

RELIGIOUS TOURIST GUIDEBOOK

tirana 2022



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Qendra për
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Dear visitor of our city of Tirana!

It is a privilege for me, as Mayor of the Municipality of Tirana, to say a few words of welcome at the beginning of this special tourist guidebook which is dedicated to the religious buildings of the city of Tirana.

Tirana is well known for its religious heritage, where Muslim and Christians, specifically Suni, Bektashi, Orthodox and Catholic believers and Evangelicals have lived in harmony with one another to this day. As always, the city of Tirana opens its arms to welcome diverse citizens, without seeing the color of their skin, or their religious or political affiliation. There are numerous of these examples, such as the protection of Jews, who were running away from a structured anti-Semitic persecution during World War II which aimed their total annihilation. The citizens of Tirana, like many Albanians in all Albanian cities, not only did not support this but did not remain indifferent either. They put their families at risk to save these people

in need, without minding their religion at all. Is there a better example for tolerance than understanding and accepting without conditions the existences of other religious affiliations?

Swiss writer H  l  ne Dufour-Pittard, who wrote under the pen name of No  lle Roger, visited Tirana in the beginning of the 1920s. This is how she describes the religious harmony of the citizens of Tirana: *"In an orthodox church of Tirana, a funeral service was being carried out for a deceased Christian Albanian officer. Participants in the ceremony were Muslims as well who were holding one of the flower wreaths. The imams were holding candles. The Christian priest honored Muhammed and the Muslim imam honored Jesus Christ. This is how Albanians understand the unification of the cross with the crescent moon, something which the West has never ceased to oppose"*.

The same spirit of tolerance is even today in Tirana, and everywhere in Albania. All of us together, in joys and sorrows.

Dear visitors,
This special tourist guidebook you have in your hands will present and lead you to the religious buildings located in Tirana. By visiting them you will learn more on this rare and outstanding characteristic such as the peaceful and brotherly coexistence of religious faiths in Tirana. Its not necessary to have a population of tens of millions in order to have distinctive values. Even a small nation can have huge values, write history and stand out for something which perhaps might be unthinkable somewhere else.

Today, the number of religious buildings in Tirana is smaller than in 1957. They were damaged as a result of the brutal prohibition of religious faith in 1967 by the communist regime. Some of them were destroyed, the others were converted into storehouses and gyms while only a few were preserved as monuments of culture. However, we can learn something out of this as well. Our experience as “the first atheist country in the world” is unique as well, which you will find nowhere else other than in Albania during 1967-1990.

I wish you a very pleasant tour,

Yours sincerely

Erion Veliaj

Introduction

Religious feelings have been inseparable from the lives of Albanians since most ancient times. Religious plurality in Albania existed before the political and historical plurality, and it has not endangered the national existence and identity. The arduous renaissance writer Pashko Vasa would write: "The religion of an Albanian is Albanianism". This expression of course does not show lack of religious faith among Albanians, but it is the best indication of a strong national identity and religious respect and tolerance among Albanians, which is reflected still to this day on the quiet and honorable consistence of the five religious communities in Tirana and everywhere in Albania: The Suni, the Bektashi, the Orthodox, the Catholics and the Evangelists.

The development of a guidebook on the religious objects in Tirana aids not only the promotion of the Albanian historic tourism related to religious buildings and culture but it also brings to light one of the most significant Albanian values of all time: the harmonious and peaceful coexistence of different religious faiths in Albania. This guidebook is useful for all categories of tourists, locals or international. It is helpful to understand the development of religious faith in Albania and reveals an important small piece of our national history at the same time. At a time when religious extremism, violence and instrumentalism by terror is one of the most pressing problems world



society faces today, showing the values of religious coexistence in a country with different religious affiliations conveys a message of peace in today's era full of challenges. Tracing religious coexistence on religious objects, such as mosques, churches and monasteries, which combine

with one another throughout the centuries, proves the fact that religion always played a pacifying role in the Albanian national identity. The cultural tradition and the non-dogmatic nature of religious faith in Albania prevented Albanians from cultivating religious fanaticism and intolerance. This can be considered to be one of the most distinguished cultural values of the Albanian society, in addition to hospitality and Besa (pledge of honor). This has been part of the lives of Albanians generation after generation and above all it has to do with the identity of the Albanian nation. The national feelings of Albanians, naturally influenced by the historic conditions and geopolitical circumstance, have stood historically above the differences in religious affiliations. This does not make Albanians a nation less religious, but it is a consequence imposed by history itself. Albania was the ground where two of the biggest empires of the Medieval Age, Rome and Byzantium, would meet and separate. As a result, the authority of two churches, Roman and Byzantine, East and West, would clash here as well. Nevertheless, a historic fact is that among Albanians this separation was never made into

a cause for conflict, but on the contrary. Seen from this perspective, religious harmony can be considered an ethnologic feature of Albanians. The peaceful religious plurality serves as a unifying and not divisive element in the Albanian society. It provided a joint point of reference to all religions: catholic and orthodox religions and later to Muslim faith.

Religion, more specifically Christianity, came in the Albanian territories, i.e. the Illyria of that time, naturally like in all Europe and elsewhere. Like the other neighboring nations, the Illyrians, our ancestors, were polytheists. Christianity left its mark and appeared in Illyria as early as the first century AD. One of the main reasons this religion spread rapidly was the geographical position of the main Illyrian cities, which were connected by the Via Egnatia. This road was used by Christian missionaries going from Jerusalem to Western Europe.

The faith of Albanians inherited also a large dose of traditional pagan rites, which gave characteristic features to their religious feelings. Motives of pagan rites were often present when cults of Christian saints were being worshiped and honored, such as the practice of sacrificing and slaughtering an animal every time a house, bridge or castle was built. The act of sacrifice was often done by the hand of a priest. Albanians believed in the God of Christians, but at the same time they honored and feared other "gods", demons, evil spirits, fairies, amulets, talismans, etc.

Judging from a general perspective, these gave Albanian Christianity rather the features of a folk and non-doctrinal Christianity and certainly made religious faith more tangible, although it

should be emphasized that religious devotion and feelings among Albanians is as complicated as the problem of religion and the church itself. Historical sources do not fail to show from time-to-time lack of religious passion among Albanians, but on the other hand, other sources prove much more the opposite, which speaks of the fervor of their religious devotion.

In the Middle Ages, the development of the Albanian church went through several stages, which were connected to major events, mainly with the history of Rome and Byzantium. As the border between two religious worldviews, Albania sometimes came under the religious jurisdiction of Rome and sometimes under that of Byzantium. Of course, this phenomenon changed the religious hierarchy as well as the religious consciousness of Albanians, making the Catholic Church dominate in the North of Albania and the Orthodox Church in the South.

The establishment of the Ottoman rule in Albania brought about profound changes in the religious structure of the population. The Christian affiliation of Albanians, the Orthodox and Catholic affiliations, began to be undermined in favor of the spread of Islam, which was the official religion of the Ottoman state. Over the centuries, the ratio of religious affiliations in Albania also changed, favoring the Muslim religion over the Orthodox and Catholic ones, as a result of mass conversions of the population.

As noted above, we see that religious consciousness of Albanians went through several stages, always influenced by historical circumstances. One such circumstance was the prohibition of religious practice during the communist regime. A decree published on November 22, 1967 by Enver Hoxha's

government, officially declared Albania the first and only atheist country in the world and in history, where any religious expression was prohibited by the Constitution. Hundreds of religious objects were razed to the ground, others were turned into factories, warehouses, stables, cinemas, clubs. Almost all monasteries were destroyed or turned into military barracks. These works of art, so skillfully built by some of the best Albanian and foreign architects, were destroyed and lost their religious, cultural and architectural values. Very few of them were preserved intact, except those that were considered to bear historical and cultural values. There are about 200 religious buildings in Albania, which were designated as monuments of culture and are protected by the state.

The advent of democracy in 1990 restored freedom of religious belief to Albanian society. The return of religious faith brought an influx of many new currents. The latter sometimes cause doctrinal clashes, and not only, within traditional religious communities. Currently in Albania there are registered and active 241 religious communities, among which the most important are the Sunni and Bektashi Muslims

and Christians such as Orthodox, Catholics and Evangelicals.

To this day there is still no official figure on the total number of religious buildings in Albania. However, based on the declarations of religious communities about the number of their religious objects, we can say that the total number of religious buildings of all faiths in Albania is 1757. Some of them are reconstructed buildings, with a history of hundreds of years. Of course, the largest number of them are newly built, mostly after the 1990s. The density of buildings varies according to the number of believers existing in each community. In addition to spiritual fulfillment, these religious institutions also convey historical messages which help us understand the past and future of Albanians, their struggle and efforts for peace, a better and democratic life. And where can democracy be expressed better than in a country where religious coexistence and tolerance is the most natural and the most inviolable value?

**Prof. Asoc. Dr.
Marenglen KASMI**

The Muslim Community of Albania

Some of religious buildings
That are located in the territory of
Tirana Municipality



We thank the Mufti of Tirana Lauren Luli, for the cooperation in providing information and old photos about the religious buildings of the **Muslim Community of Albania**.

Religious buildings usually had a decisive role on the construction of city centers in many countries of the world. This is also the case of the capital of Albania, Tirana.

Mosques, as well as buildings of other religions, dominated the center of Tirana. The proximity and the harmonization of these buildings with one another is unique in Albania and it is rarely found in many other cities of the world. This architectural harmonization is in fact also a symbol of the harmony that existed between faiths in Tirana and Albania in general.

Religious harmony is part of the identity of Tirana. The legacy of religious coexistence, and the awareness that national and religious ideas do not interfere with each other, is the most precious gift we have. The peaceful and problem-free coexistence of religious faiths in Tirana and all over the country makes Albania a country that should be considered as an example for other countries. Religious harmony remains one of the historical, cultural and civilizational values, which our country is proud of and which it offers to other peoples of the Balkans and beyond. But this value does not stand on its own; religious leaders work permanently to preserve it. Religion in Albania has played a first-hand role in the survival of the Albanian nation, it not only did not become



an obstacle, but worked hard for a healthy and stable nation.

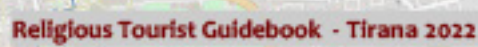
Past regimes intervened a lot on the religious buildings in Albania; especially the communist regime uprooted a

large part of the capital's mosques. However, thanks to God, the Mosque of Et'hem Bey was saved, which is also the symbol of the city, one of the oldest religious, urban-historical and cultural objects remaining in the city. It testifies to the high level of construction of our Albanian craftsmen. The mosques of "Dine Hoxha" and "Kokonoz" are still existing, but almost substantial interventions have been made in them. Unfortunately, the Mosque of Suleyman Pasha, which marked the founding of the city of Tirana in 1614, no longer exists. We also have the Hamdi Mosque in Peza, which has been restored by the Muslim Community of Albania.

In these objects, which are easily accessible to be visited, tourists can also get information on the history of the capital, such as the ancient cultural heritage and the special contribution that Islam has to the architectural form and urbanism of the city.

CHAIRMAN OF THE
MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN ALBANIA
Z. Bujar Spahiu

Some religious buildings of the Muslims
That are located in the
Tirana



THE MOSQUE OF HAJI ET'HEM BEY



*Address: Sheshi Skënderbej,
Nd. 1,
Njësia Administrative Nr. 2,
Kodi postar 1001*

The Mosque of Et'hem Bey is the only mosque which survived the demolitions or the destructions from the periods of war or even communism in the Albanian capital and it is a work of precious value. The mosque is located in Scanderbeg square in the center of the city. Together with the clock tower and the modern palace of culture, it is a key point in the architecture of Tirana.

The mosque consists of the usual prayer hall with a dome (10.52 m²), an open and wide portico in front, which has a flat wooden ceiling and a tiled roof, and a very tall and thin minaret on the right side.

The mosque was not built during a single period of construction. The oldest part of the building is the prayer hall with a dome. The founder of the mosque, Molla Bey, was a feudal lord originally from Petrela. He was the grandson of Suleyman Pasha. It is possible that the mosque, which began to be built in 1793 during the reign of Selim III, was left unfinished due to the war that began in 1799, between Bushatli Ibrahim from Shkodra and Kapllan Pasha Toptan, the feudal lord of Tirana in Central Albania. Molla Bey died in 1808. His son, Haji Et'hem Bey, finished the mosque in 1238 AH (1822/23), as shown by the inscription on the portico. The chronograms

of both inscriptions identify the year 1208 H (1793/94) as the date of its construction. The shape of this building is almost common in Albania, with steep angles and an octagonal drum, which is very low here. The overall proportions of the mosque are very thick and indicate the late period of construction. Three decades after the construction of the prayer hall an outer portico was built around two sides of the mosque. This is an unusual element: temporary circumstances may have prevented the builders from making it symmetrical.

The prayer hall has been developed remarkably inside. All the walls and the dome are covered with well-preserved decorative drawings that are not found anywhere else. The background has a pleasant ashen color. A red-brown color and a very pleasant green color are painted very harmoniously over the background. Intricate floral drawings mix with paintings of fantastical cities and beautiful mosques, creating a scene which is very similar to those scenes found in the rich interiors of old Turkish buildings. All were created by the itinerant groups of craftsmen and painters from the Albanian-Wallachian villages. The mosque of Haji Et'hem Bey became a museum in 1967. This mosque was one of the only ones in Tirana which survived communism and so on January 18, 1991, the mosque opened again to serve the faithful of the city of Tirana.

After a long period, it became very urgent to make a detailed intervention and restoration of the mosque. Thus, in February 2018, the mosque would close for complete restoration until September 2021, when the restoration was completed and the mosque became fully functional again.





Address: Rr. Shyqyri Ishmi, Nd. 1, Njësia
Administrative 2, Kodi postar 1010

It was built in the 17th century by the Ottoman Empire. On October 16, 1927, lightning struck the building, cracking it, and the minaret fell to the ground, killing one soldier and injuring 11 others. After that, the Tanners' Mosque was rebuilt with the contribution of the residents and was inaugurated on July 28, 1933. In 1990, the mosque underwent restoration, and this time the minaret was also rebuilt. Even today, it bears the name the Tanners' Mosque.





THE MOSQUE OF KOKONÓZ



Address: Rr. Shenasi Dishnica, Nd. 22, Njësia
Administrative 2, Kodi postar 1017

The Mosque of Kokonoz or otherwise known as the Mosque of the New Bazaar is one of the oldest (still remaining) mosques in the city of Tirana. We come across the name of the mosque for the first time in a document dating back to 1775 which reads that Chandler Mustafa Këllezi was forced to give 6 akche a day to the khatib of the mosque in question, the builder of which (of the Mosque of Kokonoz) had died not long ago. Based on the preserved documents we understand that the builder or the funder of the construction of the mosque had died in 1775 and this indicates that the mosque was built at least 20 years before his death (around 1750-1760), or at least before the date of the document in 1775. As such we come to the conclusion that the Mosque of Kokonoz belongs to the middle of the

XVIII century, between 1750-1760. In 1967, Mosque of Kokonoz was closed like many other mosques due to the communist regime. It was turned into a tobacco warehouse and remained so until 1990. When opened again as a mosque, it was in a deplorable condition. This state continued until the end of 1999, when a group of believers began the restoration of the mosque.



THE MOSQUE OF KALA PREZE



Address: Prezë

The mosque is located at the entrance of the Castle of Berat and it was built in 1547, by order of the Sultan. It is a simple rectangular building with a surface area of about 133 m² and walls about 4 m high. Two mihrabs are on the eastern wall which were walled up during the reconstructions. A plaque with an inscription bearing the date 1772 was found near the second mihrab, which should be the date of a reconstruction.



THE MOSQUE DINE HOXHA



Address: Rr. e Kavajës, Nd. 16, Njësia
Administrative 10, Kodi postar 1001

Initially known as “Xhamia e Re” (the New Mosque), it was built in the so-called Mëhalla e Re (the New Quarter) in the capital city, at Mussolini Boulevard, latterly known as Kavaja Street. Dine Hoxha donated the land of this mosque, while the sponsoring for the construction was provided by the inhabitants of Mëhalla-e Re. The construction works for this mosque were inaugurated in November 6. 1932, in a special ceremony with the participation of Madras students, quarter's population, and chief-mufti of Tirana, Muharrem Mullahi. Based on the tradition provided by the Islamic Religion, a sacrifice was offered on the occasion. The mosque was built in less than 9 months and in July 30, 1933 was made the inauguration of the opening of Xhamia e Re (the New Mosque), with a speech delivered by the chief-mufti of the area of Tirana, Muharrem Mullahi. This mosque was later denominated by the population and believers as Dine Hoxha Mosque, which the name it bears also nowadays. The views we can see in the pictures of the year



1930 show clearly a mosque with five cupolas, and four semi-cupolas, which vanished later, after the establishing of the communist regime. During this regime, the mosque was put under the service and administration of Decoration Enterprise, which was engaged in the decoration of Tirana during various feasts. The mosque was reopened to the religious services in May 1993. Later, it was subjected to various reparations.

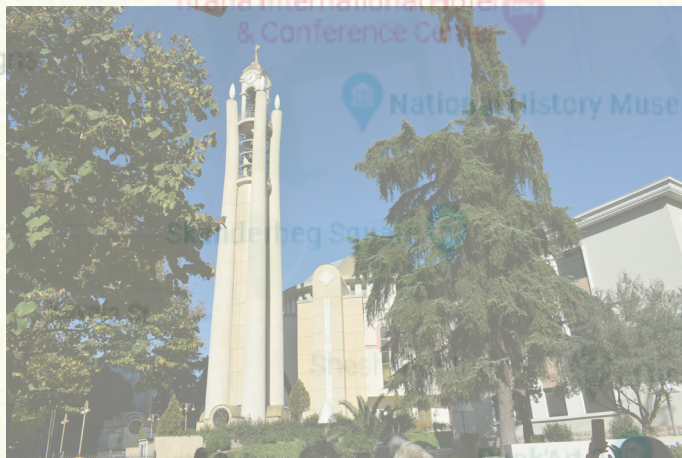
including the reconstruction of the minaret.



The reparations were completed in the year 1996. Meanwhile improvements were accomplished also after that year, and the mosque has now its main entrance at Kavaja Street. Soon after its reopening, the mosque was denominated with the name of the well-known imam in Tirana, “H. H.Mahmud Dashi”, but in spite of this, it is still known among the citizens under the name of Dine Hoxha Mosque.

The Orthodox Church in Albania

Some of religious buildings
that are located in the territory of
Tirana Municipality



We thank His Grace Bishop Asti Bakallbashi, for the cooperation in providing information and old photos about the religious buildings of **The Orthodox Church in Albania.**

The Orthodox Church in Albania is a divine institution, being the One Holy Catholic (Universal) and Apostolic Church in the country. It includes all Orthodox Christian believers of the Republic of Albania, regardless of origin, nationality and race. It operates through the dioceses of the Archbishopric of Tirana-Durrës

and the north of the country, the Metropolis of Berat, the Metropolis of Gjirokastra, the Metropolis of Korça, the Metropolis of Apollonia and Fier, the Metropolis of Elbasan.

The Orthodox Church of Albania has a rich spiritual, historical, artistic and monumental history and tradition, uninterrupted and inseparable from the ecclesiastical and spiritual life of the Orthodox Christian World, since the apostolic years of the I century to this day. It existed during the three Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman empires and it was subjected to various historical persecutions, filled with known and unknown saints. After the Great Schism of Christianity in 1054, the Orthodox Church continued to be part of Eastern Christianity.

Today, the Orthodox Church of Albania, on the administrative aspect, has the status of the Autocephalous Church (1937), alongside the sister Orthodox Churches and Patriarchates in the Orthodox World.

From 1944-1967, the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania was faced with the atheist communist persecution in its classic form, as it happened in other Eastern European countries as well. From 1967-1990, it experienced total persecution, all religious expression and activity were prohibited by the constitution, places of

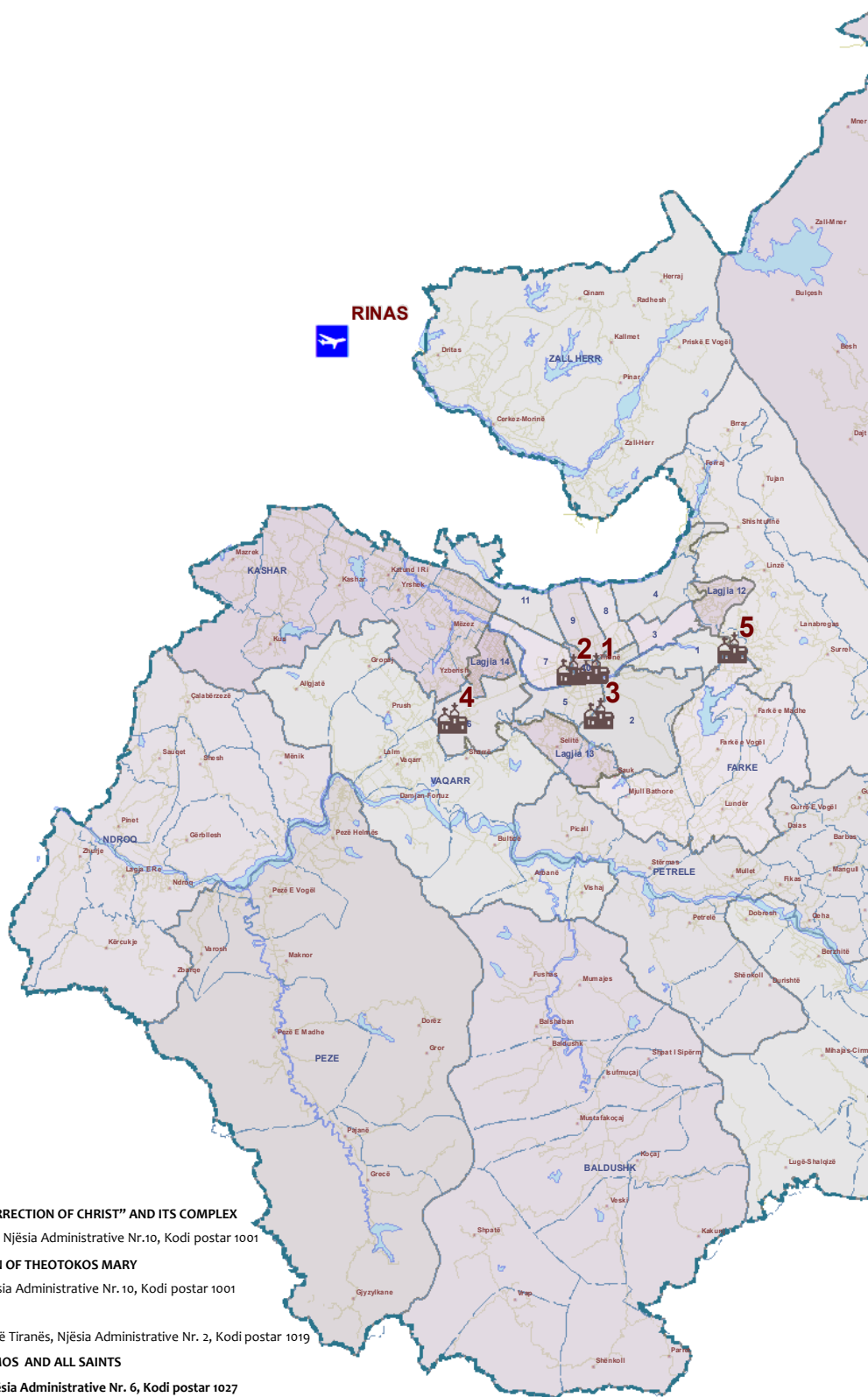


worship were destroyed, clergy and believers were persecuted, imprisoned and killed, until complete dissolution of religion. In 1991, when freedom of religious belief was restored, the Orthodox Church of Albania was completely ruined, with only 15 elderly clergy, without any bishop, with destroyed

churches and many of the existing ones turned into warehouses, stables, clubs, etc., and with no administrative buildings.

Bishop (Prof. Dr.) Anastas (Janullatos) undertook the task of rebuilding the Church at the request of the Orthodox believers of Albania and as such he who was elected Archbishop in 1992. From then until now, for 30 uninterrupted years, the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania is organized and completely rebuilt with ecclesiastical structures (The Holy Synod, 160 new clergies, catechists, psaltery), 160 new churches, 68 restored churches, monasteries and cultural monuments, 170 repaired churches. The Orthodox Church organizes numerous activities and initiatives in the social, educational, health fields, strengthening the faith, love and hope of the Orthodox people and the Albanian society as a whole. It contributes fundamentally to the spiritual and social development of the country and to religious harmony in the country. It actively participates in activities around the world, both in inter-Christian and inter-religious activities.

Archbishop of Tirana, Durrës and All Albania,
His Beatitude, Prof. Dr. Anastas
(Janullatos)



1. THE CATHEDRAL OF THE "RESURRECTION OF CHRIST" AND ITS COMPLEX

Address: Rr. Ibrahim Rugova, Nd. 3, Njësia Administrative Nr.10, Kodi postar 1001

2. THE CHURCH OF ANNUNCIATION OF THEOTOKOS MARY

Address: Rr. e Kavajës, Nd. 123, Njësia Administrative Nr. 10, Kodi postar 1001

3. The Church of Saint Procopius

Address: Kodrat e Parkut të Madh të Tiranës, Njësia Administrative Nr. 2, Kodi postar 1019

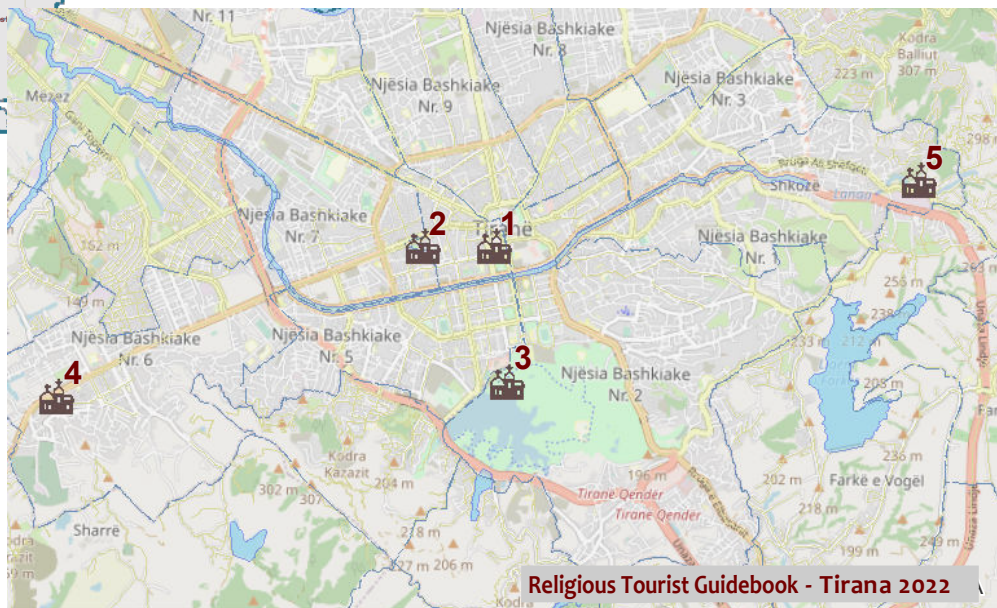
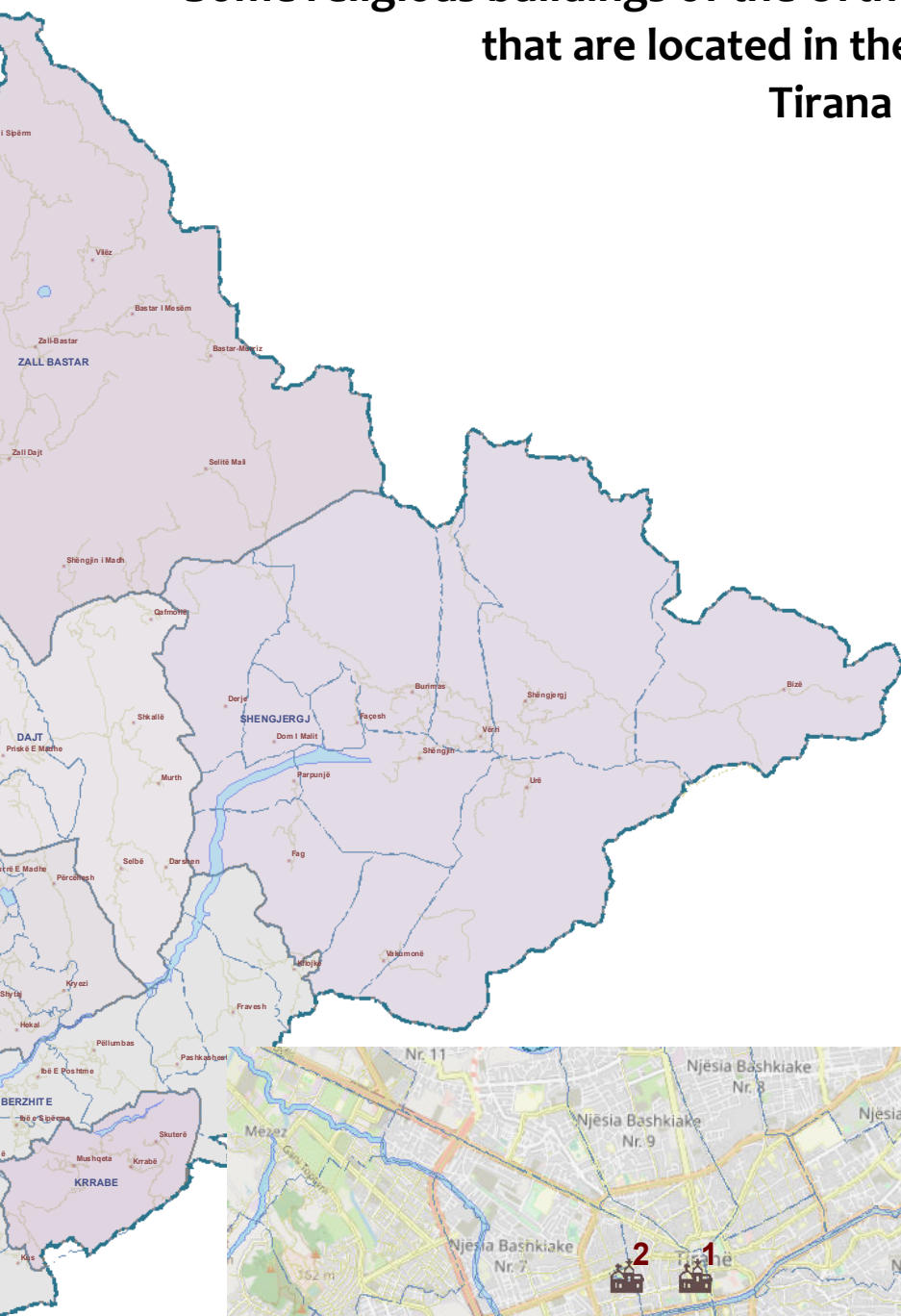
4. THE CHURCH OF SAINT GERASIMOS AND ALL SAINTS

Address: Rr. Llazit Miho, Nd. 149, Njësia Administrative Nr. 6, Kodi postar 1027

5. KISHA "METAMORFOZA E KRISHTIT"

Address: Rr. Aleksandër Martelli, Shkozë, Njësia Administrative Nr. 1, Kodi postar 1005

Some religious buildings of the Orthodox Church that are located in the territory of Tirana Municipality



THE CATHEDRAL OF THE “RESURRECTION OF CHRIST” AND ITS COMPLEX



Address: Rr. Ibrahim Rugova,
Nd. 3, Njësia Administrative Nr. 10,
Kodi postar 1001

The complex of the new Cathedral of the “Resurrection of Christ” in Tirana is located in the heart of the capital. The land it is built on was given in exchange for the land of the old cathedral church of Tirana, which was destroyed by the atheist regime in 1967, and Hotel “Tirana International” was built in its place.

The complex was designed by studio “Papadatos Partnership LLP” in New York and it was implemented by a group of architects and engineers under the auspices of Archbishop Anastas. The church began to function in 2012, and it was consecrated in 2014, with the presence of the primates of the Orthodox Churches worldwide.

The complex consists of a Cathedral Church, Chapels, a Bell Tower, The Seat of the Holy Synod and a Cultural Center.

The cathedral “Resurrection of Christ” draws on the architecture of the church of St. Sophia of

Constantinople (6th century). The architecture of the cathedral combines traditional Byzantine and modern development, revealing the dynamism of truth, beauty and love in Christian faith (Archbishop Anastas).

The architectural concept and vision of the Cathedral Church is based on the sign of the cross (the central symbol of the Christian life) and on the cycle, which contains the meaning of eternal time. Its culminating axis connects the earth to the heavens and creates the center of a large cross, 49 m long and wide. The church is covered with a dome, with an internal diameter of 26 m and a height of 23 m, in which there are 52 windows representing the 52 weeks of the annual calendar. The large mosaic “Christ the Pantocrator (Almighty)”, connecting time created with eternity, is dominant inside at the peak of the dome.

Next to the Altar, several scenes are made with mosaics: the “Theotokos Platytera” (Wider than

the heavens)", "Resurrected Christ Advising the Disciples", "The Ascension of Christ", "The Birth of Christ", "The Mystical Supper", "Christ in Emmaus with the two disciples", "The Pentecost" etc. Four main events from the life of Christ are shown on the large four supporting pillars of the church: The Baptism, The Metamorphosis, The Crucifixion, The Resurrection; and the 4 evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. The iconostasis, made of marble and decorated with Christian symbols, has painted wooden icons that primarily represent Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, Saint John the Baptist, the Resurrection of Christ and various saints, while the top row presents the main moments from the life and work of Christ.

The western view from the outside - the facade of the church is formed by a large arch which gives the impression of hospitality and above the main entrance is a large bronze cross, surrounded by two ears, a symbol of sacrificial love and devotion (John 12:24).

The cathedral celebrates its feast on the day of Easter, the Resurrection of Christ.

A chapel is in the north-western corner of the land. It is dedicated to the birth of Christ and it is covered with a cross-shaped cover. Inside it is all decorated with mural iconography, with moments

from the beginning of the world to the life of Christ, and with moments from the revival of the Church of Albania.

The bell tower, 46 m high, has the shape of four Paschal candles, which symbolize the four Evangelists who announce the Resurrection. They converge around the central axis of the stairs. The circular staircase leads to two open floors, where there are 16 bells. Above the bells, a quadrangular clock marks the time.

On the eastern side of the Complex is the Seat of the Holy Synod, which has the offices of the Synod, the Archbishopric, the library and two chapels.

The Cultural Center was built in two underground floors, under the square of the cathedral church. The center contains an amphitheater, with a capacity of 500-850 seats, used for conferences, performances and artistic activities. A small, open amphitheater was developed for summer activities on the northern side, in front of the Cultural Center. The bookstore is to the right of the impressive staircase leading up to the Cathedral Church. To the left of the stairs are the meeting rooms which young people, children and believers can use after the church services.



THE CHURCH OF ANNUNCIATION OF THEOTOKOS MARY



Address: Rr. e Kavajës, Nd. 123,
Njësia Administrative Nr. 10, Kodi
postar 1001



The Church of Annunciation of Theotokos Mary has a byzantine style, with a cross in square plan with a dome, consisting of several premises in the same building: the narthex (the antechamber), the naos, (the central part of the church), the altar and the baptistery with its small chapel. The church celebrates its feast on March 25.

The church was built in 1964, after the destruction of the former Church of the Annunciation together with its entire adjoining complex (the Archdiocese and the Theological Seminary Apostle Paul, stretching over 3500 m²), located in the center of Tirana. Its architect was Mr. Skënder Luarasi, the same person who designed the church of St. Procopius, in Tirana. The Church of the Annunciation had a very short life.

The communist-atheist regime after the dark year 1967 altered the function and premises of the church, turning them into a gym for the "17 Nëntori" Sporting club until 1991. After the fall of communism in 1991, the church was given back to the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania in a

deplorable state.

In 1992, it was completely reconstructed with the funds collected by Archbishop Anastas. Ancillary premises were also added to the building. This was the main church of the Orthodox community until 2012. Many important church events took place here, from the enthronement of Archbishop Anastas, the numerous graduations of deacons, priests and bishops, to festive celebrations, reception of representatives of other Autocephalous Orthodox Churches,

etc. Being too small to meet the needs of the Orthodox community, it was replaced by the cathedral "Resurrection of Christ" and its complex which were built in the center of the city. Today, the Church of the Annunciation is the second church after the cathedral, and serves the community in the surrounding area.

Next to the church, the Orthodox Church built the Albanian-American Educational Complex "The Protagonists" (kindergarten, primary and secondary school), serving the wider community without religious distinction.



THE CHURCH OF SAINT PROCOPIUS



Address: Kodrat e Parkut të Madh të Tiranës, Njësia Administrative Nr. 2, Kodi postar 1019

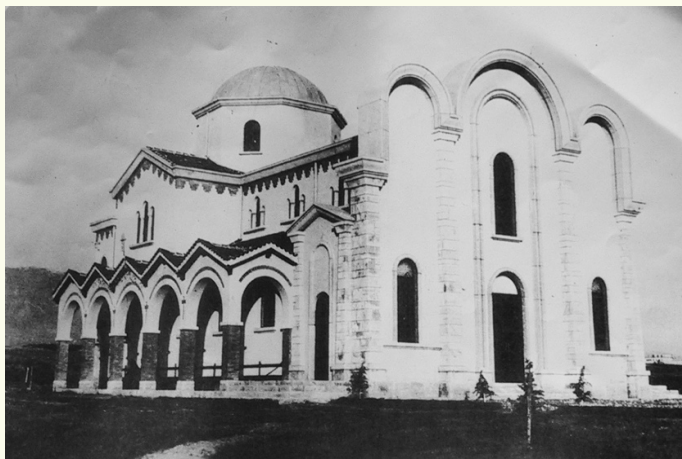
The church of Saint Procopius is the first church that was built by the Orthodox community of Tirana in 1785. It was originally built at the courtyard of the current Presidency building. It had an area of 12,000 m². Inside, the church was decorated and the iconostasis was made by the local craftsmen of that time. The believers of the community were also buried in the church yard. At that time, the Church of Saint Procopius met all the spiritual needs of the community.

In 1882, after the great church of the Annunciation was built in the center of Tirana, the church of Procopius lost its great importance.

In 1938, the church changed its location, due to the project of the great boulevard of Tirana. A land of 5500 m² was bought in the hills of the artificial lake of Tirana and the new church of St. Procopius was built, where it is still today. It was inaugurated in 1945 by then Archbishop, His Beatitude, Kristofor Kissi.

The architecture of the church was Byzantine, a cross in square with a dome, and with Roman Catholic influences on the western facade of its main entrance with three arches.

In 1967, during the communist-atheist regime, after a series of transformations and essential changes, it was turned into a cafe and a restaurant until



1993.

In this year, after numerous protests from the Orthodox community of Tirana, this church was restored to its believers. Subsequently, it was adapted to the needs of the community with icons, iconostasis and all liturgical objects, serving the Orthodox community, but in a completely depreciated structural condition. Currently, the church is waiting for permission from the Albanian government to be transformed into a real church. The church celebrates its feast day on July 8, the day of Saint Procopius, a martyr.



THE CHURCH OF SAINT GERASIMOS AND ALL SAINTS

 Address: Rr. Llazi Miho, Nd. 149,
Njësia Administrative Nr. 6, Kodi postar
1027

The Church of St. Gerasimos and All Saints was built in the western part of the city of Tirana, which is known as the Kombinat Quarter. The church was completed in 2010, when it was consecrated. It has a Byzantine architecture. It has a cross in square plan, with a dome, and a portico on the north, west and south with arcades and columns. This church meets the spiritual needs of the Orthodox believers in the Kombinat Quarter, and it provides all religious services, on Sundays and weekdays.

The church celebrates its feast days on August 16, October 20 and on Sunday of All Saints.

The church was built within the "Nazaret" workshop complex of the Orthodox Church, a complex which includes the candle workshop, the printing press, the iconographic studio, the restoration of icons and carpentry.



“THAVOR” SPIRITUAL CENTER



Address: Rr. Aleksandër Marteli,
Shkozë, Njësia Administrative Nr.
1, Kodi postar 1005

On the outskirts of Tirana, at the foot of Mount Dajti, in the area of Shkoza, near the former tractor factory, there is a complex of social and educational buildings run by Orthodox Church, which was bought and adapted in 2006.

In 2012, the church of the “Metamorphosis of Christ the Savior” (St. Sotiris) was built in the courtyard of the complex, which has a typical Byzantine architecture, a cross in square type with a dome. This church has been serving the Orthodox Christian community of the area for years. The church celebrates its feast day on August 6.

In 2012, the “John Koukouzelis” School of Byzantine Church Music started operating in the multi-story building. The students of the psalti (chanting) school study here. They are the

cadres who are preparing to serve in Orthodox churches all over the country.

A kindergarten for small children also operates in another area nearby.

The “Familja e Dashurisë” (Asylum) nursing home for elderly women began operating in 2018 within this complex.



The Catholic Church in Albania

Some of religious buildings
that are located in the territory of
Tirana Municipality



We thank Father Zef Bisha, for the cooperation in providing information and old photos about the religious buildings of **The Catholic Church in Albania**.

The Catholic Churches in Tirana are part of the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Tirana-Durrës. This Archdiocese, one of the two archdioceses in the country, together with the other four Catholic Dioceses represent the Roman Catholic Church in Albania, under the spiritual leadership of the Pope in Vatican.

The Roman Catholic faith is witnessed very early in Albania and in Tirana too. Ruins of old churches are still found in the suburbs of the Capital, which are considered an archival and spiritual wealth of the Catholic faith.

The Catholic Church of "Our Lady of Immaculate Conception" is the first church built in modern times Tirana, consecrated by his Excellency, Archbishop Raffaele D'Ambrosio O.F.M. (1856), which was destroyed upon the advent of the communist regime. The communist regime years tried to terminate and destroy people's faith in God, by replacing it with the ideals of the time.

Apart from their architectural and spiritual values, the Catholic Churches in Tirana hold also the history of the Catholic clergy sacrifices. So, in the churches of "Saint Anthony of Padua", "Our Lady of Immaculate Conception" and "The Sacred Heart" have served many priests that later were persecuted and a good number even shot during the communist regime. Among them, we can name: Fr. Matë Prendushi, O.F.M. (Beatified in 2016.); Fr. Anton Harapi, O.F.M.; Fr. Filip Mazreku, O.F.M.; Fr. Marjan Prelaj, O.F.M.; Fr.



Zef Pllumi, O.F.M.; Fr. Shtjefën Kurti (Parish priest and Dean of Tirana in 1938; beatified in 2016.); Fr. Mark Dushi; Fr. Zef Bici; and Fr. Pjetër Meshkalla, S.J. In this view, the Catholic Churches of Tirana are a valuable wealth of the city and of the Albanian history.

The Catholic Churches in Tirana are now spread throughout the entire territory of the city, starting from the Cathedral Church of "Saint Paul", and following with the

Churches of "Saint Anthony of Padua", "Sacred Heart", "Our Lady Help of Christians", "Our Lady of the Assumption", "Saint Joseph", "Saint Michael", and with the other smaller centers.

In Tirana, there are also religious houses, which serve in many ways. It is distinguished in particular the mission of the Sisters of Mother Teresa, the Albanian Saint known worldwide for her extraordinary work and that of the Congregation founded by her.

The Catholic community participates actively in the life of the Church in Tirana, increasing thus her value, not only as a building for practicing the faith, but as a spiritual, intellectual, cultural and social community, which, through the Word and the Catholic Doctrine, contributes to the coexistence, peace, human dignity and prosperity in the society.

Archbishop
Arjan Dodaj F.d.C



1. THE PARISH CHURCH OF "THE SACRED HEART"

Address : Rr. e Kavajës, Njësia Administrative Nr. 10, Kodi postar 1001

2. THE PARISH CHURCH OF "SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA"

Address : Rr. Ali Pashë Gucia, Nd. 34, Njësia Administrative Nr. 8, Kodi postar 1017

3. THE PARISH CHURCH OF "OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION"

Address : Pranë ish Kombinatt Autotraktorëve

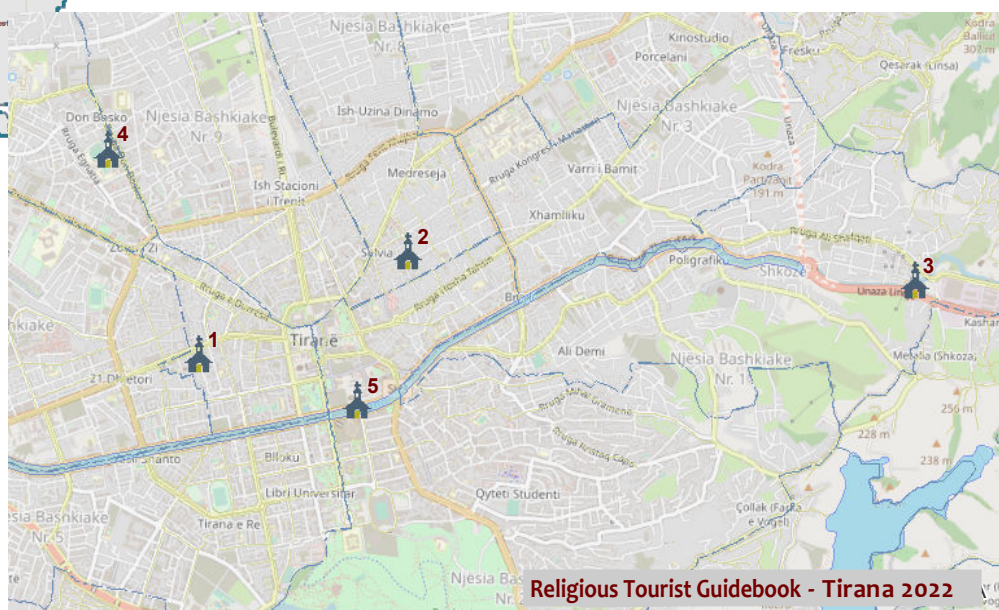
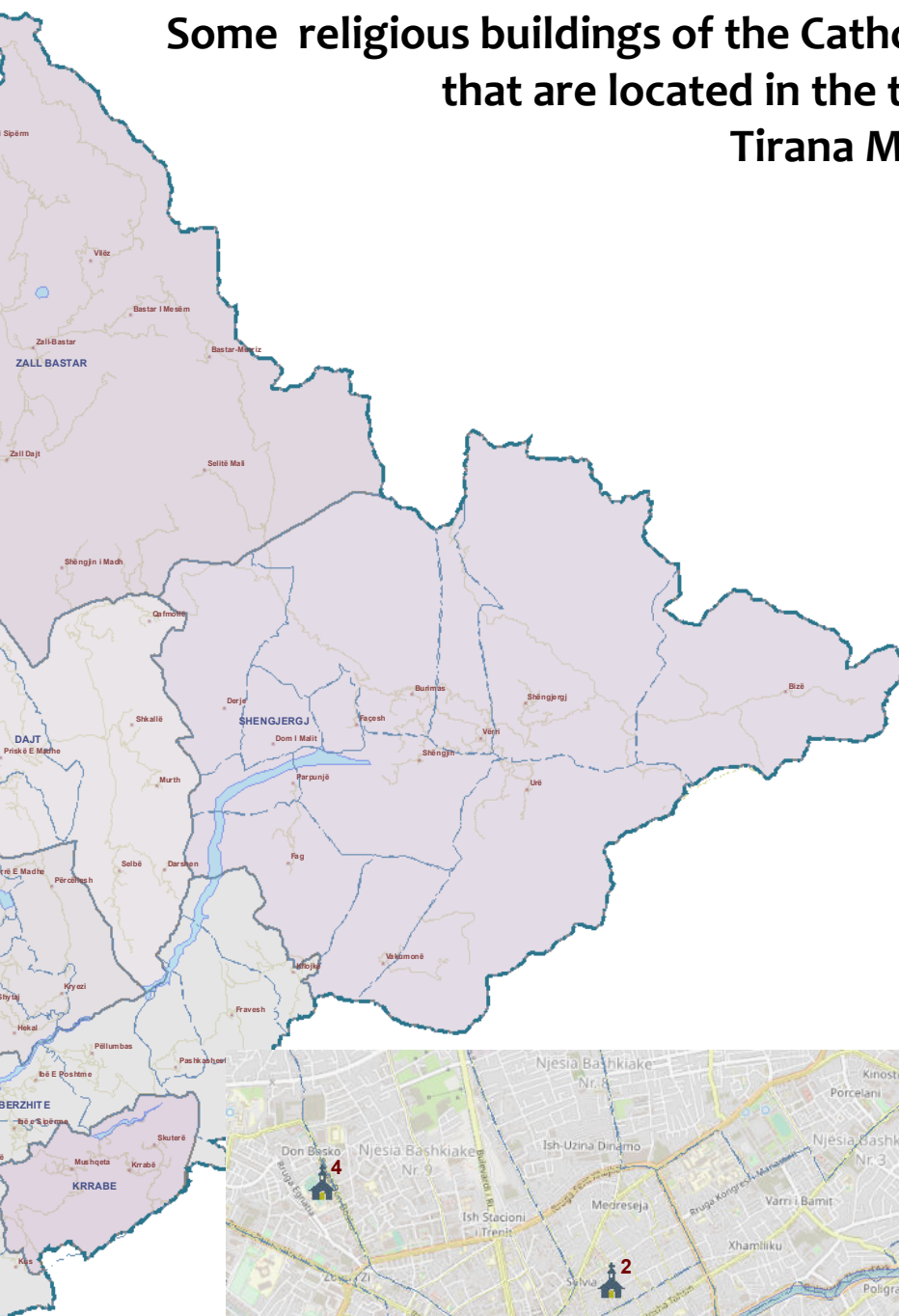
4. THE CHURCH OF "OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS"

Address : Rr. Don Bosko, Nd. 95, Njësia Administrative Nr. 11, Kodi postar 1026

5. THE CATHEDRAL OF "SAINT PAUL" TIRANË

Address : Blv. Zhan D'Ark, Nd. 1, Njësia Administrative Nr. 2, Kodi postar 1001

Some religious buildings of the Catholic Church that are located in the territory of Tirana Municipality



THE CATHEDRAL OF “SAINT PAUL ” TIRANË



Address: Blv. Zhan D'Ark,
Nd. 1,
Njësia Administrative Nr. 2,
Kodi postar 1001



The Cathedral Church of “Saint Paul” in Tirana is a 20-year-old church, with a modern style, which started its construction in 1998, in order to meet the needs of the Capital's Catholic faithful. The only Catholic parish church, which existed in Tirana exactly where today is Hotel “Tirana International”, was destroyed by the communist regime.

The Dedication of the Saint Paul's Cathedral dates on January 26, 2002. Everything was accomplished thanks to the dedication and continuous efforts of the first Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Tirana-Durrës, his Excellency Rrok Mirdita. The project and the implementation of the works were carried out by engineer Giancarlo Rigamonti and a firm from Florence, Italy, within a four-year time period.

The project corresponds to a triangular shape with a circle inscribed within it. The triangle relates to the symbolism of the Holy Trinity, while the circle relates to the notion of eternity of a single God in three persons. In the upper front part of the Cathedral, is seen the statue of Saint Paul to whom the church is dedicated. At the front courtyard, stands the statue of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, the Albanian Saint.

In the frontal cupola, awaits the Crucified Christ. On the left side, near the sacristy, is the large mosaic of Saint Mother Teresa, and also the statues of Saint Mary, Saint Paul, Saint Anthony of Padua, Saint Nicholas, and the bust of Saint John Paul II. Inside the cathedral, there is the Chapel of “Saint Lucy” with the statue of the saint.

The dedication of the Cathedral Church to Saint

Paul is linked to his proclamation of the Gospel in Illyria, as per his own writings, and to the foundation of the first Christian community in Durrës, where, until the '90s, was located the seat of the Diocese Durrës-Tiranë. At the request of Pope John Paul II, it was decided that the Seat of the Diocese would be transferred to the Capital.

Next to the Cathedral of "Saint Paul", it is located the Archdiocese, the Seat of the Metropolitan Archbishop, which is currently represented by his Excellency, Archbishop Arjan Dodaj, FdC. The Archdiocese has halls and spaces for holding religious activities at the diocesan level and beyond.



THE PARISH CHURCH OF "THE SACRED HEART"



Address: Rr. e Kavajës, Njësia Administrative
Nr. 10, Kodi postar 1001



On June 24, 1938, it was placed the first stone of the Church of "The Sacred Heart", named as the "Sanctuary of the Sacred Heart", by the Jesuit Fathers, who came to open their mission in Tirana. The works were interrupted in 1939 due to the Italian invasion of Albania and restarted on December 25, 1940. The first religious rite welcomed over 1500 people.

The Church remained open until 1967, and after that it was turned into a concert hall and cinema. The church building was not destroyed. The façade of the Church was covered by a wall, carefully designed by the architect Maks Velo that conserved it undamaged.

The side Chapel of the Most Blessed Sacrament was used also by the Greek-Byzantine Rite for its religious services.

The Church of "The Sacred Heart" has played the role of a co-Cathedral together with the Church of "Saint Lucy" in Durrës for the Archdiocese of Tiranë-Durrës until 2001, year when the new Cathedral of "Saint Paul" was built.

The Church is of Roman style. The project was realized by the Italian architect Luigi Santi. The structure with pillars, where the arches are supported, allows for an immediate feeling of the presence of Holiness.

The Church was reopened with the intervention of Mother Teresa, who delivered its keys to Fr. Ndoc Sahatçia on March 23, 1991. After the opening, it started its pastoral activities as the Parish of "The Sacred Heart" and it continues even today serving its faithful.

The Altar is at the center of the Church and it is made entirely of marble. There are three paintings above the arches, which represent the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, works of Albana Keraj Sinaj.

On the walls of both side chapels are shown: on one side, the "The Last Supper" and "The Mystery of the Death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ", and on the other side, at the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is displayed "The Mystery of the Annunciation of the Birth of Jesus Christ", works of Shpend Begu.



THE PARISH CHURCH OF “SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA”



Address: Rr. Ali Pashë Gucia, Nd. 34, Njësi
Administrative Nr. 8, Kodi postar 1 017

In February of 1942, the Franciscan Friars opened a house (hospice) for the needs of the local people. On June 13, 1944, Fr. Anton Harapi built the church dedicated to Saint Anthony of Padua. The church was closed in 1967 and was used as a cinema for the Pioneers' House. It was reopened on December 24, 1990, and Fr. Zef Pllumi celebrated the Christmas Mass.

In July of 2004, the church was destroyed to build a new one. With its arched lines, it creates the perspective towards the sky, while its walls are covered with stone.

The iconography of the church, like the mosaic that unfolds from the church's entrance, the big colored windows and up to the main altar in biblical key, presents the idea of the church-garden inspired by “The Song of Songs”.

There's a mosaic with the image of the roe deer in the meadow at the vestibule.

At the side windows, through paintings, is displayed the Canticle of the Brother Sun, a poem of Saint Francis. At the second window on the left, we can see the Saint. In front of him, there is Saint Claire, with whom he founded the Second Order – that of the Poor Claire Nuns.

The pillars with twelve crosses and the Altar were consecrated with Holy Oil by his Excellency, Archbishop Rok Mirdita, during the Dedication Mass on June 1, 2011.

The altar, as a symbol of the presbytery, bears the colors of Christological symbolism; the lilies at the foot of the Altar remind of sainthood. The Ambon, on the left side of the Altar, bears the symbol of the vine. On the right side of the Altar, the pillar of the Tabernacle is decorated with wheat bran. The mosaic and the half-circle stained glass, above, are works of Eduard Sinaj.



Above the triptych stained glass window, close to the Altar, is the coat of arms crowned by the sign Tau, the personal seal of Saint Francis.

At the head, it is also displayed the symbol of Saint Bernardino of Siena: the Holy Name of Jesus – IHS. The stained-glass window is realized by “Idelvetro - Verona”.

In the two side altars, there are the statues of the Mother of God and Saint Anthony of Padua, the Patron Saint of this Church.



THE PARISH CHURCH OF “OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION”



Address: Pranë ish Kombinatit Autotraktorëve

The Parish Church of “Our Lady of the Assumption” is a new church build in 2006 by Irish volunteers, which is added to the other Catholic churches in Tirana. It is located in the suburbs of Tirana, in the area called “Tractor” Factory, due to the previous presence of a big tractor factory, which was abandoned immediately after the fall of communism.

The small church is a prefabricated construction built by Irish volunteers. It has been renovated



recently in its interior and exterior. The beauty of this church is also given by a small garden surrounding it.

This new church serves to a considerable number of Catholic faithful, who have arrived here from different areas in the North, mainly from Puka. So, the church is a missionary presence here in support of these people, often facing difficulties and poverty. It provides pastoral care, by preparing the faithful in receiving the holy Sacraments.

The church is dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption and its feast is on August 15. To Mary, image of the saved humanity, humble servant of God and present at the feet of the cross, we entrust our prayer for us and for all those who are most in need and have no one to pray for them.

THE CHURCH OF “OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS”



Address: Rr. Don Bosco,
Nd. 95, Njësia Administrative Nr. 11,
Kodi postar 1026



The Catholic Church of “Our Lady Help of Christians” is located in the new “Don Bosco” neighborhood, built after the fall of communism and managed by the Salesians of Don Bosco. Its construction began with the laying of the first foundation stone on June 26, 2006, and ended with its inauguration on October 25, 2008. It was designed for the city of Tirana by the Italian engineer Nicola Danca. It is a modern, ellipse-shaped church made of reinforced concrete, with wooden beams and a roof. Over the Altar, there is a mosaic made of shells, representing Christ the man and Christ in the Eucharistic mystery.

At the end of the church, high up, stand decorative windows, which show at the center the Resurrection of Christ, the center of the Christian faith, and the

four Evangelists symbolized by the figure of a man (Matthew), a lion (Mark), a bull (Luke) and an eagle (John). The other windows represent the 20 mysteries of the Rosary prayer. The Altar is characteristic, in the form of two hands (one above the other), holding the dome of a bunker. In addition, the door of the alabaster Tabernacle shows us the figure of the Good Shepherd, the model of

every Salesian. And finally, next to it, a decorative window that shows the famous dream of Don Bosco, “the dream of two pillars”. The church is equipped with a heating-cooling system for winter and summer. Next to the Parish, there are the Oratory, the Youth Center, and two school facilities of primary (9 grades) and secondary education.



The Bektashi World Dedeabate

Some of religious buildings
that are located in the territory of
Tirana Municipality



We thank Mr.Nuri Cuni, General Secretary, for the cooperation in providing information and old photos about the religious buildings of **The Bektashi World Dedeabate**.

The World Bektashi Dedeababate, the only world institution in Albania, represents the universal tradition of the Bektashi order from the XIII century until now. The founder was Hajji Bektash Veli, who established the first tekke in 1282 in Kara Ujuk (Anatolia), Nevşehir province, which houses today the Hajji Bektash museum in Turkey. It became the general center of World Bektashism. Bektashi order is a tariqa, an Islamic mystical path, which deals with the spiritual perfection of humans. As an Islamic religious doctrine and practice, Bektashism has its roots in the Koran and in the teachings of prophet Mohamed and sacred imams. The goal of Bektashism as a source of knowing through mission, is based on the doctrine of the "Four Stages" (Sharia, Tariqa, Marifa, Haqiqat). During the national resistance (1860-1912), the tekkes, the Dedeababas and the Dervishes gave a distinct contribution to the national cause under the slogan "There is no religion without a homeland". The world center was closed down in 1925 by the Turkish government and was transferred to Albania in 1930 under the lead of Dedeababa Salih Niazi Dede. During 1930-1941, Dedeababa Salih Niazi Dede, gave Bektashism an historic new dimension. The other successors who followed him according to the traditional customary law were Ali Riza Dede, Kamber Ali Dede, Xhafer Sadik Dede, Abaz Hilmi Dede, Ahmed Myftar Dede, Hajji Dede Reshat Bardhi, Hajji Dede Edmond Brahimaj. The Bektashi tariqa respects all people regardless of their religion, ideas, race, color or ethnicity. Today in the Albanian territories

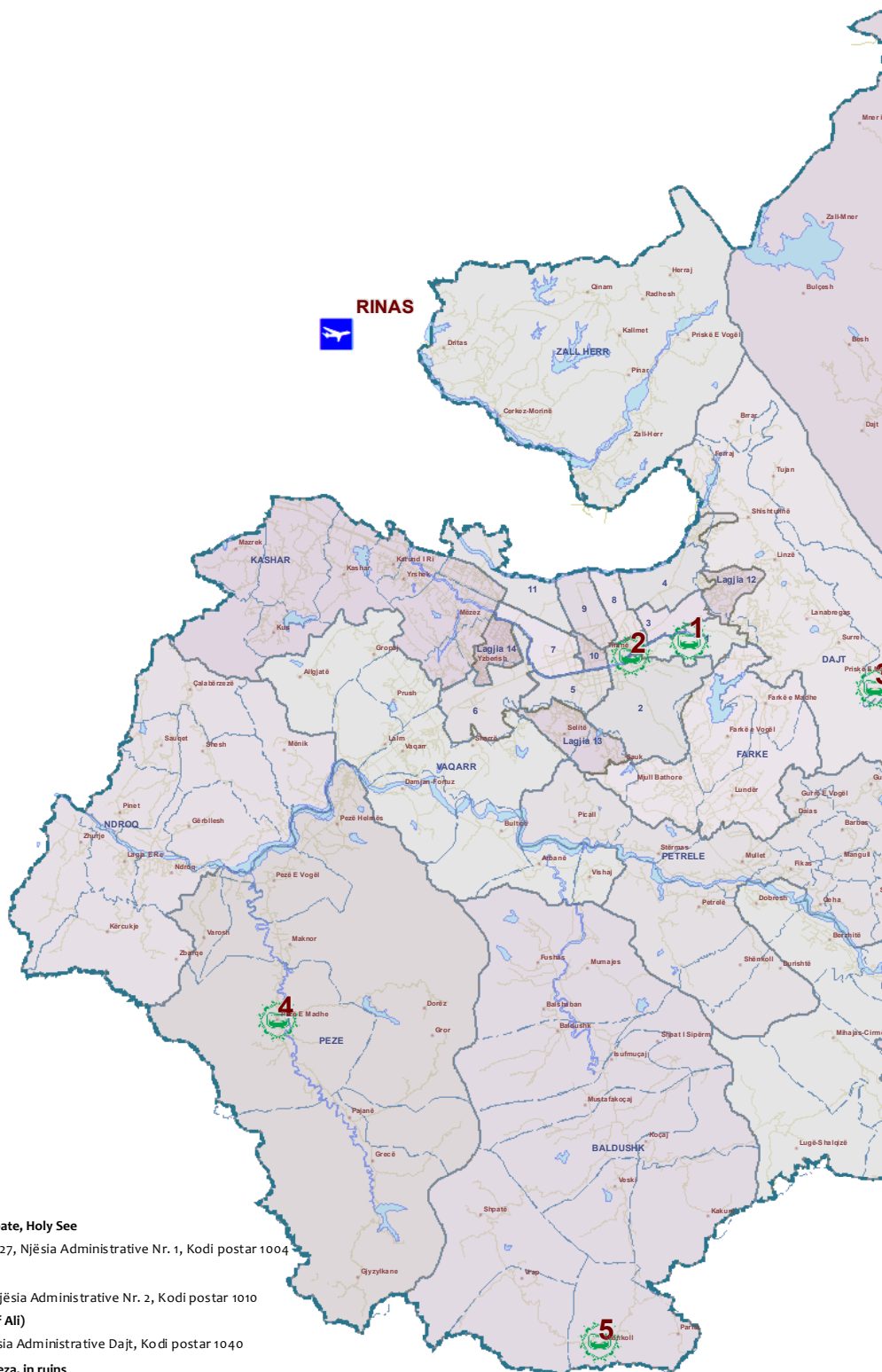


in the Balkans there are eight Bektashi quarters located in Kruja, Elbasan, Korça, Skrapar, Vlorë, Gjirokastra, Kosovo and North Macedonia.

The holy seat has direct relations with the Bektashi communities acting and living in America, Canada, Australia, Germany, Netherlands, Great Britain, Turkey, Egypt, North Macedonia,

Kosovo, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Rumania, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Iraq etc. All Bektashi tekkes closed down in 1967 during the communist dictatorship when Albania was isolated. The clergy and believers were persecuted and imprisoned. World Bektashi Dedeababa Hajji Reshat Bardhi revived Bektashism after 1990. He will be remembered for his valuable contribution during 1967-1990 and the restoration of faith during the political pluralism period in Albania. In November 2008, the World Bektashi Dedeababate signed the agreement with the Albanian government. The Odeon was inaugurated on September 7, 2015. It is a rare architectonic, religious and multifunctional monument which houses the museum of Bektashism, the Archive, the Library etc. The Dedeababate has provided valuable assistance for the establishment and enhancement of tolerance, coexistence, social and spiritual peace, wisdom, human harmony, dialogue and interpersonal respect which are so much needed and vital to our country and the whole world

WORLD DEDEBABA OF BEKTASHI
HIS EXCELLENCY
HAXHI DEDE EDMOND BRAHIMAJ



1. The Bektashi World Dedeabate, Holy See

Address : Rr. Bajo Topulli, Nd. 27, Njësia Administrative Nr. 1, Kodi postar 1004

2. The Tekke of Tirana, in ruins.

Address : Lagjia e Tabakëve, Njësia Administrative Nr. 2, Kodi postar 1010

3. The Good Place (The Tomb of Ali)

Address : Priskë e Madhe, Njësia Administrative Dajt, Kodi postar 1040

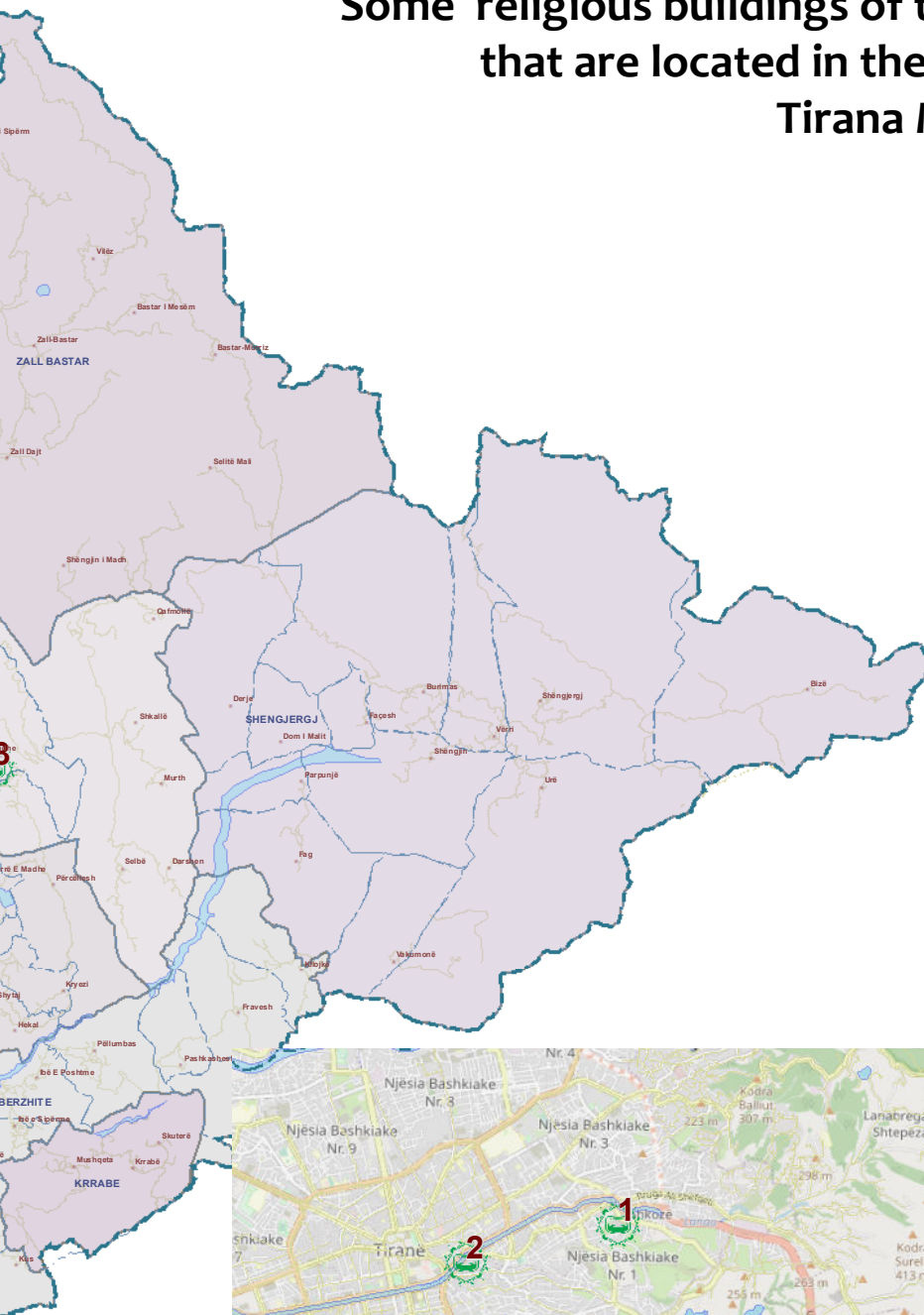
4. The tekke of Baba Hasan in Peza, in ruins

Address : Pezë e Madhe, Njësia Administrative Pezë, Kodi postar 1038

5. The Hill of the Tomb in the village of Shënkollë, in ruins.

Address : Shënkollë, Njësia Administrative Baldushk, Kodi postar 1035

Some religious buildings of the Bektashi that are located in the territory of Tirana Municipality



THE BEKTASHI WORLD DEDEBABATE, HOLY SEE



Address: Rr. Bajo Topulli, Nd. 27,
Njësia Administrative Nr. 1,
Kodi postar 1004



The Holy See of the World Bektashi Center, Tirana. Established in 1931 by the Bektashi World Dedebaba, Sali Niazi. He has a special history of coming to Albania: a decision by the third Bektashi Congress held on September 26, 1929 in the Turan teke in Korça, provisionally settled him in this teke from January 28, 1930 to August 8, 1930. Later on, until December 1931, he settled in the Teke of Melçan. And then in Tirana at the beginning of 1932. Dedebaba, Sali Niazi, gave Bektashism in Albania a new historical dimension both inside and outside the country during 1930 - 1941. On November 28,

1941, he was killed because he was known for his opposition against the Italian occupation. He is "Martyr of the Motherland" and "Honour of the Nation".

The remains of Naim Frashër were laid to rest with a grand ceremony in the center in 1937, and then, the monumental tomb of Naim was built east of the headquarters in 1940. The bust of Naim Frashëri was installed in 1954.

The Dedebabas who led the Holy See until 1967 are: Sali Niazi Dede, Ali Riza Dede, Kamber Ali Dede, Xhafer Sadik Dede, Abaz Hilmi Dede,

Ahmed Myftar Dede. The dedebabate was closed in 1967 by the communist state and turned into an asylum. The Bektashi World Dedebabate reopened on March 22, 1991, on the occasion of the traditional holiday of Sultan Novruz. In the ceremony participated Her Holiness, Mother Teresa. The tombs of the dedelers were built in 1995, and the Main Gate was built in 1910 in the form of a castle gate with two towers. In addition, near the tombs is the bronze bust of Haji Bektash Veli, the founder of this faith. There are fountains, the well with the winch, taps and other characteristic objects. Here is also the bust of Naim Frashëri, head of the Bektashi. The magnificent Odeon was built with the support of Dede Baba, Reshat Bardhi during 1990-2011.

His Holiness, Haji Dede Edmond Brahimaj, leads the Bektashi World Dedebabate from June 11, 2011. The Odeon, the last wish of Dede Baba Reshat Bardhi was completed by Dede Baba Edmond Brahimaj, and it was inaugurated on September 7, 2015. It is dome-shaped with a special, multifunctional architecture with its wonderful premises. It has the museum of Bektashism, the archive, the library and other functional facilities. The Holy See maintains ties with the Bektashi communities that operate and live in many countries of the world. The Holy See is visited by many foreign dignitaries, visitors and believers from all over the world. It is a Category II Cultural Monument designated by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports.



THE TEKKE OF TIRANA, IN RUINS.



Address : Në lagjen Tabakëve të qytetit, Njësia
Administrative nr.1, Bashkia e Tiranës, rrënojë.

Based on the historical events of the time, even though we have few historical sources, it appears that Bektashism arrived in Tirana during the XVII-XVIII centuries. The Tekke of Tirana is certainly related with the missionaries who passed through Kruja, Preza, Elbasan, Durrës, leaving behind their mark. In his book "General History of the Bektashi" Father Ali Tyrabiu writes: "In Northern Albania, a very big anti-Bektashi catastrophe was committed by Sultan Mahmut II (in 1826) of Turkey. The tekke of Shkodra, the tekke of Tirana and the tekkes of Kruja were completely destroyed, including the Bektashi Quarter in Shkodër and the Tabak Quarter where the Bektashis of Tirana lived. The myhibs of these two large quarters were stabbed with knives while those of Kruja were shut up as prisoners in their



city all by the cruel hands of fanatical Turks."

The Bektashi tekkes would become secret centers of culture, education, tolerance and, at the same time, centers of national resistance against the Turkish rule. Bastar's creative talent also developed under the influence of the Bektashi spirit.

These indirect sources seem to reveal that the tekke of Tirana was founded in the XVII century.

This is probably related to the special position that the guild of tanners had in the economic and social life of Tirana in the XVII-XVIII centuries. They lived in the Quarter of Tabakeve, known as Tabakanea, where a stone bridge was built, with two arches and paved with cobblestones. Today the bridge is a cultural monument. The tekke, after its destruction in 1826, functioned as a small tekke with a dervish until 1967.



THE GOOD PLACE (THE TOMB OF ALI)

 Address: Në fshatin Priskë e Madhe, Njësia Administrative Dajt, Bashkia e Tiranës



The Türbe, The Good Place (The Tomb of Ali) is located in the village of Priskë e Madhe, Administrative Unit of Dajt. It has an old history related with the wars in the Ottoman Empire. Prominent commander, Ali, was seriously injured while fighting battles around the village and behind the mountain. The opponents reached him and cut off his head. But the miracle happened, the legend. Ali, with his severed head on his hands, passing through the village of Priskë, said to his companions: "This is where I want my grave." The inhabitants built his tomb and pilgrimage started since then. The believers called it the Good Place (The Tomb of Ali). Residents turned to him for prayers and went there at any time hoping to have their wishes

fulfilled. This continued for centuries and there are various mystical and unusual stories and events about the Tomb of Ali. In 1967, after religion was prohibited by law, the tomb was destroyed. The first person who removed the first stones

fell ill on the second day and lost his mind. That same day in the afternoon, a wolf destroyed the livestock of the village and there was also a fire. Some residents cleaned the destroyed place and would secretly lit candles and continue the ritual until 1990. After the political system changed, the residents rebuilt the tomb which they now maintain.



THE TEKKE OF BABA HASAN IN PEZA, IN RUINS



Address: Në fshatin Pezë e Madhe,
Njësi Administrative Pezë,
Bashkia e Tiranës.

It is located east of the village of Peze, on a beautiful landscape which can be visited. Baba Hasan, a man educated in the East, worked for several years in the tekke of Prizren, and then came and set up the tekke in Peza. The history of the tekke lied along two lines, the Sadis and the Bektashis. These two lines later split and father Hasan continued with the Bektashi order. This tekke was well known throughout Albania, but especially in the provinces of central Albania. The tekke was an important node, a passage way on the road to Peqin, Rrogozhin, Elbasan. Believers and benefactors tried to help and would often bring olive oil, cattle, grain, wool and various agricultural products. Fathers and dervishes used these for aid and charity. The tekke preached love and brotherhood, not only faith in God but also love for the country.

Throughout its history, it found the support of



the people and contributed to Albanian history in Peza, both during the bourgeois democratic revolution in 1924 and the Second World War. In March 1941, father Hasan was wounded by the Italians and passed away in the hospital. His body was secretly taken and buried in the cemetery of the Bektashi World Dedeabate. After the liberation, he was declared a martyr and his remains today rest in the Cemetery of Martyrs in

Peza. The tekke was destroyed down to its foundations in September 1967, before the Anniversary of the Peza Conference was celebrated. There were arguments between Manush Mufti and Myslim Peza regarding the demolition of the tekke. Myslim Peza refused to destroy it. But the tekke and the tomb were destroyed in 1967. However, the Türbe of Baba Hasan was rebuilt after the 1990s.



THE HILL OF THE TOMB IN THE VILLAGE OF SHËNKOLLË, IN RUINS.



Address: Në fshatin Shënkollë, Njësia Administrative Baldushk, Bashkia e Tiranës



In the village of Shënkoll in the east, there is a beautiful hill with one juniper tree and bushes, rubble stones, a tombstone of the old Türbe and grave stones with no symbolic. It is possible to notice also engraved pumice stones which seem to indicate that they were used on the walls of the former tomb. The hill dominates over the entire Baldushku valley and overlooks Tirana on the north-east while Peqin is also nearby on the west. The elderly would say "this Türbe was very

old and it was ruined quite a long time ago. We used to call it "Hill of the Türbe" and we used to light candles there. We also had a special oath "For the olive trees of the Tekke". There were three olive trees which were not touched and their oil was used to light the candles. Even today they call it a holy place and light candles. Residents of

the village perform there the religious rites on the feast of Sultan Nevruz, the Great and Small Eids. Dervishes and fathers have come here before, because it also stands on the road from Tirana to Peqin. The residents demand that the tomb and the road be rebuilt.



The Evangelical Brotherhood of Albania

Disa nga Objektet e Kultit
që ndodhen në territorin e
Bashkisë Tiranë



We thank Mr. Ergest Bitri, Chairman of the Brotherhood, for the cooperation in providing information and old photos about the religious buildings of **The Evangelical Brotherhood of Albania**

The Evangelical Protestants became part of the history of Albanian religion with love for the Albanian people as early as the 1820s, producing in 1824 the first Gospels translated into the Albanian language, and then the entire New Testament in 1827; one of the greatest contributions to the Albanian language and culture. Making the Bible available into the language of the people is the typical evangelical thing to do since this is also what the first Protestant, Martin Luther, did it for the German language in 1522. So, while aiming to connect Albanians directly with God through the Bible in their own language, The Bible became also a very important evangelical work for Albania, because it was the first essential document in Albanian, or as a well-known researcher said, "the most valuable and reliable source" for the establishment of Albanian studies. By the mid-19th century evangelicals were helping with the development of other resources for the education of Albanians in their own language, and in 1891 Albanian evangelicals were the first to open the first Albanian school for girls in the southern city of Korça. Korça is also where evangelicals trace their establishment as a religious community back in 1892. The evangelicals of Albania aimed to bring forward the gospel of Jesus Christ becoming as such a

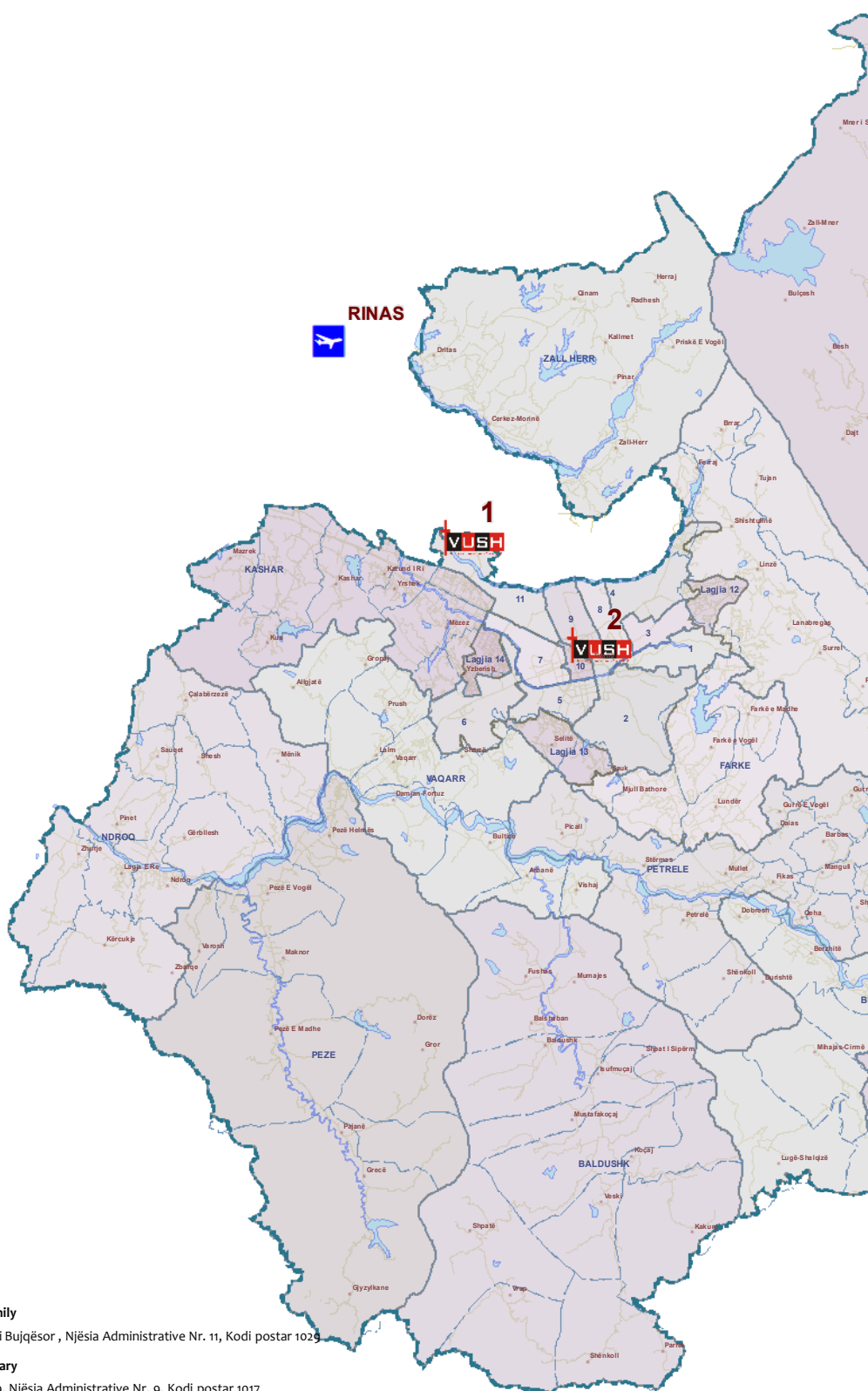


blessing to the Albanian nation as pioneers of Albanian education and emancipation of women. It was strategic to educate the girls of Albania as they would be the mothers of the creators of a new Albania. Following the example of Korça, the first institute for teaching young women was established many years after in the capital of Tirana, which became a renowned national educational institution.

As for all other religious community in Albania, the decades of communism were devastating, so it was only after 1991 that it was again possible to worship publicly and organize local churches. With the help of evangelical missionaries, mainly from Europe and the USA, the evangelical revival began after the fall of communism in Albania and today there are evangelical churches in every city of Albania. In 1992, one hundred years after the first organization of the Evangelical community, the Albanian Evangelical Alliance (The Evangelical Brotherhood) was reconstituted as an interreligious alliance and today it is an umbrella organization for about 200 hundred churches in the country.

Pastor, Ylli H. Doçi, Ph.D

President of the Evangelical Brotherhood
Of Albania



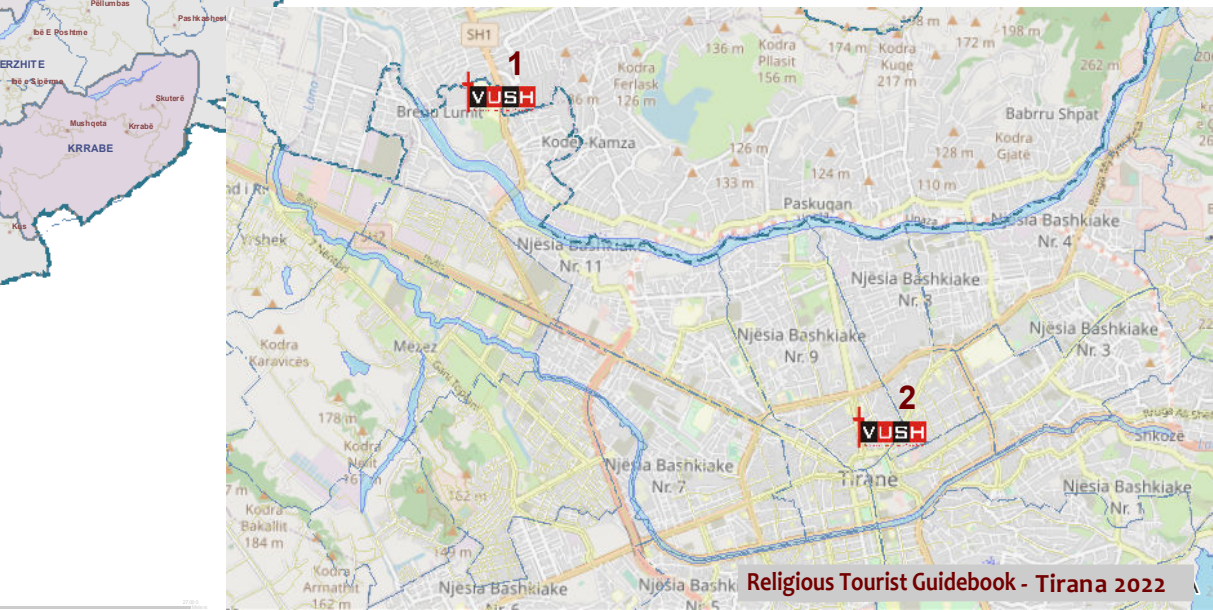
1. The Museum of the Qiriaz Family

Address: Rr. Kastriotët, Instituti Bujqësor , Njësia Administrative Nr. 11, Kodi postar 1029

2. The Headquarters and the Library

Adresa: Rr. Zenel Baboçi, Nd. 19, Njësia Administrative Nr. 9, Kodi postar 1017

Religious buildings of the Evangelical Brotherhood of Albania that are located in the territory of Tirana Municipality



THE MUSEUM OF THE QIRIAZI FAMILY



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Njësia Administrative Nr. 11, Kodi postar 1029



The Museum of Qiriazhi family is located near the Agricultural University of Kamza, in the premises of the Qeriazhi Non-Public University. It is a small museum which exhibits facts and evidence from the journey of the first evangelists such as the Qiriazhi family, who were the bedrock of Evangelical Faith in Albania, but who also provided a strong support for education and publications in the Albanian language. On November 14, 1892, Gjerasim Qiriazhi with a group of evangelical patriots, including among others the patriot Petro Nini Luarasi, founded the "Evangelical Brotherhood". Their aim was threefold: 1) spreading the Gospel in Albania; 2) Publishing the Albanian literature; 3) Opening and managing Albanian schools. It

is worth noting that Gjerasim and Sevasti Qiriazhi opened the first Albanian school for girls, breaking the taboo of the time and the perception that existed for women at that time. In 1908, the Evangelicals actively participated in the organization and proceedings of the Congress of Manastir. In the midst of persecutions,

prejudices, expulsions and obstacles from the High Gate, the evangelicals worked actively not only to spread the message of the Gospel but also to spread the Albanian language, literature and schools. The Evangelical Christian community continued to enjoy a steady growth and by 1940 boasted a membership of several hundred.



THE HEADQUARTERS AND THE LIBRARY



Address: Rr. Zenel Baboçi,
Nd. 19,
Njësia Administrative Nr. 9,
Kodi postar 1017



vocational courses, children's homes, asylums, health centers and clinics, social projects for children, the poor, pensioners, prisoners, etc. Evangelical Christians can be met in every field of life in the country as pious and honest citizens.

The headquarters is located near the center of Tirana. In the headquarters there is also a library and a bookshop with evangelical books which are in Albanian language as well as some in English. The library has a wide range of books, over 1000 titles. With the advent of democracy in 1992, the EVANGELICAL BROTHERHOOD OF ALBANIA restarted its activity, following up on the work of the Albanian Christians and Evangelical patriots of the previous centuries such as Gjerasim Qiriaz, Grigor Cilka, Kristo Dako, etc. Today, through its churches the Evangelical Community is spread in every city of Albania and continues to contribute not only to the spiritual transformation of Albanians, but also in every field of life in the country.

This contribution has been reflected into the opening of schools, kindergartens,

They believe that the message of the Gospel can positively transform the life of an individual, a family, a community and all Albanians. On November 22, 2010, the EVANGELICAL BROTHERHOOD of Albania was awarded with the status of a Religious Community, thus becoming the fifth religious community officially recognized by the Albanian state.





**BASHKIA
TIRANË**



tirana
EUROPEAN
YOUTH
CAPITAL '22



**Qendra për
Administrim Social
Ekonomik Territorial**

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