

This project sets out to document and provide a detailed linguistic description of Guardioli, a unique and severely endangered variety of Occitan spoken in the south of Italy, more precisely in the village of Guardia Piemontese. As the name of the village (literally 'fortress of Piemonte') suggests, its inhabitants ultimately trace back to the northern Italian Piemonte region.

For various reasons, this project will be of great scientific and social value. Firstly, after the settlement of Guardia Piemontese in the late Middle Ages, contacts with the homeland were permanently interrupted as a result of which Guardioli developed in isolation from the rest of Occitania and can therefore be used as a unique window on earlier stages of Occitan. Secondly, with less than 300 native speakers remaining, Guardioli is a severely endangered speech variety. The documentation and description of Guardioli can contribute significantly to the preservation and revitalization of Guardioli and thus strengthen the position of its speakers in a wider socio-economic context. The fact that Guardioli is also the last remaining variety of Occitan spoken outside of the Occitan-speaking area traditionally known as Occitania (i.e. Southern France, North-Western Italy and North-Eastern Spain) further underlines the urgent need for its description.

To achieve the goals of the project, audio and video recordings will be made of a broad range of communicative events. All relevant contextual information (including sociolinguistic profiles of the speakers, historical information regarding the settlement of the village, etc.) will be stored and catalogued. The digital audio recordings will be annotated and archived in a structured corpus. This also ensures the long-term usefulness of the data.