

CONSTRUCTING AN ERA: THE LEADER'S MUSEUM, THE TYRANT'S MUSEUM, THE PEOPLE'S MUSEUM IN GJIROKASTRA, ALBANIA

Through the anthropological paradigm, this work analyzes the current transformation of presentation of traditional cultural forms, way of life and family values, using Albania as an example. This country has experienced a radical change in several socio-political, economic and ideological formations over the past century. The case study chosen is the Ethnographic Museum in Gjirokastra, the hometown of the country's communist leader Enver Hoxha (1908–1985). The anthropology of museum work focuses on managing perceptions of the past through artifacts and collective memory. It uses methods and approaches adopted both for the study of traditional societies and innovative strategies that used to manipulate public opinion and to impose ideologies. Over the last couple of centuries, museum spaces were the main places of contact with the past in most regions of the Old World, and they have not lost their importance to this day. In Albania, which lagged significantly behind the rest of Europe in economic terms, the start of museum work began to develop later, only in the middle of the 20th century. In Albania the first localities to be transformed into museum spaces were those related to the “recognized” leaders of the country, such as the Skanderbeg's castle (15th century) in Kruja or the Hoxha family's house in Gjirokastra. Expanding connections with the world, the globalization of the information space, and the development of tourism have contributed to the emergence of new forms of “implementation” of ethnographic knowledge and museum services — primarily through flexible historical narratives, the production of museum artifacts replicas, etc. The analysis proposed by the author is an attempt to decipher the complex relationship between an ethnographer and a museum visitor, an official and a consumer of goods and services, a person and society.

Keywords: museum, Albanians, ideology and exhibition, construction of history, Enver Hoxha, commercialization of traditional culture

Author Info: Novik, Alexander A. — Ph.D. in History, Head of the Center for European Studies, Leading Researcher, Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation). E-mail: njua1@mail.ru

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