



TIRANA

OF "GOD AND THE GUEST"



Autor: Qendra pwr Administrim Social Ekonomik Territorial
Copyright © Qendra ASET

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the author. For inquiries regarding requests and authorizations, please address correspondence to the author, specifically to the 'Attn: Authorizations Coordinator,' at the following address.

e-mail: info@asetcenter.al

Printed by "Toena"

ISBN 000-0000-000-00-0

Tirana 2024

TIRANA

OF "GOD AND THE GUEST"



INDEX

1. Introduction	13
2. History of the city	14
3. Ethnography and culture	36
4. Historical, natural attractions and cultural objects	52

"This publication was realized within the project Tirana of
"God and the guest" with financial support of Tirana Municipality.
The content of this publication is the responsibility of the ASET Center and
in no way can be considered as the opinion of the Municipality of Tirana.









Dear citizen,
Dear visitor to our city of Tirana

It is always a pleasure for me in my quality as Mayor of Tirana to make a few remarks on the occasion of promotional publications for the capital of all Albanians. You are holding an album that sheds light on the identity, culture, history and heritage of our city, which not only grows daily and increasingly becoming a European metropolis, but which has also become one of the most sought after tourism and visit destinations.

As always Tirana belongs to *"God and the guest"*, and it welcomes a multitude of visitors and inhabitants with open arms, without consideration for the color of their skin, their religion or political beliefs. Tirana has many examples of this, from the most extreme such as the shelter provided to the Jews during World War II, to many foreigners choosing Tirana today as *"a second home"*, living and working in Tirana or just choosing it as a quiet place to spend their retirement years. This is because Tirana is an open city, a city of opportunities, of culture, of development and of the Albanians European future.

Introducing our city, especially in limited formats such as this publication as well, is a challenge not only from a conceptual but also content perspective. From the many photographs and works of art, the curators of this album have been able to present our city, its past and its present in the best manner possible, without forgetting to shed light on its development plans in the future. Any foreign tourist that will turn the pages of this album will gain better appreciation for our city and they will take a piece of *"Tirana"* when they live the country, that will ignite their desire to return in the future.

Yours,
Erion Veliaj



AMEL UBRIACO
GRUPPO UBRIACO



“When you visit Albania’s capital city, Tirana, there is nothing too impressive at first. However, soon enough, all of its liveliness, colors, emotions and diversity shine through. In Tirana, you will find a unique blend of Ottoman, communist and modern architecture: archaeological traces of antiquity, historical buildings and objects, such as Tanner’s Bridge, simple dwellings, typical socialist prefabricated apartment buildings, as well as modern glass buildings and skyscrapers. All of them, along with other features, create an adventurous urban landscape. There is something to be discovered in every corner of Tirana.” This is a common impression that attentive and curious foreign tourists share with their friends about visiting Tirana.

This album is an additional effort to display Tirana’s beauty, to spark curiosity about this developing metropolis, as well as to share several historical facts and developments pertaining to it.

The employed methodology is simple: firstly, a brief history of the city will be provided, starting with the first traces of life and followed by a journey across centuries up to modern day Tirana, outlining the main stages of its development. Naturally, the album will also include the relevant explanations related to the selected photographs and images. The Tirana of the European future constitutes a key chapter in this album. The city’s development plans, art, and culture will be at the center of this album. Further, its ethnographic features will be presented, as a distinctive characteristic of the city. Lastly, tourism in Tirana will be showcased, including a number of tourist sites and attractions found in the city and its suburbs from all perspectives: historical, cultural, religious, etc.

The album does not intend to display a simplified view of the city. It is much more than that. The combination of history, culture, the present and the future does not only satisfy the curiosity of tourists but also serves as a proud presentation of the capital of Albanians and, certainly, helps educate the new generation.

HISTORY OF THE CITY

Tirana is located 114 meters above sea-level and is situated in the southeastern edge of the Plain of Tirana, with Dajti Mountain rising to the east, Kërraba and Sauk hills to the south, Vaqarr and Yzberish hills to the west, and Kamza hills to the north. These hills surrounding Tirana reach up to 250-300 m in height.

As regards the city's name, some historians reference Tyrkanos Castle's name, which is also mentioned by the 6th century Byzantine scholar, Procopius of Caesarea. As a place, Tirana is first mentioned (whether as a village or plain, this is uncertain) in the last quarter of the 14th century . In the 15th century, its name is mentioned in three forms: Tyrana Minor (Lesser Tirana), as the name of the plain where the modern capital is located; Tyrana Major (Greater Tirana), as the name of the plain extending to the northwest of the city, and undefined Tyrranna (Tirana), which was supposedly a small settlement in Lesser Tirana. In 1583, Tirana was recorded in the Ottoman defter as a village with 8 households, of which 7 Muslim and one Christian.







Another version is the one included by Teki Selenica in his 1929 publication “Shqypnija e Ilustrueme” [Illustrated Albania]. According to this work, Tirana’s name derives from the Latin term “tyros” and Greek term “turos” (cheese), which means an area of dairy production. The supporters of this hypothesis link it to the fact that the Illyrians, as capable farmers, were renowned for the production and trade of sheep’s cheese. Maybe the Plain of Tirana was named as such because of the sheep’s cheese production and trade.

The third version primarily concerns the etymology and supports the hypothesis of the transformation of the local wording “të ranat”, meaning a plain created by the sediments of the water bodies crossing through it. Lana River’s name is explained along the same lines, i.e., “të lana”, meaning the sediments left behind by the stream/river that crosses through the capital to this day.

However, the lack of a precise and convincing explanation for the city’s name is not what sets it apart. There are several European capitals whose names’ origin is yet to be established.

In 1614, a Sanjak-bey named Sulejman Pashë Bargjini, built a mosque in the actual capital city center, as well as an inn, hammam and a bakery, which no longer exist. The selection of that location was not an accident because it was the intersection of several trade caravan routes.

A century later, Tirana comprised 400 houses and, over time, it became one of the main cities of Central Albania. Meanwhile, still under the rule of the successors of its founder, Tirana also attracted the attention of neighboring feudal lords. In the battle for its control, Kruja feudal lords were most prominent, namely the Toptani household. Ibrahim Pashë Bargjinolli and his descendants ruled the region, not consecutively, until 1818, when Kapllan Pashë Toptani finally took over Tirana's control.

During the 19th century, Tirana experienced an economic, social, cultural and artistic development. The city became urbanized and remained as such until the end of World War I. Windowed buildings were constructed. Simple mosques were replaced by new ones, decorated with columns with chapiters and colorful frescos with floral and arabesque motifs; only the Haxhi Et'hem Bey Mosque, built in 1821, remains to this day, as well as the clock tower beside it. Charshiya complex (Old Bazaar) was a distinct area but it was demolished during the construction of the Palace of Culture.





In mid-19th century, the kaza of Tirana separated administratively from the Sanjak of Ohrid (Monastir Vilayet) and joined the Sanjak of Durrës, which was under the Shkodra Vilayet. At the time, Tirana was still an old-fashioned city. It had only one Quranic madrasa. High-income households would send their children to study in developed Ottoman Empire cities, some even in Western cities.

After 1908, following the victory of the Young Turk revolution, Tirana residents progressed from the cultural movement to the movement for Albania's autonomy. In 1912, Tirana's citizens set up patriotic chetas to fight in the general anti-Ottoman rebellion. Tirana was represented by two delegates at the National Assembly of Vlorë, which declared Albania's Independence on 28 November 1912. However, during the First Balkan War, Tirana was occupied by Serbian armies two days prior to the Independence declaration. After the Serbian armies' leave in April 1913 and following the 6-month rule of the German Prince Wilhelm zu Wied, Tirana was taken over by the anarchy resulting from the Esadist and Haxhi Qamili's rebellion, until it was suppressed by the Serbian army, which re-captured Tirana in June 1915 for the second time. Afterward, during World War I, in January 1916, Tirana was occupied by the Austro-Hungarian army, followed by the Italian army by the end of the War.

The lead bodies of the Albanian state, established in 1920 by the Congress of Lushnja, were set-up in Tirana on 11 February 1920, which was also designated as Albania's provisional capital, followed by its declaration as the permanent capital of the Albanian Republic in January 1925. After 1920, Tirana saw an influx of residents from other regions and cities across the country. In 1922, Tirana separated from the Prefecture of Durrës and became an independent prefecture. In 1923, it comprised 12,453 residents.

The stability of Ahmet Zogu's 14-year rule also aided the development of Tirana. Albanian governments at the time expedited the work on the drafting of a city organization plan, which was a novelty. Similarly to modern times, the dilemma between "the old and the new" was also present back then and the question concerned whether a new city should be established outside the old city or should the latter be impacted, too. As usual, a compromise was reached.



The first city organization plan was drafted in 1923. Certain authors hold that it was drafted by Eshref Frashëri, while others believe that the plan was prepared by the Austrians. Regardless, the plan was never implemented and was followed by another plan during 1925-1927, which was funded by the Italian Society for the Economic Development of Albania (SVEA) with an Italian architect, Armando Brasini. Brasini envisaged the construction of the main boulevard in the North-South axis, the central square and another square to the north, while keeping the historical and traditional buildings. The new buildings would be constructed in the classic and neoclassic styles of the late

19th century. The plan could not be implemented due to the high costs of construction but Brasini's ideas would inform all future city organization plans.

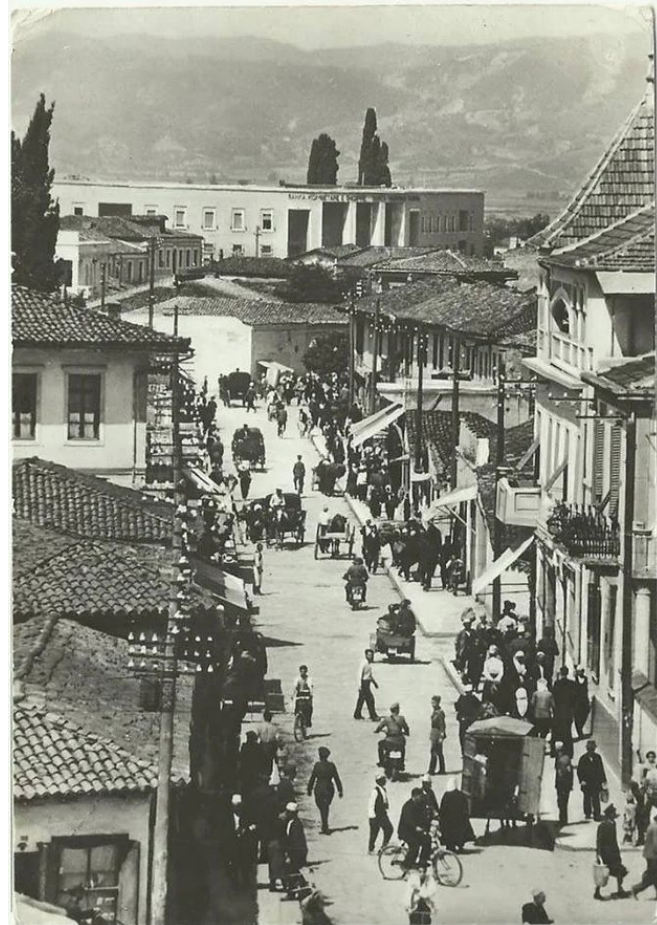
The third capital city organization plan was drafted in 1928 by the Austrian architect Köhler. This plan was different as it covered the entire city. Although it did keep the boulevard proposed by Brasini and also included in it two of the most important buildings of the city's identity, namely the Clock Tower and Et'hem Bey Mosque, the plan did not get approved.

One year later, in 1929, the fourth Tirana organization plan was designed, which was subsequently approved. Its author was the Italian architect Florestano de Fausto. Along with the main boulevard, the ministry complex and the municipality building were designed. Furthermore, the plan



also envisaged the preservation of key identity buildings of the capital, such as the Clock Tower, mosques, the Old Bazaar, etc. In 1931, the ensemble of ministry buildings was established in “Skanderbeg” square; in 1938, the construction of the National Bank of Albania was completed, as well as the radio station, leading to Radio Tirana’s launch with a limited program. The New Tirana, the part of the city with the villas of politicians and paved roads, started to become more vibrant, whereas the Old Tirana comprised the economic activity of the city and the largest number of residents, living in houses, with narrow streets and roads. They were separated by the Lana stream. Neither side had water supply, nor sanitation utilities. Water was obtained from wells. The main houses in the old part of the city were made from adobe bricks. The cultural and artistic life began to flourish. Tirana had three upper secondary schools (two for boys and one for girls). Three cinemas were built. Theater shows, artistic programs and sports clubs became more prevalent. During the 1930s, the capital’s population increased from 31 thousand residents in 1930 to 38 thousand in 1938.

Tirana rose against the Italian fascist occupa-



tion of 7 April 1939. Italian armies entered the city the following day, on 8 April. The Italian fascist occupation continued until 8 September 1943 when the German troops entered the country. During the war, the capital city population's resistance became increasingly greater, aiming at re-establishing independence. At first, the resistance in the city was carried out through political actions, anti-fascist demonstrations, followed by armed actions (guerrilla units), concluding with the establishment of new anti-fascist bodies (national liberation councils). The German military occupation, despite being harsher, did not discourage the National Liberation Fight in Tirana. With the volunteers from Tirana, four ANLM brigades were set up: Brigades II, III, XXII and XXIII S. Tirana was liberated on 17 Novem-







ber 1944. On 28.11.1944, the 32nd anniversary of Independence Declaration, the Democratic Government formed during the Second NLC Meeting in Berat was established in Tirana.

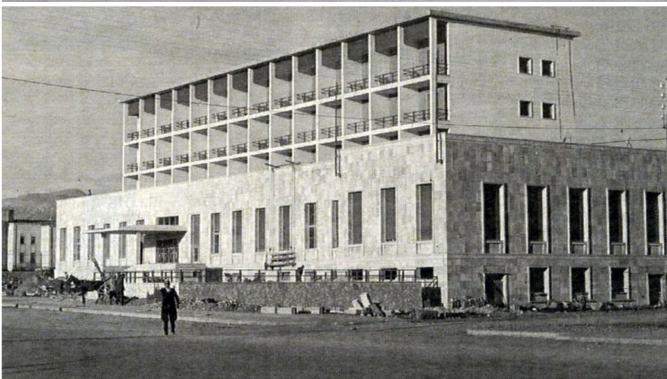
During 1939-1944 in Tirana, a number of public and private buildings were constructed with both domestic and Italian funding, aimed at improving the economic and urban structure of the capital, namely "Dajti" Hotel, the Prime Minister's Office, "Palace of Brigades", the "Mother Teresa" Square complex, Maternity, new upper secondary school building, as well as apartment buildings for clerks and army officers, military barracks, etc.

Upon its liberation, Tirana encompassed 59,900 residents. This figure doubled in five years. The post-war recovery took several years. Since 1947, serious reforms were undertaken to set up a cen-



tralized economy. In the following years, the economy developed according to socialist principles, along with culture, education and art. Industrialization received particular attention. Factories and plants were built, with some employing over 1000 workers, a few even reaching up to 5000 workers. These included: The Wood Plant and Shoe Factory, Textile Plant in today's "Kombinat" area, at first employing 5000 workers, then 20,000; Metal Production Factory, Glass Factory, Porcelain Factory and the Silica Brick Plant, Food Plant, Auto Tractor Factory, etc.

As a result of such developments, the population increased from 108,200 residents (1955), to 152,700 residents (1969), to 189 thousand residents (1979) and 238,100 residents (1989).

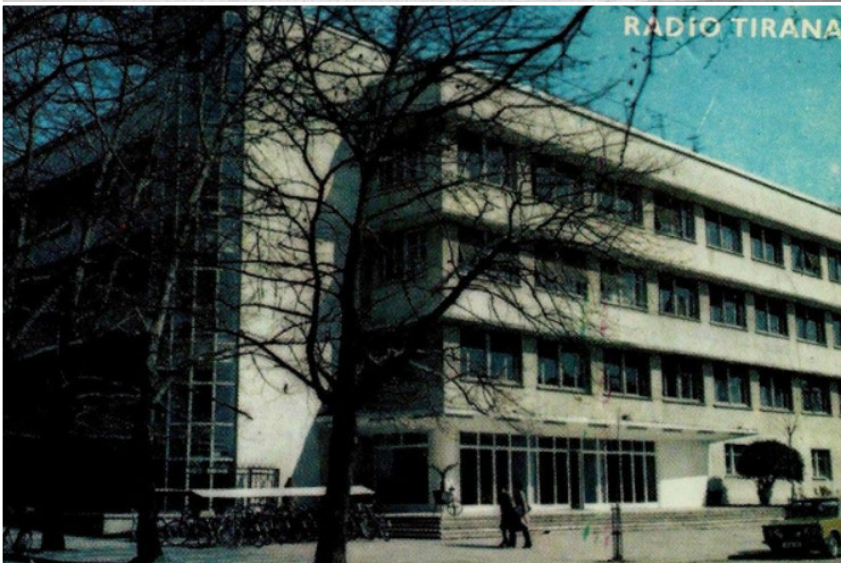


Tirana underwent substantial development in terms of education and culture. Higher education institutes were established for the first time: in 1946, the Two-year Higher Pedagogical Institute; in 1951-1953, six higher institutes at university-level were established; in 1957, the Tirana State University was established, followed by the Higher Arts Institute (1966), Higher Physical Education Institute (1960), Higher Military Academy (1962). The Institute of Sciences (1947) was also established, later on integrated into the Tirana State University in 1957. In 1991, the Agricultural University was established on the basis of the Higher Agricultural Institute of Tirana, founded in 1951. A number of scientific institutes for various profiles (industry, mining, construction, architecture and urban planning, transport) were established afterward. In 1972, the Academy of Sciences of Albania with 13 subordinate science institutes was founded. The cultural and artistic life developed rapidly. The Albanian National Theater (1947) and the Albanian League of Writers were established. From having





only one library with 12 thousand volumes in 1945, in 1990 Tirana had 13 public libraries, with the National Library having more than one million books. The number of literary publications, theater shows, concerts, Albanian music festivals increased, Radio Tirana's power and programs increased, and the Albanian Television commenced broadcasting (1960). The number of hospitals increased and the medical service improved.



The first multi-story hotel in Albania was Hotel "Tirana", constructed in 1970. It is located in the northern part of "Skanderbeg" Square, close to the Grand Palace of Culture and the National Historical Museum. Its location was based on a partial urban survey of Tirana's city center. The hotel comprises 16 floors. Its architectural style is modern and simple, including geometric shapes and volumes. With travertine as the external material, it matches the color of the Grand Palace of Culture and the National Historical Museum. The construction of the hotel was a novelty to the Albanian architecture, influencing other major cities across the country to construct high-rise hotels at their city centers, which became symbols of a new Albanian architecture.



On the other hand, the more the economy developed, the more the political and ideological dictatorship under the CPA leadership strengthened. The communist regime continuously deepened the internal dictatorship and isolation of Albania with regard to foreign relations. This political rule and the difficult economic circumstances, particularly food scarcity, resulted in people's dissatisfaction, leading to anti-regime demonstrations in 1990. This took place right after the fall of the Berlin Wall.



In July 1990, the “embassy attack” took place. In December 1990, the students’ movement, supported by the workers’ movement, forced the communist government to allow political pluralism, which paved the way for the process of the fall of the communist regime and establishment of market economy. The first opposition parties were founded in Tirana. In June 1991, the Labor Party that had led the dictatorship was dissolved. The Socialist Party of Albania was established. In the elections of 31 March 1992, the Democratic Party and its allies obtained the majority of MPs and created the democratic government. Thus, Tirana was involved in the transition period from the communist regime to the capitalist system. During this period, Tirana has undergone and continues to undergo radical changes. The end of the centralized communist economy resulted in the shut-down of hundreds of state factories and workshops. In the early 1990s, under the pressure of unemployment and the aspiration for free movement, tens of thousands of youth left the country. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of mountainous region residents, particularly from the northeastern part of the country, moved to the capital and its outskirts. In the city of Tirana, the number of newcomers exceeded the number of those who had left. As a result of this process, within 10 years, Tirana’s population increased rapidly, and is still increasing to this day.



After 1990, during the transition period, bigger and more substantial changes took place in Tirana in all areas, such as economy, culture, demographics, urbanism, political and social life, etc.

Currently, Tirana is a city that keeps growing and changing everyday and it is the center of the political and administrative life of Albania, wherein almost all state institutions are located. All diplomatic representatives of the countries Albania has diplomatic relations with are located in Tirana, which is also the largest education center in the country.



Tirana is a city full of hotels, restaurants, bars, pubs, youth and art centers, which provide a diverse active and cultural life for both locals and foreigners visiting Tirana. Moreover, Tirana is also a center for important national and international events, such as seminars, conferences, festivals, shows, etc., making it a renowned and open city to the world.

Tirana has become the city that never sleeps.



ETHNOGRAPHY AND CULTURE

Tirana, the capital of Albania, is a city with a rich ethnographic and cultural heritage that reflects the country's diversity and complex history. The culture of Tirana is a mixture of ancient Albanian traditions and external influences, which have been shaped by various conquests and historical periods. The city is known for the hospitality of its residents, the vibrancy of daily life and its dynamic atmosphere. Tirana boasts an ethnic mosaic, where apart from Albanians, other minorities also live. Rich folklore traditions, such as polyphonic music and folk dance, are still alive and form an important part of the city's cultural identity. At the same time, Tirana is an important center for contemporary art and culture, with museums, galleries and various artistic activities that reflect the development and modernization of Albanian society.

In addition to rooted traditions, Tirana is a city in constant transformation, where modernity and tradition coexist in harmony. Its architecture tells the story of social and political change, from Ottoman and communist-era buildings to today's skyscrapers and modern structures. Cultural activities are many and varied, including international film festivals, contemporary music concerts and modern art exhibitions. The city's many restaurants and cafes offer a rich cuisine that combines traditional Albanian recipes with Mediterranean and European influences. Tirana is also an important center for education and science, with various universities and research institutions contributing to the development of the city and the entire country. This combination of tradition and innovation makes Tirana an attractive destination for visitors and an inspiring place for its residents.

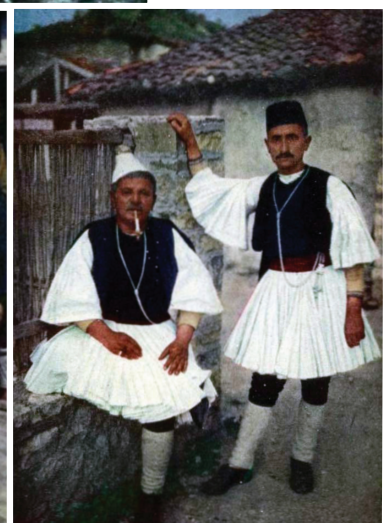
WOMEN'S TIRANA CLOTHING

Generally the women of the city of Tirana and the other cities of middle Albania, in ceremonial family occasions wore luxury clothing sewing under Oriental fashion. Such were the slops "Citjanet" known as "Dimiq" loose breeches, Shirts "Kemisha" of natural silk, gowns "Xhybet" and waistcoat "Jelek" embroidered with gold thread. In complete harmony with these parts were also the belt "Brez" made of silver metallic thread or gold plated. Especially, differed the embroidery realized in shirts sleeves and in the apron "perparjet", called "cerve".

CLOTHING WITH "BREKUSHE"

Like in all middle east Albania, even the men of Tirana have generally used clothing with white panties "brekushe" accompanied with shirts "Kemishe", red waistcoat "Jeleke" embroidered with black and yellow color braids, as well as the black woolen jacket "xhaken". More typical were white panties "Brekushet e Bardha" of cotton fabric in white or of fine woolen in natural color. The men of Tirana held a very high fez "Qeleshe" which is considered as the most identifying part of this garment .











CLOTHING OF THE ARISTOCRACY, FIRST QUARTER OF THE 20TH CENTURY

All the elite families of Tirana choosed for their children to study abroad in the beginning of the 19th century. Most of them have studied in Austria, Italy, Switzerland Cambridge and another part in the famous Universities in Turkey. Mostly they studied medicine, finance, agronomy as well as in the Military Academy. In the late 1930s in Tirana there were more than 240 young graduates in European universities, this is a very good report considerable compared to the population.

"Photos with clothes are taken from the Volume "Albanian folk costumes", Publication of the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and the Study of Art"



MEN'S CLOTHING OF THE ARTISAN CLASS AROUND 1920

Men's clothing is uniform with small local features from one area to another. It prevailed the typical dress of middle Albania with pants, shirt, waistcoat or "mintan" and wool jacket. In this clothing could distinguish changes that had to do with the men's age and marital status but also with the occasion for which they were dressed. Among the pieces the typical clothes were white panties made of a thin fabric materials where the top was made of linen thread and the weft was made of fine woolen thread. They had simple cuts, they didn't have ornaments and were tied to the waist with "ushkur". The other part that completed the outfit was the a long shirt of linen. Over the shirt was worn a waistcoat with a lining for the warm season or with "xhamadan shajaku" for winter which could be white, black or brown. Men wore woolen socks black, white or colored according to age and self-made cowhide shoes that called "opings". In Tirana, men wore high "Qeleshe", the highest that were worn in Albania.





Women's civilian clothing during the 20th century



Clothing of a young woman at the beginning of the Century. XX



Bride dress with "marble" slops, about the year 1920, Tirane.



115



110



101

Two Xhybe, part of the clothing citizens of women Century XX

SILK FABRICS



103



Cotton aprons where the colour differs according to the age of the holder, Plain of Tirane.



Woman shirt of silk cloth with borders of different colours embellished with minute lacework at the collar and the sleeves. The villages of the Plain of Tirane.



Woman shirt, the upper part of silk cloth



"Crosses" cotton head covering of the women of the hilly and plain zone.

"Photos with clothes are taken from the Volume "Albanian folk costumes", Publication of the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and the Study of Art"



Bride dress with "hanging towels" instead of the apron, Zall-Daiti (hilly zone).



Head covering for the man and woman from the Selita e Malit



Men dress with bloomers and sleeveless worsted coat (jakuqe). Tomadhe.



Young woman with the dress of Shengjergjit.



Man dress with white bloomers, Zall-Dajt



Man from the Selita e Malit, Bendë



Young woman with the dress of Shengjergjit.



Small bag with beads, part of the wedding costume. Bende.



Short coat (pelerine), waistcoat and string, parts of the town woman dress



Three weeks before the couple got married, there was music and dancing in their respective homes. In the city of Tirana, in the 20s, the bride was taken by car from her father's house. When she came out of the threshold, rice was metaphorically thrown to her to to have a good future. When she entered her husband's house, she painted the door threshold with honey so that the couple's life would be sweet. On her lap sat a boy who took off his socks with the idea that the bride would give birth to sons as



heirs. Weddings were mostly held in large courtyards where the whole neighborhood and friends were invited. The dowry was opened by the bride to respect her rights. On Monday morning, a woman from the girl's tribe arrived at the boy's house to bring gifts for them.

Women's clothing consists mainly of a suit with a long shirt and an apron with a jacket with or without sleeves. After the Second World War Women e mountains of Tirana started to wear everyday over a shirt, woolen panties and other things. Women of the plains and hilly areas, they started to put into use the dimits made of cotton, oriental cut. Above noon they came from the pre-made garments. Home made by peasant women in the area of Prezes and villages across the district.



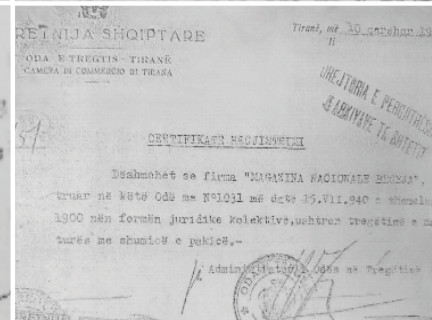
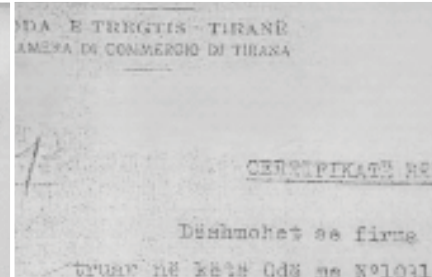
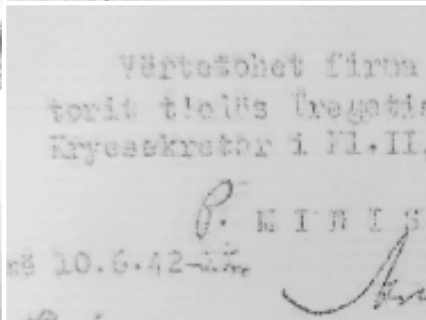
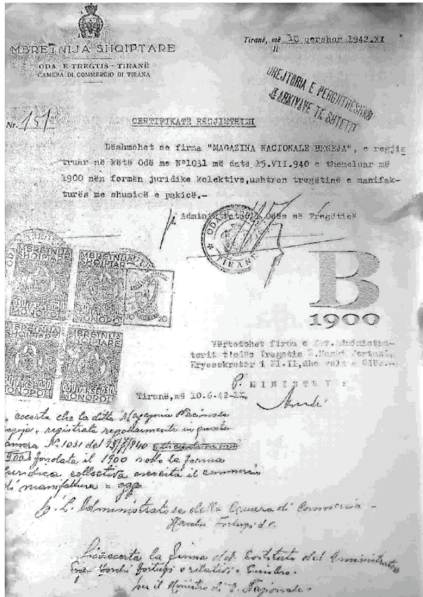
Since 1926 in Tirana there were 10 cinemas that in addition to movies, they also offered different concerts, where the most famous was Tefta Tashko Kocos in the 30s. In between there were two large libraries, that National and the Library Carnavon that was the library of foreign books, built by foreign people built by the English in his honor Albanian lover Aubrey Herbert.

Tirana also had its own radio where masterpieces were broadcast world classical music.

So Tirana had many organs press and culturally different society.

Tirana in the 20s and 30s marked its peak when a series of modern bars were opened in the city such as "Kursal", "Bella Venezia", "Paris", "Odeon", "Lirija". In them, several days a week there was also live music, while the singers were also taken from outside. In the old bazaar there were several restaurants or "Akshihone" in dialect, they serve characteristic food like Ali Balluk's place and Hamza Files. In the bazaar, there were taverns that offered different appetizers.

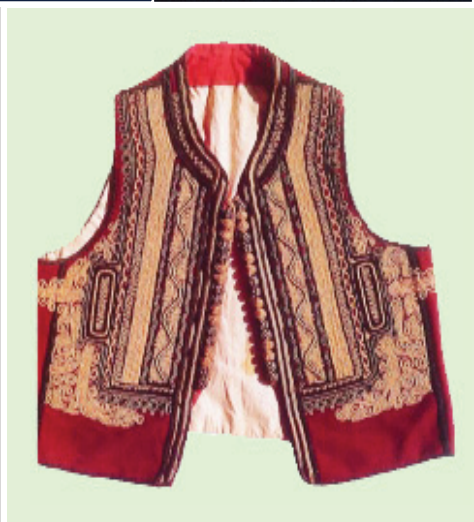




This rare document found in the state archive proves that the business was in Tirana well organized and legally registered with the competent bodies. The firm 'National Warehouse Begeja', which dealt with the manufacturing trade, is registered in in 1900 in collective legal form and it is the earliest according to the documentation.







HISTORICAL, NATURAL ATTRACTIONS AND CULTURAL OBJECTS

THE CASTLE OF TIRANA

The castle is a field fortification with a rectangular plan of 160 x 125 meters, the longest side being the east-west wall. The preserved constructions of some of the towers and segments of the surrounding walls indicate that the castle is likely to have been built for the first time in antiquity, perhaps in the early Byzantine period (IV – VI century A.D). A part of the city walls that are seen today on land belong to the constructions of the last centuries, which were built by Ahmet Pasha Bargjini (1788 - 1809) in the last decade of the XVIII century on the ruins of the old castle.

In 1798 the castle fell into the hands of the Toptani family of Kruja. During this period it was placed in the center and became a subject of war between the Toptani family and the Bushatllinj rulers of Shkodra. In 1817 it underwent a siege of 5 (five) months, which had serious consequences not only for the fortress but also for a big part of the city. After the bombing, the castle was rebuilt in part by the Toptani family, until 1832 when it fell due to the incursions of the Ottoman army led by Mehmet Resit Pasha, who ordered the destruction of all forts.

Today a part of the north wall and the leaflets on the southern side of it are still conserved, which is combined with the enchanting surrounding infrastructure



MOSAIC OF TIRANA

Discovered in 1972, during the building of a residential block, remains one of the earliest testimonies on Tirana's soil. During the first phase of discovery appeared the ruins of an ancient building, part of which was paved with a mosaic of geometric and floral patterns. Immediately, the surface area was taken over by Institute for Monuments of Culture because it was deemed that it was a Villa Rustica dating back to 2-nd and 3-rd centuries A.D. that was converted to a paleo Christian building during the 4-th and 7-th centuries.



Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that herein there were never conducted systematic archeological excavations spare for some minor surveys for preservation purposes during 2003-2004. Despite the limited volume of excavations, it is deemed that this a Villa Rustica that extends well beyond the already discovered mosaic. To date, there hasn't been found any data in support of its conversion into a paleo Christian building. Even though there are some efforts made in interpreting some signs contained on some of the bricks or the motifs of the mosaic, still it is not enough to corroborate such a transformation. Notwithstanding the above, this archeological object of middle to late Roman Empire era is a worthy tourist attraction.



THE TANNER'S BRIDGE

is an 18th century Ottoman period stone footbridge built by the tanner's craft which had a special position in social and economic life of Tirana in this period of time.

The bridge was once part of the Shëngjergj Road that linked Tirana with the eastern highlands. The bridge went across the Lana stream and was adjacent to the area of butchers and leather workers. It testifies the ancient traditions of our country in the field of building and the hard work in this field.

The Tanner's Bridge is distinguished for its harmonious architecture and for the proportional distribution of its elements. The Tanners' Bridge is composed by a main arch and has a height of about 7 meter and a half.

This arch has the light span of 8 meters and is built with two ranks of side way arches which are 1 meter thick. The height from the water was 3.5 meters. The pavement of the bridge with 2.5 meters in width constructed with river stones and placed without any apparent order. In the two sides of the main arch, there are two arches in the shape of circular segments with a small space.

In the 90s the bridge was restored to its former glory and is now used only by pedestrians.

THE TIRANA CLOCK TOWER

began to be built by Haxhi Et'hem Beu in 1822 and was completed with the contribution of rich families of Tirana.

Initially, the height of the tower was 30 m and the clock consisted of a clock winding up mechanism and a brass bell, whose number of pips indicated the time because there were no field and clock hands. Its installation was made by the Tufina family, renowned with regard to clocks.

In 1928, the tower changed shape and got the appearance it has today. It was elevated 5 meters more, reaching 35 m, the balcony was built, 4 fields and clock hands were assembled and a Venetian typed roof was set up. In the framework of Tirana's modernization, the Albanian state bought a contemporary timepiece in Germany.

Since the tower has accompanied the development of the city, it was reflected in its appearance, where the first half is of the Ottoman style, the entire stone-carved section, and the balcony and the part above pertains to the western style.

In the '30s, the tower was lit for the first time in the evening. During the World War II it was damaged, but it was restored in July 1946. Until 1970 the tower was the highest building in the capital city. The lower part built with thick stone walls, used to have wooden stairs that could take you to the upper areas. During the restoration the wooden stairs were replaced with metallic ones.

The Clock Tower is the symbol (Coat of Arms) of the Municipality of Tirana and together with the Et'hem Bey mosque represents a unique architectural ensemble.



MUSEUM OF SECRET SURVEILLANCE: "HOUSE OF LEAVES"

The building known as the "House of Leaves" (so called because of the clambering plant covering its facade) has now returned to the Museum of Secret Surveillance. Opened on 23rd of May, it is the newest museum in Albania and certainly the most intriguing one that tries to narrate to young people and to foreigners, one of the darkest periods of the country's history. Located in the center of Tirana, in front of Orthodox Church: "The Resurrection of Christ" and near the National Bank, the building that temporarily housed Gestapo during the occupation of Albania in WWII was the Central Directorate of the Secret Service from 1944 to 1991.

As the history of Albania itself under the Communist dictatorship that was installed at the end of World War II and continued for almost half a century, the House of Leaves also, was covered for a long time with all sorts of legends and it comprised the unknown, a mystery. Whispers of people and rustling of leaves... By opening the doors of this house, presenting the activities that were conducted in it and many other things related to it, this museum will unfold simultaneously aspects of Albanian society in the conditions of a regime that aimed at the total control over the human bodies and souls.



The House of Leaves is the most intriguing museum in Albania. It is considered the same as the STAS headquarters in East Germany. The leaves mean hidden things that the public did not know in that regime. All the curious who want to know what is hidden in the infamous state security center, otherwise known as the House of Spies, will be left speechless. The Leaf House was built in 1931 and originally functioned as a clinic. During the second world war, it was used by the Gestapo as an investigation office, and after the second world war, it was used by the communist regime of Enver Hoxhe, as an investment headquarters, but also as a torture center for opponents of the regime. Inside it you will see facts and stories of persecution of political opponents, but also stories of espionage, devices of the time that were used for all these investigations and constant persecution of suspected people.

THE NEW BAZAAR

Was constructed in 1931 and in the years that followed it was developed and grew even more. It was created as a need to increase the commercial activity that couldn't be handled only through the Old Bazaar. After the demolition of the Old Bazaar in 1959, the New Bazaar remained for a long time the only big trade centre of meat, fish, fruit and vegetables in Tirana.

This Bazaar is located in that area of Tirana that together with Mujo's Neighbourhood, represents one of the oldest area of Tirana, located between the city centre and the Elbasan Street, in the eastern part of the main boulevard. Even today the New Bazaar remains one of the biggest trade markets in the capital for meat, fish, fruit and vegetables. Municipality of Tirana with the support of the Albanian-American Foundation Development renovated this area and turned it into a business development zone to provide a new model investment and community space. New Bazaar is a space that operates 24 hours, where the greatest focus in the morning is on the market and in the afternoon to culinary matters such as bars, restaurants around and organizing artistic activities - such as cultural festivals, fairs, etc .





THE PYRAMID

The Pyramid of Tirana is already the most special attraction in Tirana, which can now be called the symbol of the complicated history of Albania. The pyramid was built as a mausoleum of the former dictator Enver Hoxha with the architects his daughter Pranvera and her husband Klement Kolaneci. While today it is an entertainment and innovative center. It was built and inaugurated as the "Enver Hoxha" museum in 1988 in Tirana, that is, three years after the death of Enver Hoxha. The museum was built in two years. Perhaps the most interesting fact about the Pyramid, and one that most people don't know, is that "pyramid" is actually a misnomer, as the construction, when viewed carefully, reveals a more complex design, with many unexpected facades from different perspectives. The pyramid shape only exists on the front, while the back is vertical, while the aerial view reveals an abstract version of the double-headed eagle. The frontal pyramid was created to fit as well as possible with the mountain panorama of Dajti in the distant background. Overall, despite the buildings added during the time of democracy which have their impact on the city's skyline, the Pyramid has achieved this goal.

The transformation of the Pyramid in Tirana is considered one of the 12 best architectural projects in the world. Now the Pyramid has kept its base, but has become more modern and with many small colorful boxes scattered around turning into an entertainment space for the community. Today, the pyramid is used for conferences, studio seminars, technology centers like Tumo, but also entertainment centers, bars and restaurants. The stairs give the public the opportunity to own the monument, that is, to stand on the symbol of the dictator, as well as to look at the city with a new eye. After climbing to the top of the pyramid, a special platform allows you to enjoy a complete panorama of the city.

PËLLUMBASI CAVE IN TIRANA

Pëllumbasi Cave, or Black Cave, is about an hour's climb in the village of Pëllumbasi, 27 km south-east of Tirana. The cave is located 650 meters above sea level and has dimensions of 360m length, 10-15m width and 15-45m height. Inside the environments are filled with stalactites and stalagmites and it constitutes an object of special value to study paleo evolution the geography of the entire area as well as the circulation of its underground water.

It is filled with numerous microforms of underground karst relief with rare beauty and special touristic values. It is considered one of the rarest karst caves and prehistoric settlements in Albania (declared a natural monument in 2002). It is estimated that the ancestors lived in this place since the early period about 10,000 years ago. With archaeological studies, it has been proven that at this time the technique of creating fire was used, as well as the first primitive tools and the most developed ones. The skeletons found in this cave, according to the Museum of Natural Sciences at the University of Florence, belong to the cave bear (*Ursus Speleaus*), which lived between 400,000 and 10,000 years ago. There are only five such caves in all of Europe.





SHËNGJERGJI WATERFALL IN TIRANA

Shëngjergji waterfall is another natural asset of Tirana. The beauties that surround it and the flowing water make this a place of great touristic value. The waterfall is located near the village of Shëgjini, in the municipality of Shëngjergji. It can be reached by car and the road is very good. Until six years ago, this waterfall was "hidden" between the mountains and apart from the residents of the area, no one knew of its existence. Today it has turned into a genuine tourist destination with orientation signs to help tourists to access the waterfall.

The waterfall is supplied with water from "Mount with Pites" and forms one of the tributaries of the creation of the Erzen River. It has a visible height of about 30 meters and winds through spiral funnels at a higher height and less visible to the visitor's eye. The landscape is unique and special, where its freshness and beauty are best related to each other. The road to get to this natural wonder is passable and you can go with any type of vehicle. You can visit it in any season of the year, but summer gives it even more beauty where everything has blossomed. The rock formation around it is layered and colored rocks, where red is dominant. In spring and autumn it has an amazing beauty, from the variety of colors.

THE CANYON OF "SHKALLA E TUJANIT"

Tirana is full of surprises and offers many natural beauties. One of them is "Shkalla e Tujanit" Canyon. This canyon is located near Tirana, right in the gorge between Tujani and Brrari mountains. The river that has formed this canyon over thousands of years is called the "River of Tirana" (or known as the river of Brrari, because it is also located near the village of Brrari) "Shkalla e Tujanit" is a narrow gorge 1000 meters deep, cut by the

limestone of the mountain range Krujë-Dajt from the river of Tirana. It separates Mount Dajti from Mount Priska e Vogël (1241 meters). As a result of some karst phenomena and occurrences, many still unknown caves have been created. At the exit of the gorge, the river of Tirana has formed narrow canyons, quite beautiful to explore.

Its waters originate from Mount Gropa and flow into the Erzen River. The canyon has a length of 1.2 km and during its journey it forms hollows, small cataracts, boulders, etc., creating an interesting terrain for those who prefer to explore it.

The canyon is located along the segment of the "old Arbri road" which is on its right when coming from Tirana. Walking the old Arbri road is a good destination for those who prefer mountain hiking. There are no signs for it, but with the help of local guides it can be easily found. The road there from Tirana goes through Shtishtufina and continues to the village of Brrar. Most of it is paved and then continues on good rural roads. All this beauty is located only 10 km from the center of Tirana. The picturesque view and fresh air make it a perfect choice to spend a different, beautiful and peaceful day.



"MOUNTAIN WITH PITS" IN TIRANA

Not far from Tirana there is a special destination where you can go hiking in nature while enjoying fantastic views. The natural monuments always leave you speechless with the greatness and creativity that nature has shown as it has conceived them throughout different periods of time. One of these monuments is the Karst Mountain with Pits, which is only two hours away by car from Tirana. The numerous pits, from which the mountain's name derives, were created by the long process of dissolving limestone rocks in water. These pits, with a diameter of up to tens of meters, create a rare natural landscape, where the view that appears in front resembles a sea full of rising and falling waves, where instead of waves there are rocks and instead of blue the sea dominates the green and the gray of the rocks. Other experts prefer to compare pits to beehives.

Mountain with Pits is one of the rare karst phenomena in Albania and one of the rarest in Europe, in terms of size and extent. This mountain got its name from its upper surface, which is filled with karst pits, which were formed by the dissolution of limestone during the Ice Age. These pits have a depth ranging from a few tens of meters to over 100 meters in certain areas. Some of these pits end with wells that expand into underground karst caves. This mountain is the "producer" and the source of several streams that cross the district of Tirana. The spring of Selita is supplied with water from this mountain. Its highest point reaches 1847.3 meters, which is also called the peak of Mcek (also known as Micek). It is a destination for all mountain climbing and skiing enthusiasts. In winter, it is almost always covered with snow, which sometimes reaches several meters, making it suitable for the sport of extreme skiing. There are no signs, but there are paths leading up to the highest elevation. The mountain is mostly bare of trees except for low vegetation. The road to him can continue in two directions: Tirana - Qafëmolle and Tirana - Shenmeri (Shengjergj). The road to Shenmeri and Qafëmolle is mostly good. Then proceed on a rural road and climb on foot to the destination.





PETRELË VILLAGE

Petrela is located 12 kilometers southeast of the capital, along the Tirana-Elbasan national road. Petrela is one of the places where the tradition is centuries old, which is evidenced not only by the castle, but also by the hundred-year-old houses.



The area of Petrela is characterized by nature with a typical Mediterranean climate. This area, also due to the Erzen river valley and the Mediterranean climate factor, has a rich biodiversity. Considering the shape of the physical formation with plains, hills and valleys, it provides a wonderful contrast of nature. Many restaurants and tourist resorts are located along the river and the nearby hills. Some people prefer to sunbathe and cool off in the waters of the Erzen River during the summer, and also do other water activities. Petrela Castle is one of the most visited attractions. Petrela Castle has a rich history dating back to the 6th century BC. But was it built in ancient times, today this building has its history in the 15th century. During Skanderbeg's wars against the Ottomans, Petrela Castle was put under the command of Mamica Kastriot, Skanderbeg's sister. Petrel Castle (4th century BC) serves as a tourist complex with recreational facilities and services. The entire castle offers historical artifacts. In Petrelë there are the ruins of two churches: "Qafa e Kishes" and "Kodra e Beut", as well as some cult objects such as: the village mosque, the Tyrbja of Ballaban Pasha, Sofi Pasha, Baba Sako. House constructions, folk costumes and their decorations are also characteristic. Petrela is mentioned for the rich microclimate, for beautiful panoramic views in hilly-mountainous terrain. The Erzen valley offers wonderful views, and opportunities for the beach.



EYE OF THE CYCLOPS

The Eye of the Cyclops or as they call it the Trail of the Cyclops is located about 4 km below Krraba, in the village called Skuterrë, in the Erzen river valley. It is about 20 m wide and 120 m deep like a hidden gem in the gorge of Krraba. Cyclops Eye has become one of the relaxing tourism destinations in Tirana. This hidden natural gem in Krrabë attracts every day visitors and adventure lovers who want to explore the wild nature.

Small cataracts surrounded by rock formations create a panorama that is hard to find anywhere else. In addition to the stunning view, Syri i Cyclopi also offers the opportunity to go to the beach during hot days. Another advantage of this destination is its proximity to Tirana, which can be reached by cheap means of transport.

What does the legend say?

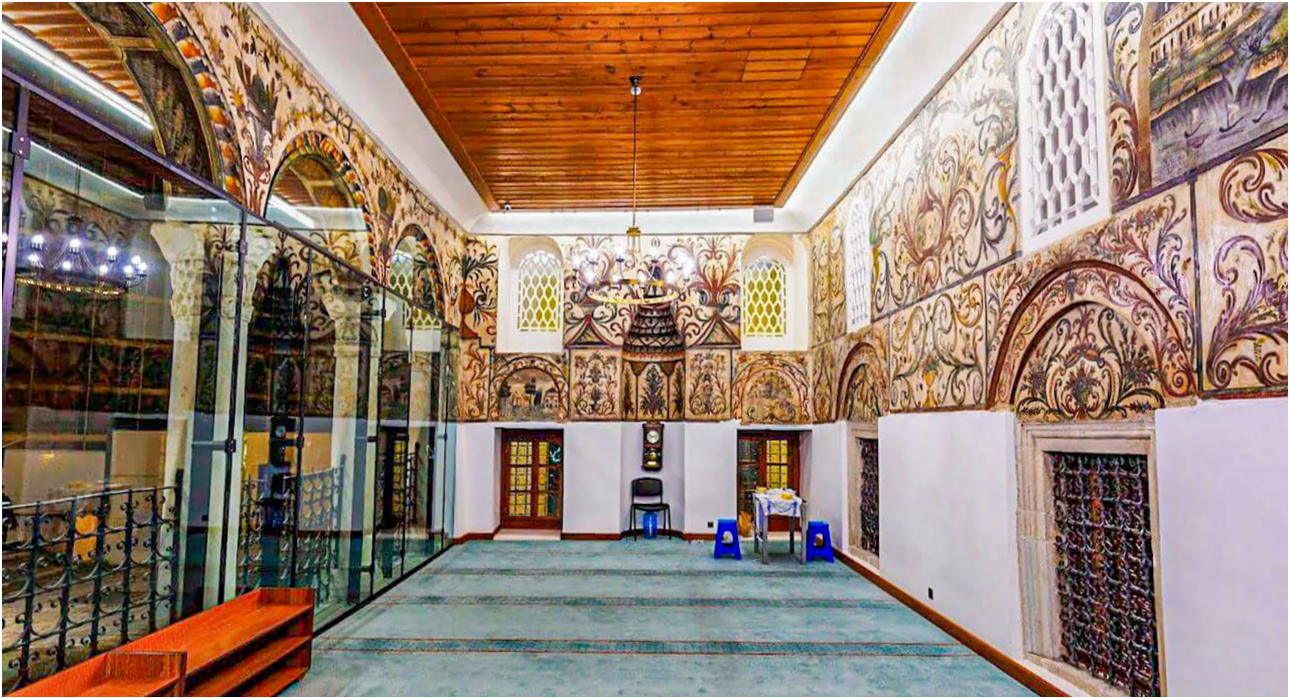
According to the legend Cyclops during a fight with the beast fell down the cliff and lost his eye and his heart. The eye and the heart have created pools of cold water, where they reach a depth of 5 meters.

To get to Syri i Cyclopi you have to go through a narrow road, walk about an hour from the village of Krrabë. The road may seem difficult, but the view is worth the effort. The trip requires an adventurous spirit and being able to walk for an hour. In addition to the stunning view, you can sunbathe there and swim in the blue waters of the natural pools. To go there you definitely need a local guide.





THE MOSQUE OF HAJI ET'HEM BEY



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.

From the inside, the prayer hall has been treated in a very fantastic way. The entire surface of the walls and the dome is covered with well-preserved decorative drawings that are not found anywhere else. The background has a sweet gray paint color, against which the red-brown color and a very sweet green color are placed very harmoniously. Intricate flower drawings are mixed with paintings of fantastical cities and beautiful mosques, a look very similar to the first ones in the rich interiors of old Turkish buildings. All of them are the work of itinerant groups of craftsmen and painters from Albanian-Wallachian villages.

The mosque of Haxhi Et'hem Bey was turned into a museum in 1967. After the years of communism, this mosque was one of the only ones in Tirana that resisted communism, and thus on January 18, 1991, the mosque would be opened again to serve the faithful of the city of Tirana. After a long period, it became very urgent to make a detailed intervention in the restoration of the mosque. Thus, in February 2018, the mosque would be closed to be fully restored until September 2021, where the restoration was completed and the mosque returned to full functionality.



KATEDRALJA NGJALLJA E KRISHTIT

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 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 CATHEDRAL OF "SAINT PAUL"

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. Inside the Cathedral, stands out in particular the ancient statue of the Virgin Mary with the Child Jesus, clearly conveying the signs of the communist persecution. It was returned to the cult after 70 years of concealment and sequestration. In the frontal cupola, awaits the Crucified Christ. On the left side, near the sacristy, is the large mosaic of Saint Mother Teresa. Other statues are also those of Saint Paul, Saint Anthony of Padua, Saint Nicholas, and the bust of Saint John Paul II. Inside the church, 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 BEKTASHI WORLD DEDEBABATE, HOLY SEE

The Holy See of the World Bektashi Center, Tirana. Established in 1931 by the Bektashi World Dede Baba, 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. Dede Baba, 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 Dede Babas 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 Dede Babate 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 Dede Babate 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 MUSEUM OF THE QIRIAZI FAMILY

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.





BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Academy of Sciences of Albania: Albanian Encyclopedic Vocabulary, Tirana 2008.
2. Gazmend A. Bakiu: Old Tirana. An illustrated story, Tirana 2014.
3. <https://tirana.al/pikat-e-interesit/atraksione-ne-tirane>



BASHKËJA
TIRANË



Balkan Cities Network



Qendra për
Administrim Social
Ekonomik Territoric

Center for Social Economic and Territorial Administrationl (ASET)
Address: Rruga "Fadil Rada" Nd.7 Hyrja 3, Tiranë

www.asetcenter.al  Qendra Aset  [qendra_aset](#) 