

INFLUENCES OF POLITICAL REGIME SHIFTS ON
THE URBAN SCENE OF A CAPITAL CITY
CASE STUDY: TIRANA

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

INDRIT BLETA

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN THE DEPARTMENT OF
HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE

JUNE 2010

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Meliha Altunışık
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Güven Arif Sargın
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Belgin Turan-Özkaya
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elvan Altan-Ergut (METU, AH) _____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Belgin Turan-Özkaya (METU, AH) _____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. F. Candaş Bilsel (METU, ARCH) _____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name: Indrit Bleta

Signature:

ABSTRACT

INFLUENCES OF POLITICAL REGIME SHIFTS ON THE URBAN SCENE OF A CAPITAL CITY - CASE STUDY: TIRANA

Bleta, Indrit

MA, Graduate Program in Architectural History

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Belgin Turan Özkaya

June 2010, 132 pages

On the eve of the twentieth century, the dismembering of old empires brought the formation of many new nation states, therefore of emerging new capitals. Becoming independent in 1912, Albania chose its definitive capital, Tirana, in 1920. Since then, the city has been a showcase of planning and architectural interventions for various regimes that have come in power, and its centre was and still is seen as a possibility to show the political ideals of each. The aim of this study is to examine how this important part of the city was produced, used and transformed in a timespan starting from 1920 until the fall of the People's Socialist Republic in 1991. The spatial analysis of the city's centre and the description of the relations between the main actors of these processes will help us understand the underlying goals for which these representative spaces were designed. On the other hand, comparing its urban elements with those of several coetaneous capitals will locate Tirana among the important planning examples of the time.

Keywords: Capital city, Albania, Tirana, architecture and politics, totalitarian regime.

ÖZ

BAŞKENT KENTSEL İMAJINDA SİYASİ REJİM DEĞİŞİKLİKLERİN ETKİSİ – TİRAN ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA

Bleta, Indrit

Yüksek Lisans, Mimarlık Tarihi Programı

Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Belgin Turan Özkaya

Haziran 2010, 132 sayfa

Yirminci yüzyılın başı, eski imparatorlukların parçalanmasından çıkan birçok yeni ulus devletin oluşumunu, dolayısıyla yeni başkentlerin ortaya çıktığını gördü. Bağımsızlığını 1912'de kazanan Arnavutluk, başkentini 1920 yılında resmi olarak Tiran'a taşıdı. O günden beri şehir, ve özellikle onun merkezi, her rejim değişikliğinde, iktidar tarafından yapılan planlama ve mimari müdahalelerle siyasi ideolojilerin bir güç göstergesi haline gelmiştir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, 1920'de başlayan ve 1991'de Sosyalist Halk Cumhuriyeti rejimin çöküşüyle biten zaman aralığında kentin bu önemli kısmının nasıl üretildiğini, kullanıldığını ve değiştirildiğini, incelemek olacaktır. Şehir merkezinin mekânsal analizi ve bu sürecin baş aktörlerinin arasındaki ilişkileri ortaya çıkarmak, bu temsiliyet alanlarının tasarımının altındaki hedefleri anlamaya yardım edecektir. Öte yandan, kentsel öğelerini dönemin belli başkentlerinin öğeleriyle karşılaştırmak Tiran'ın zamanın önde planlama örnekleri arasındaki konumunu ortaya çıkaracaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Başkent, Arnavutluk, Tiran, mimarlık ve politika, totaliter rejim.

...e ti sentivo ancora, sapore della vita...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Because this thesis is the finalisation of an exhausting period of stressful moments but also days of joy, I am therefore indebted to many persons who have contributed and supported me throughout all these times.

The first thanks go to the members of the committee, whose contribution, critiques and most of all patience during the last months of the thesis I greatly appreciate. I would like to express my sincere gratitude especially to my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Belgin Turan Özkaya who never stopped encouraging, guiding and believing in me during all this research period. Also, many thanks go to all the academic staff of the Department of Architecture with whom I had the pleasure to work, for their support and the constructive period I had during these studies. Being at the origin of all this long process, my gratitude goes to M. İlhan Kesmez for his friendly teachings and support since the early days at the basic design studio. I must also thank M. Ziya Tanalı for believing in me and encouraging me from the beginning of these studies.

Many thanks go to Besnik Aliaj, Pavllo Luarasi, and the employees of the Planning Institute whose help during the research phase in Tirana has been decisive on procuring archival material.

Bu çalışmanın aşamalarında her şekilde yanımda bulunan, yardımını, desteğini ve anlayışını esirgemeyen Güzey Mimarlık'taki herkese ne kadar teşekkür etsem az olacağımı biliyorum. Yine de bütün kalbimle teşekkür ederim – her şey için minnettarım.

My deepest thanks go to Rabia Ç. Çavdar for her continuous support, encouraging words and helping me in the hardest moments of this thesis. I am also grateful to Sanem Arslan and Selcan Uzun for their valuable support and efforts during stressful times, Cem's', Emre, İsbën, Klodi, Roland, Ruşen, Selda, and all of my friends whose presence and friendship have been indispensable throughout these years. A particular regard goes to Besnik: UO!

Nuk di se nga duhet t'ia nis për të falenderuar familjen time. Me gjithë

vështirësitë që kanë ndeshur gjatë gjithë këtyre viteve, mbështetja që më kanë dhënë në çdo pikëpamje ka qenë dhe mbetet e pamatë, për të cilën u jam mirënjohës nga zemra. Ngazëllimet e hidhërimet, heshtja, merakun e mallëngjimet, mbështetja e debatet, edhe emocionet e hareja e Herës, të gjitha kanë qenë për mua një forcë pa të cilën nuk do të kisha arritur deri këtu.

The tender sound of leaves under a spring breeze or a lightning in clear sky, I thank Aslı for all that she is in my life – Sa mali me borë!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ÖZ.....	v
DEDICATION.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	xix
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	6
2.1.The capital as focus of political power.....	6
2.2.Albanian national awakening since the mid 19th century.....	21
2.3.Time-line of events leading to the proclamation of Tirana as capital city.....	27
3. THE MONARCHY AND WORLD WAR II PERIOD.....	33
3.1.The first plan of the city.....	33
3.2.The approach of the monarchy and the foreign planners.....	46
3.3.The occupation and its effects on the city's layout.....	53
4. THE AFTER-WAR AND BUILDING OF A SELF-EFFICIENT DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT	68
4.1.Urbanisation as a large scale project.....	70
4.2.Making Tirana a capital for the people.....	77

4.3.The unseen actors of the urban scene.....	97
5. CONCLUSION.....	104
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	117
APPENDIX.....	123

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig 1.1: Geophysical map of Albania, showing the location of Tirana.....	5
(Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Albania_map-en.svg)	
Fig 1.2: Political map of Europe showing the location of Albania.....	5
(Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Europe-Albania.svg)	
Fig 2.1.1: Pro Helsingfors master-plan for Helsinki, by Eliel Saarinen and Bertel Jung, 1918...10	
(Source: Kolbe, Laura. “Helsinki: from provincial to national centre.”, 78.)	
Fig 2.1.2: Perspective drawing of Kuningasavenue (King’s Avenue), from the Pro Helsingfors plan, 1918.....	10
(Source: Sonne, Wolfgang. <i>Representing the state: capital city planning in the early twentieth century</i> , 148)	
Fig 2.1.3: Helsinki Centrum plan model by Alvar Aalto, 1964.....	10
(Source: Kolbe, Laura. “Helsinki: from provincial to national centre.”, 83)	
Fig 2.1.4: Preliminary general plan of Canberra by Walter Burley Griffin, 1913-14.....	14
(Source: Sonne, Wolfgang. <i>Representing the state: capital city planning in the early twentieth century</i> , 155)	
Fig 2.1.5: Perspective drawing of the government district by Walter Burley Griffin, 1912.....	14
(Source: Sonne, Wolfgang. <i>Representing the state: capital city planning in the early twentieth century</i> , 13)	
Fig 2.1.6: Land Axis with War Memorial in Canberra, 1954.....	14
(Source: Sonne, Wolfgang. <i>Representing the state: capital city planning in the early twentieth century</i> , 187)	
Fig 2.1.7: Plan of Carl Christoph Lörcher for Ankara, 1924.....	16
(Source: http://www.mimdap.org/w/?p=22066)	
Fig 2.1.8: Hermann Jansen's plan for Ankara, 1932.....	16
(Source: Ankara Tarihi Kent Merkezi – 1, 2005, 23)	
Fig 2.1.9: Scheme of the centre of Ankara today.....	16
(Source: Vale, Lawrence J. <i>Architecture, power, and national identity</i> . 2nd ed., 117)	
Fig 2.1.10: Delhi, the Viceroy's House and the Secretariats, 1931.....	20

	(Source: Sonne, Wolfgang. <i>Representing the state: capital city planning in the early twentieth century</i> , 232)	
Fig 2.1.11: Plan of New Delhi by Edwin Landseer Lutyens, 1912.....		20
	(Source: Joardar, Souro D. “New Delhi: Imperial capital to capital of the world's largest democracy.”, 187)	
Fig 2.1.12: King's Way, now the boulevard serves for celebrations on Republic Day.....		20
	(Source: http://www.indembassy.uz/)	
Fig 2.2.1: Map of four Albanian inhabited <i>vilayets</i> of Ottoman Empire.....		25
	(Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Balkans_at_1905.jpg)	
Fig 2.2.2: Cover of the first edition of “Shqipëria - Ç'ka qenë, ç'është e ç'do të bëhet'.....		25
	(Source: Personal archive)	
Fig 2.3.1: Prince Wilhelm F. Heinrich of Wied.....		30
	(Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:WilhelmPrinceAlbania.jpg)	
Fig 2.3.2: The outer wall of the remains of Toptani castle.....		30
	(Source: Castiglioni, Bruno. “Tirana - Appunti sulla capitale dell'Albania all'alba del nuovo regime.”, 12)	
Fig 2.3.3: Aerial view of the first nucleus of Tirana.....		30
	(Source: <i>Tirana në kartolina deri në vitin '44.</i> , 40)	
Fig 2.3.4: Painting of Edward Lear showing the centre of Tirana in 1850.....		30
	(Source: Lear, Edward. <i>Journals of a landscape painter in Albania, &c.</i> , 107)	
Fig 3.1.1: The earliest technical document of Tirana's urban development.....		34
	(Source: Digital Archive of the Municipality of Tirana)	
Fig 3.1.2: The situation of the city in 1921. Plan by Skënder Frashëri.....		34
	(Source: Digital Archive of the Municipality of Tirana)	
Fig 3.1.3: Aerial view of the Old Bazaar.....		38
	(Source: Giusti, Maria Adriana. <i>Albania - architettura e città: 1925 – 1943.</i> , 18)	
Fig 3.1.4: The old building of the Parliament of Albania, now used as a children's theatre.....		38
	(Source: http://vargmal.org/fotoarkiv/index.php?n=393)	
Fig 3.1.5: View of the Old Bazaar, Et'hem Bey Mosque and the Clock Tower.....		38
	(Source: <i>Tirana në kartolina deri në vitin '44.</i> , 37)	
Fig 3.1.6: View of the future Skënderbej Square.....		40
	(Source: <i>Tirana në kartolina deri në vitin '44.</i> , 67)	
Fig 3.1.7: Plan of the first version of the project presented by Armando Brasini, 1926.....		40

	(Source: Miho, Koço. <i>Shqipëria: vështrim urbanistik, 1912-1944</i> . 144)	
Fig 3.1.8:	Perspective drawing of the fan-shaped city centre by Armando Brasini, 1926.....	40
	(Source: Giusti, Maria Adriana. <i>Albania - architettura e città: 1925 – 1943</i> , 19)	
Fig 3.1.9:	Perspective drawing of the north-south boulevard by Armando Brasini, 1926.....	41
	(Source: Aliaj, Besnik, Keida Lulo, and Genc Myftiu, eds. <i>Tirana, the challenge of urban development</i> . 31)	
Fig 3.1.10:	Perspective drawing of the Presidential Palace.....	41
	(Source: Aliaj, Besnik, Keida Lulo, and Genc Myftiu, eds. <i>Tirana, the challenge of urban development</i> . 31)	
Fig 3.1.11:	Perspective drawing of the entrance to the square of the ministries, 1926.....	41
	(Source: Aliaj, Besnik, Keida Lulo, and Genc Myftiu, eds. <i>Tirana, the challenge of urban development</i> . 31)	
Fig 3.1.12:	Part of the plan for the centre of Tirana by Frashëri, Castellani and Weiss, 1926....	44
	(Source: Aliaj, Besnik, Keida Lulo, and Genc Myftiu, eds. <i>Tirana, the challenge of urban development</i> . 32)	
Fig 3.1.13:	Detail of the plan for the centre of Tirana by Florestano di Fausto.....	44
	(Source: Digital Archive of the Municipality of Tirana)	
Fig 3.1.14:	Perspective drawing of the Skënderbej Square by Florestano di Fausto, 1926-31....	44
	(Source: Miano, Giuseppe. “Florestano di Fausto - from Rhodes to Libya.”, 59)	
Fig 3.1.15:	Proposal for the façade of the ministries by Florestano di Fausto, 1926-31.....	45
	(Source: Giusti, Maria Adriana. <i>Albania - architettura e città: 1925 – 1943</i> , 21)	
Fig 3.1.16:	Façade detail for the ministerial buildings by Florestano di Fausto. 1926-31.....	45
	(Source: Giusti, Maria Adriana. <i>Albania - architettura e città: 1925 – 1943</i> , 23)	
Fig 3.2.1:	General plan for the city of Tirana by Köhler, 1929.....	48
	(Source: Aliaj, Besnik, Keida Lulo, and Genc Myftiu, eds. <i>Tirana, the challenge of urban development</i> . 33)	
Fig 3.2.2:	Detail of the 1929 plan by Köhler.....	48
	(Source: Aliaj, Besnik, Keida Lulo, and Genc Myftiu, eds. <i>Tirana, the challenge of urban development</i> . 33)	
Fig 3.2.3:	The newly opened Boulevard Zog. 1930.....	48
	(Source: http://vargmal.org/fotoarkiv/index.php?n=372)	
Fig 3.2.4:	The building of National Bank of Albania by Vittorio Ballio Morpurgo, 1938.....	52
	(Source: Roselli, Alessandro. <i>Italy and Albania: financial relations in the Fascist period</i> , cover)	
Fig 3.2.5:	Inner back court of the National Bank building.....	52

	(Source: “The Building of The Bank of Albania.”)	
Fig 3.2.6: Main hall of the National Bank building.....		52
	(Source: “The Building of The Bank of Albania.”)	
Fig 3.2.7: Perspective drawing of the building of Circolo Italo – Albanese Scanderbeg, by Pater – Costruzioni edili speciali, 1938.....		52
	(Source: Giusti, Maria Adriana. <i>Albania - architettura e città: 1925 – 1943.</i> , 132)	
Fig 3.3.1: Italian troops on the Skënderbej Square a day after the invasion, April 8, 1939.....		55
	(Source: http://arkivi.peshkupauje.com/7-prill-1939/2006/04/08/?q=7-prill-1939/2006/04/08/)	
Fig 3.3.2: Aerial view of Boulevard Zog on April, 1939.....		55
	(Source: Brescia, Mauro, and Roland Sejko. <i>Albania. Il paese di fronte.</i> 1,33:1, Historical documentary. Istituto Luce.)	
Fig 3.3.3: Aerial view of Tirana on April, 1939.....		55
	(Source: Castiglioni, Bruno. “Tirana - Appunti sulla capitale dell'Albania all'alba del nuovo regime.”, 26)	
Fig 3.3.4: The traffic scheme of Tirana from the master-plan of 1940,		57
	(Source: Digital Archive of the Municipality of Tirana)	
Fig 3.3.5: Detailed plan of Viale dell Impero, Skënderbej Square and vicinities from the master-plan of 1940 by		57
	(Source: Digital Archive of the Municipality of Tirana)	
Fig 3.3.6: Detailed plan of Piazza Littoria by Gherardo Bosio, 1940.....		59
	(Source: Giusti, Maria Adriana. <i>Albania - architettura e città: 1925 – 1943.</i> , 56)	
Fig 3.3.7: Perspective drawing of Piazza Littoria showing Casa del Fascio in the centre adorned by thematic sculptural groups all over the square., by Gherardo Bosio. 1940.....		59
	(Source: Giusti, Maria Adriana. <i>Albania - architettura e città: 1925 – 1943.</i> , 147)	
Fig 3.3.8: Perspective drawing for the preliminary version of Casa del Fascio, Bosio, 1940.....		59
	(Source: Giusti, Maria Adriana. <i>Albania - architettura e città: 1925 – 1943.</i> , 59)	
Fig 3.3.9: Perspective drawing of Casa del Fascio, by Gherardo Bosio, 1940.....		61
	(Source: Giusti, Maria Adriana. <i>Albania - architettura e città: 1925 – 1943.</i> , 64)	
Fig 3.3.10: Palazzo Strozzi of Florentine palaces and a typical Albanian Kulla.....		61
	(Source: <i>Historia e Arkitekturës Shqiptare – Maket</i> , 636)	
Fig 3.3.11: Perspective drawing of the building of Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro Albanese, by Gherardo Bosio, 1940.....		61
	(Source: Giusti, Maria Adriana. <i>Albania - architettura e città: 1925 – 1943.</i> , 59)	

Fig 3.3.12: Perspective drawing of the building of Gioventù Littoria Albanese, by Gherardo Bosio, 1940.....	62
(Source: Giusti, Maria Adriana. <i>Albania - architettura e città: 1925 – 1943.</i> , 155)	
Fig 3.3.13: Perspective drawing of the Olympic stadium, by Gherardo Bosio, 1940.....	62
(Source: Giusti, Maria Adriana. <i>Albania - architettura e città: 1925 – 1943.</i> , 159)	
Fig 3.3.14: Scale model of Viale dell'Impero, 1940.....	62
(Source: <i>Inviato del Duce in Albania: la visita del Conte Ciano in Albania</i> , 68)	
Fig 3.3.15: Detailed plan of the <i>Skënderbej Square</i> from the master-plan of Tirana, 1940.....	63
(Source: Digital Archive of the Municipality of Tirana)	
Fig 3.3.16: Perspective drawing of the new arrangement of <i>Skënderbej Square</i> , 1940.....	63
(Source: Digital Archive of the Municipality of Tirana)	
Fig 3.3.17: Perspective drawing of the new arrangement of <i>Skënderbej Square</i> , 1940.....	63
(Source: Giusti, Maria Adriana. <i>Albania - architettura e città: 1925 – 1943.</i> , 55)	
Fig 3.3.18: Perspective drawing of the Dajti Hotel, by Gherardo Bosio, 1939.....	66
(Source: Giusti, Maria Adriana. <i>Albania - architettura e città: 1925 – 1943.</i> , 137)	
Fig 3.3.19: Photo of the construction process of the Dajti Hotel. 1940.....	66
(Source: Giusti, Maria Adriana. <i>Albania - architettura e città: 1925 – 1943.</i> , 137)	
Fig 3.3.20: Photo of the construction process of <i>Casa del Fascio</i> , 1941.....	66
(Source: <i>Inviato del Duce in Albania: la visita del Conte Ciano in Albania</i> , 54)	
Fig 3.3.21: Photo showing the construction process of the Olympic stadium, 1941.....	67
(Source: <i>Inviato del Duce in Albania: la visita del Conte Ciano in Albania</i> , 61)	
Fig 3.3.22: Photo showing <i>Viale dell'Impero</i> and the vicinities during construction, 1941.....	67
(Source: <i>Inviato del Duce in Albania: la visita del Conte Ciano in Albania</i> , 61)	
Fig 3.3.23: Bas-relief with Mussolini's words; his personal envoy to Albania, Count Ciano inspecting the public works in the capital, 1941.....	67
(Source: <i>Inviato del Duce in Albania: la visita del Conte Ciano in Albania</i> , 57;59)	
Fig 4.1.1: Previously a building of the Fascist regime, it serves as gathering hall of the new Constituent Assembly, January 11, 1946.....	71
(Source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/44425842@N00/3723308544/in/set-72157621408978727/)	
Fig 4.1.2: Prefabricated housing blocks – an important element of the rapid urbanisation.....	71
(Source: Stërmasi, Ferit. “Uzinë që prodhon apartamente banimi.” <i>Sbkenca dhe Jeta</i> , no. 03 (1975): 24-25.)	

Fig 4.1.3: Urbanisation and the 'new man' as a central theme in arts.....	71
(Source: http://sq.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%ABmij%C3%ABt_(piktur%C3%AB))	
Fig 4.1.4: Urbanisation theme used for advertising propaganda: a 50 lek banknote, 1964.....	71
(Source: Personal archive)	
Fig 4.2.1: The urban plan of 1957. The Skënderbej Square still preserves the old structure.....	79
(Source: Aliaj, Besnik, Keida Lulo, and Genc Myftiu, eds. <i>Tirana, the challenge of urban development</i> . 53)	
Fig 4.2.2: Preliminary phase plan of 1965 for the centre of Tirana.....	79
(Source: Digital Archive of the Municipality of Tirana)	
Fig 4.2.3: Scale-model of a version for the plan of the centre of Tirana, 1976.....	82
(Source: Alimehmeti, Faik. “Kryeqyteti ynë, Tirana, dje, sot dhe nesër.” <i>Shkenca dhe Jeta</i> 06 (1976): 20-23.)	
Fig 4.2.4: Scale-model of a version for the plan of the centre of Tirana, 1976.....	82
(Source: <i>Shkenca dhe Jeta</i> 06 (1976), cover)	
Fig 4.2.5: The zoning sheet of the master-plan of Tirana of the year 1989.....	82
(Source: Personal archive)	
Fig 4.2.6: The Politburo and the people of Tirana kneeling and making an oath of loyalty before the statue of Stalin, March, 1953.....	85
(Source: Brescia, Mauro, and Roland Sejko. <i>Albania. Il paese di fronte</i> . 1,33:1, Historical documentary. Istituto Luce.)	
Fig 4.2.7: The Politburo and the people of Tirana kneeling and making an oath of loyalty before the statue of Stalin.....	85
(Source: Brescia, Mauro, and Roland Sejko. <i>Albania. Il paese di fronte</i> . 1,33:1, Historical documentary. Istituto Luce.)	
Fig 4.2.8: Stalin's statue in front of the gift Soviet Union made to Albania: the Palace of Culture.....	85
(Source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/44425842@N00)	
Fig 4.2.9: Soviet and Albanian architects discussing on the model of the Palace of Culture.....	85
(Source: Velo, Maks. <i>Paralel me arkitekturën</i> . 81)	
Fig 4.2.10: Perspective drawing of a proposal for the Skënderbej Square, prior to the building of Tirana Hotel, 1966.....	88
(Source: Digital Archive of the Municipality of Tirana)	
Fig 4.2.11: Photo showing the construction process of Tirana Hotel, 1974.....	88
(Source: <i>Shkenca dhe Jeta</i> 03 (1975), cover)	

- Fig 4.2.12: Perspective drawing of a proposal for Tirana Hotel, by Petraq Kolevica, 1972.....88
(Source: Kolevica, Petraq. *Arkitektura dhe diktatura*. 176)
- Fig 4.2.13: Perspective drawing of a proposal for the National Historical Museum, by Enver Faja, 1976-81.....89
(Source: Faja, Enver. *Kush e drejton urbanistikën shqiptare*. 121)
- Fig 4.2.14: Perspective drawing of a proposal for the National Historical Museum, by Enver Faja, 1976-81.....89
(Source: Faja, Enver. *Kush e drejton urbanistikën shqiptare*. 121)
- Fig 4.2.15: Perspective drawing of a proposal for the National Historical Museum, by Petraq Kolevica, 1976-81.....89
(Source: Kolevica, Petraq. *Arkitektura dhe diktatura*. Tiranë: Logoreci, 2004. 238)
- Fig 4.2.16: Façade for the National Historical Museum, by Maks Velo, 1976-81.....89
(Source: Velo, Maks. *Paralel me arkitekturën*. 105)
- Fig 4.2.17: Scale model of the project for the National Historical Museum, 1976-81.....90
(Source: Mitrojorgji, Nina. “Muzeu Historik Kombëtar.” *Shkenca dhe Jeta*, no. 02 (1979): 6-8.)
- Fig 4.2.18: Perspective drawing of the new arrangement for the Skënderbej Square, 1986.....90
(Source: Kolaneci, Klement, and Ilir Fico. “Qendra e Tiranës.” *Shkenca dhe Jeta*, no. 03 (1986): 4-7.)
- Fig 4.2.19: Perspective drawing of the project for the monument of Enver Hoxha, 1986.....90
(Source: Kolaneci, Klement, and Ilir Fico. “Qendra e Tiranës.” *Shkenca dhe Jeta*, no. 03 (1986): 4-7.)
- Fig 4.2.20: The monument of Enver Hoxha in Skënderbej Square, Tirana.....93
(Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/44425842@N00/3712312962/in/set-72157621408978727/>)
- Fig 4.2.21: The boulevard 'Martyrs of Nation' during a military parade.....93
(Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/44425842@N00/3713325772/in/set-72157621408978727/>)
- Fig 4.2.22: The seat of Presidium i Kuvendit Popullor, now Presidency.....93
(Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/44425842@N00/3722886071/in/set-72157621408978727/>)
- Fig 4.2.23: Palace of Congresses, along the boulevard “Martyrs of Nation”.....94
(Source: Personal archive)
- Fig 4.2.24: Photo showing the construction process of the Palace of Congresses.....94
(Source: Bakallbashi, Spiro, and Kujtim Meka. “Pallati i Kongreseve.” *Shkenca dhe Jeta*, no.

02 (1984): 10-11.)	
Fig 4.2.25: Museum of Enver Hoxha, 1988.....	94
(Source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/44425842@N00/3726133200/in/set-72157621408978727/)	
Fig 4.3.1: Gallery of Visual Arts, by Enver Faja, 1976.....	97
(Source: Faja, Enver. <i>Kush e drejton urbanistikën shqiptare</i> . 65)	
Fig 4.3.2: Apartments block, by Maks Velo, 1972. The architect has been deported for this project among others, because this (modern) was regarded as an reactionary style.....	97
(Source: Velo, Maks. <i>Paralel me arkitekturën</i> . 79)	
Fig 5.1: The many faces of the city's spine: the boulevard Dëshmorët e Kombit as a military showdown.....	106
(Source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/44425842@N00/3711273316)	
Fig 5.2: ... as an empty,.....	106
(Source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/44425842@N00/3711273316/in/set-72157621408978727/)	
Fig 5.3: or as a showdown of the youth and country's achievements.....	106
(Source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/44425842@N00/3722921341/in/set-72157621408978727/)	
Fig 5.4: City layout of Tirana in 1917.....	111
Fig 5.5: Proposed city layout of Tirana in 1929.....	111
Fig 5.6: City layout of Tirana in 1930.....	111
Fig 5.7: Proposed city layout of Tirana in 1940.....	112
Fig 5.8: City layout of Tirana in 1961.....	112
Fig 5.9: Proposed city layout of Tirana in 1965.....	112
Fig 5.10: Centre of Tirana in 1990.....	113

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACT	(en) Australian Capital Territory
AQTN	(sq) <i>Arkivi Qendror Teknik i Ndërtimit</i> (Technical Construction Central Archive)
FNÇ	(sq) <i>Fronti Nacional-Çlirimtar</i> (National-Liberation Front)
G.L.A	(it) <i>Gioventù Littoria Albanese</i> (Albanian Youth of Lictor)
I.N.F.A.I.L.	(it) <i>Istituto Nazionale Fascista Assicurazione contro gli Infortuni sul Lavoro</i> (National Fascist Institute of Work Accidents' Insurance)
I.N.P.S	(it) <i>Istituto Nazionale della Previdenza Sociale</i> (National Institute of Social Security)
O.N.D.A	(it) <i>Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro Albanese</i> (Albanian National Recreational Club)
PKSH	(sq) <i>Partia Komuniste e Shqipërisë</i> (Communist Party of Albania)
PPSH	(sq) <i>Partia e Punës e Shqipërisë</i> (Party of Labour of Albania)
RPSSh	(sq) <i>Republika Popullore Socialiste e Shqipërisë</i> (People's Socialist Republic of Albania)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the rise of the nation-state, the capital city has become a symbol for the state and its government, imbued with strong political meaning. Because of the diversity of these states and their origins the capital has no universal physical features, but they all are seen as representative of the respective state. Although they do not always house the central organs of state power and they are not the only carriers of state power symbolism, their role in this respect is significant. Citing van der Wusten, capital cities' main features can be distinguished as:

...they represent and symbolize state power and national unity. They may as a whole signify the central state idea and national unity (e.g., Haussmannian Paris). Their function as icons may also be attached to different more specific parts of such cities (e.g., the imperial administrative centre in New Delhi imbued with even wider than national pretence), and individual elements of their built environments may function as such (e.g., Budapest's Parliament Building).¹

Because of their high representative potential, capital cities have always been stages of huge planning ideals, glamorous urban interventions and the continuing effects of the latter. Beyond the practical efficiency needed to carry out their main functions, the authorities' attitude towards the urban spaces of the capital carries the will to produce an image appropriate to national identity. As the result of these state-sponsored investments, larger buildings, avenues and monumental spaces emerge as personification of these cities, conveying national aspirations.

A capital city plays the role of a public space that shows all ideological aspects. On the other hand, the many ideologies that have passed upon the cities may leave their imprint on the spaces they occupied or created. The result of this is the creation

¹ Herman van der Wusten, "Dictators and their capital cities: Moscow and Berlin in the 1930s," *GeoJournal* 52, no. 4 (2001): 339.

of hybrid patterns in many cities. In some cities this phenomenon has led to the development of unique spaces by evolving and interrelating these patterns, but where this doesn't happen, the result is a city with many estranged isolated spaces, not available to human interaction. Tirana is an example of both of these situations. Although a relatively new city (even newer as a capital) it has gone through radical changes in very short intervals of time, always initiated by the dominant ideologies of the time, still today struggling to develop an identity of its own.

As the major city of a small country, Tirana had the position of a flagship, and at the same time of an urbanisation laboratory for nearly 70 years. New patterns of urban development that firstly have been applied there later came to be adopted at lower levels of the urban hierarchy. It was (and is) also the city with the most foreign influences and exposed to foreign valuation in the country – from the Ottoman past to Chinese Culture Revolution, from Italian Fascism to Soviet totalitarianism. The strategies followed by different regimes are visible in many elements of the city, from the public spaces to the dwelling zones and governmental buildings.

This research's starting point was to question how these ideologies have manifested themselves in the spaces of the city. Urban plans, beyond the technical-functional or formal issues were also interpreted in the context of political conditions. This kind of relation of political regimes with urban forms gives way to a supposition that urban plans made use of specific elements to transmit political messages. The main purpose of this study is an analysis of the impact that political developments, in the chosen time interval have had upon the main planning decisions, the most important actors of these stages and the consequences these moves had for the future developments of the city. The emphasis will be on examining all these processes in the light of the modern concept of the capital city, what it represents and its ideological framework. For a better and more focused research, the study will limit itself in time and area terms, too. The examined area comprises the main central boulevard of the city and its vicinities, while the time interval starts from the proclaiming of the city as the capital of Albania in 1920 up to the fall of the *dictatorship of proletariat* in 1991.

Before starting analysing the main period a short historical background of the city and the country will take place in Chapter II. At the same time displaying some

examples of capital cities designed and built almost at the same time with Tirana will give a more complete panorama of the situation of urban planning used as a means of representation for different ideologies in the first quarter of the twentieth century. This historical and comparative background will also be used in the concluding section, focusing on specific urban elements. The main part of the study is divided in two parts, respectively two separate periods of political regimes. The first part, Chapter III, describes the first efforts of the governments to create a capital city worth of the new state from 1920 to the end of World War II. Firstly capital of a republic, then of a kingdom and in the end capital of an empire's part, Tirana got its urban plans mainly designed by foreign architects invited by the regimes or under central organisations of the Fascist occupation. Nevertheless, these were the years that gave the city's centre its principal features, which later would be used and preserved in the second period, since 1944 to 1991, the year when the single party system fell. Chapter IV analyses these years in a broader aspect, as such was the urbanisation program that the city and all the country underwent. This program, its ideological background and its effects on the urban scene are examined in the first section of the chapter. Then a panorama of the several plans for the centre of the city, the buildings and their uses during these forty-seven years is displayed. The last part of the chapter shows briefly the spectrum of professionals that designed the centre of Tirana during these years and their working conditions amid ideological developments. Also short biographies of principal actors on the planning scene take place in the appendixes.

The relation between spaces and ideological frameworks during the interval prompts questions like 'Do spaces have politics?' and the reverse 'Do politics have spaces?'² The closing Chapter V concludes by answering these and several other questions rising during the analysis of the spatial elements in Tirana and their design process. Also a comparison between the selected capitals' centre layout and that of Tirana will try to locate its status among the planning and architectural history of the twentieth century. An appendix of schemes illustrates the physical change of the city's centre during the years.

² David Crowley and Susan Emily Reid, eds., *Socialist spaces: sites of everyday life in the Eastern Bloc* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2002), 2.

This scope is partly fuelled by the existence of very few titles of research about Tirana and Albania in the field of architectural historiography, despite being one of the newly proclaimed capitals in the first quarter of the twentieth century which had their urban development stimulated by grand architectural projects. Thus, the whole outline of the study is constructed around different sources of various disciplines. The main research work has been carried at the National Library of Albania, the AQTN and personal collection of “*Shkenca dhe Jeta*” journal (Science and Life). The principal sources about the architectural developments of the first period emerged the publications of M. A. Giusti, K. Miho and Aliaj et. al. The second period's planning analysis is based mainly on the official account of several journals and on memoirs of P. Kolevica, M. Velo, E. Faja and others that have exercised their profession during the years of *the dictatorship*. On the other hand, news and reviews from the respective period's press were examined to extract the possible reactions of the public opinion. The publications related to both periods are enhanced with technical archival material from the Municipality of Tirana and visuals from *Istituto Luce*. The historical dimension of the materials gives them also the strength of the possibility to compare initial designs with their implementation and use over time with their meanings altered or preserved. Meanwhile, historical literature about Albania's history during these seventy years, were examined so that a more detailed panorama of contextual specifics could be revealed. On the other hand, publications of D. Gordon, W. Sonne and L. J. Vale were the principal sources on twentieth century capitals' analysis. The overlapping of all these sources and publications during this study has displayed an interesting panorama of the architecture – ideology relation in Albania, worth of further detailed research.



Fig 1.1: Geophysical map of Albania, showing the location of Tirana.



Fig 1.2: Political map of Europe showing the location of Albania.

CHAPTER II

CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. The capital as focus of political power

If we can use the modern definition, a capital city is the seat of government of a sovereign state, or as geographer Jean Gottmann put it: “A capital city is the seat of central government of a separate political unit.”³ The main meaning used in everyday language represents the political aspect of the term relying strongly on the aforementioned conditions. On the other hand, as there are many other uses of the notion like 'cultural capital' or 'economic capital', they always has to be accompanied by an specifying attribute. The primary condition defines the quintessential characteristic of a capital that differentiates it from all other cities: it must house a state government, although the inverse is not always true. Examples like Abidjan, La Paz or The Hague, are seats of respective governments, but not official capitals of their countries.

At first glance, it seems that a capital is a natural product of the founding a state or a consequence of political (re)organisation, materialising the statehood into reality. Earlier, in the Middle Ages, empires did not require designated capitals as the centre of the state wasn't related to it but where the king was, while many city states were capitals unto themselves. The royal capitals certainly were power centres of these territorial states but rather as symbols of royal pride and vanity than as objects of identification for the people. And it was only with the emerging of the nation-states that capital cities began to achieve their modern meaning. Going beyond the granted practical necessity of pure materialisation, the modern concept of the capital came out as a consequence of the evolution of nation states and a crucial part of their conscious

³ Wolfgang Sonne, *Representing the state: capital city planning in the early twentieth century*, trans. Elizabeth Schwaiger (Munich; New York: Prestel, 2003), 32.

policies of 'inventing traditions' to create and promote 'national unity'. Therefore, the newly iconographic interpretation of these cities began to serve the process of forging national identities.

Generally, the future capital cities in old Europe were respectively primate cities, dominating the economic and cultural life of the nation, and housing the political elites. On the other hand, the newly formed states outside it often chose minor cities to serve as capitals, trying to escape colonial influences and at the same time build a new identity of their own. Functionally, the capital city “secures strong and lasting centrality; it calls for a special hosting environment to provide what is required for the safe and efficient performance of the functions of government and decision-making characteristic of the place,”⁴ as Gottmann elaborates its definition. Often, this centrality is expressed more politically than geographically, but on the other hand inside the city it results in the creation of a centrally located government district. But as the task of a capital should not be limited to merely furnishing a physical location for the government, it must also act as an embodiment of the state and its fundamental values. Specific urban and architectural forms here become bearers of political meanings which will construct the urban culture desired by various regimes.

The process of assigning or designating a country's capital is a complex one, made of many choices and intervening factors. Capitals, as with all the built environment, are a product of this process' social, political, geostrategical and cultural circumstances. Despite the various categories these cities have been separated according to their primary role,⁵ the complexity of the underlying constructional forces cannot be simplified as such and, on the other hand the overlapping of these categories is itself a promoter of these forces. The balance between them gives way to the assigning of a particular location in a particular time to be a capital city.

There can be outlined two categories of capital cities regarding their formation process. The first one is the city evolving into a capital city – many examples of the Old World take place in it, like London, Paris, Rome, Tokyo, Beijing, etc. they have evolved during ages from important centres of trading, military or religious aspect into

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Peter Hall, “Seven Types of Capital City,” in *Planning twentieth century capital cities*, ed. David L. A. Gordon (New York: Routledge, 2006), 8.

main administrative, thus capitals of respective empires and later nation states. Although they have undergone many planning efforts and restructuring processes, their main driving force lies in the historical power background they possess. On the other hand, we have the assigned/designed type of capital city. They are results of national independence movements and mainly the will to build new national centres, away from the imperial influence or any possible strategical danger. The first planned example of this category is considered Washington, the capital of U.S.A., established in 1790 and designed by Charles Pierre L'Enfant a year later. Its plan, with the wide mall and the capitol area set the standard for the nation-state capital city planning for many years. Yet, it falls outside the timespan of this study, in which cities like Helsinki, Ankara, Canberra, or New Delhi, are some of the most prominent examples of the category. These cities have also been stages of experimenting and demonstrating the contemporary ideals of city planning. Because of the similarity between them and Tirana, regarding the conditions in which they are assigned and the later developments, it would be useful to discuss some of their features. All these cities have been assigned as capitals of respective countries almost at the same time, more or less with the same circumstances of local rivalry (except Helsinki) and feature generally similar urban elements in their planning processes. On the other hand, they experienced the change in use of main urban spaces due to various governing regimes' shifts, like Helsinki's shift from imperial to democratic spaces, Canberra's democracy-praising plan turned into war memorial, the main axis of Ankara designed as a promenade of the republic later had to mix with free economy's features and New Delhi's 'King's Way' nowadays hosts the parades of the republican army.

The *Pro Helsingfors* plan prepared by Eliel Saarinen and Bertel Jung (Fig. 2.1.1) in the spring of 1918⁶ marked the beginning of a new urban era for the newly independent Republic of Finland and its would-be-capital, Helsinki. The country had been part of the Kingdom of Sweden up to 1809, when it was annexed by Russian Empire as the autonomous Grand Principality of Finland. So was the urban fate of Helsinki, first a Royal Swedish coastal town with military balance purpose than an

⁶ Laura Kolbe, "Helsinki: from provincial to national centre," in *Planning twentieth century capital cities*, ed. David L. A. Gordon (New York: Routledge, 2006), 79.

Imperial Russian regional capital.⁷ In 1812, the Emperor appointed the city's first planning authority, Reconstruction Committee, headed by the military engineer Johan Albrecht Ehrenström. During this centrally planned period, the city received an imperial neoclassical centre, designed by Carl Ludwig Engel, a trend that lasted until the administrative reform of 1875 which gave the planning control to the city council. But it was in the 1918 plan that the city had a remake with “continental planning ideas, modernistic monumentalism and traffic optimism.”⁸ Its main feature was an almost north-south axis, named *Kuningasavenue* (King’s Avenue) which connected the old railway station neighbourhood to the new one (Fig. 2.1.2) and symbolised Helsinki’s political role as a national centre. Moving away from monarchist connotation by renaming it as *Valtakunnankatu* (Nation Street), it formed an urban backbone for the city while shifting the weight from the old imperial centre. The plan was not fully implemented because of various administrative conflicts, but it had an immense influence over the development of the capital throughout the twentieth century.

In 1925 an answer was sought for the unsolved question for a modern city centre, with a new city plan competition, of which the winning project proposed a centre with “urban monumentalism and historical-classical dignity.”⁹ Still without concrete solution, it would be the competition held in 1923 for the design of the *Eduskuntatalo* (Parliament House) situated in the Töölö bay area, which was cut off from the sea by a railway embankment. The winning project of the team led by Johan Sigfrid Sirén, resulted in a “lonely stone castle with strong roots-like frontal stairs anchoring it to a rock outcrop.”¹⁰ The building completed in 1930, emerged as a new institutional and democratic symbol, away from the imperial past, of which representative was the Senate Square.

The Great Depression and subsequently the World War II interrupted all the urban developments in the city. After it, in 1949 the city's authority endorsed the preservation of the surrounding area of the *Eduskuntatalo* and the main train station,

⁷ “A short history of Helsinki,” <http://www.helsinki.fi/en/index/kaupunkijaseutu/historyinbrief.html> (accessed April 25, 2010).

⁸ Laura Kolbe, “An Eastern or a Western capital city? The spirit of Helsinki,” *International Review of Sociology* 16, no. 2 (July 2006): 329.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 336.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*



Fig 2.1.1: *Pro Helsingfors* master-plan for Helsinki, by Eliel Saarinen and Bertel Jung, 1918.



Fig 2.1.2: Perspective drawing of *Kuningasavenue* (King's Avenue), from the *Pro Helsingfors* plan, 1918.



Fig 2.1.3: Helsinki Centrum plan model with *Finlandia Talo* at the centre by Alvar Aalto, 1964.

and in 1954 a district west of them was planned as the new administrative centre. In 1959, Alvar Aalto was commissioned the development of the city's centre plan, which he firstly presented in March 1961. The Töölö bay area was again the focus of the design, this time receiving a terraced profile, emphasized with socio-cultural buildings like opera, theatre, museum, etc. The project (Fig. 2.1.3) aimed at gathering up the crater-like cityscape around the bay, based on a triangular forum which “opened to embrace the whole country to the north”¹¹ and a series of monumental buildings including the Finnish Academy, the Museum of Finnish Architecture, a concert hall, an opera house or theatre, the main city library, the city museum, and a central art museum. Adverse circumstances, including budget reasons and increasingly vocal opposition to building in the park, and above all the 'cultural revolution' of the 1970s, delayed the implementation of the centre plan, which was accused of 'aesthetic elitism' by its radical critics. Aalto modified it in 1972, deleting the cultural buildings on the park shore, allocating a new plot near the Olympic Stadium to the opera house, etc. Although the plan was approved as a basis for further planning, only *Finlandia-talo* (Finlandia Hall) and *Säbkötalo* (Electricity House) were built.¹²

Since then, the urban policy of the city has been characterised by the preservation of a strong city centre by encouraging diversified cultural activities and limiting the expansion of office buildings, thus ensuring that the centre places to live and to use. Nevertheless, the question of the central zone of Töölö bay area seems to have remained unsolved. A Nordic planning competition with the aim of finding a comprehensive urban-artistic concept for it was held in 1985,¹³ without setting a permanent solution. The civic debate develops on whether or not the area is suitable for either, e.g., a republican forum for culture and ceremonies, a civic forum, a traffic node or a green area, meanwhile constructions are continuing slowly. On the other hand, emphasising the maritime character of the city has been another main goal of many waterfront projects which reclaim the old industrial areas for residential and

¹¹ Göran Schildt, *Alvar Aalto: the complete catalogue of architecture, design, and art*, trans. Timothy Binham (New York: Rizzoli, 1994), 33.

¹² Ibid., 34.

¹³ Mia Hipeli, “Plans for Helsinki city centre by Alvar Aalto,” in *II Paper Session* (presented at the UNIVERSAL versus INDIVIDUAL - The architecture of the 1960s, Jyväskylä, 2002).

recreational ones.¹⁴

The grandeur attributed to national capitals, in the case of Canberra derives not from pompous architectural complexes, as it can be expected, but from the immense impact the city's landscape have on it. The search for a special site to build the capital of the newly formed Commonwealth of Australia began in May 1901, with the 'Congress of Engineers, Architects, Surveyors and Others Interested in the Building of the Federal Capital of Australia', in which was emphasised the importance the landscape and specifically water bodies would have in the new capital's planning.¹⁵ The Royal Commission established for this purpose, acted on the following lines of the constitution:

The seat of Government of the Commonwealth shall be determined by the Parliament, and shall be within territory which shall have been granted to or acquired by the Commonwealth, and shall be vested in and belong to the Commonwealth, and shall be in the State of New South Wales, and be distant not less than one hundred miles from Sydney.¹⁶

After evaluating forty-five suggestions “from a scenic standpoint, with a view to securing picturesqueness, and with the object of beautification”¹⁷, the Yass-Canberra district, in the state of New South Wales was approved by the Senate on December 14, 1908,¹⁸ named as Australian Capital Territory. On April 30, 1911, an international competition was declared, which was boycotted by RIBA and also missed by many German designers, because of many technical restrictions.¹⁹ The winning design was of Walter Burley Griffin, while the second prize went to Eliel Saarinen and the third to Alfred Agache.

The Griffin's plan (Fig. 2.1.4) was designed as a cross-axial scheme, accurately responding to the site's physical features, namely its hilly terrain and watersheds. It employed pure geometrical lines to strategically articulate the site's potential – a Land

¹⁴ Kolbe, “An Eastern or a Western capital city? The spirit of Helsinki,” 341.

¹⁵ Christopher Vernon, “Canberra: Where Landscape is Pre-eminent,” in *Planning twentieth century capital cities*, ed. David L. A. Gordon (New York: Routledge, 2006), 130.

¹⁶ “Commonwealth of Australia - Constitution Act (Chapter VII, Section 125),” *Documenting Democracy*, <http://foundingdocs.gov.au/scan.asp?sID=1168> (accessed June 26, 2010).

¹⁷ Vernon, “Canberra: Where Landscape is Pre-eminent,” 133.

¹⁸ Sonne, *Representing the state: capital city planning in the early twentieth century*, 149.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 150.

Axis starting from the Mount Ainslie to Mount Bimberi, crossed by the Water Axis (Fig. 2.1.5), a basin formed by the damming of Molonglo River – all these overlapping with a triangle which represented the administration centre, the mercantile centre and the governmental one.

Nevertheless, a so-called Board Plan was prepared as a blend of most convenient features of all prized designs. Griffin's plan was the base of it, although a main change was introduced: instead of the Capitol at the centre of the city, the Houses of Parliament was placed, implemented only seventy years later.²⁰ Meanwhile, the cornerstone for the construction of the capital was laid on March 12, 1913, with the Commencement Column as a symbolic starting point. As the time's Commonwealth Attorney General would summarize the new capital's role: “The people are incapable of nourishing abstract ideals; they must have a symbol. Here we have a symbol of nationality.”²¹

A competition was launched on June 30, 1914 for the design of the Houses of Parliament, but it was delayed and relaunched twice until the dramatic campaign of World War put an end to it. The war was the first worldwide event that they participated as Australians and is recalled by many as the beginning of true Australian nationhood. Being such, representing this spirit in the national capital became a matter of pride and identity. So the Land Axis of Griffin, intended to be the hub of public life generated by theatres, museums and coronated with the casino and entertainment centre, was named ANZAC Parade, topped by a monumental Australian War Memorial designed by Emil L. Sodersteen, and on the other end across the lake the parliament building (Fig. 2.1.6). The memorial would be the only monumental building in the city, far from the original plan, which designed the capitol as the dominating structure.

Interrupted by the two wars, the process for the site selection and the design of the Parliament was so prolonged and intense that it caused even the dissolution of both houses of parliament in 1975, resulting in many protests from the citizens. Finally, a competition was launched in 1977, and the winning project of the New York

²⁰ Ibid., 181.

²¹ Ibid., 182.

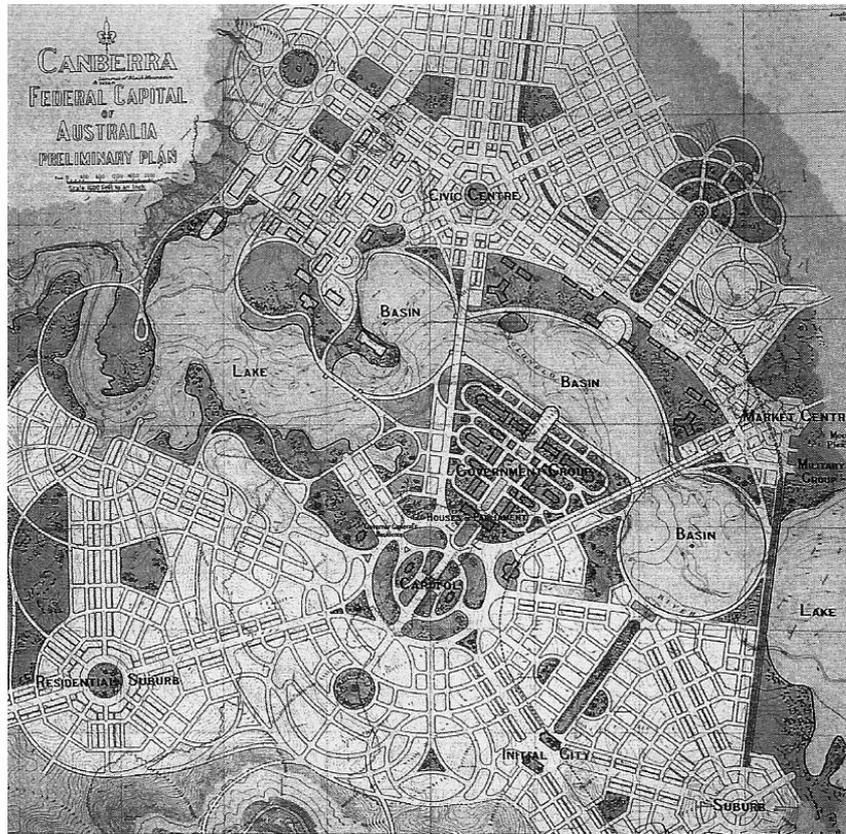


Fig 2.1.4: Preliminary general plan of Canberra by Walter Burley Griffin, 1913-14.

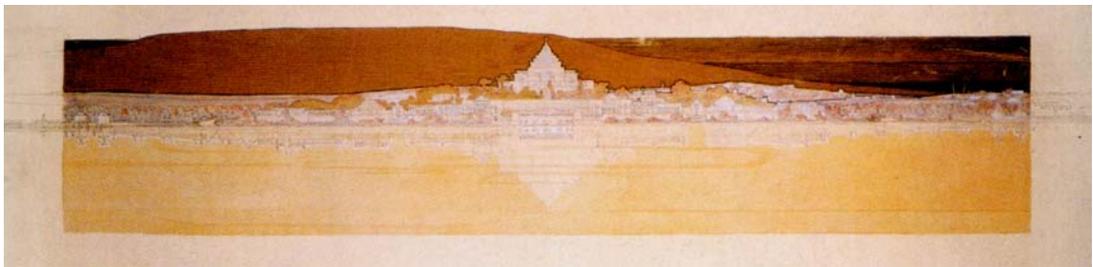


Fig 2.1.5: Perspective drawing of the government district of Canberra from the Water Axis by Walter Burley Griffin, 1912.

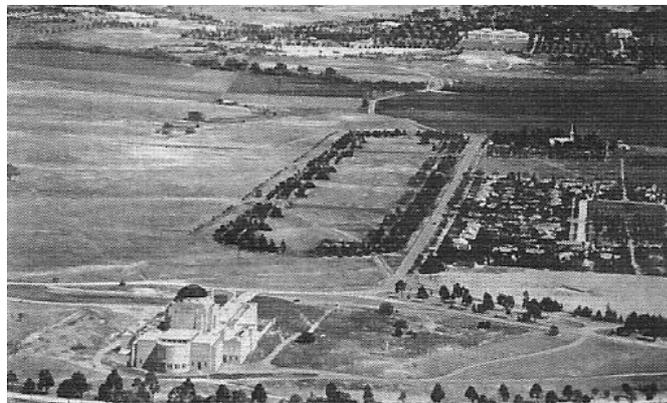


Fig 2.1.6: Land Axis with War Memorial and provisional Parliament House in Canberra, 1954.

based architectural firm of Mitchell/Giurgola was completed only in 1988, the year of Australia's bicentennial.²² The building tries to simulate the hill upon which it was supposed to lay, leaving space for the citizens to admire the Griffin's perspective under a huge pyramidal steel flagpole and at the same time achieved the requested functional security. In 2002, a project called 'Griffin's legacy' was launched to examine the relevance of the original design for the national capital with the recent developments and the conditions in the twenty-first century. The final report praised “the original plan's cultural significance and conclusively established its contemporary relevance, even enlarging its legacy through a series of urban design initiatives.”²³ Nevertheless, while the dream which gave way to the Griffin's plan about a world city of peace and monument to a vital democracy, the same layout ended in being used as a monument to the fallen and to a national identity forged by war legends.²⁴

The same World War I had a much more direct impact over the political, socio-cultural and also urban developments of the agonising Ottoman Empire, while laying the foundations for the Republic of Turkey. And it was during the following Independence War that Ankara, the future capital, grew of importance and became the centre of the coordination for the military and political operations.²⁵ Nevertheless, this status would gain its official form on October 13, 1923 by a special decree of the Grand National Assembly. This move represented the first official step towards the abandonment of the Caliphate and old imperial state practices. A new republican modernisation era was beginning and it was to be directed from a capital trying to be a development example to the country.²⁶ This was an important factor which led to the first planning attempts that tried to control the fast spread of the city.

In December 1923, *Keşfiyat ve İnşaat Türk Anonim Şirketi* (Turkish Estimating and Construction Ltd. Co.), an Istanbul based German company, of which planning responsible was Carl Christoph Lörcher, was commissioned to prepare a survey report

²² Lawrence J. Vale, *Architecture, power, and national identity*, 2nd ed. (London, New York: Routledge, 2008), 90.

²³ Vernon, “Canberra: Where Landscape is Pre-eminent,” 147.

²⁴ Robert Manne, “The war myth that made us,” *The Age* (Melbourne, April 25, 2007), sec. Opinion.

²⁵ İlhan Tekeli, “Ankara'nın başkentlik kararının ülkesel mekân organizasyonu ve toplumsal yapıya etkileri bakımından genel bir değerlendirme,” in *Ankara Ankara*, ed. Enis Batur (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1994), 147.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 148.



Fig 2.1.7: Plan of Carl Christoph Lörcher for the old part and the expansion of Ankara, 1924.

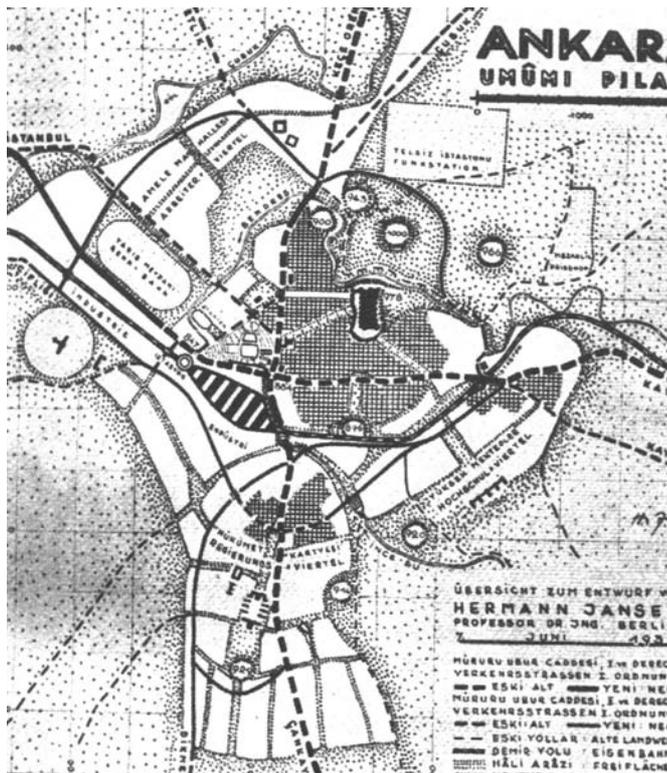


Fig 2.1.8: Hermann Jansen's plan for Ankara, 1932.

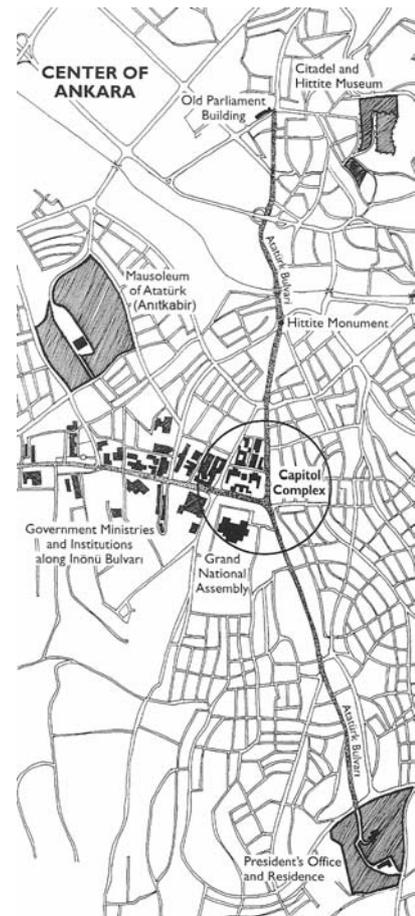


Fig 2.1.9: Scheme of the centre of Ankara today.

and a plan for the capital. The company delivered the study on May 30, 1924²⁷. The plan (Fig. 2.1.7) was developed over two separate approaches on two zones, the existing old city with the citadel, and the new one spreading to the south housing the administrative units in a monumental triangle. The plan for the old part of the city was not approved by the municipality authority, considered as inapplicable to the historical urban fabric, meanwhile the new city zone planning was accepted as an immediate solution to the spreading housing question.²⁸ It's connection axis between the two zones, called *Millet Caddesi* (People's Avenue), later would create the base layout further developed on the future plans. Nevertheless, this plan would be soon outdated by the urban developments, and thus the need for a new master plan emerged.

The quest began when in May 1927, a municipality delegation ended up inviting Hermann Jansen and Josef Brix from Berlin, and Léon Jaussely of Paris in a limited competition for the plan of the city.²⁹ The jury announced the project of H. Jansen as a winner on May 16, 1929, while the elaborated final plan (Fig. 2.1.8) was officially approved on July 7, 1932.³⁰ It emphasized the creation of neighbourhoods along the Garden City movement's principles, and on the other hand a governmental complex was placed along the city's main north-south axis in a symmetrical triangle sector pointing toward the old city's citadel. The axis, later named after the founder of the republic, Atatürk, goes on to reach the hills on the south of the city, where the Presidential Palace would be located, thus creating a core for the development of the city. The governmental complex and the presidential palace were designed by Clemens Holzmeister. Started on October 26, 1939 and inaugurated on January 6, 1961³¹ the campus of the Grand National Assembly occupies the most prominent place in the complex, backing all the government buildings, but due to later interventions it lost its grandiosity.³² However, the skyline of the city was to be dominated by *Anıtkabir*, the

²⁷ Ali Cengizkan, *Ankara'nın ilk planı: 1924-25 Lörcher planı, kentsel mekan özellikleri, 1932 Jansen Planı'na ve bugüne katkıları, etki ve kalıntıları* (Ankara: Ankara Enstitüsü Vakfı -Arkadaş Yayınları, 2004), 153.

²⁸ Gönül Tankut, *Bir başkent'in imarı: Ankara, 1929-1939* (İstanbul: Anahtar Kitaplar Yayınevi, 1993), 54.

²⁹ Ibid., 66.

³⁰ Ibid., 91.

³¹ Ömer Ekşi, ed., *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Tanıtım Kataloğu* (TBMM Basın ve Halkla İlişkiler Müdürlüğü, 2008), 71.

³² Ali Cengizkan, "Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi ve bakanlıklar," in *Ankara Ankara*, ed. Enis Batur (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1994), 217.

mausoleum of Atatürk, which was built in 1955 upon one of the highest hills of the city. It was the result of an international design competition held in 1942 and won by Orhan Arda and Emin Onat's monumental proposal, which was later to turn into the symbol of the capital and the republic as well.

During the early fifties, because of an uncontrolled demographic growth the city limits were expanded by illegal housing constructions, thus the Jansen plan began to lose its coherence and in 1955 a new plan was prepared by Nihat Yücel and Raşit Uybadın. During this period the centre of the city gradually shifted to the south along the Atatürk Boulevard, which was widened in 1958. On the other hand, the city due to the more liberalisation economic politics began to develop further and at the same time expand rapidly. New quarters and principal streets emerged (Fig. 2.1.9), slightly diminishing the importance and symbolic of the main axis. Nevertheless, as Vale points out “the architecture and urban design of Ankara represent a turning point in the development of a postcolonial capital consciousness”³³ being a reference point for the later international developments.

The aftermath of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 saw the end of the Mughal Empire and the reorganisation of the British possessions. The ruling powers were transferred to the British Crown and the Governor-General of India gained the new title Viceroy of India, whose residence was Calcutta (Kolkata). On December 12, 1911 during a visit to the provinces, King George V announced the creation of a new city in Delhi to house the seat of the Viceroy, thus transferring the capital and the administrative centre of India. Beside being a reminder of empire's continuing presence, this choice was seen as move to appease the colonized population, because of the deep historical resonances the city had for the Indian nation, and on the other hand a move to a more secure location for the central administration. At the time , as there were no clear signs of an Indian independence movement and the fractional nature of the population, the new capital was meant to be “a clear reminder of British hegemony, an architectural affirmation of the superiority of Western civilization.”³⁴

A Committee constituted to select the site, after examining several proposals,

³³ Vale, *Architecture, power, and national identity*, 120.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 104.

finally decided on Raisina Hill to be the location of the Viceroy's house (Fig. 2.1.10), because of the “sweeping panorama and the opportunities the hilltop provided of connecting vistas to other historical landmarks.”³⁵ The opening of a competition for the design of the Secretariat building was considered in September 1912 by the Viceroy, but it was prevented by Edwin Landseer Lutyens, an architect part of the committee who had managed to get promises about the contracts for these buildings.³⁶ He and his friend Herbert Baker were officially commissioned by the Viceroy on May 8, 1913 as “principal architects and general architectural advisers in connection with the new capital.”³⁷ Sooner, the work for the definitive plan (Fig. 2.1.11) had begun, following the advices of the king's private secretary, Lord Stamfordham who communicated George V's view that:

...the building to house the British viceroy must be 'conspicuous and commanding,' not dominated by the structures of past empires or by features of the natural landscape: 'We must now let [the Indian] see for the first time,' he declared, 'the power of Western science, art, and civilization.'³⁸

Lutyens designed the Government House upon the Raisina Hill featuring a dome that rose above the rest of the city. As both the architects cited the Athenian Acropolis and the Roman Capitol as major inspirations, Baker designed the Secretariats as a kind of propyleum to the Viceroy's House of Lutyens, which they both considered as the Parthenon of the city. The citizen would reach the wide steps, portico, and dome of Government House along the King's Way. The crossing of the Queen's Way and the King's Way was marked by four large edifices containing the Oriental Institute, National Museum, National Library, and Imperial Record Office. However, this promenade effect was minimised by a design error that caused the gradual disappearance of Government House from view by an inverse slope. Although the Viceroy House was to be the most eminent structure of the promenade and the sign of the mighty British Empire, its diminished role seems to fit the later developments.

Because the construction of the new capital was a task of great magnitude, a

³⁵ Suroo D. Joardar, “New Delhi: Imperial capital to capital of the world's largest democracy,” in *Planning twentieth century capital cities*, ed. David L. A. Gordon (New York: Routledge, 2006), 184.

³⁶ Sonne, *Representing the state: capital city planning in the early twentieth century*, 204.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Vale, *Architecture, power, and national identity*, 106.

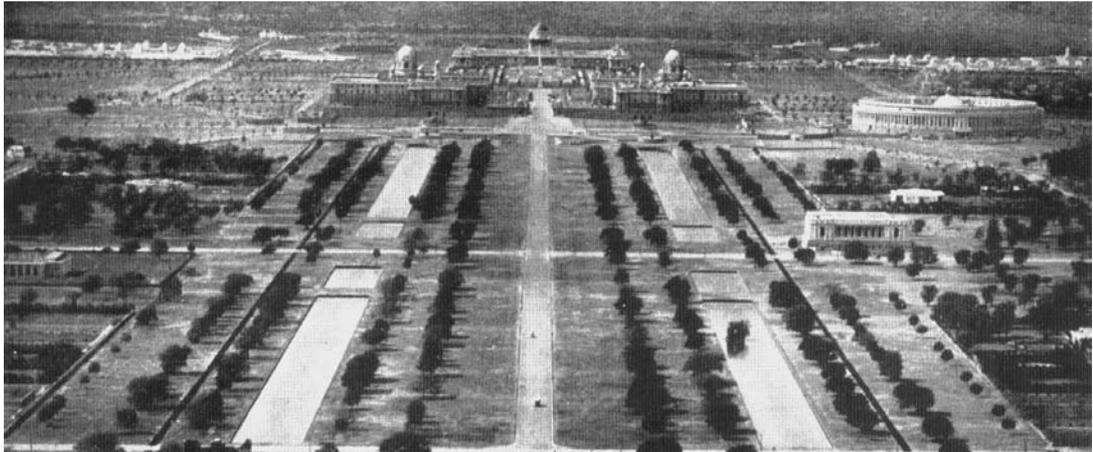


Fig 2.1.10: Delhi, the Viceroy's House, by Edwin Landseer Lutyens and the Secretariats, by Herbert Baker, 1931.

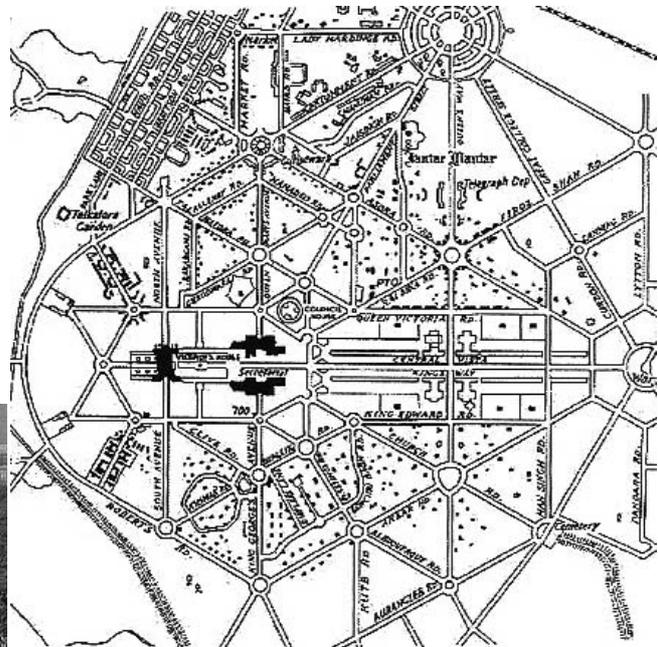


Fig 2.1.11: Plan of New Delhi by Edwin Landseer Lutyens (in black, left the Viceroy House, centre the secretariats) 1912.

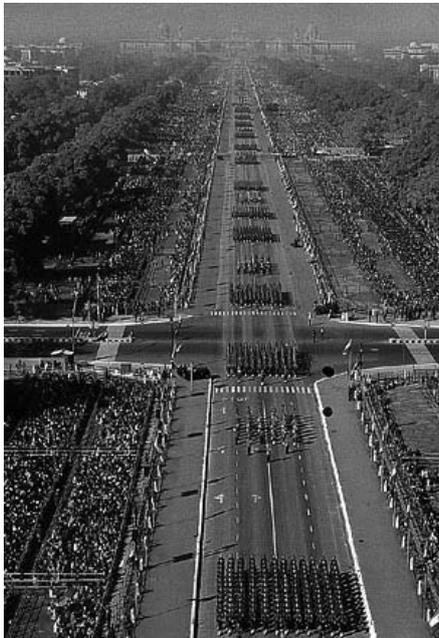


Fig 2.1.12: Once the King's Way, now the boulevard serves for celebrations on Republic Day.

central authority named Imperial Delhi Committee was set up on March 25, 1913, which later would become the New Delhi Municipal Committee. However, with the beginning of the World War I, the decreasing of allocated funds brought causing delays on the implementation of the design. On the other hand, designed by Lutyens after the war, the All India War Memorial was erected on the King's Way to commemorate the 90,000 fallen of the British Indian Army during several campaigns.

The new capital was officially inaugurated on February 15, 1931 with a consecration from the Anglican Church of Redemption.³⁹ Its layout was made of a central axis surrounded by five types of hexagonal areas. These were zones of ethnic and occupational separation which were developed carefully not to intervene into the political centre of the city. On the other hand, the city was designed not an exclusively British rule site, but on assumption of eventual Anglo – Indian joint administration.⁴⁰

With the proclamation of independence in 1947, New Delhi became the capital of a new reality. New symbolic status, uses (Fig. 2.1.12) and a variety of new national institutions came together with a rapid increase of government bureaucracy, a mass of refugees caused by the partition of India and Pakistan, and increasing commercial activity. These factors changed the face and the meaning of the city's layout. Nevertheless, its centre, with broad avenues surrounded by vast buildings and greenery layout, still carries on reminiscences of the imperial era, standing out from the rest of the developing fabric of the city. Despite the government regime being a democratic one, the urban layout of the city's centre continues to display the traces of its long imperial past.

2.2. Albanian national awakening since the mid-19th century

The wave of national awakening movements that had swept across Europe, arrived to the Balkans quite late, as in the case of Bulgaria's Renaissance and the Greek Revolution in the 1820's or the Croatian national revival (1835 – 1849), mainly because

³⁹ Sonne, *Representing the state: capital city planning in the early twentieth century*, 207.

⁴⁰ Vale, *Architecture, power, and national identity*, 111.

of the control of two main empires, the Ottoman and the Austro – Hungarian, over a variety of ethnic and cultural groups. On the other hand, the rising of the identity politics inside these empires, like the Hungarian nationalism or Ottomanism, also played an important role in suppressing these movements. At the time, “the image of the 'Turkish yoke' had become fixed in the nationalist mythologies and psyches of the empire's Balkan peoples, and their struggle for independence quickened.”⁴¹ The Albanian National movement, mainly because of internal social and religious divisions (mostly externally fuelled), was the last to crystallize, triggered by the fears that the Ottoman Empire would lose its Albanian-populated lands to the emerging Balkan states – Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, and Greece. Since the 1840's until the proclamation of independence in 1912, the struggle to establish a nation state and thus, its capital, was at the centre of the visions laid by the intelligentsia and the patriots. Its importance increases by the fact that it would be the first time in history that Albanians across their land would have a single centre.

The 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War gave a powerful blow to the Ottoman power in its European lands, leaving the empire weakened, holding only what was left from Macedonia and the Albanian-populated lands. The first post-war treaty, the abortive Treaty of San Stefano, assigned Albanian-populated lands to Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria, who had already invaded much of them. Although Austria-Hungary and Britain blocked the arrangement because it would upset the European balance of power influence towards Russia, it was the first concrete sign of what the Great Powers⁴² could make of the lands inhabited by Albanians. Consequently, on June 10, 1878, about eighty delegates from the four Albanian-populated Ottoman *vilayets*⁴³ met in Prizren, Kosova. The delegates set up the Prizren League, under the direction of a central committee that had the power to impose taxes and raise an army. In July 1878,

⁴¹ Raymond E Zickel and Walter R Iwaskiw, eds., *Albania: a country study*, Area handbook series (Washington D.C: Library of Congress. Federal Research Division, 1994), 16.

⁴² Vesna Danilovic, *When the stakes are high: Deterrence and conflict among major powers* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002).
Vesna Danilovic, *When the stakes are high: Deterrence and conflict among major powers* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002).

⁴³ There were four Albanian-inhabited *vilayet* (province) in the Ottoman Empire: Shkodra, Kosova, Janina and Manastir. Their centres were respectively Shkodra, Shkup (Skopje), Janina (Ioannina) and Manastir (Bitola).

the league sent a memorandum to the Great Powers at the Congress of Berlin, demanding that all Albanian inhabited lands (Fig. 2.2.1) be united in a single *vilayet* with an Ottoman governor seated in Manastir (now Bitola), who would be advised by an Albanian committee elected by universal suffrage.⁴⁴

After ignoring the memorandum and proclaiming that there wasn't any Albanian nation,⁴⁵ the Congress of Berlin ceded to Montenegro the cities of Bar and Podgorica, areas of Guci and Plavë, and some other parts to Serbia. On the other hand, fearing also a possible loss of Epirus to Greece, the Albanians opposed the territorial losses by armed resistance efforts in Guci, Plavë, Shkodër, Prizren, Prevezë, and Janinë. In August 1878, the Congress of Berlin ordered a commission to trace a border between the Ottoman Empire and Montenegro, and Greece. The Great Powers expected the Ottomans to ensure that the Albanians would respect the new borders, ignoring that the sultan's military forces were too weak to enforce any settlement and that the Ottomans could only benefit by the Albanians' resistance. Thus, when the Ottoman army withdrew from areas awarded to Montenegro under the Treaty of Berlin, Albanian tribesmen simply took control. Their successful resistance to the treaty forced the Great Powers to alter the border, returning Gucia and Plavë to the Ottoman Empire and granting Montenegro another Albanian-populated coastal town, Ulqin. As this was again opposed with arms by the population, the Great Powers' fleet blockaded Ulqin by sea and forced the Ottoman authorities to crush the Albanian resistance on November 22, 1880.⁴⁶ In the aftermath, the *Sublime Porte* grew uneasy over the League's activities and hastened to take the necessary measures. In April 1881, a 10,000 men strong army led by Dervish Pasha captured Prizren after fierce clashes and later crushed the resistance at Ulqin. The League's leaders and their families were deported to Rhodes.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, during its short lifespan the Prizren League effectively brought the Albanian people's existence and their national interests in front of the Great Powers eyes and also succeeded in preserving much more Albanian-populated territory than would have been done without its resistance.

⁴⁴ Joseph Swire, *Albania: the rise of a kingdom*, The Eastern Europe Collection (New York: Arno Press & New York Times, 1971), 52.

⁴⁵ Constantin Anastasi Chekrezi, *Albania past and present* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1919), 50.

⁴⁶ Swire, *Albania: the rise of a kingdom*, 56.

⁴⁷ Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: a modern history* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), 41.

The main legacy of the League consisted in awakening the national spirit among the Albanians, and in the effort to rally the various religious groups around the ideal of an independent Albania, stressing upon a secular nationalist movement. Whereas, being divided into four *vilayets*, Albanians lacked a single geographical or political centre and had only their spoken language as a uniting factor. At the time relying in the Latin, Cyrillic, and Arabic scripts, a standard literary form and a standard alphabet were far from developed, while there were no Albanian-language schools even in the most developed centres up to 1878, where schools conducted classes either in Turkish or in Greek.⁴⁸ In 1886, beyond the official ban of upon the teaching of the Albanian language, the patriarch of Constantinople threatened with excommunication anyone found reading or writing Albanian.⁴⁹ These conditions urged the Albanian intellectuals to focus on devising a single, standard Albanian literary language and demanding its use in schools. In 1879, *Shoqëri e të shtypuri shkronja shqip* (Society for the Printing of Albanian Writings) was founded in Constantinople with members from all religious groups to promote and develop the spreading of the written Albanian language.

After the military reforms aimed at reviving the troubled Empire, Sultan Abdül Hamid II still continued repression to maintain order. He refused Albanian demands for unification of the four Albanian-populated *vilayets*, which at the same time would give them the first political centre after centuries, uprisings begun through Albanian lands. The imperial forces ruthlessly crushed them, executed the leaders and once again banned Albanian – language books and correspondence. By the time, emerging opposition groups in the Ottoman Empire proposed restoring a constitutional government even by revolution if necessary. In July 1908, after a Young Turk rebellion Sultan Abdül Hamid II agreed to their demands and restored the constitutional rule. For the Albanians the Young Turks' uprising meant hope for autonomy within the empire, so it had a large support amid the Albanian lands. Suddenly the ban on Albanian language schools and writing was lifted and in November 14, a congress gathered in Manastir (now Bitola) chose the Latin alphabet as a standard script.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Ibid., 45.

⁴⁹ Swire, *Albania: the rise of a kingdom*, 64.

⁵⁰ Vickers, *The Albanians: a modern history*, 55.



Fig 2.2.1: Map of four Albanian inhabited *vilayets* of Ottoman Empire before the Balkan wars.

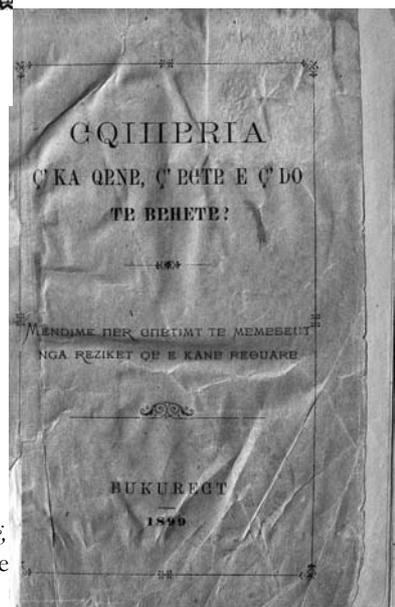


Fig 2.2.2: Cover of the first edition of “*Shqipëria - Ç'ka qenë, ç'është e ç'do të bëhet?*” of Sami Frashëri, a guide-like book for the national movement for independence.

However, after deposing Abdül Hamid II in April 1909, the Young Turks outlawed race or political-based groups and societies by a decree in August of the same year, attempting to extend *Sublime Porte's* control over the Albanian inhabited lands.⁵¹ Refusing to submit to the new politics, Albanian uprisings began in Kosovo and the northern mountains in early April 1910 and lasted some three months until Ottoman forces suppressed them, outlawed Albanian organizations, disarmed entire regions, and closed down schools and publications.⁵² But uprisings of the mountain tribes continued to grow into widespread revolts, which the Porte – fearing also the possibility of war with the Balkan states - couldn't control by force. Thus, concessions on schools, military recruitment, and taxation were granted and the use of the Latin script for the Albanian language was sanctioned, but the union of the four Albanian-inhabited *vilayets* into an autonomous unit was denied.⁵³

Seeing the continuation of suppression policies from the *Sublime Porte*, Albanian uprising begun in Kosovë and by May 1912, Shkup (Skopje), the centre of the *vilayet*, was in their hands.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, with the start of the First Balkan War on October 8, 1912 many Albanian lands, considered by the Balkan League as Ottoman possessions were invaded by them. This forced the Albanian leaders to quicken their efforts for an independent nation-state. After several visits of a delegation in the main capitals of Europe to ensure their support, eighty-three Muslim and Christian leaders meeting in Vlorë in November 28, 1912 declared Albania an independent country and set up a provisional government.⁵⁵ The new independent state found itself almost totally invaded by the Balkan forces, and had to wait until the Conference of Ambassadors which opened in London in December resolved the major questions concerning the Albanians concluding with the Treaty of London of May 1913.⁵⁶ The Treaty established a constitutional monarchy under the protection of the Great

⁵¹ Swire, *Albania: the rise of a kingdom*, 98.

⁵² Owen Pearson, *Albania and King Zog: independence, republic and monarchy 1908-1939*, vol. 1, Albania in the twentieth century: a history (London, New York: The Centre for Albanian Studies & I.B. Tauris, 2004), 10.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1:20.

⁵⁴ Chekrezi, *Albania past and present*, 68.

⁵⁵ Swire, *Albania: the rise of a kingdom*, 137.

⁵⁶ James Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 510.

Powers, with an international police force to secure the control of the new neutral principality, which were to be governed by a foreign prince. Thus, the road to a sovereign state with its own centre and government began to be paved.

2.3. Time-line of events leading to the proclamation of Tirana as capital city

The centre of Albania in other word the general capital will be one of the cities located in the middle of Albania and where the Albanian language is spoken. Yet it would be even better that a new city be made in the middle of Albania in a healthy and beautiful place. This city, which we can call *Skënderbegas*, will be arranged in the most beautiful manner with wide and straight streets, with nice houses, with squares and everything necessary, and could be enlarged and grow in a short time because all the elite of Albania and the wise Albanians will need to get together and build their houses there. So this city will be free from the bad vices preserved that old cities have; and since its habitants will be gathered from all parts of Albania, the language spoken there will be a mixed one, so that it can be used as a general and literary language of all Albania. This city including some nearby regions will be governed as an autonomous region.⁵⁷

Vlora, although provisionally, became *de facto* the first capital of the new state of Albania. After the Treaty of London, an International Commission of Control was created to draw up a constitution upon investigation on local conditions. They were advised by Ismail Qemali - the head of the provisional government to choose Elbasan as the new capital due to its central geographical position and its nearest-to-literary dialect of Albanian language.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, this proposal was refused as the provisional government was not recognised by the Powers, and the commission chose Shkodër as its seat. In November 1913, Prince W. F. Heinrich of Wied (Fig. 2.3.1) was officially assigned to the throne of Principality of Albania and was offered the crown on February 21, 1914.⁵⁹ He established Durrës, instead of Shkodër, as the capital

⁵⁷ Sami Frashëri, *Shqipëria - ç'ka qenë, ç'është e ç'do të bëhet* (Bucharest: s.n., 1899), 69.

⁵⁸ Vickers, *The Albanians: a modern history*, 78.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

of his state, landing there on March 7. This choice aroused much concern in north and south of the country, where Shkodër and Vlorë respectively were more favoured and on the other hand was seen as a manoeuvre of Esat Pashë Toptani - a largely influential landowner of whom Durrës was the stronghold.⁶⁰ But internal revolts, the abandonment from the Great Powers and the brink of World War I, which had started in the Balkans, forced Prince Wied to leave the country on September 3, 1914, to never come back.⁶¹

During the years of the war Albanian territories were once again occupied by many armies – Britain, Italy and France in Shkodër, Serbia in the east down to the Shkumbin river, Greece almost of the south and south-east plain with the excuse of defending the Greek minority living there. France had also occupied several parts of the south, while in the rest of the country Italy caught the occasion to fulfil the unilateral protectorate declared in 1917. Its government patronaged a provisional government seated in Durrës, but with almost no authority over its compatriots because of this involvement. Struggling to preserve territorial integrity, the country failed to organise an effective government and its capital. The end of the war found Albania mainly under the governance of Italian and some French forces. As victorious they sought the implementation of the Secret Treaty of London (April 26, 1915), which outlined the formation of a smaller state of Albania under the protectorate of Italy, which had the right of conducting the foreign relations of the new state.

In the light of all these developments, leaders and tribe chiefs gathered in Lushnjë in late January 1920 in a congress to discuss the fate of national governance. They rejected any kind of protectorate and vowed to fight for full sovereignty. Reluctant to recall Prince Wied due to the outcome of the war, they constructed a High Council of Regency, made of representatives of all the religious communities.⁶² A National Legislative Assembly would be called and an active government, under Sulejman Delvina, was elected in the final day, January 31. After that, the irregular troops of respective chiefs made way for the government move to Tirana. The main

⁶⁰ Pearson, *Albania and King Zog: independence, republic and monarchy 1908-1939*, 1:56.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1:79.

⁶² Bernd Jürgen Fischer, *King Zog and the struggle for stability in Albania*, East European Monographs 159 (New York: Boulder, 1984), 19.

part of these troops was made of tribesman of Ahmet Zogolli, a twenty-five year old chief who was selected as minister of the interior.⁶³

The government's move to Tirana was made due to its location away from the areas threaten by the occupiers, but at the other side it had to be none of the centres under the influence of any tribe chiefs, to avoid conflicts of interests. Thus, Tirana being an unimportant settlement of several thousand habitants was proclaimed as the provisional capital of Albania in February 11, 1920.⁶⁴

It was a small city, founded around the first quarter of XVII century by Sulejman Pashë Bargjini, a local landowner serving also as military officer in the Ottoman army.⁶⁵ Located in a crossroads of various caravan routes, the first settlement nucleus, erected with the function of a *külliye*, consisted of some houses, a mosque, a *hamam* and a bakery, while remains of an old fortress (Fig. 2.3.2; 2.3.3) were repaired and used for security reasons.⁶⁶ During his travels described in the famous book '*Seyâhatnâme*', Evliya Çelebi saw Tirana "situated on a broad plain and has mosques, hans, bathhouses, bazaars, vineyards and gardens. All the public buildings have fully tiled roofs and are splendid structures."⁶⁷ The first century of the city passed among quarrels and battles between local tribe chiefs and also military expeditions from the Sublime Porte. In May 1820, Haxhi Et'hem Bey after several armed struggles managed to get the administration of the city, marking this achievement with the construction of a mosque named after himself,⁶⁸ which would become later one of the symbols of the city. Some twenty years later, the famous English artist and traveller Edward Lear described the situation of the town (Fig. 2.3.4) as follows:

⁶³ Pearson, *Albania and King Zog: independence, republic and monarchy 1908-1939*, 1:39.

⁶⁴ Muin Çami, "Tirana kryeqytet - peng i intrigës dhe i politikës (1920 - 1925)," *Studime historike*, no. 3 - 4 (2000): 191.

⁶⁵ Kristo Frashëri, "Tirana - A brief historic overview," in *Tirana, the challenge of urban development*, ed. Besnik Aliaj, Keida Lulo, and Genc Myftiu (Tiranë: Cetis, 2003), 139.

⁶⁶ Alban Laze, "1641 - 'Kulliye' e Tiranës: Fillea e një metropoli?," *Forum A+P*, no. 1 (January 2009): 56.

Of these structures only the Mosque, and the Turbe of Kapllan Pasha saw the beginning of the 20th century, with the mosque being demolished during the battle for the liberation of the city, in November 1944.

⁶⁷ Robert Elsie, "1662 | Evliya Chelebi: Seyahatname - a Journey through Northern Albania and Montenegro," *Texts and Documents of Albanian History*, <http://www.albanianhistory.net/texts16-18/AH1662.html> (accessed March 15, 2010).

⁶⁸ Frashëri, "Tirana - A brief historic overview," 151.



Fig 2.3.1: Prince Wilhelm F. Heinrich of Wied.



Fig 2.3.2: The outer wall of the remains of Toptani castle



Fig 2.3.3: Aerial view of the first nucleus of Tirana with the mosque of Sulejman Pashë Bargjini at lower left.



Fig 2.3.4: Painting of Edward Lear showing the centre of Tirana in 1850.

Wavy lines of olive - dark clumps of plane, and spirally cypresses marked the place of Tyrana when the valley had fully expanded into a pianura, and the usual supply of white minarets lit up the beautiful tract of foliage with the wonted deceptive fascination of these towns. As I advanced to the suburbs, I observed two or three mosques most highly ornamented, and from a brilliancy of colour and elegance of form, by far the most attractive of any public building I had yet beheld in these wild places; but though it was getting dark when I entered the town (whose streets, broader than those of Elbassán, were only raftered and matted half way across), it was at once easy to perceive that Tyrana was as wretched and disgusting as its fellow city, save only that it excelled in religious architecture and spacious market places.

...In no part of Albania are there such beautiful mosques, and nowhere are collected so many green-vested dervishes...

The immediate neighbourhood of Tyrana is delightful. Once outside the town and you enjoy the most charming scenes of quiet, among splendid planes, and the clearest of streams.⁶⁹

Regarding the social and economic structure of the city, the inhabitants lived, worked and carried on almost all their daily life within the same urban quarter. These compact quarters were basically created upon ethnic and religious affiliation, and were almost self-sufficient communities with which the individual identified, thus physical and social space, were almost identical. These neighbourhoods had the exact convenient human scale and types of social networks in which the inhabitant could find a uniquely individual space.

On the eve of the proclamation of independence, Tirana was said to have approximately 15000 inhabitants.⁷⁰ During the World War I, as did also the rest of Albania, it became theatre of many military operations firstly by Serbian, then by Austro-Hungarian forces. Although not a central stage of national movement developments, the town had certain advantages that favoured its choice as residence of the government, then as capital. The other main centres of the country were located mainly near the frontier, thus presenting security concerns. On the other hand, Tirana was almost out of any local regional and cultural influences, unlike Shkodra for the

⁶⁹ Edward Lear, *Journals of a landscape painter in Albania, &c.* (London: Richard Bentley, 1851), 100.

⁷⁰ Frashëri, "Tirana - A brief historic overview," 157.

northern or Vlora for the southern parts of Albania. With later developments, this balanced position emerged as a cultural hinge between different regions of the country.

CHAPTER III

THE MONARCHY AND WORLD WAR II PERIOD

3.1. The first plan of the city

The proclamation of Tirana as the future capital of the country was of immense importance for its urban development. Previously, it was only a “lesser known provincial centre, where local vernacular and the Ottoman influence mingled in a hybrid, Balkan-oriental architecture and urbanism”.⁷¹ It was a settlement of nearly 304 ha (98.2% of which was residential area) and a population of some 11000 inhabitants.⁷² The city and its infrastructure were almost incapable of fulfilling the needs of a capital. There was no suitable building to house the government's administrative units, so they were allocated at some of the best fitted villas of the city. There was also lack of housing for the new officials, foreign embassies and extreme deficiencies in electric supply, sewerage, etc., too.⁷³

Until that time, the only technical documents about the city's urban state were some situation plans of various scales prepared by the Austro-Hungarian military geodesists in 1917, when Tirana had been the site of the headquarters of the occupying Austrian army.⁷⁴ Because of the poor technical, economic and also professional background in the field, only small urban interventions could be made. The immediate needs of constructions and public works were solved partially by local and foreign technicians and also by locally well-known masonry masters.

According to the period's press, a “city's regulation plan” was prepared in 1923, the authorship of which is disputed in several sources: sometime attributed to one of

⁷¹ Koço Miho, *Shqipëria: vështrim urbanistik, 1912-1944* (Tiranë: Extra, 2003), 138.

⁷² *Relacion i Planit Rregullues të Tiranës* (Tiranë: Instituti i Studimeve dhe Projektmeve nr. 1, 1989).

⁷³ Koço Miho, *Trajta të profilit urbanistik të qytetit të Tiranës* (Tiranë: 8 Nëntori, 1987), 118.

⁷⁴ Bruno Castiglioni, “Tirana - Appunti sulla capitale dell'Albania all'alba del nuovo regime,” *Bollettino della Reale Società Geografica Italiana* VI, no. 1 (January 1941): 11.

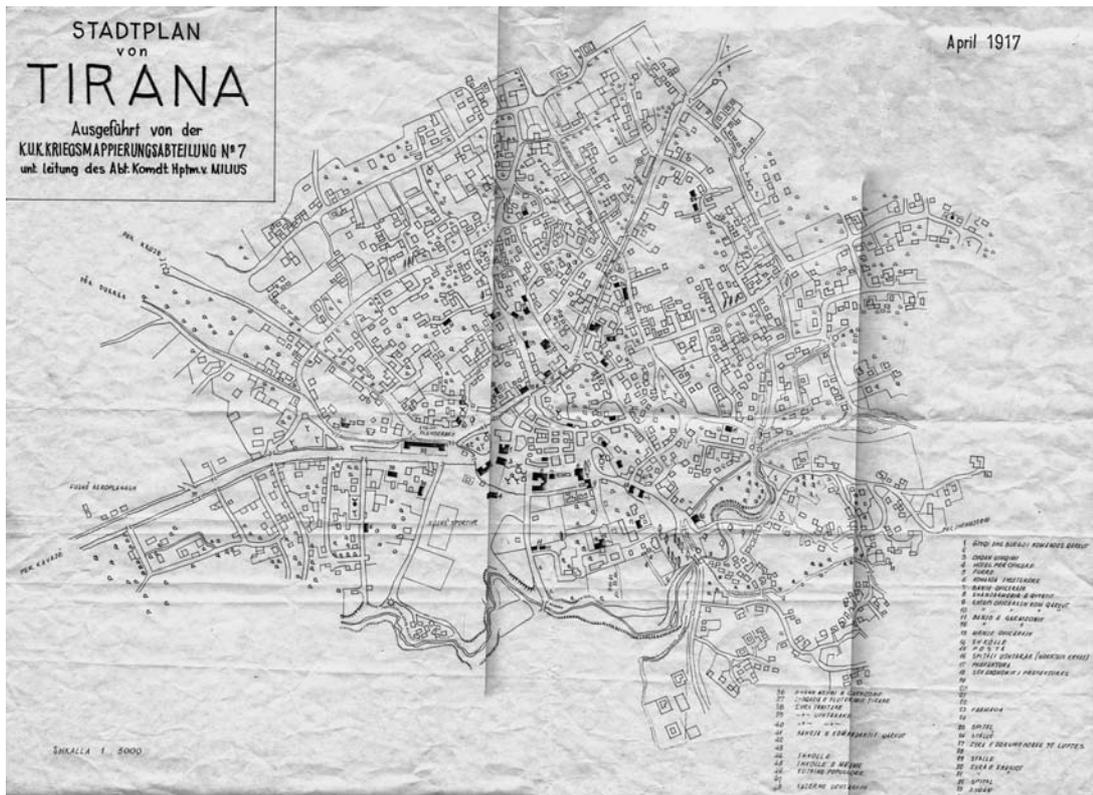


Fig 3.1.1: The earliest technical document of Tirana's urban development: plan of the city drafted by the Austro-Hungarian army in 1917.

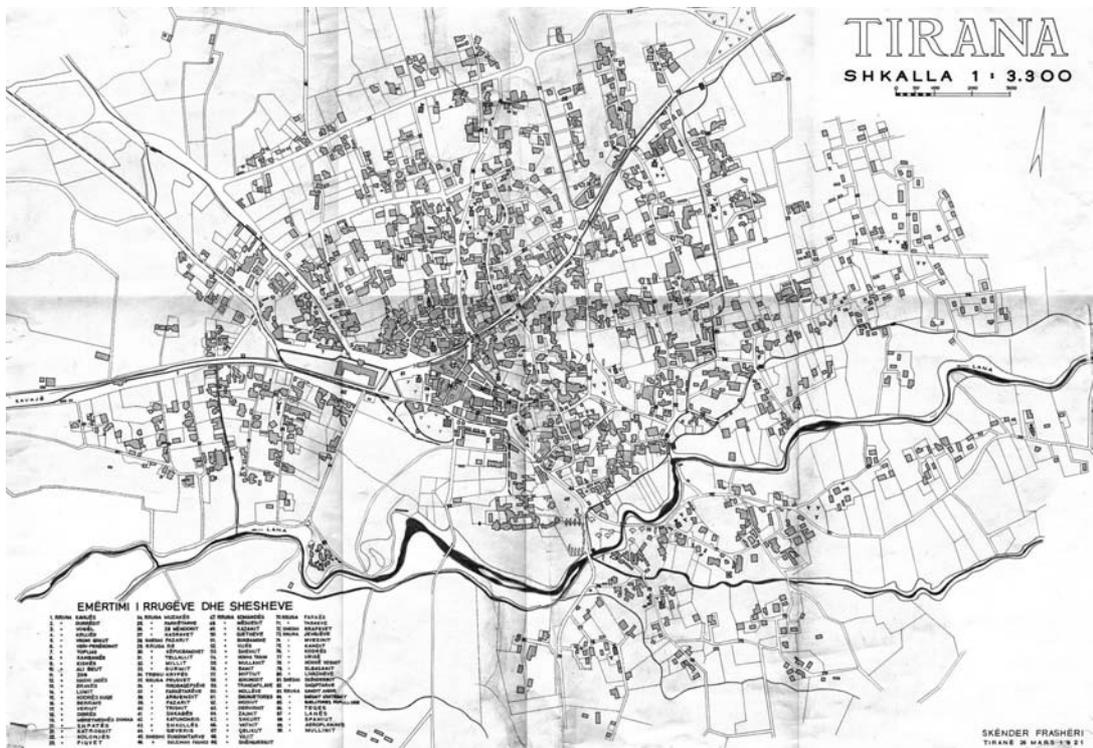


Fig 3.1.2: The situation of the city in 1921. Plan by Skënder Frashëri.

the prominent engineers, Eshref Frashëri,⁷⁵ or to a group of Austrian professionals.⁷⁶ This plan, because of not being a thoroughly detailed one, was not approved upon the request of the Public Works Ministry.⁷⁷ Its main objective was the improvement and adjustment of the existing street network and introduce a regular orthogonal layout (where possible even by partial demolitions of old neighbourhoods⁷⁸) and the accommodation of the ministries in a huge building, planned to be erected in the centre of the city.⁷⁹ But, the Bazaar (Fig. 3.1.3, 3.1.5) was still to remain centre of the city. Castiglioni gives an elaborated description of it:

The heart of the city is, as we saw, the Bazaar, that is a quarter sui generis, distinct from all others, little changed today compared to the descriptions we receive from the days of Turkish Tirana. It is a maze of streets and alleys, lined with small huts at the slightest expression, mostly with only ground floor, with the shop opening on the road with and the back room, when necessary used for storage or workshop.⁸⁰

Although it was not executed, the plan served as the base for several anonymous and partial studies, mainly concerning the opening and widening of the main radial streets of the town. (Fig. 3.1.6)

The first years of Tirana as a capital were characterized by intrigues and tribal warfare disguised in Western political garb. From 1920 to 1924, Albania endured as much as eleven prime ministers and respective governments, the longest of which was the one of Ahmet Zogu,⁸¹(the son of a Muslim chief of the Mat tribe, born Ahmet Zogolli, later changed his surname to Zogu as a token of his dedication to Westernisation⁸²) who had become at the time a central figure of Albanian politics. In June 1924, the rising popular discontent and the political discordances evolving into violence brought the so called June Revolution, which established a coalition

⁷⁵ Miho, *Shqipëria: vështrim urbanistik, 1912-1944*, 141.

⁷⁶ Besnik Aliaj, Keida Lulo, and Genc Myftiu, eds., *Tirana, the challenge of urban development* (Tiranë: Cetis, 2003), 28.

⁷⁷ Miho, *Shqipëria: vështrim urbanistik, 1912-1944*, 143.

⁷⁸ Fan Stilian Noli, *Rron or rron dhe nuk vdes shqiptari* (Tiranë: 8 Nëntori, 1976), 170.

⁷⁹ Miho, *Trajta të profilit urbanistik të qytetit të Tiranës*, 126.

⁸⁰ Castiglioni, "Tirana - Appunti sulla capitale dell'Albania all'alba del nuovo regime," 19.

⁸¹ "Chronology of the Prime Ministers of Albania," *Council of Ministers of Albania*, <http://www.keshilliministrave.al/?fq=brenda&r=&gj=gj2&kid=57> (accessed December 4, 2009).

⁸² Fischer, *King Zog and the struggle for stability in Albania*, 39.

For further information on Zogu, see Appendix

government. Although it started reforms, the government was too fragile because of the groups of interest which it was composed of. As the prime minister Fan S. Noli would describe his government's failures: "By insisting on agrarian reforms, I aroused the wrath of the landed aristocracy; by failing to carry them out I lost the support of the peasant masses. My government colleagues, and the majority of the army officers were either hostile or at best indifferent to these reforms".⁸³ At the end of the year, Zogu and his tribesmen crashed it using help from Yugoslav and White Russian armed forces, and after that purged all the oppositional elements. This opened his way to declare himself "dictator and commander-in-chief and to institute martial law until a regular government could be set up".⁸⁴ On January 31, 1925, the old Constituent Assembly was reconvened, obviously without many of those who had opposed and fought against Zogu. The four-member Regency was abolished, Ahmet Zogu was elected president of the newly declared Republic of Albania, and finally, Tirana was officially endorsed as the country's permanent capital.⁸⁵ This move gave him a sense of security, seeing that his loyal tribesmen from Mat were close at hand. It served also as a sign of iron hand on securing internal security, since no previous government succeeded on this because of the strong opposition from Shkodër and Vlora, which this time had fallen into disrepute due to their complicity in the June Revolution.

Despite the urban developments that took place since 1920, as described by Fischer the new capital was:

The new capital was actually little more than an enlarged Moslem village... ..and consisted primarily of a bazaar used for hanging offenders of the peace, four mosques, several barracks and a number of legations. Tirana gave the appearance of a gold rush town in the late 19th century American West, with its saloons, gambling casinos and ever present guns and gunbelts. A rickety Ford progressing slowly along the muddily unpaved unlit streets was the only sign of the twentieth century.

The buildings of the town were rather unostentatious. Most of them consisted of old shanties interspersed with an occasional small villa, belonging

⁸³ Jason Tomes, *King Zog of Albania: Europe's Self-Made Muslim King* (Washington Square, N.Y.: New York University Press, 2004), 70.

⁸⁴ Fischer, *King Zog and the struggle for stability in Albania*, 75.

⁸⁵ Çami, "Tirana kryeqytet - peng i intrigës dhe i politikës (1920 - 1925)," 198.

to some Moslem worthy, many of which were in such a state of disrepair as to give the visitor "the impression that the whole town had been recently under shell-fire." Two such unassuming buildings, dating back to Turkish times, became the presidential office building and Zogu's residence..⁸⁶

Several plans for various public buildings including a Parliament (Fig. 3.1.4) and a number of hotels concerning foreign visitors were prepared. However, construction progressed rather slowly, and in the meantime "Tirana remained a sleepy provincial city... ..offering little in the way of Western European cultural amenities. In an effort to give his capital a Western cultural air, Zogu founded a dramatic and choral society – the performances of which, however, proved an embarrassing ordeal for those unfortunate foreigners who could not find reasons to excuse themselves from attending".⁸⁷

With the establishment of the presidency, Zogu had finally provided himself a political structure he could control. The next step was the strengthening of the economy, on which he sought the help of Italy, which at the time was the most suitable power interested on investing in Albania. On the other hand, the fascist supporters of Mussolini were executing their program aimed at establishing a new Roman empire in the Mediterranean region since his coming in power in 1922. They saw Albania as a foothold in the Balkans, helped also by the decisions of the Ambassadors' Conference in November 1921, which had recognized that Italy had vital security interests to defend at the entrance to the Adriatic.⁸⁸ The Great Powers with the Treaty of London (April 1915) had also granted Italy among other concessions, "the right of conducting the foreign relations of Albania".⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Fischer, *King Zog and the struggle for stability in Albania*, 81.

⁸⁷ Vickers, *The Albanians: a modern history*, 121.

⁸⁸ Fischer, *King Zog and the struggle for stability in Albania*, 86.

⁸⁹ Frederick Seymour Cocks, ed., *The secret treaties and understandings: text of the available documents* (London: Union of Democratic Control, 1918), 37.

"Article 6.—Italy will receive in absolute property Valona, the island of Saseno and as much territory as would be required to secure their military safety—approximately between the River Vojuzza in the north and in the east, down to the borders of the Chimara district in the south.

"Article 7.—Having obtained ...also the Gulf of Valona, Italy undertakes, in the event of a small autonomous and neutralised State being formed in Albania, not to oppose the possible desire of France, Great Britain, and Russia to repartition the northern and southern districts of Albania between Montenegro, Serbia, and Greece. The southern coast of Albania, from the frontier of the Italian territory of Valona to Cape Stilos, is to be neutralised. To Italy will be conceded the right of conducting the foreign relations of Albania; in any case, Italy will be bound to secure for Albania a territory sufficiently extensive to enable its frontiers to join those of Greece and Serbia to the east of



Fig 3.1.3: Aerial view of the Old Bazaar. On the left, Karapici Mosque and on the right, the Clock Tower and the Et'hem Bey Mosque. At the bottom, the Parliament building.



Fig 3.1.4: The old building of the Parliament of Albania, now used as a children's theatre.



Fig 3.1.5: View of the Old Bazaar, Et'hem Bey Mosque and the Clock Tower which is pictured before the renovation works.

The Italian assistance for the Albanian economy began during the first half of 1925, when firstly “*Società per lo Sviluppo Economico dell’Albania*” - S.V.E.A. (Company for economic development of Albania) and after that the National Bank of Albania was established financed in major percentage by Italian banks and companies. Albanian government also awarded Italian shipping companies a monopoly on freight and passenger transport to and from Albania. S.V.E.A.'s fundamental task was to issue to the Albanian government a loan of 50 million Albanian gold francs, to be paid in stages, with a maturity up to 40 years. The loan was destined essentially for the construction of road and rail networks and ports, and for the reclamation and draining of the marshes.⁹⁰ But all in all the investments and on the other side the job vacancies that were created, commissions opened by these investments were primarily on the urbanisation of the main cities. As Roselli indicates, “under the heading of building expenses, a good 45 per cent of the total was spent on royal residences and ministerial palaces, and a further 30 per cent on military buildings.”⁹¹ The expenditure on royal residences is also an indication of the Fascists' desire to gain Zogu's sympathies. Another point of interest is the nationality of the companies who won the contracts for the works: 69.6 per cent of the total costs went on works carried out by Italian companies, 21.8 per cent on those by Albanian firms and 5.1 per cent on those by firms from other countries.⁹²

There were different perspectives about the urban future of the city during the mid 1920s, diverging mainly on the point whether the old city should be left intact as an exotic tourism focus or the new capital should revitalize the old nucleus besides developing on the empty fields south of it. The second alternative prevailed with the project prepared by the Italian architect Armando Brasini,⁹³ regarded also as the archetype of Italian colonial architects⁹⁴ and known in his home country for restoration of many administrative buildings in Rome and several urban plans for Italy’s African colonies. Invited at the end of 1925 by the government to develop a plan for the

⁹⁰ Alessandro Roselli, *Italy and Albania: financial relations in the Fascist period*, trans. Catherine Forner (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 33.

⁹¹ Ibid., 125.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ For a short biography of Armando Brasini see Appendix

⁹⁴ Vittorio Santoiani, “Il Razionalismo nelle colonie italiane 1928-1943. La "nuova architettura" delle Terre d’Oltremare” (Ph.D. Thesis, Università degli Studi di Napoli “Federico II”, 2008), 86.



Fig 3.1.6: View of the future *Skënderbej Square* area whose opening works can be seen in the lower left. In the centre the newly opened “*Nëna Mbretëreshë*” street (today known as Street of Durrës), to the right the *Karapici Mosque*, soon to be demolished to make place for the main boulevard.

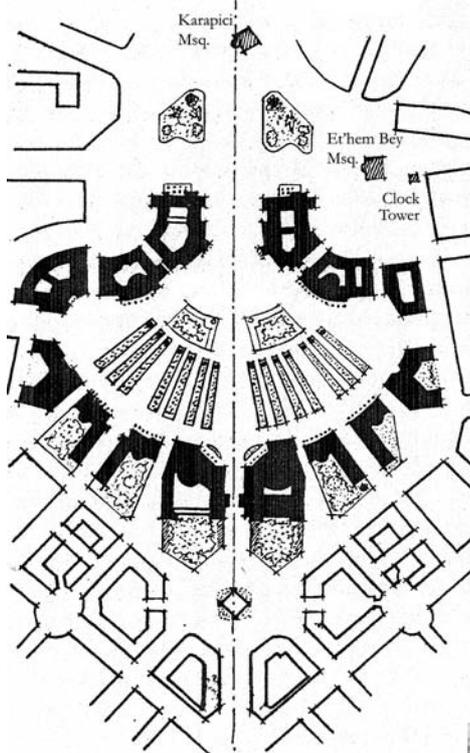


Fig 3.1.7: Plan of the first version of the project presented by Armando Brasini for the centre of Tirana, 1926.



Fig 3.1.8: Perspective drawing of the fan-shaped city centre - *Piazza dei Ministeri* - from the first version of the project presented by Armando Brasini, 1926.



Fig 3.1.9: Perspective drawing of the north-south boulevard from the second version of the project for the centre of Tirana presented by Armando Brasini, 1926. In the upper right corner the Presidential Palace and in the lower left one the square of the ministries.

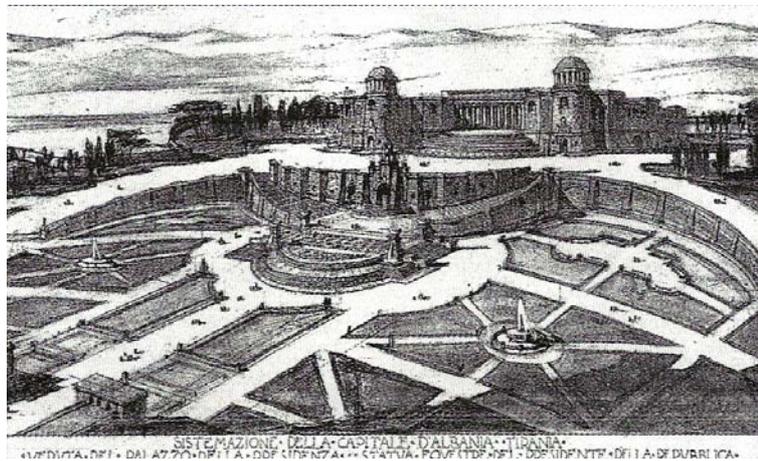


Fig 3.1.10: Perspective drawing of the Presidential Palace at the southern end of the north-south boulevard, with an equestrian statue of President Zogu in front of it.

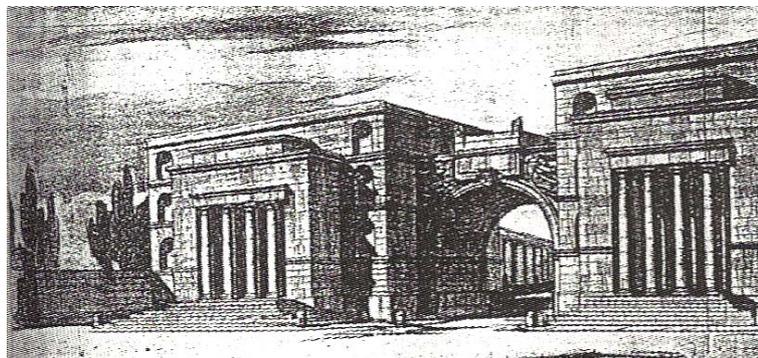


Fig 3.1.11: Perspective drawing of the entrance to the square of the ministries from the project for the centre of Tirana presented by Armando Brasini, 1926.

rearrangement of the city centre, he prepared different versions sharing almost the same principles. Their main element was a north-south boulevard, incorporating all the governmental and civic buildings, separating them from the existing old city. It would play the role of a hinge between the historic centre and the modern part of the city, for which the project did provide no precise information.

In the first version, the centre of the city was designed like a fan-shaped main square (Fig. 3.1.7; 3.1.8) surrounded by central administrative buildings which led way to two smaller plazas to the north and south. The northern plaza developed around the old Karapici Mosque, serving in this way as a connection to the old city, while the southern one served as a gate to the new one, facing the Presidential Palace at the end of the boulevard. The second version was again developed around the main boulevard concept, but this time the interconnected plazas were replaced by a single circular huge plaza, (Fig. 3.1.9) similar to Rome's Saint Peter and *Via della Conciliazione* project of Brasini.⁹⁵

Neither version of this plan was executed due to many reasons, like the handling of “huge volumes and vast areas, demolition of the picturesque character of the city by means of symmetrical and monotone lines”, as the period's local press indicates.⁹⁶ This kind of design elements were too expensive and at the same time not so familiar with the cultural background of the society. Nevertheless, this plan was the first of a series of projects aiming to create a new capital city of Roman and Neoclassical grandeur, (Fig. 3.1.10; 3.1.11) distinct from the old so called Oriental nucleus. The square, located at the beginning of the boulevard, would form the city's backbone and serve as a focus for the later partial studies and master plans of the city. New constructions began to spread more and more throughout the city, and a planned intervention was needed urgently. Because of this, a general road plan (Fig. 3.1.12) with a more detailed study of the centre seems to have been prepared by a work group of three engineers, E. Frashëri from Albania, Castellani from Italy and Weiss from Austria, probably with the collaboration of another well-known colonial architect,

⁹⁵ Mathew Alderman, “The Modern Baroque of Armando Brasini,” *New Liturgical Movement*, February 5, 2009, <http://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2009/02/modern-baroque-of-armando-brasini.html> (accessed January 8, 2010).

⁹⁶ “Katundi i math po bëhet qytet,” *Telegraf* (Tiranë, August 3, 1927), 2.

Florestano di Fausto.⁹⁷ The authorship of this project is not clear, as various sources claim different ones in different periods. Aliaj et. al. indicate the mentioned group as the author,⁹⁸ while the plans displayed show the scheme developed by di Fausto as proved by other Albanian⁹⁹ or Italian researchers.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, it is known that F. di Fausto had been visiting Tirana as a consultant of the Ministry of Public Works since late 1926,¹⁰¹ by intervention of the *Staccioli* contracting firm.¹⁰²

This was the plan where Brasini's idea of the main north – south axis was materialised. Although not a completed one, because it missed many parts of a master – plan, like street profiles, building heights, etc.,¹⁰³ apart the urban solution of the centre it gives also the first signs of the emerging east-west axis, by including the straightened course of Lana creek into the city's layout.

Despite the deficiencies, this plan was partially executed, because it was the more adequate choice for the financial conditions.¹⁰⁴ Instead of the vast areas designed by Brasini, it presented a more human scale for the main square, which would be called “*Skënderbej Square*” in honour of the national hero Gjergj Kastrioti Skënderbej and of whom an equestrian statue would adorn the centre of the square.¹⁰⁵ The square (Fig. 3.1.13) was designed in the shape of a “funnel” that gathers the traffic from the north part of the city by means of radial streets, and transmits it to the modern part of the city by means of the north – south axis. Using the main boulevard as an axis, it was a totally symmetrical space (if the preserved Et'hem Bey Mosque is not taken into account), be it in plan or elevations' composition. The plan which “displays an undeniable dignity in the well-calibrated articulation of the volumes of the buildings

⁹⁷ For a short biography of Florestano di Fausto see Appendix

⁹⁸ Aliaj, Lulo, and Myftiu, *Tirana, the challenge of urban development*, 32.

⁹⁹ Miho, *Shqipëria: vështrim urbanistik, 1912-1944*, 152.

¹⁰⁰ Maria Adriana Giusti, *Albania - architettura e città: 1925 - 1943* (Firenze: Maschietto, 2006).

¹⁰¹ Giorgio Rocco, “Originalità dell'architettura Italiana nel Dodecaneso,” in , ed. Giuseppe Strappa and Anna Bruna Menghini, vol. 4, Quaderni ICAR (presented at the Architettura Moderna Mediterranea, Bari: Mario Adda Editore, 2002), 68.

¹⁰² Giuseppe Miano, “Florestano di Fausto - from Rhodes to Libya,” in *Presence of Italy in the Architecture of the Islamic Mediterranean*, Environmental Design (Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre, 1990), 62.

¹⁰³ Miho, *Shqipëria: vështrim urbanistik, 1912-1944*, 154.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 153.

¹⁰⁵ For further information about Gj. K. Skënderbej see:

Noli, Fan Stylian. *George Castrioti Scanderbeg (1405-1468)*. New York, International Universities Press, 1947

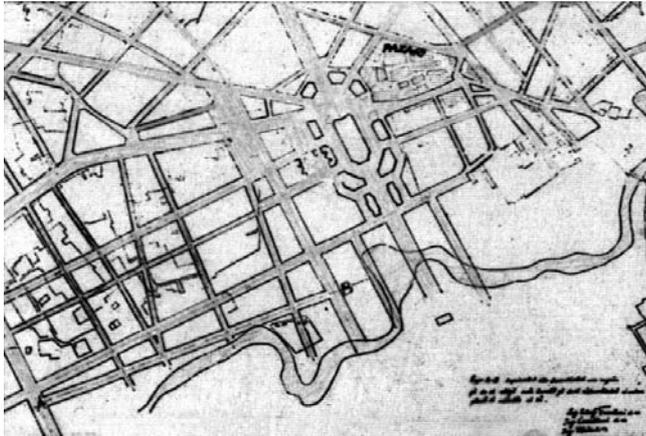


Fig 3.1.12: Part of the plan for the centre of Tirana by Frashëri, Castellani and Weiss, 1926.

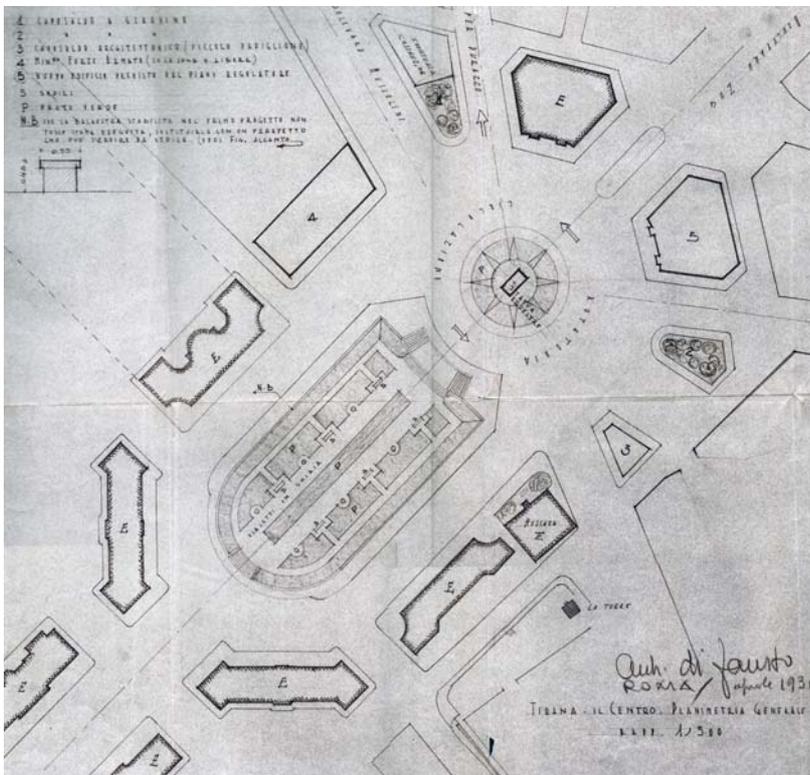


Fig 3.1.13: Detail of the plan for the centre of Tirana by Florestano di Fausto, showing the relationship between the ministerial blocks. The sheet is of the year 1936 when the square and the sunken garden took their final shape.



Fig 3.1.14: Perspective drawing of the Skënderbej Square by Florestano di Fausto, 1926-31

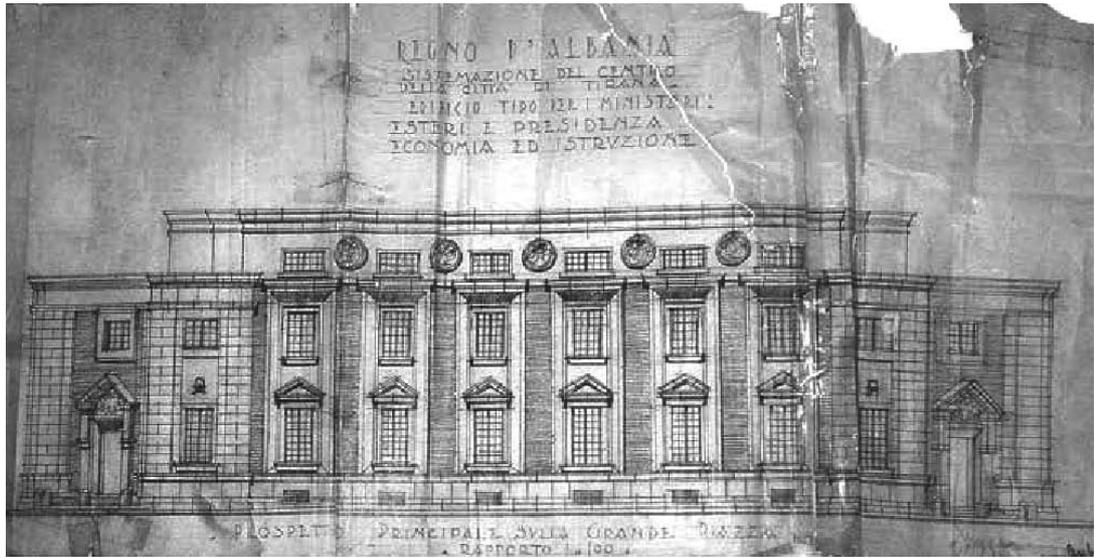


Fig 3.1.15: Proposal for the main façade of the ministerial buildings by Florestano di Fausto, 1926-31.

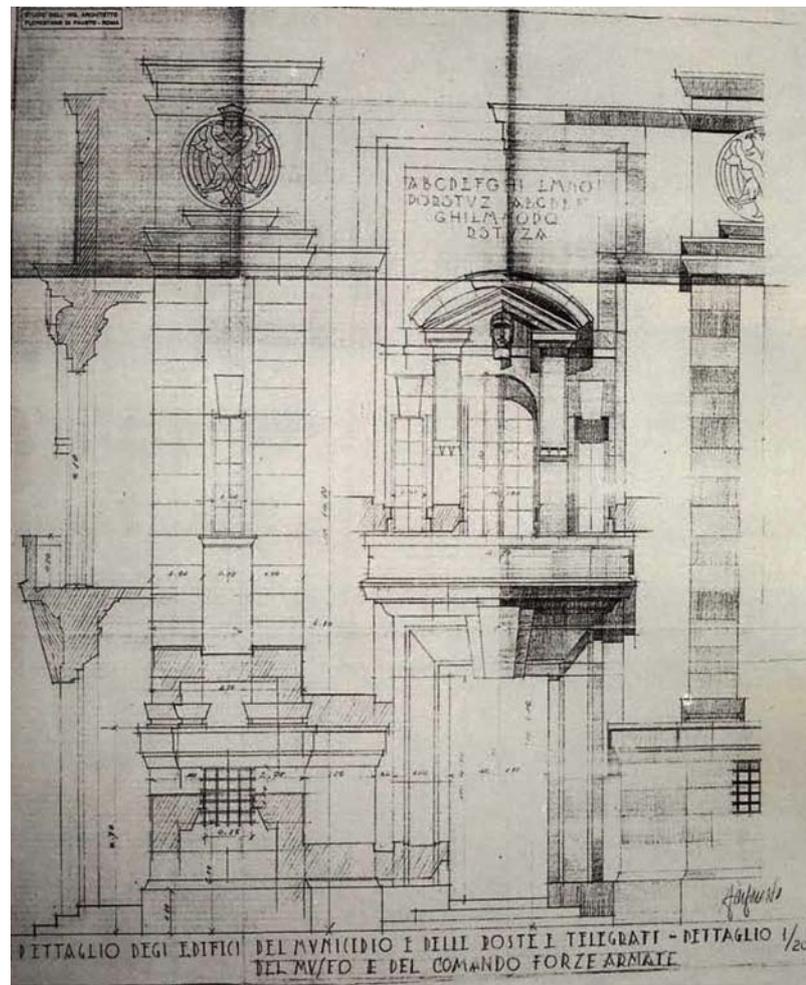


Fig 3.1.16: Façade detail of the project for the ministerial buildings by Florestano di Fausto. 1926-31

juxtaposed in an ample space”¹⁰⁶ can be compared to the rearrangement that di Fausto designed for the Arch of Marcus Aurelius in Tripoli, Libya.

Meanwhile, the volumes are simple demonstrations of Neoclassical influences (Fig. 3.1.14; 3.1.15),¹⁰⁷ much used at the government's buildings in Italy.¹⁰⁸ On both the sides of the “funnel” were placed the buildings of various ministries, while on the upper part, located at the crossings of the radial streets were placed the building of the municipality of Tirana, the building of the National Bank of Albania and the Central Post's building (the latter two were not built). The main boulevard entered the square from the empty areas south of it, split in two branches around a sunken garden which join each other again to exit the square as the northern part. The garden was sunk so that the buildings around it could be perceived higher than they were, and on design notes the architect prescribed planting wide-crown trees to achieve the maximum shadow possible without harming the effect over the buildings.¹⁰⁹ To build the northern part of the square and part of the boulevard it took the demolition of the Karapici Mosque (previously an important part of Brasini's plan, laying upon the central axis) and some 19th century *hans* and shops of the old Bazaar.¹¹⁰

As it can be seen, the first period of the capital's urban development is characterised by limited interventions which sought to create a new Western – fashioned centre, meanwhile the rest of the city kept growing without planning despite the very immediate need of it.

3.2. The approach of the monarchy and the foreign planners

Since the beginnings of Zogu's involvement in the political stage of Albania, “it soon became obvious to most of those around him that he was interested in more than just limited authority”.¹¹¹ His moves towards his goal were rather slow and cautious as

¹⁰⁶ Miano, “Florestano di Fausto - from Rhodes to Libya.”

¹⁰⁷ Aliaj, Lulo, and Myftiu, *Tirana, the challenge of urban development*, 40.

¹⁰⁸ Miho, *Shqipëria: vështrim urbanistik, 1912-1944*, 156.

¹⁰⁹ Artan Lame, “Lamtumirë, lulishtja ime!,” *Shqip* (Tiranë, April 26, 2010), sec. Shqipni Tavolinash.

¹¹⁰ Miho, *Shqipëria: vështrim urbanistik, 1912-1944*, 156.

¹¹¹ Fischer, *King Zog and the struggle for stability in Albania*, 128.

a result of prudence not to give Albanians the impression of a conservative working on his own interests, on the one hand and fear of the European powers' reaction on the other. These can be seen during the republican transition period in which despite of controlling most of the country's power, he preferred progressing in smooth but effective manners. Always concerned with superficial legality he managed to get the Parliament dissolve itself in favour of the election of a Constituent Assembly, which would in turn revise the constitution.¹¹² After securing the needed financial and political support from Italy, the silent approval of the other Great Powers and the manipulated will of many chiefs of the north tribes, the Assembly met on August 25, 1925.¹¹³ On September 1, it unanimously adopted the resolution of making Albania a hereditary monarchy and offered “the illustrious crown of the historical Albanian throne to the Saviour of the Nation under the title Zog I King of the Albanians”,¹¹⁴ referring in this way to the memory of Gj. K. Skënderbej on the one hand, and to the modernisation (the abandonment of the Turkic name) and a nationwide, rather than state referring title.¹¹⁵ The new constitution abolished the Senate creating a unicameral National Assembly, but King Zog retained the dictatorial powers he had enjoyed as President Zogu.

The price he admitted to pay for this support was the penetration of Italy on almost every field of economic, military and cultural development of Albania. The financial loans that Italians provided were crucial in keeping the king under political pressure. With the financial and logistical help from Italy, the king begun to accelerate the projects for a modern facelift of Tirana, a kind of investment which was fine for the Italians, since they didn't want the money they gave to be spent on the development of the economy, which would render Italy's role almost insignificant.¹¹⁶ Despite publicly state priorities, rather than building infrastructural projects, much needed by the growing population of the city, he went on building large governmental buildings and even planned to erect a royal palace on the outskirts of Tirana.¹¹⁷

¹¹² Ibid., 136.

¹¹³ Ibid., 140.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 141.

¹¹⁵ Vickers, *The Albanians: a modern history*, 124.

¹¹⁶ Roselli, *Italy and Albania: financial relations in the Fascist period*, 123.

¹¹⁷ Giusti, *Albania - architettura e città: 1925 - 1943*, 167.

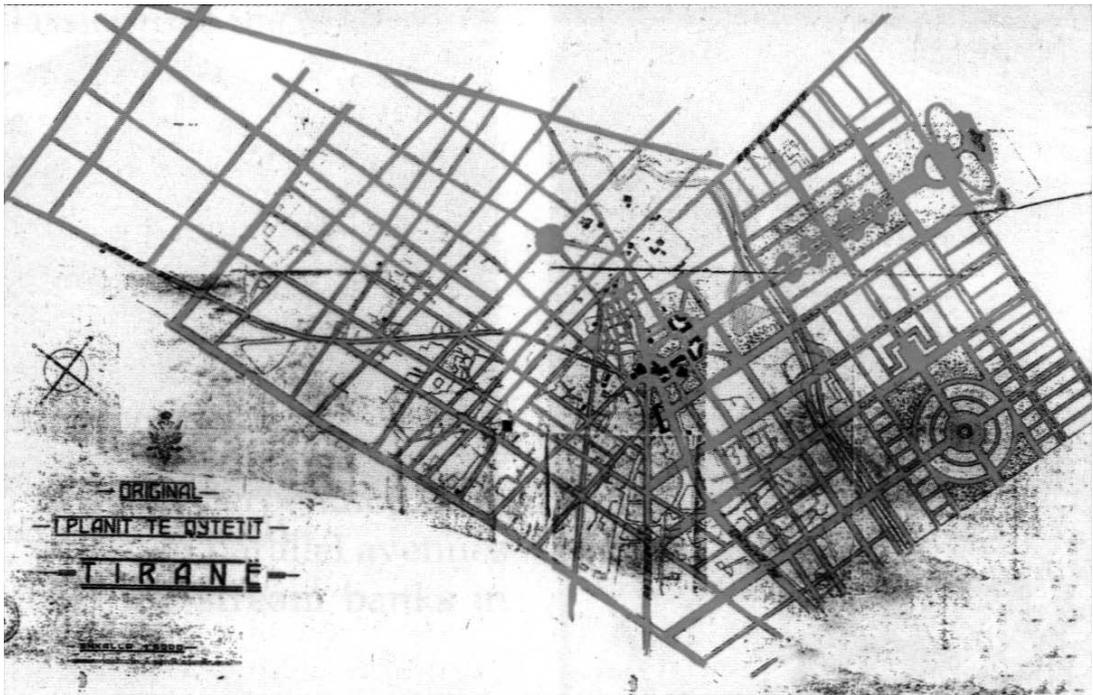


Fig 3.2.1: General plan for the city of Tirana by Köhler, 1929.

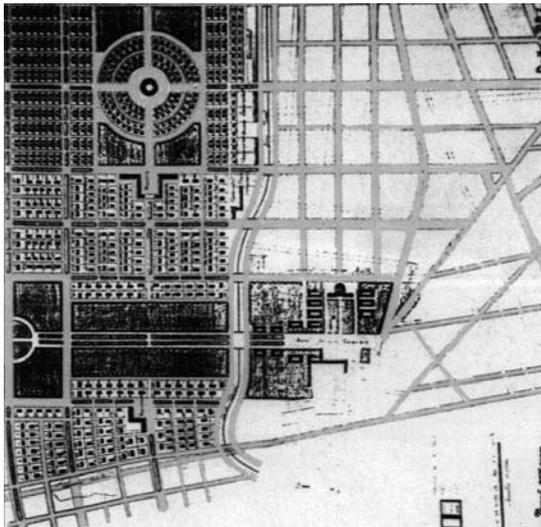


Fig 3.2.2: Detail of the 1929 plan by Köhler, showing the arrangement of the New Tirana district related to the main boulevard.



Fig 3.2.3: The newly opened *Boulevard Zog*, 1930

Continuing the “tradition” of hiring foreign architects, this time an Austrian engineer, called Köhler¹¹⁸ was invited in 1928 (during the research process of this study no documents or facts have been discovered about the procedure of these appointments). Although this plan represents an important milestone for the planning of the new Tirana, no other details emerge about this author apart the Austrian nationality, the professional title “ing.” and his surname. Uncertainty surrounds the project's date, too. While the local press and the Official Journal of 1927 write about an already designed project carrying the same features, Aliaj et. al. mention the year 1928,¹¹⁹ and Miho doesn't give a precise date at all. This is how, for example, the *Telegraf* newspaper describes the plan in an article about the latest civic developments that were taking place in the capital:

... and houses of the government employees divided into three classes on a vast plain area, separated by 30m wide streets, perpendicular and parallel to the Street of Durrës with a huge square park 250m wide and starting from the Clock Tower up the hills where the Presidential Palace, and a lot of green gardens. Six hundred house plots have been allocated to the clerks through a lottery.¹²⁰

This plan, prepared on a 1:5000 scale, was mainly a regulatory plan of streets and plot allocations. It imposed a totally Hippodamic plan to the newly opened areas in the south of the Skënderbej Square, and tried to apply it as much as possible over the existing pattern of the old quarters by straightening the trajectories of the main axes. (Fig. 3.2.1)

In this plan, the southern part of the main boulevard, consisting of three lanes separated by green areas, passed through a huge park stretching from the area where the Square of the Ministries was supposed to be, up to the southern hills, where the Presidential – now Royal – Palace designed by Brasini was still to be built. This time,

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 157.

¹¹⁹ Aliaj, Lulo, and Myftiu, *Tirana, the challenge of urban development*, 32.

¹²⁰ “Tiran' e Ré,” *Telegraf* (Tiranë, November 28, 1927).

“...nga banimet e Nëpunësve të ndara në tre kllase në një fushë të gjërë të ndarë me rruga në gjënësi nga 30 metra, pandiqlyere dhe paralele me rrugën e re të Durrësit me një park madhështor në midis, 250 metrash të gjërë dhe të gjatë qysh prej kullës të Orës së tregut e deri në majë të bregut ku do goditet pallati Presidential, dhe me sheshe e kopshtëra të lira për bukuritë. Gjashtë qind (Nr. 600) trulle shtëpish të ndarë në tre klase me numurin'e vetë u vunë në lloto dhe u shënuan mbi emën të secilit nga të zotë.”

the boulevard instead of being the city's main artery, carrying most of the governmental and civic functions, was only a monumental that accompanies the citizen/visitor from the governmental centre to the highest power unit – the king – with no contact at all with the rest of the city. On the other hand, this plan elaborated the relation that Lana creek would have with the city, and mostly with the main boulevard. Its bed was straightened and on both sides new roads were opened, thus creating a new important traffic artery for the city.

Although roughly a street network study, the project also dares to neglect the project prepared for the Square of the Ministries by di Fausto and the others – seeing that at the time their execution doesn't seem to have been started.¹²¹ It brings a totally new layout of the government buildings. Unlike the plan of di Fausto which showed influences of Baroque and Renaissance, this plan uses rigid and pure quadratic forms arranged in a layout resembling a parade ground formation.

On the other hand, the blocks of houses designed south of Lana were arranged so that each of them would have its own garden. Because of these green areas and their spreading which was nearly as much as the existing city, this district was later called *Citta giardino* (Italian for “Garden City”).¹²² Despite this, it must be noted that the name resembles only a formal similarity to the Garden City Movement, whose political background were directed at improving the social and hygienic conditions for workers, while the proposal for Tirana was arranged to house the middle class in formation and adopted for the development as a luxury suburb. Nevertheless, while the reason why this plan was not executed is not known, its layout for the *Tirana e Re* district (Albanian for “New Tirana”) served as a guide for the later developments.(Fig. 3.2.2)

All the plans described until now brought each one special features to the city's layout, and particularly to its main axis, the north – south boulevard. All these features were finally assembled in a new plan prepared in 1929, of which the authorship is

¹²¹ Eshref Frashëri, “Artikujt e Gazetarve dhe Kryeqyteti,” *Telegraf* (Tiranë, October 2, 1927). “...bëjmë komisione edhe s'kemi mundur gjer më sot jo të bëjmë godinat qeveritare edhe të nëpunsave, po s'kemi ndarë as vëndet.”

¹²² Miho, *Trajta të profilit urbanistik të qytetit të Tiranës*, 136.

Although the name refers to the “Garden City movement” founded by Sir Ebenezer Howard in the United Kingdom, what these plans had in common were only the widely used green areas. *Tirana e Re* was only a dwelling zone, while the Garden Cities were designed to be self-contained communities involving also industry and agriculture.

unknown until now. This is probably the most exhaustive plan prepared during the post-independence period until the Italian occupation. It defined the city's expansion borders, including the old city and the planned new districts. It also outlined the centre's area consisting of the main boulevard and the vicinities.

This plan brought together the axis ideated by Brasini and later elaborated by di Fausto and Köhler, the plans for the Square of the Ministries of di Fausto, the Hippodamic layout of the *Tirana e Re* district of Köhler, and a new feature: the extension of the boulevard northward finalizing it with a huge stadium project. Although Giusti attributes this project to Köhler,¹²³ it doesn't appear on the procured materials. By this addition, the boulevard had a central point – the Square of the Ministries – and two ends, the political one: King's palace, and the sportive one: the national Stadium. Ironically, the northern part of the boulevard was the first to be realised, although projected nearly six years later than the southern one. The decree 2241 of September 9, 1929 marks the beginning of the works for this part of the boulevard (Fig. 3.2.2) which was named “Zog I”.¹²⁴

During the kingdom years, other several buildings of high quality have been built by Italian architects and contractors. Two of these are of exceptional value: the National Bank Headquarters' building for being almost a turn point from the neoclassical design to more simplified modern lines and the *Circolo Italo – Albanese Scanderbeg*, for being the first building where prefabricated construction techniques were applied resulting in a rationalist design. Inaugurated in 1938, the National Bank building, designed by Vittorio Ballio Morpurgo, is located at the western part of *Skënderbej Square*. Morpurgo, an exponent of the Roman architecture school was mostly famous for designing the protective building of *Ara Pacis* (now demolished) and *Palazzo della Farnesina* in Rome. In Albania he designed the project for the National Bank in other cities, like Durrës, Korçë and Vlorë, as well.¹²⁵ The building is an exemplary of rationalised monumentality solved by fine architectural details. (Fig. 3.2.4; 3.2.5) The emptying of the volume at the corner, the use of terracotta covering and several bas-relieves (Fig. 3.2.6) keep this effect at a reasonable scale.

¹²³ Giusti, *Albania - architettura e città: 1925 - 1943*, 157.

¹²⁴ Aliaj, Lulo, and Myftiu, *Tirana, the challenge of urban development*, 35.

¹²⁵ Giusti, *Albania - architettura e città: 1925 - 1943*, 107.



Fig 3.2.4: The building of National Bank of Albania by Vittorio Ballio Morpurgo, 1938.



Fig 3.2.5: Inner back court of the National Bank building.



Fig 3.2.6: Main hall of the National Bank building.

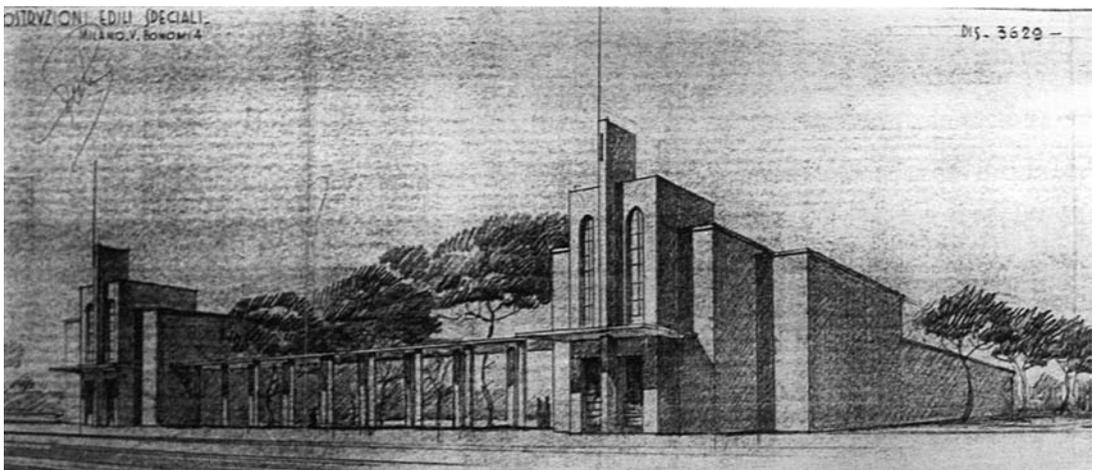


Fig 3.2.7: Perspective drawing of the building of *Circolo Italo – Albanese Scanderbeg*, by Pater – *Costruzioni edili speciali*, 1938

The other building, *Circolo Italo – Albanese Scanderbeg* was a cultural centre designed and constructed by the “*Pater – Costruzioni edili speciali*” Italian enterprise from Milan. It was one of the many enterprises which benefited from the economic advantages Albanian government ceased to Italian capital. The building is a mixed use of a theatre, an open air pool, a restaurant and a small tennis field. It consists of two similar wings connected by a colonnade which in turn leads to an open greenery space. (Fig. 3.2.7) As Montanelli described its “monumental rise beside the old Royal Palace will fill the emptiness (of Tirana), along with its pool, covered areas of tennis, a luxury restaurant. This circle, born after the Italian-Albanian cultural agreement will be a last touch of western furnishing for Tirana”¹²⁶

3.3. The occupation and its effects on the city's layout

The promotion of Count Galeazzo Ciano as Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Italy brought a new approach to what the Italians had begun to refer to as “the Albanian problem”.¹²⁷ His strategy to include Albania into the “resurrected Roman Empire” and treat it more as a family property (after the occupation, streets, places and even cities were named after members of his family), can be seen at the agitative phrases he chose to play upon Mussolini:

...In Albania, which belonged to us every so often in history, we seek and find the natural road to expansion in the Balkans... In the sixteen years of Mussolinian policy has been newly joined to Italy by bonds of great importance. This work... ...must find at the opportune moment its culmination in the annexation of Albania by Italy.¹²⁸

These lines refer to Rome's domination over the region but also Italy's poor military record of which Mussolini himself was one of those who felt Italy's prestige suffered, when the Italian armed forces had to withdraw from Vlora in 1920. Writing in the *Popolo d'Italia* on August 5, 1920, he commented:

¹²⁶ Indro Montanelli, *Shqipëria një dhe një mijë*, trans. Aurel Plasari (Tiranë: 55, 2005), 43.

¹²⁷ Mia Fuller, *Moderns abroad: architecture, cities and Italian imperialism*, Architect (London: Routledge, 2007), 35.

¹²⁸ Fischer, *King Zog and the struggle for stability in Albania*, 266.

...Valona was to be the recompense for Italy's suffering and blood which she shed. Valona was to be the threshold of our pacific penetration into the Balkans. We admit that, from the strategic standpoint, the possession of Sasseno makes up for the loss of Valona... But all this does not attenuate the extent of the Albanian catastrophe which is essentially of a political and moral character...¹²⁹

Indeed, after many diplomatic negotiations between Rome and T'irana with each other and the centres of political influences, this project became a reality on the morning of April 7, 1939, (Fig. 3.3.1) when some fifty thousand troops, supported by hundreds of aircraft, mechanized infantry and warships invaded Albania, entering from all its coastal line.

While in Italy, calling Albania *quinta s'p'onda* (Italian for "fifth shore") summed up the colonising aims of the invasion,¹³⁰ suddenly after the military operation, Italian government used all the possible media under its influence to demonstrate that this was not an occupation but a deepening of the friendship between the two countries and that the investments that would be done were only for the good of the Albanian people. These investments were mainly of military strategic importance, such as opening of new roads to the frontiers, improvement of the existing ones, building some railways from mineral rich regions to the main ports and so on. On the other hand, following the pattern established earlier in Africa, land was seized for eventual development into new settlement areas for future Italian settlers.¹³¹

Nonetheless, *the city* was the central theme of these works, inherited from the comprehensive and unified land management project of the last years of the Zog's regime supported by the Italian loans. On the other hand, "the urban design was focused on T'irana and Durr'ës, basically on the definition of the administrative and business centre, and on addressing the road network situation, as a node for digestion of the traffic coming from outside, rather than an organising element of the urban zoning".¹³² The representative quality of the centre, and more specifically, the capital, was the spinning idea on which design options played upon. On the other hand, T'irana

¹²⁹ Ibid., 23.

¹³⁰ Bernd Jürgen Fischer, *Albania at war: 1939 - 1945*, Central European Studies (West Lafayette: Ind. Purdue Univ. Press, 1999), 66.

¹³¹ Fuller, *Moderns abroad: architecture, cities and Italian imperialism*, 36.

¹³² Giusti, *Albania - architettura e città: 1925 - 1943*, 14.



Fig 3.3.1: Italian troops on the Skënderbej Square a day after the invasion, April 8, 1939.



Fig 3.3.2: Aerial view of Boulevard Zog on April, 1939.



Fig 3.3.3: Aerial view of Tirana on April, 1939. The *Skënderbej Square*, the ministries, the National Bank building, the building of *Circolo Italo-Albanese Scanderbeg* and a section of the main boulevard can be seen completed

was a special case among all these investments. It was the place where the grace and glory of Fascism was to be displayed, where better and more clearly than anywhere else were reflected the political orientation and spatial composition criteria. This is why the regime relied on the contest of the best and most experienced Italian professionals called to leave the incisive and recognizable mark of the Italian culture of those years.

Their work was organised by a central unit, founded immediately after the occupation, the *Ufficio Centrale per l'Edilizia e l'Urbanistica dell'Albania* (Central Office for Construction and Urban Planning in Albania). It was a small unit, “consisting of three architects, four designers, three assistants, a secretary and a helping typist, exercised its functions of control over both private and public construction, both urban and architectural design, covering all the Albanian territory”.¹³³ On the other hand, with the establishment of the *Ufficio*, it seems that a language change begun, departing from the more neoclassical lines used until then to more rational designs. This change can be explained by the difference between the two schools who exercised their profession before and during the occupation. While during the mid twenties up to 1939 the principal actors of the urban and architectural design were from the Roman school of architecture, praising and demonstrating the “*romanità*”, with the establishment of *l'Ufficio*, almost all of the involved designers were of Florentine background, exploring new expressions of rational architecture.¹³⁴

There were two opinions regarding how the existing situation should be handled. The first one was to create a whole new city, with a linear expansion and a semicircular plan, with the old city preserved and maintained as an exotic target, with an “oriental” pattern. The second one expected the city to develop into its existing area, mainly through reconstructions and some extensions in open and free areas, mainly south of Lana creek. The second solution was followed because it came out to be more efficient due to the lack of time and financial problems.¹³⁵

On this ground, the *Ufficio* led by arch. Gherardo Bosio, prepared a draft project in the 1:5000 scale on September 1939 concerning the plan of *Viale dell'Impero* and the surroundings, still based on the situation plan of the Geo-Military Institute of

¹³³ Ibid., 39.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Miho, *Shqipëria: vështrim urbanistik, 1912-1944*, 244.



Fig 3.3.4: The traffic scheme of Tirana from the master-plan of 1940, by *Ufficio Centrale per l'Edilizia e l'Urbanistica dell'Albania*.



Fig 3.3.5: Detailed plan of Viale dell Impero, Skënderbej Square and vicinities from the master-plan of 1940 by *Ufficio Centrale per l'Edilizia e l'Urbanistica dell'Albania*.

Firenze. (Fig.3.3.4) It was ratified by the authorities on March 7, 1940. Arch. Ivo Lambertini consulted by ing. arch. Ferdinando Poggi took the lead of the project after Bosio's untimely death on 1941. Based on the previous city plan, it was proceeded to a regional plan which reached its final stage on 1943.¹³⁶

According to this project, Tirana was expected to reach a population of 130.000 inhabitants in a time span of sixty years, and an area of 1100 hectares, with an area of 660 ha. reserved for further expansion and 1700 ha. of military zones, meanwhile the existing situation of the city had a population of 75.000 in an approximate area of 700 ha¹³⁷. As Miho indicates, it had three main objectives:

- “the creation of a new centre “worthy of the capital of a full developing country”
- improvement of a functional zoning which would integrate the heterogeneous urban pattern
- the improvement of the street network, and the transformation of it into a ring-road system with opening of new radial and peripheral roads.”¹³⁸

The first objective was not fulfilled, while the other two were implemented partially and with changes according to the existing layout. The city's residential zone would expand northward, while the industrial zones would develop towards north-west and south-west creating in between a residential zone for workers. On the other side, by preserving the typical use of greenery on the old city and expanding it throughout the new areas, the plan aimed at creating a *città giardino*. The new elements of the functional zoning comprised of new residential areas on the southern hills, the great park behind them and a square at the southern end of the main north-south axis. This plan was used as a reference for the later zoning of the city, after which the hospital, industrial zones were located. Also, the rings of this plan were not executed but served as the basis for the future ring road which would be built after the war.¹³⁹

The main legacy of this period, seems to be the definitive design of the southern part of the north – south boulevard, or as it was named at the time *Viale del*

¹³⁶ Giusti, *Albania - architettura e città: 1925 - 1943*, 45.

¹³⁷ Aliaj, Lulo, and Myftiu, *Tirana, the challenge of urban development*, 43.

¹³⁸ Miho, *Shqipëria: vështrim urbanistik, 1912-1944*, 247.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 248.

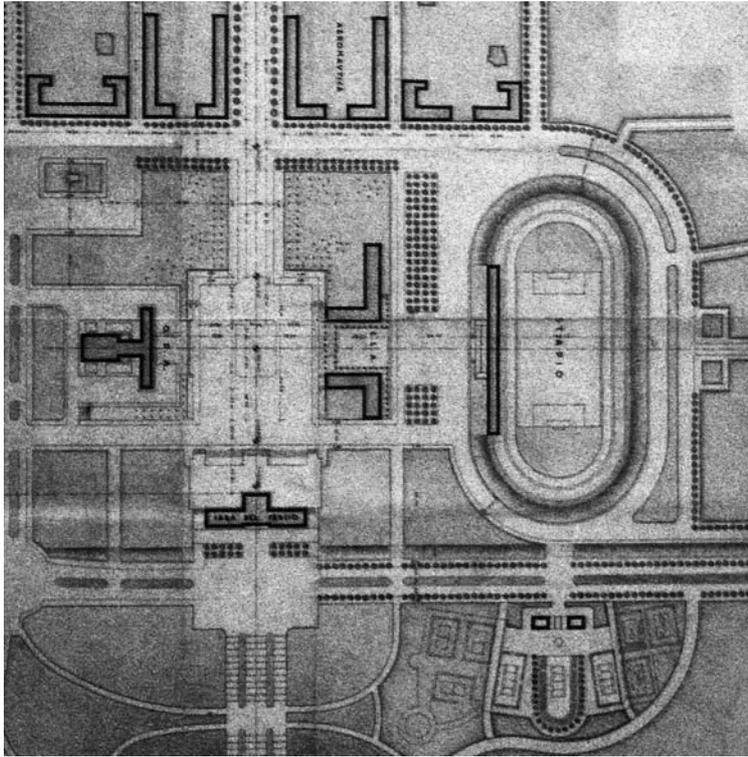


Fig 3.3.6: Detailed plan of *Piazza Littoria* by Gherardo Bosio, 1940. Left, the O.N.D.A., centre the G.L.A, right the stadium and bottom *Casa del Fascio*.

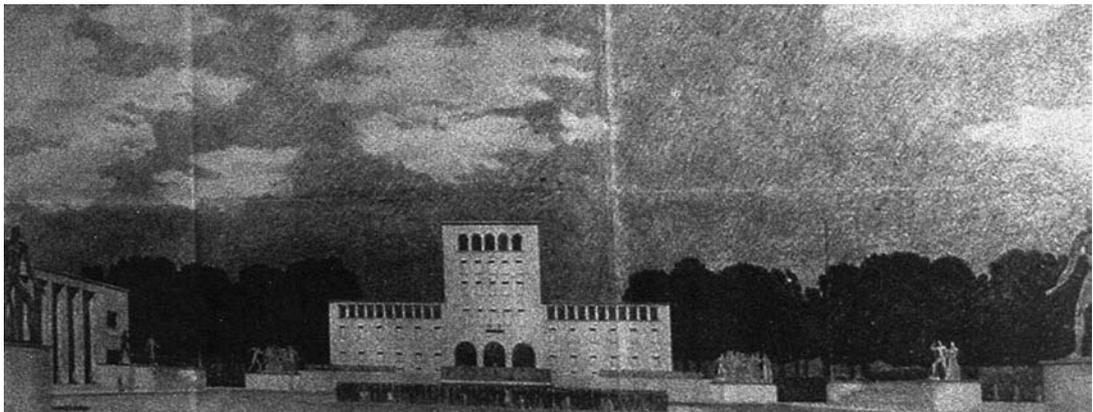


Fig 3.3.7: Perspective drawing of *Piazza Littoria* showing *Casa del Fascio* in the centre adorned by thematic sculptural groups all over the square., by Gherardo Bosio. 1940.

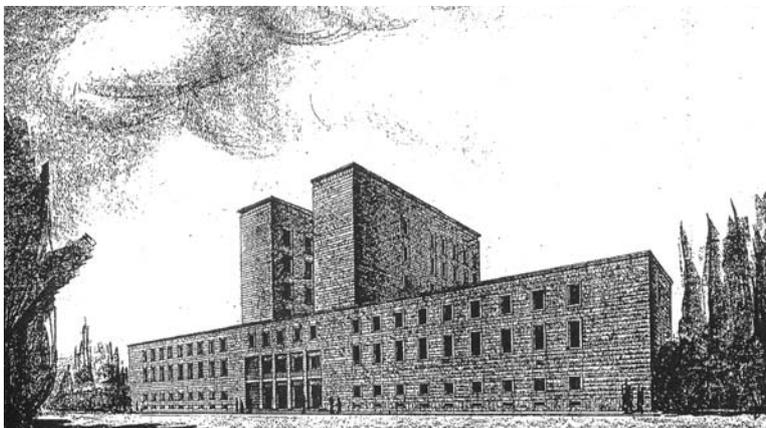


Fig 3.3.8: Perspective drawing for the preliminary version of *Casa del Fascio*, Bosio, 1940.

Impero (Empire Avenue), and the *Piazza Littoria* (Lictor Square), situated at the southern end of it. (Fig. 3.3.5; 3.3.6) It was elaborated as a special case in a partial study from Gherardo Bosio since the beginning of the works of *Ufficio*. Fascism needed a central and well displayed architectural complex to house its civilian and military administration. The only complex in the city was the group of ministries built some years ago, but it has to be used by the local puppet regime, made of officials of the Albanian Fascist Party and Italian advisers.¹⁴⁰

It was the place where the conjunctures and the architectural expression of the occupation and its ideology would be shown better and clearer, and at the same time the connection of the old city with the new political centre that was to be created at *Piazza Littoria*. (Fig. 3.3.7) It emphasised the axiality of the project started by di Fausto, by forming a “*Cardo Maximus* crossing the city joining the *Casa Littoria* situated at foothills, with the barracks of the *Guardia*, planned to be built on the plains towards the *Viale Vittorio Emanuele III*.”¹⁴¹ The regime needed visual representations of the Italian fascist culture, with all the elements of grandiosity that one can find at the *Esposizione Universale di Roma – E42*, thus the central avenue resulted the perfect solution for this purpose.

On the way to the *Piazza Littoria*, nucleus of the political and propagandistic buildings of Fascism, the avenue would host all the administrative and military organs: *Comando truppe* (Army Headquarters), *Comando Aeronautica* (Air Force Command), *Comando della Milizia Forestale* (Command of the Forestry Militia), *I.N.F.A.I.L. - Istituto Nazionale Fascista Assicurazione contro gli Infortuni sul Lavoro* (National Fascist Institute of Work Accidents' Insurance), etc. It was planned as a reminiscence of the Roman Forum, forming in this way a centre for the new part of the city. This new centre was itself separated from the old one by the double boulevard on the banks of Lana creek, which can be perceived as the *Decumanus Maximus* of the new plan. Although regarding the Roman rules of the city planning, the *Forum* - the hub of the city should be at the intersection of *Cardo* and *Decumanus*, *Piazza Littoria*, which plays the role of the *Forum* was placed at the end of *Cardo* – *Viale dell'Impero*.

¹⁴⁰ Vickers, *The Albanians: a modern history*, 142.

¹⁴¹ Gherardo Bosio, *Piano Regolatore di Tirana: Regolamento urbanistico del Viale dell'Impero* (Tiranë: Ufficio per l'Edilizia e l'Urbanistica de l'Albania, 1940), 3.

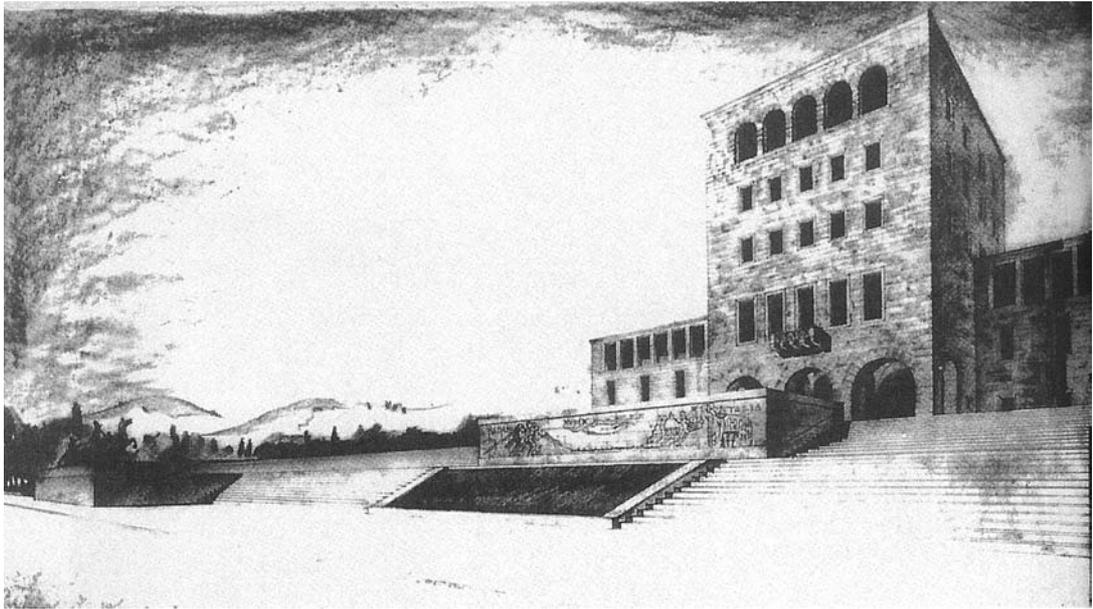


Fig 3.3.9: Perspective drawing of the final version of *Casa del Fascio*, by Gherardo Bosio, 1940.

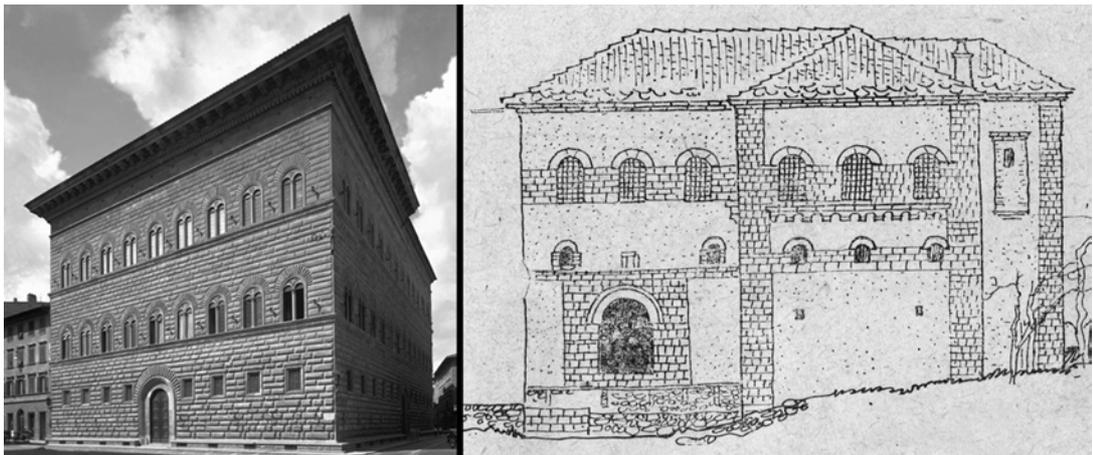


Fig 3.3.10: Two influences: *Palazzo Strozzi* of Florentine palaces and a typical Albanian *Kulla*.

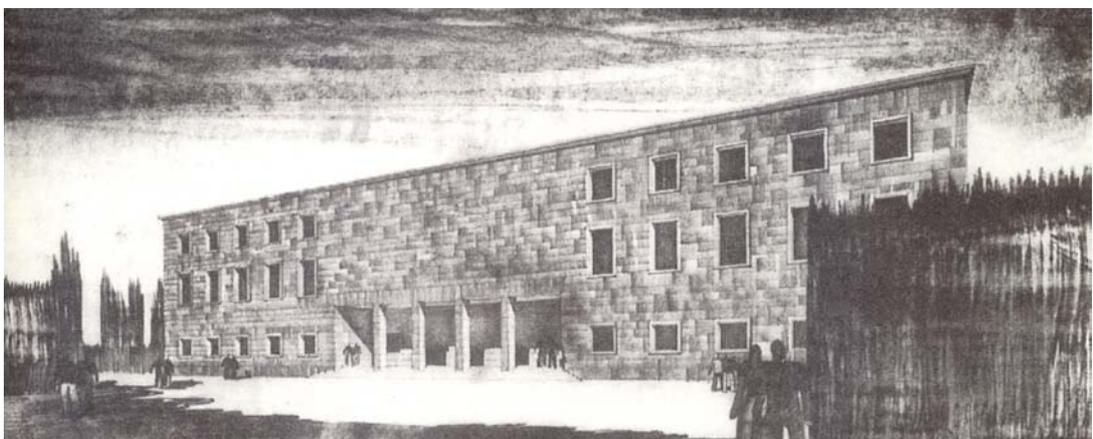


Fig 3.3.11: Perspective drawing of the building of *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro Albanese*, by Gherardo Bosio, 1940.

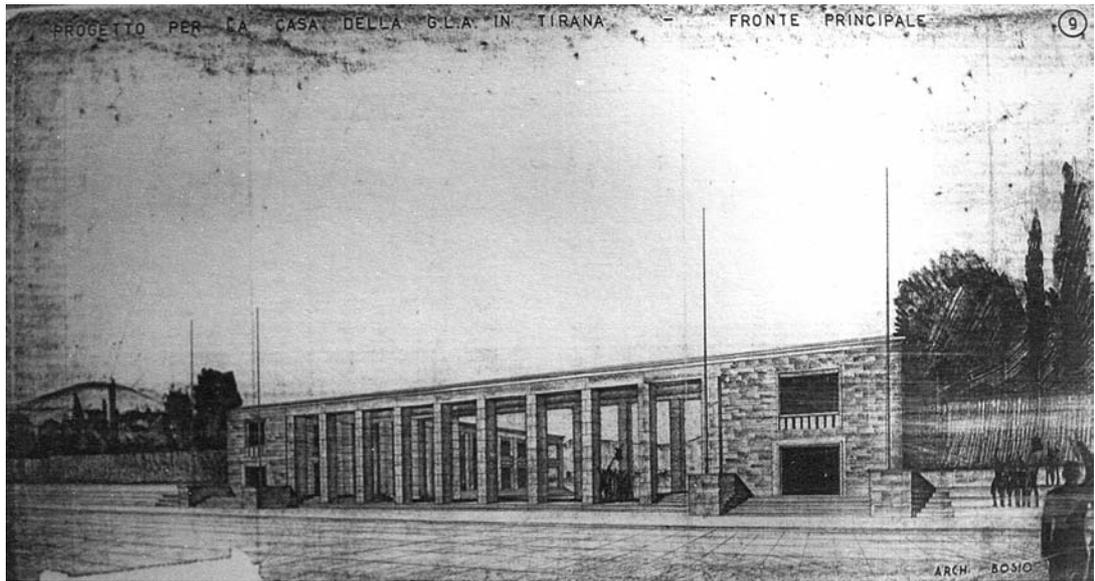


Fig 3.3.12: Perspective drawing of the building of *Gioventù Littoria Albanese*, by Gherardo Bosio, 1940.

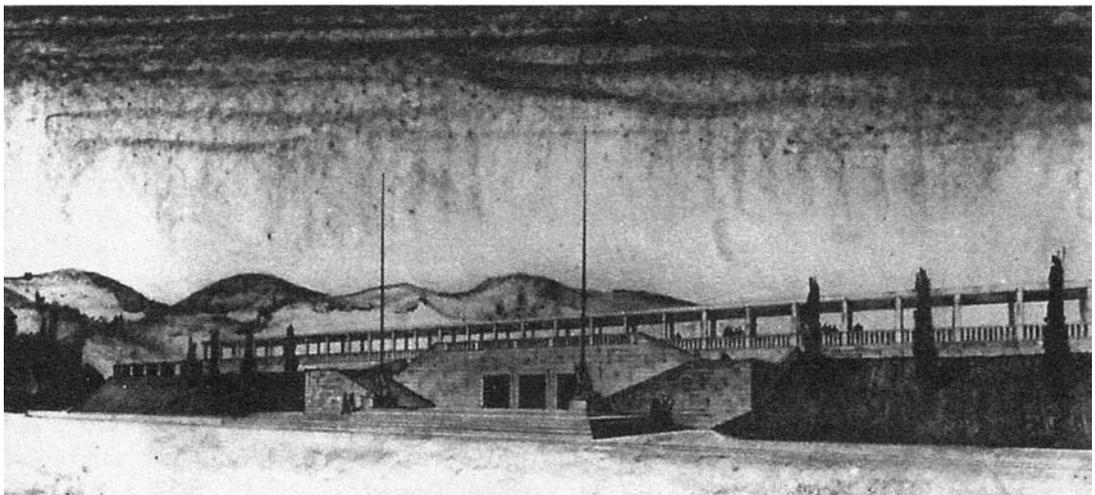


Fig 3.3.13: Perspective drawing of the Olympic stadium, by Gherardo Bosio, 1940.



Fig 3.3.14: Scale model of *Viale dell'Impero*, 1940.

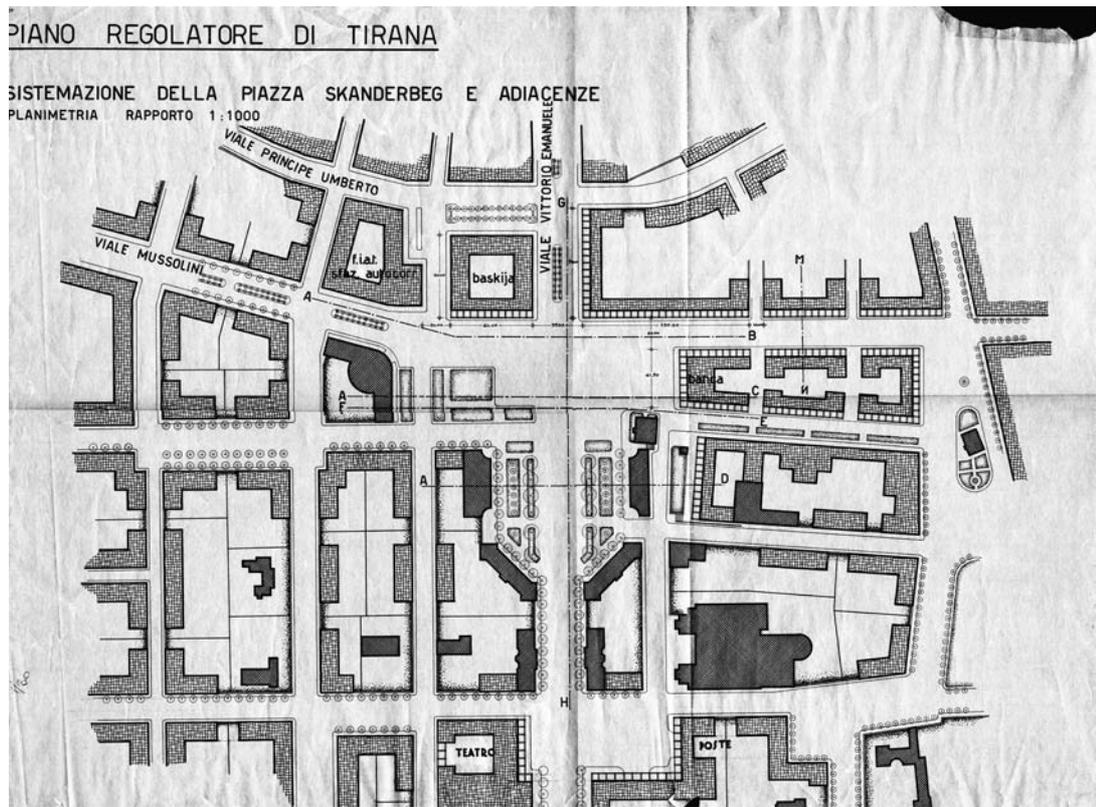


Fig 3.3.15: Detailed plan of the Skënderbej Square from the master-plan of Tirana, by *Ufficio Centrale per l'Edilizia e l'Urbanistica dell'Albania*, 1940.

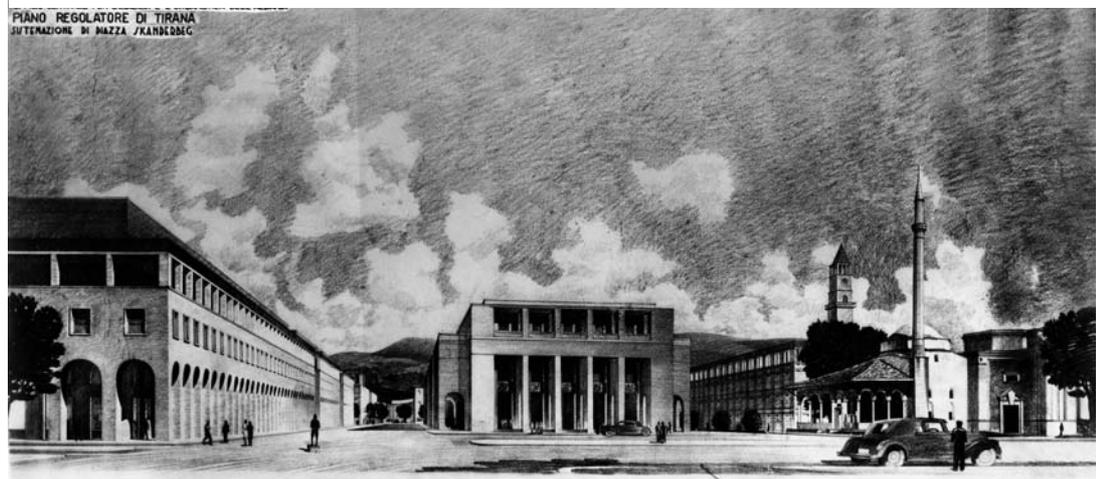


Fig 3.3.16: Perspective drawing of the new arrangement of Skënderbej Square, 1940.

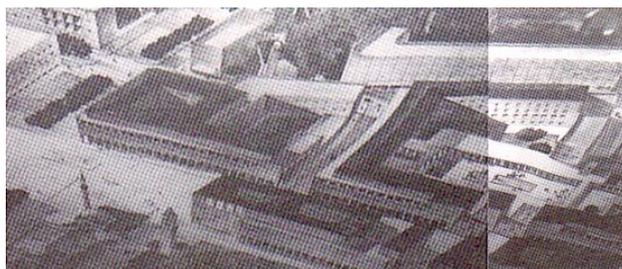


Fig 3.3.17: Perspective drawing of the new arrangement of Skënderbej Square showing the commercial district, 1940.

The huge plain of the square is designed as an ancient theatre circumscribed by stair steps which are interrupted to introduce the side-wings: the buildings of *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro Albanese* (Albanian National Recreational Club – the Italian version of Third Reich's *Kraft durch Freude*) and the *Gioventù Littoria Albanese* (Albanian Youth of Lictor), whose characteristics are marked by the homogeneity of valuable plasticity and textures. (Fig. 3.3.11; 3.3.12) Although the buildings are different in architectural details, their overall presence is absorbed by the absolute monumentality of the space they reside on. On the other hand, between the arcade of the G.L.A one can pass to a smaller square, yet monumental space in front of the Olympic stadium (Fig. 3.3.13) with a plasticity reminiscent of *Stadio dei Marmi* of Rome.

Moreover, the project of Bosio emphasized this monumentality by using series of emblematic sculptural ornaments, representing the eagles (used as symbols of both ancient Rome and Gj. K. Skënderbej), allegory of work, the heroes of *romanità*, the march of Lictor Youth, of legionaries, of aviators.¹⁴² Actually the boulevard is the materialisation of this march to the last rise which in turn is symbolised by the hills carrying the *Casa del Fascio*. The building, known also as *Palazzo Littorio*, coronates the promenade. Standing on a huge pedestal, it is the most important piece of the complex, featuring influences of the Florentine palaces and reminiscences of the traditional *Kulla* (the Albanian word for “tower”) of northern Albania. On its feet lays the space reserved for the public, which initially incorporated a huge water basin,¹⁴³ another feature that increases the monumental effect of the space.

Beside the ideological infrastructure, the plan included also the artistic, sportive and economic buildings along the boulevard. The architects, trying to preserve the characteristics of the old city, placed the new business centre of the city where the Old Bazaar lied, (Fig. 3.3.15) which had become almost inefficient that time. It was designed as a series of colonnaded buildings, (Fig. 3.3.16; 3.3.17) similar to pure forms of the G.L.A. but less monumental, which were the northern borders of the new *Skënderbej Square*. The original design of di Fausto was modified so that the longitudinal area between the ministries turned in a green space preparatory of the proper square,

¹⁴² Giusti, *Albania - architettura e città: 1925 - 1943*, 64.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 46.

now an empty space on the east-west direction, with a fountain in the middle of it.

Dajti Hotel (named after the mountain situated east of Tirana, creating a background for the city) situated at the crossing of *Viale del Impero* with the riverside boulevard built along the Lana creek, (Fig. 3.3.18; 3.3.18) was designed to be one of the biggest hotels of the Balkans and among the most modern in Europe. It was commissioned on September 1939 from *Ente Nazionale Industrie Turistiche e Alberghiere* (National Agency of Tourism and Hotel Industries) to Gherardo Bosio, who couldn't live long enough to see the completion of this exemplar of rationalist architecture in Albania. The volume and details of the hotel can be seen as the coronation of the language simplifying process undertaken by the Italian architects, starting with di Fausto.

Although all the urban and architectural achievements gained through the Monarchy period and the first years of World War II cannot be denied, and somehow formed the core of the urban layout of Tirana, the fact that they were commissioned and designed under a colonial agenda must not be underestimated. (Fig 3.3.23) They were fruits of the theoretical debates and previous practices in the African and Aegean colonies. Nonetheless, in Tirana there was a less sophisticated urban layout, fact which gave architects a freer rein to experiment than the characteristically harsh environment of Libyan or Eritrean architecture had done. On the other hand, these improvements meant a lot for a city claiming the capital status while having no infrastructure at all. These were to be the last contributions of the occupation period for the city, since the replacement of the *Regio Esercito* by the *Wehrmacht* in September, 1943, after the capitulation of the fascist Italy, brought no economic or financial improvement, except some repairs of military bases and airports.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ Fischer, *Albania at war: 1939 - 1945*, 177.

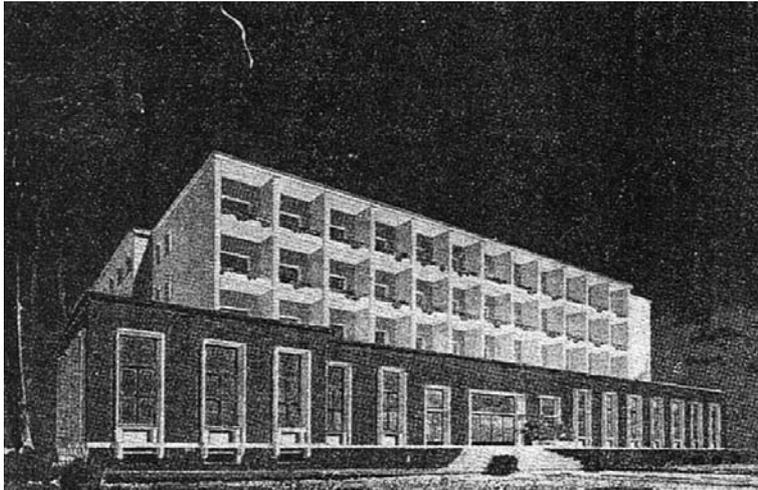


Fig 3.3.18: Perspective drawing of the Dajti Hotel, by Gherardo Bosio, 1939.



Fig 3.3.19: Photo of the construction process of the Dajti Hotel. 1940

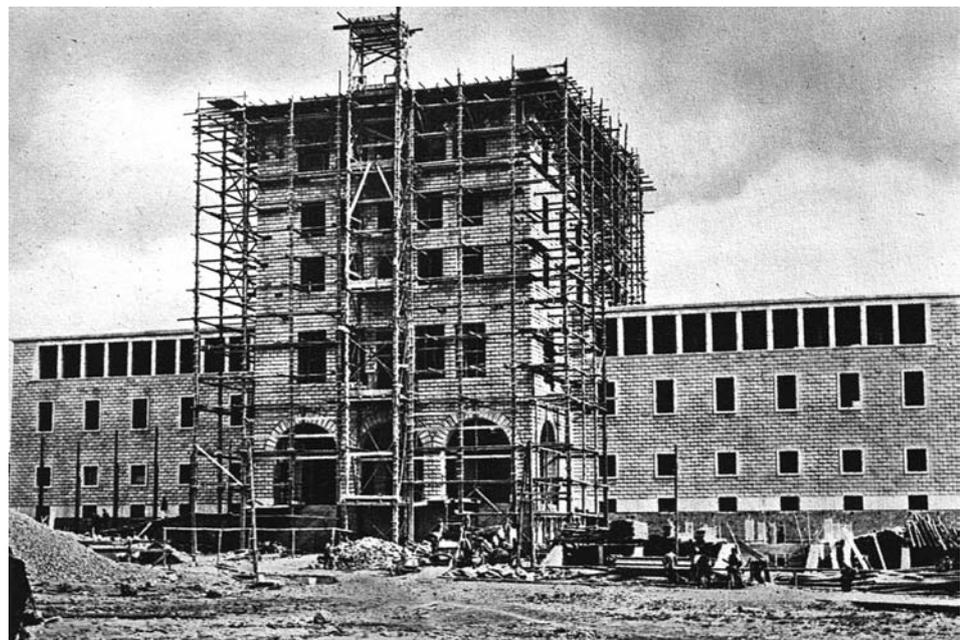


Fig 3.3.20: Photo of the construction process of *Casa del Fascio*, 1941

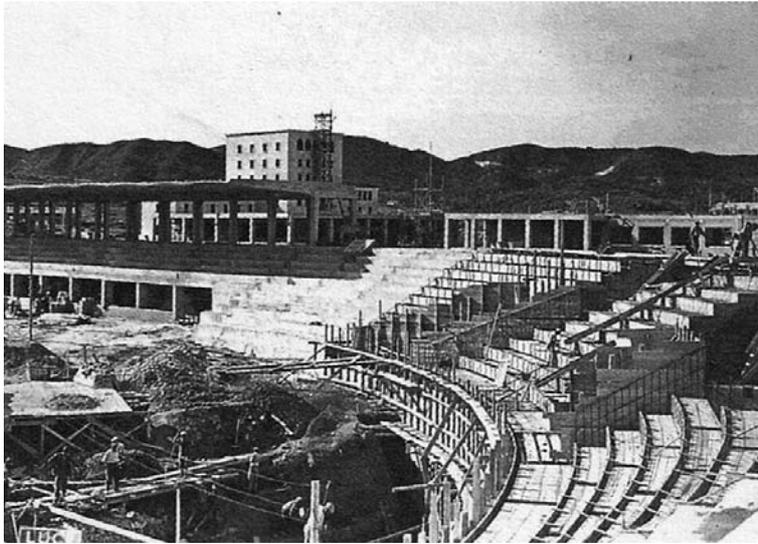


Fig 3.3.21:
Photo showing the construction process of the Olympic stadium and in the background *Casa del Fascio*, 1941.



Fig 3.3.22:
Photo showing *Viale dell'Impero* and the vicinities during construction, 1941



Fig 3.3.23: Bas-relief with Mussolini's words on it placed on the façade of the maternity Hospital. Right, his personal envoy to Albania, Count Ciano inspecting the public works in the capital, 1941.



CHAPTER III

THE AFTER-WAR AND BUILDING OF A SELF-EFFICIENT DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

Albania emerged from the World War II as literally the most backward country in Europe. Although no reliable statistics on Albania's wartime losses exist, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration reported about 30,000 Albanian war dead, 200 destroyed villages, 18,000 destroyed houses, and about 100,000 people left homeless.¹⁴⁵ Compared to the pre-war population and economic development, these numbers represent the worst damage any country in Europe had suffered. Almost a third of all buildings were destroyed, nearly all mines, ports, roads and bridges were rendered unusable, and few industrial plants were left in working order. Shelter had to be found for the thousands made homeless by the destruction of towns and villages.¹⁴⁶ Few passable arteries remained as the communications network built up before the war had largely been destroyed. As all goods had to be carried by road, because no railway network existed at all, transport was a real problem for most of the country's remote parts suffering at the brink of famine.

In every material sense, the war placed Albania at a tremendous disadvantage regarding the rest of the continent. Politically, though, the war played into the hands of the emerging regime, as it did on most Eastern European countries. Contrary to these countries, where the advance of the Red Army was the most important factor in establishing new regimes, in Albania a new, previously unknown path to socialism was opened as the partisan forces led by the Communist Party achieved liberation from fascism. As Aman argues, despite the difficulties, the administrative, and economic vacuum left by the Nazi-Fascists and their collaborators presented an opportunity for the establishment of a new system. The resistance was far less than it would have been

¹⁴⁵ Zickel and Iwaskiw, *Albania: a country study*, 37.

¹⁴⁶ Vickers, *The Albanians: a modern history*, 166.

otherwise; largely relying on the goodwill of the large part of the population.¹⁴⁷ On the other hand, the propaganda directed by the Communist Party during the war years brought the marginalisation of other potential oppositional forces from the future political stage.

The resistance during World War II was largely a guerilla movement consisting of groups which lacked organization on a large scale until 1942. Also, the groups had squabbles among themselves and usually refused to work together since all the groups had designs on gaining power in post-war Albania. The absence of a political system to take effective control after King Zog I left the country was the largest obstacle the various political groups were facing at the time. The resistance movement proved to be the instrument by which the internal power struggle for control of post-war Albania was fought.¹⁴⁸

There were some efforts to unify the several resistance groups under a central management (which was named National Liberation Front), but following disagreements on the issue of creating an ethnic state of Albanians after the war, the PKSH denounced the other groups as collaborators to the occupiers and the councils were purged of the non-communist elements. The Communist seizure of power began at a congress held in Përmet on May 24, 1944, attended by representatives from all the country. The Congress decided to "set up a new democratic Albania for the people" and that "the permanent type of government would be decided after the war by free elections".¹⁴⁹ It was also decided that King Zog could never return to Albania and that all agreements made by his regime were officially void. It elected an Anti-Fascist Committee for National Liberation headed by Enver Hoxha, which was transformed into the provisional government of Albania on October 22. It moved to Tirana after its liberation on November 28, 1944.¹⁵⁰

The first post-war general elections were held on December 2, 1945. The Democratic Front – the new name of FNC, which included some non-Communist

¹⁴⁷ Anders Åman, *Architecture and ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin era : an aspect of Cold War history* (Cambridge, Mass.: Architectural History Foundation, 1992), 8.

¹⁴⁸ James Salibur O'Donnell, *A coming of age: Albania under Enver Hoxha*, East European Monographs 517 (Boulder, 1999), 8.

¹⁴⁹ Zickel and Iwaskiw, *Albania: a country study*, 36.

¹⁵⁰ Tomes, *King Zog of Albania: Europe's Self-Made Muslim King*, 265.

resistance elements – won some 93 per cent of the vote.¹⁵¹ This was no surprise since virtually all the candidates stood for it. A new national assembly met in January 11, 1946. (Fig. 4.1.1) It approved a new constitution, proclaiming Albania a "People's Republic", giving thus an official end to Zog's monarchy.¹⁵²

4.1. Urbanisation as a large scale project

The end of the war found Albania devastated in every field of life. The little economic and industrial improvement gained between the wars was almost destroyed, agriculture roughly had the same fate, and the urbanization had mostly halted at what Italians had made, and in some places it was even worse, those achievements had been destroyed by the bombardments. The reconstruction of the country's almost non-existent economy and being recognized as an independent and sovereign state were the most urgent tasks facing the emerging regime. On the other hand, restoring order to the ruins and starting reconstruction was the great task that people could agree on, and ruins meant not only shattered buildings but also the inherited wreckage of society. Anton Zischka, in his book describing his travels in the region during this period, witnessed:

Everywhere people wear national costume. The old traditional patriarchal way of life has been destroyed, but a new one suited to prevailing Albanian circumstances has not yet been discovered.¹⁵³

On this background, the government began introducing a centralised economy, based on the Soviet model. In December 1944, the foreign and domestic trade, the few industrial, commercial and transportation enterprises the country possessed were put under state control. Foreign-owned properties were nationalised and concessions previously granted to foreign companies cancelled.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Vickers, *The Albanians: a modern history*, 164.

¹⁵² Tomes, *King Zog of Albania: Europe's Self-Made Muslim King*, 266.

¹⁵³ Vickers, *The Albanians: a modern history*, 180.

¹⁵⁴ Zickel and Iwaskiw, *Albania: a country study*, 39.



Fig 4.1.1: Previously a building of the Fascist regime, it serves as gathering hall of the new Constituent Assembly which would declare Albania a People's Republic, January 11, 1946.



Fig 4.1.2: Prefabricated housing blocks – an important element of the rapid urbanisation.

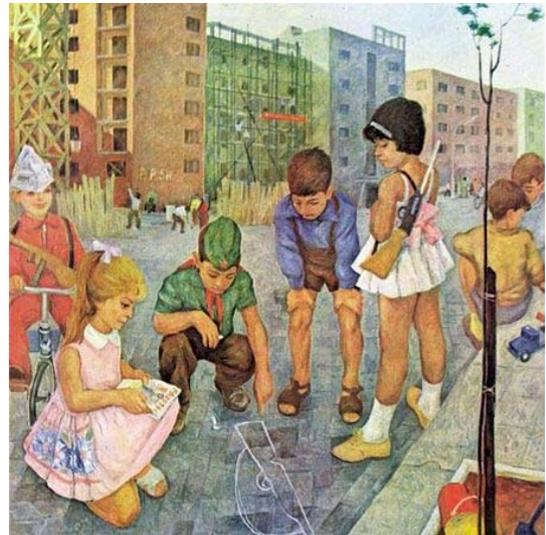


Fig 4.1.3: Urbanisation and the 'new man' as a central theme in arts: "Children" of Spiro Kristo, 1966.



Fig 4.1.4: Urbanisation theme used again for advertising propaganda: a 50 lek banknote, 1964.

Nonetheless, industrialisation was the main goal of the economic strategies. Planners at the newly founded Economic Planning Commission emphasized industrial development, and in 1947 the government introduced the Soviet cost-accounting system. A concise statement on building the economy by concentrating on industrialization was made at the First Congress of the Party in November 1948 when it was announced that:

Its fundamental economic objective was to raise the country from its profound backwardness, through a vigorous development of the forces of production.

The essence of this task was the socialist industrialization and the electrification, of the country. The absolute necessity for industrialization was dictated by the need to create an entirely new material-technical base for the people's economy, to extend the production of goods within the country, to prepare the conditions for the reorganization of agriculture on a socialist basis, to increase the numbers of the working class so as to strengthen its leading position. Socialist industrialization would directly serve the safeguarding of the gains and the development of the revolution, the construction of socialist society.

Socialist industrialization had to be carried out at rapid rates so as to overcome the backwardness inherited from the past within the shortest possible time, to ensure the independent development of the economy and to achieve an appreciable rise in the material and cultural level of the working masses.¹⁵⁷

The pre-war society structure made of a large and impoverished peasantry, an almost in-existent capitalist and workers class and a politically powerful landed aristocracy, had a strong feudal character. Such an industrialisation rate as indicated would increase the numbers of the working class, the primary condition for a socialist revolution. The Communist Party of Albania even renamed itself according to the new goals, as *Partia e Punës e Shqipërisë* (Party of Labour of Albania).¹⁵⁸ This class change would be possible only by the expansion of the urban area and with “the gradual

¹⁵⁷ Instituti i Studimeve Marksiste-Leniniste, ed., *Historia e Partisë së Punës të Shqipërisë*, Botim i II. (Tiranë: 8 Nëntori, 1981), 242.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 245.

abolition of all the distinction between town and country”.¹⁵⁹ On the other hand, citing Lenin, the cities were seen as “centres of the economic, political and spiritual life of the people and the major source of progress”.¹⁶⁰ These ideological phrases could hardly apply to the economic development of the new state, as it had lagged behind the rest of Europe (including most of its neighbours). As Enyedi indicates, “Marxist ideology refused to adopt the life style of the western societies, but needed to achieve their levels of material wealth to establish the socialist (that is, egalitarian) well being of the population”¹⁶¹ in an almost total poverty. Radical social changes, rapid economic growth and accelerated urbanisation were the main tools which the new regime had to use to reach this goal. While in the West the development of cities was brought up as result of economic prosperity and designed to satisfy individual consumption, the urbanisation project in Albania (as in other Eastern bloc countries) was built upon Marxist – Leninist ideals of progress and principles of social justice. The primary element of these principles was the equal redistribution of all resources through the agency of the state.

Consequently, a centrally planned and egalitarian urbanisation, made out of different “socialist spaces” took place all over the country. It meant equal living conditions on the urban network scale and within individual settlements. As the main item of this urbanisation was the housing question, large housing units were built, all of whose apartments had more or less the same layouts and amenities. The amount of space, the units of basic public services each person/family should get was equal and the population of the new housing complexes was socially mixed. Before and during the war, there were striking differences in living conditions between cities and regions, and between various social classes, thus these principles were seen as big opportunities to most of the people. The importance the urbanisation issue had for the central government can be observed in the words of Enver Hoxha:

¹⁵⁹ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, ed. Friedrich Engels, trans. Samuel Moore (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1906), 46.

¹⁶⁰ George J. Demko and Joanna Regulska, “Socialism and its impact on urban processes and the city,” *Urban Geography* 8, no. 4 (August 1987): 289.

¹⁶¹ György Enyedi, “Urbanization under socialism,” in *Cities after socialism: urban and regional change and conflict in post-socialist societies*, ed. Gregory Andrusz, Michael Harloe, and Ivan Szélényi, Studies in urban and social change (Oxford; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), 105.

Considering today's shortage on sheltering, houses for workers must be built. The people must see an improved situation, thus there must be initiatives in this direction. Everything that will be built, must be in compliance with our people's regime. The sanitary side and the comfort must be taken under consideration; workers' and civil employees' housing must be beautiful, with gardens and trees, occupying not too much space, not lacking anything for the residents either. The buildings must be developed horizontally and not too vertically; architects should take into account our vernacular style. They must try to create a style in accordance with the characteristics of our country.¹⁶²

According to official statistics of the time, the pace of urbanisation was such that the construction capacity in 1974 was 121 times higher than that of 1938;¹⁶³ during the years 1970-73 649 million lek were invested only on housing constructions and by 1972 233.000 apartments were built by the state or with state investments.¹⁶⁴

All these processes were part of the great social project of creating the new socialist man, where space and material environment were believed to have great capacity to shape his new mentality. A new consciousness would emerge from novel social relations developed by reshaping the home, the workplace or the street. While trying to provide sufficient housing for all, (Fig. 4.1.2) the regime made sure that the home and new public spaces of leisure would be primary sites for ideological intervention. And the construction process itself was a playground of this project, by involving largely the voluntary work which “was a technique to change the minds of the people and turn them into good socialists.”¹⁶⁵

The urbanism emerging from these politics has been criticised having low rates

¹⁶² Enver Hoxha, “Nga fjala e mbajtur në komisionin e ngritur për çështjen e urbanizmit të qytetit të Tiranës dhe të qyteteve të tjera të vendit - 19.02.1948,” in *Vepra (Janar 1947 - Dhjetor 1948)*, ed. Instituti i Studimeve Marksiste-Leniniste, vol. 4, Vepra (Tiranë: Naim Frashëri, 1970), 455.

“Duke marrë parasysh që ne sot kemi nevojë të madhe për strehim, duhet të ngrihen banesa për punëtorët. Gjithë populli të shikojë një gjendje të përmirësuar, prandaj duhet të ketë iniciativë në këtë drejtim. Çdo gjë që do të ngrihet, të përshtatet me regjimin tonë popullor. Të shikohet ana e shëndetit, komoditeti; shtëpitë për punëtorët e nëpunësit të jenë të bukura, me kopshte e pemë, të mos zënë shumë hapësirë, por edhe të mos u mungojë asgjë atyre që banojnë. Godinat të shtrihen në gjerësi e jo shumë në lartësi; arqitektët duhet të kenë parasysh stilin popullor. Të përpiqen që të krijojnë një stil në përshtatje me karakteristikat e vendit tonë.”

¹⁶³ Emin Mysliu, “Ndërtimet transformojnë pamjen e atdheut tonë,” *Shkenca dhe Jeta*, no. 03 (1974): 5.

¹⁶⁴ Valentina Pistoli, “Përmbi gjysma e popullsisë në banesa të reja,” *Shkenca dhe Jeta*, no. 03 (1974): 15.

¹⁶⁵ Julie Abitz, “Post-socialist city development in Tirana” (Master's Thesis, Roskilde: Roskilde Universitet, 2006), 60.

of “economizing with space”¹⁶⁶, which is strongly related to the fact that land was state property, and being as such, urban planners had great freedom in implementing their plans by being more concerned with the aesthetic rather than the economic aspects of their urban space designs. However, as employees of the institute explained during interviews and as several decrees indicate, this was not the case in Albania due to economic reasons. The main directives given by the state were that the cities were to be designed “... avoiding any influence from the revisionist and bourgeois ideology, aiming the concentration and gathering of the buildings, thus saving the arable land used for agrarian purposes, especially the grain fields...”.¹⁶⁷ In a regime that tried to build a self-reliant economy, space-saving plan designs, furniture and austere use of materials came as natural living conditions for everyday life, which was propagated as the main achievement of PPSH:

... they [the local government] must create better life conditions for the people, who will then see the new living conditions, the changes introduced from people's government assistance, how state is making efforts in that direction and has achieved results.¹⁶⁸

Cities' configuration was used as a powerful tool and at the same time as a stage setting to control and develop the psyche of the masses. The new quarters and public spaces that were created were the main objective of this process. Here, spaces could easily become “Great Spaces through a connection with the grand spatial narratives of socialism”.¹⁶⁹ As a result, the huge metallurgical complex *Çeliku i Partisë* figured as the *forge of socialism*; a children's kindergarten (Fig. 4.1.3) as a paradigm of the *future*

¹⁶⁶ Ivan Szelenyi, “Cities under socialism - and after,” in *Cities after socialism: urban and regional change and conflict in post-socialist societies*, ed. Gregory Andrusz, Michael Harloe, and Ivan Szelenyi, Studies in urban and social change (Oxford; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), 300.

¹⁶⁷ Ministria e Ndërtimit, *Dekreti dhe Rregulloria për hartimin, miratimin dhe zbatimin e planeve rregulluese të qyteteve dhe të fshatrave*, 1978, 3.

“...kundër çdo ndikimi të ideologjisë borgjeze e revizioniste, për përqëndrimin dhe grumbullimin e ndërtimeve, duke kursyer sa më shumë fondin e tokës bujqësore, e sidomos të asaj arë...”

¹⁶⁸ Hoxha, “Nga fjala e mbajtur në komisionin e ngritur për çështjen e urbanizmit të qytetit të Tiranës dhe të qyteteve të tjera të vendit - 19.02.1948,” 458.

“...të krijojnë kushtet për një jetë më të mirë për popullin, i cili të shikojë kushtet e reja të jetesës, të shikojë ndryshimet që vijnë nga ndihma e pushtetit popullor, të shikojë si shteti përpiket për të dhe jep rezultate.”

¹⁶⁹ David Crowley and Susan Emily Reid, eds., *Socialist spaces: sites of everyday life in the Eastern Bloc* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2002), 8.

communist city, etc.¹⁷⁰ Yet, the urban spaces that socialism had now to manage were not totally blank. Previous regimes and eras had left their traces, which were often very powerful. Managing meanings and their impositions upon the existing spaces was as important as creating the new ones. Previous street names were replaced with heroic or revolutionary ones, the old quarters were filled with memorial plates everywhere, many houses were declared part of the glorious national-liberation war, thus cradles of the mother Party. The city of T'irana itself was called *T'irana e kuqe (e Partisë)* - Albanian for "(Party's) Red T'irana", emphasizing its role in the anti-fascist war and the foundation of the Party in an old quarter of the city.

On the other hand, besides being itself a tool for the education and the control of masses' consciousness, the vast urbanisation project was one of the main themes on visual arts along with scenes that reinforced national identity and pride. Scenes from the great spaces that were being created were on paintings, street boards, banknotes, etc. (Fig. 4.1.4) Although the official account was theoretically and practically against the modern movement as a decadent and revisionist way of thinking,¹⁷¹ still the whole project they applied can be evaluated to be modern in aiming to create a new way of life by urbanity, art, science, etc.

Despite this whole project of creating the new man, removal of privileged classes, and application of equity principles, "individuals devised hidden mechanisms for defending their interests and for promoting urban social processes in opposition to official policies, rejecting some of the values of socialist urbanization in favour of a continuation of *bourgeois* attitudes and ideology".¹⁷² Therefore, many residential locations were regarded as better or worse by the citizens, despite the equal infrastructural conditions. Moving from or to these areas was meant to be a status change for everyone. In T'irana's case this phenomena will be analysed in the next section.

¹⁷⁰ Albanian for "Party's Steel", it can be seen as a wordplay on Stalinist ideals, *Stalin* meaning *steel* in Russian. It was advertised by the regime as "the second liberation of Albania", although it was built mainly with financial and technological assistance from RP of China.

¹⁷¹ For a detailed analysis of this critique see:

Alfred Uçi, *Labirintet i modernizmit: kritika e estetikës moderniste*. (Tiranë: Naim Frashëri, 1987).

¹⁷² Enyedi, "Urbanization under socialism," 105.

4.2. Making Tirana a capital for the people

Cities, as organisms often have to deal and react to many traumatic events such as wars or natural disasters. Destructions of this scale can be a significant opportunity to repair or modify shortcomings of earlier urban form. In the case of Tirana, the physical destruction brought by World War II combined with change of the governing regime change, had an immense influence on the nature and scale of urban design of the after-war period.

The state, as a central planning entity, had a powerful influence on the production of (urban and public) space. The authority and pressure applied by the state through city planning, which was viewed as an important means of achieving political purposes, did materialize in the physical layout of the socialist city. On the other hand, the capital with around 100,000 inhabitants appears to have remained more or less on the same grounds as before the war, despite the immediate reconstruction of the city centre. Zischka noted that:

Low houses remain unchanged since Turkish times, bazaars and half decayed booths of artisans, there is a continual smell of donkey manure and rancid mutton fat, and where hens and pigs refuse to be disturbed by any mere pedestrian. The embassy cars go regularly into Yugoslavia to buy provisions for there is a shortage not only of luxury articles, but of many necessities, shortages are in evidence everywhere.¹⁷³

As the cult of the individual began to consolidate, as in every field of Albanian life, Enver Hoxha gave directives also for the future planning of the capital, which would be carried from a commission mainly controlled by members of *Byroja Politike* (Politburo of PLA). He “advised” that the city should have many housing complexes for the workers, large parks, wide streets, a centre adorned with administrative and cultural buildings, an “Unknown Soldier” monument, etc.¹⁷⁴ All these features were studied and implemented on the first urban plan of the city after the war, prepared by this commission in 1957. (Fig. 4.2.1) According to the official account, this plan was prepared only due to the construction of the Palace of Culture in the centre of the

¹⁷³ Vickers, *The Albanians: a modern history*, 180.

¹⁷⁴ Hoxha, “Nga fjala e mbajtur në komisionin e ngritur për çështjen e urbanizmit të qytetit të Tiranës dhe të qyteteve të tjera të vendit - 19.02.1948,” 456.

city,¹⁷⁵ which was one of the many generous gifts of the kind the USSR made to most of the Soviet bloc countries. It prepared the interventions necessary for allocating the Palace. On the other hand, Aliaj et. al observe that this was an immediate plan that was prepared up to the need of restructuring new developments and creating new satellite towns for the emerging labour force.¹⁷⁶ Whatever the starting point, this plan was the first general attempt to put under control the immense and irregular expansion the city had obtained up to the time. It provided “the expansion of the housing areas to meet the population needs, the readjusting of the zoning functions, the improvement and enlargement of the road network and the declaring of distinctive areas as historic values”.¹⁷⁷ Yet for the state ideology, the main achievement was the infiltration of socio-cultural units into the heart of the city, the main square. This was perceived as a triumph of the socialist consciousness of science, culture and progress over the capitalist one made of money generating spaces.¹⁷⁸

Meanwhile, constructions all over the city continued to form its physiognomy – surrounded by different industrial zones, a huge housing area which surrounded the central axis, carrier of the cultural, administrative and sportive units of the city. The later plans would emphasise this layout furthermore. In 1965, a second plan was prepared by the Institute of Planning and Project Nr. 1., which was the first plan that beside the all-time concern about the centre, elaborated the organisation of the city's development and growth, as the official press of the time indicates.¹⁷⁹ It was after this plan that the centre was once again modified with a 15-storey-high hotel and with

¹⁷⁵ Faik Alimehmeti, “Kryeqyteti ynë, Tërana, dje, sot dhe nesër,” *Shkenca dhe Jeta* 06 (1976): 23.

¹⁷⁶ Aliaj, Lulo, and Myftiu, *Tërana, the challenge of urban development*, 52.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁷⁸ Alimehmeti, “Kryeqyteti ynë, Tërana, dje, sot dhe nesër,” 23.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

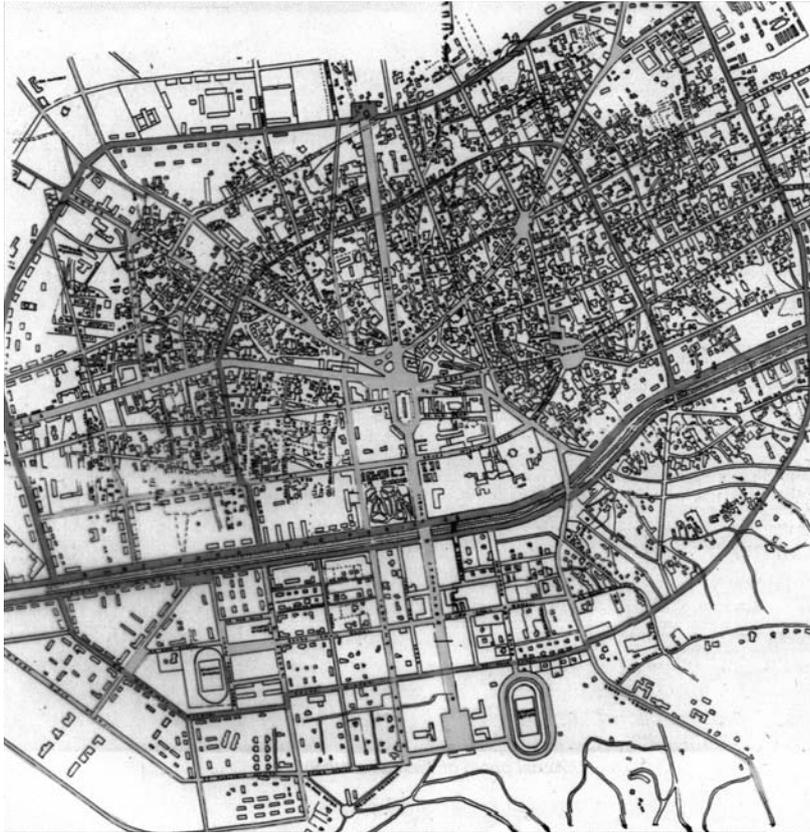


Fig 4.2.1: The urban plan of 1957. The Skënderbej Square still preserves the old structure.

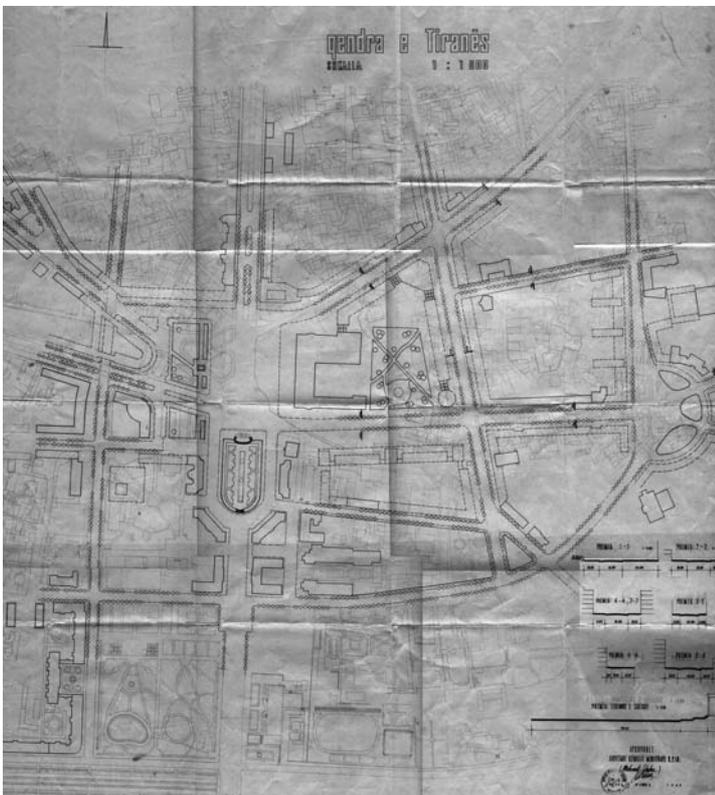


Fig 4.2.2: Preliminary phase plan of 1965 for the centre of Tirana.

some wide streets stretching from the old part of the city to the square that changed its face drastically. (Fig. 4.2.2)

Another urban study was approved in 1976, (Fig. 4.2.3) this time concerning mostly the centre zone. A mini-ring road was introduced to relieve the square from the vehicles, while it would be a clear empty space, now confined and defined by the new National Historical Museum Complex. A statue called “Monument of Freedom” would take place in the middle of this political-cultural huge space, (Fig. 4.2.4) giving it the maximum solemnity possible. After the death of Enver Hoxha, *Byroja Politike* decided among other honorific gestures that this monumentality would be realised by his statue overlooking all the square. In the plan prepared for this remake, a water basin was placed in the centre of the square, while the north exit was marked by a concrete flag staff as high as the hotel “Tirana”.

The last plan prepared under the centralised economic system was launched in 1985 and was ratified in 1989, (Fig. 4.2.5) in a time when the wave of falling totalitarian regimes began spreading all over Eastern Europe. At this time, the city had developed mainly along the east-west direction. This was partly because the north-south dominating axis was mostly institutional, administrative, bounded south by the Grand Park and north by arable land and partly because of the geological suitability of the flat areas eastward. The existing functional zoning had become almost inefficient due to their spreading towards each other's area. Many housing areas lacked proper service facilities regarding their inhabitants' number. The plan was supposed to prepare the city's layout for a period of 20 years and manage with its powerful expansion, which had gone beyond the predicted limits. In relationship to this study, the plan's main features were setting a new outer ring road as a development boundary and the prolongation of the north-south axis toward the airport direction, thus transforming it into the main entrance of the city.

In general, Tirana was planned as a compact, self-sufficient city, that was a scale-model of Albania's state in that period. Some of its spatial features were expressed through strong axial streets, residential areas developed in typical (mostly prefabricated) blocks or collective housing. While urban edges were reserved for horticultural, food and light industrial production, the centre was meant to be the most

distinctive characteristic, the focus of all political, administrative, educational and sportive activities of not only the city, but all the country. Although it is doubtful whether the Albanian architects had any professional connection with their colleagues of the Eastern Bloc, from this aspect the centre of Tirana fits perfectly into the socialist city concept, as it was outlined in the “*Sixteen principles of urban development*”, established by the GDR government in 1950:

...the centre is the heart of the city; it is the political centre for its citizens. The most important political, administrative and cultural establishments are in the city centre. On the central squares, political demonstrations, parades and festivals on public holidays take place. The city centre with squares, main avenues and voluptuous buildings determine the architectural silhouette of the city. Squares are the structural basis for urban development.¹⁸⁰

On the other hand, as the urban development was “promoted and directed from the top governmental level by the allocation of development funds, the first priority was to modernize the top of the urban hierarchy”,¹⁸¹ thus the capital city. As such, in a country with a high degree of centralization, beside the money allocation factor, the largest share of the political, administrative, military and artistic elite was concentrated at Tirana.

The removal of privileged classes claimed by the regime should theoretically be reflected in the urban patterns. In the housing arena, one can expect that no social or occupational group would have better or more favourably located residential sites. Similarly, public services such as transportation, healthcare, etc., should be of equal quality and availability. However, in reality, the aforementioned groups were rewarded by access to special facilities providing health care or goods not generally available. A district of mainly well-preserved villas from the pre-war period were nationalised and used exclusively for the high ranks of *Byroja Politike*. Some high-quality apartment blocks were built for a lower, but still near-to-the-highest rank officials. Thus, services and conditions considered the right of every citizen were treated also as a privilege or

¹⁸⁰ Hartmut Häussermann, “From the socialist to the capitalist city: experiences from Germany,” in *Cities after socialism: urban and regional change and conflict in post-socialist societies*, ed. Gregory Andrusz, Michael Harloe, and Ivan Szélényi, Studies in urban and social change (Oxford; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), 217.

¹⁸¹ Enyedi, “Urbanization under socialism,” 114.

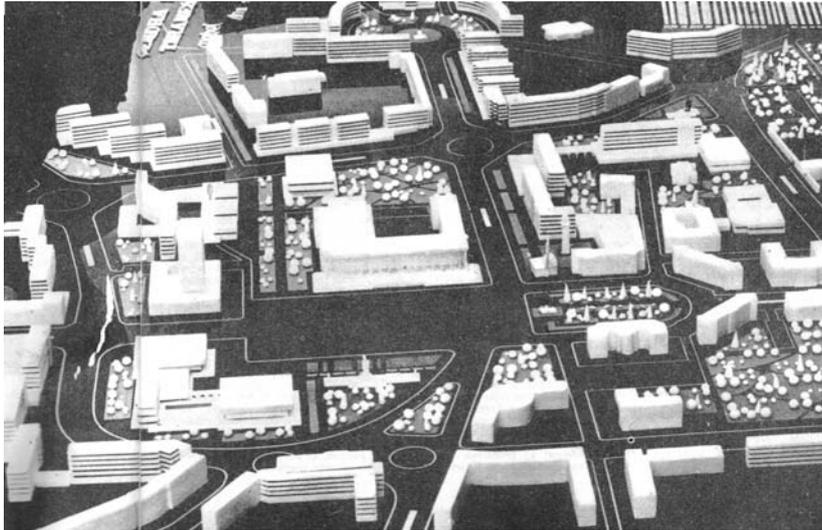


Fig 4.2.3: Scale-model of a version for the plan of the centre of Tirana, 1976.



Fig 4.2.4: Scale-model of a version for the plan of the centre of Tirana, 1976.



Fig 4.2.5: The zoning sheet of the master-plan of Tirana of the year 1989.

reward for these groups. The vicinity of these zones to the main axis of the city gave it a more prestigious meaning on the eyes of the population. After all, this was the intention of the regime to have a solemn and monumental central zone.

The reversal of power and ideology which took place in Albania was a drastic transition process from fascist (or its vassal system) to socialist authority. Nonetheless, in spatial terms this transition meant the inevitable presence of earlier eras' material traces. The existing buildings were the only possible administrative infrastructure and it would have been unwise not to use them, so they had to change their connotations. The past was present more than anywhere else in the city on the main boulevard, and people could use old meanings and memories that did not fit with the new regime's scheme. Nevertheless, the remains of the previous politico-urban regime were more easy to be absorbed and even forgotten mainly for two reasons. First, it was present for only a short time, so the image created was easy to be changed, and also because the amount of people who lived with that image was a minority of what would be the demographics of the socialist capital. Second, most of the image created by the previous regime, which was mainly state buildings and public works, served easily as a base for the future planning, both being dictatorial systems.

In this way, the ministerial complex, the bank building, Dajti Hotel and the stadium after a maintenance process were used for the same purposes. *Casa del Fascio* was used as the central seat of the State University of T'irana, formed in 1957 after the merging of several institutes, while *Gioventù Littoria Albanese* as an archaeological museum. *Opera Dopolavoro Albanese* was used as the seat of the Constituent Assembly in the first years after war, and then transformed into the Higher Institute of Arts, thus closing the educational function of the complex. On the other side, the political-sportive minor square gained an educational aspect, although it ought to have been an indoctrinated one. *Uffici Luogotenenza* would be the seat of the Council of Ministers, and receive some extensions on the years to come. Meanwhile, the boulevard's north and south sections were preserved intact, and renamed respectively "Stalin" and "*Dëshmorët e Kombit*" (Martyrs of the Nation).

On the other hand, as Fowkes put it, "building socialism involved changing people's mind and view of history, ...and new public monuments were expected to play

a major educational role in this respect.”¹⁸² Monumental interventions into the central square of the city began in 1945. In front of the sunken garden designed by di Fausto, a temporary monument to the fallen in war was erected, using an eagle figure part of the demolished Monument to Freedom. This garden later would be adorned with 10 spruces, brought from the Soviet Union. In 1951, a statue of the Soviet dictator, J. V. Stalin of whom the regime was probably the most fanatic follower, was placed. It was a work prepared in the USSR by the renowned Soviet sculptor Nikoláy Vasílyevich Tómskiy.¹⁸³ Enver Hoxha and *Byroja Politike* made the city and whole nation kneel in front of the statue on the day Stalin died, making an oath of loyalty. (Fig 4.2.6; 4.2.7) The statue would later be placed on the boulevard bearing his name, while its central position on the square would be taken over by a monument of Gj. K. Skënderbej. Inaugurated in 1968, the 500th anniversary of his death, the sculpture is a work of the renowned artist Odhise Paskali with Janaq Paço e Andrea Mano.

In late may 1959, the First Secretary of the CP and Premier of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, Nikita S. Khrushchev paid a long visit to Albania. Despite the ideological divergences which emerged after the 20th Congress' speech, this visit culminated with Khrushchev laying the cornerstone of a Palace of Culture in the centre of the city, a present in the name of fraternity from the people of Soviet Union. Similarly, with its counterparts across Soviet bloc countries, its project was prepared by Soviet architects.¹⁸⁴ (Fig. 4.2.9) The old centre of the city began disappearing from now on, as its heart, the old bazaar was torn down to make space for the new political-cultural giant. On the other hand, outside T'irana, a brand new plant for the production of construction materials' (mostly marble treatment) was built to accelerate its works. The palace would house an opera, the national library and several offices and auxiliary spaces. Yet its construction process would face the same fate as the other Soviet investments had after the break that resulted from the Sino-Soviet ideological conflict.

¹⁸² Reuben Fowkes, “The role of monumental sculpture in the construction of socialist space in Stalinist Hungary,” in *Socialist spaces: sites of everyday life in the Eastern Bloc*, ed. David Crowley and Susan Emily Reid (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2002), 65.

¹⁸³ Rubens Shima, “Stalini dhe Lenini, do të ruhen si vlera artistike dhe jo si përmbajtje politike,” *Sot* (Tiranë, July 25, 2008).

¹⁸⁴ “Historia Palacu Kultury i Nauki,” <http://www.pkin.pl/historia/> (accessed April 12, 2010). The use as “gift” of palaces of culture was a spread procedure then, the most famous being the PKiN in Warsaw, whose architect was Lev V. Rudnev.



Fig 4.2.6: The Politburo and the people of Tirana kneeling and making an oath of loyalty before the statue of Stalin, March, 1953.



Fig 4.2.7: The Politburo and the people of Tirana kneeling and making an oath of loyalty before the statue of Stalin. The decoration at the background was raised on purpose. March, 1953.



Fig 4.2.8: Stalin's statue in front of the gift Soviet Union made to Albania: the Palace of Culture



Fig 4.2.9: Soviet and Albanian architects discussing on the model of the Palace of Culture.

All the Soviet architects, engineers and specialists left the country in April 1961, six months before the unofficial expulsion of Albania from Warsaw Pact and COMECON. Works continued under the guidance of Albanian architects E. Dobi, B. Daja, S. Mosko and engineer F. Stërmasi, who made many essential changes to the original project.¹⁸⁵ As this was an immense investment for the economic state of the country, again the Chinese financial help came into rescue.

The scale intervention this 'gift' made to the centre and to the psyche of the citizens was irreparable. On one hand, while expanding artificially the borders of the square, it changed in an irreversible way the relations buildings of the centre had with it and among each other. On the other hand it can be perceived as an urban message from the regime, backed also by the Soviets. In a certain way it told people that the regime of the *dictatorship of proletariat* had already become the dominant power and that the development of the country was henceforth to advance along Stalinist lines. With its immense form, its style and function it also constituted a challenge to the city's lifestyle up to then. It became a new and different type of urban focus from what the citizens were used to – previously the bazaar was the hub of everyday life with the clock tower and the mosque on the background, while now a cultural giant was indicating that the socialist society was to be built not upon old beliefs and habits, but upon the pillars of science, culture and education, which were taking over the centre.

During the first years of the 70s, the regime decided to build (tourism) hotels across the country as a facelift for those few controlled foreign tourists. In 1972, the design process for the main hotel in the centre of Tirana, (Fig. 4.2.11; 4.2.12) which had been previously assigned on the urban plan of 1965 began. A group of architects composed of V. Pistoli, K. Çomi, M. Pepa, P. Kolevica, N. Theodhosi, K. Kolaneci, etc., was formed to prepare the design.¹⁸⁶ Making space for it required the demolition of an orthodox and a catholic old churches, perfectly timed,¹⁸⁷ in a period when Albania had declared itself the first atheist state in the world.¹⁸⁸ Finished in 1979, the new

¹⁸⁵ Enver Faja, *Kush e drejton urbanistikën shqiptare* (Tiranë: UFO Press, 2008), 43.

¹⁸⁶ Petraq Kolevica, *Arkitektura dhe diktatura* (Tiranë: Logoreci, 2004), 171.

¹⁸⁷ Kuvendi Popullor i Republikës Popullore Socialiste të Shqipërisë, *Kushtetuta e Republikës Popullore Socialiste të Shqipërisë*, 1976, sec. C, Article 37.

“Shteti nuk njih asnjë fe dhe përkrah e zhvillon propagandën ateiste për të rrënjësuar te njerëzit botkuptimin materialist shkencor.”

¹⁸⁸ Robert Elsie, *A dictionary of Albanian religion, mythology, and folk culture* (New York: New York

building, although it had to be built under severe economic conditions, emerged to be the highest building in the country, altering the silhouette of the city drastically, and the proportions of the square more violently than any other building.

The last big intervention into the central square during the totalitarian period started in late 1976. The start for the design of a National Historical Museum was given from the central government and a group composed of E. Faja, N. Shehu, P. Kolevica and S. Mosko, directed by the latter.¹⁸⁹ It was foreseen that this would be a complex of three units, namely the Pre-war Period, the National-Liberation War Period and the Building of Socialism, which were to be organised around a monument which would be on the centre of the perspective from the street of Durrës. At the top, the monument would have the personification of E. Hoxha as the architect of the modern Albania, while his closest comrades were to be on the ground base.¹⁹⁰ As P. Kolevica writes, because later the architects were told “from above” that “the struggle of the Albanian people is a single thorough one”,¹⁹¹ the museum also had to be designed as a single unit. (Fig. 4.2.17) The result was a 20 metre high volume of 90x70 metres, which is acclaimed to be the architectural expression of the struggle of Albanian people during history.¹⁹² In 1979, the old municipality building, the only piece closing the square according to the original design, was demolished by being blown up, after having been let into deterioration. The new building was inaugurated on November 8, 1981, the 40th anniversary of the PLA, while the mosaic on the main façade was named “*Shqipëria*” (Albania). In this way the main square received its last major space-confining element, although it still remained a vague space.

On April 11, 1985, Enver Hoxha died, leaving the country in a total isolation and a deteriorating economy. The centre would be used in the same way as he did nearly 30 years ago while paying homage to his ideological father. People from all the country filled the “Skënderbej” square to give their late leader the last farewell. This same space would be used later for the pedestal of his statue, (Fig. 4.2.18) this time alone, gazing at the Dajti mountain slopes and dropping his huge shadow over the

University Press, 2001), 18.

¹⁸⁹ Faja, *Kush e drejton urbanistikën shqiptare*, 123.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹⁹¹ Kolevica, *Arkitektura dhe diktatura*, 228.

¹⁹² Nina Mitrojorgji, “Muzeu Historik Kombëtar,” *Shkenca dhe Jeta*, no. 02 (1979): 6.



Fig 4.2.10: Perspective drawing of a proposal for the Skënderbej Square, prior to the building of Tirana Hotel, 1966.

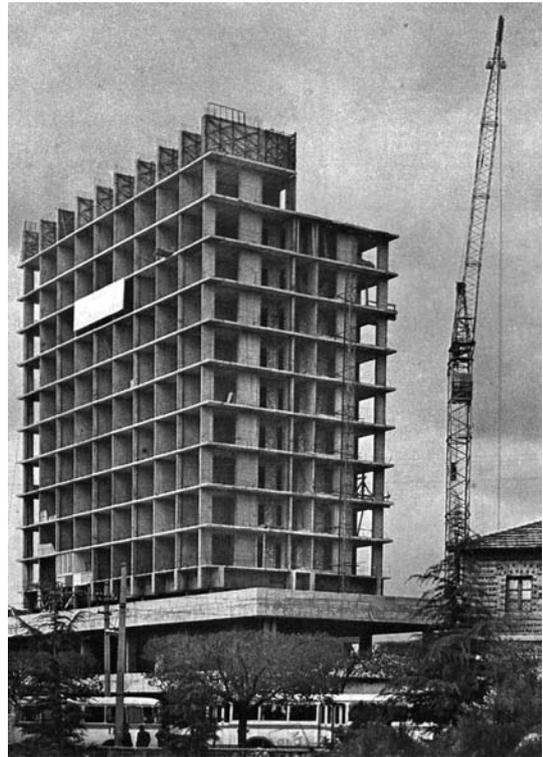


Fig 4.2.11: Photo showing the construction process of Tirana Hotel, 1974.

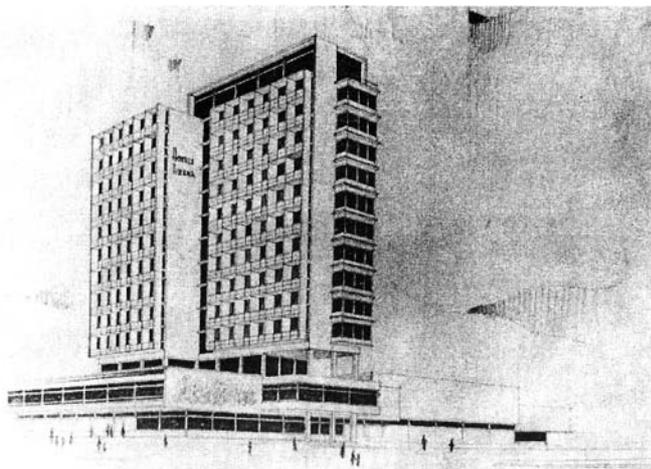


Fig 4.2.12: Perspective drawing of a proposal for Tirana Hotel, by Petraq Kolevica, 1972.

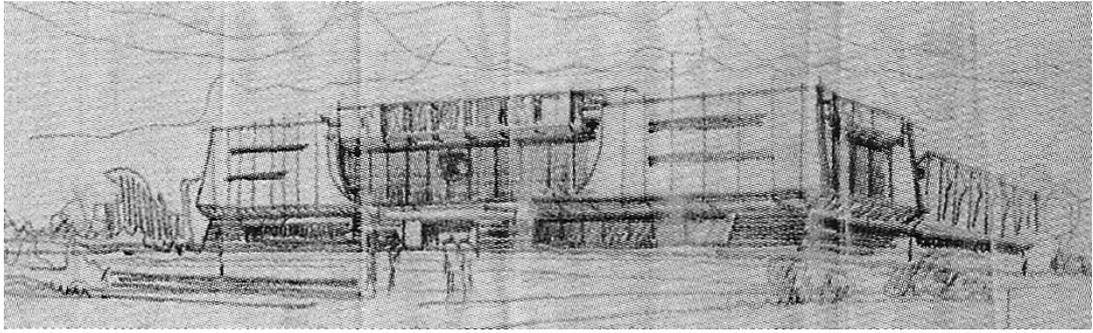


Fig 4.2.13: Perspective drawing of a proposal for the National Historical Museum, by Enver Faja, 1976-81.

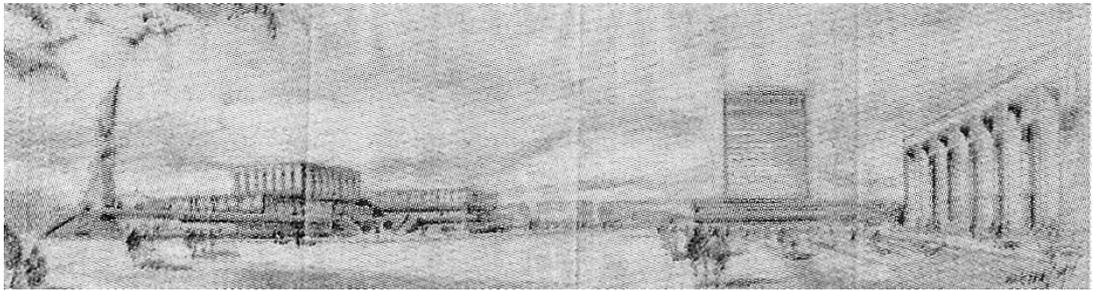


Fig 4.2.14: Perspective drawing of a proposal for the National Historical Museum, by Enver Faja, 1976-81.

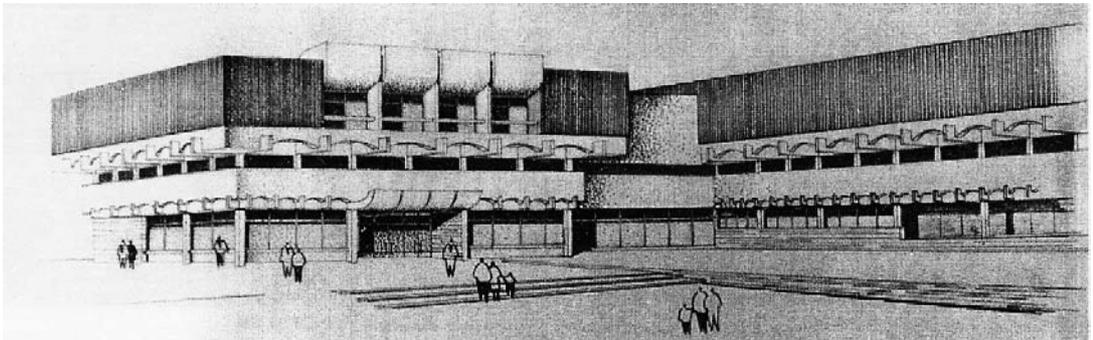


Fig 4.2.15: Perspective drawing of a proposal for the National Historical Museum, by Petraq Kolevica, 1976-81.

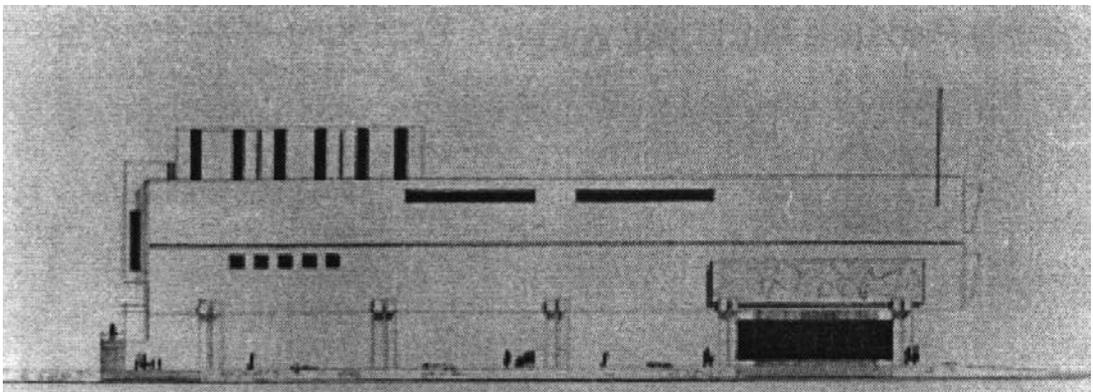


Fig 4.2.16: Façade of a proposal for the National Historical Museum, by Maks Velo, 1976-81.



Fig 4.2.17: Scale model of the final version of the project for the National Historical Museum, 1976-81.



Fig 4.2.18: Perspective drawing of the new arrangement for the Skënderbej Square, 1986.



Fig 4.2.19: Perspective drawing of the project for the monument of Enver Hoxha in Skënderbej Square, 1986.

square. This was one of the decisions *Byroja Politike* made in honour of *the architect of the modern Albania*, besides naming the university of Tirana, many industrial plants, etc., after him. Behind the statue, a high-rise building with a glazed façade, which would close the square composition and at the same time serve as a background for the monument was designed, but was not realised. (Fig. 4.2.19) A flag staff as high as the surrounding buildings that was designed to take place on the axis of the boulevard, also was not realised. In front of it, a number of different levelled water-basins would play the mirror to the image of the leader and the national flag.¹⁹³ Together with many floristic and pavement details, they were aimed to minimise the huge scale of the square and the monument. (Fig. 4.2.20) Nevertheless, the space created was already out of any human scale, an almost empty rectangle of nearly 4.5 ha.

There were major interventions also outside the central square, in different periods. The first was the building housing the *Komiteti Qendror i PPSH* (Central Committee of PLA). It was built opposite of the Council of Ministers' building in 1954, with a project of Andon Lufi and Skënder Luarasi, from the few architects that had graduated before the war in western schools. It was designed under the Soviet classicism style, with many façade decorations. (Fig. 4.2.21) This building now houses the offices of the parliament, the Ombudsman and several other units.

Another building is the Presidential Palace, (Fig. 4.2.22) of which the original purpose was to house the embassy of the Soviet Union, but after the break of the relationships, it became the seat of *Presidiumi i Kuvendit Popullor* (Presidency of People's Assembly). It received the actual status after the fall of the regime and the introduction of President Institution on April 30, 1991.

On the other side of the boulevard, during the early 80s, the construction of the Palace of Congresses started upon the project designed by a group of architects directed by Klement Kolaneci.¹⁹⁴ Being the biggest venue in Albania, with the main hall of 2100 seats, its volume reaches a height of 18 – 23 metres, trying not to overlook the adjacent historical buildings. (Fig. 4.2.23; 4.2.24) It is acclaimed to be one of the best

¹⁹³ Klement Kolaneci and Ilir Fico, "Qendra e Tiranës," *Shtetëria dhe Jeta*, no. 03 (1986): 7.

¹⁹⁴ Kolevica, *Arkitektura dhe diktatura*, 240.

Here the author implies the direction of last main projects in Tirana by K. Kolaneci, son-in-law of dictator E. Hoxha. Together with his wife, Pranvera Hoxha, he is attributed the direction of selected design groups of the Palace of Congresses and later the Enver Hoxha museum.

modern interpretations of the vernacular architecture of several regions in Albania, the façade columns and windows resembling the old traditional elements of houses in Gjirokastër, Berat, etc.¹⁹⁵

Further north, at the intersection of the boulevard with Lana creek, after the demolition of some two-storey houses, the Museum of Enver Hoxha, inaugurated in October 16, 1988, his 80th birthday anniversary, was built. (Fig. 4.2.25) The design group composed of K. Kolaneci, P. Hoxha, Pirro Vaso and Vladimir Bregu, envisaged a shell-like structure with a well-lit inner main hall, where in the centre stood a marble statue of the dictator.¹⁹⁶ After the fall of the regime the building was modified and renamed International Cultural Centre. Nowadays, it is deteriorating while waiting for a façade reparation.

In 1971, the design process for the Gallery of Visual Arts, (Fig. 4.3.1) of which the architect is Enver Faja, of the generation of architects who studied in the “people's democracies” countries, began. It was built at the lot between the ministerial complex and Dajti Hotel, partly in 1976, to be completed in 1979 with an exhibition capacity of 700 artworks. After the fall of the regime it underwent several interventions and extensions, and was also renamed as National Arts Gallery.¹⁹⁷

While the southern part of the boulevard was the stage of pompous buildings and political-cultural context, the “Stalin” boulevard had only a few of them, and more housing units. Among prominent buildings is the maternity hospital built during the reign of King Zog by Italian investors. In December 12, 2004, it was renamed as Obstetric – Gynaecological University Hospital “Queen Geraldine” in honour of the first queen of the Kingdom of Albania.

Opposite of it stands the building of the Faculty of Natural Sciences of University of Tirana, built during the first years following the war in a neoclassical style. Next, further south stands the building of Ministry of Justice. Built in 1953 as one of the biggest hotels in the city, and named *Arbëria* (the name of Albania during middle ages), it was one of the Soviet style buildings of the city. While the decree for the use of it is of August 8, 1999, the works for its renovation, which left almost no

¹⁹⁵ Spiro Bakallbashi and Kujtim Meka, “Pallati i Kongreseve,” *Shkenca dhe Jeta*, no. 02 (1984): 10.

¹⁹⁶ Klement Kolaneci, “Si e ndërtoam piramidën për Enverin,” *Albania* (Tiranë, January 22, 2008).

¹⁹⁷ Faja, *Kush e drejton urbanistikën shqiptare*, 63.



Fig 4.2.20: The monument of Enver Hoxha in Skënderbej Square, Tirana.



Fig 4.2.21: The boulevard 'Martyrs of Nation' during a military parade celebrating May 1st. On the right, the building of Komiteti Qendror i PPSH, on the background the old Palazzo Littorio, now seat of SU of Tirana.



Fig 4.2.22: The seat of Presidiumi i Kuvendit Popullor, now Presidency.



Fig 4.2.23: Palace of Congresses, along the boulevard “Martyrs of Nation”.



Fig 4.2.24: Photo showing the construction process of the Palace of Congresses.



Fig 4.2.25: Museum of Enver Hoxha, 1988

trace of the old architecture, lasted until 2005.

Even further south, stands an eight-storey flats building, designed by P. Kolevica in 1972. Built during 1973-75, it was commissioned for foreign lecturers of SU of Tirana and for the use of CAAC – Civil Aviation Administration of China. Opposite of it, the old headquarters of Albanian Telegraphic Agency, designed by Maks Velo in 1973, rises. Both of these buildings can be considered as advanced examples for the time they were designed in, knowing the economic-political conditions in which they were realised.

The rest of the spaces over the boulevard and the central square were flat apartments or green spaces. At the end of the dictatorial regime, as a result of various interventions in different periods, the centre of Tirana had a hybrid character, in terms of styles, space use, typology, etc. Despite the acclaims of the official account that at last a harmonious centre composition had been achieved, the reality was different. Instead of being a place inviting people to join each other, its scale is more dividing than any other place in the city. The distances, the heights of volumes and other features form a conflictual unfinished space. If we were to cite a foreign visitor of early thirties who is recalled to have said about Tirana in those days that he “had seen cities without boulevards, but never a boulevard without a city”, it can be easily stated that the city has created its character, but the centre/boulevard has lost the homogeneity and already its history. These factors would be crucial on later urban and also political developments of the city.

4.3. The unseen actors of the urban scene

After the war, the break with the past was the main theme in every possible field of life in Albania. Economic strategies were at lead position of these changes, with the removal of private property at its roots. This also brought about the elimination of private practise of the profession that had just begun to flourish before the war. Firstly, the service sector and later small craftsmen were collectivised into middle cooperatives with the pretext of a more efficient production process. After that

all services, production fields and other possible professional practices were nationalised, thus the state became the sole huge employer who would decide what, how, when it needed. Architecture was of no exception. During the pre-war period, several private practices, whose work was controlled by the municipality, operated in the city. The Italian occupation brought a centralised system for the main works in the country, *Ufficio Centrale per l'Edilizia e l'Urbanistica dell'Albania* (Central Office for Construction and Urban Planning in Albania), which was at the same time the control mechanism for every construction. On the other hand, many works were designed by Italian architects or engineers. Another issue standing in the roots of this problem derives from the architecture professional education. There were very few Albanian architects before the war, all of them been graduated abroad mainly as civil engineer-architect, providing that no higher education of any kind existed in the country. Some of them left the country after the occupation, like Qemal Butka (graduated in Vienna) – also mayor of Tirana during 1936-37. This generation of architects, together with Italian designers were the first to bring in Albania the wave of style change that was sweeping across Europe, of course within the economic and social limits of the country. Here, we can mention Skënder Luarasi and Andon Lufi, both of whom received their degrees in Austria; Lutfi Strazimiri and Vasil Noçka, graduated in Germany; Kristo Sotiri, Haxhi Dauti, Ibrahim Prushi, Çefo Fico and Naim Shashai, graduated in Italy. As Kolevica would emphasize later, “this generation was the kind of intellectuals undesirable for the new regime, but their work needed to be exploited”.¹⁹⁸ At the end, they were the only capital in the hands of a country emerged from the war poorer than ever. Nevertheless, this part of the society, i.e. the intellectuals of any field that have studied in Western countries, were continuously under severe suspicion and surveillance, and many were imprisoned or even shot.

On the other hand, during the first years after the war, with the establishment of mutual help politics in Eastern Bloc, many students were sent to USSR, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia to study architecture (often as engineer-architects). Here we can name Koço Miho, Gani Strazimiri, Sokrat Mosko, Koço Çomi, Enver Faja, Valentina Pistoli, etc. In 1951, the Polytechnic Institute of Tirana was founded,

¹⁹⁸ Kolevica, *Arkitektura dhe diktatura*, 72.

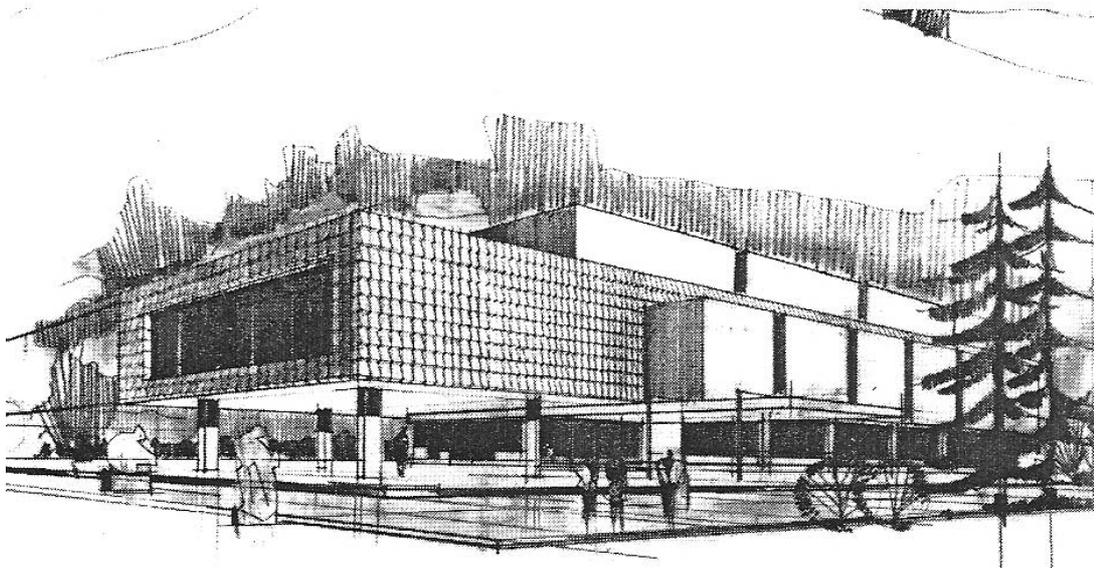


Fig 4.3.1: Gallery of Visual Arts, by Enver Faja, 1976.

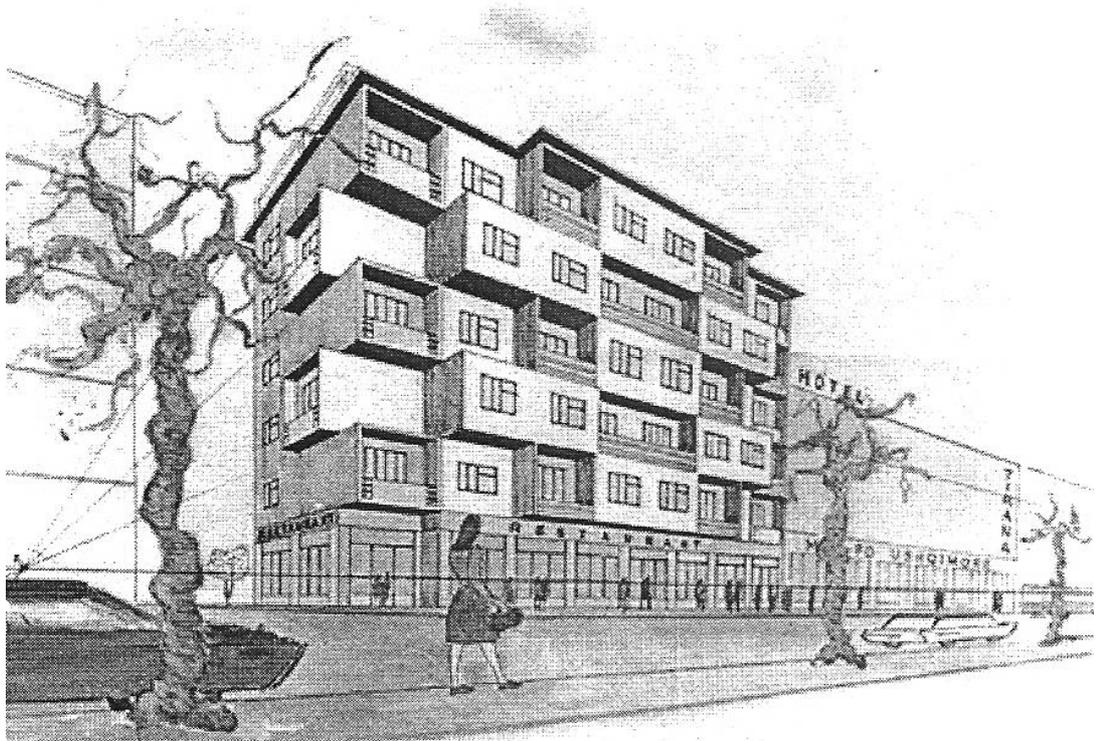


Fig 4.3.2: Apartments block, by Maks Velo, 1972. The architect has been deported for this project among others, because this (modern) was regarded as an reactionary style.

incorporating the Civil Engineering Department with an academic staff including several of these architects and engineers together with many Soviet lecturers. Later, in 1957, it would become a part of the State University of Tirana.¹⁹⁹ All these professionals were also appointed at *Ndërrmarja Shtetërore Projekti* (State Enterprise “Project”) founded in 1947, who designed most of the projects built around the country,²⁰⁰ in accordance with the five-year plans prepared by *Komisioni i Planifikimit Shtetëror* (State Planning Commission). This meant the official end of private architectural practising. It would be a crucial point, both professionally for those few architects used to another practising system, the new ones that would come and in terms of subsequent architectural developments. Unlike Italian fascism, that had applied the same organisational pattern in the country, now the investor, the supervisor and the designer was the same entity, able to have influence on every stage of the process. This high degree of centralisation working system had three major steps. First, a draft of the plan was sent from the State Planning Commission to the enterprise (the quota phase). These plans were prepared for a time span of five years, comprised into twenty year development plans. The enterprise, then, sent their revisions back (the preliminary plan phase) so that the Commission could coordinate the various plans of different fields of economy and pass the final version on to the Council of Ministers for approval. The final approved plan was sent back to the enterprises as law.²⁰¹

Understanding the professional conditions of those years for Albanian architects would be of crucial importance in analysing the built environment that they have designed. Albania had not inherited a rich architectural environment in terms of professionalism. As aforementioned, there were only a few architects, who were not organised in any kind of professional structure. Housing, as the main composition of the cities, was mostly produced by the owners, without any official project. These factors brought the lack of a clear trend of the built environment, where one can see in juxtaposition samples of neoclassical, proto-rationalist and Ottoman architecture, built almost at the same time. The period when the spreading of rationalist influences that were brought from the Italian professionals or Albanian architects trained abroad, was

¹⁹⁹ Maks Velo, *Paralel me arkitekturën*, ed. Artan Shkreli and Daniel Gjoni (Tiranë: Njeriu, 1998), 29.

²⁰⁰ Ministria e Ndërtimit, *Dekret për Akordim Dekoratasb*, Nr. 2434, April 1, 1957.

²⁰¹ O'Donnell, *A coming of age: Albania under Enver Hoxha*, 177.

disrupted by the war.

Meanwhile, a comparison with the other countries of Eastern Bloc, reveals that there were great differences of architectural tradition and cultivation. As Åman indicates, in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and the future DDR, the Modernist tendency was strong and dominant. In Poland and Yugoslavia it was balanced by a Neoclassical tendency, while in Romania and Bulgaria the Neoclassical style predominated.²⁰² Traditionalism had already began losing ground towards rationalist modern ideas. Their cultivation had began during the years of the Bauhaus school and continued after the war by means of architectural journals, such as *Tér és forma* in Hungary, *Architektura ČSR* in Czechoslovakia, and *Architektura* in Poland.²⁰³ While reconstruction works gathered pace all over the countries, they continued publishing various competition entries and previously finished buildings. And of course, there was what was coming from the east; after having won the official struggle over all avant-garde movements, the Stalinist Soviet architecture, a mixture of Neoclassical, Renaissance and Art-Deco influences. It was brought along with the organisation of state planning bureaus. The new scheme of things was introduced quickly, starting with Bulgaria early in 1948. Czechoslovakia and Hungary followed suit that year; next came Poland, at the end of the year, and finally, at the beginning of 1949, Romania and the DDR.²⁰⁴ The application of central planning on architectural practising was among the preconditions for creating the proper built environment.

On the other hand, as no architectural educational infrastructure existed up to that day and because architecture as an art was neglected compared to infrastructure and simple constructions, in Albania, the trends of architecture used to change according to the political-cultural alliances. Some two-storey brick buildings constructed by means of voluntary work,²⁰⁵ according to Yugoslav building standards, were the first housing units in Tirana. After the break with Yugoslavia, the Soviet architecture began to enter the stage of constructions in full pomposity.²⁰⁶ Of this kind of architecture were the “Stalin” Textile Plant, *Kinostudioja “Shqipëria e Re”* (“New

²⁰² Åman, *Architecture and ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin era : an aspect of Cold War history*, 12.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

²⁰⁵ Abitz, “Post-socialist city development in Tirana,” 60.

²⁰⁶ Velo, *Paralel me arkitekturën*, 35.

Albania” Film Studio), housing along the Lana bank (nicknamed *Shallvare* – shalwar), the faculties of Natural Sciences and of History and Philology, etc. The most prominent building of this style is the *Komiteti Qendror i PPSH* (Central Committee of PLA). In the last years before, and more intensively after the break with the USSR this trend was abandoned, due also to political conjunctures. Architects and engineers had gained a certain freedom on design, as all arts began to be much more deliberately expressive in style terms. In 1968, architecture was detached from civil engineering as an independent department, signalling to the importance that the profession had achieved for the regime. Also, during the late '50s *Ndërrmarja Shtetërore Projekti*, was transformed into *Instituti i Studimeve dhe Projektimeve Nr. 1* (Institute of Studies and Design Nr.1 – this is an unspecified naming, casting shadow over the reasons, in a time when other ISDs had their own speciality named, such as: *Instituti i Studimeve dhe Projektimeve të Gjeologjisë dhe Minierave* - Institute of Geological and Mining Studies and Design; *Instituti i Studimeve dhe Projektimeve Mekanike* - Institute of Mechanical Studies and Design, etc.).

However, the freedom was meant to last as much as it seemed harmless to the foundations of the regime. As both sides, political leaders and architects wanted to imprint their respective ideologies or principles on the newly created spaces, designing for power and professional or national identity at the same time brought a clash between the two groups. After the clearly political purges of the breaks with Titoists and Khrushchevites, there came the influence of the Cultural Revolution. On the base of all these eliminations was the fight over one's success, Stalin's thesis of the intensified class struggle. Any kind of art other than socialist realism was regarded as bourgeois, reactionary art and had to be punished. Artists of all fields had to be controlled by means of a central organisation, so that their work reflected the glorious new life. This mechanism of control would be *Lidhja e Shkrimtarëve dhe Artistëve* (League of Writers and Artists), founded in October 1945, in which the architects were represented as a mini-section incorporated into the visual arts branch, created in 1967.

In the eyes of the regime, architects were seen as troublemakers and mostly had to be under surveillance.²⁰⁷ In 1971, the First National Meeting of Architects, where

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 71.

they discussed substantial and essential issues of building, was organised. This meeting was, of course, under the tutelage and approval of the Party's highest ranks, whose several individuals also were among the participants. It gave the architects the possibility of a professional affirmation and daring more towards the aesthetic treatment of buildings. Yet, in 1974, the IV Plenum of the PLA brought to an end any kind of liberalisation seen in arts up to the date. It recalled once again the principles of the socialist art against the bourgeois, modernist and other reactionary style. Singers, composers, writers were punished with different grades up to life sentences. Architects were not spared. Many of them were put under trial and deported, as were Petraq Kolevica or Maurizio Bego or imprisoned, like Maks Velo.

After the purge in arts, the main slogan of the creativity had to be “a national form, with a socialist substance”. For example, this was the motto during the design process of the National Historical Museum. Furthermore, as usual in big scale projects, a draft of ideas about how the museum should be was given to the architects. Beside the ideological and economic issues these directives were also about form and planning.²⁰⁸

On the other hand, because of severe economic shortage, the *tipizim* – the unification of housing units into standardised spaces – became the primary design issue. Every year, several units were produced, which were the only possibilities for the architects to transform them into different buildings. As Velo describes, this standardised design was the main cause of the destruction of the architecture and of the spiritual world of the Albanian people as well.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Kolevica, *Arkitektura dhe diktatura*, 229.

The author describes how they were told to design the building with motives resembling a bandoleer, as the Albanian people made their way throughout history fighting for their rights.

²⁰⁹ Velo, *Paralel me arkitekturën*, 36.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The task is to find a form for the soul of the masses.²¹⁰

Robert Breuer

Capital cities are an important element of the national framework of any country and on the other hand, they exist due to the relationship with the nation-state. Regardless of their size, structure, wealth or power, the capitals are viewed as generators of change, thus they can demonstrate and promote with a certain hierarchy the priorities of their state. Be it democracy, religion, a king's or a president's power, throughout ages, the architecture and urban design of capitals seem to be an excellent representative of their values, and their radiant culture overshadows the provinces while becoming their representative to the world. Capitals, due to their state representative role, have to be as much symbolic as functional; time-proof yet flexible to keep the pace of development. All these tasks are performed in a large scale by means of built environment. In “Der Stadtebau als architektonisches Problem”, Robert Breuer estimated architecture as a genuine means of expressing political conditions: “Architecture is power made concrete; architecture is the materialisation of social rule. The architect is the instrument of rendering centres of power visible. And architecture is the medium by which the transitoriness of social activity assumes an enduring image that is comprehensible for all time.”²¹¹

Being such, it seems that no matter who the commissioning power is, the question remains the same: *How can a successfully representational capital to one's values be built?* This question directs us to another question which has to be answered simultaneously: *Which architectural elements and urban design decisions can correctly represent e.g.*

²¹⁰ Sonne, *Representing the state: capital city planning in the early twentieth century*, 31.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

independence, democracy, national identity and at the same time be unconditional to the citizen? Here it should be clarified that representation is used as a political means, a depiction of political values and ideals, regardless of who is being represented (state, people, corporation) and its legitimacy (status, war, election). On the other hand, citing Breuer, what is to be articulated “is whether such materialisations occurred by chance, incidentally, randomly; or whether these installations of monuments were truly intended, whether these materialisations of the *Zeitgeist* in architecture occurred with deliberation.”²¹² While in the first presumption, built environment would be a symptom of political circumstances, it would take on the role of a deliberate symbol if the second one applies.

Having changed political stance many times since the proclamation as capital, both the aforementioned situations seem to be eligible in the context of planning developments in Tirana. During the interval examined in this study, the city was an opportunity to showcase the state-sanctioned power of order with paradigmatic and symbolic force. Nevertheless, this presumption cannot be securely applied for the first twenty years of the capital, since the involvement scale of the head of state (President, than King Zog) in the deciding process has not yet been revealed. Yet, for sure the built environment created during his regime can be classified among its symptoms, in a time when Baroque architecture, with its references to imperial Antiquity and classic cultural traditions, seemed to represent the highest stylistic level. On the other hand, being a totally centrally planned system, the spaces created during the dictatorship of proletariat years were easily managed by and produced along official lines, thus creating its representational spaces. However, minor tolerations, harmless to the regime's ideological representation could be done, and there, architects could try out-of-canon solutions²¹³ – but the area concerning this study, the main boulevard of the city surely is not the case.

As displayed in the previous sections, Tirana as a capital was subject of several planning efforts where monumentality and physical separation were primary concerns, overshadowing attempts to use architectural elements culturally relevant to the city's

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Velo, *Paralel me arkitekturën*, 89.

context. Among boulevards and public squares, analysing these efforts' main elements would be helpful to re-examine how they were designed and perceived. At the same time, comparing them with the elements of coetaneous capitals will contribute to identifying Tirana's position among the early twentieth century capital plans.

During this period, centrality, height, and monumentality seem to be the most obvious attributes of capital city designs. Among the possible urban elements, the square – axis pair usually was the most frequently employed.

In Tirana, the axis – firstly ideated by Brasini – serves as a central spine, running through the entire city linking the old and the new parts of the city, along which all the major public buildings are anchored. While in Canberra the (Land's) axis and in Helsinki the *Valtakunnankatu* were designed in the service of democracy, in Ankara the Atatürk Boulevard was meant to represent the success of the republic and its main power hubs and it marked the presence of a colonial power in the New Delhi, where it was the dominant feature. Moreover, although there was no *de jure* colonisation of Albania at the time of design, the boulevard fitted perfectly into the kingdom's and later the Italian colonisers' official account. On the other hand, urban elements in a city's skyline can make a grand impression seen from greater distances, and the axis/boulevard was an optimal way to stage government buildings in an impressive manner. This was one of the functions of many axial solutions – Canberra, Helsinki, Ankara, New Delhi and Tirana made full use of it. (Fig. 5.1; 5.2; 5.3)

As in Canberra, where the Land's Axis was meant to be a showcase of the democracy and peace, but is used to commemorate war and its fallen or in New Delhi where *Rajpath* (King's Way) was intended to emphasize the Viceroy's palace but is used for the annual Republic Day parade, which takes place on every January 26, the use of Tirana's main boulevard has changed with time. It was firstly meant by Brasini to connect the ministerial complex with the presidential-later-royal palace (which was never built) in south; in ten years, the southern end was changed by Bosio into the highest organisation of Fascism, *Palazzo Littorio*, and after only four years, at last, it became the seat of Tirana State University's rectorate. Thus, change in the meanings this space carried was forced more than once. During the years of the dictatorship of proletariat, the boulevard, after being named north “Stalin” and south “Martyr's of

Nation”, experienced a depletion of any social meaning. Theoretically, “the street was supposed to belong to the 'people'. Boulevards and central squares, the tools of the absolutist city-builder, were used for parades and demonstrations.²¹⁴ Nevertheless, as a large scale proletarianisation was applied, most people became state employees. Only centrally controlled and organised professional, cultural and other associations were allowed, and those were responsible for isolating any form of social activity at the workplace as much as possible. Thus the old role of the settlement and its confining space as the place for political socialization was violently taken. Unintentionally, as an inner response, the central axis was turned into a space where almost all the streets' flow poured in, vaguely socialising.²¹⁵ On the other hand, the only other use the boulevard had were the grandiose military-sportive propaganda parades used at every possible occasion to demonstrate the power and liveliness of the regime.²¹⁶

Regarding its means of use during the second half of the century, the boulevard in Tirana can also be perceived as a mall, if compared to the other aforementioned designs, although physically it was not. It can comply at once with several points that malls on capital city plans in the early twentieth century have been carried out, citing Sonne:

as an axis it provided a dramatic approach to the government buildings at the far end; as a large public space with the surrounding public buildings it was of direct use to the public legitimisation, which no government system could afford to forego in times of growing mass participation; as a green space it was an ideal response to the hygienic requirements of the time for fresh air and recreational space in the city.²¹⁷

The boulevard was the core of the city, while its social-political centre had shifted twice during the past century. A centrally developing plan seemed to be the easiest way of controlling a city's urbanism, and when the subject is the capital city, consequently, the centre would be a governmental one, not only for functionality but also to emphasize its representation. The planning of the new ministerial complex

²¹⁴ Häussermann, “From the socialist to the capitalist city: experiences from Germany,” 216.

²¹⁵ Ardian Vehbiu, *Kulla e Sbatit* (Tiranë: K&B, 2003), 46.

²¹⁶ Parades took place usually twice a year, on May 1 and November 29 – the liberation day, or also when any kind of important anniversary like the 40th anniversary of the Party's foundation, the 30th anniversary of the People's Army, etc., was celebrated.

²¹⁷ Sonne, *Representing the state: capital city planning in the early twentieth century*, 296.



Fig 5.1: The many faces of the city's spine: the boulevard *Dëshmorët e Kombit* as a military showdown...



Fig 5.2: ... as an empty, huge and out of scale monumental space.



Fig 5.3: or as a showdown of the youth and country's achievements.

On the other hand, the square element in Tirana is repeated again at the southern end of boulevard. Leaving the central square to carry its everyday functions, the Italian Fascism created a new centre (although not geographically) by placing all its organisations around a forum-like geometrically rigid space named *Piazza Littoria* (Lictor Square). This large rectangular area together with the surrounding pure-lined travertine clad buildings were pure reminiscences of the Roman Imperial past, of which the fascist propaganda was fond of. Their placement on slopes of the southern hills adds them an impressive and meaningful backdrop; almost the same practice was used by Griffin in the location of governmental district in Canberra. Again, here, the elevation of the buildings upon huge ornamented pedestals is used as a means to emphasize their statute.

Although the disassociation from the past was the headline of the official account after the WWII, in terms of urban meanings, it followed the pattern applied by Fascism, continuing to turn the squares from small spaces fed by surrounding facilities into large plazas, hubs of political and ideological power but non-friendly to everyday use by the citizen. Thus, contrary to democracy principles, the centre of the city assumed the role of a buffer zone between the masses and the political power through extremely impressive yet placeless ceremonial centres. Paradoxically, this happened in a time when the development of urban planning projects proceeded towards the goal of creating the new society, which was to be flag-bearers of the modern republic, prosperity and wealth, all for the citizens.

Stylistic approaches were also the means used to depict and communicate power or trying to forge a certain national identity. In this aspect, Albania's past could not constitute an idyllic example to be followed as many other countries did, because of the lack of a cultivated and preserved architecture heritage. Also, the national awakening of the mid-nineteenth century spent almost all of its human and political resources towards the language and history goal, which seemed the only possible means to unify the different regions of occupied Albania, unlike many other neighbouring countries, whose architecture's typical role in forming the national identity can be clearly read in this passage from *The Architecture of Modern Italy*:

Once Italy had been made, its architecture was called upon to make Italians. The Enlightenment of the eighteenth century invested architecture with the power of moral reform, and Romantic thought focused this reform on the goal of national unification. In Rome, the representational role of architecture was paramount in the shaping of a collective identity. The power of these architectural instruments of persuasion relied upon the inheritance of an indigenous classicism in which artistic, civil, and national identities were indissolubly united. The collective memory of the new nation was shaped efficiently by the capital's monumental architecture.²¹⁸

So, the first possibilities of creating a national style emerged after the proclamation of independence, but even then, because of the fragility of the state and its organisms, the priority was minimal.

It was on such ground that the first big scale projects began to develop in Tirana, all by foreign architects, whose planning approaches were oriented on the Haussmanian model while government buildings were designed in academic Classicist style, based on aspirations for hierarchy, rank and grandiosity. While throughout Europe and wider, the emergence of modernism dictated new canons of design and planning, this could be, on a certain scale unintentionally, a strategy of employing style to demonstrate the country's participation in the international political stage, due to the wide spread of the monumental Classicism in many of the Imperial powers' cities during the nineteenth century. Although the years of Fascist occupation observe a drift from this kind of architecture towards a more rationalist and pure style, still, the monumentality would be a central issue, due to the representational role of its buildings.

After the war, *the dictatorship of proletariat* applied the same Classicist approach to build some important buildings. This was not due to the need for affirmation as the previous regime, but because of the deep influence the art and architecture of Stalinist URSS had in those years. Being a foreign-imposed kind of design in a very short interval of time, it was so fragile as to be abandoned immediately after the political break between the two countries.²¹⁹ This theoretically marked the beginning of the efforts to design and build according to the national identity, but that had still to be

²¹⁸ Terry Kirk, *The architecture of modern Italy*, vol. 1 (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), 259.

²¹⁹ Velo, *Paralel me arkitekturën*, 32.

formed. This search for identity was merely a façade for the austere constrictions on the financial aspect of design and constructions, while in large scale buildings like the National History Museum it was a means on the hand of the rulership to control the architects.²²⁰

The planning and design of Tirana, as those of other national capitals discussed here, have been deeply affected by the political, economic, and social forces that erected them and furthered their development. This fact is enhanced when the subject is the capital's heart, the main boulevard, which through years has been designed to serve from personal to supranational conjunctures rather than to advance 'national identity'. In this way, the first question about the representation of one's values can be positively answered. Viewing the designs from the respective commissioning power, they seem to have fit their official account, even in the case of the dictatorship during 1945-91, which had to inherit many structures from the previous regime, this due to the totalitarian aspect of both them. Built environment is indeed capable of assuming new meanings thanks to the fact that they can house new uses. In this sense, every conventional political meaning in capital cities can change as the use of the cities changes. While this fact helped the regime adjust the panorama for many of the inherited structures, it also became a means on the hands of the citizens, who often could build their own account of the totalitarian spaces along the boulevard. If the success of representative elements can be assessed in this way, the same cannot be said of the second query about the peaceful relationship with the citizen. As more than ninety percent of the timespan of this study had been part of dictatorial regimes, a negative response would be a natural consequence. While building their perfect representational spaces, these regimes have alienated the citizens from their city's centre.

In this aspect, for the actual centre of Tirana, although its planning started in the first quarter of the twentieth century, more or less in the same time with Ankara, Canberra, etc., the followed course did not give similar results because of the harsh period of dictatorial regime the city experienced. While other cities managed to turn their main central axis into real living cores, in Tirana, it remained

²²⁰ Kolevica, *Arkitektura dhe diktatura*, 229.

merely a monumental space that still emerges as a problematic area regarding its relationship with the citizens. In March 2004, an international competition for a master-plan for the city's centre was launched,²²¹ and since then many efforts have been made to reconcile the centre with its citizens. However, due to political mentality, economic difficulties and other social obstacles, no serious interventions have come out. Nevertheless, the boulevard continues to be the spine of the city, (Fig 5.4-5.9) be it monumental, a pedestrian avenue or a major traffic line; the mark it has left on the development of the city since Brasini put the first lines has been remarkable.

²²¹ For further information on this competition:
Odeta Durmishi, "Competing urban visions for the capital of Albania: international projects for Tirana city centre" (Master's Thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2008).
Tirana Municipality: <http://www.tirana.gov.al/?cid=2,13,330>



Fig 5.4: City layout of Tirana in 1917



Fig 5.5: Proposed city layout of Tirana in 1929



Fig 5.6: City layout of Tirana in 1930



Fig 5.7: Proposed city layout of Tirana in 1940



Fig 5.8: City layout of Tirana in 1961



Fig 5.9: Proposed city layout of Tirana in 1965

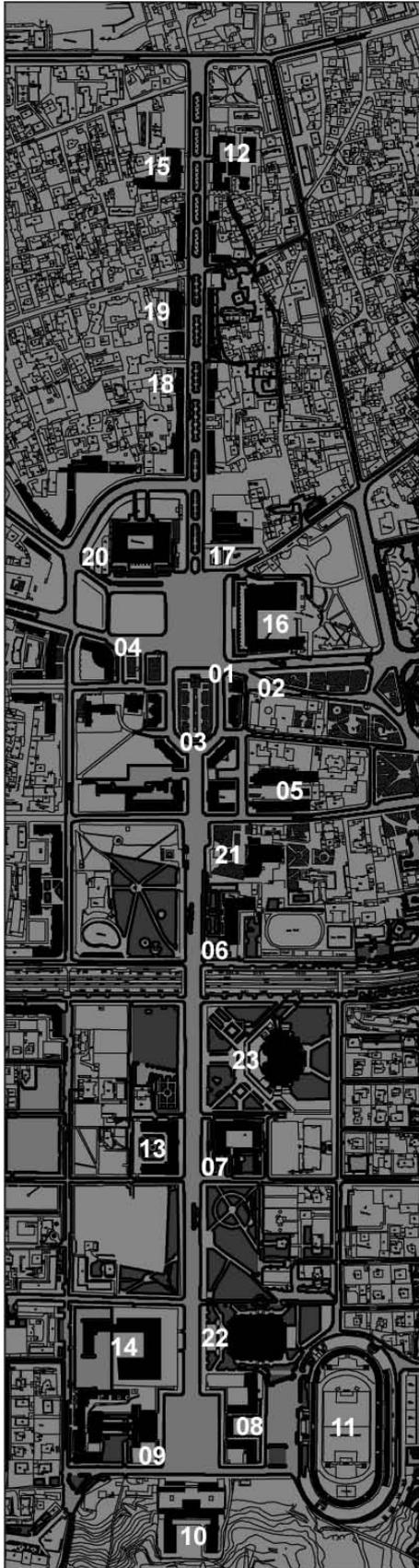


Fig 5.10: City centre layout in 1990. Buildings are listed in a chronological order. (in brackets today's use)

01. Et'hem bey Mosque
02. Clock Tower
03. Ministerial complex
04. National Bank building
05. Circolo Italo-Albanese Scanderbeg (National Theatre)
06. Commando Aeronautica (Council of Ministers)
08. Gioventù Littoria Albanese (UT Rectorate)
09. Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro Albanese (Higher Institute of Arts)
10. Palazzo Littorio (UT Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering)
11. Olympic stadium ("Qemal Stafa" stadium)
12. Maternity Hospital
13. Central Committee of PLA (Parliament offices)
14. Seat of Popular Assembly of PSRA (Presidency)
15. Faculty of Natural Sciences
16. Palace of Culture
17. Tirana Hotel
18. CAAC building
19. Arbëria Hotel (Ministry of Justice)
20. National Historical Museum
21. Gallery of Visual Arts
22. Palace of Congresses
23. Museum of Enver Hoxha (International Centre of Culture)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abitz, Julie. "Post-socialist city development in Tirana." Master's Thesis, Roskilde: Roskilde Universitet, 2006.
- Aliaj, Besnik, Keida Lulo, and Genc Myftiu, eds. *Tirana, the challenge of urban development*. Tiranë: Cetus, 2003.
- Alimehmeti, Faik. "Kryeqyteti ynë, Tirana, dje, sot dhe nesër." *Sbkenca dhe Jeta* 06 (1976): 20-23.
- Åman, Anders. *Architecture and ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin era : an aspect of Cold War history*. Cambridge, Mass.: Architectural History Foundation, 1992.
- Bakallbashi, Spiro, and Kujtim Meka. "Pallati i Kongreseve." *Sbkenca dhe Jeta*, no. 02 (1984): 10-11.
- Bosio, Gherardo. *Piano Regolatore di Tirana: Regolamento urbanistico del Viale dell'Impero*. Tiranë: Ufficio per l'Edilizia e l'Urbanistica de l'Albania, 1940.
- Castiglioni, Bruno. "Tirana - Appunti sulla capitale dell'Albania all'alba del nuovo regime." *Bollettino della Reale Società Geografica Italiana* VI, no. 1 (January 1941).
- Cengizkan, Ali. *Ankara'nın ilk planı: 1924-25 Lörcher planı, kentsel mekan özellikleri, 1932 Jansen Planı'na ve bugüne katkıları, etki ve kalıntıları*. Ankara: Ankara Enstitüsü Vakfı -Arkadaş Yayınları, 2004.
- . "Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi ve bakanlıklar." In *Ankara Ankara*, edited by Enis Batur, 209-217. Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1994.
- Chekrezi, Constantin Anastasi. *Albania past and present*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1919.
- Cocks, Frederick Seymour, ed. *The secret treaties and understandings: text of the available documents*. London: Union of Democratic Control, 1918.
- "Commonwealth of Australia - Constitution Act (Chapter VII, Section 125)." *Documenting Democracy*. <http://foundingdocs.gov.au/scan.asp?sID=1168> (accessed June 26, 2010).
- Crawford, James. *The Creation of States in International Law*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Crowley, David, and Susan Emily Reid, eds. *Socialist spaces: sites of everyday life in the Eastern Bloc*. Oxford; New York: Berg, 2002.
- Çami, Muin. "Tirana kryeqytet - peng i intrigës dhe i politikës (1920 - 1925)." *Studime historike*, no. 3 - 4 (2000): 191-199.

- Danilovic, Vesna. *When the stakes are high: Deterrence and conflict among major powers*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002.
- Demko, George J., and Joanna Regulska. "Socialism and its impact on urban processes and the city." *Urban Geography* 8, no. 4 (August 1987): 289-292.
- Ekşi, Ömer, ed. *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Tanıtım Katalogu*. TBMM Basın ve Halkla İlişkiler Müdürlüğü, 2008.
- Elsie, Robert. *A dictionary of Albanian religion, mythology, and folk culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2001.
- Enyedi, György. "Urbanization under socialism." In *Cities after socialism: urban and regional change and conflict in post-socialist societies*, edited by Gregory Andrusz, Michael Harloe, and Ivan Szelényi, 100-118. Studies in urban and social change. Oxford; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996.
- Faja, Enver. *Kush e drejton urbanistikën shqiptare*. Tiranë: UFO Press, 2008.
- Fischer, Bernd Jürgen. *Albania at war: 1939 - 1945*. Central European Studies. West Lafayette: Ind. Purdue Univ. Press, 1999.
- . *King Zog and the struggle for stability in Albania*. East European Monographs 159. New York: Boulder, 1984.
- Fowkes, Reuben. "The role of monumental sculpture in the construction of socialist space in Stalinist Hungary." In *Socialist spaces: sites of everyday life in the Eastern Bloc*, edited by David Crowley and Susan Emily Reid, 65-83. Oxford; New York: Berg, 2002.
- Frashëri, Eshref. "Artikujt e Gazetarve dhe Kryeqyteti." *Telegraf*. Tiranë, October 2, 1927.
- Frashëri, Kristo. "Tirana - A brief historic overview." In *Tirana, the challenge of urban development*, edited by Besnik Aliaj, Keida Lulo, and Genc Myftiu. Tiranë: Cetus, 2003.
- Frashëri, Sami. *Shqipëria - ç'ka qenë, ç'është e ç'do të bëhet*. Bucharest: s.n., 1899.
- Fuller, Mia. *Moderns abroad: architecture, cities and Italian imperialism*. Architext. London: Routledge, 2007.
- Giusti, Maria Adriana. *Albania - architettura e città: 1925 - 1943*. Firenze: Maschietto, 2006.
- Hall, Peter. "Seven Types of Capital City." In *Planning twentieth century capital cities*, edited by David L. A. Gordon, 8-15. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Häussermann, Hartmut. "From the socialist to the capitalist city: experiences from Germany." In *Cities after socialism: urban and regional change and conflict in post-socialist societies*, edited by Gregory Andrusz, Michael Harloe, and Ivan Szelényi. Studies in urban and social change. Oxford; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996.
- Hipeli, Mia. "Plans for Helsinki city centre by Alvar Aalto." In *II Paper Session*. Jyväskylä, 2002.

- Hoxha, Enver. "Nga fjala e mbajtur në komisionin e ngritur për çështjen e urbanizmit të qytetit të Tiranës dhe të qyteteve të tjera të vendit - 19.02.1948." In *Vepra (Janar 1947 - Dhjetor 1948)*, edited by Instituti i Studimeve Marksiste-Leniniste, 4: Vol. 4. Vepra. Tiranë: Naim Frashëri, 1970.
- Instituti i Studimeve Marksiste-Leniniste, ed. *Historia e Partisë së Punës të Shqipërisë*. Botim i II. Tiranë: 8 Nëntori, 1981.
- Joardar, Souro D. "New Delhi: Imperial capital to capital of the world's largest democracy." In *Planning twentieth century capital cities*, edited by David L. A. Gordon. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- "Katundi i math po bëhet qytet." *Telegraf*. Tiranë, August 3, 1927.
- Kirk, Terry. *The architecture of modern Italy*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005.
- Kolaneci, Klement. "Si e ndërtuam piramidën për Enverin." *Albania*. Tiranë, January 22, 2008.
- Kolaneci, Klement, and Ilir Fico. "Qendra e Tiranës." *Shkenca dhe Jeta*, no. 03 (1986): 4-7.
- Kolbe, Laura. "An Eastern or a Western capital city? The spirit of Helsinki." *International Review of Sociology* 16, no. 2 (July 2006): 329-346.
- . "Helsinki: from provincial to national centre." In *Planning twentieth century capital cities*, edited by David L. A. Gordon, 73-87. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Kolevica, Petraq. *Arkitektura dhe diktatura*. Tiranë: Logoreci, 2004.
- Kuvendi Popullor i Republikës Popullore Socialiste të Shqipërisë. *Kushtetuta e Republikës Popullore Socialiste të Shqipërisë*, 1976.
- Lame, Artan. "Lamtumirë, lulishtja imel!" *Shqip*. Tiranë, April 26, 2010, sec. Shqipni Tavolinash.
- Laze, Alban. "1641 - 'Kulliye' e Tiranës: Fillea e një metropoli?" *Forum A+P*, no. 1 (January 2009): 50-59.
- Lear, Edward. *Journals of a landscape painter in Albania, &c.* London: Richard Bentley, 1851.
- Manne, Robert. "The war myth that made us." *The Age*. Melbourne, April 25, 2007, sec. Opinion.
- Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Edited by Friedrich Engels. Translated by Samuel Moore. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1906.
- Miano, Giuseppe. "Florestano di Fausto - from Rhodes to Libya." In *Presence of Italy in the Architecture of the Islamic Mediterranean*, 56-71. Environmental Design. Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre, 1990.
- Miho, Koço. *Shqipëria: vështirë urbanistik, 1912-1944*. Tiranë: Extra, 2003.

- . *Trajta të profilit urbanistik të qytetit të Tiranës*. Tiranë: 8 Nëntori, 1987.
- Ministria e Ndërtimit. *Dekret për Akordim Dekoratasb*, 1957.
- . *Dekreti dhe Rregulloria për hartimin, miratimin dhe zbatimin e planeve rregulluese të qyteteve dhe të fshatrave*, 1978.
- Mitrojorgji, Nina. “Muzeu Historik Kombëtar.” *Shkenca dhe Jeta*, no. 02 (1979): 6-8.
- Montanelli, Indro. *Shqipëria një dhe një mijë*. Translated by Aurel Plasari. Tiranë: 55, 2005.
- Mysliu, Emin. “Ndërtimet transformojnë pamjen e atdheut tonë.” *Shkenca dhe Jeta*, no. 03 (1974): 4-5,31.
- Noli, Fan Stilian. *Rron or rron dhe nuk vdes shqiptari*. Tiranë: 8 Nëntori, 1976.
- O'Donnell, James Salibur. *A coming of age: Albania under Enver Hoxha*. East European Monographs 517. Boulder, 1999.
- Pearson, Owen. *Albania and King Zog: independence, republic and monarchy 1908-1939*. Vol. 1. 3 vols. Albania in the twentieth century: a history. London, New York: The Centre for Albanian Studies & I.B. Tauris, 2004.
- Pistoli, Valentina. “Përmbi gjysma e popullsisë në banesa të reja.” *Shkenca dhe Jeta*, no. 03 (1974): 15-16.
- Relacion i Planit Rregullues të Tiranës*. Tiranë: Instituti i Studimeve dhe Projektimeve nr. 1, 1989.
- Rocco, Giorgio. “Originalità dell'architettura Italiana nel Dodecaneso.” In , edited by Giuseppe Strappa and Anna Bruna Menghini, 4: Vol. 4. Quaderni ICAR. Bari: Mario Adda Editore, 2002.
- Roselli, Alessandro. *Italy and Albania: financial relations in the Fascist period*. Translated by Catherine Forner. London: I.B. Tauris, 2006.
- Santojanni, Vittorio. “Il Razionalismo nelle colonie italiane 1928-1943. La "nuova architettura" delle Terre d'Oltremare.” Ph.D. Thesis, Università degli Studi di Napoli “Federico II”, 2008.
- Schildt, Göran. *Alvar Aalto: the complete catalogue of architecture, design, and art*. Translated by Timothy Binham. New York: Rizzoli, 1994.
- Sonne, Wolfgang. *Representing the state: capital city planning in the early twentieth century*. Translated by Elizabeth Schwaiger. Munich; New York: Prestel, 2003.
- Swire, Joseph. *Albania: the rise of a kingdom*. The Eastern Europe Collection. New York: Arno Press & New York Times, 1971.
- Szelényi, Ivan. “Cities under socialism - and after.” In *Cities after socialism: urban and regional change and conflict in post-socialist societies*, edited by Gregory Andrusz, Michael Harloe, and Ivan Szelényi, 286-317. Studies in urban and social change. Oxford; Cambridge, Mass.:

- Blackwell, 1996.
- Shima, Rubens. "Stalini dhe Lenini, do të ruhen si vlera artistike dhe jo si përmbajtje politike." *Sot*. Tiranë, July 25, 2008.
- Tankut, Gönül. *Bir başkent'in imarı: Ankara, 1929-1939*. Istanbul: Anahtar Kitaplar Yayınevi, 1993.
- Tekeli, İlhan. "Ankara'nın başkentlik kararının ülkesel mekân organizasyonu ve toplumsal yapıya etkileri bakımından genel bir değerlendirme." In *Ankara Ankara*, edited by Enis Batur, 143-161. Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1994.
- "Tiran' e Ré." *Telegraf*. Tiranë, November 28, 1927.
- Tomes, Jason. *King Zog of Albania: Europe's Self-Made Muslim King*. Washington Square, N.Y.: New York University Press, 2004.
- Vale, Lawrence J. *Architecture, power, and national identity*. 2nd ed. London, New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Vehbiu, Ardian. *Kulla e Sabatit*. Tiranë: K&B, 2003.
- Velo, Maks. *Paralel me arkitekturën*. Edited by Artan Shkreli and Daniel Gjoni. Tiranë: Njeriu, 1998.
- Vernon, Christopher. "Canberra: Where Landscape is Pre-eminent." In *Planning twentieth century capital cities*, edited by David L. A. Gordon, 130-150. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Vickers, Miranda. *The Albanians: a modern history*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1999.
- van der Wusten, Herman. "Dictators and their capital cities: Moscow and Berlin in the 1930s." *GeoJournal* 52, no. 4 (2001): 339-344.
- Zickel, Raymond E, and Walter R Iwaskiw, eds. *Albania: a country study*. Area handbook series. Washington D.C: Library of Congress. Federal Research Division, 1994.
- Websites:
- "A short history of Helsinki."
<http://www.helsinki.fi/en/index/kaupunkijaseutu/historyinbrief.html> (accessed April 25, 2010).
- Alderman, Mathew. "The Modern Baroque of Armando Brasini." *New Liturgical Movement*, February 5, 2009. <http://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2009/02/modern-baroque-of-armando-brasini.html> (accessed January 8, 2010).
- "Chronology of the Prime Ministers of Albania." *Council of Ministers of Albania*.
<http://www.keshilliministrave.al/?fq=brenda&tr=&gj=gj2&kid=57> (accessed December 4, 2009).
- Elsie, Robert. "1662 | Evliya Chelebi: Seyahatname - a Journey through Northern Albania and

Montenegro.” *Texts and Documents of Albanian History*.

<http://www.albanianhistory.net/texts16-18/AH1662.html> (accessed March 15, 2010).

“Historia Palacu Kultury i Nauki.” <http://www.pkin.pl/historia/> (accessed April 12, 2010).

APPENDIX

BIOGRAPHIES

Gherardo Bosio

Born in Florence in 1903, he graduated in civil engineering in Rome in 1926 and subsequently obtained a degree in architecture in Florence, in 1931. Soon after together with many decoration and small scale projects, started teaching 'Architectural design and monuments' rilevation' at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Florence. After the conquest of Italian East Africa in 1936 prepared the plans of the Ethiopian cities of Gondar and Dessie.

Here follows a short chronological list of Bosio's works.

- 1927 Restoration and expansion of *Villa La Pietra* (Villa Acton), Florence, Via dei Bruni. (until 1929)
- 1928 Competition project for the Lighthouse in Memory of Christopher Columbus, Santo Domingo
- 1929 Refurbishment of the hospitality hall of *Federazione Toscana per il Movimento dei Forestieri*, Florence.
Renovation, expansion and furnishing of Casa Uzielli, Florence, Piazza D'Azeglio. (until 1932)
- 1932 Refurbishment of *Casa Maraini*, Florence.
Designs the Nursing Home in Florence on *Viale dei Colli*.
- 1933 Refurbishment of Casa Trabalesi, Florence.
- 1934 Project of *Villa Ginori Conti*, Cerreto di Pomarance.
Designs with Pierluigi Nervi the Ugolino Golf Club, Impruneta, via Chiantigiana.
- 1935 Refurbishment of Italian Cultural Institute, Budapest.
Restoration and refurbishing of the offices of Monsavano Society, Pontassieve.
Restoration and decoration of *Villa Pandolfini*, Tizzano of San Polo.
Swimming pool for the OND of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome.
- 1936 Decoration of the House of Gherardesca, Florence, Vespucci riverbank.
Project for the master-plan of Gondar and Dessiè in Italian East Africa.
- 1939-40 Project for the master-plan of Tirana and main buildings of the plan, including *Casa del Fascio*, Albania.

For further detailed information on Di Fausto see:

Cresti, Carlo, ed. *Gherardo Bosio - architetto fiorentino 1903-1941*. Florence: Pontecorboli Editore, 1996.

Giusti, Maria Adriana. *Albania - architettura e città: 1925 - 1943*. Firenze: Maschietto, 2006.

Armando Brasini

Born in *Tor di Nona* district of Rome in September 21, 1879, to a modest family of handicrafts, he is considered by many to be one of the main representatives of the Italian colonial architecture. Displaying a strong talent for drawing, started working early as an apprentice engraver and decoration painter. After having successfully attended the Institute of Fine Arts, begun working at the Museum of Industrial Art, where he met the director, architect Raffaele Ojetti, of whom Brasini said to be his master.

From the very outset he was familiar with the buildings and the art of ancient Rome. "...I admired Rome, and realized that only Rome could be my teacher" this declaration, from his autobiographical notes, reveals his inflexible opposition to the cult of the modern. His early studies about the theatrical style of the city of Rome gained the sympathy of Mussolini, who would later entrust him many works. In 1921, when he was invited to Libya by the governor of Tripoli, Giuseppe Volpi, the architect was an emerging figure in the Roman professional world. In Tripoli, he prepared the master-plan, which would form the basis for the ambitious urban regeneration project of the capital, implemented with a series of monumental buildings that were to arise on the seafront.

Here follows a chronological list of Brasini's works.

- 1901-2 Works as sculptor at the *Santa Teresa* church in Rome.
- 1902-9 Has an intense activity in decoration of palaces, villas, and churches in the capital.
- 1912 Wins the first prize with Marcello Piacentini in the competition for the refurbishment of *Piazza Navona*.
- 1913-16 Prepares the development plan for the north extension of Rome.
- 1916 Designs the arrangement layout of Saint Peter's vicinities.
- 1917 Is assigned the restoration of *Palazzo Chigi*, seat of the Ministry of Colonies.
Designs and builds the Aviation School in Taranto.
'L'Urbe Massima e l'architettura di Armando Brasini' of P. Oran, a collection of his works is published.
- 1918 Begins working on the new urban study of *Piazza della Vittoria* in Rome which was to be

- created from the union of *Piazza della Colonna*, *Piazza Montecitorio* and *Piazza del Pantheon*.
- 1919 Designs the scenery and costumes for the film *Teodora*, of Leopoldo Carlucci.
- 1922 Is assigned the draft for the plan of Tripoli by the Governor of Tripoli Giuseppe Volpi.
Executes the restoration of the Castle of Tripoli (until 1923).
According to the building program that Volpi had prepared for Tripoli, executes the Volpi Promenade (until 1924).
Involved in the project of the *Basilica del Cuore Immacolato di Maria* in *Piazza Euclide*, Rome.
Starts designing the sets for the film *Quo Vadis* of Gabriellino D'Annunzio and Georg Jacoby.
- 1923 Designs and builds The Monument to the Fallen and Victory in Tripoli is built (until 1925).
- 1924 Is invited in Albania to prepare the regulatory plan of Tirana and Durrës and a proposal for the royal palace.
Becomes artistic director for the Monument to Vittorio Emanuele I in Rome.
- 1925 Prepares the plan for the arrangement of the eastern slope of the Capitol, between *Vittoriano* and the *Vignola* arcade is approved.
Designs the Italian pavilion at the International Exposition of Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris.
- 1926 Supervises the restoration works of the *Palazzo Volpi* at *Piazza delle Quattro Fontane*.
- 1927 Commissioned by the Ministry of Education the design of a urban plan for the *Flaminio* district in Rome.
- 1928 Appointed member of the Committee for the rehabilitation and restoration of *Palazzo Venezia* (until 1931).
Studies the plan and expansion project of Urbino, prepares the project for the seat of INAIL in Rome (until 1932).
Designs *Palazzo del Podesta* in Foggia (until 1929).
Builds *Villa Manzoni* in Rome.
- 1929 Is appointed *Accademico d'Italia*.
Designs the Government Palace in Taranto (until 1934).
Designs the monumental entrance of the Zoo in *Villa Borghese*, Rome.
Is assigned the project of the provincial seat of *Casa Provinciale della Congregazione di N. S. della Carità del Buon Pastore*, Rome (until 1934).
Designs *Flaminio* bridge, Rome.
Designs *Villa Brasini* on *Flaminia* street, Rome.
- 1930 Designs the new Museum of the *Risorgimento* in Rome (until 1933).
- 1931 Becomes part of the committee for the new master-plan of Rome.
Designs the Italian Pavilion for the International Colonial Exposition in Paris, which resembles a smaller scale reconstruction of the Basilica of Leptis Magna.
Is invited in the international competition for the Palace of Soviets in Moscow.
- 1932 Prepares the project for the headquarters of the *Cassa di Risparmio* (Savings Bank) of Tripoli in the Clock Square, adjacent to the castle of Tripoli, which opened in 1935.

- 1933 Designs the building of I.N.F.A.I.L. in Naples (until 1938), currently *Banca Nazionale del Lavoro*.
- 1937 Designs an imposing building, the *Mole Littoria*, intended to celebrate the imperial Rome of Mussolini in direct competition with what Albert Speer had done for the Nazi Germany. However, the Duce, didn't approve the project due to the high cost, in a time when E42 was being built, and on the other hand because it was not suitable to the kind of architecture favoured by Mussolini in this phase.
- 1938 Designs the Palace of Agriculture and Forestry for the E42, later demolished.
- 1939 Is appointed chairman of the Central Advisory Unit on Housing and Urban Development at the Ministry of Italian Africa and prepares projects for the plan and the cathedral in Addis Ababa.
- 1952 Designs the urban arrangement layout for the central part of Rome bordered by *Argentina Avenue*, *Via della Scrofa*, *Via Tomacelli*, *Via del Corso* and *Piazza Colonna*.
- 1954 Is commissioned by the government of Saudi Arabia to design an urban plan for Riyadh and the royal palace.
- 1955 Acquires the medieval castle of *San Polo dei Cavalieri*. The castle, which was in a state of neglect, was built by the Order of Knights Templar of Malta during the eleventh century. Brasini dealt with the complete restoration of the building, including the frescoes of the interior, and restored the building its current splendour.
- 1956 Prepares the urban plan for the *Saxa Rubra* area of 'Lighthouse of Christianity' in Rome.
- 1958-63 Studies and prepares a project for the bridge over the Messina strait.

Brasini was the embodiment of the classicist architect who imported from the motherland language inspired by the monumental tradition of the Roman Baroque, injecting it without any mediation into the respective colonial context. Although his main works abroad were in *Tripolitania*, the scheme layout he prepared for Tirana emerged of immense importance, as they were more or less followed by later architects.

For further detailed information on Brasini see:

Brasini, Luca, ed. *L'opera architettonica e urbanistica di Armando Brasini: dall'Urbe Massimi al ponte sullo stretto di Messina*. Roma: s.n., 1979.

Conforti, Claudia. "Armando Brasini's Architecture at Tripoli." *Environmental Design*, no. Presence of Italy in the Architecture of the Islamic Mediterranean (1990): 46-55.

Pisani, Mario. *Architetture di Armando Brasini*. Architettura 13. Roma: Officina edizioni, 1996.

Florestano di Fausto

Di Fausto was the most prolific Italian architect working in the colonies and other foreign settings. Although his place in Italian architectural culture remains uncertain, his vast architectural and urban planning production, the quality of his works, which are difficult to assess, their character; a production that seems to elude any easy classification, all are reasons for a growing interest on his figure.

Florestano Di Fausto was born in Rocca Canterano, a little village in the hilly eastern part of Lazio not far from Subiaco on July 16, 1890. Graduating as an architect from the Academy of Fine Arts in 1914, and obtaining a degree in civil engineering in 1922, his formation was entirely of Roman background. However, the sum total of his work is a substantial eclecticism which enabled him to adapt to different cultural situations.

His professional début was the architectural part of the Monument to Pius X in St. Peter's, due to the credit his brother enjoyed in Vatican circles. In January 1921, became a technical adviser at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a starting position that determined a large part of his future professional activity.

His article, titled "The Mediterranean Vision of My Architecture" grounded his entire body of work in the Mediterranean context. But his Mediterranean was specifically Eurocentric: "I have not betrayed my land, nor my sky! And my colonial architecture... could not betray it as a result... Architecture was born in the Mediterranean and it triumphed in Rome... ..thus it must remain Mediterranean and Italian." Di Fausto's Mediterranean was also decidedly historical. Indeed, he began by stating that "no sea is rich in history like the Mediterranean" – by which he meant Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Christian histories, rather than Semitic or Ottoman.

In Rhodes, he inflected buildings throughout the new city with Venetian accents – because the islands had at one time been under Venetian control. In Tripoli he changed the face of the city by numerous government and leisure constructions. He designed a broad open portico facing the cathedral, leading directly to the sea, both physically and visually – a symbolically meaningful link, since the sea was both the coveted, end-in-itself Mediterranean, and the link back to Rome

At the same time, Di Fausto had also been at work on Tirana, even though it was not yet officially an Italian colonial city. As in Tripoli and Rhodes, the 1925 master plan was based on the separation of new constructions from old; and significant government-built structures resembled their historicist designs elsewhere.

Here is a more detailed chronological list of Di Fausto's works.

1921 Becomes technical adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- 1923 Is summoned by the governor of the Dodecanese, Mario Lago, to direct the Office of Architecture and Urban Planning.
- 1924 Seat of the Italian Legation in Belgrade. (until 1926)
The reconstruction of the old Cathedral of St. John Knights, destroyed in 1856, in Rhodes. (until 1925)
- 1926 Prepares the urban plan and built the main buildings of New Predappio, the birthplace of Mussolini, as a demonstration of the links with him. (until 1928)
The house of the famous tenor Beniamino Gigli, at Montarice, near Loreto. (until 1928)
The New Market and the Palace of Government (inspired by the *Palazzo Ducale* in Venice) of the port of Mandracchio in Rhodes, which was called the *Foro Italico*.
The Government Palace and the *Agnus Dei* catholic church in Kos. (until 1927)
The Government Palace of Kastelorizo.
At the same period begins the work on the plan for the centre of Tirana, where inspired by Italian Renaissance, builds around the Skënderbej Square a ministerial complex, inaugurated in 1932.
- 1927 Builds the Posts Palace in Rhodes.
Is replaced by the Roman architect Pietro Lombardi in his duty at the Aegean islands.
The assignments in Albania continue with the House of Officers in Durrës.
- 1928 Seat of the Italian Legation in Cairo. (until 1930)
In Albania builds the Royal Residence and buildings of the Italian School of Industrial Art in Shkodër, and the Royal Palace in Durrës. (until 1930)
- 1931 The House of Italians in Algiers.
The Consulate of Italy in Tunis and the Italian embassy in Ankara. (until 1932)
- 1932 Thanks to the friendship with Italo Balbo, the new governor of Libya, takes the office of 'consultant for the architecture of the Municipality of Tripoli.'
Designs the new façade of the cathedral of Tripoli, not realised.
Published in Geneva a book illustrating his work.
- 1934 Builds *Casa Madre dei Mutilati e Invalidi de Guerra* (House of Invalids and Amputees of the War) in Tripoli's *Oriani* square.
Curator of the Second International Exhibition of Colonial Art, held in Naples.
- 1935 Realises two of his best works in Tripoli - the *Uaddan* complex on the waterfront, consisting of a hotel, a theatre and a casino and hotel *Mehari*.
The isolation of the Arch of Marcus Aurelius, the renovation of the castle to be used as seat of the government, restoration of the mosque of *Sidi Scuscian*, the craftsmen district of *Suk el Musci* in Tripoli.
Grand Hotels in Jefren and Nalut (1935)
'*Olive*' (Tripoli), the first of an important project of 'colonization villages' built in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica.
Performs restoration interventions at the monastery of *Sacro Speco* in Subiaco, near Rome (until 1936).
- 1936 Builds the Arc of Triumph, also known as Arch of Filens at Ras Lanus.
Prepares the draft of a colonial type of house put on display an year after at the Italian East African Pavilion at the XI Fair of Tripoli.

- 'Magdalena'* colonization village – Benghazi.
 Refurbishes a building for the headquarters of the Fascist Confederation of Agriculture Workers in Rome. (until 1937)
- 1937 In Tripoli designs the church of San Francesco, the I.N.P.S. building, the workshop area around the Arch of Marcus Aurelius, *Casa Littoria* on the waterfront, the Seat of Workers' Unions, the market place, the new building of the High Islamic School .(until 1938)
 The headquarters of the Savings Bank of Libya in Derna.
 At the same time prepares a draft layout for Ferrara's city centre and a rehabilitation of the *San Romano* neighbourhood.
- 1938 The government offices in *Piazza Italia*, the new headquarters of the Navy High Command and of the Command of Libyan troops.
'D'Annunzio' colonization village – Benghazi
 'Baptists' colonization village – Derna
- 1939 Builds the new Archaeological Museum in the Castle of Tripoli.
 The pavilion of the Government of Libya at the XII Fair of Tripoli
'Oberdan' colonization village – Benghazi
- 1940 Sets up the section of Libya in the Exhibition of Overseas Italian lands held in Naples.
- 1945 At the end of World War II, becomes an activist of the Christian Democratic Party and gets elected to the Constituent Assembly. At the end of the mandate passes to the Monarchist National Party.
 The reconstruction plan of Subiaco (until 1953) and in the same city, the restoration of the Cathedral of St. Andrea (until 1952).
- 1947 The Cistercian General House in Rome. (until 1955)
- 1948 The restoration works at the Sanctuary *Montevergine* in Avellino (until 1961).

Immediately after the war, Di Fausto, thanks to his brother Amanto's activity in the Popular Party, was invited by the new Catholic Christian Democratic Party, becoming a Deputy at the Constituent Assembly. His period as a Christian Democratic MP was marked by lack of discipline and came to an end because of a scandal, having lasted from 1948 to 1953, when he joined the Monarchic party. He died in Rome on January 11, 1965, after continuing tirelessly with his professional activity, refusing any substantial cultural revision and modernization.

For further detailed information on Di Fausto see:

Fuller, Mia. *Moderns abroad: architecture, cities and Italian imperialism*. Architect. London: Routledge, 2007.

Miano, Giuseppe. "Florestano di Fausto - from Rhodes to Libya." In *Presence of Italy in the Architecture of the Islamic Mediterranean*, 56-71. Environmental Design. Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre, 1990.

Rocco, Giorgio. "Originalità dell'architettura Italiana nel Dodecaneso." in , edited by Giuseppe Strappa and Anna Bruna Menghini, 4: Vol. 4. Quaderni ICAR. Bari: Mario Adda Editore, 2002.

Enver Hoxha

Hoxha was born in Gjirokastër, a city in the south of Albania, on October 16, 1908. His father was a cloth merchant who used to travel around in Europe and United States of America and his mother was housewife. Growing up in a family strongly bounded with the fights for the national liberation, he was deeply influenced by his uncle Hysen Hoxha, a patriot who represented Gjirokastër in the act of proclamation of independence of Albania and who oppositionally to the regime of King Zog. This played a fundamental role in the formation of the political ideas of Enver Hoxha.

Hoxha's revolutionary thoughts began to develop when he became secretary of the Students Society of Gjirokastër, a protest group against the monarchist government. After the Society was closed down by the government, he left his home town and moved to Korçë, continuing his studies in a French high school, where he learned about French history, literature and philosophy, read the Communist Manifesto of Marx, and learned about the October Revolution and the ideas of French Revolution. This would be a breaking point on his formation of political thoughts and tendencies.

In 1930, Hoxha won a state scholarship to study natural sciences, biology at the University of Montpellier, France, which after a year he left being much more interested in either philosophy or law, thus moved to Paris. While taking courses of philosophy at the Sorbonne, he collaborated with *L'Humanité*, writing articles on the situation of Albania, a move which would cause the break of his scholarship by the government of Zog. In 1934 started working as secretary at the Albanian consulate in Brussels but had to return to Albania in 1936 after he was dismissed because of the Marxist and anti-regime publications he possessed. As a result of his education; Hoxha was fluent in French, and had gain knowledge of Italian, Serbian, English and Russian.

Back in Albania, he established contact with Albanian communists, especially the communist group of Korçë, which was the most solid and organized of the movement. He began to work at French high school of Korçë as a teacher. In 1939, he moved to Tirana for his openly revolutionary and anti-fascist thoughts, after the occupation of Albania by Italy. Meanwhile he continued collaboration with the communist activists working actively for the unification of the scattered communist movement. On November 8, 1941, the Communist Party of Albania was founded and Enver Hoxha was chosen one of seven members of the provisional Central Committee. In September 16, 1942 at the Conference

of Peza, the National Front of Liberation was formed with the goal of uniting the anti-Fascist Albanians, regardless of ideology or class. By March 1943, the first National Conference of the Communist party of Albania elected Hoxha, as General Secretary of the Party, a position that he held until his death. On July 10, 1943, the Albanian partisan groups were reorganized in the Albanian National Liberation Army. The General Staff was created and Enver Hoxha became its political commissary.

The role of Enver Hoxha as a political and military figure was very important and fundamental. By May 1944 he was chosen as president of the National Anti-Fascist Committee of Liberation at the Anti-Fascist Congress of Përmet, which emerged the only legislative organ of the Albanian State, with the attributes of a provisional government. After four months, on the eve of the liberation of the country, the Committee was transformed into the Provisional Democratic Government and Enver Hoxha became the first head of government of the new Albania. After liberation, the Constituent Assembly, proclaimed Albania a Peoples Republic and nominated Enver Hoxha as Prime Minister, the office that he held until 1954.

While the immediate after-war period was characterized by a strong relationship with Josip B. Tito of Yugoslavia, drastic agrarian and monetary reforms, 1948 was marked by and the firm and determined attitude of Enver Hoxha to prevent the realisation of their intentions to transform Albania into a Yugoslav republic, and the purges inside the party. The politics of PPSH already had three fundamental orientations: industrialization, the development of agriculture through the formation of cooperatives, and a program for the development of education and culture.

After the break with Yugoslavia, Hoxha got closer to the Soviet Union, of whom he was a great admirer. During 1948-60, \$200 million of Soviet aid would be given to Albania for technical and infrastructural expansion. Albania was admitted on February 22, 1949, to the COMECON and Albania remained important serving as a pro-Soviet force in the Adriatic Sea. Relations continued to remain close until the death of Stalin on March 5, 1953, whose death was met with national mourning in Albania. Enver Hoxha's political thoughts were in the Marxist-Leninist line.

After Khrushchev took the place of Stalin in U.S.S.R, Hoxha opposed his revisionism. Upon his arrival at the Conference of the 81 Parties in Moscow on November 16, 1960, Enver Hoxha made a speech displaying his reservations and his accusations regarding the new Soviet course. This act also marked the official break between Albania and the U.S.S.R, and later another wave of purges aimed at consolidating his power further. Due to this break, Hoxha begun closer relationships with Mao Zedong's China, of whom initial ideological views, Hoxha found to be in line with Marxism-Leninism - Mao condemned Khrushchev's alleged revisionism and was also critical of Yugoslavia, and during the diplomatic isolation following the Cultural Revolution relations strengthened further. But this went on until the visit of the US President Richard Nixon in China, which

made Hoxha feel betrayed. Following Mao's death, Hoxha remained optimistic about Sino-Albanian relations, but in August 1977, Hua Guofeng, the new leader of China, stated that Mao's 'Three Worlds' Theory would become official foreign policy. This meant that Hoxha viewed this as a way for China to justify having the U.S. as the "secondary enemy" while viewing the Soviet Union as the main one, thus allowing China to trade with the U.S. "...the Chinese plan of the 'third world' is a major diabolical plan, with the aim that China should become another superpower, precisely by placing itself at the head of the 'third world' and 'non-aligned world.'"[66] From August 30-September 7, 1977, Tito visited Beijing and was welcomed by the Chinese leadership. At this point, the Albanian Party of Labour had declared that China was now a revisionist state akin to the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and that Albania was the only Marxist-Leninist state on earth. On July 13, 1978, China announced that it was cutting off all aid to Albania. This resulted in the total isolation of the country from the outside world.

Meanwhile, Enver Hoxha suffered a heart attack in 1973. The more his health problems increased the less his activity in Party and the state was felt. From the end of the 1970s, he began a writing and theoretical activity, publishing memoirs of all his experiences and activist life the party. To name some of these works: *Yugoslav "Self-Administration" - A Capitalist Theory and Practice* and *Imperialism and the Revolution* (1978), *Reflections on China and With Stalin* (1979), *Euro-communism is Anti-Communism* and *The Khrushchevites* (1980), *The Anglo-American Threat to Albania* and *The Titoists* (1982), *Reflections on the Middle East* and *Laying the Foundations of the New Albania* (1984), *Two Friendly Nations* and *The Superpowers* (1985). Also a series of more than 65 volumes of his writings, speeches and letter was published by the Institute of Marxist-Leninist Studies.

In 1981 Mehmet Shehu, Prime Minister for a twenty-seven years was reported to have committed suicide and was subsequently condemned as a "traitor" to Albania and that he was operating in the service of multiple foreign intelligence agencies. In its aftermath Hoxha ordered the purge of several party and government officials.

Later, Hoxha withdrew into semi-retirement due to failing health. He turned most state functions over to Ramiz Alia. In his final days he was confined to a wheelchair and was suffering from diabetes, which he had suffered from since 1948, and cerebral ischemia, which he had suffered from since 1983. Hoxha's death on 11 April 1985 left Albania with a legacy of isolation and fear of the outside world. Despite some economic progress made by Hoxha, the country's economy was in stagnation; Albania had been the poorest European country throughout much of the Cold War period.

For further detailed information on Hoxha see:

Fischer, Bernd Jürgen. "Enver Hoxha and the Stalinist Dictatorship in Albania."

In *Balkan strongmen: dictators and authoritarian rulers of South Eastern Europe*, edited by Berndt Fischer, 239-269. London: Purdue University Press, 2007.

O'Donnell, James Salibur. *A coming of age: Albania under Enver Hoxha*. East European Monographs 517. Boulder, 1999.

Pearson, Owen. *Albania as dictatorship and democracy: from isolation to the Kosovo War, 1946-1998*. Vol. 3. 3 vols. Albania in the twentieth century: a history. London, New York: The Centre for Albanian Studies & I.B. Tauris, 2006.

Vickers, Miranda. *The Albanians: a modern history*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1999.

Ahmet Zogu

Ahmet Muhtar Bej Zogolli was born on October 8, 1895, in the castle of Burgajet, stronghold of his forefathers on the north Albanian mountains. His family, Xhemal Pasha Zogolli and Sadijé Toptani, were a tribe of landowners. His father was the governor of the region of Mat. His mother's members of the family were claimed to be descendants of Albania's national hero of the 15th century, Skanderbeg.

Zogolli spent the first eight years of his life in Burgajet until the death of his father, and then he was sent to follow the high school studies in Constantinople. After graduating from the *Lycée Impérial de Galatasaray*, Zogu was accepted to the Ottoman military school. Meanwhile, a new period of learning, culture and nationalist rebirth had begun in his country. Ahmet Zogu watched this national revival from a distance until 1911 when he left school and went to Mat in order to guide his tribesmen for the fight of independence.

In September 1914, with the start of the World War I, Prince Wilhelm Wied left the country as many neighbouring armies invaded Albania. Zogu managed to defend Mat against Serbian forces between the years of 1915 and 1916. During the last two years of the war, he had been assigned the rank of officer in the Austro-Hungarian army, by which he was induced to travel to Vienna. Spending his time there, he grew to enjoy a Western European lifestyle and diplomacy. He was influenced by Western technologies and political thoughts and began to adopt Western-style methods to train his armies for the re-establishment of a uniform and centralized administration. In October 1918, all of the Albanian territory formerly under Austrian occupation fell into the hands of the Italians, except for Shkodra, which was occupied by the French. Zogu returned to Albania in 1919 and began to organise his tribesmen so that they could secure the vicinities of Lushnja where the gathered National Congress emerged with a provisional government and he was appointed Minister of the Interior. He was authorized to return to Tiranë and take over the reins of government immediately, arriving there on February 11, 1920.

During the early 1920s, Zog served as Governor of Shkodër (1920–1921), Minister of the Interior (March–November 1920, 1921–1924), and chief of the Albanian military

(1921–1922). In the elections of December 27, 1923, after the results gave an almost complete triumph for Zogu party, he became the target of an assassin who wounded him in the parliament hall. A crisis arose in 1924 after the assassination of one of Zogu's opponents, Avni Rustemi. In the aftermath of this crisis, a popular revolt forced Zogu and around six hundred of his allies to fly into exile to Yugoslavia in June 1924.

He returned to Albania on the back of Yugoslav forces in December of the same year. On January 15, 1925, following a forced recess of seven months, the Assembly reopened its sessions, accepted the republican regime as a definite form of government and finally Zogu was elected as president for a period of seven years. A process of modernization in the country began firstly with the preparation of civil, penal and commercial codes. Not only a gendarme force but also a small, mobile army was organized.

The Yugoslavs were granted Sveti Naum on 28 June 1925, in return for the assistance they had provided him on his return to Albania. However, it was also a breaking point with the relationship between Albania and Yugoslavia. Civilian forces were mobilized at the frontier, Sveti Naum, and entered Albanian territory provoking the Dukagjin uprising, which was a lesson to him that Albania was not yet strong enough to stand alone in the midst of a circle of greedy and grasping foreign nations. Therefore, Zogu entered into negotiations with the Italian government, and on November 27, 1926, a Treaty of Friendship was signed in Tirana, for a five-year period. Also, the Treaty of Defensive Alliance between Albania and Italy concluded in 1927 was ratified.

On 1 September 1928, Zogu declared himself the King of the Albanians, and named as Zog I. In 1929, King Zog abolished Islamic law in Albania, adopting in its place a civil code based on the Swiss one. The King organized an educational system and attempted to modernize the Albanian military, although the expenses for his project were high. The Treaty of Friendship had expired in November 1931, thus the Italian Government requested a renewal, but the King felt that this was not necessary and refused it. In 1932 and 1933, Albania was unable to pay the interest on its loans from S.V.E.A., and the Italians used this as a pretext for further dominance. In defiance of Italian demands, Zogu ordered the national budget to be slashed by 30 percent, dismissed all Italian military advisers, and nationalized Italian-run Roman Catholic schools in the north of Albania in order to decrease Italian influence on the population of Albania. In 1934, he tried to build ties with France, Germany, and the Balkan states, but without success. Subsequently, Albania drifted back into the Italian orbit.

Zog had been engaged to the daughter of Shefqet Verlaci before he became the King. Soon after his coronation, however, he broke off the engagement. In April 1938, Zog married to Countess Geraldine Apponyi de Nagy-Apponyi, a Roman Catholic aristocrat who was half-Hungarian and half-American. Their only child, Prince Leka, was born in Albania on 5 April 1939. Two days after the birth of his son, on 7 April 1939,

Mussolini's Italy invaded Albania, facing no significant resistance. The royal family settled in England until 1946, after their escape from Italian occupation. In 1946, King Zog and most of his family left England and went to live in Egypt at the behest of King Farouk, who was overthrown in 1952. The family left for France in 1955. Zog finally chose to make his home in France. At the age of 65, he died in France on 9 April 1961.

For further detailed information on Zogu see:

Fischer, Bernd Jürgen. *King Zog and the struggle for stability in Albania*. East European Monographs 159. New York: Boulder, 1984.

Pearson, Owen. *Albania and King Zog: independence, republic and monarchy 1908-1939*. Vol. 1. 3 vols. *Albania in the twentieth century: a history*. London, New York: The Centre for Albanian Studies & I.B. Tauris, 2004.

Tomes, Jason. *King Zog of Albania: Europe's Self-Made Muslim King*. Washington Square, N.Y.: New York University Press, 2004.

Vickers, Miranda. *The Albanians: a modern history*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1999.