



Historical Dictionary of Albania (Historical Dictionaries of Europe)

By Robert Elsie

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Historical Dictionary of Albania (Historical Dictionaries of Europe) By Robert Elsie

Albania is not well known by outsiders; it was deliberately closed to the outside world during the communist era. Now it has thankfully become free again, its borders are open and it can be visited, and it is increasingly integrating with the rest of Europe and beyond. Unfortunately, Albania has had its share of problems in the post-communist era; it's a land of destitution and despair, thanks in part to the Albanian mafia, which has turned the country into one of blood-feuds, kalashnikovs, and eternal crises. Yet, Albania is, in essence, a European nation like any other and will soon, it is to be hoped, advance and take its proper place in Europe and the world.

The second edition of the *Historical Dictionary of Albania* relates the history of this little-known country through a detailed chronology, an introduction, a bibliography, appendixes, and over 700 cross-referenced dictionary entries on significant persons, places, and events; institutions and organizations; and political, economic, social, cultural, and religious facets.

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Editorial Review

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Readers researching Albania will find more than 735 up-to-date entries in this second edition, which is more than 50 pages larger than the first (1996). Topics cover geographic features (Gramsh, District of; Prespa, Lake); industries (Agriculture, Banking, Oil production); organizations (National Information Service, United Nations); events from Albanian history (Pyramid investment scandal and the 1997 uprising); and people from a wide range of time periods and occupations, including persons born in Albania, such as current prime minister Sali Berisha, as well as non-Albanians affiliated in some way with Albania, such as English poet Lord Byron. Countries are covered in terms of their relevance to Albania (e.g., Kosovo, Albanians in; China, relations with). Author Elsie also includes entries from other topic areas, such as government and society (Health care, President) and culture (Film, Theater). Many entries are single paragraphs. A few subjects, such as Islam, span several pages. Second to the entries in significance is a 75-page bibliography. Although English-language sources are emphasized, resources in Albanian and other languages are included. Items are organized under nine sections (e.g., "History," "Society"). Numerous resources have been added since the previous edition. Other features include a 22-page introduction covering events in Albanian history and a 23-page chronology. Sadly, illustrations are limited to maps—one current and seven historical. Lists of "Albanian Heads of State and Government" and "Albanian Political Parties and Organizations" are appended. An excellent introduction to Albania for academic and public library users. -- Stephen Fadel

Review

'The poorest and most underdeveloped country in Europe,' according to the author, Albania is a mystery to most of us, reason enough to give this title serious consideration. This book represents Albania's third appearance in Scarecrow's 'Historical Dictionaries of Europe' series; the first by Raymond Hutchings appeared debuted in 1996, the second by Elsie in 2004. The author of more than 50 books and articles on Albania and a literary translator, Elsie here presents 750 brief entries on the people, organizations, and events shaping this turbulent Balkan land. He includes non-Albanians who have contributed significantly to Albanian studies and culture, and he aptly describes items of cultural interest. The 'Evil Eye' entry is particularly intriguing. A chronology of Albanian history from the seventh century B.C.E. to 2009, plus lists of heads of state and political organizations, provides useful supplemental material. The most noticeable update since the 2004 edition is in the extensive classified bibliography. The maps are also new to this edition. **BOTTOM LINE** Highly recommended for libraries. (*Library Journal*)

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An informative introduction, maps, hundreds of detailed entries in this encyclopedic overview of Albania past and present, its people of note, historical periods and events, political dynamics and general issues that have shaped its character and destiny. An especially useful bibliography impresses with its broad scope. (*Book News, Inc.*)

About the Author

Robert Elsie is the author of over 50 books and numerous articles. He has served as a translator and interpreter of Albanian, most recently before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, and presently he works for the Hague Tribunal.

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