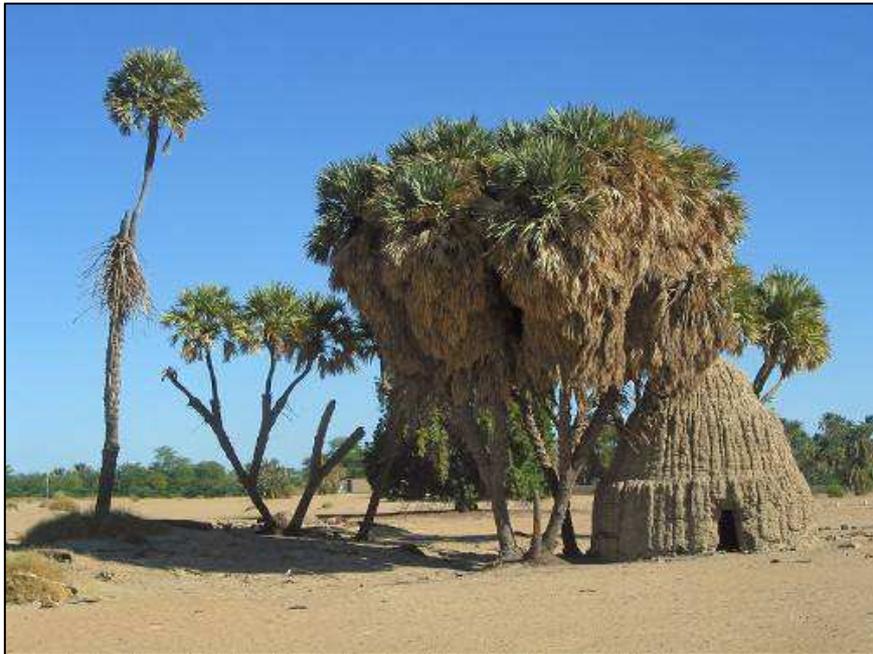


## FROM NUBIA TO SUDAN

**Greek-Norwegian photo exhibition tells about life along the Nile:  
From a Medieval cathedral and an Ottoman fortress of the past  
to Islamic monuments and controversial dams in the present**



**Opening: Wednesday 16 May 2012, at 20:30**

**Address: Nikiforou Foka 130**

**Exhibition: 16 May – 27 May 2012**

**Old Town of Rethymno**

The Institute of Mediterranean Studies, Rethymno, hosts an exhibition of photographs shot by the archaeologists Alexandros Tsakos and Henriette Hafsaas-Tsakos, partners in life and work, who have worked, travelled, and lived in Sudan during the last couple of years.

South Sudan gained its independence on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2011, but all the photographs of the exhibition were shot in what is still the country of Sudan – and mainly the northernmost part, namely Nubia, as the stretch of the Nile Valley from Khartoum in Sudan to Aswan in Egypt was known as during medieval times. The photographs show historical monuments, like pyramids and temples from the pagan times, churches from the Christian era, and the main features of Sudan's Islamic architecture, like mosques and qubbas (funerary monuments). A central focus of the exhibition is some unique photographs from the Fourth Nile Cataract that was flooded when the controversial Merowe Dam was inaugurated in 2009 and 173 kilometres of the Middle Nile Valley disappeared under water. Since the Ottoman past is a topic that is studied at the Institute of Mediterranean Studies, the images and text also tell about the southernmost frontier in Africa of the Ottoman Empire, namely Sai Island, where the archaeologist couple is running a project excavating a

medieval church close to the Ottoman fortress of the island that was built on the ruins of a medieval fortress. Throughout the exhibition there is a stress on sharing the experience of life along the Nile.

“The exhibition was first organized at the Benaki Museum of Islamic Art in Athens after a suggestion to the museum curators Mina Moraitou and Anna Balian by Irini Gonou, an artist who has seen our photographs as follower of our blog on the Medieval Sai Project (<http://medievalsaiproject.wordpress.com/>). It was Irini who arranged our first meeting with the curators of the museum”, relates Alexandros Tsakos.

The Benaki Museum of Islamic Art chose to host the exhibition in order to familiarise the Greek public with this special land – a crossroad of Islam and Christianity in the African landscape of the Nile.

“The exhibition at Benaki consisted of more than 80 photographs, but the version that has travelled to Rethymno is smaller although covering the same themes”, says Henriette Hafsaas-Tsakos. And she adds: “There is also a new panel telling about our survey and excavations in Sudan (the Medieval Sai Project) that link the medieval period with the subsequent Ottoman occupation.”

The exhibition was well received in Athens, and other institutions – in Greece, Sudan, Egypt, and Norway – have expressed their interest in showing the photographs. First out is the Institute of Mediterranean Studies in Rethymno.

The Institute for Mediterranean Studies, which has as its programmatic aim the study and presentation of the culture and history of Oriental and Mediterranean countries, was very happy to incorporate in its activities this exhibition, concerning the civilization of a remote hinterland in the borders between the Mediterranean and the African world.

The exhibition at the Institute of Mediterranean Studies is sponsored by the institute itself, by the Norwegian Embassy in Athens and the Norwegian Institute at Athens, by the Greek branch of the Norwegian company Yara, by the Greek Embassy in Khartoum, and by the Organization for Greek-Norwegian Cooperation in the Fields of Culture and Humanities.

Photographs, texts and layout by Alexandros Tsakos and Henriette Hafsaas-Tsakos

Curated by: Alexandros Tsakos and Henriette Hafsaas-Tsakos

Coordination: Antonis Xydianos

The opening will take place on Wednesday 16 May at 20:30 with a short presentation by Alexandros Tsakos. The exhibition will run until 27 May 2012. Alexandros Tsakos and Henriette Hafsaas-Tsakos will be present at the venue every day in order to introduce Nubia and Sudan to the visitors in a direct way.

Opening hours:  
Every day from 11:00-14:00 and 18:00-21:00

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