

Albania

The Land of the Eagles



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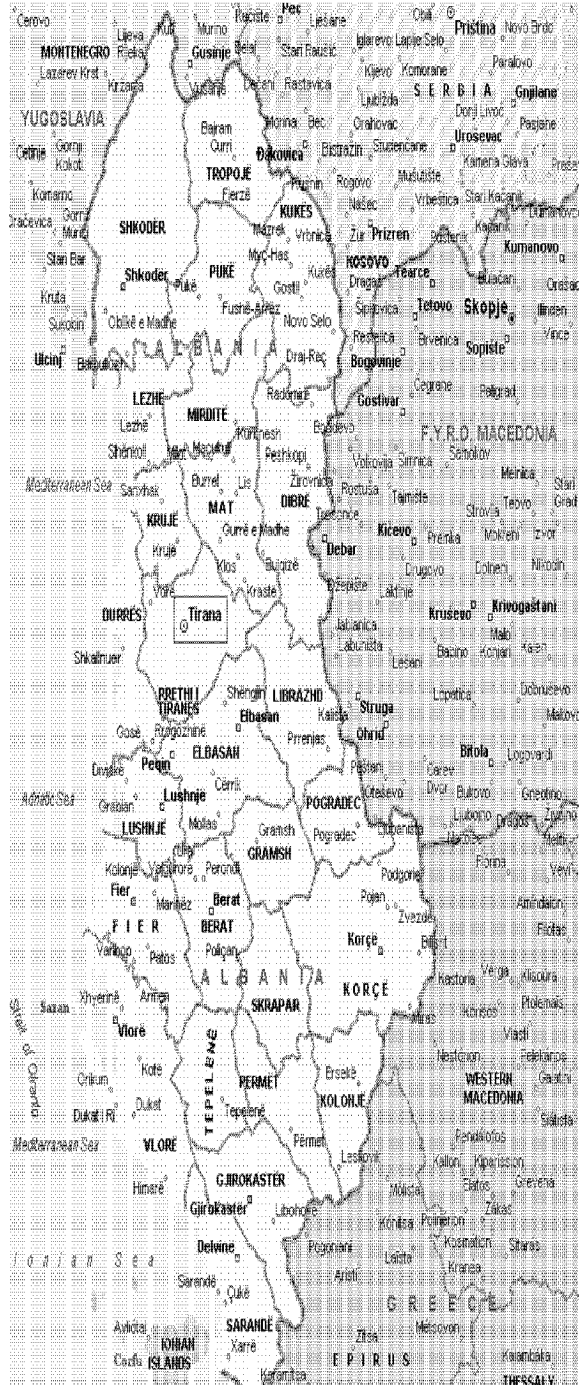
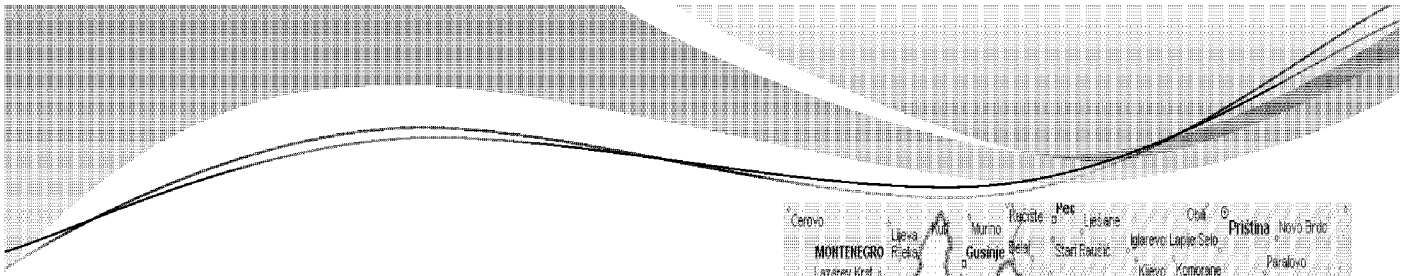
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Demographics

- Location: Southeastern Europe, bordering the Adriatic Sea and Ionian Sea, between Greece in the south and Montenegro and Kosovo to the north
- Area: total: 28,748 sq km
- Border countries: Greece 282 km, Macedonia 151 km, Montenegro 172 km, Kosovo 112 km
- Climate: mild temperate; cool, cloudy, wet winters; hot, clear, dry summers; interior is cooler and wetter
- Terrain: mostly mountains and hills; small plains along coast



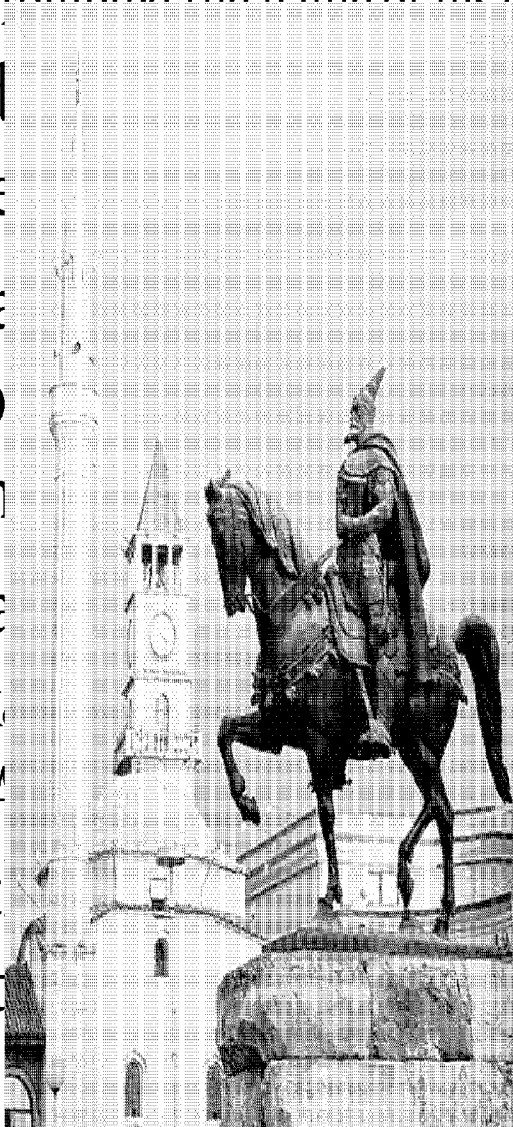



History of Albania

- Albanians trace their evolution from the ancient Illyrians.
- From the 8th to 6th century B.C., the neighboring Greeks began to create a string of colonies around the Albanian border.
- Unfortunately, a continuous string of foreign attacks followed. Rome attacked and defeated the Illyrians in 229 B.C, and ruled for six centuries. However, the Illyrians allowed their language and traditions to survive.
- Eventually, the Roman Empire did fall, dividing Albania into halves, and allowing the Byzantine Empire to assume control. Under the rule of the Byzantines, the Illyrians continued to suffer constant devastation by raids. Once again, however, the Illyrians allowed their language to survive.

History of Albania


- The Illyrians lacked the unity of a name until Ptolemy of the Albanoi tribe prompted the name of his central Albanian tribe to be used in the native language (Albania in the land of eagles).
- The ruling Byzantine Empire and Albania was attacked by more Ottoman Turks
- In 1443, an Albanian hero (nicknamed Skanderbeg) drove out the Turks. After the Ottoman Turks in 1468, the successful fight time, and were recognized as the return of the empire of the independence.





History of Albania

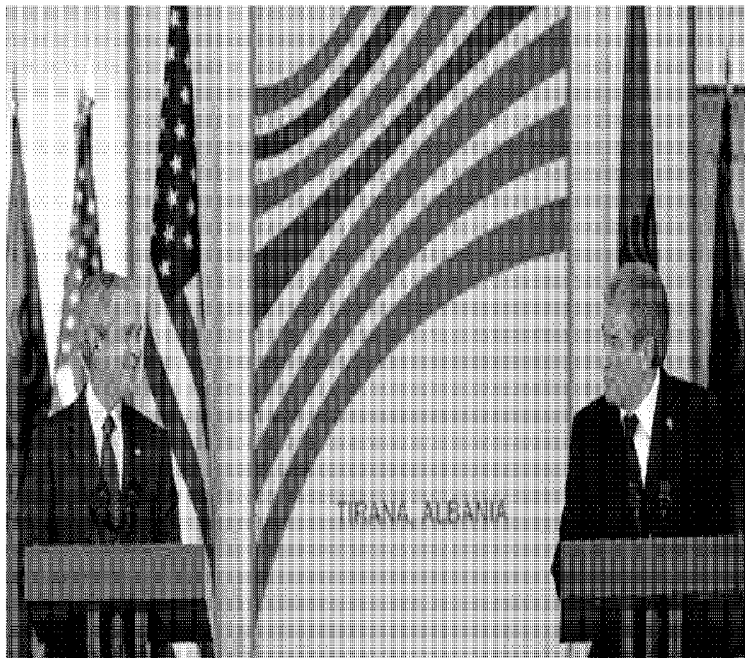
- Under Turkish dominance, art, economy and culture were destroyed, forcing many Albanians to leave their native land.
- Albanian rebellions were numerous throughout the time. The Turks thought that by converting the Christian population to Muslim, the Albanians would be brought together and spiritually closer to Albania. Two-thirds of the population converted, many fearing violence and exploitation if they did not do so.
- Finally, Albania declared its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1912.




History of Albania

- With their independence, Albania faced new problems with the rise of the communist People's Republic of Albania in 1941. Enver Hoxha became the ruler of the party, and eventually a cunning, ruthless, and oppressive leader.
- By the time Hoxha died in 1985, Albania had gone back to rely on manual labor and only its own resources.
- Although Hoxha's death meant new hope for the Albanians, it wasn't until the early 1990's that change was prominent. On February 20, 1991, rioters toppled the statue Hoxha had erected of himself in Tirana. With the new election in 1992, Sali Berisha was elected president, promising reform in the economic and social foundations of the country.

George Bush and President of Albania





History of Albania

- Albania has made progress in its democratic development since first holding multiparty elections in 1991, but deficiencies remain.
- In the 2005 general elections, the Democratic Party and its allies won a decisive victory on pledges to reduce crime and corruption, promote economic growth, and decrease the size of government. The election, and the orderly transition of power, is considered by many as an important step forward. Albania joined NATO in April 2009 and is a potential candidate for EU accession.

Costumes

Albanian Folk Costumes



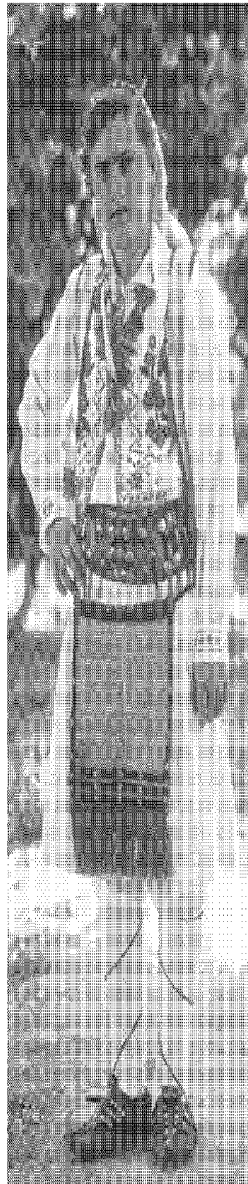


Traditional Costumes

- Albanian costumes have been influenced by Turkey, Greece, and Persian-Tartar designs. Albanian traditional costumes vary depending on the region.
- Women's clothing tends to be more colorful than the men's clothing. Northern Albanian costumes tend to be more ornamental and include a distinctive metal belt. Basic types of costume include a wide skirt (xhublete), long shirt or blouse (kraholl), and a short woolen jacket (xhoke).
- The traditional costume of Moslem women may include a tightly pleated skirt (kanac) or large woollen trousers (brekeshe).
- Aprons are a pervasive feature in every type of women's costume and great variety is seen in their shape and embroidery.
- Many Albanian Americans often wear traditional costumes during Independence Day celebrations and other special occasions and social events.

Culture

Albanian Folk Costumes





Culture and Language

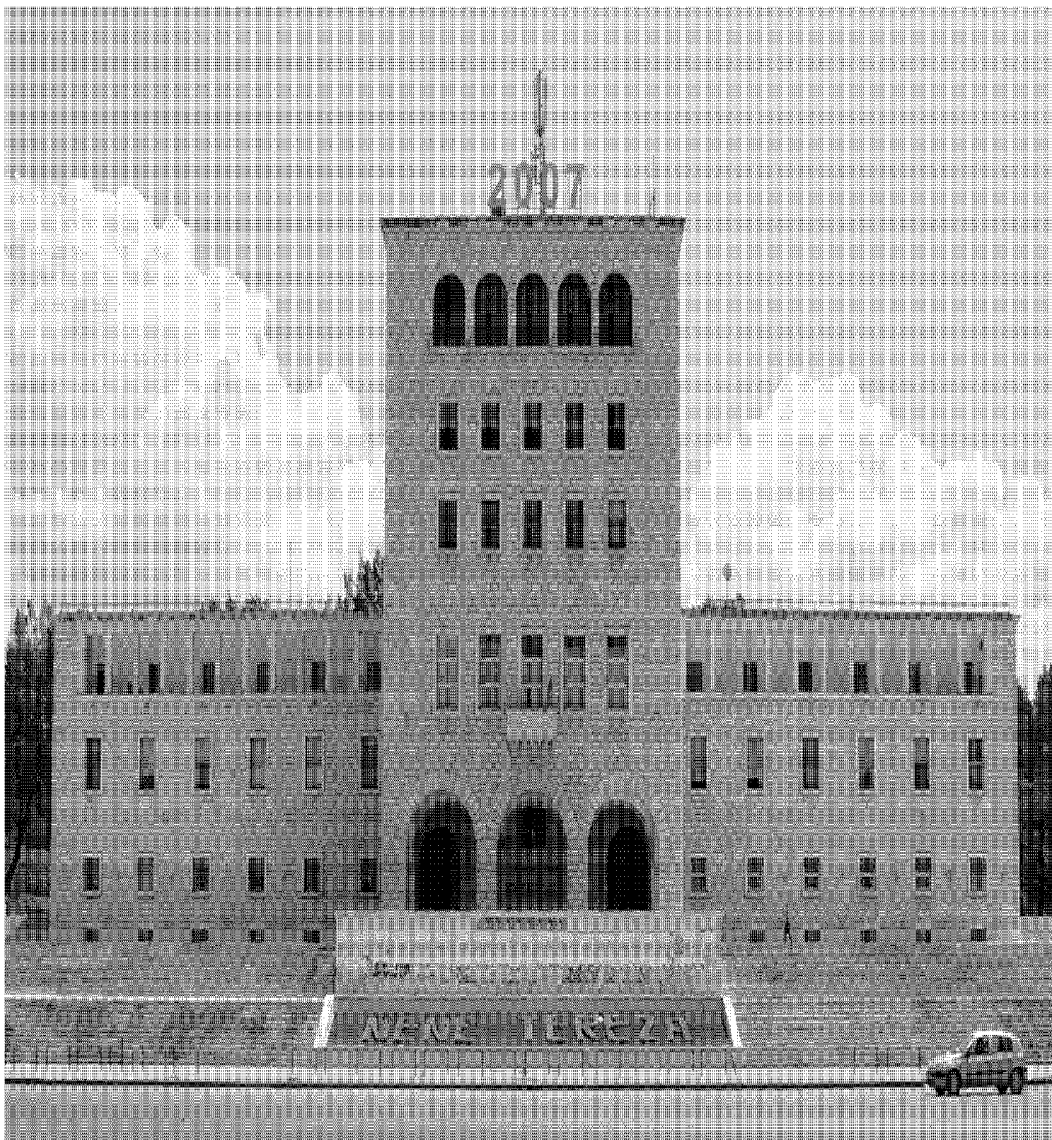
- Culture varies in north and south
- Albanian is probably part of the Illyrian branch of eastern Indo-European languages.
- Two main dialects – Tosk (about two-thirds of the population) and Gheg the remaining one-third).
- Gheg is spoken in northern Albania and by the Albanians of Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia
- Tosk is spoken in southern and central Albania, as well as Greece
- Variations in northern and southern traditions are displayed in Albanian folk music
- “Rugged and heroic” tone of the north can be contrasted by the “relaxed, gentle, and beautiful” form of the south



Education

- Education is a top priority of the Albanian government.
- Schooling is mandatory between ages 7 and 15.
- Education at the primary and secondary levels is free, and higher-education fees are based on family income.
- The University of Tirana, constructed in 1957, is the country's major institution of higher education.
- Tirana also has an agricultural and polytechnic university, as well as many professional and vocational schools.
- More than 90% of the population 15 and older is literate.

University of Tirana, Albania



Famous Albanians

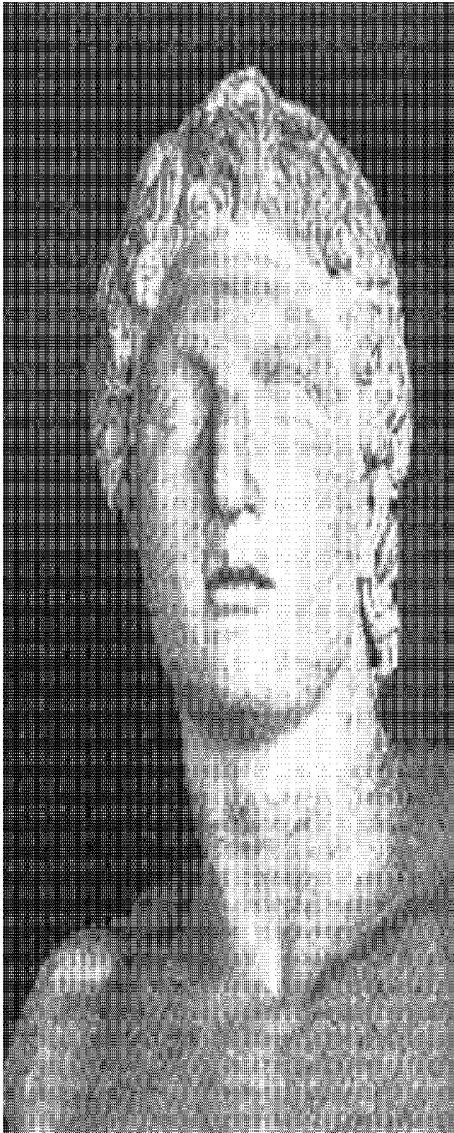


"By blood, I am Albanian. By citizenship, an Indian. By faith, I am a Catholic nun. As to my calling, I belong to the world."

In 1988, she went to visit her mother's and sister's graves in Shkodra, Albania. Her last visit to Albania was in 1993, when on April 25th, she attended the inauguration ceremony of the Great Cathedral in Shkodra, alongside Pope John-Paul II. She visited Kosova in 1980.

Mother Teresa

Famous Albanians

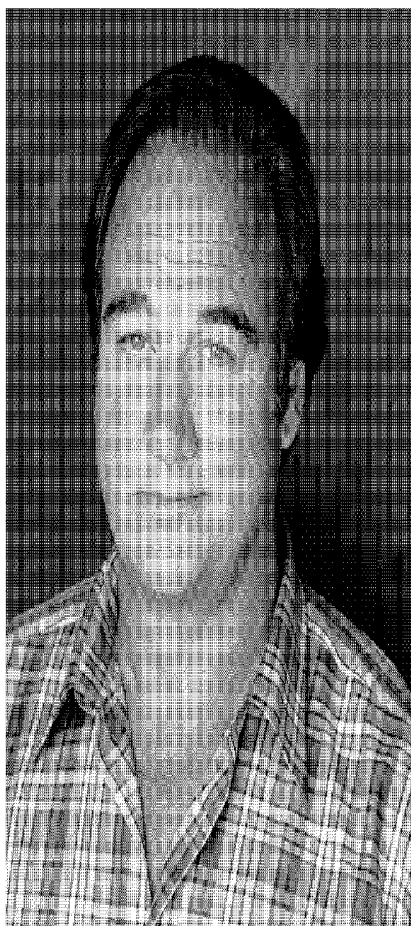


Alexander the Great

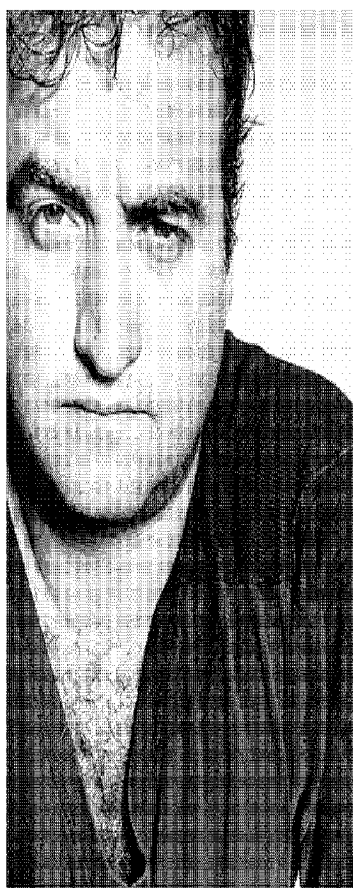
"... Greek culture and history had a Pelasgian, and therefore an "Albanian" origin".

"Let it be known - announced Kristo Daco - that Philip and his son Alexander the Great as well as all the Macedonians were not Greeks, but the forefathers of the ALBANIANS"

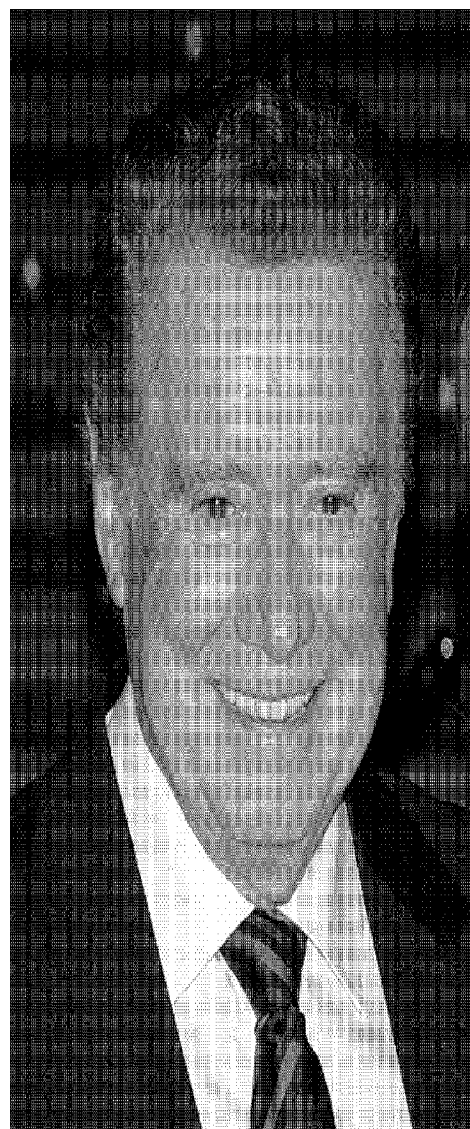
Famous Albanians



Jim Belushi

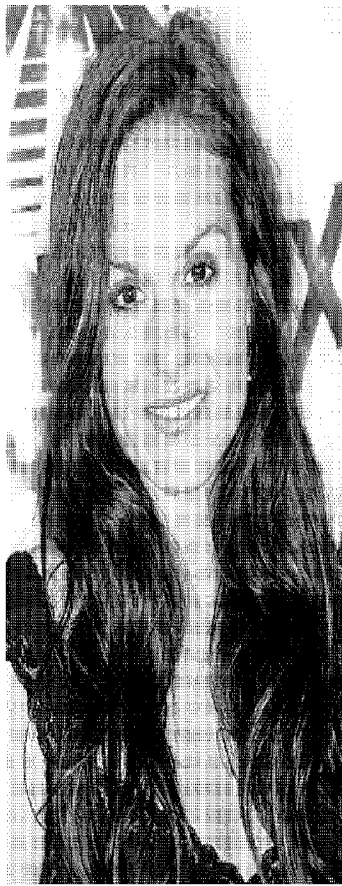


John Belushi



Regis Philbin

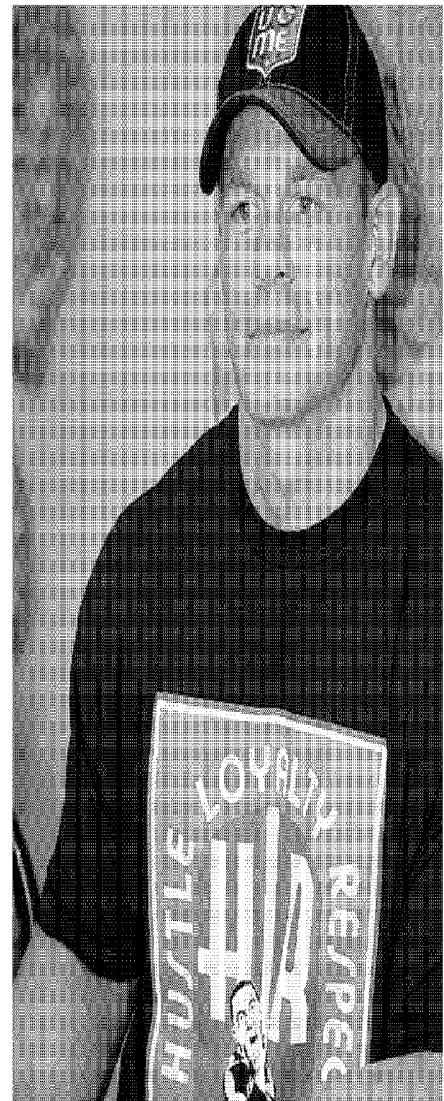
Famous Albanians



Kara DioGuardi



Joseph DioGuardi

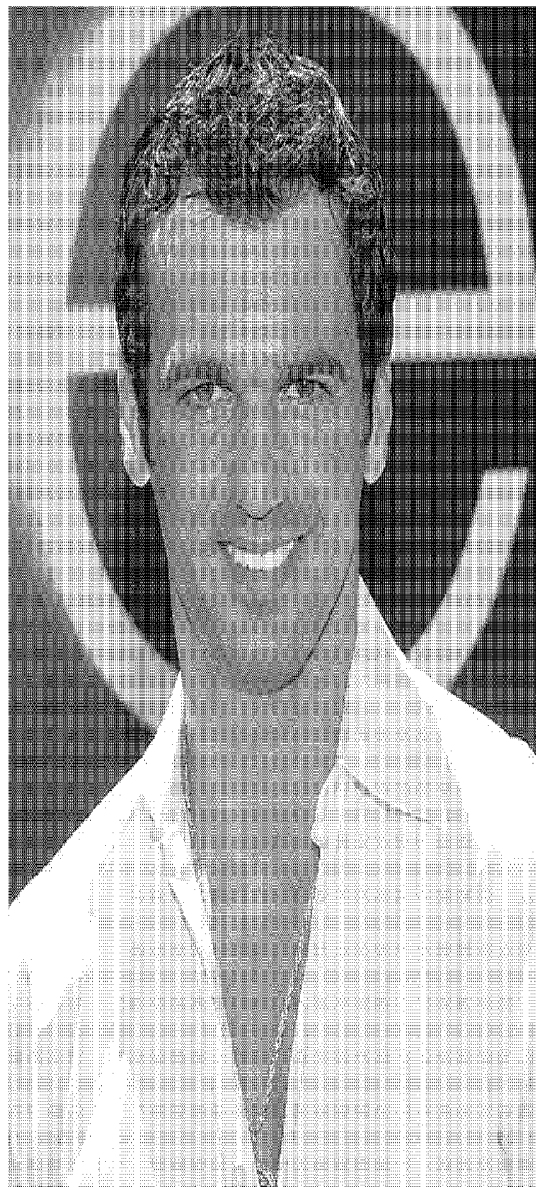


John Cena

Famous Albanians



Eliza Dushku

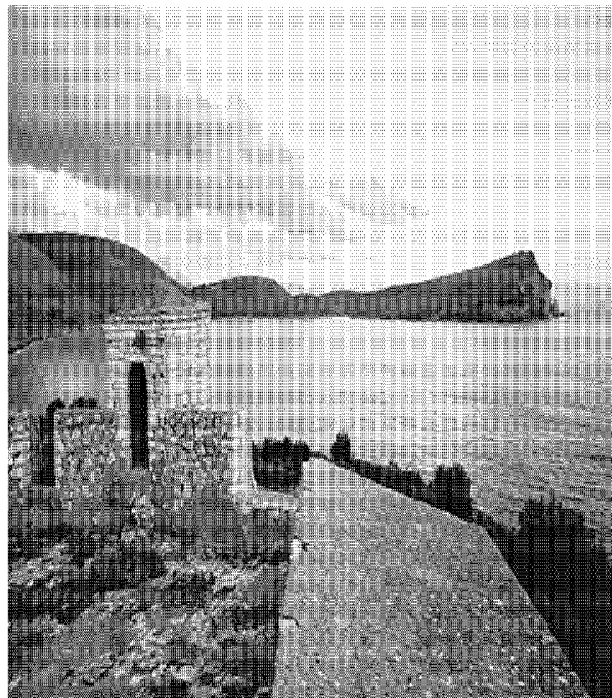
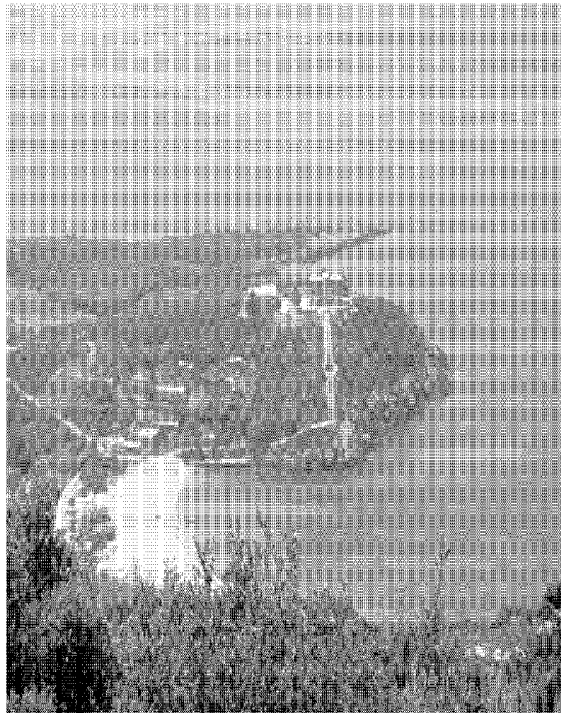
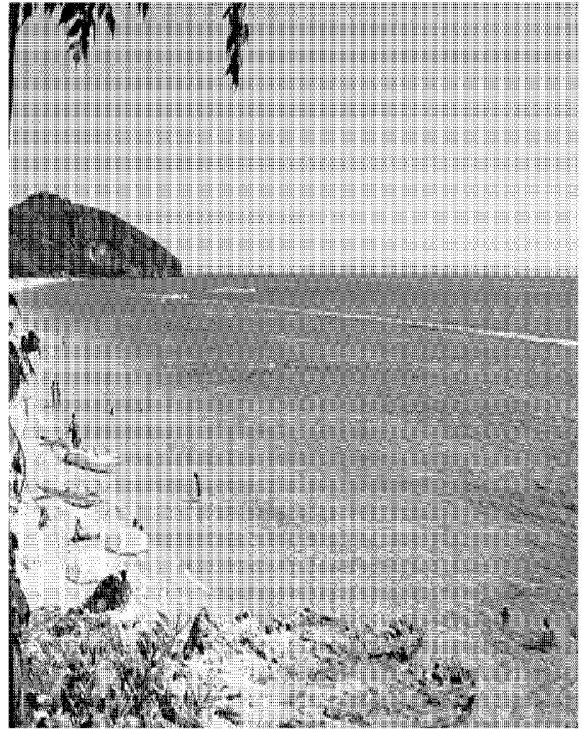
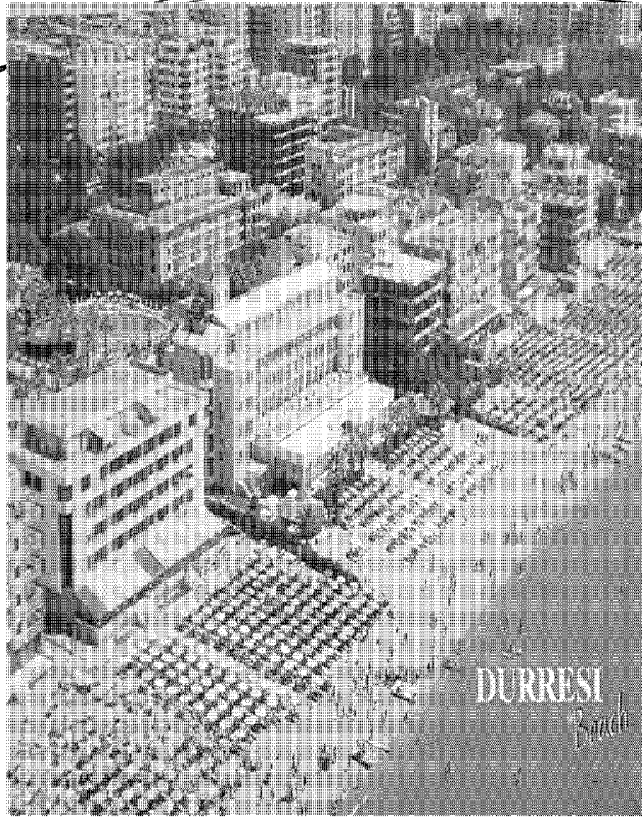


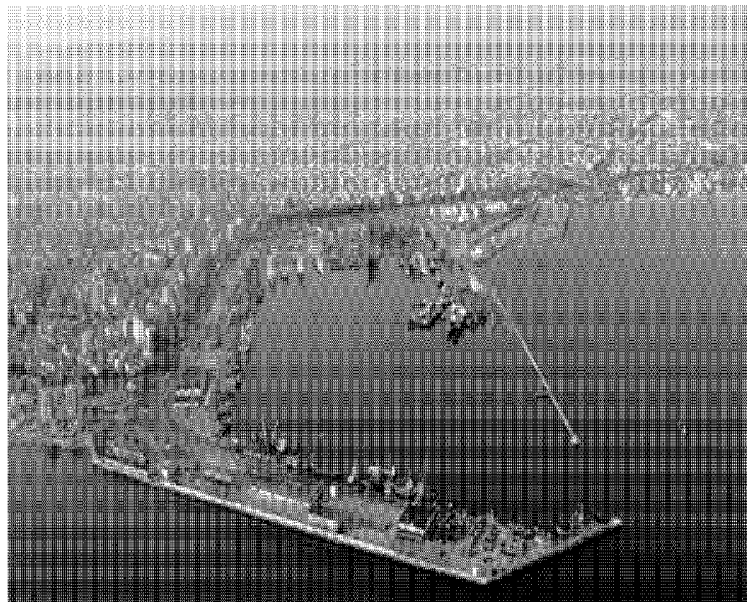
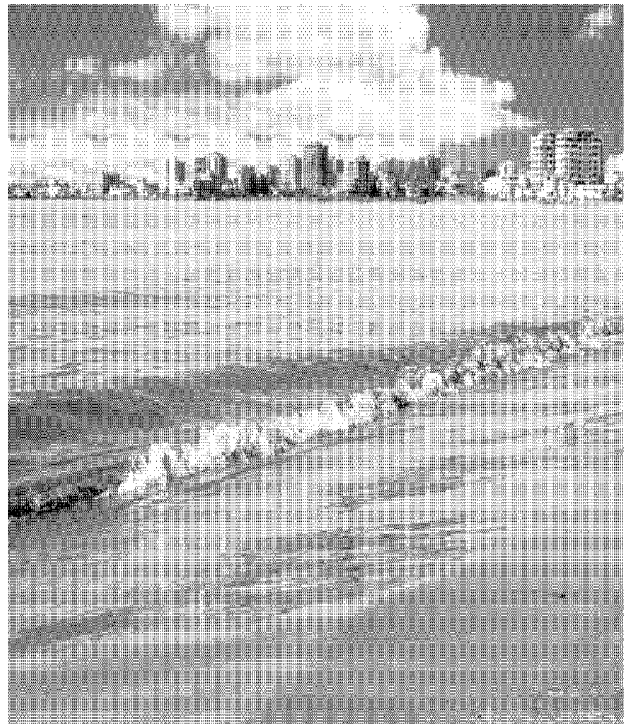
Tony Dovolani

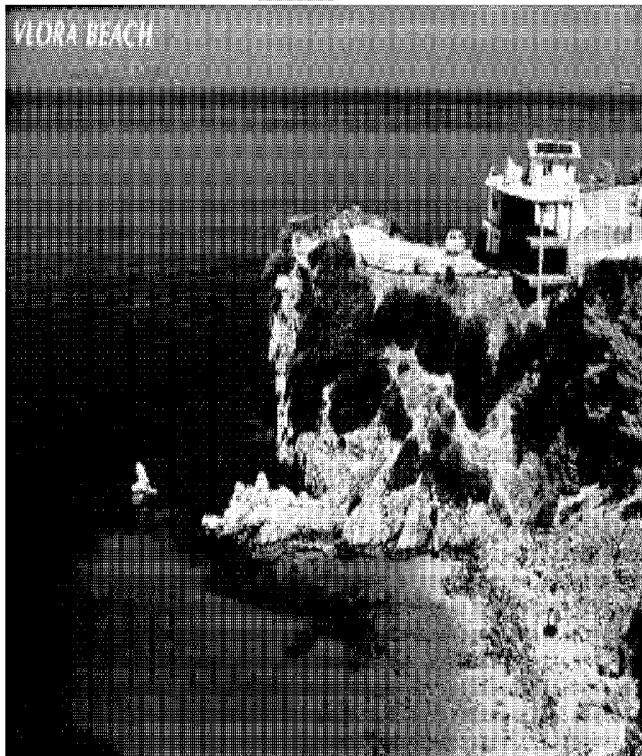
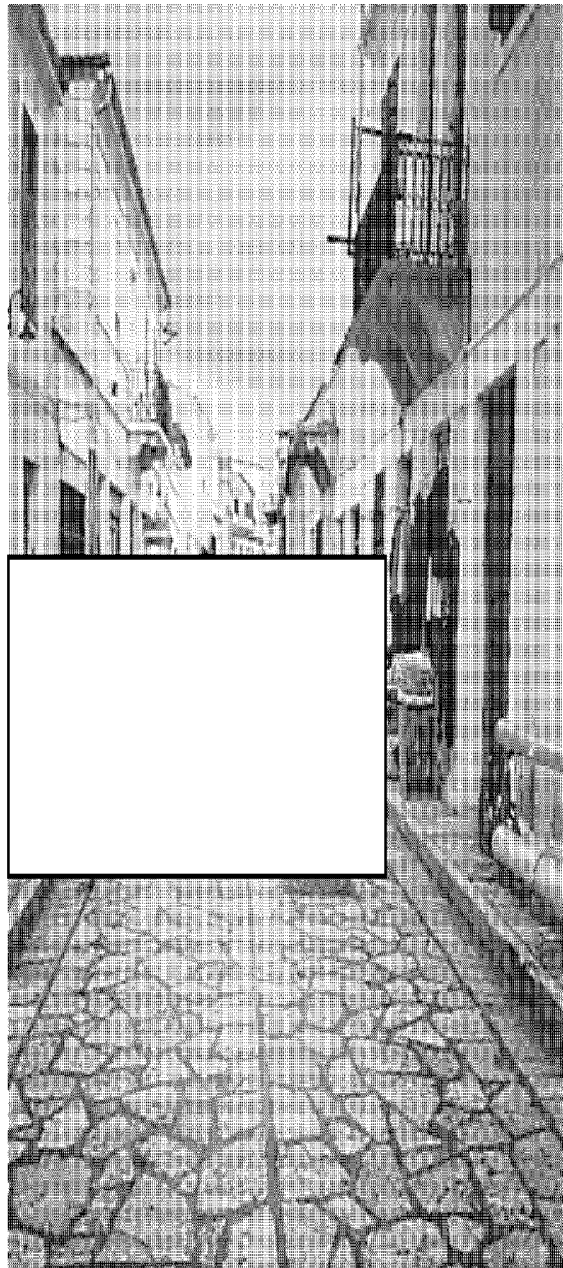


Kanun

- Kanuni i Lekë Dukagjinit – a set of laws developed by Lekë Dukagjini, an Albanian prince who fought against the Ottoman Empire
- The laws were used mostly in northern Albania and Kosovo from the 15th century to the 20th century, and were recently revived after the fall of the communist regime in the 1990s
- The code was divided into several sections: Church, Family, Marriage, House, Livestock and Property, Work, Transfer of Property, Spoken Word, Honor, Damages, Law Regarding Crimes, Judicial Law, and Exemptions and Exceptions
- Some of the most infamous rules specified how murder was supposed to be handled, and in some parts of the country, the Kanun resembles the Italian vendetta
- These rules have recently resurfaced in northern Albania, since people have no faith in the powerless local government and police

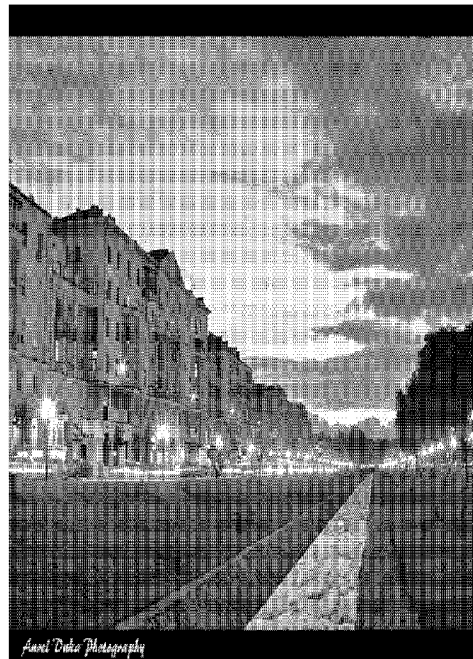
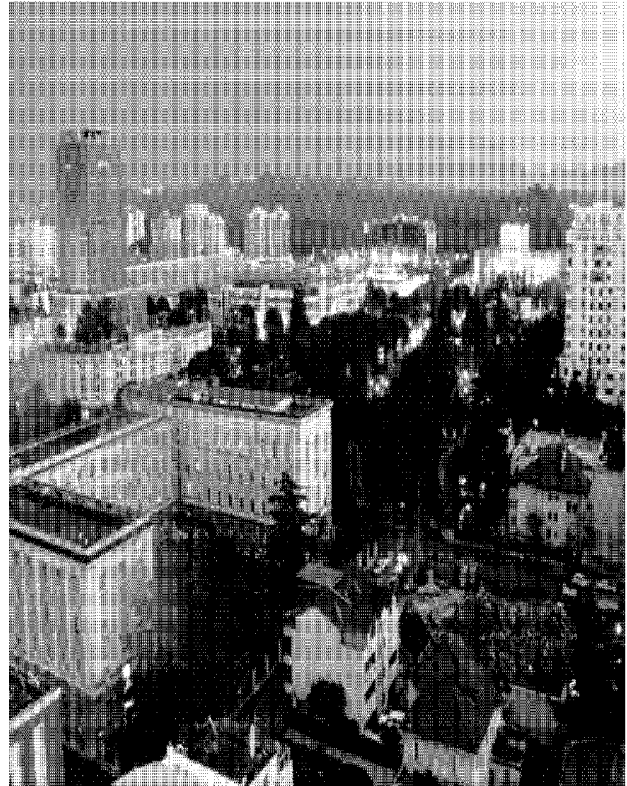






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Tirana, the capital city of Albania.





Greetings and Other Expressions

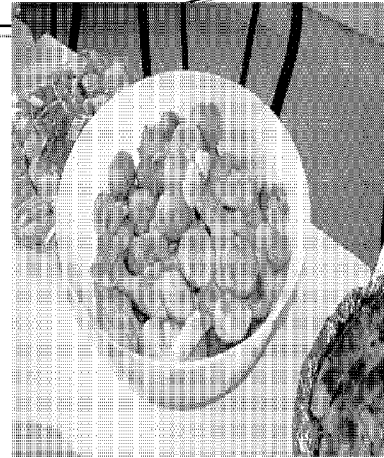
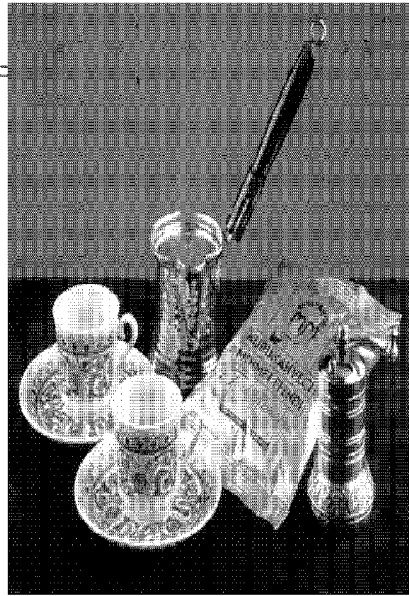
- Some common expressions in the Albanian language include: *Po* ("Yes"); *Jo* ("No");
- *Te falemnderit/Ju falemnderit* ("Thank you");
- *Po, ju lutem* ("Yes, please");
- *Miredita* ("Hello" or "Good day");
- *Miremengjes* ("Good Morning");
- *Si jeni?* ("How are you?");
Mirembrema ("Good evening");
- *Naten e mire* ("Good night");
- *Mirupafshim* ("Goodbye");
- *Me fal/Me falni* ("Excuse me")



Holidays & Religion

- Since Albanian Americans are members of either Roman Catholic, Orthodox, or Islamic faiths, many religious festivals and holy days are observed.
- November 28 is celebrated as Albanian Independence Day, the day that Albanians declared their independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1912.
- Many Albanian Americans also recognize the Kosova declaration of independence from Serbia on July 2, 1990.
- Albanians in the United States are primarily Orthodox Christians, Roman Catholics, or Muslims.

Cuisine



- Albanian dishes have been heavily influenced by Turkey, Greece, Armenia, and Syria. Recipes have often been adapted and altered to suit American tastes. Albanians enjoy a variety of appetizers, soups, casseroles, pilaf, pies, stews, and desserts.
- Family members will announce the birth of a child by making and distributing petulla, pieces of fried dough sprinkled with sugar or dipped in syrup. Albanians enjoy Turkish coffee or Albanian coffee (kafe), Albanian whiskey (raki) and wine. Kos, a fermented milk drink, is still popular.



Settlement Patterns

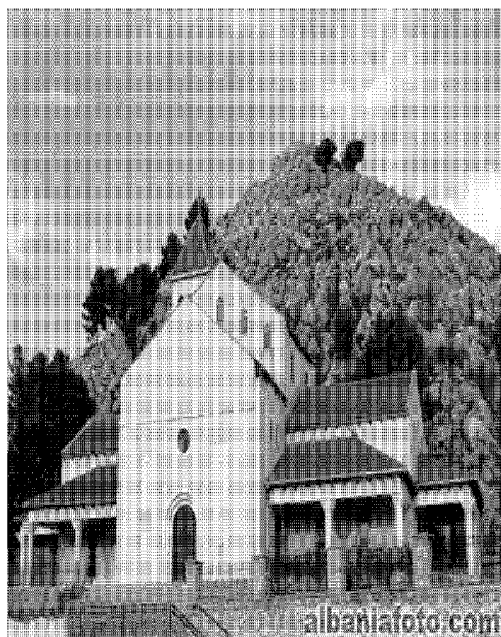
- Early Albanian immigrants settled around Boston and then moved to other parts of Massachusetts where unskilled factory labor was plentiful.
- Prior to 1920, most of the Albanians who migrated to the United States were Orthodox Tosks from the city of Korce in southern Albania.
- Early Massachusetts settlements were established in Worcester, Natick, Southbridge, Cambridge, and Lowell.
- The 1990 census reveals that the largest number of Albanians live in New York City with a high concentration in the Bronx, followed by Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Illinois, California, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Settlements of Albanians can be found in Chicago, Los Angeles, Denver, Detroit, New Orleans, Miami, Pittsburgh, and Washington, D.C.



Immigration Waves

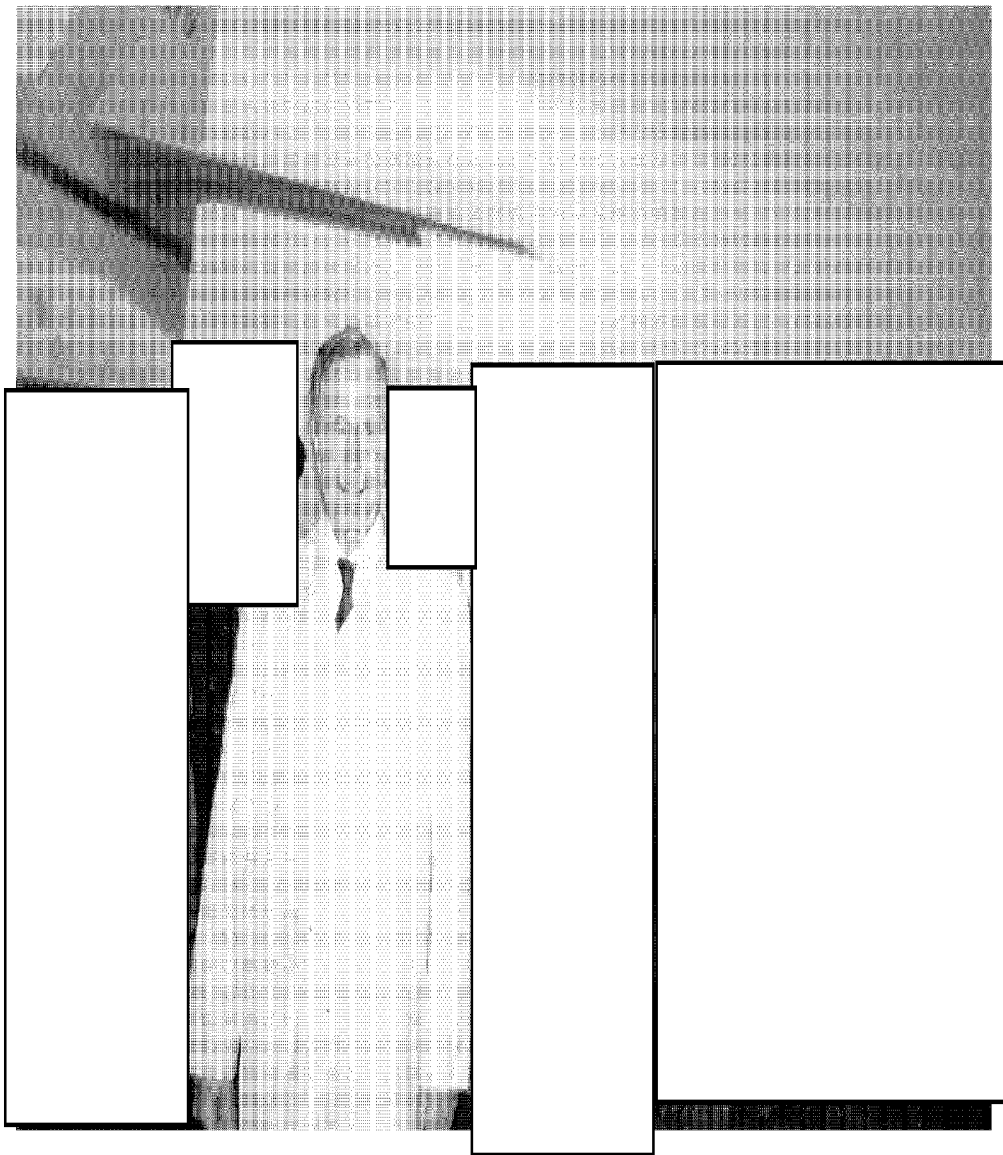
- Albanians are the most recent group of Europeans to immigrate to the United States and their numbers have remained small.
- Prior to World War I, Albanians migrated to America because of poor economic conditions, political concerns, or to escape military conscription in the Turkish army.
- Many Albanians (between 20,000 and 30,000) who fled Albania for political reasons returned to Albania between 1919 and 1925. Many of these same Albanians re-migrated to the United States, intending to remain permanently in America.
- Another wave immigrated after Albania came under Communist control in 1944.
- After the fall of communism, Albanians began entering the United States in increasing numbers between 1990 and 1991.
- In 1999 the United States granted legal alien status to about 20,000 Kosovar refugees.

"I have fully preached the gospel," says St. Paul in Romans 15:18, "as far round as Illyricum." Illyricum was the Roman name for Albania. Inevitably, Pope John Paul II quoted this text on his daylong trip to Albania on April 25, 1993. It was his 58th international journey and the first visit of a pope to Albania, though it is only 50 miles across the Adriatic from Italy.



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My Husband and Pope John Paul II in Shkodra, Albania at the ruins of a church destroyed by Communists, which was later rebuilt



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This was the first visit of former president George H.W. Bush in 1994