



LESSON PLAN

# SILENT BALKANS

---

A documentary based on the first photographs and films from the Balkans  
on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Balkan Wars





# SILENT BALKANS

a documentary by Andreas Apostolides

## The Film

“Silent Balkans” is based on the first photographs and films of the Balkans.

The film explores the lives of ordinary people in the midst of the dramatic changes that transformed the Balkans at the turn of the 19th Century: it attempts to explain how the ethnic and religious co-existence of different peoples during the Ottoman Empire ended with the rise of nationalism and armed conflict after almost four centuries.

“Silent Balkans” includes rare archive footage from across Europe and the Balkans, and interviews with Mark Mazower (Columbia University), Christina Koulouri (Panteion University, Athens), Halil Berktay (Sabanci University, Istanbul), Irena Stefoska (St. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje), Machiel Kiel, Radina Vucetic (University of Belgrade), Frasher Demaj (Institute of History, Prishtina), Alexei Kalionski (University of Sofia), Dimitris Livanios (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki) and director Fotos Lambrinos.

The 26’ documentary is screened in the exhibition venues of ‘A Balkan Tale’ and distributed to schools to help teachers enliven classroom teaching, prepare their school’s visit or develop further student interest.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS		NARRATION	Ian Robertson
DURATION	27’	WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY	Andreas Apostolides
FORMAT	16/9	HISTORICAL ADVISOR	Christina Koulouri
NARRATION	ENGLISH	PHOTOGRAPHY	Stelios Apostolopoulos
SUBTITLES	ENGLISH	EDITING/MIXING	Giorgos Helidonidis
		PRODUCERS	R. Apostolides & Y. Averof





# LESSON PLAN

## Estimated time needed

1 to 4 school hours

## Classes

Year 6 of Primary School, Secondary School, High School

## Modules / Subject Areas

History, Environmental Education (Primary School)

History, Local History (Secondary School)

History, Project (High School)

## Module goals

Students should (depending on the educational level):

- Discover a new dimension of Ottoman history in the Balkans
- Understand the historical changes that took place during the transition from the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire to the new nation-states of the Balkans
- Understand historical terms such as nationalism and irredentism
- Understand the use of collective memory (the conservation and destruction of monuments, the celebration of national holidays for a particular purpose)
- Be able to study and explain multimodal texts and different historical sources
- Be able to exchange views and present their arguments
- Realise that there are different approaches to the same historical event

## CYCLE A: Images & Reality

Students should

- Become familiarized with the use of visual sources in historical research (film and photographic archives)
- Realise that these sources are not “neutral” but reflect the photographer’s/cinematographer’s point of view
- Learn how to study and use these visual sources and become familiarized with the use of photographic and film archive by the mass media (visual and media literacy).

## CYCLE B: Life before and after the Balkan Wars

Students should

- Understand the causes and results of the Balkan Wars
- Realise that during the 19<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, despite various problems, peaceful co-existence rather than conflict, predominated among diverse ethnic and religious groups.
- Understand how radically everyday life was changed by the Balkan Wars



## Material / Necessary equipment

### CYCLE A

- television or audio projector connected to a DVD player for the film screening in the classroom
- Student Handout A, including texts and exercises (one copy/photocopy for each student)

### CYCLE B

- computer with Internet access **at home and in the classroom**
- Student Handout B, including maps and exercises (one copy/photocopy for each student)

## Method

Classes are organized into two cycles with different aims:

- Cycle A aims at encouraging critical historical thought through the use of diverse historical sources
- Cycle B focuses on the actual content of teaching and on empathy, so that students can understand the transitional era of the Balkan Wars

The teacher can choose one of the two cycles or reverse their order and start from Cycle B. The initial planning, if the teacher opts for both cycles, is to screen the film during Cycle A and to research the website during Cycle B.

However, the teacher can also take initiative and combine the film screening with the website or re-plan the cycles entirely.

In any case, Cycle B, if it does not include the film screening, can be implemented as a team project at home and then discussed in the classroom.

The time needed by the teacher depends on the planning he/she chooses, on the class composition, the students' interests and level and can consist of 1 to 4 teaching hours in total.

### **CYCLE A: Images and Reality – 1 TEACHING HOUR** (indicative time)

1. Film screening in the classroom (26')
2. Reading of Source 1 or Source 2 (3')
3. Students fill in Handout A (6')
4. Classroom discussion. Comparing answers (10')

### **CYCLE B: Life before and after the Balkan – 1 TEACHING HOUR** (indicative time)

1. Film screening in the classroom (26') or looking into the website in groups of 3 or 5 people (it can also be done at home as a team project).
2. Students fill in Handout B in groups (it can also be done at home) (8')
3. Classroom discussion. Comparing answers (15')

## CYCLE A: Images and Reality

### TEACHER MATERIAL

#### Information on the documentary “Silent Balkans”

The film is divided into six sections:

- 1) The Ottoman Empire
- 2) Birth of the Nation-States
- 3) The visit of Sultan Mehmed V to Thessaloniki
- 4) The First Balkan War
- 5) The Second Balkan War
- 6) The Legacy of the Balkan Wars

#### Information on the archive material

Find below information related to the archive material presented in the documentary.

*The archives are presented in order of appearance in the documentary.*

Image	Description	Time	Place	Cinematographer/ Photographer
	The First Balkan War: The siege of Ioannina by the Greek army	1913	Ioannina	Unknown
	The First Balkan War: The Bulgarian army entering Lüleburgaz	1912	Lüleburgaz (Arcadiopolis, eastern Thrace)	Unknown
	The First Balkan War: Turkish soldiers captives of the Bulgarian army in Thrace	1912	Thrace	Unknown

Image	Description	Time	Place	Cinematographer/ Photographer
	The first film shot in the Balkans: Avdela weavers on duty The protagonist is the cinematographers' 116 years old grandmother, in their house yard.	1904	Avdela, Grevena	Manakia brothers (Yannis and Miltos)
	Tirana central square.	1914	Tirana	Unknown
	Everyday life scene in the town of Andrijevisa, Montenegro	1904	Andrijevisa, Montenegro	British cinematographer Frank Storm Motershaw
	Jewish women of Thessaloniki dressed in traditional costume, in front of Villa Allatini.	1913	Thessaloniki	Collection of Swiss humanist Albert Kahn. Photographer: Auguste Leon
	Coronation of King Peter I of Serbia.	1904	Belgrade, Serbia	British cinematographer Frank Storm Motershaw
	Roma woman dancing, while little kids are watching.	1914	Durrës, Albania	Unknown
	Outdoor school in Avdela	1905	Avdela, Grevena	Manakia brothers (Yannis and Miltos)














Image	Description	Time	Place	Cinematographer/ Photographer
	Macedonian fighter Captain Lazaros Apostolides with his soldiers.	1908	Kastoria area	Photographer: Leonidas Papazoglou
	Vlachs of Chroupista (currently Argos Orestiko)	1908	Argos Orestiko, Prefecture of Kastoria	Photographer: Leonidas Papazoglou
	Visit of the Sultan Mehmed V to Thessaloniki.	1911	Thessaloniki	Manakia brothers (Yannis and Miltos)
	Bulgarian military exercises	1911 (?)	Unknown	Unknown
	The army of Montenegro sieging Shkodra	1912	Shkodra, currently northern Albania	French newsreel crew
	The Greek army entering Ioannina. In the first shot, Konstantinos, the Crown Prince, is passing riding a horse.	1913	Ioannina	Unknown Greek cameraman
	Muslim civilians leaving or being expelled from Shkodra	1912	Shkodra, currently northern Albania	Unknown



Image	Description	Time	Place	Cinematographer/ Photographer
	Muslim civilians leaving or being expelled from Kilgis	1913	Doerane, Kilgis prefecture	Alexandros Makkas (amateur photographer)
	The Second Balkan War: city on fire (Serres or Kilgis).	1912	Serres or Kilgis	French newsreel crew
	The Second Balkan War: Vojvode of Thrace, Tane Nikolov, during his visit to wounded Bulgarian soldiers in Lozengrad, after the battle in Lüleburgaz.	1912-1913 (?)	Lozengrad, (currently Kirklareli eastern Thrace)	Unknown
	Croatian tank is bombarding Mostar bridge (on Neretva river).	8/11/93	Mostar, Bosnia	Amateur cameraman
	Greek refugees from Meleniko.	1913	Sidirokastro, Prefecture of Serres	Collection of Swiss humanist Albert Kahn. Photographer: Auguste Leon
	Royal guard of Evzones, wearing the traditional "foustanela".	1912	Athens	French newsreel crew





## STUDENT HANDOUT A

### Images and Reality

1. Which of the pictures shown in the film did you find most striking in the documentary:

- “The Weavers” and “the Wedding” by the Manakia brothers
- the Sultan’s visit to Thessaloniki
- the coloured pictures from the Albert Kahn collection
- the black and white pictures by Leonidas Papazoglou from Kastoria
- shots of civilian refugees from the period of Balkan Wars

2. Describe in detail and in your own words the scene / picture you chose. What does this scene narrate?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. According to “SOURCE 1” and the parade of ethnic groups in the film, which ethnic groups lived in Thessaloniki before the Balkan Wars?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. Which ethnic group do you think was the most populous in Thessaloniki according to these sources?

.....  
.....

5. What do you think was not shown or hidden by the lens?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

6. What do you understand by the phrase “photos may not lie, but liars can take pictures”? How can a liar take a picture or use a photo?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

7. Study “SOURCE 2” and the pictures of the film showing refugees. Who was forced to become a refugee due to the Balkan Wars? Which problems do refugee populations have to face? (Supplementary exercise: search for literary texts or films referring to the refugees’ problems).

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



## ACCOMPANYING SOURCES

### SOURCE 1

#### Students at the French Highschool (Petit Lycée Français), Thessaloniki 1904.

Narration by a Jewish boy, student at the French high-school:

“The score of children who made up the two initial classes represented a fair cross-section of the heterogeneous population of Salonica. The lower group, in which I was placed, was made up of three French boys, one Greek, four Spanish Jews, a Serb, a Mamin, an Armenian, a Turk, and a Montenegrin boy who had come from Cetinje expressly to join us.

And here, for the first time, sitting side by side on the new benches, facing the blackboard on its tripod, we listened to M. Thierry, the ruddy-faced, blue-eyed, and blond-mustached director, outline for us the course of our studies.

His genuine interest in the customs of the country loosened the tongues of the most shy and retiring among us. Soon Mehmed, the Turkish boy, was volunteering explanations of the rites of Kurban Bairam, the holiday following Ramadan; Yovanovich, a relative of King Nicholas of Montenegro, spoke freely of his people and his mountains; and we found with Papopoulos that the Greeks had many customs in common with the Serbs, when Ivan, the son of the consul, told us of his home celebration of Easter. As we talked freely together and played together, as we made worm friendships, visited one another’s homes, and shared our confidences, we came to know more intimately of those things about one another’s ways, which viewed from the outside, might have appeared strange and meaningless.”

Leon Sciaky, *Farewell to Salonica. City at the Crossroads*, Philadelphia, Paul Dry books, 2003, p.153-4.

### Biography

Leon Sciaky, the author of this text, was born in Salonica in 1893. His family were descendants of Jews expelled from Spain in 1492, from Italy in 1493, and from Portugal in 1497. The Jews of Salonica spoke a fifteenth-century Spanish dialect known as Ladino. In 1915, Leon emigrated to New York. His family followed him shortly after (his father Salomon, his mother Paloma, his sisters Elda and Laure and his brother Maurice.) They fully intended to return when the political turmoil in Turkey ended, but they never did. Leon studied mechanical engineering at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. In 1922, he married Frances Hillmann from Latvia. He died in Mexico City in 1958. He first published his memoirs of his childhood in Salonica in 1946.





## SOURCE 2

### When the Muslims left, October 1912

We set out but it was almost impossible to advance in order. The road was blocked by carts, flocks, women and children walking at random; it's our Muslim population that's retiring towards the interior. Poor people! They're all in tears because they're leaving their property and their houses: The horror of the war has already begun.

Lieutenant Selim bey, *Carnet de campagne d'un Officier Turc (Octobre-Décembre 1912)*  
*De Sul-Oglou a Tchataldja*. Paris, Nancy 1913, p.24.

### Biography

Lieutenant Selim bey wrote a diary describing the operations in Thrace from October to December 1912. His diary was published in French in 1913.



## CYCLE B: Life before and after the Balkan Wars

### TEACHER MATERIAL

Information about the website [www.balkantale.com](http://www.balkantale.com)

In this section you will find detailed information on the project (partners, map, etc.), as well as short historical texts and photos of monuments from the ottoman period in the Balkans, based on five thematic categories: *Conquering, Worshipping, Living Together, Modernising, Forgetting & Remembering*.

This categorization aims to illustrate:

- the co-existence of different ethnic and religious groups during the ottoman period (14<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> cent.)
- the state of the Ottoman period cultural legacy (Christian, Muslim, Jewish) in the Balkans today.

The website contains many photos of the 50 monuments of the exhibition, but also of many other monuments of the time, which are not included in the exhibition. For every monument there is information relating to its history and current state.

From the exhibition's catalogue (also posted in the website)

#### WORSHIPPING

During the Ottoman centuries, religion represented a key element, not only of people's identity but also of their everyday life. Social events related to birth, marriage and death, dietary practices, ways of thinking and doing things were all inextricably related to religion. This is a reason why places of worship and religious manifestation were points of reference in Ottoman cities.

The Ottoman state was undoubtedly Islamic, largely based on the Islamic Holy Law (*şeriat*). Yet, for this huge, multi-ethnic state to function, it was necessary to include non-Muslims and recognise their own religious leaders. *Şeriat* entitled Christians and Jews to repair their churches and synagogues, yet not to build new ones. Permission by the Ottoman authorities, either the local judge (kadi) or even the central administration in Istanbul, was required for each repair. Yet, in actual practice, the Ottoman state demonstrated realism and flexibility, so that new churches and synagogues were built, in spite of the official ban. Besides, there was quite a margin for adaptation on the local level. Yet, aggressive actions against other religions by fanatical *ulema* [Muslim scholars of sacred law and theology] or local Ottoman dignitaries also occurred. There was enmity, especially against Catholics, as the pope was considered the sultan's greatest enemy. Only after the 1683-99 wars with the Habsburgs did the Ottoman authorities change their attitude. Since the Reformation era (Tanzimat), though, in the 19th century, and the liberalisation of religious policy, many more churches – including Catholic ones – were erected.

The co-existence of different religious communities was reflected in space by the mosques, churches and synagogues. Another important presence was that of dervish orders, whose life revolved around their lodge, the tekke. This was a mystical and popular version of Islam that became very popular also in the Balkans.



## LIVING TOGETHER

Ottoman society was strictly hierarchical. Social relationships were determined by the discrimination between Muslims and non-Muslims (*zimmi*), on the one hand, and between the ruling class, which was not taxed, and the taxed subjects irrespective of religion (reayas), on the other. The non-Muslim inhabitants of the empire were considered institutionally inferior to Muslims, but were entitled to practise their religion and own property.

This hierarchy is also reflected in the form of cities. In Ottoman cities, sometimes there were separate neighbourhoods for Muslims, Christians and Jews. At any rate, they lived all together, in the alleys and bazaars of their cities. The *bedesten* (covered market) was the heart of the city, a meeting place, and the commercial centre. In fact, Evliya Çelebi, in the 17th century, distinguished two kinds of Ottoman cities, depending on whether there was a *bedesten* or not.

In all three religions, water was symbolically associated with inner cleansing. The Koran provided for several ritual uses of water, especially of flowing water. This is the reason why public baths (hamams) were built in all Ottoman cities; they were double, with separate sections for men and women, or single, open to men and women at different times. The hamams were socialising hubs, especially for women, above all Muslims ones. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, wife of the British ambassador to Istanbul, in the 18th century, called them 'coffeehouses for women'.

The donation of water was, according to the Koran, a major act of benefaction, and many wealthy Muslims, even the sultan, sponsored more or less sophisticated fountains. The prevailing notion was that public works were an expression of piety and charity, and consequently were not considered government activities. Ottoman cities were full of building complexes made for charitable causes. These buildings were typically *waqfs*, that is, charitable institutions devoted to God.

Inter-city contact was facilitated by an extensive network of roads, in which solid, arched bridges played an important role. Traders' caravans travelled throughout the Balkan Peninsula and Central Europe, blazing trails for communication and exchange of products and ideas.



## Maps

The following maps show the Balkans before and after the Balkan Wars.

### THE BALKANS IN 1878

In 1878, the provisions of the Berlin Treaty brought about the following developments:

- the independence of **Serbia**, **Montenegro** and **Romania**.
- the founding of a small autonomous **Bulgaria** under the power of the sultan.
- the military occupation of **Bosnia Herzegovina** by Austria.
- the autonomy of **Eastern Rumelia** under a Christian governor.
- the borders of **Greece** would remain at the 'Arta-Volos' line (since the founding of the independent Greek state in 1830), while in 1864 the British had given up the Ionian Islands.



### THE BALKANS IN 1914

After the end of the Second Balkan War (Bucharest Treaty, 1913):

- **Greece** annexed southern Macedonia (with Thessaloniki, Kavala until the Nestos estuary), southern Epirus and Crete. The eastern Aegean islands were given to Greece a year later under the Florence protocol (February 13, 1914). The Dodecanese Islands remained under Italian occupation.
- **Serbia** annexed northern Macedonia (with Monastir/Bitola and Skopje).
- **Bulgaria** acquired a way out to the Aegean (between Alexandroupolis and Porto Lagos).
- **Romania** won its border dispute against Bulgaria in the Dobrudja region.
- **Albania** became an independent state, which also included northern Epirus.
- the **Ottoman Empire** retained eastern Thrace (up to and including Adrianople/Edirne).
- **Bosnia-Herzegovina** had been annexed to the Austro-Hungarian Empire since 1908.



## STUDENT HANDOUT B

### Life before and after the Balkan Wars

1. Fill in the names of nation-states, autonomous regions or empires on both maps of the Balkans, before and after the Balkan Wars (in 1878 and in 1914).





2. Visit the website [www.balkantale.com](http://www.balkantale.com) and navigate through the interactive map.

Which religious groups are represented in the monuments of the 'Worshipping' category?

.....

.....

3. Visit the monuments of the "Living together" category. Which places or buildings gave people of different religions the opportunity to meet and mingle?

Write down three specific examples from the map.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. Choose a city from the map. If you were a Muslim, Jewish or Christian Orthodox resident of the city, how do you think your daily life and neighborhood would change after the Balkan Wars?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....





OTHER POSSIBLE QUESTIONS / EXERCISES

- Choose five monuments from the website and mark their position on the two maps included in the Handout ('Balkans 1878' and 'Balkans 1914').

- In which country/region are the monuments situated before and after the Balkan Wars?

	MONUMENT	BEFORE	AFTER
1.	.....	.....	.....
2.	.....	.....	.....
3.	.....	.....	.....
4.	.....	.....	.....
5.	.....	.....	.....

-What is the current state of the monuments you chose and what is their use today. Do any of these monuments need repairing or restoration? What alternative purpose could they serve today?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- Collect information on the Christian monuments of cities in modern Turkey, e.g. of Istanbul. What is their current state and how are they used? Compare with the monuments you have chosen in the Handout. How do you explain their similarities or differences?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



## FURTHER RESOURCES

▶ Website [www.balkantale.com](http://www.balkantale.com). Includes texts and photographs of Ottoman period monuments in the Balkans, as well as resources for teachers.

▶ Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, CDRSEE: alternative educational material for teaching the modern southeast European history.

[http://www.cdsee.org/jhp/download\\_gre.html](http://www.cdsee.org/jhp/download_gre.html)

Workbooks:

1. The Ottoman Empire
2. Nations and States in south-east Europe
3. The Balkan Wars.

▶ Website 'Thessaloniki, a Balkan city 1900-1930'

<http://www.wow.gr/projects/thessaloniki/index.htm>

▶ Website 'Architecture in Athens / Interesting Athens architecture':

<http://www.zee.gr/architecture/?mid=5480>

▶ Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*, London: Reaktion Books, 2001.

▶ Marc Ferro, *Cinema and History*, Wayne State University Press.

▶ Mark Mazower, *The Balkans*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000.

▶ Machiel Kiel, *Studies on the Ottoman architecture of the Balkans*, Variorum, 1990.

▶ Suraiya N. Faroqhi (Editor), *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 3, the Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*

## ABOUT THE PROJECT 'A BALKAN TALE'

The "Silent Balkans" documentary and the accompanying Lesson Plans are part of the multimedia project 'A Balkan Tale', produced by Goethe-Institut, in collaboration with the Museum of Greek Folk Art / Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism, under the aegis of the Municipality of Athens and with the financial assistance of the European Union.

The project 'A Balkan Tale' consists of a periodical photography exhibition supplemented by parallel actions (educational programs, documentaries, the website [www.balkantale.com](http://www.balkantale.com) and a printed edition). The program aims to start a public discourse on the common history of the Balkans and contribute to the conservation and promotion of the region's cultural legacy.

### Editor

Prof. Dr. CHRISTINA KOULOURI, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens

### Historical Advisor

Prof. TÜLAY ARTAN, Sabanci University, Istanbul

### Historians

Prof. HALIL BERKTAY, Sabanci University, Istanbul

Dr. FRASHER DEMAJ, Institute of History, Prishtina

Prof. FERIT DUKA, Chair of the Department of Medieval and Ottoman Studies at the Institute of History, Tirana

Dr. ELIAS KOLOVOS, Department of History and Archaeology, University of Crete, Rethymno

IRENA STEFOSKA, Institute of National History, Dpt. of Ancient and Medieval History, University "St. Cyril and Methodius", Skopje

Dr. RADINA VUČETIĆ, Department of History, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

Vasiliki Sakka contributed to the **lesson plan**.



*This project has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union.*

*The contents of this lesson plan can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the EU.*