

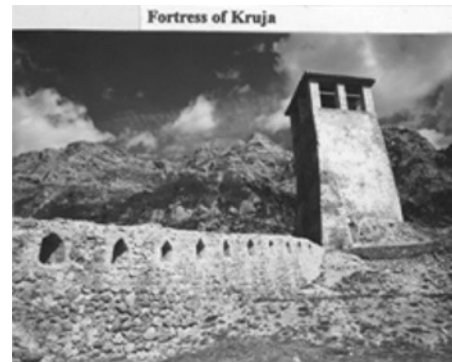
## Fortress of Kruja

Country or territory:  
ALBANIA

Name of organisation  
compiling the information:  
Institute of Monuments of Culture

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<u>Name and address of building(s) or site:</u>	FORTRESS OF KRUIJA
<u>Inventory reference number(s):</u>	1026
<u>Building type(s):</u>	Architectural ensemble, fortress
<u>Main date(s):</u>	879 AD, 15 <sup>th</sup> century
<u>Current use(s):</u>	Opened to the public, partly inhabited, two museums

### Significance:

The Fortress of Kruja is one of the most important fortresses in Albania. In 879 AD, it was an important Bishopric and an important Byzantine center. In 1190, the city became the seat of the Arberi principdom. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Kruja was a symbol of resistance against the Turks under the leadership of Scanderberg.

The Fortress of Kruja was built on top of a rocky crest. It has a perimeter of 800 m, with walls reinforced by nine towers of different shapes. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, in the highest part of the fortress, a castle was built. One of the towers of the castle, which is well preserved, has also served as a clocktower. The castle has two main gates on the northeast side, the third leads to a fortified courtyard where water springs are located.

Different phases of construction can be traced, from the early Middle Ages up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The construction works on the tower near the main gate, carried out by the national hero, Scanderbeg, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century are of particular importance and interest for military architecture.

There is an inhabited neighborhood within the territory of the fortress. The Ethnographic Museum was established within the fortress, and situated in a characteristic house of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The National Museum of Gjergj Kastrioti Skenderbeg also situated in the castle, is dedicated to the life of this national hero and his deeds.

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Categories of significance:

Of outstanding national importance

Categories of ownership or interest:

The fortress is opened to the public.

Documentation and bibliographic references:

Documentation

Complete documentation, including land surveys, photographs, is archived at the Institute of Monuments of Culture.

Bibliography

1. Gjerak Karaiskaj; *5000 years fortifications*, Tirana, 1981
2. Stilian Adhami; Monuments magazine, Tirane, 1980

Condition:

Very poor: on the east side, large blocks have been detached from the ground where the fortress is built, carrying away pieces of the Acropolis. Partial measures have been taken for their anchoring. Measures of consolidation have also been taken, but other parts of the ground are still at risk of falling down, together with the walls built upon them.

Risk:

The risk is related to the instability of the ground.

Condition risk:

Slow decay, solution agreed but not implemented.

Technical assessments and costing:

Two major consolidation interventions have been undertaken up to now. The first, in 1987, stabilized the rocks with steel cables anchored in a tile of concrete. The second intervention, in 1998, which cost 500 000 USD from the State budget, took place after the fall of a large rock on the main gate.

Despite these interventions, this phenomena occurs on the entire perimeter of the fortress. It is necessary to consolidate the rocks to prevent them from falling, to drain water, and to restore the outside walls. The general cost for implementation of these operations is estimated at 3 000 000 USD. The preparation of the restoration project is estimated at approximately 50 000 USD.

Ownership:

The fortress is owned by the Institute of Monuments of Culture. The houses are private property.

Occupation:

The fortress is opened to the public, but also inhabited by the families who own the houses.

Management:

The Institute of Monuments of Culture is responsible for the management of the monument and also for funding and supervising the works.

Summary:

The Fortress of Kruja is one of the most important in Albania. It is a symbol of the Albanian resistance against the Turks under the leadership of Scanderbeg. Due to its geographical situation, about 30 km from Tirana, its historical importance, and the historical significance, presence of two national museums within the walls of the fortress, this castle is one of the most visited in Albania. There is also an Antique archaeological site (the city of Albanopolis) near the castle.

The fortress is at risk of slow decay.

The priority level for intervention is *high*.

Sign. and date:

Prof. Gjerak Karaiskaj

10.03.2004.