

Hiddenspirits_Mbreshtan:

Some basics about Mbreshtan and its surroundings

by Martin Heusinger



The remote Albanian village Mbreshtan is situated some 500 meters above sea level, in the hillsides of southern Albania. Next center at about 10 km is the very scenic but still remote town Berat ("city of thousand windows") lying in the bed of Osumi river, which is only slightly above sea level.

The settlement area of Mbreshtan is not very concentrated, the houses of the approximately 180 families - corresponding to about 800 inhabitants - of today are a kind of spread within the high valley, limited by the rocky and steep hillsides of Shpiragu mountain and the water reservoir at the bottom.



For the moment we know of at least two stories about the origin of the village's name. The first version derives Mbreshtan from "vreshta" (wine yard) which would indicate a (rather historic) tradition with wine cultivation. The second tells about a sultan of the ottoman period, who recognized the privileged and refreshing climate during the summer times, and gave the name "King ("Mbret") of the villages". There will be some more legends about the village to discover.



Agriculture is the most important employer of the village, producing mainly for subsistence, without onelined specialization. Plenty of different fruits, vegetables of excellent quality, not to forget the strong tradition of raki from grapes in September, make Mbreshtan a very tasty experience.

The hinterland, climbing up to about 1000 meters offers medical herbs which are (collected and) exported to the industries of the Western world.



Very close to the village, oil drilling of an international investor is said to have been successful. Since a couple of years the resources seem to be ready to be exploited.



Which future for the Mbreshtan and its hidden spirit?

