

[Like](#) 316 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

[Dental Implants Macedonia](#) Free Flight & Accommodation Book 4 Dental Implants Now! [www.medianadental.com](http://www.medianadental.com)

[Skopelos Sea-Side Villas](#) Stay at a Beach-Front 5\* Resort Stunning location and service! [www.adrina.gr](http://www.adrina.gr)

[Garnier Blemish Balm](#) BB Cream για τέλεια επιδερμίδα στη στιγμή! [www.garnier.gr](http://www.garnier.gr)

[Real Justice](#)  
Restorative Justice Books, Videos,  
Training, International Conferences  
[www.realjustice.org](http://www.realjustice.org) [AdChoices](#)

[AdChoices](#)

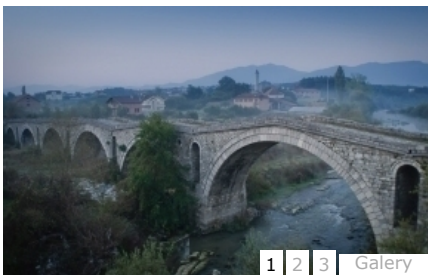
[Home](#) / [Nine muses](#) / [History](#)



## A not so old Balkan tale

07 February 2012 / 21:02:25 **GRReporter** 0

283 reads



Bridge in Kosovo, Photo: Samir Karahodzha

**Anastasia Balezdrova**

The period of Ottoman rule in the Balkans implicates a lot of negativity and tension for most of today's countries of the "hottest" peninsula in Europe. In the minds of most people, this is a dark period and the prevailing trend is that it should be condemned and forgotten.

Thus, we, the Balkans, omit a long period of history, when people lived together despite the differences in

their language and religion within the last empire in Europe.

It is this forgotten part of history that the exhibition entitled A Balkan Tale seeks to bring to the fore. It is organized by the German Goethe Institute supported by the European Union in Athens.

"The project is an attempt to revisit the cultural heritage of the period of the Ottoman rule in the Balkans. We want to look at our region in a new way through the buildings that still exist, but have different functions, or have been destroyed and forgotten," said to GRReporter. Professor in Modern and Contemporary History at the Pandeio University Christina Koulouri, an associate to the programme. The exhibition presents photographs of churches, mosques, synagogues, tombs, bridges, shelters and other buildings and structures of that period. According to recent studies, the Balkan cultural heritage is threatened because over 98 per cent of the monuments have been destroyed.

"This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Balkan wars. On this occasion, we decided to look at the general Balkan history, i.e. how people lived together in the Ottoman Empire before 1912. We are talking about four centuries of co-existence, which we do not remember today. In general, there are a lot of things we do not know about this period," said Rea Apostolidi, historian and producer of the documentary Forgotten Balkans.

Are the Balkan people ready to talk about their common past? "It is impossible to generalize. There are people who may think that they are not ready. But I think the common past is a fact and we should look at it as we look at each other moment of our past. I mean that there is no past that is not common. Every moment of our past is shared by someone else. We do not live separated from one another; walls that no one has ever passed through do not surround us. We are part of the Balkans, some countries are part of the Mediterranean region, then, we are part of Europe and then, we are part of the world. Therefore, we cannot separate our past from the past of others, and especially from the past of our neighbouring nations," replied Christina Koulouri.

Five photographers - Ivan Petrovic from Serbia, Camilo Nolas from Greece, Uta Benzenberg from Albania and Germany, Ivan Blajev from Macedonia and Samir Karahodzha from Kosovo present the specifics of each monument and its present state through their contemporary look. The exhibition will be presented for the first time in Athens, and then, it will take the route Thessaloniki - Belgrade - Pristina - Skopje -

Current weather

 **Athens** 16°C  **Thessaloniki** 8°C  
 **Heraklion** 17°C  **Sofia** 8°C

[News](#) [Forthcoming](#) [Most Read](#)

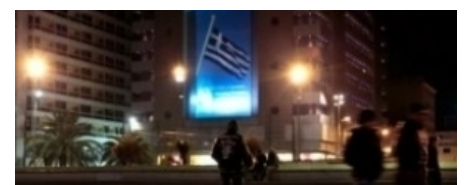
**10:19** Voluntary participation of private creditors in the Greek PSI reached 85,8

**06:11** The military were ready for action during the big night of vandalizing in Athens

**01:30** Politicians and the Church against the construction of crematories

**23:20** Moment of truth comes for the shareholders of Greek banks

**19:35** The state imposes garnishment of 50 per cent of Aspis' liquid resources



Tirana to arrive in Germany and the capital of united Europe - Brussels.

Visitors note the absence of many other Balkan countries from the exhibition. According to Rea Apostolidi, the European programme has granted funds to certain countries to participate. Historians expressed their will to be included in the programme at a later stage, because the project provides this opportunity.

Christina Koulouri said, "not only Bulgaria is absent. Other countries are also absent such as Romania, Croatia, Bosnia, where there are beautiful ruins of the Ottoman past, such as bridges and other monuments. Perhaps this is a great opportunity for the countries that are not present in the exhibition to organize the presentation of their monuments. That is why they are not arranged by countries. They are mixed namely to emphasize that it does not matter in which country these monuments are today, but that they are part of old city centres of the Ottoman territory."

She said that the programme involves various activities planned to make us reconsider the Balkan history. "One of them is the exhibition of photos that are not simple images and works of photographers - artists. A documentary was filmed within it, entitled Balkan Wars, which involved the teacher from Sofia University Alexei Kalionski. On the [website](#), the visitors can see more photos than those in the exhibition, information on the monuments, and educational programmes for teachers."

Will the exhibition be able to help the hot Balkans begin understanding each other?

"First, it will help us realize how many things we have in common. To understand that there are buildings around us, whose history we are not familiar with. We do not know to which era they belong, when they were built, who lived in them. One such example is the hammams. They were part of the daily lives of people for centuries. Even today, some of them have other functions, like galleries, for example. All these buildings are all around us, but maybe noone realizes that they are the evidence of our common past, of an era when we lived in a different way before the formation of national states."

Many opponents of such initiatives would reprove the project. According to Christina Koulouri, they have nothing to fear.

"We decided that we have gone through the era of national states. After the 1980s, many of us commented that this political model is outdated. I think history refutes this. People continue to be organized within national states. Even now, we see how the European Union finds itself among a supranational policy and national policies.

In the Balkans, the phenomenon is even more intense, especially as we witness the birth of new national states, such as Kosovo. The process of ethno genesis in the Balkans continues."

The exhibition will be open from 10 February to 8 April, 2012 at the Bath of the Winds on 8 Kiristou Street in the Athens Plaka neighbourhood at the foot of the Acropolis. The building is a remnant of the Ottoman era and it functioned as a hammam until 1965. Today, it is one of the art galleries of the Museum of Greek Folk Art. The complete project and the documentary Forgotten Balkans will be presented at the German Goethe Institute (14-16, Omirou Street) on 10 February at 8:30 pm.

Tags: History Balkans Ottoman rule Common past National states Religious and cultural heritage

Share: [Like](#) [twitter](#) 1 [SHARE](#) [Print](#)

More from "Nine muses"

- [The festival "Pictures from the 21st century" ⇨](#)
- [In mid March we're caught up in catastrophes ⇨](#)
- [Bakkar, Irfan and Barkat on the stage of the National Theatre ⇨](#)
- [29th of February 2012 brings luck in everything except for love ⇨](#)
- [Robbery in the archaeological museum of Ancient Olympia ⇨](#)

Like

Add New Comment

[Login](#)



Empty comment input box

Showing 0 comments

Sort by newest first



1 Gallery

What do you expect from the elections in Greece?:

- Greece needs reforms not elections
- According to all polls New Democracy will win the elections and it will be able to take the country out of the crisis
- It doesn't matter which party wins, the current political system is unable to cope
- Circumstances will force the two major parties to share the power
- The next Parliament will be very fragmented and it will be quite difficult to form a governing coalition

Vote



March 2012						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



Find us on Facebook

**GRR** News from Greece

GR Reporter

316 people like News from Greece.



Facebook social plugin

**Panorama Hotel - Patmos**  
A beautiful view to Grikos bay from your room. Special offers!  
[www.panoramapatmos.com](http://www.panoramapatmos.com) [AdChoices](#)

- News
- Society
- Economy
- Nine muses
- Entertainment
- Media & Hi Tech
- Sport
- Doc Online

- RSS
- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube

- Terms of use
- About us
- Contact us
- Advertising
- Site map
- Blog

GRRShop  
[my-ifinder.com](http://my-ifinder.com)

**GRReporter**

© 2006-2012  
GRRreporter Ltd.  
e-mail: [office@grreporter.info](mailto:office@grreporter.info)