

The Museum for the Macedonian Struggle

The Museum for the Macedonian Struggle is located in the centre of the city of Thessaloniki, Central Macedonia, Greece. It occupies a neoclassical building built in 1893 and designed by the renowned German philhellene architect Ernst Ziller to house the Greek Consulate General in Thessaloniki.

In its six ground-floor rooms the Museum graphically illustrates modern and contemporary history of Greek Macedonia. It presents the social, economic, political and military developments that shaped the fate of this historical Hellenic region between mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century. Through its exhibit the Museum enables the visitor to form a global picture not only of the revolutionary movements in the area but also of the rapidly changing society of the southern Balkans and its endeavour to balance between tradition and modernization.

The Museum for the Macedonian Struggle and the Research Centre for Macedonian History and Documentation (KEMIT) are run by a special institution, the homonymous Foundation.

The history of the building

The building which today houses the Museum for the Macedonian Struggle was from 1894 to 1912 Greece's Consulate-General at Salonica. It was erected on ground belonging to the Salonica Inspectorate of Greek Teaching Establishments, right next to the Bishop's Palace, after the great fire of August 23, 1890, which had destroyed the south-eastern quarters of Thessaloniki.



Among the losses was the humble residence that till then housed the Consulate General of Greece, which was the property of the Greek Orthodox Community of Thessaloniki. With the insurance money, the donation of the benefactor Andreas Syngros and the financial help offered by the Hellenic government, a sufficient amount was collected to reconstruct the buildings of the Greek community. Among them this magnificent neoclassical residence to plans drawn up by the architect Ernst Ziller, appropriate for a consular mansion. Renting of the building by the Greek state began in March 1894.

In May 1904, with the arrival of Lambros Koromilas as Greece's Consul General at Salonica, the consulate building became the nerve-centre of the struggle of Hellenism in Central Macedonia against the Bulgarians. Besides Koromilas and the diplomats, who in-

cluded two successors of Koromilas (Kontogouris, the consulate's director, and Papadiamantopoulos, its consul-general), there was a fair number of military personnel. The first of them to arrive were Ioannis Avrasoglou, Athanasios Exadaktylos, Dimitrios Kakkavos, Konstantinos Mazarakis, Mihail Moraitis, and Spyridon Spyromilios. They were followed by Andreas Kourouklis, Alexandros Mazarakis, Georgios Mastrapas, Alkiviadis Moskhonios, Alexandros Othonaios, and Kyriakos Tavoularis. These army officers worked at the consulate, under an assumed name, as "special clerks", for various lengths of time, from May 1904 to June 1909. It was they who organized the struggle, and to do this they had to go on regular tours of inspection to various areas of Macedonia.



The Consul-General's Office (reconstruction).

Consulate was being used to shield guerillas and help them escape to Greek territory. In early May 1905 this did very nearly happen, we are told in Kakkavos' *Memoirs*. The band from Crete led by Ioannis Dafotis had been in an engagement with the Turkish army, at the Agia Anastasia monastery near Vasilika, and it was necessary to get several of the men back to Greece. With two of the guerillas hiding out in the basement of the building, a Greek-speaking Turkish-Cretan was sent to the Consulate by the Turkish police to declare that he was one of Dafotis' band and needed protection. Fortunately, the officers saw through the

Then there were the many Patriarchists from towns and villages, coming to the Consulate to ask for assistance and guidance, or to pass on information. Quite a number of photographs of them were taken by the employees (mainly by Kakkavos) either inside the Consulate or outside. Christian Ottoman subjects who visited the Consulate were taking a considerable risk, for close by the building were two Turkish police posts to keep an eye on who went in. This was a problem; but it was solved by using the adjacent Bishop's Palace with the Gregory Palamas chapel in its yard. Through a little gate in the party wall, those who so wished could go unobserved from the Bishop's Yard to the yard of the Consulate.

At other times the Consulate building was a "safe house" for fighters who were under pursuit. Such was the case with Tellos Agapinos ("Captain Agras"), accommodated in the Consulate when wounded in the arm and needing hospital treatment, after an engagement with the Bulgarians on November 14, 1906. There was of course a great risk that the Ottoman authorities might find out that the

trap and sent the “spy” away, with a strongly-worded protest about this ruse to the Turkish policemen in the neighbouring post.

In Salonica, centre of Macedonia’s administrative and military authorities, the Consulate’s multifarious missions could be achieved only by ingenuity, imagination, and daring. Koromilas seems to have had all three. Late in 1905 he arranged for two officers, chieftain Georgios Kakoulidis (“Captain Dragas”) and chieftain Christos Tsolakopoulos (“Captain Rembelos”), to be smuggled back to Greece. It so happened that the First Secretary at the Consulate was going on leave, on an Italian steamship bound for the Piraeus. Koromilas invited the entire staff of the Consulate for a get-together at the Olympos Hotel, close to the quay. Among them were the two chieftains, who managed to go aboard unobserved.

The Ottoman authorities were particularly irritated by Koromilas’ actions, as effective as they were undisguised, and at the end of 1906 they demanded that he be removed from his post. The result was that in 1907 he found himself directing the Struggle from Athens.

The Consulate was at the same time an information-gathering centre. The information in question was worked on by the staff -the army officers and the diplomats- in order to rough out a course of action for the Greek camp. Letters from the heads of the various different regional centres of the Struggle were dispatched, using railway officials, to Salonica; they were then taken from the station to the Consulate, sometimes by children, to avert suspicion.

That a diplomat or an army officer was at the Consulate did not mean that he was out of the firing line. He might even go in danger of his life, for he would constantly be in the cross-sights of the Ottoman, and still more of the Bulgarian camp. Early in 1908 there was a meeting at the Bulgarian Agency (Consulate), at which it was decided to assassinate one of three people: Exadaktylos, Kakkavos, or the First Interpreter at the Greek Consulate, Theodoros Askitis. Eventually it was Askitis who was assassinated, on February 22, 1908, no more than two hundred yards away from the Consulate. The Greek camp hit back through the “Thessaloniki Organization”, which attempted to assassinate one of the most respected Bulgarian notables of Salonica, Hadzhimichev, Interpreter at the Russian Consulate, and with him Todorov, the Interpreter at the Bulgarian Agency.

Nor did the Consulate’s involvement with national disputes cease with the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, when the guerilla bands were dissolved and large-scale armed conflict stopped. The Greek side, in contrast to the Bulgarian side, continued its activity even under the new dispensation. This provoked strong displeasure among the Young Turks, and in June 1909 all the remaining consular officers were recalled to Athens, having been accused by the authorities of stirring up the embers of the quarrel between



Military uniforms of Admiral John Demestichas and Athanasios Souliotis.

Patriarchate and Exarchate. The Consulate did of course continue to support and protect Hellenism in Macedonia until Liberation in 1912.

The Balkan Wars brought victory to the Greeks and led to the union of Macedonia with the Hellenic national territory. Since the consular service was no longer required, the building was thereafter utilized for other purposes. In 1915, the Agricultural Bank of Macedonia operated on its ground-floor and basement. In 1917, for a period of three years, it provided temporary accommodation to the National Bank of Greece until its branch, which was destroyed in the great fire that struck the city that same year, could be rebuilt. In 1923, the 23rd Primary School was housed in the building. During the German Occupation (1941-1944), the Red Cross distributed food in the basement and for a few



months at the end of the Civil War (1949), the basement was used for the detention of political prisoners. In the decades that followed, it hosted a girls' school, a night school and, since 1970, the 43rd Primary School.

The founding of the Museum for the Macedonian Struggle

In April 1917, not long after Macedonia had been integrated into Greece, the Provisional Government of Premier Eleftherios Venizelos enacted order 2134 establishing a "Macedonian Museum", although with a much broader scope. This museum was to assemble

all the considerable archaeological finds marking the various historical and artistic periods through which Macedonia has passed, from antiquity to the end of the Ottoman era.

The process of creating the museum was continued in the 1940s by the Macedonian Fraternal Association for Education, while after 1950 the initiative passed to a group of private individuals, prominent public figures and descendants of the celebrated *Makedonomachoi*.

After the 1978 earthquake, which caused considerable damage to its neo-classical mansion, the building was restored and given to the “Friends of the Museum of the Macedonian Struggle” as a repository for all manner of relics and material documenting Northern Greece’s modern history.

Since 1999 the Museum has been run by the “Foundation for the Museum for the Macedonian Struggle”, which initiated, in addition to the Museum’s exhibition and



publishing activities, new educational programmes and workshops and technologically innovative applications.

The Research Centre for Macedonian History and Documentation (KEMIT)

The Research Centre for Macedonian History and Documentation (KEMIT) maintains a specialised library and electronic databases, collects and processes archival material, publishes monographs and studies, organises seminars and conferences, provides

information and documentation to interested parties and in general promotes the academic objectives of the Foundation through all possible means.

Specifically, KEMIT has amassed a huge amount of archival material concerning the period 1800–1912. The material consists of private archives and copies of diplomatic correspondence between Greek, British, United States, French and Austro-Hungarian consulates in Macedonia, all of which has been catalogued into the Museum's databases and is available to researchers. Moreover, its archive contains private documents and personal archives of Macedonian fighters and other similar collections, as well as a fully documented collection of 5,000 photographs.



KEMIT's databases are continually updated and include material pertaining to various thematic areas such as: archival material and bibliography for 2,500 towns and villages of Macedonia, demographic data and detailed election results for the periods 1900–1981 and 1928–1985 respectively, information about post-WWII migrants from Macedonia who were handled by the International Migration Organization, records of the victims of all fractions from the period 1903–1908 etc. Finally, KEMIT maintains a rich bibliography pertaining to the history of modern and contemporary Macedonia, comprising 12,500 titles. Hundreds of researchers have been served by KEMIT over the years. In addition, KEMIT also offers internships and practical training to university students.

The fundamental priority of the Museum is to serve visitors and researchers. The library and archives are open to the public every day, but archival research requires a permit, as does the copying of photographic or documentary material. Archival material may also be subject to further restrictions, depending on the specific unit.

Computer databases are available for searching information about the “Struggle for Macedonia”, the area it covered and the people who were involved in it.

The Research Centre for Macedonian History and Documentation (KEMIT) is overseen by an Academic Committee.

The exhibition

The Museum presents the modern and contemporary history of Macedonia and the movements for its integration into the Hellenic State. Emphasis is placed on the period of the “Macedonian Struggle” (1903-1908). This was an irregular warfare fought mainly between Greeks and Bulgarians in what was at the time a part of the Ottoman Empire. Both sides were vying to strengthen their hold in the region in anticipation of the expected collapse of the Ottoman domination. Nonetheless, the “Macedonian Struggle” was the last chapter of a long historical process, i.e. the Greek insurrections, mainly since the Revolution of 1821-1828, aiming to unite the “unredeemed” Greek inhabited regions of the Ottoman Empire in a modern Hellenic state. In Macedonia this process was concluded with the Balkan wars of 1912–1913. Finally, the peace treaty of Bucharest (August 1913)

officially put an end to five hundred years of Ottoman rule in the historical region of Macedonia.

For the Greek Macedonians, and, indeed, for the Hellenes at large, the “Struggle for Macedonia” has come to symbolize not only a century long struggle for freedom, but also the survival and revival of a cultural heritage traced back to a period of over two millennia. The Museum’s collection is show presented in seven halls on the ground floor. More specifically is presented in:



Sacerdotal relics, weapons and Macedonomachos' costume in Hall E, dedicated to the Armed Struggle.



View of Hall F.

Hall A Armed Struggles for freedom. 19th century Greek insurrectionary movements in Macedonia.

Hall B Macedonian society at the turn of the 19th century.

Hall C The Consul-General's Office (reconstruction).

Hall D Characteristics of the Struggle. The recruiting of the Greek bands.

Hall E The struggle in towns and villages. Special features of the Greek Struggle in town and countryside; the role of the clergy.

Hall F The end of the armed Macedonian struggle. The Balkan Wars and the incorporation into the Hellenic state.

Hall G Hellenic Macedonia in the 20th century. From the end of the Balkan Wars to the present.

In the multi-purpose hall on the first floor temporary exhibitions are hosted and also documentary films are presented.

In the basement there are life-size 3-D models of scenes from the Struggle.



Transporting ammunition (Diorama).



A Greek school (Diorama, detail).

Educational Activities

Thessaloniki: Metamorphoses of a city

The modern history of Thessaloniki unfolds in front of the children's eyes through dramatizations, games and challenges. The children have the chance to become acquainted with the city's past, to become familiar with its transition from a city which was part of an empire to the co-capital of a nation state, to examine the ideas of multiculturalism and to interact with the smells, the sounds and the stories of the city through its monuments, to which they supply their own narratives.

Deciphering the Macedonian Struggle

Hidden messages and well kept secrets await deciphering. Kids use their imagination and logical skills to discover the secretive nature of the Macedonian Struggle through an exciting game of cryptograms!

Travelling through time on a quill and a... mouse!

Since 2004 the Museum's Research Centre for Macedonian History and Documentation (KEMIT) has been running an educational programme entitled "Travelling through time on a quill and a... mouse!" The programme was designed to allow teachers and pupils to make use of the fifteen years of systematic research work that has been carried out by the Museum and its database of historical information (political, electoral, demographic, social, economic and educational) on Macedonia's communities.



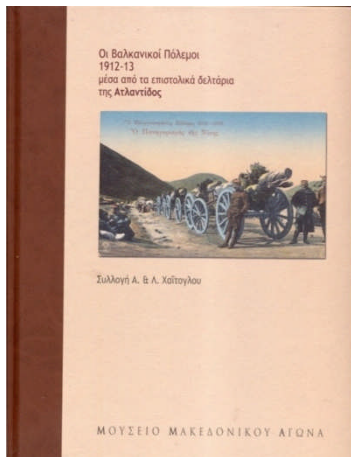
Publications

Books

2014

Karabati, P.G. - Nikoitsios, V. (eds), *Pavlos Melas, A Man of his Time* (in Greek)

Karabati, P.G., *Shadows over the Lake* (in Greek)



2013

Georgiou, A. (ed.), *The Balkan Wars (1912-13) through the postal cards of "Atlantis"* (in Greek)



2012

Gounaris, B.C., Stoikou, E., Diogos, K. (eds), *The British Presence in Salonica and the Macedonian Hinterland* (in Greek and English)

2010

Stefanidis, I.D., Vlasidis V., Kofos, E. (eds), *Macedonian Identities through time. Interdisciplinary approaches* (in Greek)



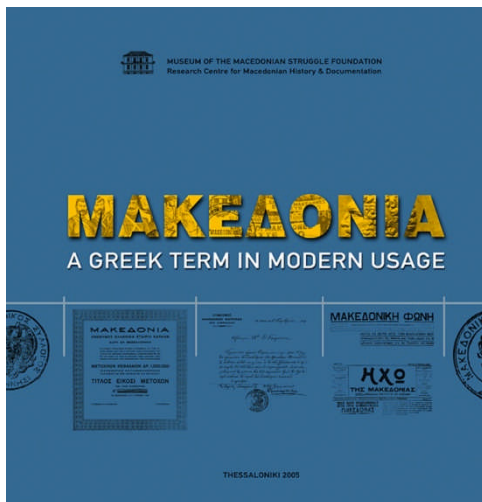
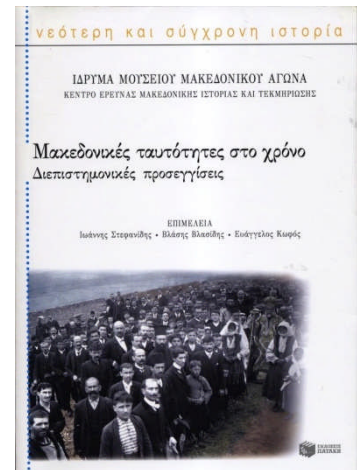
2009

Karabati, P.G., Koltouki P.G., Mandatzis C.M., Michailidis I.D., Chotzidis A.A. (eds), Gounaris, B.C. (intr.), *The Struggle for Macedonia: The Early Years (1903-1904). 100 Documents from the Greek Foreign Ministry*, Revised second edition (in Greek and English)

Karabati, P.G., Koltouki P.G., Michailidis I.D. (eds), Gounaris, B.C. (intr.), *The Struggle for Macedonia: The Greek Counter-Offensive (1905-1906). 100 Documents from the Greek Foreign Ministry*, Revised second edition (in Greek and English)

2008

Stefanidis, I.D., Vlasidis V., Kofos, E. (eds), *Macedonian identities in time. Interdisciplinary approaches*, Athens, Patakis & Research Centre for Macedonian History and Documentation - Museum for the Macedonian Struggle (in Greek)



2006

Research Centre for Macedonian History and Documentation, *Macedonia: A Greek term in modern usage* (in Greek and English)

Koukoudis, A., *Social Life in the vlach villages of Macedonia in the 1900s* (in Greek)

2005

Karabati, P.G. (ed.), *The Macedonia of Pavlos Melas: Struggle and dilemmas*, Kyromanos Press (in Greek)

2004

Christianopoulos, D., *Pavlos Melas in the works of Macedonian poets*, Museum for the Macedonian Struggle & Kyromanos Press (in Greek)

Album of Maps: Mapping Macedonia 1870-1930, Museum for the Macedonian Struggle & National Cartographic Archives (in Greek)

Hatzigeorgiou-Hassioti, V., *Imprints of the Macedonian Struggle in Modern Greek Prose. A literary approach and anthology*, University Studio Press (in Greek)

Gounaris, V.C. - Michailidis, I.D. (eds), *Refugees in the Balkans: Memory and Integration*, Athens: Patakis & Museum for the Macedonian Struggle (in Greek)

Nikoltsios, V. - Vlasidis, V., *65+1 Historical Museums in Greece*, Thessaloniki, Friends of the Museum for the Macedonian Struggle (in Greek)

2003

Kofos, E. - Vlasidis, V. (eds), *Athens-Skopje, An Uneasy Symbiosis*, Research Centre for Macedonian History and Documentation

2002

Album of Photographs: Macedonia, 1908. Photographs from the A.G. Papaïoannou Collection (in Greek)

2000

Karabati, P.G., *Fighting Symbols. The seals of the Makedonomachoi* (in Greek)

1998

Karabati, P.G., Koltouki, P.G., Michailidis, I.D., Toloudi, F.I. (eds), Gounaris, V.C. (intr.), *The last phase of the armed conflict in Macedonia (1907-1908). 100 documents from the archives of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (in Greek and English)

1997

Kofos, E., "Ethnic heritage and national identity", 1998 (in Greek), reprint from Thanos Veremis (ed.), *National Identity and Nationalism in Modern Greece*, Athens: National Bank Cultural Foundation (in Greek)

Gounaris, V.C., Michailidis, I.D., Angelopoulos, G.V. (eds), *Identities in Macedonia*, Athens: Papazisi (in Greek)

Karabati, P.G., Koltouki, P.G., Michailidis, I.D. (eds), Gounaris, V.C. (intr.), *The Greek counter-attack in Macedonia (1905-1906). 100 documents from the archives of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (in Greek and English)

1996

Karabati, P.G., Koltouki, P.G., Mandatzis, C.M., Michailidis, I.D., Chotzidis, A.A. (eds), Gounaris, V.C. (intr.), *The beginning of the Macedonian Struggle (1903-1904). 100 documents from the Archives of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (in Greek and English)

Chotzidis, A.A. (ed.), *Memoirs of the Makedonomachos Efthymios Kaoudis (1903-1907)* (in Greek)

1993

Dakin, D., *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia (1897-1913)*, Thessaloniki, reprinting 1st edition: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1966

Gounaris, B.C., Panayotopoulou, A.A., Chotzidis, A.A. (eds), *The Events of 1903 in Macedonia as presented in European Diplomatic Correspondence* (in Greek)

Gounaris, B.C., Panayotopoulou, A.A., Chotzidis, A.A. (eds), *The Events of 1903 in Macedonia as presented in European Diplomatic Correspondence* (in English)

Kofos, E., *The Vision of "Greater Macedonia"* (in Greek, English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Dutch)

1992

Gounaris, B.C. (ed.), *The Unpublished Diary of the Makedonomachos Efthymios Kaoudis (Autumn 1903)* (in Greek)

1989

Andriotis, N., *The Federal Republic of Skopje and its Language*, reprint (in Greek)

1987

The Macedonian Struggle, Symposium, Institute for Balkan Studies & Museum for the Macedonian Struggle (in Greek)

1984

Apostolakis, S., *Our Makedonomachoi in Folk Poetry* (in Greek)

Kanellopoulos, P., *The Historical Meaning of the Struggle for Macedonia*, Athens: "Friends of the Museum for the Macedonian Struggle" (in Greek)

Modis, G., *Collected Short Stories, "The Knights of the Cross"*, ed. by Kostas Kafantaris, Athens: Estia & Museum for the Macedonian Struggle (in Greek)

Calendars (in Greek and in English)

2015

Thessaloniki 1916, Small Stories - Great Stories

2014

The National Schism in the Shadow of the Great War

2013

Women of Macedonia

2012

Nikis

2011

The Greek Navy in the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913

2009

The Black '97

2008

The long march towards freedom

2007

*In Macedonia one hundred years ago (1908): Expectations and illusions
Macedonia in the Great War (1914-1918)*

2006

Children in the early 20th-century Macedonia

2005

Macedonian society in the early 20th century

2004

Album of photographs: Schools of the Macedonian Struggle

