

Bjoern Andersen

Two steps forward?



Albania and the Albanians

Draft edition / Version 1.2 – 03.12.2006

BA Forlag
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19th December 2005

Dear * * *

In some days a little book about Albania will be issued in Danish (the book's Danish web-site is: <http://bjoerna.net/to-skridt-frem/>).

I'm now going to edit a parallel edition in English. Hopefully, it can be published late 2006.

To begin with I have published a draft on the internet as a PDF-file: <http://bjoerna.net/articles.pdf> (55 pages, 2 MB).

In 2006 the »missing« articles in the Danish edition will be translated and all articles will be revised. The »missing« articles are about the political situation i 2005/2006, the »Foundation of Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation of Disputes« and the religious tolerance conferences in Tirana in 2003 and 2004.

My plan is to pay Tirana a visit in Spring or Summer 2006 and to interview researchers, journalists and 'institutions'.

Any comments and suggestions will be welcomed.

Best regards and a happy new year from

Bjoern Andersen
post@bjoerna.dk

Two steps forward?

Albania and the Albanians. Articles

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Cultivating the river banks. Tirana. Photo: Bjoern Andersen, 2005

Two steps forward? / Albania and the Albanians / Draft edition [2005-2007]

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<http://bjoerna.net/articles.pdf> [Jan. 2006: approx. 100 pages, 2-3 MB].

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Best regards from

Bjoern Andersen, post@bjoerna.dk, 19th December 2005 [revised 3rd December 2006]

Some of the articles in English [HTML-editions]

- [Danish sociologist's thoughts on Albania's past, present and future. Interview with Bjoern Andersen in Tirana Times 1st December 2006.](#)
 - [»We have to change the mentality«. Interview with Qemal Minxhozi when he was retiring as a chargé d'affaires in Copenhagen.](#) April 2005 [only as a PDF-file]
 - [Doing the homework. Roads and bridges in the vicinity of the city of Burrel in the Mat area, Albania](#) [September 2005]
 - [Progër. A village in the neighbourhood of Korça in Southern Albania](#) [January 2006. Comments on a socio-anthropological study. The article is not in the Danish edition].
 - [Albanian immigrants in Athens. Power relations and health. A review of Anna Mousouli's book](#) [November 2005]
 - [Holberg on Scanderbeg. Scanderbeg is one of the greatest generals ever - wrote the famous historian Ludvig Holberg in 1739. A viewpoint from Copenhagen](#) [May 2003]
 - [Gjakmarrja. Albanian Highlander's »Blood Feud« as Social Obligation. A review of Diana Gellçi's book](#) [November 2005]
 - [The Albanian girl and the Danish artists](#) [September 2005]. Albanian edition: [Vajza shqiptare dhe artistët danezë](#)
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Two steps forward?

The book was published (in Danish) in December 2005. It is in 10 chapters:

Introduction

- 01 Two kinds of friends. The sweet ones and the sour ones. The sweet ones are nice, the sour ones are telling the truth.
- 02 Summer and autumn 2005. The election and the new government. The voters turn-out in the different parts of the country. Black, grey and white economy. Construction. Labour force, employment, emigration to Greece and other countries. The cafées. Traffic (traffic-culture). Policework. The programme of the Berisha-government. Albania and Kosova. Albania in the Balkans. Corruption. Fatos Nano, Edi Rama and the future of the Socialist Party.

Doing the homework

- 03 Interview with Qemal Minxhozi. *We have to change the mentality.*
- 04 Doing the homework. Two examples: Gurrë e Vogël and Urakë. A conversation with the mayor of Burrël (Skender Lleshi).

Sociological studies

- 05 Albanian immigrants in Athens (comments on a book by Anna Mousouli).
- 06 Feuds and vengeance. The kanún. A novel by Kadaré (comments on a book by Diana Gellçi).
- 07 Family violence in Tirana (comments on an article in *British Medical Journal*).
- 08 The Foundation of Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation of Disputes.

Religious tolerance

- 09 Religious tolerance (the Tirana Conferences in 2003 and 2004). The Tirana Summit-Declaration (2004). The inauguration of the Mother Teresa-statue in Tirana.

The Albanian girl

- 10 The Albanian Girl and her affair with the Danish poet, Christian Winther (the girl might have been of Albanian descent, but most likely she was from *Colli Albani* - the Albani hills just outside Rome).

An English edition (with some more chapters) will be published later on, maybe in late autumn 2006.

Abstract

Albania is in a much better position than in 1991 or 1997, but the transition from a communist dictatorship to a modern European state has been very difficult, and still there are deep and serious problems in social life, economy and politics. Export is small and is only improving slowly, import is much bigger. The black sector is alarming big. Many Albanians have to work and live abroad - and resource-drain has emerged. Organized crime and trafficking has a big impact on social life. Family violence is widespread. Corruption has - as it seems - risen in the last years, and the political initiatives to get rid of it are not sufficient. On the other hand, police work seems to have improved, at least to some extent. Roads and infrastructure have been improved, but the severe problems in electricity-supply persist and invalidate economy.

In many aspects the Nano-administration moved Albania in the right direction, but too slowly as it seems - and the two major political forces were not able to co-operate technically. Many ordinary people wanted a change and therefore the socialists lost the parliamentary election and a new government was elected. The voters turn-out was *very small* (less than 50 %), which is a bad signal. By now, it is not to say whether the new Berisha-government has the will and power to change the points and to make Albania ready for an integration in the EU, but it has issued an ambitious programme in 2005.

Since Edi Rama was elected mayor in Tirana some years ago, the situation has improved in the capital in many aspects. Now, Rama also has been elected chairman of the Socialist party too.

Some Albanian initiatives are to be appreciated, especially when they are aiming at modernizing mentality and behaviour in social life, economy and politics. Definitely, a new Albania has to be developed by the Albanians themselves and - to a high extent - they have to rely on their own resources. Support from the EU is necessary, but it will have no deep impact, if good Albanians *at all levels* are not doing the proper homework and are not taking responsibility.

Among the good initiatives are the religious tolerance-initiatives (2003, 2004), *The Foundation of Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation of Disputes*, some media initiatives, demonstrations against corruption - and maybe the *Mjaft*-movement too. But much more - and much more widespread - initiatives are necessary.

The author

Bjoern Andersen is a sociologist and a philologist. In recent years he has written books and articles about

- The Albanian history. The intervention in Kosova.
- The Danish Law of 1683.
- Ludvig Holberg.

Holberg (1684-1754) was the most outstanding Danish-Norwegian author in the Enlightenment. He was a playwright, a philosopher and a historian; he has written an essay about Scanderbeg. (Cf: <http://bjoerna.dk/Holberg/Scanderbeg.htm>)

[Links: Reports, background articles etc.](#)

The Danish *Side = Page*.

The Danish edition can be examined at: <http://bjoerna.net/to-skridt-frem-net.pdf> [5,3 MB].

You may not print this file or copy from it. To open the file a password is needed: gennemsyn

- [Albanian Brain Drain. Emigration of the intellectual elite](#). By Assoc. Prof. Andrea Koxhaj and Assoc. Prof. Fatmir Mema

Bjoern Andersen: <http://bjoerna.net/articles/BA.htm>

Version 1.8 - 3rd December 2006 - The articles may be quoted free of charge, but only with a proper reference.

Albania

bjoerna.dk [Bjoern Andersen, sociologist](mailto:Bjoern.Andersen.sociologist@post.bjoerna.dk) post@bjoerna.dk

Danish sociologist's thoughts on Albania's past, present and future

By Alba Çela



Alba Çela

Version 1.0 - 03.12.2006

A pdf-version for printing-purposes can be downloaded from:
<http://bjoerna.net/articles/interview-TT-061201.pdf>

Feature

Bjoern Andersen's first visit to Albania was in the middle of the 1970's when he joined a group of enthusiastic Marxists from Western Europe to explore what was then a forbidden country for almost all the rest of the world. Then, in 2003, after participating in an international conference in Tirana about religious tolerance he decided to come back every year. He agreed to confess to Tirana Times his observations, talk about the big differences between the situation in the middle of the 1970's and the situation by now, and disclose some of his plans related to a seminar he is planning about the figure of Skenderbeu.

Albania, then and now

I have always met an overwhelming hospitality and some nice curiosity. In the middle of the 1970's borders were closed in both directions. Only high-ranking officials and specialists, or people on guided tours were allowed to visit from Western Europe and the United States. Anyways, back then, I got some good impressions from different parts of the country -Korça, Elbasan, Tirana, Durrës and Shkodra - and from different sectors: the factories, the cooperatives and the state-farms – and from a very little private market as well. Now, the country has opened its borders in many respects. It is really good, even when some very important problems are appearing too: illegal emigration, heavy crime related to drugs, trafficking and smuggling – and corruption at different levels. In the Northern parts of Europe from where I come we are not at all happy with these sinister aspects of the open borders, we do not accept either the quantity or the “quality” of crime. To my opinion the crime presents an important hindrance when speaking about the possible Albanian membership of the European Union.

Positive changes

One of the really good things is the improvement of the free debate and the improvement of printed and air borne media. Some of your newspapers have developed considerably in quality and the education of journalists has improved too. The debate has improved considerably in quantity and quality through the years. For example I have observed a long and sincere discussion about your great writer Ismail Kadaré. Some Danes know Kadaré, actually one of his books – “The Successor” – was published just recently and got very

good commentaries in newspapers. The Danish-Albanian Association 'Miqësia' has just invited Kadare to visit Denmark and to give a lecture, hopefully he will find the time in 2007. The discussion between Rexhep Qosja, Dritëro Agolli and Ismail Kadare, three different and very skilled writers with different approaches to the Albanian past, strikes me as positively serious. I am grateful to Shaban Sinani who has published his very important studies about the "Kadare archives". Just recently a special edition came out in French together with a very good interview by Stéphane Courtois. I will recommend that edition and the interview to everyone interested in the works of Kadare and in his artistic interpretation of Albanian history. Hopefully, the interview will appear in Albanian, English and Danish as well.

I am not at all an expert in politics, and I can only speak on my own behalf, but on the one hand I have observed impressing and very good steps concerning elections and political working together in certain matters. Now you will only find a few examples of the type of boycotting parliamentary work. On the other hand, the nation would benefit quite a lot, if the politicians forgot – from time to time at least – to get and to obtain power. Politics is very much about such issues, so I will not recommend a naïve approach – nevertheless things would be much better if the politicians focused much more on real issues: economy, exports, security, corruption, infrastructure, education and health-care.

Observations about economy

Obviously your economy has improved during the last years. But still there is a very high trade deficit. The imports are – compared with the exports – tremendously high. The exports are – to a certain extent at least – improving, but it is not so easy to find good markets. I understand that you meet a lot of obstacles. Often you have to import electricity, especially when the quantity of electricity from the rivers is too little to meet rising demands; you have to buy some commodities abroad, cars for instance – but you could meet much more of the internal demands pretty well with Albanian commodities, especially if quality or design was improved. Your dairy commodities are better in quality, good milk, good cheese etc. You are also very good in vegetables, especially you have the opportunity of exporting early tomatoes, onions, cucumbers and the like. You are very good at grapes, but many other regions in the Adriatic and the Balkans are highly productive and cost-effective. Also, you are wine-producers, but there is a reason why even Albanians prefer to drink wine from other countries. To my opinion Albanian wine – in general – is not meeting the European market standards. If you will stay in the market or even get a better position, you will have to do something seriously, I am afraid. Anyway, you have an advantage, I think: You are not using fertilizers that much, and therefore you possibly can get a good position in the market of organic vegetables and herbs. Obviously, you will have to improve in organizing exports and in marketing.

You have a big informal – or black – economy. To some extent it is about trading between acquaintances and friends, hard-crime money is involved and this definitely is a serious question for the police and other authorities.

Definitely, this is not only an Albanian problem, a black economy has developed in countries like Denmark too – especially when hiring workmen and service-people, possibly because the taxes in Denmark are considerably higher than in Albania. The big informal or black economy is somehow a catalyst, nevertheless you do not get taxes from it, therefore you are in a shortage of money to invest in infrastructure, education, health-care and the like, and that is a serious problem, since education is a prerequisite for economic and social development.

Suggestions:

1. Military spending

You could consider, I think - and in that point I definitely disagree with many Western governments - to lower the costs in the military sector and to use the money to improve the more in other sectors? Do you have any serious enemies by now? I do not think so. Then why do you not leave it to bigger countries to secure the region militarily and instead use your money to solve your problems?

2. Infrastructure

As mentioned before I have been visiting the Burrel area, actually both this year and last year. The roads in Burrel city are under reconstruction, and that is very good. Outside Burrel, in the village areas, for example in Uraka, the roads are pretty bad and the bridges are either missing or not good enough. Here you are facing some sort of a paradox. When the roads are in a poor condition, when the bridges are missing, you could assume that the people would stay behind the 'bars'. But, as you know, the opposite happens. The 'bars' or 'walls' are somehow one-sided; they are hindering visits from the outside, they are hindering the villagers from working in the cities in the daytime - or hindering them in bringing commodities to and from the local markets. The government, I would suggest, and the regional authorities should consider to change priorities, that is to move more money to the villages. Otherwise, more and more villagers, especially the younger ones, will move to the cities worsening the situation there - or to countries abroad – legally and illegally. When I visited the mountains in the Mat-region, I met many very nice, diligent, hard-working people, shepherds and peasants. If the roads in Uraka were bad, the roads in these mountain arrears were a real challenge. You could only approach by an off-roader or by foot. How do you think these nice people should sell their sheep, their cheese, and their nuts to the city markets or even to export it? They need support. Without good roads and modern facilities they cannot attract foreign tourists to these very beautiful places.

3. Traffic

I have met many very good drivers in Albania, drivers who manage as good musicians, to "listen" to each other and in that way they are helping the traffic to flow. But there are many bad drivers who do not have proper manners, who do not know of musicality. A very nice lady told me that she was pushed to act in traffic as an aggressive male, because if she did not she would not be allowed to drive from a smaller road into a bigger. It seems like the most important instruments in an Albanian car are the steering-wheel, the mobile phone, the speeder and the horn. Not many are using the seat-belts, some tires should be renewed immediately, and a lot of drivers should learn to slow down. Last year I observed a fast Mercedes running directly towards a car from the other direction with full speed macho. Full speed macho is an awful cocktail you do not have to export. Again, if you are dreaming of attracting foreign tourists, some Albanians have to improve considerably in the music of traffic.

Current visit and future plans

This time I have been doing three things: I have visited the Burrel area and the high

mountains in the Mat-region, I have had meetings about a possible Scanderbeg-seminar in November of this year and I have had other meetings with some journalists and sociologists. One afternoon I visited the book exhibition in the Pyramid. I knew already that the Albanian publishers are producing a huge quantity of books and many of them seem to be of high quality. I was quite happy to visit the stand of the Miqjeni Publishing House. The director, Angelina Ceka, who I met briefly in Copenhagen earlier this year – recommended the book of her husband, Neritan Ceka, about the Illyrians and the Albanians. Now, the book has been published in a very nice English edition, which I am going to read pretty soon. My meetings about the Scanderbeg-seminar went pretty well. All I have met, at the Albanian embassy in Copenhagen, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and at the Danish Embassy as well have been very supportive. I have arranged with Genc Myftiu, who is in charge of SEDA and experienced in promoting Albanian history and culture, that he will do what has to be done in organizing the seminar, and he will very soon contact Albanian historians and philologists and authorities as well. In spring 2007 I will visit Tirana once again to participate in the planning and organizing.

A memory about Albania in the 1970's

When visiting Albania in the middle of the 1970'es one 5-year plan was to be finished and a new one was on the sketch board. A quick comparative study in the original old plan and in the reports about the results – especially in the agricultural sector - made me curious since there was a big discrepancy. The results were considerable lower than the estimates. What could the reasons be? Most possibly, I thought, the original plan was built upon wishful thinking. At first I asked our Albanian guides, a teacher and two young students. The teacher suspected me, I think, to be an enemy beneath a friendly surface, so I told him that I was quite sincere and definitely not an enemy to the Albanians. He called for a party-secretary when we visited a cooperative in the Shkodra area, but the nice man was not able to explain why the outcome was so much lesser than the estimate-figures and went away a little angry, I am afraid. Some days later professor Harilla Papajorgji, a big shot in planning business, appeared, gave a lecture about Albanian economy and social structure and also took questions. I put my question to him. At first everything went quite well, but since he in fact did not explain the discrepancy, I asked once again – and definitely as politely as I could. Then he suggested bad weather as the cause. OK, weather is always up and down, but I did not know of troubles of particular size of the kind in the previous years – and said it to him. Then there were no more space for questions. Our guides asked all to leave, and afterwards I got a reprimand in quite harsh words from the Danish tour leader (a real Marxist-Leninist) for offending Albanian hospitality! In the evening I asked the other Danish tourists whether they would like to participate in a discussion on the beach. Actually we had a nice and friendly discussion for an hour or two about Albanian economy, problems deriving from inside the country and abroad, planning issues and the political situation in general; that is, the Danish tour-leader and some of the other Marxist- Leninists, mostly "Chinese" to my recollection, kept away. Home again I concluded that Albania – may be - was on the track to prosperity, that the Albanians - may be - really wanted a political system like what they had, but also that something had turned completely wrong since an open-minded and free discussion was a prerequisite for a modern society.

Bjoern Andersen holds a MA in sociology and in Danish philology.

He has visited Albania some times through the years, the first time in 1976. In 2003 and 2004 he was a participant in the conferences about 'the clash of civilizations' [cf.: <http://bjoerna.dk/tolerance/>] and 'religious tolerance' [cf.: <http://miqesia.dk/Summit-2004.htm>], both in Tirana. He is the author of books in Danish about Albanian history. The latest is »*To skridt frem?*« [2005] [»*To steps forward?*«]. BA is the editor of the 'Miqësia Experiences Project', cf.: <http://miqesia.dk/erfaring/experiences.htm> and <http://miqesia.dk/erfaring/>

Recently he has published the 'Danish Law of 1683' in a digital edition - and by now he is working on a book about the Danish-Norwegian author Ludvig Holberg - who, in 1739, issued an appreciating article about Scanderbeg.

TIRANA TIMES

»**Tirana Times**« - <http://www.tiranatimes.com/> - is an Albanian weekly in English. **Editor-in-chief** is Jerina Zaloshnja. Information about **subscription**: <http://www.tiranatimes.com/subscription.php>

This article is a part of »[Two steps forward? Albania and the Albanians. Articles](#)«. It may be quoted free of charge, but only with a proper reference.

We have to change the mentality

Interview with Qemal Minxhozi when he was retiring as a chargé d'affaires in Copenhagen. April 2005

BA: Obviously, Albania played an important role in the Kosovo-crisis in 1999, when some hundred thousands fled from Kosovo to shelter in Albania. What role is Albania playing in the Balkans now?

Qemal Minxhozi: A role as a mediator since we have good relations to our neighbours, and since these relations are improving.

A few days ago the ministers of culture from 10 Balkan countries visited the Nordic ministers and signed an agreement. The purpose is to establish an organization of cooperation in the Balkans.

When our president, Alfred Moisiu, took initiative to the Tirana Summit in December 2004, together with UNESCO, it was an initiative of the same kind. Albania wants to establish and consolidate good relations between the Balkan countries.



Photo: BA, April 2005

A few weeks ago our foreign minister, Kastriot Islami, was the host of a meeting in Durrës with the Balkan Foreign Ministers from Serbia-Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia and Croatia. The German Minister, Mr. Fischer, attended the meeting too. The purpose was to discuss our mutual interest in the integration of our countries in the European structures.

BA: For some years Albania has aimed at being a member of NATO and the European Union. Possibly Albania will be a member of NATO in some years, since there is some progress in the cooperation in the military field. What is missing is perhaps more training in military management etc.?

An admission to the European Union will last a little longer, we suppose, maybe many years - since the European Union has expressed herself concerning the big black economy, the level of corruption, the level of organized crime - and the very deep, nearly insurmountable obstacles in the political field.

The Albanians have a very difficult task, it seems. Some of your partners in this process are the Nordic countries. Are we doing what is needed?

Qemal Minxhozi: Yes. You're quite right. We have to oppose many and very deep problems. We have made progress in some fields. Albania today is in another situation now than back in the first part of the 1990'es. In other fields we really are lacking behind. Sometimes we have to take small steps to move forward - we have to combine energy and patience. The only thing we will *not* do is to give up.

The Albanians like and admire the Nordic countries - Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark - very much indeed. As Albania, the Nordic countries are small countries. We are happy to be in a situation when we are at an eye level with our partners. It is much easier to have a real dialogue then. We also admire the good traditions you have in many fields. In the political field. In the field of public discussion. In the field of human rights.

One of our new institutions is the Ombudsman, the People's Advocate - as we put it. Such an institution is very important when you are building up a modern democratic society. The Ombudsman institution is of a great importance to us - but in fact the problems are deeper and therefore we have to dig much deeper. What it is about is to build up a new culture, a new mentality, not only in the very core of Tirana but throughout the country. In the other cities, in the countryside and in the remote areas in the mountains.

Fundamentally, it is a job the Albanians have to do by themselves, but we need to have good and close friends to discuss things with. In principle it is not a question of material support, but some small material support would be highly appreciated - foremost, it is about good and persisting communication and cooperation. The Albanians have to visit other countries, to study other countries to be acquainted with them - and the Albanians would appreciate visits from the Nordic countries. Short visits, tourist visits - but also longer visits and recurrent visits. And - definitely - we have a need of long lasting cooperation on many issues which are important to us in the process of beeing integrated in Europe and in the European structures.

BA: You said it, mostly it is not about material support. But one of the keystones in any development *is* the economic development, isn't it?

Qemal Minxhozi: Definitely. We are making some progress in that field. In Tirana - and other cities - many buildings are beeing constructed these years. And we have reached the situation where it is important to re-arrange some thing. Therefore we have started a big project to make a better planning of the development of Tirana. In this area we are happy that the *Henning Larsen Tegnestue* is involved. The *Henning Larsen Tegnestue* is a key partner in building an important building at the central square in Tirana, the Scanderbeg Square. The project is offering some new good aspects to Albanian architecture, I think.

In some fields we are facing some sort of a paradox. We are producing very good vegetables - visit the markets in Albania and look at all the good things from our countryside. Taste them. We can eat the vegetables ourselves, but because of the market situation, the market regulations etc. the export will be very limited. What can we do then? To develop we have to export some thing. Without export to other countries we are too much depending on money which is beeing sent back from Albanians in Greece, Italy, Germany etc. - and too much depending on material support from the European Union, the World Bank and other countries and organizations.

If we can not develop the economy, many Albanians will find that they have to recur to act in the »black« and - in some instances - sinister economy. We are in a bad trouble here, but we have to address that openly and firmly - first of all in Albania, but also with our good friends in Denmark and in the other Nordic countries.

BA: A few Danish companies have invested in Albania. Possibly, it is because of problems with the infrastructure, imaginations - correct or not - about the »climate«. And thirdly, because the Albanian market is a tiny one. What can be done and what can Albania offer?

Qemal Minxhozi: We have a fundamental need of foreign investment in many fields, and I'm happy to say that some foreign companies have established in Albania. Companies from various fields and various countries, bankers, industries, companies in the service sector etc. But many more investments from abroad are needed to develop the Albanian economy.

We have to admit that we have had - and still have - severe problems influencing the economy. But some of our main roads are being improved by now. We have had a lot of problems in supplying electricity, at least in the quantities which are needed, but also here we are improving. The situation is much more stable than previously.

One of our main assets is what we can offer in the touristic field. We have very good opportunities and I suppose this will be a field for a cooperation with companies from the Nordic countries.

Some Danish travelling agencies are offering travels to Albania now, and that is a very good thing. We will listen carefully to the experiences from these agencies. How can we improve to offer better opportunities to the travellers.

BA: Denmark was supporting Albania from the beginning of the 1990'es to the end of 2003. We gave some transitional support. You think it was a little premature to step out, I suppose?

Qemal Minxhozi: We are happy because of the support. It made a good *impetus* to the development in Albania. I think the Danes acted in a very good way.

Maybe the start was a little widespread, but as the support was concentrated to some specific fields in which the Danes really had something special to offer, we made a lot of successes.

Your support to development of new institutions in the Dibra region was important as well as the support to the development of the Dibra police.

I'm happy to mention your support to the development in the field of the media, in the fields of the human rights and of education of judges - and there are other good examples, for example the development of the schools and education of teachers - and in the field of labour education as well.

But - yes, it was a little premature to step out, since we still are very weak. What I'm aiming at is not that our development should be financed from the Nordic countries or the European Union, we have to do the things by ourselves - but we need to have some close support. In Denmark you're speaking of '*hjælp-til-selvhjælp*' (assistance supplementary to own efforts), that's exactly what I'm speaking about. And how could that be done: By continuing some of the projects the Danes already have been involved in and to make similar projects in other parts of Albania. Secondly by supporting us in projects organized within the framework of the European Union, the Council of Europe, Unesco and some other countries.

BA: You would have liked to stay longer in Denmark, we know, but since you are a candidate in the parliamentary election you have to return to Albania. Where is it you are a candidate?

Qemal Minxhozi: In Burrel in the Mat region - North to Tirana. My family is from Burrel, you know, so if I should be elected, it should be there. Politics in Albania differs from politics in Denmark, it is not the same issues we are discussing. The main issues in Burrel will be economic development under special circumstances. Without economic development the area is in danger of 'thinning'. Some of the young people are moving to bigger cities or even to foreign countries if they have the possibility. Some qualified people are moving to more prosperous places, so we have to change the development. It will be a tough job, I'm sure.

BA: Thank you. We wish you and your family good luck. Hopefully, we will meet again in Denmark as in Albania.

From: »Two steps forward? Albania and the Albanians«

cf.: <http://bjoerna.net/to-skridt-frem>

<http://bjoerna.net/articles/Qemal-Minxhozi.pdf>

Doing the homework

Roads and bridges in the vicinity of the city of Burrel in the Mat area, Albania

Version 1.0 - 29.09.2005. - A pdf-version for printing-purposes can be downloaded from: <http://bjoerna.net/albania/homework.pdf>



One of the new bridges in Gurrë e Vogël. Photo: Bjoern Andersen

In September 2005 Qemal Minxhozi, the newly elected deputy for the Burrel area in Mat, Albania, invited me to visit some villages in the vicinity of the city of Burrel.

One of the villages is Gurrë e Vogël, south of the city. It is quite easy to drive the first kilometres, but the by-way to the village is quite stony and bumpy. To drive this road with an ordinary car, a Volkswagen or a Mercedes, would not be a splendid idea, you will have to use an off-roader - and you will have to be a skilled driver to approach.

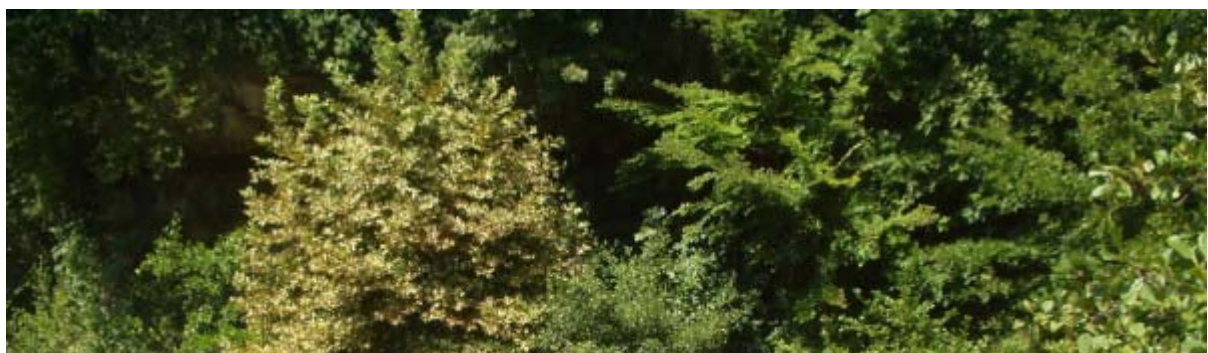




Had you taken the journey into this beautiful area a little while ago, you would - after some kilometres - have reached an end marked by a river, low at summer, high and heavy in rainy winter.

In one direction you could continue by foot over a narrow and fragile bridge. In the other direction you had to continue - also by foot - by descending the bank-side, passing some stepping stones - and ascending the opposite side. Some few years ago a person drowned during the passage.

To pass the river in these two directions by car, may it have been an off-roader, would have been out of question.





The old bridge in Gurrë e Vogël. Photo: Bjoern Andersen

During the election campaign this summer Qemal Minxhozi heard about the severe infrastructural problems and began considering what could possibly be done.

When elected July 3rd he roughed out a plan and began to discuss it with friends and people from the area. Maybe this was a matter for the local authorities - or even for the government - but a solution would not come easily or quickly this way round. Instead he thought of making some sort of a joint venture.

If the villagers would participate with all necessary labour, others maybe would contribute with cement, wood and machinery?

Qemal Minxhozi was helped very much by the Ministry of Defense, which decided to assist with a military bridge of the good old Bailey-model.





The Bailey bridge in Gurrë e Vogël. Photo: Bjoern Andersen

So, during August and September the construction of the first of the bridges was nearly completed. When I visited the area some weeks later on, the bases were established thanks to some construction companies in Burrel - the Neziri, the Gjoka and the Koliqi companies - and the Bailey was put in the right position; missing was only the ramps - but they would be constructed as soon as the cement had hardened.

The villagers participated from the very beginning - and during the process they became even more enthusiastic and decided to participate in the next project, happy as they were seeing the infrastructure being so much improved. Among the villagers and other participants the bullozer-driver, Isuf Kurti, Sefedin Muharemi and Avni Kurti have to be remembered.

This next project was a little bigger than the first one, since only one Bailey was available - and therefore some financial support from the outer world was needed.

Qemal Minxhozi succeeded in convincing an Albanian bank-company - the Banka Popullore - to make a donation, and some more construction-companies decided to support the project too - among those Dode Doci from the Lura-company contacted Qemal Minxhozi to offer his assistance.

In mid-September the construction-work began, and this second bridge will be inaugurated before winter.

The importance of these projects is obvious. Many villagers, especially in the younger generations, have left the villages in the last 10-15 years, most likely never to return to settle. With a bad and highly insufficient infrastructure it is more prosperous to leave for good and ever than to stay.

This migration to the cities in Albania - and to Greece, Italy and other countries - can not be expected to stop since not all children will like to be farmers as their parents, but *hopefully* the migration from the area will weaken.

It will be easier to work outside the village and drive to and fro - and it will be easier to bring agricultural products to the city-market. By that the income of the villagers will raise, and subsequently the villagers will buy more commodities in the city. Last, but not least, it will be easier to maintain and even elevate the level of education in the area, then not so remote as in recent years.

Since the European Union and Albania have signed an agreement this summer about legal and illegal emigration to the countries in the Union, an improvement of the infrastructure in the Albanian villages is the more necessary.





The mayor of Burrel, Dr Skender Lleshi, to the right. Qemal Minxhozi to the left. Photo: Bjoern Andersen

I had the opportunity of a friendly coffee with the mayor of the city of Burrel, Skender Lleshi, of profession a medical doctor. Dr Lleshi has been abroad some times and is familiar with the opportunities there, so he and the members of the city council have made an ambitious plan for developing the city. Dr Lleshi is a Democrat, Qemal Minxhozi a Socialist, nevertheless he appreciated very much the road'n'bridge-initiatives. To his mind all the area will benefit when the infrastructure is being improved in the villages surrounding the city of Burrel.





Do you have the Google Earth-application (<http://earth.google.com/>) installed, you can download a closer look of the area: <http://bjoerna.net/albania/Urake.kmz>.
The Mat Hydropower Station is situated to the west.

Urakë means oracle, I have just been told by professor, Dr Shaban Sinani, the general-director of the Albanian National Archives. Perhaps what is going to happen in Urakë has to do with messages from an oracle? You have to interpret the messages by yourself, that is to apply the knowledge from Urakë, Gurrë e Vogël and other places to your own circumstances - and you will have to use your imagination to get proper results.

Many years ago, maybe 20 years ago, the then government established the big Hydropower Station in the Mat valley.



At that time the authorities promised the inhabitants in the area that new roads and a bridge were to be built, since the area and the infrastructure was changed radically to make the production of the highly needed electricity possible.

The government also began constructing a rail-road - but as can be seen from the picture below, the plan was not exactly fulfilled. The rail-road ends up in open space.



The open space rail-road. Photo: Bjoern Andersen

In all the years since - that is in the period of the first Democrat governments and in the period of the Socialist governments - not very much has happened. Neither the government in Tirana, nor the local authorities have taken any profound initiative to promote the infrastructure in this neighbourhood.

The roads in the area are pretty awful, both in the vicinity of the village and in the centre of the village as well. The most appropriate way to come through the area is by foot as the shepherds - or by donkey or mule.

The villagers have sent their signal to the authorities at all levels and to all the Albanian political parties. At the last election they did not vote. Not at all. None of the 450 voters gave their vote, were they Democrats, Royalists, Republicans or Socialists. They agreed to act in common - and therefore the signal is so important.

Looking at the circumstances and opportunities in this area it is obvious that something has to be done, but also that it is *possible* to do something good - even with a limited amount of money.





The Urakë-area as seen from the hillside. The village is situated to the left; the river-bed is to the right. Most of the river-bed has dried up because of the summer-heat. Photo: Bjoern Andersen

The best thing to do might be to establish a bridge across the river-bed in a length of some hundred meters. With such a bridge you could come to and fro the city of Burrel within 30 minutes by car or minibus, because the length would only be about 10 kilometres.

Nevertheless, such a bridge can not be established quickly and for a limited amount of money. To build such a bridge you will have to study the geology carefully and to think the piling thoroughly through. Maybe the construction will have to follow principles of self-sustaining?





The river-bed. Photo: Bjoern Andersen

There is another option which will be less expensive. A shorter bridge can be established in another direction - but then the distance to the city of Burrel will be prolonged from 10 to approximately 25 kilometres since another road to the city has to be used - and improved. Such a bridge will be much better than nothing, not to mention that some other villages can be served, and most of the need can be complied with at least for some years.



The other option. Photo: Bjoern Andersen





Discussion at the river-bank. Photo: Bjoern Andersen

In a short time some engineers will appear in the area to make the proper measurements in the ground; afterwards the two alternative projects will be sketched - and hopefully, a bridge can be established in a future, not so distant.

Possibly, some money could be directed to the project from governmental and local governmental sources, but since there are so many other things which need attention and money, the most appropriate and efficient way to step forward will be doing something in common and without governmental money or money from regional authorities.

Maybe a friendly construction company could donate some old construction equipment, let say a bulldozer? Maybe the villagers could participate voluntarily by driving the bulldozer and do most of the necessary work in preparation of the construction of a bridge, for example by improving the narrow and stony roads in the area, since they are in such a poor condition?

By the way, there is a flagrant discrepancy between the individual houses and fields *and* the common roads in the very neighbourhood - not to speak of the school in the village which also is in the need of a »face-lift«.

The attitude towards the authorities might have been ambiguous in recent years, nevertheless you do not have any doubts about the enthusiasm among the villagers now. When I visited the area in the company of Qemal Minxhozi and the manager of the Hydropower Station in the Mat valley, Sokol Muceku, many villagers joined us from the top of the hill and down to the centre of the village to show us the area, the obstacles and the opportunities - and to express their views about what has to be done.

In an improvised meeting in the house of one of the villagers, the discussion went on for some hours over coffee's and raki's. The voices were pretty loud, but everyone spoke politely towards the other fellows and the guests. This discussion will, I am sure, show up as an important step of uniting in the case of the 'oracle bridge'.

Bjoern Andersen is a sociologist. He has visited Albania some times through the years, the first time in 1976. In 2003 and 2004 he was a participant in the conferences about 'the clash of civilizations' and 'religious tolerance', both in Tirana. He is the author of some books in Danish about Albanian history. Recently he has published the 'Danish Law of 1683' in a digital edition - and by now he is working on a book about the Danish-Norwegian author Ludvig Holberg - who, in 1739, issued an appreciating article about Scanderbeg.

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Progër

A village in the neighbourhood of Korça in Southern Albania

Version 1.1 - 09.01.2006 - A pdf-version for printing-purposes can be downloaded from: <http://bjoerna.net/articles/Proger.pdf>



Progër is situated NE to Korça

Village-life in Southern Albania

In 1993, shortly after the collapse of the Hoxha-regime and a few years before the pyramid-scandals, a young Norwegian social-anthropologist - Tobias Svenningsen - went to

Albania. He stayed there for 8 months and made many useful observations of daily village-life. He had taken inspiration from another Norwegian anthropologist, [Berit Backer](#), who unfortunately was killed by a sick refugee from Kosóva before the departure of Tobias S.

Some sociologists, anthropologists, journalists etc. have visited Albania or Kosóva in the second half of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th - and again in recent years - and have made interesting observations [\[Note\]](#). Some of them have visited the Northern of Albania, possibly because this area is the most inaccessible and in some aspects the most exciting part of Albania since some of the old traditions - as the *gjakmarria* - still are uphold to some extent [cf.: [»Gjakmarria. Albanian Highlander's »Blood Feud« as Social Obligation«](#)].

Tobias S. chose otherwise; he decided to go South-East to the Korça region - and even to study the Albanian language before he appeared in the area. Some of the Albanian contact-persons found a suitable family in Progër to host him. All Albanians are very hospitable - and many families would have welcomed the guest, but since the field-study would last for many months a family with a young son - at the age of Tobias S. and with a lot of spare time - was chosen. Secondly, it was agreed that Tobias S. should pay for his stay.

The area in the Korça-region is not lowland and as easy to pass through as the areas near the Adriatic, but it is very near to modern Greece and not as remote as the Northern regions.

The observations

Tobias S. did not make any sort of a »stiff study« or a study too much influenced by »theoretical ideas«, and he did not make formal interviews either; instead he made a down-to-earth-study, observed what was happening - and made a lot of ordinary conversations with the hosts, with people in the streets and in the bars and with people he helped to install satellite dishes. To get the best understanding of village-life, this procedure seems to have been the most appropriate.

One of the most striking observations was that everyone - of the parent-generation - preferred their sons (and daughters) to leave countryside and to get a job in one of the cities. Most parents thought life as a farmer was too exhausting, too out-of-date and too distant from modern city-life, and therefore they often were reluctant to goad the sons (and maybe even the daughters) into activity at the farm. One reason why the farms were too out-of-date was that most fields were too small to be exploited economically, and furthermore the fields often were sliced up as in Denmark before the great reforms in the first part of the 19th century.

If possible, many young people emigrated - mostly to Greece - to earn some money to settle there or - after some years - back in Albania. Many emigrants sought to get a job as far away from the Albanian-Greek border as possible, to learn and speak Greek, to use Greek Christian names and to appear as Greek in any possible sense. Nevertheless, many of them were caught by the authorities and had to return home before they had planned to do so, since they did not have got valid visa and work permits.

On the other hand, it was not as easy to get a good job and a good flat in the cities, and furthermore many commodities were more expensive at the city-markets than in the village. That is, some agricultural products from abroad were highly competitive - as Danish feta - and many Albanians therefore preferred to buy such foreign products instead of Albanian products of problematic quality [\[Note 2\]](#).

The collapse of the Hoxha-regime might have to be seen as a major step forward, politically spoken. Nevertheless, the closing down of the collective farms had certain disadvantages - first of all, many women workers were forced to work at the family farms and therefore their daily social contacts were weakened.

Tobias S. was a little surprised of the common village-strategy, since the villagers - at least in Progër and mostly the Christian ones - did not choose to work together, to modernize and to make proper investments. The greatest hindrance maybe was not »structural«, but »ideological«. Most villagers did not want to repeat communist collectivism - with the exception of some people who were closely related to each other. *Reciprocity* is a key-concept in the Albanian village (as it is in many other parts of the world), but it is most easy to handle inside family and among friends. Many villagers hoped some *foreigners* would invest in the village - but it did not seem realistic.

A few villagers chose a more prosperous strategy than the other villagers since they combined agricultural work - at their own fields - with other kinds of work.

One villager established a new bar, but he had to give up after a short while since he did not have the kind of a social network as his competitor had. Obviously he did not have the *flair*, nor the *entrepreneurial spirit*. The other fellow acted as a typical Albanian businessman, he got himself supported by family and friends, from time to time he stood a round of free drinks - and he took some other initiatives.

Relevance

Things have changed in the Albanian villages. But still the most important observations are highly relevant.

All the major problems seem to have persisted, and the authorities as well as the farmers have to make a restructuring. Maybe a rapprochement to the EU will do something good, but - to my opinion - the Albanians have to change policy and strategy by themselves and to get rid of the widespread corruption. Only then, other countries and some of the international organizations will be able to support the Albanians in a future-oriented way.

Bjoern Andersen

Note

1) For example Edward Lear, Edith Durham, Franz von Jessen, Fritz Magnussen - later on Birthe Traerup, Berit Backer, Antonia Young, Isabel Fonseca, Robert Carver and Nina Rasmussen.

2) Even when the Albanian products are good, the Albanians often choose foreign products. For example furniture, shoes and clothes from Italy. Since the Albanians do not produce cars all cars and vans have to be imported.

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BA: »*Gjakmarria. Albanian Highlander's »Blood Feud« as Social Obligation. A review of Diana Gellçi's book*«: <http://bjoerna.net/sidste-nyt/277.htm> [2005]

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He has visited Albania some times through the years, the first time in 1976. In 2003 and 2004 he was a participant in the conferences about 'the clash of civilizations' [cf.: <http://bjoerna.dk/tolerance/>] and 'religious tolerance' [cf.: <http://migesia.dk/Summit-2004.htm>], both in Tirana. He is the author of books in Danish about Albanian history. The latest is »*To skridt frem?*« [2005] [»*To steps forward?*«]. BA is the editor of the 'Miqësia Experiences Project', cf.: <http://migesia.dk/erfaring/experiences.htm> and <http://migesia.dk/erfaring/>

Recently he has published the 'Danish Law of 1683' in a digital edition - and by now he is working on a book about the Danish-Norwegian author Ludvig Holberg - who, in 1739, issued an appreciating article about Scanderbeg.

This article is a part of »*Two steps forward? Albania and the Albanians. Articles*«. It may be quoted free of charge, but only with the reference to: <http://bjoerna.net/albania/Proger.htm> or: <http://bjoerna.net/articles/>.

Sidste Nyt fra Albanien, Kosóva og Makedonien

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The old Peloponnes' Railway Station in Athens. A common meeting place for Albanians. Photo: Andreas Roepke, 2005

Albanian immigrants in Athens

Power relations and health

A review of Anna Mousouli's book

The relations between Albania and Greece, Albanians and Greeks are complex

The relations between Albania and Greece, Albanians and Greeks are complex, maybe complicated and dubious; some relations are good, some really bad - some are between people who respect each other, but generally the relations are unequal, the Greek consider the Albanians as »underdogs«. {1}

An anthropologist on a friendly visit

Recently Anna Mousouli, a young Greek anthropologist, has made an interesting study about Albanian immigrants in Athens, - more precisely about how they are treated by physicians and other medical staff.

The author presents valuable information - not only about the specific subject in itself, but about the *set-up*. She is quite frankly about her own position as a friendly anthropologist - from the »patron-culture« - visiting the Albanian subculture.

To make her field study Anna Mousouli had to be introduced to the Albanians by one of them, nevertheless the Albanians were more or less reluctant towards her. They all took her for a stranger and maybe for a strange person. *What could her intentions be?*, they thought - and some of them put the question to herself.

Some of the Albanians suspected her being related to the police or other Greek authorities, some of them took her visit to the Albanians as a single event: She was doing something *trendy* and would disappear quickly afterwards never to return, they imagined. Generally, the Albanians were polite to her, but not all of them wanted to be interviewed.

By the way, Anna Mousouli had no need for an interpreter or a companion (as I have understood it), since all the Albanians spoke Greek, many of them excellently.

There are disadvantages with the *set-up*, since there is an obvious gap between the researched and the researcher. Maybe a team of a male and a female Albanian sociologist could have reached far deeper in the interviewing? Probably, they could have collected more interviews, they could have made *observations*, they could have understood the »hidden« and the silent language much better etc. Last not least they would not have been taken as Greek spies. This is not - in any sense - meant to be a criticism of Anna Mousouli. First of all, she has to be commended for her initiative and diligent work. Secondly, she has a major advantage, since she is familiar with the »patron culture«.

The public and the private language

One of the observations is very important, even not exactly a new one. The researched master at least two languages, a public one and a private - and may be hidden - one {2}; when Anna Mousouli made her interviews, the Albanians all spoke the public - and Greek - language; one of them understressed the language-problem by saying that he did not care whether she was a police informant or something else.

Even when the researched are speaking public language, it can be useful to interview them, but often it is more preferable to combine participant observation with interviewing, I imagine.

The findings

Since the field study only lasted for about six weeks and the number of interviewed persons is limited (actually only 20 were interviewed), we have to take the findings with some care. Nevertheless, they seem to be unambiguous:

- The Albanians belong to a lower caste or class than the Greek. Both objectively and according to common Greek.
- Medical staff disliked Albanians and considered them causing problems. »*[The Albanians] are characterized as overdemanding, ungrateful and suspicious towards the medical personnel. Sometimes they are compared to animals*«, Mousouli writes.
- The Albanians are often considered criminals. To Anna Mousouli some Albanians may be criminals, but not more than the Greek themselves; to her opinion the criminal activity has been over-exaggerated by the media (and the authorities?).
- The Albanians considered themselves to be in an exposed position. Therefore they decided to lie low and not to act in a provocative way against policemen, civil servants etc. Some Albanians even idealized and palliated troublesome experiences with the Greek health care system.

To stand silent

Many of the Albanians - being asked about experiences with the health system - answered that they did not have any experience themselves, since they and their family were healthy. It is not to know whether they answered in this way because they would not like to be interviewed, whether they would not risk to be exposed - or whether they actually did not have any experience. Most likely, many of them considered it would be the most clever thing to do to stand silent.

When the Albanians objectively were in need for medical care, some of them postponed or gave up to visit a physician, either of economic reasons or because they had bad experiences with the health system.

Additional money

In Greece medical care is commonly paid for by an insurance company, and most of the Albanians (being interviewed) had taken out a proper insurance {3}, nevertheless the Albanians

generally paid the physicians some more money in addition. They imagined - probably correctly - that the treatment would be better then. To the author the payment of additional money also tilted the scales between the medical staff-person and the Albanian in the favour of the latter - the staff and the Albanian became more equal {4}.

Since the *raison-d'être* of most Albanians in Greece is to work for an employer they have to be productive every day. Every loss-in-work could turn out to be highly critical, especially for those being employed in the big informal economy {5}.

Patrons and clients

Some Albanians have found a *patron*, in Greek an *affentiko*, who at some time had assisted them to be formally assimilated in the Greek community; often a Mediterranean *patron-client-relationship* has been the foundation of such an assimilation. Many of the patrons were Greek, but some of them - I imagine - might have been Greek with Albanian ancestors. Even when an Albanian family was not 'patronized', it often assimilated their children voluntarily - for example by letting them being baptized in the Greek Orthodox Church. The reason is obvious, the family has had no intention of returning to Albania and wanted to secure itself as much as possible.

The Greek policy is harsh and ambiguous

The Greek policy against the Albanian immigrants has been tough since the breakdown of the Hoxha-regime in Albania, but there have been ups and downs. On the one hand the Governments have been well aware of the micro- and macro-economic advantage of the big influx of underpaid workers, on the other the immigration have raised a lot of social and political problems. Economically spoken, the existence of a big - and maybe even growing - informal sector has made it difficult for the »white« companies to compete on the free market.

Since 1991 the Greek governments have acted ambiguously, mostly they have oppressed the Albanians.

- Authorities have often persecuted illegal immigrants and expelled them to Albania (and may be Macedonia?).
- Many incidents of Police brutality have been reported.
- From time to time Police has mounted harsh *skoupa*'s - sweep operations. (Possibly, the *skoupa*'s were run more frequently when Anna Mousouli did her field work since it was in the Olympics season).

Eventually, the Governments have accepted a big quantity of legal workers - and have occasionally made it easier to become legalized immigrants.

More studies and sincere discussions are needed

The study is to be welcomed. Hopefully, it can inspire to more and deeper studies and to sincere discussions between the Greek and Albanian Governments. All parts would gain, I am sure - except black and grey agents.

Notes

1) Some Greek cities were established in Albania in antiquity, Durrës (then Epidamnus - founded by Greek colonists from Corinth and Corcyra (Corfu), Lezha (then Lissus - founded by Dionysius I) and Apollonia (not far from Fier - founded by Greek colonists from Corinth and Corcyra (Corfu)).

For centuries Albanians have settled in Greece, the *Arvanites*, and Greeks in Albania.

For many years the Greek Governments have not wanted to recognize the Albanians as an ethnic minority. Many (or most) »old« Albanian families in Greece have - voluntarily and non-voluntarily - been hellenized and assimilated. Some have changed their names to Greek ones, some of them have been baptized - and they all speak Greek.

Some years after World War I many Muslim Albanians in Greece were forced to emigrate to Turkey. At the same time a large number of Greek emigrated from Asia Minor to Greece.

After World War II Greece expelled many Muslim Albanians from Ipeiros, the Greek part of Çameria. Çameria is the Albanian name for the borderregion in the South of Albania and the North of Greece. The Ambassador's Conference in London 1913 had assigned the biggest part of Çameria to Greece, the smallest to Albania. Greek attempts in 1919 to »move« the Southern part of the region to Greece did not meet international approval. Ioannina is the main city in the region - and the city of Ali Pasha of Tepelena too.

Since the first part of the 1990's hundreds of thousands of Albanians have emigrated to Greece for ever, for some years or for a shorter period, many of them illegally. Reliable figures are not to be found for the illegal emigration, but it is estimated that almost 550.000 Albanians are living in Greece.

The big emigration is caused by repulsion and attraction. Repulsion because the living conditions in Albania still are very poor, attraction because the labour markets in Greece and Italy more or less have been in the need of legal and illegal immigrants. Also Germany houses a large contingent of Albanians (some of them from Albania, many from Kosóva and Macedonia).

Official figures: »According to the Internal Ministry, specifically the Department of Social Integration of Greece in October 2004 from the general number of stance permissions of all kinds, 672.584, the number of Albanians requesting such service stand somewhere at 452.321 people from which the Albanian males number is 325.784 and Albanian females is 99.403«. Source: The Albanian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs: »*Albanian Emigration as a Developing component since its surviving stage*«. Paper, May 2005.

2) The author is speaking about »a public transcript« and »a hidden transcript«. Scott has said, she writes, that a *hidden transcript* is a discourse that takes place 'offstage', beyond direct observation by powerholders, while the *public transcript* is the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate. (Mousouli, p. 27).

3) Many Albanians have taken out health insurances, but probably less than 50%.

4) »*Informal payments are a practice well rooted in the Greek health care system*« (Mousouli, p. 37). It can be added that this kind of corruption has increased in Albania since 1991. The level is unknown.

5) According to Anna Mousouli most Albanian males are occupied in the agricultural sector or in the construction sector, the half in the formal, the other half in the informal sector. Most females are occupied in private homes as domestics - and some are prostitutes.

Possibly many construction workers occupied in Albania have been occupied in Greece. In both countries

informal work in the construction sector is considered very big.

Literature, links etc. - a sample

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Albanians: Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albanians>. In the English edition also articles about the ancient Greek cities in Albania: [Durrës](#), [Apollonia](#) and [Lezha](#).

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The Çam-problem: <http://www.frosina.org/about/infobits.asp?id=161>

Brain drain: Andrea Koxhaj and Fatmir Mema »*Albanian Brain Drain. Emigration of the intellectual elite*«: <http://bjoerna.net/sidste-nyt/275.htm>

Bjoern Andersen holds a MA in Sociology and Danish philology. He has visited Albania some times through the years, the first time in 1976. In 2003 and 2004 he was a participant in the conferences about 'the clash of civilizations' and 'religious tolerance', both in Tirana.

He is the author of books in Danish about Albanian history, eg a collection of articles in »*Albanske Studier*« 1-2 (Soeborg, Cph. 2002), cf.: <http://bjoerna.dk/albansk-historie/studier-2002.htm>. Among the articles some about Edward Lear, Edith Durham, Sami Frashëri and Ismail Kadaré. Also an article about feuds in Corsica.

BA has published the play of Sami Bey Frashëri: »*Besa*« on the internet in a Danish translation of Johannes Oestrup [Johannes Østrup]: »*Æresordet*«, Cph. 1912.: <http://scanderbeg.dk/frasheri/aeresordet.htm>.

Recently he has published the 'Danish Law of 1683' in a digital edition - and by now he is working on a book about the Danish-Norwegian author Ludvig Holberg - who, in 1739, issued an appreciating article about Scanderbeg. Cf.: »*A viewpoint from Copenhagen*« <http://bjoerna.dk/Holberg/Scanderbeg.htm>.

You may quote this newsletter by referring to: <http://bjoerna.net/sidste-nyt/280.htm> or <http://bjoerna.net/sidste-nyt/280.pdf>

Mixed Feelings

Version 2.0 - 02.01.2006 [1.0: 20th April 1999]

Robert Carver: The Accursed Mountains. Journeys in Albania

John Murray, London 1998

The Accursed Mountains evokes mixed feelings. No doubt it is one of the most important books on contemporary Albania and by that a book of current significance too.

Carver made a journey to Albania in 1996. He stayed at ordinary people and made many observations far from those you may read in ordinary newspapers - or in sociological reports as well.

He succeeds another down-to-earth Englishmen, Edward Lear and Edith Durham, who travelled through Albania many years ago and made accurate observations, from which we benefit - even now.

Maybe Carver was in high spirits planning the journey, but approaching Albania the spirits lowered quickly - and the journey ended in scratch. I wonder whether Carver has lost his confidence in a recovery of the Albanian society.

The Albanian society was falling apart when Carver made his journey, societal life was regressing into ancient customs and tribal regulations - full-scale gangsterism was added.

The most important police work was taking bribes and to hide.

Until 24th March 1999 society was in a slow recovery from corruption and bribery and moving towards responsibility (from 24th March things will change fundamentally - to the worse or to better), but back in 1996 a disaster was approaching - ordinary people took arms and believed in tribal - not in societal responsibility, and it had to end in a showdown.

Unfortunately the Albanians have a long tradition of a neck or nothing. If your party is in power, you will get your share - otherwise you will get nothing or even lesser. The Berisha regime was not an exception - corruption, bribery and gangsterism flourished, as business and politics went into Pyramids in the Desert.

It is not surprising that ending a dictatorship leads to disorder - but in Albania the Democrats were increasing disorder instead of diminishing it - and all Albanians expected US and EU coming to rescue.

Albania was in 1996 a professional client state or something like a black hole sucking in energy and money from gullible donors - and worse, bribing someone to take aid gifts that helped the donor country could even be appropriate. Foreign aid could easily end up fuelling a corrupted domestic elite as well as doubtful propositions in the donor countries.

Changing things was necessary, to reverse the reversed economy and to inspire responsibility

in the Albanians. Maybe the complex situation since 24th March will make these things worse. ... When supplies to the refugees from Kosova were unloaded in Durrës (19th April) it was necessary to bribe the customs officers. Maybe one bad example? Yet NATO has to deploy some 8.000 troops to protect the relief work from gangsters and brigands.

Carver met many people. Someone wanted to make quick profits by cheating and sharing in Pyramids - someone was helpful and dignified, and many people just wanted to move to US or other countries of prosperity. Many Albanians abandoned production (in cities in particular), but Carver found from time to time places 'with a sense of quite purpose'.

Some Albanian put it in this way: 'All the energetic Albanians have left the country or are leaving, the lazy and the corrupt remain'. In Albania the burden often said: 'You have to help us. You have to feed us'. Actually the Albanians could feed themselves if they wanted to. As it was in 1996 foreign aid and investment would not help much - obviously foreign aid aided a transverse economy to grow and not to vanish. On the other hand helping the Albanians to reestablish a society and an economy should be wise - but not unconditionally. Just providing aid is no answer.

Often the profiteers were democrats and the helpful people were villagers from remote sites in the mountains or old communists - not to say that Hoxha's socialism in any respect represented a Paradise.

Quite the opposite. The Hoxha regime represented hard totalitarianism and repression - but no private gangsterism or tribal gjakmaria (a blood feud) was to be found. Hoxha was just more brutal and better organised than the bandits who opposed him. He coerced hard labour, but eventually his activities were counterproductive and the people chose candy-floss capitalism and begging when the regime collapsed.

The highland was full of stone towers populated by men hiding from blood feuds. Everyone you met on the trail in the mountains was overwhelmingly polite not to offend the other ones. Offending could easily lead to another feud. Yet more Albanians were killed in accidents than in blood feuds, Carver was told.

Carvers suffered from a light persecution mania, I think, but some evidence he gives shows without any doubt that he was occasionally in danger. However, he managed thanks to foresight, resourcefulness - and old-fashioned tribal protection. Maybe the mania of his was the saving of him.

The 15th Century Kanun of Lek Dukagjin - which regulated medieval life - had regained practical importance, even when nobody actually read the Kanun. Two interpretations competed - in Peshkopi the parts that applied to reconciliation were in front, whereas the people in Tropoje District and Bajram Curri preferred the parts on gjakmaria.

Family, clan and tribe meant all in Albania in 1996, but so did the habit of non-discussion. Albanians discuss nothing, because if you question what another is saying you are offending him. Therefore nobody has to listen to what is said and nobody has to modify his own position or to elaborate it.

Inside the family a man seldom lifted a hand. The women made all the housework and devoted the men.

So it had been for centuries - it made things function, anyway the women were repressed and bad stories could be told.

The humour of Carver is sometimes too far out. A young Albanian asks: 'Do you have a

Children's Day?' - 'No, we celebrate King Herod's Day'. Certainly the Albanian had to accept this rubbish not to offend the visitor. Some stories are priceless: Carruthers [Foreign Office Civil Servant] ordered in fluent Albanian.

The waiter looked pained. 'I'm sorry, sir', he said, 'Could you repeat that in English, please?' Suddenly Carver discovered his shoelace needed tying up.

Carver often exposes the characters, but Carver himself is no exception to that treatment. Nevertheless, some characters are not given the proper names - and so it was with Carruthers, this chap had quite another name, but is easy to identify anyway. Possibly Carver blur the descriptions of the individual Albanians much more. More important is that the descriptions are important for the understanding of Albanian behaviour.

The heroes in this book, written by an atheist, are the American and German missionaries in the North - and certainly those Albanians who actually took up responsibility and were truly focused. The missionaries did a Sisyphean labour - I think the outcome will be next to nothing, if the Albanians themselves do not take over, and that is Carver's hope, even when he actually does not expect it.

Du må citere hvis du angiver hovedsidens adresse: bjoerna.dk ... Siderne om Albanerne: bjoerna.dk/albanerne.htm ... Søgning på internettet: bjoerna.dk/soegning.htm

History

The Back-Garden Powderkeg

Version 2.0 - January 2006

The history of the Balkans plays a great role in the current conflict in Kosova. Often the Serbs are referring to the Battle at the Kosovo Polje that took place in 1389. The book tells about the battle - the background and about what happened afterwards: the integration into the Ottoman Empire.

The book argues against the use of the History as a key. History cannot decide who has the legitimate right to inhabit a specific area.

Apart from this, History did not take place as the Serbs usually say. The Turks were brutal, but coming to terms with them was possible - or even more than that. The Serb princes - and the Albanians too - could manoeuvre and get much out of it. If switching to another partner was profitable, then it was often done. Skanderbeg, the renowned medieval Albanian prince, did just that in the 15' century.

The Serbs oriented themselves to the North, whereas the Albanians got along with the Turks, - but many uprisings took place.

This separation between the Serbs and the Albanians - and the parallel differences in cultural habits - is important in the current conflict in Kosova.

The book tells the story of some fascinating Albanian characters - who are complex politically. One of them was Ali Pasha of Tepelene, who attempted to establish his own kingdom in the first part of the 19' century. His attempts were done at the expense of the Turks, but obviously at the expense of the Albanian and Greek inhabitants too. Even when he succeeded for a long period, he failed in the end. All let him down - and he himself was beheaded - and the Turks displayed his head in Constantinople.

Another important character was the chief Ahmet Zogu, who was strong enough to seize power after the First World War and to proclaim as a king, but the Italians and Mussolini overthrew him. The Italians then made Albania as a colony - as in the antiquity.

Studying the period since the First World War, the Italian philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli is of particular relevance. The book presents *Il Principe* and discusses some main thoughts of Machiavelli.

Enver Hoxha, the communist leader, did just the same as his predecessors did. He too manoeuvred and leaned in turn against three, different, big powers. First Yugoslavia, then the Soviet Union and at last the People's Republic of China.

Nevertheless, even when the intention was to get most independence, Albania had to pay an exorbitant price: the country did not develop economically and socially as the countries in Western Europe, and when the Hoxha-regime collapsed in 1990, Albania had to face enormous problems - and these problems persist.

The communist memorial to Hoxha - a huge pyramid in Tirana - announced, ironically, the scandalous Pyramid Schemes in the era of Sali Berisha.

Stefan Lazarevic, king of the Serbs in the years after the Battle at the Kosovo Polje, and also Skanderbeg, Ahmet Zogu and Enver Hoxha, can be regarded as vassals, but the old Latin relationship between the patron and his clients call itself into attention. Often the patron and his clients both gained from the relationship - and so it was from time to time in the Albanian past. However, unsatisfied clients have changed to another patron - and the opposite has happened too - as when Mussolini sent Ahmet Zogu packing.

The last years have been quite chaotic. Showdowns have arisen between the old and the new. We can hope for a reconciliation between the two big 'wings', that is the Democratic Party and their allies and the Socialists and their allies, or at least we can hope for an emerging of an understanding, which can open for negotiations and compromising. Obviously the process will take time considering the lack of experience in modern democracy.

Different types of sources have been used from topical news telegrams to writings of Ludvig Holberg (the Danish historian, 1684-1754), Lord Byron, Edward Lear (the English painter and writer), Sami Frashëri (the Albanian writer) and Franz von Jessen (the Danish journalist, 1870-1949). Some sources are reprinted in part. [Holberg, cf.: Holberg om Skanderbeg [in Danish] / Holberg on Scanderbeg [in English]]

A search for the wife of King Zog on the Internet leaded to a book by the American diplomat, John F. Montgomery. Montgomery tells about some clandestine negotiations on Albania between Mussolini and the Serb king Alexandar. Shortly after the negotiations ended - in vain - the king was killed in France.

Some Danes have studied Albanian matters - among those are the philologists Holger Pedersen, Gunnar Sandfeld, Johannes Oestrup and Gunnar Svane. Oestrup translated an Albanian Drama (which is quoted in the book) - and an old Serb chronicle - interpreted by Gunnar Svane - has been of a great value too.

The book is supplemented with many illustrations, a table of contents and a comprehensive subject index.

Du må citere hvis du angiver hovedsidens adresse: bjoerna.dk ... Siderne om Albanerne: bjoerna.dk/albanerne.htm ... Søgning på internettet: bjoerna.dk/soegning.htm

Scanderbeg - a renaissance prince

Scanderbeg • Barletius •
Holberg • Bjarnason



Webmaster: [Bjoern Andersen](#)

Version: 1.3 - 23rd October
2006

[PDF-version of Scanderbeg - a
renaissance prince](#)



Gjergj Kastrioti Scanderbeg, 1405-1468

A symposium was planned

It was planned to arrange a symposium in Copenhagen in 2005 in commemoration of the birth of Scanderbeg 600 years ago. The symposium should be about Scanderbeg as a renaissance prince and of the understanding and interpretation of him in Scandinavian countries.

Involved in the planning were the then General-Director of the Albanian National Archives, Professor, Dr Shaban Sinani, the then Chargé d'Affaires of the Albanian Embassy in Copenhagen, Mr Qemal Minxhozi - and myself.

Eventually, we have had to give up the project because of pressure of time after the elections and the political considerations in Albania.

Hopefully *something* can be arranged in 2006, either in Albania or in Copenhagen - and at least on the internet.

Below you may find information about the preliminary programme.

[Bjoern Andersen](#), 30th October 2005

A seminar in Albania in 2007 or 2008?

Article in »Tirana Times« 13th October 2006

Scanderbeg in Scandinavia

by Bjoern Andersen



The seal-stamp of Scanderbeg

A few years ago a Danish archaeologist, Dr Peter Pentz from The Danish National Museum, published an article about *the seal-stamp of Scanderbeg*, a brass-stamp to seal documents.

The stamp had been bought in Italy in the middle of the 17th century on behalf of the Danish king. For many years the stamp was looked upon as an artefact from the Byzantine Empire in Constantinople. Now, Dr Pentz made a thorough study and discovered that the seal-stamp had something to do with Scanderbeg.

According to the inscription, which is in Greek, the stamp belongs to *Alexander* (= Skender) who is described as an Emperor of the Romans and a King of the Turk, the Albanians, the Serbs and the Bulgars.

Since Scanderbeg never was in a position in which he could describe himself as an emperor or a king - or would be accepted as such of the other nobles in Albania - it is most likely that the stamp has been manufactured in Italy some years after his death of political or economic reasons, either in the 16th or in the first part of the 17th century. Furthermore, we do not know of any documents with this seal. Dr Pentz adds that another stamp is known with a simple and modest text: *Georgius Castriotus Scendarbigo*.

Ludvig Holberg

When discussing the stamp Dr Pentz and I recalled a text about Skanderbeg by Ludvig Holberg. Holberg was born in Bergen, Norway, in 1684 and moved to Copenhagen to study theology; at that time Norway, Iceland and Denmark were united with the Danish king as the sovereign. Later on, Holberg became a professor of the university which he was till he passed away in 1754. Today he is widely acknowledged as one of the main characters in the Danish-Norwegian Enlightenment.

Holberg was a great scholar and a highly productive and versatile writer. His writings were on natural law and natural rights, history and philosophy, but he also made up scathing satires and vivid comedies that are performed even today. Some of the comedies are *The Political Tinker*, *Erasmus Montanus* and *Jeppe of the Hill*. Holberg wrote against haughtiness and false wisdom - in the comedies and in his essays as well.

In his late essays - the *Epistles* - he discussed many problems of contemporary importance; like other European writers of that time he - for instance - grappled with the insoluble theodicy-problem, the discrepancy between the good and almighty God and the overwhelming evil.

Holberg on Scanderbeg

In 1739 Holberg published *The Achievements of Great Heroes*. He had taken inspiration from the ancient Greek writer Plutarch, who once compared outstanding Greek and Roman characters.

Holberg wrote about 12 pairs: Zoroaster and Mohammed, Sulla and Caesar, Socrates and Epaminondas - and Zizka and Scanderbeg. The characters were as it appears - highly important persons from different times and different places.

One of the favourites of Holberg was Socrates, whom he highly appreciated because of his approach to knowledge and his moderation.

Scanderbeg was appreciated as one of the greatest generals ever lived - and for his modesty. According to Holberg Scanderbeg never overrated his position, but stood up as an humble Christian Soldier since he left the Ottoman army and abandoned Islam.

Writing about Scanderbeg Holberg took the work of Marinus Barletius (or Barleti) as a starting point, but he formed his own judgement. Possibly, he had an aim of his own to pursue - to promote certain virtues and to discredit other ones.

Holberg realized that Scanderbeg - with limited support - was capable of holding his ground against the Ottoman forces. Even more, he fought the enemy vigorously, defeated him and often put him to flight.

Holberg took an interest in Scanderbeg because of his great military achievements against the Muslims. Here we have to bear in mind the Ottoman attack on Vienna in 1683 (led by one of the Albanian-Turk Köprülü's - and the Habsburg attack on Kosova and Macedonia in 1689 (led by general Piccolomini and his vice-general, the Danish-German count Georg Christian von Holstein). At the time of Holberg the Ottomans still were to be considered a powerful and dangerous neighbour.

Barletius

A searching at Danish libraries for more information about Barletius and Scanderbeg was quite succesful, since two very interesting publications were found. First an article by Minna Skafté Jensen, who in many years were a professor in Latin and Greek in Copenhagen and later on at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense.

In 1988 she wrote *A Heroic Tale: Marin Barleti's Scanderbeg between orality and literacy* which is to be found at <http://miqesia.dk/Barleti-Scanderbeg.htm>

Minna Skafté Jensen analyses the narrative style, looks upon the relationship between history and epic and upon the contradiction between barbarism and civilization. Her article is a major contribution to the discussion of biographies of renaissance princes. Hopefully, her article will appear in Albanian in some months. Initially, she writes:

»The prologue establishes this sombre framework, but as soon as the author begins the description of his hero, the melancholy present pales into insignificance against the excitement of heroic valour and victorious exploits. But the point of departure is sad. Just imagine what would happen if Alexander the Great returned! Or Pyrrhus, who in his day fought so brilliantly against the Romans! They would hardly be able to recognize their country, but would leave again full of contempt, because it was no longer a home of freedom as in their day. The present squalor is so overwhelming that the author fears he will be unable to convince his readers that Albania was glorious not only in antiquity, but also during the immediately preceding period. Freedom reigned supreme, where now slavery has spread. In those times the whole world looked to Epirus in admiration, where now the only question is whether fortune will never weary of plaguing the country. The work is dedicated to Donferrante Kastrioti, Scanderbeg's grandchild, but also to posterity, and its double purpose is to offer a treasury of moral examples from reality and to ensure for the Albanian nation the kind of immortality that is to be found in fame and is treated by writers. Thus, the scene is now occupied by three protagonists - Barleti, Donferrante and Scanderbeg as author, addressee and hero respectively.«

The book from 1709

At the Royal Library a rare book from 1709 was found. It is in Danish, but most certainly it is translated from the German. The title of the book is *The true story about the most powerful three Turkish emperors and their most aggressive opponents*. One of these opponents was Scanderbeg. It seems as the German author has been very much inspired by Barletius. We do not know whether Holberg has read the Danish translation, but possibly he has and has made use of it. Some time in the next year the text from 1709 and the text of Holberg will be carefully compared. Cf.: <http://scanderbeg.dk/1709/slides.htm>

The Icelandic poem

An Albanian friend told me some years ago that he had heard about an Icelandic poem about Scanderbeg. Was it possible to find it? It was, quite easily, actually at the Royal Library, which is one of the two national libraries in Denmark. An Icelandic poet, Hannes Bjarnason – who also was a lay preacher had written *Rímur af Skanderbeg Epirótakappa*, which means something like: *The poem about Scanderbeg from the Epirus*.

There is an old and important relation between the Danish and the Icelandic languages, anyway, it is not so easy for modern Danes to read Icelandic, so a skilled interpreter had to be found.

Out of the blue, one day earlier this year, he appeared, professor Matthew Driscoll of the University of Copenhagen, who is in charge of the collection of Icelandic manuscripts in Copenhagen (a great part of the collection has years ago been transferred to Iceland).

Driscoll had initiated a study of handwritten Icelandic manuscripts about Scanderbeg. The source of these manuscripts seems to be the text of Holberg. Afterwards, the manuscripts and the oral tradition have given the input to the poem of Bjarnason.

Some time in 2006/2007 Driscoll will publish his study in English. Interesting enough the study is about something very similar to old Albanian customs, namely the relation between oral and written tradition.

A seminar in Albania?

When I am visiting Albania later this year, I will see whether Albanian historians and philologists would like to arrange a seminar with the participation of Albanian scholars and students and Scandinavian scholars.

In Scandinavia we are not very much familiar with modern Albanian Scanderbeg-research and we would be happy to exchange information and views about the history of Albania and Scanderbeg and about how to step further in the research. Later on the papers from the seminar and the minutes could be published in English and Albanian on the internet to the benefit of anyone who is interested.

Bjoern Andersen is a Danish sociologist, <http://bjoerna.dk>. Recently he has published a book on Albania in Danish; which will appear in English in 2007, cf.: <http://bjoerna.net/articles>. Earlier he has published The Danish Law of 1683 in a digitized version in Danish. His research field is now the writings of Ludvig Holberg.

A symposium was planned

Preliminary programme

[and preliminary links]

Chair

The Director of the Danish National Museum, MA Carsten U. Larsen

Welcome

»*Scanderbeg - a renaissance prince*«

Professor, Dr Kristo Frashëri

»*Descendants of Skënderbeu and the patronymical families in Italy*«

[Dr Costanzo d'Agostino]

»*Scanderbeg in the anals of the manuscripts and rare books of the Danish Royal Library*«

Ivan Boserup, MA

About the Scanderbeg-biography of Barletius

cf: [Minna Skafte Jensen: »A Heroic Tale: Marin Barleti's Scanderbeg between orality and literacy«](#)

The seal of Scanderbeg

Dr Peter Pentz

Medieval Seals in Danish Museums

[A Danish specialist]

Presentation of the book: »*Sandfærdige Beskrivelse ...*«

Translated from German. Published in Danish, Cph 1709.

'The true story about three powerful Turkish Emperors: Amurath [Murad], Mahumet [Mohamed] and Soleiman.
And the story about three famous War-heroes: Hunnaides [from Hungary], Scanderbeg and Count Nicolaus of Serini'

Bjoern Andersen, MA

»*Holberg on Scanderbeg*«

Bjoern Andersen, MA

Presentation of »*Hannes Bjarnason: »Rímur af Skanderbeg Epirótakappa« (1861)*«, an Icelandic poem

[An Icelandic Philologist]

Discussion. Questions and answers



The room of the symposium. The Ceremonial Hall at the National Museum in Copenhagen. Originally the library of King Frederik III (1648-1670). Photo: BA 2005.

The lecturers and the papers

- [Minna Skafte Jensen: »A Heroic Tale: Marin Barleti's Scanderbeg between orality and literacy«](#)
- 1709 [click to see [17 slides of the Scanderbeg-chapter in the 1709-book plus an introductory note](#) [the text on the slides is in Danish]]

You can download and print the note and the images (in a pdf-edition (0.6 MB)) by clicking here:
<http://scanderbeg.dk/1709.pdf>

- [Bjoern Andersen: »A viewpoint from Copenhagen«](#) [Preliminary ed.]

Links and literature

- [The Albanian History](#)

- [President Moisiu on Scanderbeg](#) (the Oxford Lecture, November 2005)
- [Hvad véd vi i dag? \[What do we know?\]](#) - Article in Danish
- Peter Pentz: »*Den store Albaner*« [about the seal of Scanderbeg] in: »*Sfinx*«, Aarhus, Denmark, 2003/1, pp. 20-24.
- Articles about the anniversary in »*Gazeta Ushtria*« [the Defence Newspaper], a weekly published by the Albanian Ministry of Defence [in Albanian]:
 - [Ushtria-051007-01.htm](#)
 - [Ushtria-051007-12.htm](#)
 - [Ushtria-051014-01.htm](#)
 - [Ushtria-051014-03.htm](#)
 - [The articles in a PDF-file](#)
- The Danish Renaissance: <http://www.renaessance2006.dk/>

Holberg on Scanderbeg

Publisher: [Bjoern Andersen, Sociologist](#)

Contact: post@bjoerna.dk

***Scanderbeg is one of the greatest generals ever* - wrote the famous historian Ludvig Holberg in 1739**

A viewpoint from Copenhagen

By *Bjoern Andersen* [\[1\]](#), May 2003.



Ludvig Holberg. The original painting is at the Soroe Academy, a copy can be found at [»Tersloesegaard«](#) - the mansion of Holberg near Soroe - and another one in Oslo, Norway. *Click* the image to enlarge it.

Professor Ludvig Holberg was the major character in Danish and Norwegian literature at the time of the *Enlightenment* - and he is still much admired.

He was born in Bergen in Norway, went for England for some years in his youth - and then settled in Copenhagen. At that time Norway and Denmark was a dual kingdom, and some Norwegians went to Denmark and vice versa. Later on he travelled some years in France and Italy.

Holberg was promoted to the chair of public eloquence at the University of Copenhagen (est. 1479); some years later he was promoted to the chair of history - and he was a Rector and a Treasurer for some years, too [\[2\]](#).

The writings of Holberg

Holberg was a great scholar and a highly productive and versatile writer. His writings were on natural law and natural rights, history and philosophy, but he also made up scathing satires and vivid comedies that are performed even today. Some of the comedies are »*The Political Tinker*«, »*Erasmus Montanus*« and »*Jeppe of the Hill*« [\[3\]](#). Holberg wrote against haughtiness and false wisdom - in the comedies and in his essays.

In the essays - the '*Epistles*' - he discussed many problems of contemporary importance; like other European writers of that time he - for instance - grappled with the insoluble

theodicy-problem [4].

Great Heroes

In 1739 Holberg published '*The Achievements of Great Heroes*' [5]. He had taken inspiration from the ancient Greek writer Plutarch, who once compared outstanding Greek and Roman figures.



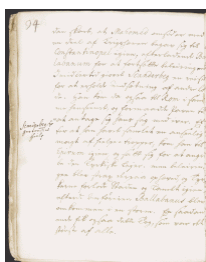
'*The Achievements of Great Heroes*'. Click the image to enlarge it.

Holberg wrote about 12 pairs: Zoroaster and Mohammed [6], Sulla and Caesar, Socrates and Epaminondas - and Zizka [7] and Scanderbeg. The figures were - as it appears - highly important figures from different times and different places.

One of the favourites of Holberg was Socrates, whom he highly appreciated because of his approach to knowledge and his moderation.

Scanderbeg

Scanderbeg was appreciated as one of the greatest generals ever lived - and for his modesty. According to Holberg Scanderbeg never overrated his position, but stood up as an humble Christian Soldier [8] since he left the Ottoman army and abandoned Islam.



One of the rare Holberg manuscripts (at the National Library in Oslo, Norway). This page is from the story about Scanderbeg - and is written by a scribe of Holberg's. Holberg himself wrote the draft - and the marginal notes in the final manuscript. Click the image to enlarge it.

Writing about Scanderbeg Holberg took the work of Marinus Barletius (or Barleti) [9] as a starting point, but he formed his own judgment. Possibly, he had an aim of his own to pursue - to promote certain virtues and to discredit other ones.

Holberg realized that Scanderbeg - with limited support - was capable of holding his ground against the Ottoman forces. Even more, he fought the enemy vigorously, defeated him and often put him to flight.

Holberg took an interest in Scanderbeg because of his great military achievements against the Muslims. Here we have to bear in mind the Ottoman attack on Vienna in 1683 [10] - and the Habsburg attack on Kosova and Macedonia in 1689 [11]. At the time of Holberg the Ottomans still were to be considered a dangerous neighbour.



From Marinus Barletius: »*Historia de vita et gestis Scanderbegi Epirotarum Principis*«. Click the image to enlarge it.

True, the Ottomans had to give up against Vienna, but the Habsburgs had to withdraw from Kosova too, and that with the Patriarch Arsenije and many Serb followers.

The clashes between the Albanian princes and the role of Scanderbeg

Barletius - and Holberg - is telling about the clashes between the Albanian princes; we understand that Scanderbeg was the leading Albanian prince who could-and-would fight the Ottomans; he united the Albanian princes, but he was not followed unanimously, and some of the princes - from time to time - allied themselves with the Ottoman Sultan.

Scanderbeg therefore also had to make alliances with foreign magnates - the Pope in Rome and the King of Naples. Scanderbeg was an outstanding general, but a master in political manoeuvring as well - and had to be, to uphold his stand. When he passed away in 1468, the Ottomans profited greatly - politically and militarily.

Reading Holberg today

Reading Holberg today is quite feasible for Danes - because of the precise language [12] - but difficult too, for it is not possible to adopt the political and theoretical standpoints. Some of his most important stands on *common matters* - on the other hand - remain valid. His critical approach has been an important inspiration for the posterity, but many of his conclusions have been abandoned - and his historical scepticism has been further developed.

Today, the conflicts in the Balkans are not the same as in the time of Scanderbeg, nor as in the time of Holberg. The Albanians do not fight the Turks, on the contrary they cooperate in the military field. Furthermore, Albania is not involved in a religious or ideological strife between Muslims and Christians. And now, the agenda is to unite the European nations in the European Union for their common good - not to separate them.

Notes

1) MA in Danish Philology & Cultural Sociology (Cph.). An editor of an electronic weekly and the author of some books about Albanian matters (in Danish), cf. <http://bjoerna.dk>.

- 2) At that time the University met severe problems. Most of the buildings and libraries were destroyed by a great fire in 1728 - and for some years the research and education stagnated. Holberg analysed and criticized the institution. Some years later - in 1788 - a radical reform was carried out. Holberg supported the foundation of the Soroe Academy, a modern institution compared with the University.
- 3) English editions are available at the internet, cf. <http://www.ibiblio.org/gutenberg/etext04/cmdhl10.txt>.
- 4) There is, many were thinking, an fundamental inconsistency between a world predominated of agony and misery - and the postulate of an almighty, all-merciful and omniscient God.
- 5) Published in Danish. It came out in German too at the time of Holberg.
- 6) Holberg turned on against Mohammed and Islam, since he found a discrepancy between Islam and a rationalistic approach - which he himself supported.
- 7) Jan Zizka (John Zizka) was a Bohemian General who fought with the Roman Emperor, Sigismund, in the Hussite wars in the 15th century.
- 8) Possibly, Holberg would not have appreciated the Greek inscription at the seal: *Emperor of Rome and King of the Albanians, the Serbs and the Greek*.
- 9) 1460-1512 or 1513.
- 10) Headed by the grand vizier, Kara Mustapha Pasha - a brother-in-law to Ahmed Köprülü from the Albanian Köprülü-family.
- 11) Headed by the Habsburg General Giovanni [?] Piccolomini - and Georg Christian von Holstein, who was a relative of the Danish King. Pius II - a pope at the time of Scanderbeg - was a Piccolomini too.
- 12) But the style is old-fashioned and the meaning of some of the words have changed since then.

Literature and information

Scanderbeg

The seal of Scanderbeg at the Danish National Museum. Information from Dr Peter Pentz.

Peter Pentz: »*Den store Albaner*«. An article about the seal and Scanderbeg in the »*Sfinx*«-magazine, March 2003. Cf. <http://www.hum.au.dk/sfinx/TidsskriftetSFINX.html>

Information from Karsten Fledelius, Assoc. Professor, the University of Copenhagen.

Bjoern Andersen: <http://bjoerna.dk/albansk-historie/Seal-of-Scanderbeg.htm>

Bjoern Andersen: »*Krudttoenden i baghaven*«, Soeborg, Denmark, 1999 - the chapter on Scanderbeg. Cf. <http://bjoerna.dk/albansk-historie/krudttoenden.htm>

Ludvig Holberg

'*Epistles*' and '*Memoirs*' [»*Epistler*«, »*Moralske Tanker*« and »*Memoirer*«]. The annotated editions by F. J. Billeskov Jansen.

The chapter on Zizka and Scanderbeg in '*The Achievements of Great Heroes*' [Danish scientific edition by Carl S. Petersen of the collected works of Holberg, vol. XI, Copenhagen 1931]. I have published the chapter in Danish - with some illustrations - at the internet: <http://bjoerna.dk/albansk-historie/Holberg.htm>. Later on the chapter maybe could be translated into English and Albanian.

Comedies, cf.: <http://www.ibiblio.org/gutenberg/etext04/cmdhl10.txt>, introduction in English and three comedies translated.

Readings of Professor, Dr F.J. Billeskov Jansen (†).

Literary handbooks and encyclopaedia (in Danish).

The University of Copenhagen

Ole B. Thomsen: »*Embedsstudiernes Universitet*« vol. 2, Copenhagen 1975.

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Noel Malcolm: »*Kosovo. A short story*«, MacMillan, London 1998.

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You are welcome to quote if you specify the source: bjoerna.dk

Sidste Nyt fra Albanien, Kosóva og Makedonien

Serbien og Montenegro

The Latest News from Albania, Kosóva and Macedonia

277 - 03.11.2005

Version: 2.4 - 04.11.2005 [PDF for printing](#)

Udgiver: **Bjørn Andersen**

Publisher: **Bjoern Andersen**



The Albanian Parliament votes on the Penal Code December 1979. All were in favour - no one acted individually
Ismail Kadaré seems to be present (2nd row). Also present was Nexhmije Hoxha, the wife of Enver Hoxha.

Gjakmarrja

Albanian Highlander's »Blood Feud« as Social Obligation

A review of Diana Gellçi's book

Recently, *Diana Gellçi* - an Albanian anthropologist with relations to the Albanian Institute for International Studies in Tirana - published an essay on the Albanian »Blood Feud«. The focus is on the content and impact of the old customary law – known as the *kanún* - in Northern Albania and Kosova. To foreign readers with some knowledge of Albanian history and social life in the Northern highlands it is a good companion - maybe an eye-opener too.

We do not know much about the origin of the *kanún*, but there might be an ancient nucleus, since there are many similarities to customary law in other parts of the world, in Italy and Corsica for instance - and also in old Nordic societies, in Norway, Iceland and Denmark.

The collection of the *kanún* in the 15th century

In the 15th century the old customary Albanian laws were somehow collected; the most famous collection was made on the order of Lekë Dukagjin, one of the medieval Albanian princes; another collection was made in the district of Scanderbeg, maybe not exactly on his order. Possibly Dukagjin invited elders and leading villagers to gatherings to reach some sort of a consensus.



Shtjefën Gjeçov

In all the years of the Ottoman Empire the Albanian highlanders upheld the *kanún* as a living oral tradition and some foreigners who paid visits to Albania – among those Edward Lear in the mid 19th century and Edith Durham in the first part of the 20th century – have made informative notes about it. In the first part of the 20th century, the catholic Albanian priest, Shtjefën Gjeçov, collected the *kanún* as it had survived in the Northern highlands. It is his collection and arrangement scholars and writers mostly refer to when they nowadays write about old

customary law, and Diana Gellçi is no exception.

Oral tradition and written edition

We have to bear in mind a major difference between an oral tradition and a written edition, and that is *the arrangement*. Possibly, we may have to take the oral tradition as detached stories or specific cases built upon some ancient principles of reciprocity. If there is a structure or a hierarchy in the oral tradition it is not that firm or in that way as in a written arrangement. When the elders in the villages were discussing and deciding in a conflict, they may have made their references like this: *The kanún says ...*, that is: *When we are applying our recollection of similar cases on the specific circumstances, we have to decide in this way now*. They did not refer to a well-edited law, nor to specific articles, they referred, I imagine, to cases and stories, similar to the tradition of Homeric story-tellers in Greece.

Catholic influence

For long periods the customary laws most likely were unchanged in general. But something very important have happened in medieval times and that was the emerging influence of the catholic church - both on the Princes and on the ordinary people in the highlands. Maybe this influence already had reached a culmination at the time of Dukagjin and Scanderbeg, maybe that happened later on. In the Gjeçov-collection from the first part of the 20th century the old tradition and the catholic influence have been mingled - and a very special balance has been established. Since medieval times the catholic church has been against feuds and taking blood, in the Gjeçov-collection feuds and taking blood still is a living tradition in general, but if a catholic priest was killed, the punishment was that harder.

Balance accounts. Mediation

Taking blood was not the only response to a severe offence, but quite a »natural« one – an eye-for-an-eye response as in the Old Testament. Definitely, taking blood was meant to »balance accounts« when some family or clan had been offended, but also – I imagine – to prevent other offences in the future.

Furthermore, the *kanún* says quite a lot about mediation and reconciliation. Whether this has to be seen as an ancient tradition or it is a consequence of catholic influence I do not know, but possibly it is a tradition of some age. To what degree the village elders succeeded in mediating in conflicts or even hindering their escalation we do not know, but many conflicts did not stop - and countless males were killed.

Diana Gellçi's sources

Diana Gellçi has not made studies of her own, her sources are the Gjeçov-collection, the writings of Edith Durham and Margaret Hasluck and the famous novel of Ismail Kadaré – »*Broken April*«. All these books are highly relevant, but they have to be interpreted differently, and I do not think that the author has discussed that thoroughly enough. The first three books are the results of a systematic collection of observations and of evidence from informants - and it would have been nice, if the author had made some considerations about the collection process and of the arrangement-process too.

The Kadaré novel



Ismail Kadaré at the conference about 'Clash of Civilizations', Tirana 2003. Photo: Bjoern Andersen

The novel is quite another thing, an artistic interpretation of tradition in which a certain point-of-view, the point-of-view of an individual, is introduced - but actually in a very complex and maybe modern way. The novel can not be read in the same way as Gjeçov, Durham and Hasluck, it can not be read straightforward so to speak. We have to take the individualistic point of view in the novel *cum grano salis*, with a grain of salt, since one of the main characteristics of the *kanûn* is collectivity and collective responsibility, and not at all personal viewpoints or individualistic behaviour.

Individualistic behaviour seems in tradition to have been understood as an exception – which in some occasions even had to be punished. As I read Kadaré it is one of his major points that individualistic behaviour – under the given circumstances – was out of question, it did not - as in the time of Hoxha - have any relevance. In the novel the young man *had* to kill another one, and was to be killed himself, just to uphold social order.

Family

To my knowledge Diana Gellçi is quite right when she is taking the family as the most simple and constituent element in traditional highland life – definitely not a family of modern type or a democratic entity, but a kinship one. When she is speaking about reciprocity, she often also speaks about equality and solidarity; again I will suggest to take it *cum grano salis* – since this equality possibly not were between two »common« individuals, but between two families, two kins etc. - maybe sometimes between two persons at the top of the hierarchy, who were not taken as individuals but as representatives.

Diana Gellçi has characterized the role of the females as inferior to the role of the males, but most likely many of the males were in inferior positions too, especially if the household kept male servants. Furthermore, many of the male Albanians did not become master of a house, and therefore they often were subordinates to their grandfather, their father or an elder brother all through their life.

Kanún today?

Kanún has not exactly been swept away because of social development; only at the time of the Hoxha-regime the authorities succeeded in suppressing customary law. It was written in the [»Tirana Times« 4th June 2005](#) that as much as 734 families in Northern Albania actually are involved in blood feuds. Hopefully traditional blood feuds will disappear by mediation and reconciliation - or by *»desvetudo«*, that is when a blood feud not any longer is a proper way to solve a severe conflict among ordinary people.

From time to time Albanian media tell about *modern feuds* – feuds in the dark, feuds between criminals. To Diana Gellçi these modern feuds have not very much in common with the traditional feuds. I agree in that, that is to some extent. On the other hand, if you are studying the dark areas of society – maybe in the context of acting against organized crime and trafficking - it will be helpful to know something about traditional life, not only in Albania but in other past societies too.

Customary law and government

Customary law – or local, independent and traditional rule - has often persisted when the Government was weak, distant or ignorant, it has been said. For long periods that might have been the situation in the Albanian highlands and in Kosova, for example in periods when the Sultan did not want to or was not able to control the Albanians in detail but only in some areas, cities and mostly in plain field.

Anyway, the situation when no state and no government has been established - and the situation when a weak state or King is in *»power«* are quite different.

The Danish history

In medieval Denmark the King aimed at controlling the society and protecting it, that was his *raison d'être*. He could not do that alone, he had to come to agreement with the nobles, and in that course he and the nobles collected and re-constructed old customary law and published new common law. The articles about beehives, fish traps and water mills were only modified slightly since all agreed in them and in the necessity of such articles, the articles about revenge and ordeal by fire were radically modified because of clerical influence.

In the next hundreds of years economy and society developed, struggles for power went on from time to time – and first after some 4-500 years and a major defeat in the wars against the Swedish King, the Danish King was able to establish himself as an absolute monarch (in cooperation with some nobles and members of the upcoming classes of merchants etc.). Then in 1683 he issued a new common law of his own. Some elements of the customary law were integrated in this new law, some of them abolished – and there was not any longer doubt about the King's overall monopoly in criminal law. So, in Danish history customary law has either been integrated in the law process and been modified - or has been abolished. And some parts have *»expired«* by *desvetudo*.

After a great political crisis in the mid of the 19th century, the Danes began to establish a democratic society and new customary law - and that law is in many aspects distinct from the medieval law and the law of 1683.

Most Danes accept parliamentary law, they even want it enforced, the dark forces punished and taken into custody - and the dark spots *»enlightened«*. But in some limited and sinister *»parts«* of Danish society, the areas of biker gangs and of drug traffickers, modern *»clan law«* actually is

in force.

The Albanian history

In Albania history has been quite different from Danish history. Possibly some elements of customary law have been integrated in – and modified by – modern law; many other elements may officially have been abandoned, but have persisted in some periods - and in the most »remote« parts of the country.

But since government in many aspects has been weak after the break-down of the Hoxha-regime - and since economic conditions are so poor, a new, big and dark society has been developed beside the »official« one. In this new parallel society – which is estimated to cover about 60% of the Albanian economy – a new customary law is being established. Some of the »articles« are, I imagine, rules of old age built upon the principle of reciprocity and upon an ancient code of honour. But more of the »articles« are new, built upon principles of hierarchy and power.

Here is much to study - and much to worry about.

Bjoern Andersen

Literature etc.:



Edith Durham in Northern Albania 1913

Books:

Diana Gellçi: »Gjakmarria: Albanian Highlander's »Blood Feud« as Social Obligation«, Albanian Institute for International Studies, Tirana, 2005.

»The Code of Lekë Dukagjini, Albanian Text Collected and Arranged by Shtjefën Gjeçov, translated by Leonard Fox«, Gjonlekaj Publishing Company, New York, 1989.

Edith Durham: »High Albania«, 1st edition 1909, available on the internet:

<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/durham/albania/albania.html>

Margaret Hasluck: »The Unwritten Law in Albania«, Cambridge University Press, 1954.

Ismail Kadaré: »Broken April«, 1st edition 1982. Danish edition, Copenhagen 2000.

Film:

Saimir Kumbaro: »The End of the Vendetta«.

Fulvio Mariani and Elvira Dones: »Inchiodato« [Albanian: »I ngjuar«], cf.:

http://www.fipa.tm.fr/programmes/2005/fr.php?f=rep_11563&r=prsc

Newsarticle:

»Thousands disenfranchised because of blood feuds« - article in [»Tirana Times« 4th June 2005](#)

Mediation and reconciliation:

<http://www.afcr-al.org/english/profile/r-introduction.shtm> (cf.: <http://bjoerna.dk/dokumentation/mediation.htm>)

Bjoern Andersen holds a MA in Sociology and Danish philology. He has visited Albania some times through the years, the first time in 1976. In 2003 and 2004 he was a participant in the conferences about 'the clash of civilizations' and 'religious tolerance', both in Tirana.

He is the author of books in Danish about Albanian history, eg a collection of articles in »*Albanske Studier*« 1-2 (Soeborg, Cph. 2002), cf.: <http://bjoerna.dk/albansk-historie/studier-2002.htm>. Among the articles some about Edward Lear, Edith Durham, Sami Frashëri and Ismail Kadaré. Also an article about feuds in Corsica.

BA has published the play of Sami Bey Frashëri: »*Besa*« on the internet in a Danish translation of Johannes Oestrup [Johannes Østrup]: »*Æresordet*«, Cph. 1912.: <http://scanderbeg.dk/frasheri/aeresordet.htm>.

Recently he has published the 'Danish Law of 1683' in a digital edition - and by now he is working on a book about the Danish-Norwegian author Ludvig Holberg - who, in 1739, issued an appreciating article about Scanderbeg. Cf.: »*A viewpoint from Copenhagen*« <http://bjoerna.dk/Holberg/Scanderbeg.htm>.

You may quote this newsletter by referring to: <http://bjoerna.net/sidste-nyt/277.htm> or <http://bjoerna.net/sidste-nyt/277.pdf>

Kosóva

From Kosovo to Kosóva



American and European Foreign Policy - Following the Steps of Machiavelli and Clausewitz?

Version 2.0 - January 2006 [October 1999]

Clausewitz and Machiavelli have taught us to face reality, and this indeed is a necessity concerning the war in Kosóva.

The title - From Kosovo to Kosóva - is reflecting that the Serbs are not in control of the territory any more. Kosóva is an UN territory - and thinking of a future Kosóva as a part of Serbia - or of Yugoslavia - is not likely. Maybe Kosóva is going to be an independent republic, maybe a new state structure will arise, but Albania and Kosóva are not going to merge now, maybe never.

Kosovo is the Serbian writing, Kosóva the Albanian. The Albanians do not use the 'accent'.

Nevertheless, I use it to show the stress.

The Serbs may have had their chance to solve the problems in Kosóva and to get along with the Albanians, but they did not - and would not - understand the Albanian stand, and the Albanians looked upon the Serbs as oppressors and would not join the Serbs.

The Serbs and History

The Serbs often claim their rights to Kosóva because of historical evidence and inheritance. Obviously the Serbs have had a history in Kosóva: A Serbian Kingdom had a centre in Kosóva in medieval times, and many Orthodox monasteries and churches are to be found in Kosóva.

The Ottomans conquered Kosóva and other Balkan territories in the 14th and 15th centuries, and Kosóva belonged to the Ottoman Empire from the 15th century and to the Young Turk Revolution (1908) and the Balkan Wars (1912-13).

For some centuries now, the ethnic Albanians have been in majority in Kosóva, the Serbs in minority. It may have been otherwise centuries ago, but many Serbs fled away in the end of the 17th and in the middle of the 18th century. Then two major empires fought each other: The Habsburgs and the Ottomans. Most Serbs were allied with the Habsburgs, not at least the Orthodox church. Many Albanians were genuine Ottomans, traditionalistic and paternalistic Muslims. The Habsburgs went into Kosóva and Macedonia, but had to withdraw - and many Serbs went away with them to settle in the border areas between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans.

The Serbs conquered Kosóva (and Macedonia) in 1912 and most ethnic Albanians have looked upon the Serbs as an occupational force since then - and definitely the Serbs oppressed the Albanians in the prewar Yugoslavia.

From Tito to Milosevic

The Yugoslavs liberated themselves from the Germans and established a very complex political structure: A Socialist Yugoslavia with seven major nationalities, six republics (plus Vojvodina and Kosóva), three major religions and a backward economy.

Josip Tito aimed at neutralising the deep-rooted nationalistic and social contradictions and to build up a new Yugoslavia based upon a combination of self-management and political command.

Yugoslavia had some serious troubles with the USSR and Stalin and was expelled from Society in 1948 ... That is The Socialist Society. Yugoslavia, India and other countries then followed a course of non-alliance.



Milovan Djilas, Edvard Kardelj and Aleksandar Rankovic, three different politicians ...

In Kosóva the Serbs mistrusted the Albanians, and the Serbian leader Aleksandar Rankovic oppressed them until the middle of the 1960s. From that time, and up to the end of the 1980s, Kosóva developed, but slowly - while the economic and social development in the Northern republics and in all other parts of Yugoslavia was much quicker.

The Albanians did not want to collaborate with the ethnic Serbs and the Yugoslav establishment - politically, culturally or individually: The percentage of cross-cultural marriages was considerably beyond the level in Bosnia. Most Albanians lived in Albanian villages and districts, most Serbs in Serbian villages and districts. The Serbs might have had a chance to get around the contradictions, and so it was with the Albanians. From the end of the 1970s to the end of the 1980s they had some sort of "homerule", but they did not gain much from it. Economy did not flourish, many people moved from the rural areas to the cities - and unemployment arose. Many went to other European countries to get jobs, many received their education or training in Kosóva - in the "wrong" professions - and did not get proper jobs.

Controversies definitely arose between ethnic Serbs and Albanians and then - in 1988 - Milosevic and the Serbs overruled the Albanians.

The history is about mismanagement and contradictions, oppression and resistance. History also is of widespread Western neglect of the nonviolent & nonparticipating course introduced by Dr Rugova. Some ethnic Albanians were discontented realising that their demands sank into oblivion in Dayton 1995, and more Albanians then were choosing another course - implying terrorist actions and guerrilla warfare headed by UCK.

The Americans swing over

At first the Americans looked upon the UCK as terrorists, but during the engagements in 1998 they changed their mind. They looked upon UCK now as a political partner, as people it was possible to deal with - and to teach Western democracy. Maybe the alliance with the Kosóva Albanians could even lead to the destabilisation of the Serbian regime headed by President Milosevic.

In Dayton the Americans looked upon President Milosevic as an ambiguous character - in some respects as a reliable politician, in some respects as an obstacle for a future development towards democracy in the Balkans.

The change of the American attitude towards President Milosevic and towards UCK came about simultaneously - and maybe they are intermingled and even mingled with the dubious development in Bosnia?

From that on development should be quite predictable that is in Washington and in Belgrade as well, nevertheless the Americans and the Serbs misinterpreted the situation. The Americans were convinced (it seems) of a quick surrender - and President Milosevic was convinced of a collapse of NATO.

Milosevic

Possibly President Milosevic has nationalistic point-of-views, but first he is a master at political tactics and political survival. Maybe he does not have a real strategy, but he thinks he is the only politician who can neutralise the deep-rooted contradictions in Serbia.

Certainly, Milosevic hoped for keeping Kosóva, but he had to realise that NATO did not fall apart, that Russia was not useful, that NATO outmanoeuvred UN and that UN could not stop the war. President Milosevic realised that continuing resistance possibly would lead to a political disaster and consequently he stopped and withdrew from Kosóva.

He knew all time that the Serbs could stop the war whenever they wanted it (if only they could agree upon it themselves). Here we have to observe that President Milosevic did not broaden the war outside the "Kosóva Ring". The Serbian forces stayed inside Serbia and Kosóva, and no one attempted of terrorist acting in the capitals or elsewhere.

The military strategy of President Milosevic was not in any way suicidal, it was based upon reality - even when Milosevic partly misunderstood the American determination.

Bjoern Andersen

Note

The Danish edition consists of an analysis of the war, a brief survey of the history of Kosóva, readings of Machiavelli, Clausewitz, Samuel P. Huntington and others - and a who-is-who of contemporary characters.

Du må citere hvis du angiver hovedsidens adresse: bjoerna.dk ... Siderne om Albanerne: bjoerna.dk/albanerne.htm ... Søgning på internettet: bjoerna.dk/soegning.htm

THE SERBIAN CATASTROPHE



Tim Judah: The Serbs. History, Myth & the Destruction of Yugoslavia, Yale University Press 1997. 350 pages

Version 2.0 - January 2006 [16th April 1999]

It is wise reading - or reading again - some specific books during the current crisis.

One book is The Serbs by Tim Judah. Judah lived in Belgrade for four years from 1991. The NATO strategists may have read the book, even when it does not seem so.

Judah has drawn a bead on Milosevic: He is one and the same a politician, a strategist and a trader. He will use other people - and sacrifice them if necessary, but he also has to hold the fort: Serbia and Kosova. Maybe the NATO strategists miscounted in that respect the 24th March.

Learning by experience, the strategists supposed that Milosevic would give in to severe pressure, but nobody realized properly how Milosevic would react when Kosova was at stake. It was broadly assumed that Milosevic - an arch-opportunist - eventually would abandon Kosova. Someone thought Milosevic waited for an excuse. It was wrong. Maybe Milosevic can sacrifice some parts of Kosova, but he has to secure substantial parts if he does not want to be overthrown by the nationalists.

The Milosevic regime is a horrifying regime because of the ethnical cleansing, the village-burning and the killing of civilians. Milosevic himself is a horrifying character because of his Machiavellian inclinations and skills. Ethnical cleansing, village-burning and killing of civilians are a Balkan tradition and the history of the Balkans is largely a tragedy. This has not to be interpreted as an excuse. Milosevic is certainly responsible.

It is said that Milosevic is unpredictable. Not a bit. Milosevic comes to decisions far beyond the imagination of the Western strategists, and this is not because of inconsistency - but because of a horrifying consistency and for the sake of Serbia and of Milosevic himself.

According to the German Intelligence Services Milosevic in the end of 1998 had planned an ethnical cleansing in Kosova. Judah already wrote about such planning in his book from 1997 (on another area in the former Yugoslavia), but the analogy is striking. NATO realized or should realize what Milosevic was going to do in due time. NATO unfortunately established the alibi for Milosevic.

Judah tells why the Serbs are acting as they are. He tells about the Serbian traumas (The Battle in 1389 at the Kosovo Polje. The Exodus in the end of the 17th century. The disastrous escape through Albania in the 1st World War. The fights in the 2nd World War). He also tells what is happening when we bomb and boycott a nation: The bad guys gain. The economy is going to be ruined. The civilians will press against the ground - the gangsters are going to control and will maintain this disorder afterwards. Judah tells how the economic boycott in the 90'es resulted in the rise of the Serbian mafia and made it possible for characters as Arkan to seize control.

Possibly attacks from the outside can overthrow a bandit (History does not provide many good examples) - but only if some "insider" can take over.

History gives us instances to the contrary - about establishing relations, economic relations in particular.

Possibly establishing economic relations could result in political progress and maybe diminish the influence of Milosevic.

Eventually Milosevic will disappear - but the bombing will prolong the span of his political life. This is a tragedy for the Albanians in Kosova and for the Serbs as well. Indeed the Serbs have lost the battle. The Serbian society is ruined - and a veritable brain drain has weakened the society permanently.

Actually Judah shows that living under the same roof is genuine nonsense. Obviously we have to separate the Albanians and the Serbs in Kosova from each other. Many ideas of living together were produced in relation to Bosnia, but the exiled would not return to multi ethnic villages and areas. It is a sad conclusion - but reality - and therefore we now have to separate the Albanians and the Serbs. We have to make a separation which gives some opportunities of cross border trade and which forestalls revenge and civil war.

During the wars in the earlier 90's many people suffered from atrocities - and many people showed themselves to be bandits. However, some did otherwise - and some did their trade across the borders.

Some examples are grotesque - but maybe they show that there is another way round than bombing.

Development aid may be superior to cruise missiles.

Tim Judah: The Serbs. History, Myth & the destruction of Yugoslavia, Yale University Press 1997. 350 pages - with a bibliography and a subject index. Good maps and biographies of many prominent serbs - Slobodan Milosevic, Arkan and Vojislav Seselj.

Du må citere hvis du angiver hovedsidens adresse: bjoerna.dk ... Siderne om Albanerne: bjoerna.dk/albanerne.htm ... Søgning på internettet: bjoerna.dk/soegning.htm

Appendices

Religious Tolerance: Albania

Publisher: [Bjoern Andersen](#)

Contact: post@bjoerna.dk

Version 1.3 - 05.06.2004

An international conference »Religions and Civilization in the New Millennium: the Albanian case« was organized in Tirana on November 14-15, 2003 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania in collaboration with the Albanian Center for Human Rights, the Helsinki Albanian Committee, the Albanian Media Institute and the House of Books and Communication under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Albania, H.E. Mr. Alfred Moisiu, and the UNESCO Executive Director, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura.

Excerpts from the **invitation** from Ismail Kadare, Head of the Conference's Steering Committee:

The conference will address issues of inter-religious and inter-cultural relations of the present time. Were these last years' developments a confutation or a proof of the theory of the clash of civilizations? Where are the relations between the main religions headed to, with particular regard the relations between Christianity and Islam? What are the dangers that should be avoided?

Also relations between religion and democracy, as well as those between religion and nation-remain important issues, around which the debate in the conference will evolve. The Balkans' constitute a ground where the dramatic experiences, namely those of the last decade, coexist with the positive experiences, and have not yet received the proper recognition.

Albania, a country with a rich and complex religious landscape, where three main religions coexist - Islam, Catholicism and Orthodoxy -constitutes an interesting case of the harmonic coexistence between religions, as well as of religious tolerance. One decade after the reestablishment of religious institutions, following the ruthless ban on religion by the Communist regime, religious faith has revived. This decade has also witnessed the emergence of problems pertaining to the relations between religion and state, to the legislation on religion, as well as to the foreign influences on the country's religious life.

Further information about the conference: <http://www.achr.org>

Summaries of the Conference: http://home.tiscali.dk/bjoern.andersen/religious_tolerance_summaries.htm

The inaugural speech of the president, Alfred Moisiu: <http://bjoerna.dk/tolerance/President.htm>

The images in this section: Click to enlarge them.



01: The Vicechairman of the Parliament, Makhbule Çeço, and Kozara Kati, the Executive Director for the Albanian Center for Human Rights.



02: The President, Dr Alfred Moisiu.



03: The Head of the Conference's Steering Committee, the Writer Ismail Kadare.



04: The Head of the Conference's Steering Committee, the Writer Ismail Kadare.



05: The Bishop of Kosovo, Monsignor Mark Sopi, and the Reverend Marcus Braybrooke, the President of the

World Congress of Churches, London.



06: The Publisher Veton Surroi, Kosovo, and the Director of the Diplomatic Academy in Belgrade, Predrag Simic.



07: The Director of the Diplomatic Academy in Belgrade, Predrag Simic, the Director of East European Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington DC, Dr Janusz Bugajski and Professor at the South-East Institute in Berlin, Dr Franz-Lothar Altmann.



08: The Journalist Shkëlzen Maliqi, Kosovo, the Politician Mr. Arbën Xhaferri, Macedonia, the Historian, Dr Bernd Fischer, University of Indiana, and Mr. W. Cole Durham, the Director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies at Brigham University.



09: The Journalist Shkëlzen Maliqi, Kosovo, the Politician Mr. Arbën Xhaferri, Macedonia, and the Historian, Dr Bernd Fischer, University of Indiana.



10: The Historian, Dr Bernd Fischer, University of Indiana, Mr. W. Cole Durham, the Director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies at Brigham University, the Director of the Diplomatic Academy in Belgrade, Predrag Simic, and the Sociologist, Professor Artan Fuga - University X - Paris and Tirana University.



11: As # 10. To the right: Mrs. Elira Kokona, Lawyer, ECHR in Strasbourg.



12: The Bishop, Monsignore Vincenzo Paglia, Chairman of the Saint Egidio Foundation, and [Fatri Sinani, the Head of the Religious Committee at the Council of Ministers].



13: Members of the Muslim Communities, Mr. Hafiz Sabri Koçi, the Father Reshat Bardhi, the Bektashi Community and [to the right].



14: The Writer, Mr Sabri Godo, Albania, the Historian, Dr Roberto Morozzo della Rocca, Rome, and the Historian, Dr Nicholas Pano, US.



15: The Politician, Genç Pollo, Albania.

Television-images

The images in this section cannot be enlarged.



16: The President, Dr Alfred Moisiu.



17: The Head of the Conference's Steering Committee, the Writer Ismail Kadare.



18: The Vice Prime Minister, Dr Ermelinda Meksi, the US Ambassador, Mr. James F. Jeffrey, and the Reverend Marcus Braybrooke, the President of the World Congress of Churches, London.



19: The Publisher Veton Surroi, Kosovo.



20: The audience.



21: The Politician Mr. Arbën Xhaferri, Macedonia.

Images from: <http://www.president.al/english/pub/album.asp>

The images in this section: Click to enlarge them.



22: The President, Dr Alfred Moisiu.



23: The President, Dr Alfred Moisiu, and the Politician Ali Ahmeti, Macedonia.



24: As # 23.



25: The President, Dr Alfred Moisiu, and the Politician Arbën Xhaferri, Macedonia.



26: As # 25.



27: The Head of the Conference's Steering Committee, the Writer Ismail Kadare and the President, Dr Alfred Moisiu.



28: The President, Dr Alfred Moisiu, and the Bishop, Monsignore Vincenzo Paglia, Chairman of the Saint Egidio Foundation.



29: The President, Dr Alfred Moisiu, and the Historian, Dr Nicholas Pano.



30: The President, Dr Alfred Moisiu.



31: His Holiness Dr Anastas Yannoulatos, the Orthodox Autocephaly Church in Albania, [Dr Rexhep Boja, the Muslim Community in Kosovo], [a Representative of UNESCO], the President, Dr Alfred Moisiu, His Holiness Monsignor Rrok Mirdita, Bishop of the Catholic Church in Albania, the Durrës-Tirana Diocese, the Father Reshat Bardhi, the Bektashi Community and The Bishop of Kosovo, Monsignor Mark Sopi.

U.S. Department of State about **International Religious Freedom**: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/>. The chapter about Albania in 2003: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/24328.htm>

The Jews of Albania and their salvation during the Holocaust - cf: <http://www.frosina.org/speeches/jewsalbania.shtml> (an article by Van Christo from 1999)

An international symposium on »**Islamic Civilisation in the Balkans**« will be jointly organised by the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), the Academy of Sciences of Albania, the General Directorate of Archives (Albania), and the University of Tirana, in Tirana, Albania, on 4-6 December 2003. Cf.: <http://www.ircica.org/conf/index2.html> [Unfortunately, I don't have further information about this conference]

The symposium will review and study the sources and development of Islamic civilisation in the Balkans with a comprehensive approach, covering the subject matter in terms of the material culture (written, architectural and other tangible assets and heritage) and spiritual culture (oral, artistic, literary and other intangible aspects of culture and heritage), the stages, trends and patterns of the expansion of Islamic culture and civilisation, the formation and the legacy of the Islamic cultural heritage, its present state and prospects, with specific thematic or regional focuses. The symposium is expected to throw light on the contributions, the role and place of Islamic civilisation in the region, its relations and interactions with other cultures and civilisations, and also, to illuminate the future prospects regarding peaceful co-existence and positive cultural dialogue among the peoples of the region. At the same time, it will be an occasion to take note of the new studies to be presented during these sessions, to assess the state of scholarly research and publication in this field, and to deliberate on the problems and prospects of the study of Islamic civilisation in the Balkans as a field of academic research.

You are welcome to quote the pages if you specify the source: bjoerna.dk

Tirana Summit 2004

Miqësia er albansk og betyder *venskab*

Dialog mellem Religioner og Kulturer

Kontaktadresse: post@migesia.dk

On Inter-religious and Inter-ethnic Dialogue



Tirana 2004. Foto: Bjørn Andersen. Billedet kan forstørres ved at klikke på det [click on the photo to enlarge it]

Indhold [Contents]

[Konference om Dialog mellem Religioner og Kulturer / Tirana Summit on Inter-religious and Inter-ethnic Dialogue](#)

Stats- og regeringsledere, UNESCO's generaldirektør

- [Præsident Moisiu's tale](#)
- [Generaldirektør Matsuura's tale](#)
- [Præsident Crvenkovski's tale](#)
- [Præsident Marovic' tale](#)
- [Statsminister Bondevik's tale](#)

Andre talere

- [Very Rev. Arthur E. Liolin's tale](#)

Fotos

- [Officielle fotos](#)

[Statue for Mother Teresa afsløret / Inauguration of the Mother Teresa-monument](#)

- [Premierminister Nano's tale](#) [på Albansk]

[Billeder fra konferencen. Bilaterale drøftelser / Pictures from the conference; talks](#)

Bagsiden af Pyramiden. Kampen mod korruptionen. Byggeaktivitet

[Bagsiden af Pyramiden. Skanderbeg-pladsen / The Pyramid from behind; Skanderbeg Sq.](#)

[Kampen mod korruptionen / Against corruption](#)

[Stor byggeaktivitet / Construction](#)

Links

[Links \(The Tirana Declaration etc.\)](#)

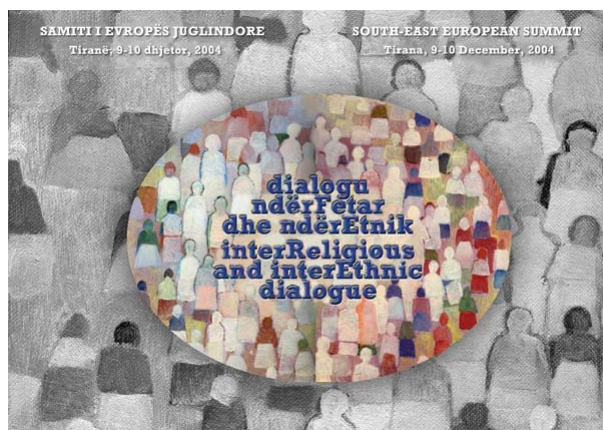
Tirana Summit on Inter-religious and Inter-ethnic Dialogue

Den Albanske Præsident og UNESCO afholdt »Tirana Summit on Inter-religious and Inter-ethnic Dialogue« 9. og 10. December 2004. I konferencen deltog præsidenter fra flere af landene i Syd-Øst Europa tilligemed den norske statsminister.

Se nærmere om 'background', 'programme' og 'participants' på:

<http://www.unesco.org/dialogue/tirana> og på: <http://www.achr.org/KONFERENCA/al/index.html>.

[AHCR \(Albanian Center for Human Rights\)](#) - der ledes af [Kozara Kati](#) - stod for den praktiske gennemførelse.



Præsident Moisiu holdt flg. tale ved åbningen af konferencen:

Allow me to welcome and to warmly thank for the participation in this Summit the Heads of States of the region, the Norwegian Prime Minister, the envoys of the presidents of the respective countries and also the guests from different countries of the world and those from the Albanian world. I would like to specially thank UNESCO and General-Director Matsuura for the fruitful cooperation, for organizing and holding this very important event.

This Summit is being held after the Conference organized a year ago in Tirana on the inter-religious tolerance and harmony in Albania. That Conference was an academic-scientific one, which treated the historic development of the inter-religious relations in Albania by evidencing the tolerance and harmony among the three main faiths, as a major value of the Albanian society cultivated in centuries and brought intact to our present days.

This political Summit at the level of heads of states of the region uplifts this topic at a new height, by adding the ethnic dimension to the religious one. These two dimensions as such are linked by an interdependence relationship and as it has been proven by the history of the development of our region, play an important role in the safeguarding of the social and national cohesion.

Albania views the holding of this Summit as an excellent opportunity to reflect on and analyze those events, developments and problems that are of specific significance and that convey important messages to face the realities through a new spirit that incites the culture of dialogue and tolerance in order to achieve that inter-religious and inter-ethnic understanding and coexistence, which is needed by the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is known that in some countries of South Eastern Europe there exist three main monotheistic religions: Christian Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Islam. We ought to admit with a feeling of pride that our region has not been involved in clashes or wars of genuine religious motives. However, we cannot claim that it is free of problems and grievances tied to the relations among the religious communities. We cannot yet admit that in our societies we have naturally achieved the acceptance of the different faith; moreover, being different has often been viewed as an expression of division, as an indicator of the non acceptance of the other, which at times has been stretched to stigmatizing the other.

Not wanting to paint the realities in dark colors, we find it important to not underestimate or sidestep the negative phenomena that are related to them. The case of Albania where the presence of three different faiths has not caused the rise of social tensions or conflicts, not even questioned the social and national cohesion, represents a positive value that deserves to be evidenced.

In this context we consider it necessary to point out that in the place where the religious communities practice tolerance and have achieved an exemplary harmony, such as in the case of the Albanian nation, it would have been a unforgiving mistake for anybody that attempts to threaten or destroy this religious equilibrium, by intervening in the tradition of our nation with religious forms and symbols that are contrary to this tradition. I express my conviction that the state, the religious communities and the entire Albanian society will know with wisdom and maturity to face situations such as these ones that go against the western civilization.

At our times, when peace, prosperity and security have been also shaken by negative developments, such as the international terrorism, we judge that the religious diversity and the example of tolerance, of well understanding and religious coexistence, which also does not lack in our societies, transmit messages of peace that oppose any tendency to use religion as contravention within a society or among nations, states and civilizations.

Albania, from its historical and actual experience, judges that our continent which is moving towards a new integrating unity, such as the European Union, will have a lot to gain if it will observe the presence of populations or countries with diversity of beliefs as a value that deserves to be respected and to be promoted as a part that makes up the cultural and religious mosaic of our old continent.

By viewing this reality as part of its cultural diversity, the Europe of the values of freedom and democracy will become more capable to strongly oppose the influence and infiltration of the Islamic fundamentalism, which aims to politicize the religion and to manipulate with the feelings of the Muslim believers everywhere, and why not, also the Muslim population of our region, which in the profoundness of its cultural and spiritual constitution has the European identity.

Distinguished participants,

History has brought about for the peoples and ethnicities in South Eastern Europe to be mixed with each other. The societies of our countries, even if they might not be genuinely multi-ethnic, have in their make up ethnic minorities and communities or linguistic and ethno-cultural groups. The truth is that in our region the clashes and wars of ethnic character have not been lacking, the same as there have also been present the inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts within the same state. Without needing to refer to ancient history, only the history of the last decade offers examples where the wars have been the order of the day to ensure national or ethnic supremacy over the others. The fall of the Berlin Wall that also marked the falling of an ideology and system was followed by the disintegration of multi-ethnic states and the vivification of the extreme nationalism. The latter one chose as the way of resolving the problems that of the use of the forces of arms and as a consequence, the region got to know for about a decade, wars and blood spilling that went all the way to ethnic cleansing. They had a high cost of human lives and material losses, furthermore they regressed the region a lot.

What is worse is that these conflicts and wars sowed the seed of divisions and hatred among the ethnicities and religious that got involved in them. Actually we are at the post-conflict period in the Balkans where there are not missing also the efforts to cure the inflicted wounds. Let us be conscious that in order to achieve this, it is needed a lot of work and struggle with our self to be able to also beg forgiveness for the injustices and crimes done and to sincerely reconcile with each other.

We believe that the inter-ethnic dialogue within each society will become a real obstacle for the social erosion and will contribute to the social cohesion and to the development of relations among the states and the peoples of the region at the political level, economic one, etc. It will also make healthier the relations among the ethnicities and nations and will overcome the old and new hatred and grudges in South Eastern Europe.

Our challenge is the education and raising of a new European generation that does not reconcile with old mentalities that keep alive the spirit of the exclusion and of "the hostile neighbor," capable to build a new spirit that accepts and respects the other who is different, the culture of dialogue and well understanding. That is why the school and the entire society have an irreplaceable role in the education of young generations with the spirit of acceptance and not that of exclusion, with the feeling of forgiveness and not that of the hatred, of tolerance, understanding and coexistence. Regardless of the nationality, ethnicity or

religious faith we might belong, we all recognize and appreciate the great advice of all the holy books: "Love thy neighbor, love the other as yourself!"

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There have been extremists and there will always be; our merit is that through the strengthening of democracy and culture of dialogue, the encouragement of tolerance and understanding, to make possible their isolation and the reduction of the chances to find support from society.

The successful example of the political and military cooperation among Croatia, Albania and Macedonia, three countries of the Adriatic 3 Chart, which from the religious pertinence represent the main three faiths in our region, is significant and proves that the integration unites values and countries regardless of the religious belief and ethnic pertinence.

The existence of different ethnic groups within the territory of another country should not be allowed to incite the maintaining alive of the spirit of division, of the no acceptance of the other and of the hostage. We will make a good service to our peoples, to peace and tranquility among us if we will not use the sincere interest about the state of the ethno-cultural groups or minorities that are present at each other to instrumentalize them for other aims. Such a thing will sow disbelief, doubt and hatred. We should look to the minorities and turn them into bridges of connection, of friendship and approaching among the peoples and countries of the region.

May this Summit be used as a great and powerful incitement for facing with the necessary courage and good willingness of the problems and worries that still do accompany the inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations. This way we can strengthen the understanding, the trust and coexistence inside the societies and also among our countries. It is important to transmit this new spirit of dialogue and well understanding to every level and link of the state and society. We strongly believe that the successful implementation of the democratic reforms and processes, and also the achievement of our major objectives of the integration in the Euro-Atlantic structures are important premises that will help us to also successfully face the wide problematic of the inter-ethnic and inter-religious coexistence. The Euro-Atlantic integration composes our historic chance to be part of the spaces of freedom and democracy, an integral part of the new European reality.

Who would have thought it a few years ago that the presidents of our region will gather and discuss these issues with the worry of finding an appropriate resolution. Such things are the best proof of the changes that have happened and should happen.

It is important to have good willingness. It is important for this understanding and trust to descent all the way to the various confines of the state and society.

Therefore, we have a great motive, which should call upon us and encourage us to move ahead.

Thank you!

Generaldirektør Koïchiro Matsuura's tale

Honourable Presidents,
Honourable President of the People's Assembly of Albania,
Honourable Prime Minister,
Honourable Ministers and Representatives of Heads of State,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Being with you today on the occasion of the Regional Summit on "The Development of Inter-religious and Inter-ethnic Dialogue", is not only an honour for me but also a source of satisfaction to the head of an organization that was set up to promote "collaboration among the nations ... in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed ... by the Charter of the United Nations", as stated in the UNESCO Constitution.

I am grateful to President Alfred Moisiu, who took the initiative, more than a year ago, to organize this important event jointly with UNESCO. When listening to him, I immediately pledged UNESCO's full support for his proposal. Apart from the generosity and the idealistic motivation of the offer to host this meeting in Albania, it appeared to me as the right initiative, the right place and the right time. But, above all, I felt that it had the potential to convey a significant and powerful message.

Throughout its long history, which many historians trace back to the Illyrians and even beyond, Albania has been shaped by the cultural traditions and influences of the Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Venetian and Ottoman periods, while its lands were claimed wholly or in part by virtually each of its neighbours as part of their historical territories. During all these centuries, the Albanian people remained where they were, patiently keeping alive their language and traditions as their most important heritage, which conveyed a sense of their proud identity to all invaders, occupants and foreign rulers.

When the modern Albanian state came into being in 1912, its population was made up of Muslims and Orthodox and Catholic Christians; the silent stone monuments that were spread all over its territory bore eloquent witness to rich and diversified cultural traditions.

Let me close this short historical digression by concluding that I consider our gathering here today as not merely coincidental or inspired by an ephemeral political convenience, but as the result of political determination and historical consciousness.

President Moisiu, you and your country are to be commended for both.

The presence of several Heads of State and Government from the region and beyond as well as many Government representatives is a clear sign that the theme of this Regional Summit attracts interest at the highest level. It also testifies to the broad-based political commitment to constructive dialogue among countries, among peoples and ethnic groups and among religious leaders. The felt need for dialogue is growing in this region and advantage should be taken of this promising opportunity.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In recent years, UNESCO has made a determined effort to respond to a United Nations initiative that is timely, relevant and innovative. I refer, of course, to the proclamation of the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations", on 21 November 2001.

Both the UN International Year and the Global Agenda conferred considerable responsibilities - and expectations - on UNESCO, focusing on the ethical and intellectual dimensions of its mandate. In the immediate aftermath of 11 September 2001, the UNESCO General Conference unanimously adopted a far-reaching resolution on the fight against terrorism, placing strong emphasis on the role of the dialogue among cultures and civilizations. A series of global, regional and sub-regional conferences ensued, organized by UNESCO, which culminated in a resolution by UNESCO's General Conference in 2003 on the Organization's activities regarding the dialogue among civilizations.

UNESCO has sought to fulfil its lead role in respect to the dialogue vigorously and creatively. In particular, we have focused on promoting dialogue and related activities at regional and sub-regional levels. This is again the case at this summit event in Tirana and, as Director-General of UNESCO, I am truly pleased by this evolution.

The precursor to today's Tirana summit was the Regional Summit Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations, held in Ohrid in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in August 2003. It is significant indeed that several of the Heads of State present here today also participated in the Ohrid event. The Ohrid Forum was unquestionably an epochal event, which succeeded in defining concrete action in the fields of education, culture and science. Action in these domains is essential for a deepening of mutual understanding and a strengthening of commonly shared values such as tolerance, through the medium of the dialogue.

Recalling Ohrid also means paying tribute to President Boris Trajkovski, who so tragically passed away earlier this year. A man of vision, commitment, courage and action, he made a seminal contribution to inter-cultural and inter-state dialogue as well as to the strengthening of peace in the region, anchored in a re-building of mutual trust among its leaders. Meeting in Tirana, we salute him and his legacy, while welcoming most warmly in our midst his distinguished successor, President Branko Crvenkovski. When serving as Prime Minister of his country, he was intimately involved in the preparations and conduct of the Ohrid summit. This first-hand knowledge and exposure augur well for a continuation of the dialogue process set in motion in Ohrid. Indeed, the desire for a more peaceful future unites us all here - and serves as inspiration for designing initiatives and practical action in the South- East Europe region - and beyond.

The Ohrid experience provided impetus to other regional dialogue processes, such as in the Arab world (where UNESCO sponsored a colloquium on the Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations in Sana'a, Yemen, in February 2004) and in the Eurasia region (where an International Conference on "Eurasia in the 21st Century - Dialogue of Cultures or Conflict of Civilizations?" was held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in June 2004).

In all regional activities, UNESCO has underlined one key point: what matters most is not the fact of holding a Summit, conference or colloquium in itself, nor is it only the joint agreement on a final text or declaration at a given moment. Rather, in the final analysis, what counts are the concrete action and practical follow-up arising as a result of dialogue and agreements reached. It is against our capacity to implement the dialogue in the real world - and in the real life of the region - that our success must be measured.

The main objective of the Tirana Summit is to pay special attention to the role of inter-religious and multi-ethnic dialogue in building and reinforcing stability and progress in the South East-Europe region, drawing also on conclusions from Ohrid.

The main underlying vision that unites us today was clearly spelled out in key passages of the "Message from Ohrid". It stated, in particular, that "Mutual respect of traditions and people will be possible when the matrix of values and the underlying spiritual and ethical foundations can influence education systems in different societies". Undoubtedly, religious beliefs and practices as well as ethnic values and traditions have a fundamental influence and impact on education systems and their quality, including curricula.

Everywhere, inter-religious and inter-ethnic dialogue represents a significant feature of social cohesion and stability. In South-East Europe, such dialogue carries particular importance both historically and in current political contexts, drawing as it does on deep-rooted moral, ethical and spiritual values. They have affected the formation of societies and formed the peoples inhabiting them.

Over centuries, the countries of the South-East Europe region have gone through military, economic, and political crises, conflicts and even war. The most recent tragedies of the 1990s are still vivid in our memory - and they motivate, if not compel, us to take all possible action to prevent a recurrence. Internal and external shocks have dislocated neighbours, ethnic groups and religious communities who before have lived together in peace. In the process, ethnic cleansing, flows of refugees, trade and commercial disruptions and economic decline in a once prosperous region damaged the social fabric of the region. However, building on the progress of the last few years, especially the resumption of economic growth and social development, the strengthening of democratic institutions and the emergence of effective governance mechanisms, South-East Europe is clearly

rebounding. "Never again" should be the motto in this region, too. Leaders in all walks of life - and here especially in communities bridging religious and ethnic differences - have a special responsibility in that regard. Clearly, the experience of the past years offers hope, as we have learned about the power of faith- and people-based contacts and initiatives.

The presence among us of the Grand Mufti of Bosnia underlines the power of interfaith dialogue, tolerance and peace in that regard. I am pleased to note that, for his role and contribution, the Grand Mufti recently received the 2003 Felix Houphouët-Boigny Prize, awarded by UNESCO, together with Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Likewise, the experience of Albania, our host country, is most encouraging indeed, benefiting from peaceful engagement and cooperation among people adhering to different religious groups and faiths under one societal roof.

For all countries, the capacity and willingness to generate - and sustain - dialogue across ethnic and religious boundaries are decisive for advancing further on the road to peace, democracy, stability and sustainable development.

Religion is of profound importance to people's identities, but religious differences should never be seen as insurmountable. There exists an underlying thread of unity connecting the great religious traditions. They each propound basic spiritual truths and standards of behaviour that constitute the very basis of social cohesion and collective purpose. The religions, therefore, should be able to dialogue in an effort that honours their deepest truths and holds promise for humanity.

This is no small challenge; there is much to do. UNESCO's Member States have requested me to identify practical steps that could be taken or initiated by the Organization to bring about concrete changes through dialogue-related action in our domains - education, the sciences, culture, and communication and information. Those measures include work with youth and women as well as the mobilization and involvement of civil society, ethnic and faith-based organizations. Invariably, this involves intensive networking.

One thing is abundantly clear. We must all place the dialogue at the core of educational efforts, in particular the pursuit of the six Education for All (EFA) goals and the promotion of quality education at all levels. Putting the notion of "learning to live together" throughout life into effect requires that we engage with the renewal of curricula, the improvement of educational materials and the enhancement of teaching/learning processes, focusing on peace, tolerance, mutual understanding and multilingual education.

In this context, let me give an example. I am pleased to note that the first phase of the joint UNESCO-Ministry of Education project to promote "Human Rights and Intercultural Education in Albania" has attained its objectives and that the Government of Italy has already approved the funds for a second phase. The project is focused on the integration of human rights and democracy education in the school curriculum; the implementation of the national in-service training curriculum for human rights education; and the large-scale training of teachers.

Advances in information and communication technologies (ICTs) also create the conditions for an extension of dialogue practices. These technologies have the potential of bringing together diverse communities, cultures and civilizations - including different faiths - in different modes. The digital divide is not only an impediment to development as a whole; it also constitutes a barrier to intercultural exchange. We must capitalize on ICTs and their innate potential to advance freedom of expression and cultural diversity. The promotion of inter-ethnic understanding and harmony is an essential part of sustaining cultural diversity.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 in Johannesburg acknowledged that cultural diversity is inseparable from economic, social and ecological concerns, echoing the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) which defines it as "one of the roots of development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence" (Article 3).

This idea also found expression when the restored Old Bridge at Mostar was opened on 23 July this year. The Mostar Declaration recalled the Message from Ohrid and the necessity of "associating cultural heritage with development policies and demonstrating how much this powerful symbol of a people's identity can become a unifying factor for national and regional reconciliation".

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

The challenges confronting us are manifold and we should seize the opportunity to promote effective dialogue.

As we do so, we should bear carefully in mind that all faiths convey a message of peace, justice and human solidarity and that religious leaders, like all other community leaders, have the potential to exercise a positive influence on how people in society understand each other and interact. Reconciliation of religious views is an increasingly significant challenge of our age. This also entails the need to create more awareness among peoples and government authorities about the need to respect the diversity of cultures, in particular with regard to the use of religious symbols, images and expressions.

We also know that ignorance and mistrust of the "other" can lead to extremist attitudes, ranging from entrenched and exclusive identities to the rejection of the "other" and even to open fanaticism based on the idea that one's own religious beliefs embody the sole truth.

All these considerations lead us to examine during this Summit:

- * The South-East European experience of inter-religious and inter-ethnic relations;
- * The need to raise public awareness of the positive impact of ethnic and religious co-existence, understanding and harmony;

* The promotion of inter-ethnic dialogue among the peoples in South-East Europe as a tool to further mutual understanding and resolve existing problems;

* Efforts to counter intolerance, discrimination and extremism, which are destabilizing factors as far as peace, security and stability in the region are concerned.

The Tirana Summit is a most timely occasion to focus on how religion and multi-ethnicity can contribute positively to a dialogue among civilizations and cultures. As I suggested at the outset, this can only further stability and progress in the region as a whole, which not only shares common challenges but also has to cope with their cross-border dimensions. Regional co-operation, therefore, must go hand-in-hand with further development within individual countries.

In conclusion, let me assure you that UNESCO stands ready to sustain the regional dialogue in progress in South-East Europe. In this regard, I am looking forward to participating in the forthcoming Regional Forum on Cultural Corridors which is being hosted by one of today's eminent participants, President Parvanov of Bulgaria, in Varna on 20-21 May 2005. I look forward to seeing you all again on that occasion, when we shall be seeking to highlight the importance of understanding the region's shared cultural past as a way of rebuilding trust and mapping out together the path to the future.

I wish you much success in your deliberations.

Thank you.



1: Præsident Crvenskovski, tv for ham Præsidenten for Serbien-Montenegro, Svetozar Marovic. 2: Præsident Crvenkovski i samtale med præsident Moisiu (fotos: Den Makedonske Præsidents kontor)

Præsident Crvenkovski's tale:

[09.12.2004] Tirana, Republic of Albania

Address of the President Branko Crvenkovski at the Regional Summit on "The Development of Interethnic and Inter-religious Dialogue - Important Factor for the Stability and Progress of South East Europe"

Dear Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary General, Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased and indeed honoured to participate to this important Summit, which deals with an essential topic, a topic whose realization should be seen as a strategic goal of all the countries in the region and wider.

The relation between ethnicity, religion and society is one of the most important and most sensitive issues of modern global politics. Responsible leaders, intellectuals, religious authorities, citizens throughout the world endeavour to overcome the prejudice that violence is due to difference and to create major awareness about the importance of respecting world cultures and religions.

Nevertheless, in our region, the region of South East Europe, this issue has certainly additional implications, certain particularities and seen as a whole, it is a complex set of circumstances.

Namely, the discontinuity in terms of free approach to freedom in contemporary countries in transition, pertaining to this part of the world, has resulted with a series of specific problems, and in psychological terms it is sometimes one of the reasons for the radicalization of the situation; there is also a traditional connection of a given ethnicity with a religion as a direct consequence of identifying ethnicity with religion, which sometimes brings to absurd and extremely dangerous unifications.

In order to overcome prejudices and uproot stereotypes and achieve the objectives and standards of modern civilized societies, there is only one way of acting both here and throughout the world. Dialogue.

Even when we have entirely different starting points in our communication and diametrically opposed views, we must talk. We must search for a common starting point to be able to find it at all. Different and diverging views that we have do not liberate us from the responsibility of being unable to establish communication.

Dialogue makes us listen each other. Dialogue is the only guarantee we have to formulate exactly what we have to say. Dialogue is an opportunity to understand. And understanding makes people humane and civilized.

Distinguished guests,

The spirit of most religions and the fundamental laws of faith are mostly based on the essential human values supporting the most important processes in our societies and the overall way of life. These universal values are the principals of all laws that regulate the system of a modern and prosperous state. The concept of a modern, civil state in our world implies also the separation of the state from the church, but also the responsibility the state has in terms of ensuring freedom of religion and equality among religious communities and nurturing religious traditions.

It is necessary to reach a wide consensus - both within each country and at regional and global level - in relation to the basic principals of interethnic and inter-religious tolerance and cohabitation being the basic prerequisites to peace, stability, security and prosperity of the citizens, regardless of the religious community they belong to. All must enjoy equal rights and have same duties and responsibilities in view of the common prosperity and future. Therefore, developing different, ethnic, cultural and religious values should be exclusively based upon the principals of dialogue, tolerance and mutual respect.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Republic of Macedonia has demonstrated that it knows how to use and nurture dialogue not only as a way of resolving problems but also as a way of harmonizing and respecting differences, as the only way to reach prosperity and progress in the country and wider in the region. I am confident that our common goal, europeization of the Balkans, depends on the strength of our mutual trust and understanding. This is something we ought to nurture patiently among us, as statesmen and among all the entities of our societies. As I said before, the recent past has proved that there is no other alternative than dialogue and tolerance in achieving the goals we have set. I may assure you that the Republic of Macedonia is strongly determined to pursue that path.

This is essential to the promotion of a peaceful and harmonious development of civil societies and to achieving closer and more integrated relations among the countries of our region and within the international community, especially in terms of the European integrations.

Tolerance is the fundamental attribute of contemporary civilized societies. Therefore our integration in international processes and in the wider international community directly depends upon dialogue and the level of respect for the rights of the other. No one will accept us unless we accept each other's virtues and weaknesses. It is also true that tolerance does not imply that we always have to agree with the way the other views life and world. Tolerance is a possibility to ensure good cohabitation of different cultures, nations and religions, regardless of our personal view or approach to certain issues. We need to be able to offer the same understanding to the others that we expect for ourselves.

However, we must never forget that dialogue requires reason and pure heart. Before we start talking to the others, very often we should first say something to ourselves. We often search in vain for prejudices in the others while they live in our mind. We fall asleep and wake with them. The battle we have to win is hard only because it starts within ourselves. We must never forget what our ancestors taught us. They used to say: We must be brave if needed - but we must be humane even if it is not needed. It has always been more difficult to protect the other from ourselves than ourselves from the other; more difficult but at the same time more noble. This is exactly the reason why on the Balkans, regardless of the religion, language, nation; regardless of divisions and sufferings, regardless of time - it has always been clear who is and who is not humane.

This world is only a place to live. Like it or not, we have to accept that we are one family and only visitors in our common home. Therefore, only people of virtue not violence will deserve eternity.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am confident that the nations of Europe are proud of their national identities and histories, but they are also resolved to create a common future, be "united in diversity".

I profoundly believe that the world has existed and will exist only for this kind of people. Thank you.

Præident Svetzar Marovic' tale:

I am taking part in our today's conference with great pleasure and a feeling of responsibility as I perceive its agenda as well as the presence of my dear friends – the leaders of the countries of our region, as the essence of the current and future relations in Southeast Europe.

I thank the UNESCO and the Government of Albania for having recognized the fact that the stability and development of Southeast Europe depend on the development of inter-religious and inter-ethnic dialogue and for having arranged this conference precisely on that topic. Serbia and Montenegro as multi-ethnic and multi-confessional republics are strongly interested in the development of such a dialogue for they see in this the only way leading to association with the European family.

All of us who represent the citizens of our respective countries here, together with the United Nations and particularly the UNESCO, are taking part in the promotion of universal values of civilization. Our duty is to win recognition for these values in our environment, particularly in the fields of education, science and technology, culture and media and communications. It is likewise our duty to recognize in that process the specific qualities of our region, so rich in diversity, which we must consider an advantage rather than a limiting factor in the 21st century.

I can, therefore, confidently make two points. First, the national, religious, cultural differences that are so much in evidence in the region we belong to are, by themselves, a great value and we are duty-bound to preserve them. Present-day Europe and the

modern world do not recognize autarchic, isolated areas that do not communicate with their neighbours and seek to ensure that their internal differences are obliterated. Second, the only way for us to maintain and stimulate diversity is through dialogue - everyday, well-meaning and tolerant dialogue without setting any preliminary conditions or imposition of ready-made solutions.

I am confident that my friends, the Presidents of the states in the region, share my satisfaction at the fact that by following precisely this mentioned principle, we have managed over the past period to create a new spirit of mutual confidence, dialogue and tolerance in the Balkan region. Evident progress in our mutual relations in all fields is the result precisely of our shared willingness to discuss everything, at all levels and on all occasions. Understandably, we cannot reach agreement on all issues of relevance to the citizens of our respective countries but this fact does not discourage anybody among us in our efforts to continue our search for solutions. Our vision must be turned, just as it has been to date, to the prosperity of the entire southeast part of Europe, we are all committed to that and we have to exhibit this commitment of ours on a daily basis.

First, we have to do it through democracy, by showing our readiness to defend the fundamental values of civilized societies without any intolerance – freedom and the right of every citizen to freely choose his place of residence, enjoy freedom of movement, the right to employment. The Western Balkans must not be the only place in Europe where there are still parts from which people have been expelled, their churches torn down, their right of return insecure and uncertain. Second, we have to show solidarity and support one another in addressing the issues on which another country has made more progress. We should rejoice at the success of the other country as at our shared success. I myself have often spoken about this having in mind Croatia and its success in the process of association with the European Union. It is on the readiness of us, the leaders in this region to take on responsibility that largely depends whether issues related to our future will be addressed through negotiation in the Western Balkans rather than on the basis of intolerance and unilateral approaches. Everything that concerns our neighbour has to do with ourselves, too. Everything that is his problem is at the same time a request for our help and cooperation.

The dialogue with the past must reflect the full strength of our belief in the importance of multi-ethnic life. Dealing with the past requires the strength to face up not only to the good aspects but also the bad aspects within ourselves and our nations. Criminal liability knows no nationality. All those that have committed crimes against other people, against the peace and security must answer, regardless of whether they are Serbs, Montenegrins, Albanians, Croats, Bosniaks... The victory over the past will at the same time mark a defeat of the concepts of great mono-ethnic states, the state for one single nation, the state of one nation ruling other nations. One cannot build the future of a multiethnic Balkan region on mythical stories about great nations, the ideas of territorial and ethnic conquests. In this way, one cannot settle fairly and durably any single of the outstanding issues that our fate is vitally linked to. We have to be forward-looking and recognize that we cannot move forward if we judge only the past for in such a case we shall be judged by the future.

It is therefore important also for our economic relations that our common market with almost 60 million people becomes completed. Not a single democratic achievement will be able to leave its full imprint unless there are economic conditions guaranteeing autonomy to every individual in making political choices.

It is our duty to show, through our partnership with Europe, that we do not only demand and expect something from Europe, but also to tell Europe that there are here competent people and elites that know how to negotiate and come to good, European solutions. We have to show that also when it comes to the solutions for Kosovo.

Kosovo is one of those issues that are possible to settle only in a European way. Kosovo is becoming a symbol by which we shall prove that it is possible to reach agreement between the majority and the minority, that such an agreement will not pose a threat to anyone in the region nor give protection to anybody who has committed a crime at any time in the past. Justice is the pivotal virtue among human values. I think that Aristotle wrote somewhere that what is just is what is equal in equal situations.

Kosovo is today, and I am confident that this will be so in the near future as well, an issue that we all in the region are interested to see settled in a European way. It is only partly an issue between Belgrade and Pristina. Kosovo is an issue for which answer must be sought primarily by those who are living in Kosovo – Albanians, Serbs, Montenegrins and the other communities. Their mutual dialogue is the essential first step in achieving the European standards and establishing the European prospect. As I have mentioned, dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina is necessary, necessary is a dialogue with all those concerned for the future of Kosovo – you who represent the countries of the region as well as the representatives of Europe and the wider international community.

The European solution for Kosovo, which Serbia and Montenegro favour, is possible to identify only through a patient and tolerant dialogue among all those I have mentioned. The aim of that dialogue can be only those solutions that give the citizens of Kosovo, regardless of their nationality or religion, a European prospect, full security, higher standards, new jobs. Present-day Kosovo, or the Kosovo we remember from some the past does not constitute such solutions. Present-day Europe does not accept killings and violence against people, their homes and cultural heritage as a lifestyle. Present-day Europe, however, does not accept any refusal to take part in democratic processes and institutions either. Finally, present-day Europe does not accept the fact that in one of its parts, in this case in Kosovo, two-thirds of people have no jobs and that tens of thousands of people still cannot return to their homes.

Such serious problems call for a strong commitment and a great deal of responsibility. But they first of all call for openness and willingness to engage in a dialogue. Should there be such willingness among all those concerned for the European future of Kosovo, a major step forward would be made. I am convinced that there will be such willingness on all sides. Kosovo today is the litmus test of our readiness to show in deed our commitment to European values and the values of modern civilization.

Our today's conference, the presence of all regional leaders and our shared openness and readiness to continue making use of dialogue as the only way to achieve full stability and overall progress in our region instills in me the optimistic hope in the success of the European integration process in the entire region. Therefore, dialogue is a word that must not hide our differences, that must not inflame passions but stimulate reasonable thinking and lead to compromise-based solutions. This is a message that associates the Balkans with Europe. This is a message for the future of 60 million people. For that reason, we shall not close our eyes before any problem. By working together and extending a hand to each other we are holding firmly the

hand of our European future.

Thank you.

Statsminister Bondevik's tale:

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The termination of violence is the first, indispensable step towards lasting peace.

Then the hardest part starts: building sustainable political solutions based on democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law.

To quote John F. Kennedy: "Peace is a daily, a weekly, a monthly process, gradually changing opinions, slowly eroding barriers, quietly building new structures."

In recent years Norway has played an important role as a facilitator in a number of peace processes. We have been involved in various ways in peace and reconciliation processes in South Africa, Colombia, Ethiopia/Eritrea, the Philippines, Guatemala, Haiti, Cyprus, the Middle East, Sri Lanka and the Sudan. As you know, Norway has also supported reconciliation efforts in South-East Europe.

Building peace means promoting fundamental values.

Without respect for human dignity, reconciliation is impossible.

Thus, promoting mutual trust and respect is essential to building peace. It is essential to inspiring hope for the future. The challenge is to replace fear with acceptance, harassment with tolerance, and hate with respect. In other words, to love one's neighbour.

As many of you may know, in addition to being prime minister, I am an ordained Lutheran pastor. I firmly believe that inter-cultural and inter-religious contacts are vital if we are to succeed in reducing tension and building mutual trust and confidence between people. This holds true not only in South-East Europe, but also in very many other parts of the world.

I have made it a priority to fight racism and discrimination against Muslims and other religious minorities in my country. To show my respect for Islam, I have visited mosques in Norway and on visits to Muslim countries.

Religion is a strong force in today's world. It has played an important and at times violent role throughout history.

Few know better than you how religion can be abused to stir up mistrust and hate. Few know better than you how religion can be abused to breed conflict and war. Too often, religious leaders have allowed themselves to become pawns used by political leaders in their struggle for power. In times of conflict religious symbols are often attacked, and this in turn inflames the tension and discord. The recent history of this region is a case in point.

Remarkable progress has been made in South-East Europe in recent years, thanks not least to your responsible leadership. We fully support you in your ambition to become further integrated into Euro-Atlantic structures. Our common wish for greater integration is based on the standards and values we share. Together we must commit ourselves to staying the course. We want your efforts to prevail.

The violent incidents in Kosovo last March were a clear demonstration that peace must be promoted every single day. They were a stark reminder of the potential for extremists to mobilise support for ethnic violence, and the vulnerability of minorities. This was emphasised by the Norwegian NATO ambassador, Mr Eide, in his report to the UN Secretary General.

Political leaders need to deal with the past and plan for the future in a constructive and responsible manner.

We all have a duty to ensure that those suspected of war crimes are brought to justice, including those indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. This is an essential step in paving the way for a genuine reconciliation process.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In many conflicts religion is considered to be part of the problem. In my view, it should be the other way around. Religion must become part of the solution. As leaders, we must take responsibility for encouraging dialogue between religions. Inter-religious dialogue does not mean giving up your own faith. We must focus on our common values such as respect for the sacred, human dignity and reconciliation.

To focus on the future, we must build on the values that unite us.

We must stop thinking in terms of "us and them".

We must learn from history, and not let the forces of the past dictate our future.

Our children are our future. Educating our children is the key to achieve concrete improvements in our societies.

Let us teach our children that we stand for harmony, not conflict. Let us ensure that our schools foster respect, understanding and consideration for others. Let us ensure that our schools foster a sense of community and solidarity. Let us teach our children to cross ethnic and religious barriers.

I believe that such an approach can lay the foundations for co-operation and co-existence, instead of alienation and hostility.

Many children in South-East Europe have spent years of their childhood in conflict and war. Their wounds are deep. Although people are learning to live together again, there are still some places where youngsters have few opportunities to meet and get to know their peers from the other side. Their parents and community leaders discourage these contacts. This will prevent their wounds from healing. It may well prove to be the most long-standing threat to a common future.

Our challenge – and let me underline that it is a joint one – is to build an inclusive society. This was a core message in a speech I made three months ago to political leaders from other European countries in the Hague, on the politics of European values.

We need to focus on what unites people – on creating bonds, on paving the way for joint, positive experiences. What does this mean here in your region? It means making sure that different ethnic groups attend the same schools, share the same water, electricity and telephone systems, the same police service, the same postal service, the same hospitals and the same fire departments.

These practical measures are essential if progress is to be made where it counts – at the local level.

But not only at the local level. Any viable political and economic strategy has to facilitate regional co-operation, development and trade. Such a regional, European-oriented strategy is important to the objective of a wider European economic and political integration.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We must repudiate the violent history of Europe and the Balkans. We must demonstrate, not only to ourselves, but to the rest of the world, that Europe is a continent of peace.

Very Rev. Arthur E. Liolin's tale:

THE QUESTION OF CONFLICT AS A DOOR TO OPPORTUNITY

Honorable Presidents, our hosts Mr. Matsuura and Mr. Moisiu,

distinguished colleagues and venerable clergy:

It is a privilege and pleasure to join with you today as we affirm the lessons learnt and the aspirations to which all humankind aspires. Especially here - in this region and in this place of transitions - where, over the course of time, pain and grief have been brother and sister to codes of honor and to pride in one's identity. Here in Albania, where tolerance and individual worth are valued traditions, where the past and the present are in stark contrast and where the struggle to form a constructive future finds fertile ground as well as challenges.

UNESCO has been a valued resource. In so many ways, it provides us with a many-faceted prism in order to focus our shared faith in a constructive future: through education, in science, and by our respective cultures. That is, in part, why we are here: to place in perspective and incorporate our shared experiences. Hopefully, they will be forged into policy and practice. Most of us today, in our own labors, have duties to perform: we've been elected and appointed to governance, and we've assembled to record with others the data we have gathered and studied as writers, philosophers and researchers: ordinary people who care and serve.

My own wish is to pursue this course of discovery via a few modest ruminations and a series of questions. I view this assembly's goal as an affirmation as well as an adventure - which has yet to be fulfilled, a harbor yet to be reached, a journey just begun. To my mind, most questions will add to the quest. They are not limited to Southeast Europe, but have implications elsewhere as well. I thank you for this occasion.

I. THE ORIGINS OF CONFLICT

Hatred between individuals, groups and peoples has long been recorded in history's annals. Our predecessors witnessed - as we continue to witness - personal crimes, internecine struggles, cultural differences, religious crusades and counter-conflicts, wars of oppression and liberation. Since Homo sapiens families and tribal clusters first appeared on the earth, these terms and others - such as "holocaust," "genocide" and "ethnic cleansing" - have become far too common occurrences, even in advanced societies. We need to know why. Is it a genetic inheritance, or a learned behavior? Has a tool which may have facilitated the survival of earlier creatures and cultures, outlived its usefulness today? Or is it a latent human tendency which is easily exploited by other agendas?

Often, coexistence appears less of an ideal than it once was. Learning from debate & dialogue - in the free market of ideas - helps to refine one own belief. Is it true that advocates of a world view, may better advance their goals and vision - by contrasting

their ideas with the ideas of others who differ? When will we learn that destruction of the adversary only returns in even more virulent ways to haunt and torment the perpetrator?

To be sure, such issues are not confined to the dramatic, to the melodramatic, to the sinister and to the criminal. Even in the loftier areas of human debate, they pertain to the refined questions of competing value systems, and of cultural goals and aspirations. Too often, these too explode from simple "differences of opinion" into combative ideological conflicts and not only for Southeast Europe. Such attitudes seem to strike at the heart of a group's world view and become a matter of destiny. And with it, comes the larger dilemma: how can an individual or group preserve the integrity of its own beliefs, while not infringing on the similar sentiments of other, different individuals and groups? It is an issue which affects neighbors on the same street, as well as neighboring countries.

In other words, what is the nature of compromise and cooperation in a world of competing values?

My first question arises: What is behind this motivation? What purpose does it serve and what may have been its primeval origins?

II THEOLOGICAL ASPECTS: LIVING ONE'S DOCTRINES

Every religion has had to face the challenge of such behaviors in its constituents. No scripture is without accounts of battles and "spiritual warfare." Its focus is to strengthen the believer's pursuit of knowledge of God and devotion to the Creator. Why is it translated into defending one's beliefs at the expense of others' convictions? In extreme instances - no doubt out of necessity - why must theologians feel compelled to clarify whether a war has its "just cause," or is the "lesser of evils?" And when an individual or group is found on the losing side, it festers into the deeper throes of victimizations, only to rise again, sometimes centuries later with a new vehemence. Indeed, why?

There is even a powerful slavic term for this phenomenon: "Zolpamiatnost:" the insidious delight in recalling over and over again the evil done to us. Instead of learning from our own sins and flaws, we wallow in them, and appeals for repentance go unheeded. It is the easy way and contradicts the Divinity. Ultimately, it is an insult to our Creator. Even Almighty God may weep at what His creatures do, or fail to do.

Question number 2: How may we foster the view that dogmas serve God and man - not as rigid or stagnant museum pieces - but as living avenues to the holy, which are firmly linked to the human aspiration to love God with "mind, heart, strength and soul?"

III. SECULARISM: MIND VS SOUL?

The legacy of the Enlightenment is often counterpoised, in Europe and elsewhere, as the antidote. One ideology strives to replace another.

Rival political camps, each with a differing world view, tempt destiny. Each seek followers and power, in a shifting landscape which leaves most folks in a state of perpetual bewilderment and insecurity. Indeed, living with ambiguity - especially in the SE region of Europe - is counterpoised by a rush to totalitarian forms of security. Nearly every secular system and every ideology arose from organic necessity and need, as well as from vision. For each, the challenge is to find avenues for change even while remaining committed to essential principles.

In this and in neighboring regions, for example, it is often said that society has moved from the ruination of one ideology into the harsh reality of another: from communism to capitalism, proceeding from vicious security to harsh insecurity, from total service to all to service only to oneself. Both are impervious to the consequences which our own deeds have on one another. And its effect on ordinary people has often been to increase bewilderment, cynicism and disillusionment.

This phenomenon has even taken on an ontological nature. It is a compelling question on the nature of being: of what it means to be a Homo sapiens, to be a person - and we struggle with questions on what it means not only to be, not only to fulfill one's potentials, but whether our existence requires a return to ancient tribalisms.

Is God and scripture the measure of man, or is man's own discovery the measure of society? Is our destiny anthropocentric or theocentric? One hopes that both views together would balance and complete the picture.

Question Number 3: It seems apparent today that Secularism and Dogmatism also require a bridge between them. Where and how are to build it?

IV. SOCIAL RAMIFICATIONS: REALISM AND IDEALISM - A DUET

Societies and ideologies hold double standards in this regard. On the one hand, we extoll the virtues of peace, while at the same time we bless those who must do battle. Oftentimes, there is only a fine line drawn between bemoaning the war, while at the same time safeguarding the warrior. It is the dilemma of all who govern. We run the risk becoming many warring islands. And the call for justice too often masquerades as other more sinister impulses.

In all conflicts, there is a tendency to identify and idealize the hero. Usually, he is thought to be the protector of the patrimony and enters into myth as symbol of the nation, or of a victimized people. But the truly heroic should be seen not only for what he is, but for what he ought to be. One who sees clearly, who has a vision, and is able to overcome adversity not simply by popularized strength, but by his ability to lead people one step forward, beyond what is expected.

How does one compare a mythic hero from an exaggerated ego? One gives, while the other is prone to take. The former's strength enables him to relent and yield, while the latter's insecurity makes him deride and intimidate. The first one understands and persuades, whereas the second enforces and imposes. The former is liberated by his office, while the latter is clad only in armor. The hero loves, while his opposite grasps at that which is not contained. One creates an opening, while the other closes doors. One admires those whom he serves, the other imprisons his charges. One listens, the other only hears. One protects, the other ridicules.

The idealist prefers to honor his most positive deeds. The realist tells us that the hero serves only a defined, separated group. To be most effective, he and she must embody both attitudes. Mostly, the authentic hero encourages heroism in each and every individual. It is of such ordinary heroes that conflict might be transformed into goals for peace and opportunity.

Question #4: How then may we encourage healthy heroism in the people of our respective societies?

V. Psychology, Sciences & Literature:

Thus, in issues of conflict, it comes down to essential matters of fear and hatred, and overcoming them -of discerning truth from fiction, of what is good or evil, of what is right and wrong, and of the gradations in between extremes. Often that which is hidden is more telling than that which is transparent. We know that behavioral patterns often stem not from the obvious, but from what is veiled.

To attain a goal, we must know what we are up against. One needs a microscope to peer into origins, then a telescope to view the future. Or to choose another metaphor: like the physician, each of us - in our own life's work - must look deeply into causes and not only at symptoms. Why, for example, is it said that "anger is the most pleasurable of human passions?" Do our angers arise out of necessity, or out of the pursuit of justice, and when might our emotions deceive us? When is anger appropriate, and when is it destructive? Here, our writers and novelists offer this challenge with clarity. And not only them, but it is our parents and teachers, and the examples which they give by their own behavior.

Question #5: Hatred, violence and fear - are they inherited, or learned?

V. OPTIONS: THE FORMATION OF THE CONSCIENCE

Providing an answer to the dilemmas posed to governments and to all people seeking peaceful resolution to conflict must therefore begin by rephrasing the question. What is it in human behavior - and by extension the policy of any given government - that finds in vicious conflict something that appears to be beneficial, but eventually is found to be counterproductive, destructive, and in the end can lead - to make a moral judgment - evil?

And following that: what can be learned about ourselves by not only avoiding our crimes of conscience and deed, but in deeply exploring the roots which prompt such behavior?

Studies of the psychology and anthropology of hatred, abuse, racism continue to be undertaken, as well as of their moral and ethical implications. For example, Prof. Robert Sternberg at Yale studies "The Psychology of Hate," as does sociologist Jack Levin at Northeastern University in Boston. Prof. Lawrence Kohlberg at Harvard and Notre Dame University outlined a "theory of moral development." In researching the aspects of the brain, Professor Susan Fiske of Princeton University, concludes from empirical data that "prejudice is not inevitable." University of Toronto Professor William Cunningham's soon-to-be-published research results challenge the notion that "racism is natural and unavoidable." From authors, we have Vaclav Havel's compelling talk, "On Hatred." From social philosopher, Hannah Arendt, was coined the arresting phrase: "the banality of evil," when doing violence to others seems so casual, so everyday, so ordinary, so acceptable, and even worse, so easy.

CONCLUSION: LOOKING FOR ORDINARY HEROES

In summary, the hero teaches us that justice is attained when all are satisfied or no one nearly so. Justice, clarity, self-criticism, repentance, forgiveness, foresight and vision: all these hard-won virtues may be drawn from theology, from society and science, from worldwide scripture, from national myth and are embodied in constitutional aspirations. All these help bring us out of conflict and to conciliation, from derision to respect. Each individual by each. One person by one. One neighbor with another neighbor down the street. And by every nation to its neighbor and to those beyond its borders. It all begins next door.

We are all vulnerable. All are warmed by the same sun, inhabit the same earth, enter a common pit, envision a shared future. Our views on this may differ widely. Yet, it is in the sharing and mingling of those views that we refine our own view. It is in relation to others that we strengthen our own group's awareness. Diversity is such a rich gift.

Our primordial human ancestors - who began the journey so long ago - often found security, self-protection and solace by demonizing others because of their perceived differences. And yet, little by little, they began to discover the merits of leaving behind untoward and hostile behaviors. We ought to have learned by now that we all have more to gain by exploration, curiosity and cooperation than by limiting our adventures only to those who appear similar to ourselves.

This then, is a lesson to be learnt: to fully "know ourselves" - and ultimately "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God."

Officielle fotos

Præsident Moisiu med statsminister Kjell Magne Bondevik, Norge

<http://www.president.al/album/1260.jpg>
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Med præsident Svetozar Marovic, Serbien-Montenegro

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Alle de deltagende præsidenter og statsminister Bondevik

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Præsident Moisiu's holder sin åbningstale.

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Præsidenterne, statsminister Bondevik

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Med præsident Mesic, Kroatien

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»Familiefoto«

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Med præsident Parvanov, Bulgarien

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Med præsident Paravac, Bosnien-Hercegovina

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Med præsident Crvenkovski, Makedonien

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Med director-general Matsuura

<http://www.president.al/album/1297.jpg>
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<http://www.president.al/album/1299.jpg>
<http://www.president.al/album/1300.jpg>
<http://www.president.al/album/1301.jpg>

Præsident Moisiu's afsluttende tale; fremlæggelse af Tirana-deklarationen

<http://www.president.al/album/1302.jpg>
<http://www.president.al/album/1303.jpg>

Præsident Moisiu og director-general Matsuura

under afslutningen

<http://www.president.al/album/1304.jpg>
<http://www.president.al/album/1305.jpg>
<http://www.president.al/album/1306.jpg>

Med stormuftien af Bosnien-Hercegovina

<http://www.president.al/album/1312.jpg>
<http://www.president.al/album/1313.jpg>

Med Father Artur Liolin, den Albanske Kirke i USA

<http://www.president.al/album/1314.jpg>
<http://www.president.al/album/1315.jpg>

PM Nano med Erhard Busek og med præsident Marovic

<http://www.keshilliministrave.al/foto/foto.asp?id=3303>
<http://www.keshilliministrave.al/foto/foto.asp?id=3305>
<http://www.keshilliministrave.al/foto/foto.asp?id=3306>

PM Nano med statsminister Bondevik

<http://www.keshilliministrave.al/foto/foto.asp?id=3308>
<http://www.keshilliministrave.al/foto/foto.asp?id=3310>

Ved afslutningen blev der udfærdiget et dokument - ***The Tirana Summit Declaration on Inter-Religious and Inter-Ethnic Dialogue in South-East Europe***: <http://miqesia.dk/Declaration-2004.htm>.

Statue for Mother Teresa afsløret



Tirana 2004. Foto: Bjørn Andersen. Dette og de følgende billeder kan forstørres ved at klikke på dem [click on the photos to enlarge them]

Under konferencen var der en højtidelighed hvor der blev afsløret en **statue for Mother Teresa** [se: <http://bjoerna.dk/albanien/Teresa.htm>]. Statuen er skabt af den albanske skulptør **Thoma Thomai**. Nedenfor billeder fra forberedelsen og fra selve højtideligheden:



PM Fatos Nano holdt flg. tale [pt kun på Albansk]:

Në ceremoninë e Inagurimit të Monumentit të Nënë Terezës morën pjesë autoritete të larta të vendit, Presidenti i Republikës Alfred Moisiu, Presidentë të vendeve të rajonit etj, pjesëmarrës në Samitin e Europës Juglindore "Zhvillimi i dialogut ndëretnik dhe ndërfaqet, një faktor i rëndësishëm për stabilitetin dhe progresin e Europës Juglindore".

Në fjalën e mbajtur me këtë rast, Kryeministri Nano u shpreh:

Është një kënaqësi e veçantë për mua që si Kryeministër i Shqipërisë t'ju uroj mirëseardhjen në një moment kaq sinjifikativ për mbarë shqiptarët: inagurimi i Monumentit të Nënë Terezës.

Kjo vepër ka një autor të nderuar, artistin dhe profesorin Thoma Thomai, por në të vërtetë kjo vepër është ngjizur kohë më parë, ditë pas dite, moment pas momenti, mrekulli pas mrekullie në vetëdijen e çdo shqiptari, madje më shumë se kaq, në memorijen e çdo qytetari të botës. Kështu, para se të materializohet në këtë përmendore, në të gjithë e kemi një përmendore të Nënë Terezës në shpirtin tonë. Sepse brenda figurës së Nënë Terezës mishërohen cilësitë më të mira të nënave shqiptare, dhe ne jemi krenarë për këtë.

Nënë Tereza ishte një bijë e thjeshtë, lindur në një familje shqiptare, të cilës nuk i mjaftoi hapësira shqiptare për të demonstruar zemrën e saj të madhe. Për këtë arsye, Ajo e shpërndau dhembshurinë e saj anekënd globit. Pa fjalë, pa deklarata të mëdha. Ajo asnjëherë nuk pyeti për kombësinë, racën apo bindjet e të vuajturve dhe të sëmurëve, por u afroi atyre shërbimin e saj të çmuar.

Kryemedikamenti i saj ishte dhëmbshuria njerëzore. Tashmë, Kisha Katolike, pas lumturimit, është përfshirë në një proces të vetin për shenjtërimin e Nënë Terezës. Ekipet e specializuara do të vërtetojnë sipas rregullave të Kishës mrekullitë e kësaj nëne, por për ne dhe për mbarë të vuajturit e botës ajo është tashmë e shënjtë: ajo është dhe do të mbetet simbol i humanizmit. Dhe për këtë ne jemi përunjesisht krenarë!

Inagurimi që po bëjmë sot merr një simbolikë të veçantë sepse bëhet në atmosferën e Samitit rajonal për zhvillimin e dialogut ndëretnik dhe ndërfetar. Në diskutimet e sotme dhe në ato që do të vazhdojnë, politikanë të lartë dhe studiues do të kenë rastin të nënvizojnë se si bashkëjetesa jonë fetare është një nga pasuritë më të mëdha që ka siguruar jo vetëm kohezion kombëtar, por edhe skalitje të vlerave humane të shqipëtarëve, ndër të cilat unë do të veçoja solidaritetin njerëzor.

Është pikërisht kjo trashëgimi e mrekullueshme shqiptare e cila ka siguruar përballimin me qetësi jo fort të zakonshme të sfidave më të egra me të cilat është detyruar të përballlet njeriu shqiptar nëpër kohëra. Është pikërisht kjo trashëgimi e mrekullueshme e cila e zmadhoi edhe zemrën e kësaj nëne para të cilës përkulemi të gjithë me respekt, ashtu siç përkulet njeriu vetëm para nënës.

E përjetshme vepra e Nënës Terezës!

Billeder fra konferencen. Bilaterale drøftelser

Et par billeder fra konferencen (se links til officielle billeder ovenfor). Borgmester Edi Rama hilser på den Græsk-Katolske Ærkebiskop (siddende tv.: Arthur E. Liolin fra den Albanske Kirke i USA). Lederen af Stabilitetspagten, Erhard Busek, bliver interviewet; under sit ophold benyttede Busek lejligheden til at drøfte mulighederne for at give støtte til en videreudvikling af de Albanske jernbaner. Nogle af konferencemedarbejderne fordeler opgaver:



Under konferencen var der mange **bilaterale drøftelser mellem Albanske ledere og de udenlandske statsledere**. Blandt dem der mødtes var PM Fatos Nano og Præsidenten for Serbien-Montenegro, Svetozar Marovic. Udenrigsministeriet for Serbien-Montenegro har udsendt flg. telegram fra Tanjug:

TIRANA, Dec 9 (Tanjug) Albanian Prime Minister Fatos Nano said during his meeting with Serbia-Montenegro President Svetozar Marovic in Tirana Thursday that without Serbia-Montenegro's contribution, there could be no prosperity or stability in the Balkans.

Nano and Marovic, whose Thursday meeting was not planned but was organized at the initiative of the Albanian side on the sidelines of the meeting of Southeast European leaders on interreligious and interethnic dialogue, also agreed that a solution for Kosovo can only be found using a peaceful way and through dialogue. The two statesmen also confirmed that the SCG and Albania share the same political would to join the European Union.

"Albania and SCG share the efforts to jointly make the region European. Without cooperation and strengthening of our position in Europe, we shall not be able to achieve that goal," Marovic told reporters after his meeting with Nano, adding that the topic will be discussed more during the forthcoming visit of SCG Foreign Minister Vuk Draskovic to Tirana.

Marovic also said that some outstanding issues, such as Kosovo the issue Nano also defined as Europe's challenge should be solved by people who have a European way of thinking.

Det Makedonske Makfax har udsendt tilsvarende om Præsident Crvenkovski's deltagelse i konferencen:

Macedonian President Branko Crvenkovski today will complete his visit to Tirana, where he took part in the two-day Regional Summit on Development of Interethnic and Inter-religious Dialogue, co-sponsored and co-organized by UNESCO and the

Albanian authorities. The aim of the summit is to assess how religion and multi-ethnicity can be put constructively to work through dialogue in the areas of UNESCO's expertise - education, culture, the sciences and communication and information - as an important contribution to the stability and progress of the Balkans.

On the sidelines of the summit, President Crvenkovski held bilateral meetings with the Serbia-Montenegro's President Svetozar Marovic, Albanian Prime Minister Fatos Nano and the Norwegian Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik.

President Crvenkovski is scheduled to meet today with his Bulgarian counterpart Georgi Prvanov and the Director-General of the UNESCO Koichiro Matsuura.

Bagsiden af Pyramiden. Skanderbeg-pladsen



Ovenfor et billede fra **bagsiden af Pyramiden** og to billeder fra **Skanderbeg Pladsen**.

Kampen mod korrupsionen



Én af dagene var der **demonstration på Skanderbeg Pladsen mod korrupsion**. Der var omkring 1.500-2.000 deltagere. Der blev holdt tale og der blev rejst en anti-korrupsionspyramide. Til slut væltede man pyramiden. Efter sigende var arrangørerne skuffede over at der ikke var flere deltagere i demonstrationen. [Billedet th er taget fra TV og kan *ikke* forstørres].

Uafhængigt heraf udsendte OSCEs Ambassadør i Albanien samme dag flg. om kampen mod korrupsionen:

TIRANA, 9 December 2004 - The OSCE Presence in Albania has today issued the following statement:

"The OSCE Presence in Albania commends the efforts of all Albanian citizens, state and political leaders, non-governmental organizations and other individuals and institutions who are dedicated to fighting corruption and congratulates them on the occasion of the International Anti-Corruption Day.

The International Anti-Corruption Day on 9 December marks one year since the signing of the UN Convention against Corruption in Mérida, Mexico. The purposes of the Convention are to promote and strengthen measures to prevent and combat corruption

more efficiently and effectively, and also to promote integrity, accountability and proper management of public affairs and public property.

The Presence also wishes to congratulate on the International Human Rights Day, recalling tomorrow's 56th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration calls on every individual and every organ of society to promote respect for human rights and freedoms and by progressive measures to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance.

The OSCE participating States expressed their strong determination to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, to build, strengthen and protect democratic institutions, and to promote tolerance throughout society, also in the 1992 CSCE (OSCE) Helsinki Summit Document.

The OSCE Presence will continue to help Albania implement its obligations to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people. It will keep contributing to capacity-building of state institutions, such as the Office of the People's Advocate, the primary human rights agency in Albania, and working with civil society.

The Presence will also assist the country in fighting corruption and in increasing transparency of government and the political process. It has designed projects to strengthen public participation in legislative drafting, raise trial standards, and ensure workers' rights and a greater transparency in court practices, the judicial process, and the work of the Assembly."

Den Amerikanske Ambassade har udsendt flg. om et anti-korrupsionsprojekt der gennemføres af USAID i samarbejde med Albanske partnere::

December 8, 2004

USAID Funds New Anti-Corruption Project for Albania

U.S. Ambassador Marcie Ries joined USAID Director Harry Birnholz and the Democracy and Governance in Albania (DGA) Consortium to announce the launch of its new initiative today at the Rogner Hotel. The project focuses on combating corruption through work with citizens, civil society institutions, the media, and political parties. The Consortium – comprised of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), Partners for Democratic Change (Partners Albania) and the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) – is funded by USAID.

The project's implementation furthers the fight against corruption in Albania, a struggle involving institutional, legal, social, and political solutions. The program's goal is to encourage greater participation by citizens, NGOs, media and political parties. Working together, they can create a more participatory and open process to combat corruption and promote better governance.

During the launch, Jennifer L. Butz, Country Director for NDI and Chief of Party for the DGA Consortium stated "this unprecedented initiative will build on progress achieved to date in Albania's democratic transition. The anti-corruption measures being implemented through this program are essential toward helping Albania move forward on reform."

The broad aim of the Democracy and Governance program is to support NGOs. As these NGOs band together, their efforts will result in more civil society participation, greater government accountability and better service to the public. The program will also work with the media to raise professional standards and provide citizens with the objective, accurate information they require to participate in democracy. Another program goal is to discuss with political parties concrete ways in which they can better represent members' interests, and translate those concerns into effective policy.

NDI Director Jennifer Butz can be contacted (068 20 74 345) for additional information about the project.

Stor byggeaktivitet



Der er (fortsat) **meget stor byggeaktivitet**. På billedet nedenfor tv ses den nye **Romersk Katolske Katedral, Skt Paul's**, i baggrunden. Kirken ligger ved Lana-floden vis-a-vis den store pyramide. Katedralen er bygget i meget enkel stil og er udsmykket med en serie glasmosaikvinduer - med billeder af Jesus, Pave Paul, Moder Teresa og flere andre.



Links

The Tirana Summit Declaration on Inter-Religious and Inter-Ethnic Dialogue in South-East Europe
<http://migesia.dk/Declaration-2004.htm>

Side om Albanerne: <http://bjoerna.dk/albanerne.htm>



Forberedelseskommittéen hos præsident Moisiu. Kozara Kati sidder ved siden af præsidenten. Foto: Præsidentkontoret (kan ikke forstørres)

Efter konferencen har præsident Moisiu takket politichefen, Bajram Ibraj, og chefen for republikgarden, Arben Çuko:

December 20, 2004 - President Moisiu has sent a message to the General Director of State Police in which states: "I wholeheartedly thank you and through you all the employees of the State Police that were engaged with dedication and professionalism for the progress and the successful conclusion of the Summit of Southeastern Europe on the inter-religious and inter-ethnic dialogue, held in Tirana from December 9 to 10 of 2004.

By overcoming the great weight during the days of the Summit you showed that the State Police is capable to face events and activities that honor the country and our society domestically and abroad.

Next year, in which will be held the parliamentary elections, will be a year of more work and responsibility, but I have complete trust that the State Police will know how to face the situations and fulfill its constitutional mission in the service of the citizens and country. I assure you for my institutional engagement in support of your work and activity.

At the end, I wish you and all the employees of the State Police, Happy Holidays of the end of the year, health and happiness to your families!"

- - -

December 20, 2004 The President of the Republic, Alfred Moisiu sent a grateful message to the Commander of the Guard of Republic, Colonel Arben Çuko, in which it is stated: "On the occasion of the successful conclusion of the Summit of Southeastern Europe on the inter-religious and inter-ethnic dialogue, held in Tirana from December 9 to 10 of 2004, I thank you and the employees of the Guard of the Republic, officers, corporals and soldiers that participated in the guarding and defending the high state personalities of the country and foreign dignitaries, in conducting the ceremonials and guards of honor.

By appreciating the importance of this Summit, you successfully managed with dedication to face a heavy load of work.

On this occasion, I congratulate you on your undeniable achievements in the mission that the law invests on you for guarding and defending the high state personalities and in the mean time to wish you and through all the effectives of the Guard of Republic Happy Holidays of the end of the year, health and happiness to your families!"

Version 2.9: 06th January 2005. Ed.: Bjoern Andersen

Kontakt webmaster: webmaster@miqesia.dk. Du er meget velkommen til at sende informationer og forslag til hvad der skal være på siden. Send evt. bekendte et tip om *Miqësia's* hjemmeside: miqesia.dk

The Albanian girl and the Danish artists

Version 1.2 - 17.11.2005 [version 1.0 published 26.09.2005]. - A pdf-version for printing-purposes can be downloaded from: <http://bjoerna.net/albania/girl.pdf>. - [Vajza shqiptare dhe artistët danezë](#).



Albanian or Italian? Painted by Albert Kuchler in 1831

Recently professor Ferid Hudhri has put forward some ideas about a painting of an Albanian girl now to be found in Glyptoteket, a well-reputed museum in Copenhagen, Denmark. Almira Pajenga - from the Danish Embassy in Tirana - has kindly made it possible for me to learn about the ideas which have been presented in the »Klan«-magazine and in the »Tema« as well.

In many books about Danish art and Danish literature the well-known painting has been named *the Albanian girl*; in other books *the Italian girl*. Professor Hudhri is asking whether the girl actually was of Albanian origin, or whether the explanation is otherwise; perhaps that the girl was an Italian from the Albani hills south of Rome? Professor Hudhri himself suggests she was of Albanian origin and had settled in Rome. Possibly, he adds, she visited an important Albanian family in Rome who often held friendly gatherings with the participation of artists.

Something can be said for sure, something can not be settled so easily.

In July-August this year I made a brief study about the painting and the involved persons (it can be found in Danish at: <http://bjoerna.net/albanerinden/>).

The painting was made by the Danish artist Albert Kuchler, later a monk, when his fellow-countryman, the poet Christian Winther paid a visit to Rome in 1831. Who actually met the girl first; Kuchler or Winther - is not known, most likely it was Kuchler.

At that time many Danish artists and poets visited Rome and travelled through Italy, among those Bertel Thorvaldsen, the sculptor, and H.C. Andersen, the author of fairy-tales. Often these Danes met each other in the taverns; and from time to time they visited the vicinities of Rome. One of the most important destinations was the Nemi-area in the Albani hills. The Danish Academy in Rome has a lot of information about the Danes and this area.

As professor Hudhri puts it, the girl might have been from the Arbëresh villages in the south of Italy, but I have to agree with him, when he judges it as not so likely. There are a couple of explanations. First of all the long distance, secondly that the Arbëresh family-traditions would not so easily correspond with a life as a »free woman« and a lover of a Danish poet.

The relationship between the young beauty and the poet has been quite intense, and possibly the girl claimed to be pregnant when the poet went back to Denmark - only to involve himself in more intense erotic relations. At least he gave her a *vigne* at his departure - a little vineyard.

A short while later, when Winther had reached the Northern Italy, he wrote to one of his friends, the sculptor Bissen:

»I have to ask you to look up the little devil and to read a letter to her. I could have asked other fellows, but you will be the best postillion d'amour, since Kùchler is not present; and I really do not like to wash my lovestruck linen in public.«

We know that Winther - at this time at least - was not very good in Italian. Possibly he wrote to the girl - through Bissen - in Danish, and *the postillion* then had to read the letter for her in Italian. Maybe she even was an illiterate?

As far as we know today, Winther quickly lost contact to the girl. Furthermore, we have no knowledge about a renewed contact between them when Winther many years later visited Rome, this time with his wife and her daughter of an earlier marriage.

Actually, Winther had the painting in his possession for some years, but - according to some sources - he had to sell it in a period of »low water«. Another reason why he parted with it might have been jealousy of his girlfriend at that time? Some years later the painting was obtained by Glyptoteket.

I have been in touch with people with knowledge of Danish artists in Rome, and especially of Albert Kùchler. I have been through the letters from the time of Christian Winther, the major biography of Winther (by Nikolaj Boegh), some articles about the painter, the relevant paragraphs in Alberto Crielesi's *»Il pittore Fra PIETRO da COPENAGHEN al secolo ALBERT KÜCHLER. Quando la Povertà con l'Arte diventa Poesia«* (Roma 1999) - and some articles in a Danish magazine from the 19th century about Kùchler and Winther.

In none of these letters, books, articles etc. it has been suggested that the girl should have been of Albanian origin (in our understanding of the word). And the people I have been in touch with hold the same opinion as I do; among those the Danish authors, Per Nyholm and Stig Holsting.

Furthermore, Alberto Crielesi writes that the clothes of the girl are from the Albani hills.

It has to be added that it was quite common among Danish artists of the time to name people from the Albani hills as Albanians; there are a lot of evidence of that. Only specialists, at least the archaeologist and philologist Peter Oluf Broendsted, who visited Ali Pasha of Tepelena, did otherwise. In the first part of the 20th century the word »Albanian« was used more frequently as today, eg. by the philologist Holger Pedersen and the author Franz von Jessen, both people who visited the Albanian area - and the old usage was given up in 1912 or even before.

»Unfortunately« we can not prove that the beauty had Albanian origins, nevertheless the

discussion has given us a very good opportunity in Denmark to raise our attention about Albania and the Albanians in the 19th century. Hopefully we will in the future find more relations from that time and from other periods to investigate thoroughly.

Bjoern Andersen holds a MA in Danish philology and sociology. He has visited Albania some times through the years, the first time in 1976. In 2003 and 2004 he was a participant in the conferences about 'the clash of civilizations' and 'religious tolerance', both in Tirana. He is the author of books in Danish about Albanian history. Recently he has published the 'Danish Law of 1683' in a digital edition - and by now he is working on a book about the Danish-Norwegian author Ludvig Holberg - who, in 1739, issued an appreciating article about Scanderbeg.

This article may be quoted free of charge, but only with the reference to: <http://bjoerna.net/albania/girl.htm>

Linksamling

Nr	Side	Link
01	15	http://bjoerna.net/balkan-dokumenter/Albania-2005-final.pdf
02	15	http://bjoerna.net/sidste-nyt/281.htm#ODIHR-final
03a-03b	16	http://bjoerna.net/balkan-dokumenter/ALB-EU-Progress-2005.pdf
04	16	http://bjoerna.net/balkan-dokumenter/ALB-EU-Partnership-2005.pdf
05	25	http://bjoerna.net/sidste-nyt/275.htm
06	32	http://bjoerna.net/balkan-dokumenter/ALB-GVT-PRG-2005.pdf
07	35	http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2000/03/jarvis.htm
08	51	http://www.unece.org/env/epr/studies/albania/chapter06.pdf
09	63	http://www.gcim.org/en/ir_experts.html
10	63	http://www.osce.org/item/14594.html
11	63	http://www.cemes.org/JEMS/contents/29(6).htm
12	63	http://www.boeckler.de/pdf/South_East_Europe_Review_2004_01_baldwin2.pdf
13	63	http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=230
14	63	http://www.gcim.org/attachements/RS5.pdf
15	63	http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=35286
16	63	http://www.mmo.gr/pdf/library/Greece/CentralEuropeReview1-21.pdf
17	63	http://www.ccis-ucsd.org/PUBLICATIONS/wrkg84.pdf
18	63	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albanians
19	63	http://www.frosina.org/about/infobits.asp?id=161
20	68	http://bjoerna.dk/DanskeLov/index.htm
		http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/durham/albania/albania.html
		http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/durham/albania/albania-I.html
		http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/durham/albania/albania-II.html
		http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/durham/albania/albania-III.html
		http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/durham/albania/albania-IV.html
		http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/durham/albania/albania-V.html
21	70	http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/durham/albania/albania-VI.html
		http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/durham/albania/albania-VII.html
		http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/durham/albania/albania-VIII.html
		http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/durham/albania/albania-IX.html
		http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/durham/albania/albania-X.html
		http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/durham/albania/albania-XI.html
		http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/durham/albania/albania-XII.html
		http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/durham/albania/albania-XIII.html
22	70	http://www.fipa.tm.fr/programmes/2005/fr.php?f=rep_11563&r=prsc
23	71	http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/reprint/331/7510/197.pdf
24	75	http://www.djoef.dk/online/view_artikel?ID=6774&attr_folder=F
25	75	http://www.jm.dk/image.asp?page=image&objno=73240
26	78	http://bjoerna.net/to-skridt-frem/bilag.pdf
27	82	http://bjoerna.net/albania/religious-tolerance-summaries.htm
28	64, 82	http://bjoerna.dk/albansk-historie/studier-2002.htm
29	83	http://bjoerna.net/sidste-nyt/281.htm#Oxford
30	84	http://bjoerna.dk/albanien/Teresa.htm
31	95	http://www.dkinst-rom.dk/nemi/
32	31	http://bjoerna.net/albanerinden/Mellem-Siljan-og-Sorrent-1883.htm
33	96	http://illustreretidende.dk/iti_pub/cv/main/Forside.xsql?nnoc=iti_pub
34	46	http://bjoerna.net/albania/Gurre-e-Vogel.kmz
35	51	http://bjoerna.net/albania/Urake.kmz
36	52	http://bjoerna.net/albania/Mati-Hydropower-Station.kmz



Bjoern Andersen holds a MA in sociology and in Danish philology.

He has visited Albania some times through the years, the first time in 1976. In 2003 and 2004 he was a participant in the conferences about 'the clash of civilizations' [cf.:

<http://bjoerna.dk/tolerance/>] and 'religious tolerance' [cf.:

<http://miqesia.dk/Summit-2004.htm>], both in Tirana. He is the author of books in Danish about Albanian history. The latest is »*To skridt frem?*« [2205] [»*To steps forward?*«. Maybe the book can be published in English some time in 2006]. BA is the editor of the 'Miqësia Experiences Project', cf.: <http://miqesia.dk/erfaring/experiences.htm> and <http://miqesia.dk/erfaring/>

Recently he has published the 'Danish Law of 1683' in a digital edition - and by now he is working on a book about the Danish-Norwegian author Ludvig Holberg - who, in 1739, issued an appreciating article about Scanderbeg.