors, so far there have been two high schools from Presheva and Pristina who have visited the museum. The connection between the students of Kosovo and Sterjo is stronger because of the publishing of his works in Kosovo for the first time. An interesting event is the visit by a group of elders from the village of Menkulas, the birthplace of Dritero Agolli. They had heard about this museum and embarked on a trip to awareness, finding the inspiration and the means to build their own museum for the writer Dritero Agolli, another colossus of the pen and friend of Sterjo at the same time. Others visitors are those who find the museum coincidentally. Those who go for hiking and come face to face with the museum. A museum in a village grasps their attention.

The data gathered among the residents, add to the number of the visitors given by the employee and the official site of Pustec Municipality. Based on this information, two issues come to surface. A better organization of work in the museum is needed, and a better orientation of the visitors towards the museum as well. The studies in the future must be based on official statistics, not only on opinions.

Based on the information gathered, as shown above, through concrete examples, the house-museum of Sterjo Spasse has had an impact in increasing the number of the visitors in the area. The visitors have been mainly organised groups and families. The origin of this visitors is mainly from Albania and North Macedonia followed by those from Kosovo and Serbia. There have been visitors from other European countries as well, who have found the house museum by coincidence according to the words of the residents. The impact of the house-museum in the increasing number of visitors has been felt mostly in the village of Gollomboch. This impact is of the cultural and moral nature mostly other than economic. In the cultural aspect this impact includes all the villages, all the people living in the area, of whom, the elders, the intellectuals, those who knew Sterjo personally are deeply touched by the existence of the museum. From the economic point of view, the tourist impact, touches primarily those villages who are more favourable as resting destinations. The priority here take the two villages of Small Gorica and Zaroshka due to the presence of the restaurants there as mentioned above.

The visitors of the museum so far have been people with previous knowledge about the writer, his life and works, friends, relatives, students and fellow readers. The casual tourists and visitors, those who come in the area for vacation, to enjoy the natural beauty of Prespa with all its treasures, or those who only use the street to pass by through Prespa rarely come to know the museum even exist, much less visit it. The only ones who do are those who find it by coincidence. The reason for this is the absence of signage, promotion and orientation toward it.

The preliminary study of the area, from the visitor point of view, highlighted some issues related to finding of the house-museum. For an outsider is not possible to learn if there is a

museum in the village without first going there. The other issue is finding it once you do. Hopefully you will find someone who speaks English, to show you the path toward the museum. Even though the village is small and eventually anyone will find it, the signage is a must! At the very least will stop the annoyance. As a conclusion, there must be put a big informational signage at the crossroad where the secondary road leading to the village, separates from the main street which connects Albania and Macedonia. The signage must tell, that on this village, taking this path is to be found the house-museum of Sterjo Spasse. The signage must be interesting in order to attract casual visitors. At the entrance of the village must be put another orientation signage and another one at the beginning of the road one has to climb to reach the museum. The signage must be in three different languages Albanian, Macedonian and English.

The big informational signage at the square next to the Yellow building of the park, first thing after crossing the neck of Zvezda and entering the park, shows no information regarding the museum. There is not a single information mentioning the existence of the house-museum here. It has information regarding other sites of Prespa and would be ideal to put a signage regarding the museum here as well. The square here is one of the most preferred spaces, especially by foreign tourists. Either for parking their caravans, stopping for a night or two, resting for a while or just taking a break, is impossible not to look at the signages here for a general information of what the area offers. The building of the park here, once a functional information centre but currently abandoned, if is ever again put to use would be ideal for exposing some more information regarding the museum.

On the other end, on the border between two countries while entering the Albanian territory from North Macedonia, inside the Albanian customs are to be found a few posters presenting some information about cultural heritage and the park. The most important object here is a screen, providing good information about certain sites, part of the cultural heritage all over the Prespa Region. A separate window informs the visitor about the cultural heritage sites only in Pustec Municipality in three different classifications (Churches/Monasteries, Museums and other interesting cultural attractions). On the window "Museums" the house-museum is nowhere to be found. It must be uploaded as soon as possible. It must be included in the other window, on both roadmaps as part of the destinations found here as well. The screen itself, must be put to a better position more accessible by the visitors.

Once exiting the customs, there is only one street signage, describing the category of the street, the speed limit and the nature of the residences to be found in the area. Next to it or behind it, there is plenty of space, suitable for putting an informational signage (including a map of the area with the key sites of the cultural heritage and house-museum of Sterjo Spasse as part of them.), for a better information regarding the contents of the area.

Enriching this key locations with informational signage is the key in letting people know about the existence of the house-museum. It is crucial especially to the casual bypasses and tourists for a better information of the area. Regarding this matter, more than 70% of the residents are aware of the absence of a signage in the crossroad before entering the village of Gollomboch. Regarding the absence of signage in both other locations, only few of them have paid attention to. Even one or two who have checked the screen inside the Albanian Customs of Gorica, have not paid close attention. They were of the opinion the museum was exposed there, which is not true as confirmed for the last time near the end of September. Nevertheless among the

intellectuals and business owners of the area there have been some with some clear ideas on improving this aspect, as mentioned above. In this matter one such resident has prepared an interesting project related to the signage since some time.

This issue is more visible to the eyes of the visitors and foreigners. While the residents see everything with the eye of knowing where everything is in advance the visitors do not. As spoken with visitors from Albania, Macedonia, France, Germany, Swiss and Greece, the conclusion is as follows. The Albanians and Macedonians found in the area mostly have some idea who Sterjo is and have heard a thing or two in social media about the museum. All the others, be them bypasses, casual tourists, tourists who vacation in the area, or those who visit it through tour-guides, have no idea the museum even exists. Not a single one of the foreign visitors interviewed, has heard about it on the internet, through social media, or has seen any informative or orientation signage anywhere, nor any poster or leaflets.

Among the foreign visitors, a couple of by passers from Switzerland going to Greece, meet in Small Gorica, did not have any information. A group of three, Two Germans, the other Russian in origin, moving around Albania and staying at the time to a guesthouse in Small Gorica did not possess any prior information regarding its existence. Even though one of them had been working in the Park for some years in the past had no information regarding this. A couple from Germany interviewed in Pustec, who were vacationing with their caravan at the time also did not have any information about the museum. The same thing happened with another French couple meet at one of the hotels in Zaroshka. They had read about Prespa in an article online and had decided to come visit the area for a few days. They were curious and eager to see and learn as much as they could but had no information regarding the museum. Even a group of German tourists (16 of them) met in the village of Pustec, along with their Albanian guide had no previous information regarding the existence of house-museum. Their main objective for being in the area was to visit the island of Maligrad. The information and suggestion for visiting the house-museum was done to both the guide and the agency (World Insight/ Balkan Insight) as a future optional destination.

Observing the museum it is obvious there is still some space for improvements. A computer data system must be placed to register the visitors. A book of impressions must be put there. The wooden fences in front of the balcony need fixing, the gold medals need to be protected behind glass in their respective places, and the traditional costumes must be original and authentic.

The economic impact of the house-museum

The economic impact as a direct result of the house-museum of Sterjo Spasse is another aspect of this study. The information gathered in the area shows, the economic impact is a direct result of the tourist impact. In the villages of Cerje, Diellas and Gorice e Madhe where the tourist impact is absent, the economic impact is also absent.

The village of Kallamas has a tourist impact, as mentioned before. Tourists of different categories visit the area and show interest in buying products of the area, such as honey, mountain tea, wine, raki, cheese, eggs and mostly fish, sometimes dry fish. A fisherman says that the tourists who stay in the area for a few days with their caravans, buy mostly fresh fish, but they have interest to buy other products as well. A teacher of this village, says there have

been even some tourists who come in groups of 3-4 people, visit the area and show interest in buying traditional clothes and then leave. In this matter the residents are sceptical because they protect the old traditions with fanaticism. Another resident says they come prepared, park their caravans along the shore, and stay there sometimes for weeks without paying any tax or buying anything in the area. The owner of one of the two coffee-bars found here states that tourists, buy only a coffee or a soft drink. He also declares that he cannot offer anything more yet, as he must first improve the conditions of his business, expand it into a restaurant and latter promote it. If the visitors, coming here, have seen the house-museum, have come for this reason in the area or will see it after, this remains unknown. One of the major issues remaining is the communication.

The village of Small Gorica, positioned close to the main street, usually has more tourists and visitors. The residents speak of an interest by this visitors especially foreign tourists, in buying products of the area from them, same as to the village of Kallamas. The same traditional foods of the area, attract attention and interest here. Some other such food are havjar, pickles, different sort of compose foods and traditional dishes of the winter. In the words of the residents, differentiating here the opinion of the owner of the only warehouse found inside the village currently out of order, it is unknown if the foreign visitors have any connection with the museum.

The two restaurant bars found on the side of the main street are the only direct economic beneficiaries of the house-museum. The visitors dining here after visiting the house museum have been mostly organised groups. The groups of students and elders are one such group. The others groups are those who have participated in events and other activities organised in the museum. There have also been other visitors, small groups of friends, or families who have declared to have visited the house-museum.

The situation appears to be the same to the village of Pustec. The economic impact as result of the house-museum is low for not saying none existing. The nature of people visiting the museum, generally daily visitors, organised groups or families, and their interests to dine after the visit, do not correspond with the absence of restaurants in this village. For casual tourists and visitors is not possible to draw conclusions, same as to the other villages of the area. Their interests on purchasing local foods appears the same. The only business profiting something more here is a known beekeeper of the area. The position of his house, and the fame of the honey favour more sales. However is difficult to pinpoint if they are as result of the museum. The situation in the village of Lajthiza, appears much different. The interest in all areas is much lower here due to its position. The only business in the village states, there is no profit by the visitors. Rarely anyone will stop when left with no other choice.

In the village of Zaroshka, the three main businesses are the main beneficiaries. They have a considerable number of visitors, especially during the weekend Saturday and Sunday. The visitors are mainly families or wider groups of relatives. This are daily visitors most of the time. Sometimes foreign tourists are to be found, usually old couples or groups of friends. The businesses here beside the services they provide as restaurants, at the same time offer other products of the area as well. Products such as honey, wine, raki, tea, fish and more, usually produced by the families who own the businesses, leave less space for other residents to sell anything. The visitors themselves go directly to the businesses of the village for whatever they need. Two of this businesses, declare they have had visitors from the house-museum on

occasions. Organised groups of friends or students have turned here for dinner after the visit. This has happened a few times since the opening of the museum, concluding the economic impact it has had in this village.

The village of Gollomboch, has had an increase in the number of the visitors, which has raised its name as a cultural destination in the area. From the economic perspective, it is one of the villages with the least economic impact. Just as it was ascertained by the residents, the visitors leave the village almost immediately after visiting the museum. The only business found in the village is a guesthouse, currently out of order. In the first floor of the building is found a coffee-bar, completed with a big kitchen for usage by the clients as they see fit. In the previous years before the pandemic, this guesthouse was functioning properly. During the pandemic it stopped its activity and to this day does not have clients. To the opinion of the owner, the tourism of this year is better than last year, but still not so good. Unfortunately it is a daily tourism. Most of the people come and go within the day. They do not stay long in the area. Even those who visit the house-museum, from the economic point of view are few, far from the perspective to see some profit from them. This renders it unable to keep the coffee-bar open and concentrate on this business. Hopefully something will change in the future.

The evaluation of the house-museum by the local government.

According to deputy mayor of Pustec Municipality (J.A.), the reconstruction of the house-museum, is a great evaluation done to the writer Sterjo Spasse, and to the whole area of Prespa. The building in itself is an object of great value, an aesthetic building in the centre of the village, which from the architectural point of view preserves the values of the old school. The construction of this museum is an added value to the cultural aspect and a tourist attraction to the visitors. According to the municipality of Pustec, the number of visitors in the area has increased as a result of museum. Most of them have been in the form of organised groups and students. However there are also those curious who learn about its existence and express the desire to visit it. Something more must be done regarding the promotion, nevertheless is a good start. The perspective to include it in tour guides, the completion of the signage, will certainly improve the tourist impact and increase the number of visitors. For us as an institution the realisation of this museum, is seen as an initiative in construction of others. The archaeological museum, the ethnographic museum and more are some of the ones in perspective. On the other end I see it as an object with potential to affect the economy of the residents in the area.

As a resident of the area the deputy mayor is planning to organise a promotional market for all the products found here, including medicinal herbs. As a representative of the local government he says that more should be done in promoting the whole area. The improvement of infrastructure is another key subject, the municipality of Pustec intends to fix through some projects this institution has. The regulation of the road infrastructure, and that of the sewerage of black water is one such project. Paving the village of Gollomboch with cobblestones, the construction of a promenade from Zaroshka to Pustec, the cleaning and arranging of two beaches that of Zaroshka and Pustec are some of this projects. Other projects consist in the reconstruction of Lajthiza road, the construction of a pier in Pustec along with a bar or restaurant in it, as well as a proper space for docking a ferry. The area of Rrallnik is in perspective to be transformed into a place suitable for tourists, where they may park their

caravans and enjoy their stay. As a resident and citizen, I want it to be realized, as a representative of the local government, I hope we will find support, the deputy mayor states.

The evaluation of the house-museum by Mr. Ilinden Spasse, son of Sterjo Spasse and his wife Mrs. Maria Spasse.

According to Mr. Ilinden Spasse, son of the writer Sterjo Spasse, the inauguration day of the Sterjo Spasse house-museum, for the family members, has been the most beautiful and meaningful day. The gratitude of the family goes to all those who have contributed to the construction of the museum house without exception. On the eyes of Mr. Ilinden Spasse, this museum might serve as an inter-Balkan museum, as a connecting bridge in the promotion of the best values of each nation in the integration toward the United Europe. For him is most important, that the museum must present clearly four aspects about his father. Sterjo as a pupil, as a student, as a teacher and as a writer. He expresses the desire, to be included in the museum all the works of Sterjo published in Kosovo during the years 1968-1969.

The family has contributed in giving most of the materials found there today and declares that they have some more materials to give. However they are concerned about some aspects of the house-museum. One such concern, consist in the improper interpretation of the exposed material donated by the family. The exposed radio for example is not just one radio used by Sterjo. It was a gift to him by the prime minister of China, Chou En Lai himself. The note below the radio is not correct. It undermines the value of both the object and that of Sterjo. It must be mentioned correctly. The same thing happens with the carpet under the writing desk. It was donated by the family because it is a work done in hand by the wife of Sterjo Spasse, not just some random carpet. This must be mentioned as well. One of the watches exposed there, is a gift to Sterjo by the publishing house Rilindja in Kosove and must be mentioned. Another element is the piece of marble, with the cover of the novel "Pse" carved on it. This was a gift by a friend of the family (from the family Gosho of Pogradec), done as sign that it would survive the burning by the communist regime. It is essential for this to be mentioned as well.

Another aspect mentioned by Mr. Ilinden is related to the cultural heritage of the area. The costumes exhibited in the museum, are not traditional of the area. He is of the opinion, they be replaced with traditional costumes of the village of Gollomboch and to be added a pair from the tradition of Kallamas as well, which differentiate from one another.

In his eyes there is still work to be done. The organization and management must be improved. There should be kept a database to register the number of visitors, and their origin. A book of impressions should be put there as well, in order to gather opinions on how the museum has been received. The curator must speak with more enthusiasm and passion about the life and work of the Sterjo Spasse. A completed signage is an element which undoubtedly will attract and better orientate more visitors toward the museum.

Ms Maria Spasse, the wife of Mr. Ilinden Spasse, in addition to her gratitude for the reconstruction of the house museum, expresses her desire for the further enrichment of the house-museum, being ready to provide some other materials from the documents and papers Sterjo used to have. Another concern of her, apart from what was mentioned is related to the exhibition of authentic materials as provided by the family. A better management regarding the schedules must be done so that tourists find the museum open at any time. Another aspect in

need of improving is the area around the museum, especially the placement of trash cans close to the building, and the wood fences in front of it, in need of fixing.

RESULTS

All residents in the municipality of Pustec, without exception, are familiar or have some knowledge about the writer Sterjo Spasse. Some know him as the writer, others have heard from their parents, while the elders and intellectuals know him in a much larger spectrum, as a friend, as a teacher, a humanist, inspiring figure and the pride of the whole area.

The house-museum of Sterjo Spasse, to the residents of Pustec municipality is the embodiment of their cultural heritage. The construction of this museum is an added value to the cultural heritage of the area, one expected for a long time and finally realised. The house itself is a valuable and aesthetic building preserving the architecture of the old school and the tradition of the area. The values it holds help raise the awareness of the people part of this culture, honours them and makes them proud. It is a place of knowledge and introduction for the new generation with the tradition of the generations past.

The residents evaluate the museum, however there are voices who point towards a number of things in need of close attention and improvement in the future, such as additional materials about the life and work of Sterjo, exhibition of authentic traditional costumes of the area, the need for a computerised data system regarding the statistics on the visitors. Adding an impressions book, improvements outside the museum etc.

Along this study have been found valuable treasures, unknown and unprompted before, which must be helped in preserving another important part from the culture of the area. Such is the case with the two history studies of the two old professors who have put in paper the work of their lifetime with the sole purpose of preserving something more of Prespa for the future generations.

The house museum has had an impact in increasing the number of visitors in the area. Most of them have been people with previous knowledge of the life and work of Sterjo, and fewer are those who have visited the museum out of curiosity. The visitors have been mainly organised groups of friends, students, or even those with a mission in the path of awareness, followed by families or small groups of people and individuals.

Statistically speaking is difficult to conclude how many visitors have actually seen the house-museum so far, due to the absence of a digitalised system and due to the statistics being kept by the guide.

The increase in the number of visitors has had an economic impact for some of the businesses found in the area, generally restaurants. It is crucial to appoint that the number of tourists and casual visitors is generally low. The products they purchase from time to time affect very little the economy of the residents in the area. Much less when one has to calculate how few of them might be as a direct result from the house-museum.

This study has brought to light some issues in need of attention, as it was pointed by some of the residents as well. The absence of signage, of promotion, of being included in tour-guides as a part among many of the cultural heritage sites of the area are some of the mayor issues, which will change things for better the moment they are dealt with, revitalising the area at a

different level. They are some key factors in attracting more tourists, especially the casual ones and as a result having a greater economic impact.

In the cultural aspect the impact is visible. With the improvement on the infrastructure, signage and promotion the impact will be even greater, The knowledge and evaluation of the figure of Sterjo Spasse and the house-museum, will expand geographically for certain.

Regarding the economic impact, there will be an increase in the number of tourists and visitors which will bring some economic growth, however not of as much as to bring any change in the economic life of the residents. On this aspect the construction and revitalisation of the museum must not be seen separated from other values and other cultural treasures of the area. Overall it must not be seen separated from the development and the revitalisation of the whole area. From the infrastructure, from the reconstruction of the roads, from the improvement of sewage drainage, from cleanup and revitalisation of beaches, from diverting the path of livestock outside or around the villages, ensuring hygiene and cleanliness. Important in achieving all this is a better cooperation between all local actors as well as the raising in awareness of the community. In order to make the community aware, and prevent it from abandoning Prespa, first trust and hope must be restored. The only way to achieve this is by bringing to reality and fulfilling the above mentioned investments. The residents are in dire need for big investments, serious ones, which need the direct intervention of the government.

The house museum should be seen as a part of the whole in another aspect as well. It must be seen as an important link in the whole picture of cultural heritage treasures, the area contains. This way is easier to be included in tour-and other organised groups, as one of many valuable locations the area has to offer to the visitors and tourists. Only this way the number of visitors will increase. The moment this happens and the numbers are high enough to make a difference, when their orientation diverts as well from casual by passers to permanent visitors who want to stay longer in the area the perspective and orientation of the residents will change as well. Only then more investments will be achieved in the area, the resident will conclude their projects and perspectives and the economic impact will have a serious effect.

The residents have plenty of visions and ideas which at the current situation and reality are not given life and supported. Many of those who actually run a business, have plans to expand and improve them. Others plan to open new businesses. Most of them are of the opinion of either transforming part of their existent house into a guesthouse or making a bigger investment on this field and building a new one. Some of them express want to run tour guides on the area, some just tours with boat along the lake and others with animals. Another intends to open a gaming centre and another envisions of building a horse farm and to organise trails through the forests with them. All of this initiatives do not support revealing another physiognomy of Prespa! In the words of the residents themselves even a few who dare take an initiative are failed. The monopolisation of investments in the hands of a few families looks more like feudalism. In this perspective the hope has died! Until it is rekindled, even those few young people remaining in the area state that are left with no other choice but to leave.

SUGESTIONS

Further enrichment of the material exhibited inside the museum-house with more materials related to the life and work of Sterjo Spasse. Presenting in the museum all the works of Sterjo published in Kosovo during the years 1968-1969.

The interpretation of all the works exhibited must be properly noted, in order to properly specify their full value and significance. The radio Shangai must be noted, is a gift by the prime minister of China, Chou En Lai, to better preserve the symbolism of the object. The same must be done for all the others.

The prices and awards, given to Sterjo and exhibited inside the museum, must be covered with protective glass.

Better administration of the museum, establishing a database system and setting up of a book of impressions.

The exposed costumes, must be replaced with authentic traditional costumes of the area. Exhibiting traditional costumes of both Gollomboch and Kallamas cultures, to further enrich the museum would be something important to add.

The material exposed, must be verified as authentic.

The museum is good to be enriched with a few other objects related to the history of the building as a school. Materials which are ready for publishing, in the form of manuscripts at the hands of old professors in the area, fellow students of Sterjo.

Further improvement of the environment and infrastructure outside the museum, competition with signage, on the road leading to the museum. Involvement of the house-museum on the orientating screen at the customs and placement of signage at two strategic places mentioned in the study.

Promotion of the house-museum and its involvement in tour-guides as another part of the whole values part of cultural heritage found in the area.

Further involvement of residents and intellectuals in events and activities organised in the house museum in a much wider circle.