

# Shkodra 1994-1999

Patrimoine sans frontières was involved in the conservation project for a unique collection of photographic images at the Marubi studio in Shkodra, the most important collection of photographic images of Albanian and Balkan cultural heritage.



Young muslim woman  
©ATE-Kel Marubi. between 1900 and 1915.

**FORCED** into exile following his patriotic activities in Italy against Austria and Hungary, Pietro Marubi (1834-1905), came to seek temporary refuge in the Ottoman Empire.

In 1858 he changed his name to Pjetër and opened the first photographic studio in Albania, in Shkodra, the former Albanian capital at the time. His first assistant died very young and it was his brother, Kel (1870-1940) who assured the studio's continuity, naming it the Marubi Studio, in tribute to its original owner. In the 1970's, it was Gegë Marubi (1907-1984), the third generation of the Marubi family, who passed over this unique collection of photographs to the state, the richest collection of photographic images of Albanian cultural heritage and one of the most important in the Balkans.

## ***Important because of its history***

After having produced the first photograph ever taken in the country (in 1858), the Marubi studio was committed to and responsible for photographing Albania and its people for three quarters of a century.

## ***Important because of its number***

Today the Marubi studio presents over 150,000 photographic negatives, set behind glass and on support supports.

## ***Important because of its continuity***

Throughout their lives, Pjetër, Kel and Gegë Marubi accompanied and photographed the inhabitants of Shkodra, providing a point of contact and reference between the great civilisations of the Mediterranean.

## **The results**

- An investigative mission, organised by Patrimoine sans frontières and supported by UNESCO funding, took place in January 1994. It enabled an assessment of the nature of the conservation work required as well as the type and quantity of material needed for an image bank and photo library ("photothèque") to be set up.
- An agreement was signed by the Albanian Ministry of Culture in November 1995, entrusting Patrimoine sans frontières with the task of making the collections of this "Photothèque" known to the media and to the general public.

## **Project partners**

- French Ministry of Culture and Communication: direction of Architecture and Heritage, department of International Affairs
- Albanian Ministry of Culture, direction of the Museums of Shkodra
- Municipality of Shkodra
- The Albanian Embassy in France
- Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – European Commission's Kaleidoscope programme
- UNESCO : Programme for the Development of central and eastern Europe
- Leon Battista Alberti Association (Turin)
- Piedmont region in Italy
- National Museum of Mountains (Turin)
- University Polytechnic of Valencia
- Museo de Etnología del Centro Cultural de la Beneficencia (Valencia)
- City of Bari
- Kodak-Pathé
- Kodak (Italy)
- Kodiris Laboratories Alitalia, Official transporter