Antiquity Musing
Reflections on the Greco-Macedonian Symbolic Contest over the Narratives of the Ancient Past

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Introduction

The claims to the Legacy and Legitimacy of Alexander the Great

Not many people in history had “The Great” as their last name. Alexander, the king of Macedon who lived more than 2300 years ago, had the fortune to earn the title of greatness during his relatively short lifetime by expanding the small kingdom he inherited from his father into one of the most gigantic empires in history. No matter if he was visionary or a villain, liberator or megalomaniac, humanist or oppressor, Alexander the Great remained as one of the most important and most exploited characters from the ancient history.1

As one of the rare “Greats” though, it is easy to suppose that Alexander of Macedon was an epitome of power and authority back in the days of the insane expeditions beyond any known boundary and the literal conquest of the world, at least the world known to the people in the antiquity. The notions of erecting cities bearing his name in every province, the alleged effort to homogenize the population of his empire (by some claimed even an effort to homogenize humanity), as well as the unprecedented symbolic unification of all the honors in the authority of just one person [i.e. the king of Macedon and the Hegemon of the Hellenic alliance (the Corinthian League), from being the Shah of Persia, to being the pharaoh of Egypt at the same time] resulting into his worship and deification, turned the young king into an absolute Sovereign and a symbol of legitimacy from the Mediterranean to the Himalayas, 2

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1 The debate over the historical role of Alexander the Great was recently brought up in 2004, during the promotion of Oliver Stone's movie called “Alexander”. See Roger Moore, “The Great Debate: For 2,300 years controversy has swirled around Alexander the Great: Was he an ambitious visionary or just a bloodthirsty tyrant?”, The Gazette (Montreal), November 14, 2004. Soon many books were published. The debate then was brought into academia. See Brooke Allen, “Alexander the Great: Or the Terrible?”, The Hudson Review, Vol. 58, No. 2 (Summer, 2005), pp. 220-230
2 For an overview of the campaigns and the policies of Alexander, see A.B. Bosworth, Conquest and empire: the reign of Alexander the Great (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1993)
being the subject, but moreover, the (sublime) object of power at the same time. The general remoteness of society back then, along with the communication gap between the king and the ordinary people were big enough for him to gain a mythological status even while he was still alive.

Fortunately or not, Alexander died very young without leaving a legitimate successor of the huge empire, leading to immediate contest between his generals for the crown. Subsequently, no proof was more solid of being the legitimate successor, than the ownership of the great king's corpse. The two potential heirs, Ptolemy and Perdiccas, were plotting and managed to hijack the Alexander's corpse from one another, yet at the end Ptolemy was more successful and the dead body ended as a mummy in Egypt, exposed in a transparent coffin, made of glass in front of the people to admire his greatness. Alexander's corpse was considered to be the talisman of the Ptolemaic dynasty. Later in the history, characters like Caesar, Mark Anthony and Octavian August were also vividly interested in the corpse, as they treated it with all the ceremonies as if Alexander had been a Roman Emperor. Unavoidable as always, was the Madman of the ancient world, the eccentric emperor Caligula. During his reign, he had taken away much of the jewelry and the armor of Alexander, and wore it during public appearances in an attempt to present himself as an incarnation of the Ancient Macedonian king.

After Christianity was introduced as an official religion in the Roman Empire, the corpse of Alexander began to be perceived as part of the pagan past and lost it political significance. However, the image of Alexander was already mythologized in many other

5 See Allen, op. cit. As well, as Robinson argues, Alexander's death was the inauguration of the institution of the western concept of divine monarchy. See Robinson, op. cit.
7 Ibid., p. 174
8 See Nicholas J. Saunders, Alexander's Tomb: The Two Thousand Year Obsession to Find the Lost Conqueror (New York, Basic Books : 2007)
9 Indeed, Alexander was sometimes even attributed with Antichrist-like features. George Cary, “Alexander the
areas that used to be part of his empire. Numerous tribes and peoples existing on the vast
territory that was once embraced of the glorious Empire, had maintained the memory of the
great king as part of their collective identification through the centuries. In the Middle Ages, a
novel titled “Alexandrida” or simply “The Alexander Romance” emerged in Europe, in which
he was portrayed as a Knight, going into many adventures, adding a lot of fantasy and myth to
the image of the Macedonian king\textsuperscript{10}. The novel had been translated in various languages,
among them some of the Slavic ones, providing the grounds for the legends that portray
Alexander the Great as a proto-Slav\textsuperscript{11}. The most famous case of attributing Alexander the
Great proto-Slavic origin is probably noted with Serbian royal dynasty Nemanyitch, in their
reign in the period around the 12-14\textsuperscript{th} century AD traced their family genesis back to the
Alexander and Philip\textsuperscript{12}.

During the revival of Hellenism as the core meta-narrative of Modern Greece, as it
will be further elaborated, the myth Alexander was now put into the nation-building process\textsuperscript{13}.
Some of the Albanian romantic nationalists also started claiming Alexander as proto-
Albanian, owing to the Epirian and Ilyrian roots of his mother Olympias. As the ‘ethnic’ make
up of the Ancient Epirote kingdom remains an open question, one of the Albanian modern-
day national myths traces the direct lineage between the ancient kingdom and the modern-day
nation\textsuperscript{14}.

\textsuperscript{11} The first claims that Alexander was proto-Slav are met in the 16th and early 17\textsuperscript{th} century, in the work of
the Italian-Croat historian Mauro Orbini, “Il Regno de gli Slavi” [“The Realm of the Southern Slavs”]. This later
became one of the narratives of portraying Alexander the Great as a proto-Serb. Also see Zorica Dergovic-
<http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_7051/is_1_11/ai_n28818955/>, last accessed 15.05.2009
\textsuperscript{12} A very popular (pseudo) academic insight on this matter is the work by Jovan Deretic, “Alexander the Great,
accessed 03.05.2009
\textsuperscript{13} Victor Roudometof, “Nationalism and Identity Politics in the Balkans: Greece and the Macedonian
Question”, \textit{Journal of Modern Greek Studies} 14.2 (1996), pp. 253-301
\textsuperscript{14} Antonina Zhelyazkova, “Albanian Identities”, International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural
Relations, 2000, available online at <http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00003852/01/Albanian_Identities.pdf>, last
Finally, it was the Republic of Macedonia that, after gaining the independence of Yugoslavia, introduced the idea of continuity of Macedonianness over the millennia, tracing the ethnogenesis of the nation back to the ancient kingdom of Macedon and Alexander the Great. At the same time it challenged the Greek historical rights over Ancient Macedonian history and symbols\(^1\). These two claims were marked with a series of conflicting political moves, especially from the Greek side – ranging from an economic embargo because of the use of Alexander's symbols\(^2\), to blocking Macedonia's NATO bid\(^3\), to halting the European integration processes\(^4\). The process currently is in front of the International Court of Justice, as the Macedonian government decided to press charges against Greece for breaking the interim accord signed in 1995\(^5\).

**Alexander the Great, Symbolic Capital and the Greco-Macedonian Context**

From the historical overview it seems that two very obvious conclusions about the imagination of Alexander the Great that can be drawn. First, is that during the course of more than two thousand years, the myth of the continuity with Ancient Macedonian royalties was incorporated in many different contexts to serve as a source of legitimacy. No matter if it was the generals of his army, the Egyptian and Roman emperors, the medieval royalties or the...
modern nationalists, the case has always been that there were attempts to derive political power from the legacy of the glorious historical figure of Alexander the Great. There are probably no more claims about any other legacy than there are for his. The second point is that those different parties claiming their relation with Ancient Macedonia often ended up contesting the other pretenders to the legacy of Alexander, although every different claim was distinctively conceptualized, since there are obvious contrasts between the way polities were legitimized through the time. Starting with the fight between Perdiccas and Ptolemy, it seems that the fate of contesting claims to the glorious past is very current, as the eyes of world politics are nowadays focused on the Greco-Macedonian dispute and their own fight over the historical rights to claim Alexander the Great and the Ancient Macedonian civilization.

Generally speaking, the main reason for the contested claims over his legacy, is that the link with Alexander generates, as Pierre Bourdieu calls, symbolic capital\(^{20}\). The teleological perceptions of Alexander's reign contributed to the creation of a more mythologized version of the past in which much of the complexities were simplified: he was portrayed as a hero that driven by his noble ideas, liberated the world and established the largest political unit ever. His era was an era of power, dignity, successes and optimism. Alexander's reign thus could serve as the Golden Age that had to be reclaimed, an ideal upon which ethnic and national communities could be established\(^{21}\). The Golden Age of Alexander the Great's reign is the precise version of the glorious past that could strengthen the legitimacy and the emotional appeal of nationalist movements, as well as to articulate the definition of the nations\(^{22}\).

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22 According to the model offered by Levinger and Lyttle, op. cit. p. 181
The symbolic capital of the meta-narrative of Alexander the Great is twofold. Its first value, is what I call “universal” and it could refer to any national or other type of community in the world that would claim Alexander as their ancestor or simply an idol. One of the layers of this myth is, for example, the immense military successes of Alexander's army are a solid basis for developing a myth of military valour, that legitimizes non-political actions and homogenizes the community\textsuperscript{23}. This myth is applicable not just to Macedonia and Greece, but also to all the ethnic or tribal communities dispersed around the territories that used to be part of his empire and it does not necessarily has to be related with the legitimization of violence. In this respect, the myth of Alexander's conquest provides a symbolical capital also for modern day armies, sport clubs, fiction writers, Hollywood directors and music bands. Similar to the “military valour”, the perception of Alexander as a humane leader who spread Hellenism through the Barbarian East, could be the basis of forging myths of election and civilizing mission, implying cultural superiority of the claiming nation in comparison to the others\textsuperscript{24}. This types of claims, besides for the geographically approximate contenders, are characteristic for the mere Western culture, as Alexander the Great humanist has been a symbol of Enlightenment and spreading noble values and probably the inspiration for what Said condemns as Orientalism.

**Thesis Objectives**

Yet, the field of interest of my thesis is rather the second type of symbolic capital the meta-narrative of Alexander the Great and the Ancient Kingdom of Macedon provides, and that is what I call the “case-specific” or simply the “Macedonian” one, referring to the Greco-Macedonian contest.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
Belonging to the ancient world, Alexander's Empire image provides a suitable content for the myths of antiquitas, which assigns the nation the historical right over controlling certain territories and symbols\(^{25}\). The hypotheses that the Ancient Macedonians were a unique community with a separate culture, gives the opportunity to the ones claiming the link to imagine their community as being sui generis, providing them with the myths of homeland, foundation, descent, national character, etc\(^{26}\). As Smith argues, the myth of the Golden Age provides the name, the emblem, the myths of common ancestry, are the basic constituents and pillars of an ethnic community\(^{27}\), and that is particularly the value of the Golden Age.

As the myths are to assert legitimacy and strengthen the authority by simplifying reality\(^{28}\), it is logical to assume that the grand meta-narrative of the legacy of Alexander the Great is very precious to many who pretend to political power. By having the exclusive right to claim the direct link to him, one instantly gets the possibility to manipulate with highly forceful arsenal of political myths. Back at the time of Perdiccas and Ptolemy, it was not the control of the corpse itself, but the control over the remains of the gigantic Empire that was at stake. Twenty-three centuries after that, in the Greco-Macedonian feud, it is not just the dignity or the historical truth, but the 'selves' of the contending nations that are at stake. Greeks and Macedonians accuse each other of attempted theft of identity as identity was something material. As it will be discussed below, for a person that is seen as a unifier rather than as a conqueror, Alexander the Great had been the reason for much of a hostility between these two neighboring states, but also a reason for much arguments even within the respective communities.

Discursively, the Macedonian and the Greek governments are resembling Perdiccas

\(^{26}\) According to Kolstø, op. cit., p. 17
\(^{28}\) Ibid.
and Ptolemy, battling for the corpse of their glorious commander in order to prove their legitimacy. Both have enjoyed broad support from the respective populations in regard to the identity policies raising the animosity between them. So, the main task of this thesis is to commit a vivid dissection of the different modes of political use of the glorious ancient past in order to legitimize the community and reject the “otherness” and the “others”.

In the following chapters, I will try to determine the political role, the consequences and the reasons of the politicization of the narratives of antiquity in the broader context Greco-Macedonian dispute.

Chapter I examines the context of the diplomatic conflict in the light of international relations and nationalism theories in order to determine its grounds. The main argument is that it is precisely the exploitation of the ancient past stirs the emotions and the dispute between the two sides here is framed as a symbolic contest with a complex structure that goes to several different phases and involves several combined strategies.

Chapter II deconstructs the rhetoric of ancient nationhood in the respective cases. The main arguments here are that in the Greek case, the suggested relationship between the Modern state and Alexander the Great perpetuated the expansionist ideas, strengthened the homogeneity of the nation and helped in the definition of the “others”. In the Macedonian case, on the other hand, my argument is that the activation of the myth of Ancient Macedonia resulted with differentiation from others' claims of the Slavic Macedonian identity, but its recent turbulent revival induced new ethnic Macedonian nationalism and deep divisions in the society.

Chapter III tries to assess the reasons behind the essentialism attributed to the myth in the respective contexts. The main question raised here is why the myth of Alexander prevailed over other national myths in the both cases. The answer will be conceptualized by building
upon two different approaches to nationalism: the ethnosymbolic and the instrumentalist. The key argument here is that the two sides by remembering the grand narrative, besides utilizing the case-specific value, avoid their unpleasant episodes from the history: in the Greek case, the myth of continuity overrides the history of an assimilation nation-building process and its consequences, while in the Macedonian case the myth is used for covering the frustrations of being a belated nation, established only in the 20th century.

The concluding chapter, tries to sum up the points and addresses the possible shortcomings of the paper, proposing some points for further research, and to framing the outcome of the research into the approaches to studying nationalism.
Chapter I. National Myths, International Dispute, Symbolic Conflict

Nationalism and International Dispute: General Considerations

Nationalism is usually perceived as a principle that defines the relation between the individuals and society. The national identification of the individual juxtaposes them in the social order as a member of the imagined community of the nation. However, nationalism and national identification serve also as a primary link between the society and the world order at large. The world we live in is a world in which the nation-state is the dominant mode of political organization and representation, hence nationalism besides providing the inner structure of nations and states, is in an inherently “dialectical relationship” with international relations and foreign policy.

Nationalism, despite providing the criteria of the political organization, also contributes to political mobilization by employing an appealing rhetoric based on historical myths. Although nationhood is an existing discursive category, the nationalist rhetoric creates the illusion of the objective collective 'self' as if it was the super-ego of the nation, attributing it with a sacred cause and moral historical rights. Thus, the process of the constitution of the national 'self' is inherently complemented with a process of creating boundaries and the Other. The particular Other is the object of nationalist attitudes and its presence is essential for establishing

32 Prizel, op. cit.
any foreign policy at first place. Having in mind that the Other is usually a fellow, often neighboring subject of nationalism with its own nationalist rhetoric for itself, it can be said that every international dispute could be read as internationalist dispute, in respect to the rootedness into two colliding nationalist rhetorics. Yet, identity matters are not always crucial for an international conflict to be inferred, since the key category in the international affairs are interests (for example, security or control over resources). A starting premise here is that sometimes, identity questions can be related to political interest. By the same token, the nationalist flavor of an international conflict is proportional with the political interest attributed to the identity matters.

Additionally, taking nationalist rhetoric as inherently paranoid\textsuperscript{34}, in respect to the narratives of self-victimization and seeing the Others mainly as a threat, the assumption is that all spheres affected by it, including international relations, are more or less marked by paranoia. The nationalist paranoia is inevitable in many international conflicts, of different nature and scope. China objects the recognition of Taiwan by claiming it has always been a part of China. One paranoid nationalist attitude that might lead to an international conflict is the refusal of the Baltic states to provide citizenship to Russians. Another one, is the Slovenian blockade against Croatia's bid for an European Union membership, as a result of the unsettled border issue. But probably one of the most paranoia-driven international disputes today is precisely the infamous “name” dispute between the two neighboring Balkan countries, Greece and Macedonia.

The Balkan peninsula is one of the most turbulent areas in terms of excessive nationalism taking place. The dissolution of the Ottoman and the Habsburg Empire, and one century later, the break up of Yugoslavia, were to some extent a consequence of rising national movements in the region, at the same time being a cause for the emergence of other

\textsuperscript{34} Danilo Kis, “On Nationalism”, \textit{Performing Arts Journal}, Vol. 18, No. 2 (May, 1996), pp. 13-17
nationalisms. During this period of about two hundred years, the region was struck by regional wars, world wars, exoduses, population exchanges, executions, deportations, militant assimilation, “ethnic cleansing”, “fratricides” and many re-drawings of the borders and institutional frameworks. Greece and Macedonia always had an important role as the events were happening. The burden of the past, characteristic for the Balkanist discourse\textsuperscript{35}, is also on the back of these two nations. The intensity of history though, inevitably resulted in individual and collective paranoia over the survival of the national 'selves'. The Greco-Macedonian feud is an ideal case study of how the dynamics of history and particularly the nationalist reading of the past can induce an international dispute that defies any rational approach but at the same times threatens the very foundations of reason in both societies.

\textbf{The Greek Context}

Greece has been established as a an independent state under the supervision of the Great Powers in 1830, that after a turbulent period of changing regimes, consolidated as a democracy in 1974. Its modern history has been marked by the numerous political issues related to the meta-narrative of the national question. In general terms, the content of this myth encompasses the aspects of definition of the national 'self', that vary from the struggle for proving the historical truth to the nation-building efforts of the state in order to maintain the homogeneity and the uniqueness of the modern Greek nation\textsuperscript{36}. The excessive exploitation and development of the imaginary national discourse in the everyday experience in Greece and the essentialism ascribed to it (the “nationalization of society” in Balibar's sense\textsuperscript{36}), has led Stathis Gourgouris to portray modern Greece as a product of “daydreaming”,

\textsuperscript{35} On the “burden of the past”, see Maria Todorova, “The Trap of Backwardness: Modernity, Temporality and the Study of Eastern European Nationalism”, Slavic Review vol. 6, no.1, (2005), pp. 140-164

\textsuperscript{36} Étienne Balibar, “The nation form: History and Ideology” in Étienne Balibar, Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, \textit{Race, nation, class: ambiguous identities} (Verso, 1991), pp. 86-106. Balibar's account on nationalization is that it is a process exceeding the cultural realm.
or being “a dream nation”\textsuperscript{37}, while Triandafyllidou and Paraskevopoulou conclude that the Greek nation is in fact a dynamic process that has been always going through the process of definition and redefinition\textsuperscript{38} (as any other nation in-deed).

The establishing of modern Greece was inherently bound to military collisions with the Ottoman Empire. There were several spheres of contention, the seething ones being the unresolved territorial disputes, of which the most important was the late-emerging Cyprus issue, as a result of the dissolution of the British Empire. As the perspective of the Greco-Turkish relations was not promising, it was their unlikely alliance under the NATO umbrella during the Cold War that neutralized the animosity\textsuperscript{39}. Decades after, it is the European Union managing the situation\textsuperscript{40}. However, the Greco-Turkish disputes remains an important concern regarding the Greek national question, thus providing enough of a source for developing a nationalist rhetoric in which Turkey will be seen as a threat rather than as an ally\textsuperscript{41}.

Another very important issue that is related to Greco-Turkish relations, but also with the definition of the 'self' and the 'others' of the Greek nation, is the failure of the Greek authorities with minorities' recognition and protection. In 2009, for example, in the Report of the Council of Europe regarding the human rights of minorities in Greece expressed concern over the inability of Greece to provide the basic rights and freedoms to minorities\textsuperscript{42}. Greece

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{38} Anna Triandafyllidou and Anna Paraskevopoulou, “When is the Greek Nation? The Role of Enemies and Minorities”, \textit{Geopolitics}, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Autumn 2002), pp. 75-98
\bibitem{39} Ronald R. Krebs, “Perverse Institutionalism: NATO and the Greco-Turkish Conflict”, \textit{International Organization}, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Spring, 1999), pp. 343-377
\bibitem{41} For instance, during a recent visit of the American President Barrack Obama to Turkey and skipping Greece, there were some reactions from Greek politicians that it is a bad sign for Greece. See Ariana Ferentinou, “Obama's Turkey trip upsets Greek political circles”, \textit{Hürriyet Daily News}, 16.03.2009 \texttt{<http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=11214839&p=2>}, last accessed 20.04.2009
\bibitem{42} “Report by Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, following his
has an open problem with the unrecognized Albanian minority as well. In the response to the Report, the Greek government stepped towards some concessions with regard to the Muslim minority, yet denied the existence of “a so called ‘Macedonian’” one. The latter thus leads to another important aspect of the national question in Greece – the Greco-Macedonian feud, which is the main field of focus of this thesis. However, before a broader analysis of that feud is being made, it is necessary to conduct a brief overview in the emergence of the new Macedonian national question in the 1990s as well.

**The Macedonian context**

The re-emergence of the national question in Republic Macedonia was one of the several consequences of the fall of the Yugoslav federation in the early 1990s. Eric Hobsbawm in his well respected work on the escalation of nationalism in the late twentieth century stated that much of the events following the dissolution of Yugoslavia were a sequel to the “unfinished business of 1918-1921”. As well, he seemed to be sure that the national questions being much more sensitive before 1914 turned out not to be explosive in the period of resurgence of radical nationalism. One of the unresolved puzzles in this respect, well known in the history, was the infamous Macedonian Question. As Hobsbawm said, unlike the other cases, Macedonia had successfully managed to stay away from the Yugoslav crisis, and remained peaceful in the years marked by hatred and bloodshed in the region.

Although not immediately turning into violence and warfare like the rest of the parts dissolved from the federation, Macedonia after the collapse of Yugoslavia inevitably found

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43 In the Greek official rhetoric, the term Muslim minority refers to all Turks, Pomaks, Roma, Albanians etc.
44 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
itself stuck in a nationalist-infected environment.

Only partially the Yugoslav context was a factor in the re-opening of the Question. The Serbian nationalist forerunners frustrated by the departure of the small brother from the federation, started referring to Macedonians as South Serbs and expressing national hatred as well as irredentism\textsuperscript{47}. Fortunately, those claims were never followed by serious political action. Today, despite the antagonism between the respective Orthodox Churches, there is no other aspect of the Serbian-Macedonian dispute that remains open.

Similarly, Bulgarian nationalists constantly have been claiming that all the Slavic speakers in the region of Macedonia, thus ethnic Macedonians, are their fellow co-nationals who speak a dialect of Bulgarian, addressing much of the commonalities in historical heritage and culture. These claims were in a paranoid manner denied by a majority of Macedonians\textsuperscript{48}. However, this issue, unlike the Serbian, certainly has the capacity to affect relations between the two states in the future, as some of the Bulgarian major political actors tentatively raise the question\textsuperscript{49}. Yet, a promising factor is that the official Bulgarian political discourse is very careful and reasonable in regard to this problem\textsuperscript{50}.

The ethnic heterogeneity and some of the rising minority questions additionally contributed to the complexity of the Macedonian national issue, culminating with an armed


\textsuperscript{49} For example, the Sofia mayor, Boiko Borisov, recently stated that “… we should make them [Macedonians] accept their own history”. See “Borisov would put Macedonia back under the Bulgarian umbrella”, A1 News 05.02.2009 [in Macedonian], Available online at \textit{<http://a1.com.mk/vesti/default.aspx?VestID=104013>}, last accessed 17.04.2009

conflict between Albanian guerillas and the Macedonian army that lasted for several months, during the summer in 2001, proving the previously discussed Hobsbawm's hypothesis being totally incorrect. The incapability of the system to bridge the gaps between the different identifications has also perpetuated ambiguities and uncertainties in respect to the definition of nation in Macedonian social science and the public discourse\(^{51}\). This “rigid definition”, was not just an issue of semantics, yet a mere burden to the reading and interpreting the phenomena of nation and national identity in both public debate and political practice\(^{52}\), and has reflected in the other national issues. Nonetheless, an important step forward was done with the signing of the Ohrid accords, and the implementation of multiculturalist policies that had the objective to raise the representation of minorities in all the spheres of society\(^{53}\). These extraordinary circumstances of the uncertainties regarding the cultural boundaries and the interchangeable state of denial of identity, could be an argument for taking the Republic of Macedonia as a clear example of a hyperreal entity\(^{54}\).

**The Feud Exposed**

What is common for the cases mentioned, in which the national 'self' of Macedonia is involved and contested, is that all of them are at least temporarily settled. The one remaining unresolved and seething is particularly the dispute with Greece.

On the surface, the reason for the conflicting attitude between Greece and Macedonia, according to the Greek side, is that the use of the term “Macedonia” by their northern neighbor as their official country name, implies irredentist claims and territorial pretensions

\(^{52}\) See Anastas Vangeli, “Theory of the Civic Identity”, *Politichka Misla* no. 16, 2006, 39-51  
\(^{53}\) See Kocho Danaj, “Dogovor vo forma na pozhelen konflikt” [The agreement as a desirable compromise], *Forum Analitika*, vol. 6 (2006), pp. 26-35  
\(^{54}\) Aleksandar Boskovic, “Virtual Places: Imagined Boundaries and Hyperreality in Southeastern Europe”, *CTHEORY* (1997), <http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/contributors2/boskovictext.html>, last accessed 22.05.2009. The author argues: “So, Macedonia is a new country that perhaps exists and it is inhabited by people claimed and at the same time denied by their neighbors. Macedonia not only provides some interesting examples for the concept of hyperreality - it is hyperreal itself!”
towards Greece, since “Macedonia is (and has always been) Greek”\textsuperscript{55}. The association of the term “Macedonia” is made in relation to the region Macedonia in Greece\textsuperscript{56}, that is perceived as the core territory of the Ancient Kingdom of Macedon. Since Ancient Macedon has been explicitly treated as integral part of the metatext of Hellenism, besides the territorial implications, the use of the term “Macedonia” is said that also implies “stealing” the Greek history. According to the Macedonian side, the Greek demands for changing the name of the country are said to be an attack against the identity of the Macedonian people and said to be motivated by historical reasons, as Ancient Macedon is claimed to be a non-Hellenic entity. Regarding the alleged irredentist claims, they are denounced by Macedonian representatives since Macedonia has issued Constitutional changes explicitly outlawing any territorial pretension towards the neighboring countries. At the same time, while Greece negates the existence of an ethnic Macedonian minority, Macedonia demands its full recognition.

Basically, these are the official grounds for the feud between the two countries.

Whether one might argue over the rationality or the justifications of the problem\textsuperscript{57}, in the realist perspective of the international relations it is a dispute between a strong state (Greece) and a small state (R. Macedonia). In such a situation, the one who really has to be concerned in the first place, is the small one. Its progress depends directly on the possibilities of alliance between the two\textsuperscript{58}. Nonetheless, one of the premises of this thesis is that the international

\textsuperscript{55} “Macedonia is Greek” has been the leitmotif of the Greek foreign policy, but also a phrase used in science as popular culture. See Victor Roudometof, “Nationalism and Identity Politics in the Balkans...”, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{56} Yet some Greek definitions of Macedonia include the southern portions of the territory of Republic of Macedonia (Pelagonia, Strumica region, Mariovo, Ohrid and Prespa).


\textsuperscript{58} This argument is built upon the insights offered by Neophytos Loizides. Drawing on authors on transnationalism and interdependence theory like Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, Loizides argues that “In this case, fYR Macedonia would assume the role of the small state, which has to face external threats to national survival and adapt its foreign policy to the constraints of the international environment. Greece might assume the role of the stronger state, which faces a lower level of external threat [...].” Neophytos Loizides, “Greece and the Macedonian Problem after the Interim Accord of September 1995: In search of viable solutions to a centuries-old conflict”, Master Thesis, Southeast European Studies Program, CEU, 1998, p. 5
perspective alone is insufficient in the analysis of the Greco-Macedonian feud, simply because for many years the solutions proposed by domestic and international relations theory are constantly failing to provide a feasible solution for the dispute.

The irrationality of this row lies in the specific dynamics between the nationalist sentiment and the both parties' attitudes of rejection of the other. Since the biggest stake in the dispute were the conflicting claims regarding the founding myth, the roots for all the controversies sought to be looked for in the constituting and the design of the new national 'self' of Macedonia. Surely, it was the powerful state (Greece) that could allow itself exercising the very politics of rejection.

The rejection from the Greek side in respect to the establishment of the independent-to-be Yugoslav republic was the objection to the recommended recognition of Macedonia\textsuperscript{59}. Despite the conclusions of the Badinter commission that Macedonia is ready to be recognized as a State, Greece intervened in the European Community the process of recognition to be halted until the new country changed its name\textsuperscript{60}. However, the dispute between the two neighbors turned much more serious in the moment when Macedonian aspirations for the ancient past were translated into politics, or to be precise, into politics of symbols. That happened when the Macedonian Parliament unanimously adopted the flag with the illustration of the Sun of Vergina, an ancient Macedonian symbol, as official flag of the new independent state\textsuperscript{61}. The official Greek stance, as it was said, was that everything that is Macedonian, thereby the symbols like the Sun of Vergina, belonged exclusively to Greece\textsuperscript{62}. Consequently, the name of Macedonia, teamed up with the ancient flag was considered to be a straightforward statement that post-Yugoslav Macedonia was pretending to the rights to the

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{61} Brown, op. cit.
heritage Ancient Kingdom of Macedon, much of what had become part of the Greek culture and politics throughout the time. The very same Sun of Vergina, for instance, was (and still is) resembled on the flag of the Greek region of Macedonia. So, when the Sun of Vergina became a symbol of the part of the territory of Macedonia in the borders of the Republic, which additionally was named Macedonia, the situation could have been understood as an opening of a direct conflict of both identifications over the historical right to claim their Ancient Macedonian origin. Furthermore, solid background for conceptualizing the Greek “defensive nationalist” was sought in the legacy of the Greek Civil War, when Macedonian irredentism was at its peak, and an analogy was being made that the history might repeat itself.

The myth easily mobilized the masses for political protests. In the Macedonian case, one factor was that it was not just the protest over historical rights, but also a claim to self-determination accompanied with the inevitable radical nationalism and irredentism. Still, the mobilization of the Greek people was much more impressive, as a consequence of the “archaelogization” of the Greek public discourse concerning to the issue, along with the speculations about possible military threat from the alliance between Macedonia and Turkey adding up to the image of the revived threat from the north.

The flag of the Republic of Macedonia was changed in 1995 after the intense pressure

63 Ibid.
64 Brown, op. cit.
65 The leader of the nationalist VMRO-DPMNE, Ljubcho Georgievski, made a famous statement that “the next congress of the Party will be held in Thessaloniki”, which meant that he stood for acquiring the city of Thessaloniki in the borders of Macedonia (a big port, nowadays in Greece, but perceived as historical part of Macedonia). A newly introduced national symbol was the “map of ethnic Macedonia”, based Territorial aspirations have been banned with the Constitution though, and since the claims of Georgievski, not much of the appetite for expansion had remained in mainstream politics. However, territorial aspirations were still plausible in popular culture. See “Koj reche kongres vo Solun?” [Who was about to hold congress in Thessaloniki], Utrinski Vesnik, 09.03.2007, <http://www.utrinski.com.mk/?ItemID=6E141DBCA1660C4AB439B15F8E4599DC>, last accessed 27.05.2009.
66 See Kofos, op. cit.
from Greece, including an unlawful economic embargo and political arm-twisting\(^{67}\). The dispute over the name was delayed by signing the interim agreement by which Macedonia obliged to use the temporary reference “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” on the way to getting full membership in the United Nations\(^{68}\). The following years of the dispute were quite silent. A compromise was never reached, but Greece halted the diplomatic pressure and at least superficially supported Macedonia in the efforts to stabilization and integration in the European Union and NATO.

The calm down between the two countries lasted for more than 10 years. The economic cooperation expanded dramatically as a large portion of the foreign investments in Macedonia came from Greece. The Greek presidency of the EU in 2003 pushed the European Union towards offering membership to Western Balkan countries which benefited directly Macedonia, and later, in 2005 Greece did not react to the Macedonia's EU candidacy bid, but even supported it\(^{69}\). The same went for the NATO integration. The temporal name was enough of a compromise for the both parties and the emotions were set aside.

Yet, many of the Macedonian people were never satisfied with their country being called a former Yugoslav republic\(^{70}\). As in 2006 the pro-nationalist VMRO-DPMNE party came in power, the stance towards the “name dispute” started to change. What was the novelty, was the radical shift in the identity politics towards the myth of Alexander the Great.

\(^{67}\) Takis Mikas argues that the real motives of Greece were even the “destabilization of the young republic and its eventual demise”. See Tachis Mikas, *Unholy alliance: Greece and Milošević’s Serbia* (College Station: A&M University Press, c2002), p. 43 On the economic embargo see John Shea, “The Course and Meaning of the Greek Embargo Against Macedonia”, in *Macedonia and Greece: the struggle to define a new Balkan nation* (McFarland, 1997), pp. 328-310

\(^{68}\) See Mirchev, op. cit.


\(^{70}\) For example, there was a massive civil society action supported by the Open Society Institute, for the promotion of the constitutional name of the country and the abolition of the reference FYROM. See Elena Simonoska, “Don't FYROM Me - Skopje Sends a Message to Strasbourg”, SEE Portal, 24.03.2004, *<http://see.oneworld.net/article/view/82332/1>*, last accessed 04.05.2009
A process of so called “antiquization of the Macedonian identity”\(^1\) was inaugurated with the renaming of the Skopje Airport into the airport “Alexander the Great”\(^2\), awakening the spirits in the dispute with Greece in no time\(^3\). Furthermore, several other moves were taken by the Macedonian government in the direction of the revival of the ancient roots of the Macedonian nation: the renaming of the main sports stadium into Philip II Arena and the main highway into Alexander of Macedon\(^4\), the broadcasting of numerous video clips with explicit nationalist content produced by the government for “raising the national dignity and optimism” featuring Alexander the Great himself\(^5\), the placement of ancient monuments in front of the headquarters of the government\(^6\), the high meeting with the royal family of Hunza, highland tribal community from Pakistan claiming to be descendants of the Alexander's troops\(^7\), and the exploitation of the ancient symbols in the campaigns of the governmental Agency for Youth and Sports\(^8\) are just some of the acts contributing to the

\(^1\) The term antiquization was one of the hottest topics in the presidential elections. The term itself is borrowed from the history of art. “Antiquization is a term coined by architectural historians to refer to the Renaissance practice of giving a city the appearance of ancient Rome or Athens through the introductions of structures organized in the classical mode. These were occasionally temporary, as in the case of the “cérémonies à l’antique” – public events of a political content – but more frequently permanent. This phenomenon became visible in Rome and Florence and in the other major Italian towns around the fifteenth century and spread through the cities of the north – Lyon, Paris, Antwerp and London – throughout all the world, up to our times.” See Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre, *Classical architecture : the poetics of order* (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, c1986), p. 263


\(^7\) Will be elaborated below.

general picture of antiquization of the present in Macedonia. The process is about to be
crowned with the erection of a colossal and very expensive sculpture of Alexander on the
main square in Skopje any day now\textsuperscript{79}. In the meantime, Greece reacted to this policies and
significantly changed the attitude towards the Republic of Macedonia, what resulted with the
blockage of Macedonia's NATO bid, and the name issue has become another benchmark on
the road to the EU accession of Macedonia. The Macedonian government however, seems to
be very uncompromising on the issue and is widely being criticized of being isolationist\textsuperscript{80}.

What can be concluded here is that in the period of the coming in power of VMRO-
DPMNE in 2006, till today, new politics inaugurated in Macedonia were the reason for
Greece's strong objections and the raising significance of the name dispute as a threat for the
region's stability. The diplomatic pressure from the stronger state and the defiance and the
rhetoric of self-sufficiency of the weaker one, just perpetuate the conflict with the same pace
as in the early 1990s. Back then, and now, the line of antagonism is clear – it is the political
use of ancient past by the Macedonian government in order to attain political legitimacy at
home. During the years of “uneasy symbiosis” (from the interim accord to the renaming of the
airport), the different issues between Macedonia and Greece were not questioning the
progress in the bilateral relations and the progress of the region in general. Literally said, the
two sides might have even discussed over name and minority issues separately, but it turned
out that the head of Alexander in the airport hall now is too much of an obstacle for that.

The Feud and the Framework of Symbolic Conflicts

One approach that transcends the insufficiency of the international relations theory in
terms of deconstructing the contest over the “ownership” of the ancient past. Simon Harrison,

\textsuperscript{79} See “Cela Firenca lee za Makedonija” [All the sculptors in Florence are working for Macedonia], Dnevnik
Daily Newspaper, 04.05.2009,
\texttt{<http://dnevnik.com.mk/?ItemID=56CF0E67D8739940B059D961D735395E>}, last accessed 04.05.2009

\textsuperscript{80} See an interview with Jasna Koteska: Isolationism is happening to us, A1 news, 08.02.2009,
departing from the orthodox Durkheimian interpretation of the identitarian complex as expression, leans towards the Bourdieu's definition of symbolic capital, and argues that actually “symbolic practices are inalienable possessions”\(^81\). Furthermore, he introduces the category of “proprietary identities” that are “social identities whose outward symbols or markers are treated as a property, and may be disputed as a property”\(^82\). The Greco-Macedonian conflict can be undoubtedly labeled as such.

Harrison argues that the different parties that contest each other's rights of a certain narrative, are concerned with the relative distribution of symbolic capital, rather than with its absolute accumulation\(^83\). To explain this premise, he proposes four ideal-type models of symbolic contest: valuation contest in which the importance of a certain symbolical complex is at stake; proprietary contest, in which the ownership is at stake; innovation contest (ontologically sometimes taking place before the valuation), in which the respective sides try to innovate new meanings and functions of the symbols; and expansionary contest, in which the one side tires to change the other's side use of symbols\(^84\). In the empirical analyses, he uses many examples from different epochs and geographical regions to support his theory, among them the Greco-Macedonian dispute over the heritage of Alexander the Great as portrayed by Danforth, as an example for a proprietary contest\(^85\). Still, as he suggests, none of the examples corresponds to ideal-type of contests, thus what matters more is the strategies of the parties than the general labeling of the situation. The hypothesis to be proven in the following chapter is that the narrative of Ancient Macedonian nationhood, in the Greco-Macedonian symbolic conflict, underwent through a combination of all of the four suggested types of

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82 Ibid., p 4.
84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
contestation strategies.

In the next chapter, the role of the narrative of Ancient Macedonian nationhood will be reviewed in the light of the respective national discourses, in order the dynamics of the contest to be dissected.
Chapter II. The Ancient Past as a Nation-Building Material in Greece and Macedonia

On Modern Greece and the Ancient Past Fetish

In historiography, and in the social sciences as well, there is a convention that whenever writing about “modern Greece” or “modern Greek” one has to put an additional emphasis the modernity attributed to modern Greekness, since Greece or Greek themselves necessarily stand for entities which date back to ancient times. This distinction was practically a byproduct of the Western European romanticism that in the 18th and 19th century. One particular aspect of that wave was its strong affection towards the glorious ancient past of Greece, or simply said its Philhellenism or Graecophilia, a tendency that had its peak at the years of the Greek liberation struggle and the dawn of the Modern Greek state.

It was a time when many western, and especially German archaeologists (ex. Heinrich Schliemann) travelled to Greece in order to find the remains of the fetishized ancient Hellenic culture. Philosophers and poets, among them the spiritual fathers of the German nation, like Schiller, Herder and Goethe were fascinated and inspired by ancient Greece. Their ultimate ideal regarding the rise of the German realm was not the resurrection, but the reincarnation of the Hellenic virtue in a new, modern form.

The emergence of the image of ancient Greece and its linkage with the developments of Modern Greece, however, did not remain uncontested. There have been many authors that challenged the philhellenic perspectives, but two of them seem to be most sound: Jacob

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89 Ibid., p. 16
Fallmerayer and Martin Bernal. The former, an Austrian traveller and historian who had lived and worked in the 19th century, had produced massive amounts of literature arguing that Modern Greeks had nothing to do with Ancient Hellenes\(^\text{90}\). A century later, in the 1980s, it was the emergence of Bernal's "Black Athena", an attempt for scientific debunk of the myth of Ancient Greece, that had upset the classical scholarship. Bernal argued that the classical Hellenistic civilization was in fact rooted in the Eastern and especially African cultures. Later, that civilization was wiped out and the efforts to create not just a Greek modern nation, but a whole neoclassical civilization without referring to the afro-asian core of antiquity, was a mere racist and "Aryan" illegitimate approach\(^\text{91}\).

The theories of Fallmerayer and Bernal appeared at different points in time, were not resembling in terms of methodology and had separate structure of argumentation\(^\text{92}\). Although they touch upon a broad variety of matters, they seem to come to one important conclusion (among many others): the relationship between Modern and Ancient Greece was a mere construction. In many respects, they had a point there. Ancient Greece in the imagination of the German romantics, had not much to do with the development of the actual events in the modern Greece. The Hellenic high culture was long gone, and Greece now was facing a transition from an Ottoman province (Rum millet) to a nation-state, with a diverse ethno-cultural landscape, different way of life and an unexpected distance from the idealized European view of the living ancestor of the ancient civilization\(^\text{93}\).

\(^{90}\) Gourgouris, “Fallmerayer, or the Misfortunes of Ancestry”, *Dream Nation...*, op. cit. pp. 140-154 The author argues that because of the energetic objections against the historical right of Modern Greek claims to antiquity, the name Fallmerayer has gained a Satanic meaning in the Greek culture.


\(^{92}\) Yet Fallmerayer was a reference point for Bernal.

\(^{93}\) Peter Bien argues that the introduction of the narrative of continuity from antiquity was a two-fold distortion: distortion of the reality of Ancient Greece in terms of highly selective usage of the ancient past, and a distortion of the reality of Modern Greece, in terms of the novelties in the discourse brought by it. See Peter Bien, *Inventing Greece: The Emergence of Greek National Identity*, transcript from a lecture, [http://www.hri.org_por/Summer98/story2.html], last accessed 10.05.2009
However, the argument about the invention of Ancient Greece and the inequitable philhellenic-driven construction of the Hellenic continuity does not discredit the importance of the nation-building process in 19th century Modern Greece and the process of the revival of antiquity.

Although their ancient origin might have been disputed, the Greek-speaking elites had played an important role back in the Ottoman Empire much before the emergence of Modern Greece. Inhabiting a significant portion of what was known as “Turkey in Europe”, as well as in Asia Minor and the Pontus, they were an important factor of the inner political dynamic of the Empire. An emphasis has to be made on two important aspects of the Greek influence here: first, the cultural influx through the institution of the Orthodox Church and second, the fact that the vanguard of the non-Turkish population of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans was in fact the “Greek, Grecophone or Hellenized strata”.

The Ottoman Empire's political system was to a great extent based on the religious identification of its population. The political tie between the individual and the society at large was the confession and belonging to one of the several millets (religious communities), one of them being the Rum millet, that was comprised from all the Orthodox Christians living on the territories of the Empire. Since the legacy of the Orthodox Church was based upon the continuity with Byzantium, the main Orthodox institution remained to be the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the language of service and religious education remained to be Greek. The supervision over the Orthodox population on the Balkans, helped Greek culture become more coherent and to spread all over the region, which certainly later gave a significant impetus in the emergence of the Modern Greek nation. On the other hand, the idea that Greeks were the

95 See Ibid.
legitimate successors of Byzantium, the one and only Orthodox Empire, implied myths of “the Second Coming” of Constantinople. Those myths were basically saying that sooner or later, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Orthodox political order would be restored and the Greeks would come to reign again. In that respect, Orthodoxy was a perpetuator of the subversive ideas of national liberation, and at the same time defined and mobilized the potential nation along the lines of its belonging.

The high status of Greeks in the Ottoman Empire, was not just based on the supremacy derived from the role of the Patriarchate. Among Greeks there were prosperous merchants that made the Greek community one of the richest in the region and probably the layer of the Ottoman Empire that was closest to the Western world. Much of the Greek owned capital, in the 18th century was invested in education and literature production. Moreover, the notion of the Phanariotes, a social strata mostly of Greek origin and sharing Greek culture, that had high positions in the Patriarchate, but also in the Ottoman administration, while later many of them autonomously governed the vassal Danubian Provinces, is an additional evidence about the privileges and the favored position of Greekdom in the region even before the national breakthrough.

The existence of an established elite, in the Age of Nationalism usually was an important in-put in the nation-establishment and the nation-building process. That had equipped Greek nation-to-be with an advantage in terms of its establishment compared to its surrounding. Furthermore, the monks, the artists, intellectuals, poets and even merchants, all brought, what is known in the Greek historiography, the ideas of the Enlightenment to the

97 See Roudometof, “From Rum Millet...”, op. cit. p. 17
98 See Laurie Kain Hart, “Culture, Civilization, and Demarcation at the Northwest Border of Greece”, American Ethnologist, Vol. 26. No. 1 (Feb., 1999), pp. 196-220. Also, Danforth notes that the term “Greek” besides its meaning in terms of cultural categorization, was also used to refer to person who owned or worked in the private enterprise. See Danforth, op. cit., p 59.
99 See Mazower, op. cit.
100 Roudometof, “From Rum Millet...”, op. cit.
Greek people. The Enlightenment in Greece, because of the relations Greek elite had with the West, was to some point an extension of the influence of the Encyclopedist and the French Revolution\textsuperscript{101}, a fact that as it will be argued below, had much to do with the introduction of the narrative of the ancient past as a leitmotif of the Modern Greek nationalism.

However, the Enlightenment in Greece was not monolithic and was reflected in several tendencies in regard to the nation building. The first tendency, inclining to the ideal of the Orthodoxy, were promoting the Enlightenment values by criticizing the points of turning back to antiquity and projecting the Greek nation as a true, modern nation, based mostly on the Christian heritage\textsuperscript{102}. Nonetheless, there was another, pro-ancient, \textit{ethnogenetic} tendency emerging that later seemed to be prevailing, that stressed the particularism of the Greek nation, as opposed the universalism of Orthodoxy. Many authors, carrying the ideas of the continuity between the glorious ancient Hellenic past and the emerging modern nation, were translating, adapting and prefacing ancient works, setting the foundation of the rhetoric of Modern Greek nationalism, also known as Neohellenism\textsuperscript{103}.

One of the most crucial characters in the Greek Enlightenment was the so called \textit{Teacher of the Greek Nation}, Adamantios Korais, an intellectual, raised in Western Europe, influenced by the ideals of the Encyclopedists, French Revolution and European Philhellenism. Diverging from his religious background, Korais was fascinated from the secular ideal of the Enlightenment and the vision of the historic nation. In terms of the Greek nation in particular, he had attributed it many transcendental features, projecting it as a one holistic entity that lasted over the centuries. In his works, he framed the Modern Greek nation as an organic successor of the ancient Hellenic world, framing the Ottoman rule for instance,

\textsuperscript{101} Kitromilides, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{102} Gourgouris, op. cit. 76
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
as a single event that had no significant contribution in the design of the nation\textsuperscript{104}. Elie Kedourie, in the analysis of the non-Western nationalisms, says that the Greek nationalist rhetoric as established by Korais, later became a prototype for the Asian and African post-colonial nationalisms that would trace their ancient roots centuries before the colonial rule\textsuperscript{105}. At the same time, Kedourie traces the Greek nationalism in the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} century as the first nationalism that emerged in a context outside of Western Europe\textsuperscript{106}.

In that new, Neohellenic rhetoric brought by Korais and many other poets and prophets of the Greek nation\textsuperscript{107}, there was a semantic equation mark between notions of origin and continuity\textsuperscript{108}. Yet, the paradigmatic case for the prophecy of the continuity was not the work of Korais, because of his strong anti-clerical tendencies. It was the historian Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, the author of the first edition of the official Greek National history (a massive nine-volume edition) that stood for inclusion of various segments of the past. For instance, unlike Korais, he referred to the clerical Byzantine tradition as a medieval Hellenism and was probably the first and most important historian of the Greek nation that included the Ancient Macedonian narrative as well\textsuperscript{109}.

As seen, an important remark on the early years of the nation-building in Modern Greece was that a homogeneous rhetoric was hardly achieved, at least among different fractions within the Greek elite\textsuperscript{110}. Kitromilides, for instance, focuses on the collisions

\textsuperscript{105} Kedourie, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{107} Such as
\textsuperscript{108} Gourgouris, op. cit. 143-144
\textsuperscript{110} See Triandafyllidou and Paraskevopoulou, “When is the Greek nation...”, op. cit. Authors here argue that the Greek nation is a dynamic process, not a static entity, shifting the perspective of “when was the Greek nation” to “how is the Greek nation” (being) established.
between the “nationalizing” elite that insisted on the cultural particularity of Greekdom and Orthodox clergy that insisted on pastoral unity of different cultures sharing the same faith\textsuperscript{111}. Kechriotis refers to the multitude of nationalist projects in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} as a discussion between the competing identifications among Greeks\textsuperscript{112}. Among the other ideas, worth mentioning is for example the federalist Greco-Ottoman stream insisting on cooperation and even building a federation between Greece and the (remains of the) Ottoman Empire\textsuperscript{113}. Yet, even within these streams, different concepts emerged. In the Neohellenic stream, that was oriented towards the ancient roots of Modern Greece, there were factions that stood for an ethnic Greek nation and were not that much opposed to the Orthodoxy and there were the radical Enlighteners, like Rhigas Velistinlis (Pheraios), of Vlach origin, who stood for the establishment of a “civic” Greek nation that would unite all the enslaved peoples that had been under the Ottoman rule, but at the same time will destroy the Patriarchate, considered to be an agency of oppression\textsuperscript{114}. The imagination of the ancient past, was also divergent, with regard to the selectivity of the different fragments of the history that were to be incorporated in the nation-building process.

\textit{Modern Greek Nationalism and the Unlikely Emergence of the Myth of Ancient Macedonia}

Despite the plenty of disagreements and sometimes even antagonistic approaches to the definition of the 'self' of the Modern Greek nation, as well as the cultural heterogeneity within the Greek community, a single coherent story had to be produced for achieving unity. The main agency that ought to ensure the unitary discourse, was the Greek semi-sovereign state\textsuperscript{115}. Despite the, initial difficulties of protecting the Greek statehood though, soon a

\textsuperscript{111} Kitromilides, op. cit. p. 33
\textsuperscript{112} Vangelis Kechriotis, “Greek-Orthodox, Ottoman Greeks or just Greeks? Theories of coexistence in the aftermath of the Young Turk revolution”, Etudes Balkaniques, 2005, No. 1, pp. 51-71
\textsuperscript{113} See Kechriotis op. cit., Triandafyllidou and Paraskevopoulou, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{114} See Mazower, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{115} The Modern Greek state was established as a Kingdom under the supervision of the Great Powers. It was
national doctrine was elaborated, known under the name of the Megali Idea (the Grand Idea). It was very much oriented towards the cultural unity of the nation, inspired from the Neohellenic visions of the past.

Even though the main pillar of Neohellenism was the strong emphasis of the heritage of classic Hellenism, the Byzantine tradition was far from disregarded. Seeing the Byzantine Empire as a successor of Ancient Rome, and Rome as successor of Ancient Greece implied a clear trajectory of development of the Greek nation through the centuries, besides the historical complexities. That is why Athens and Constantinople (Istanbul), the respective symbols of the two epochs spontaneously rose to primacy as centers of the Neohellenism. Kotsakis discusses the respective functions of the two: the ancient past provided an “extrovert symbolic capital” that was used to prove to the outsiders the longevity and continuity of Hellenism, and the Byzantine past embodied the “introvert” one, as the Greek kingdom was the new Orthodox monarchy. Thus, the Byzantine narrative legitimized the Bavarian royal family, and at the same time was a reference point of the fulfillment of the Megali Idea.

The juxtaposition of Athens in the middle of the story of continuity with antiquity though, said much about the image of the ancient past modern Greece was trying to present: the ancient philosophy, the most progressive polis while the rule of Pericles, the marvelous pieces of art and literature and so on. It was not Sparta, the ante muralis military bastion, nor Thebes, nor Olympia, nor Mycenae, but it was Athens, the cradle of democracy and wisdom that was the epicenter of Hellenic culture, and now the axis of modern Greekness and Neohellenism. The symbolical capital Athens had to give to the Modern Greeks was the myth

formally ruled by the Bavarian royal house although the government was assigned a good amount of authority. See Clogg, op. cit.

116 See Triandafyllidou and Paraskevopoulou, op. cit.
117 Clogg, op. cit., p. 48
119 Ibid.
civilizing mission. As already argued, the distinguished position of the clerical and as well the secular elite gave the Greek intelligentsia a status of culturally superior towards the other Balkan peoples. The identification with ancient Athens, the locus where the classical philosophy was bred, was something that fit perfectly in the Greek self-perception, but also in the perception of the Philhellenic West that always imagined Greece as the vanguard of civilization.

The narrative of ancient nationhood of course, was vague and very inclusive towards the different segments of the past. Although the other components of the classic Hellenic history were not given the primacy over Athens, it can not be argued that they were less claimed to be Hellenic\textsuperscript{120}. Still, what was characteristic about the first years of the establishing of the Neohellenic tradition was the already mentioned evasive role of the ancient Macedonians in terms of the image of classical ancient Hellenism\textsuperscript{121}.

Rhigas Pheraios, one of the pivotal Enlighteners, for instance was clearly an admirer of Alexander the Great\textsuperscript{122}. He had authored several pieces on the Macedonian King and tried to use his image as an inspiration for the Greek national liberation. For instance, Alexis Politis points to 14 examples from the Modern Greek literature (among them the mentioned one of Adamantios Korais) that considered Ancient Macedonians were alien to Hellenism and were being a separate community\textsuperscript{123}. Korais in his works even used the terms “Macedonian” as a

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Sparta and the battle at the Thermopylae, for example, was used as an inspiration for the independence war:
\begin{quote}
[...] “Must we but weep o’er days more blest?
Must we but blush?---Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylae. [...]
\end{quote}
Lord Byron, “The Isles of Greece”, \textlangle\url{http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/byron-greece.html}\textrangle, last accessed 26.05.2009
\item Roudometof, op.cit. p. 281-282
\item Konstantinos Dimaras, \textit{A history of modern Greek literature} (SUNY Press, 1972), p.168
\item As quoted in Roudometof, op.cit., note 36
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
synonym for an enemy. That rhetoric of using the Macedonians as the contending other to Hellenism, is very similar to the example from the speeches of the ancient Athenian philosopher Demosthenes, who was categorical on the distinction between ancient Macedonian barbarianism and the high culture of Hellenism. Furthermore, the interpretation of Macedonia, at least in the early years of the Modern Greek state, was as it is a backwards entity that could never be an equal part of the Hellenic realm. Hence, having in mind that since decades ago, the Greek government is determined to “protect” the Greek identity of Alexander the Great, the question raising here is, how and why did the image of Ancient Macedonia became suddenly evaluated as integral part of the Neohellenic rhetoric?

As already discussed, the significance of the myth of Alexander the Great, besides the universal symbolic capital, in the case of the Greece and Macedonia has additional value in terms of its appeal as a narrative of continuity, thus an evidence for the historical right over Macedonia (whatever it may mean). So, what the myth of Alexander the Great provided, and the myth of Athens and ancient nobility by itself lacked, was the latter - a cause and an argument for including the territories of Macedonia in the Greek national project. The territorial appetite as formulated in the Megali Idea, although not primarily focused on the Greek expansion towards the region of Macedonia, had still projected it as one of the key aims of the Greek cause for the future. With Constantinople being discursively further and further, it seemed that now the target place for liberating the Greek nation was shifted to the north.

The region Macedonia at that time was still under the Ottoman rule, and there were plenty of claims and efforts from the neighboring expansionist nationalisms for annexing the

124 “They are infinitely more culpable, those Greeks who first allowed themselves to be corrupted by Macedonian gold” in Korais, op. cit. p. 156
125 In his speeches he was very insulting towards Ancient Macedonians, saying they were barbarians. He was extremely harsh on Philip II, seeing him as threat to Athens. That is why some of his speeches are known as “Philippics”.
126 Kotsakis, op. cit.
remains of “Turkey in Europe”. Every nationalism, especially in the 19th century, featured a vision of the political-unit-to-be, but on the Balkans, the boundaries between the political and the cultural units had never become clear, as the struggle for their definition was the primary goal of the newly founded states.

What in the contemporary Macedonian historiography is known as “the foreign nationalist propaganda”, was in fact a contest between the Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian and to some extent the Romanian nationalism to win the population over to their side, since they had already established institutions. It has to be stressed that the meanings and the usage of the words Macedonia and Macedonian has been highly ambiguous, what probably was a factor that contributed to the emergence of the disputes between different claims to the Macedonian history, territory and symbols.

The modes of articulation of the contenders' plans, however, were different. For the sake of avoiding digressions, I would here just hold on to the Greek efforts.

The mainstream perception on the different cultural influences in Macedonia back then, is that they were put into work through the paradigm of religious institutions. In the Ottoman system, as said before, the basic political category had been the religious belonging. Therefore, it is easy to assume that the target group of the Greek influence in Macedonia were the Orthodox Christians loyal to the Patriarchate. However, an unexpected and very unpleasant occurrence that was an obstacle to fulfilling the Greek plan for Macedonia, was the emergence of the Bulgarian Exarchate, and the formation of the Bulgar millet (1870), inaugurating a new politics of belonging beyond religion – the ethnic/national one.

127 Slavko Milosavleski, “Bugarskiot, Srpskiot i Grchkiot nationalizam i razvitikot na makedonskata nacionalna svest” [The Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek nationalisms and the development of the Macedonian national consciousness], Sociologoija na makedonskata nationalna svest [Sociology of the Macedonian national consciousness] (Skopje : Kultura, 1992), pp. 168-190
128 See Danforth, op. cit. p. 6
In the contest over Macedonia, the Bulgarian Exarchate had gained a starting advantage since the majority of the Orthodox inhabitants of Macedonia were Slavic speaking, thus culturally closer to the Bulgarian cause, some of them adopting the Bulgarian ethnic and national identification and even taking active role in the Bulgarian national movement. The only Greek-speaking community, as well culturally close to the Neohellenism were the bilingual Greco-Vlachs, a wealthy yet unequally distributed minority and certainly not the decisive factor in the hypothetical future nation-building in Macedonia. So, that is why the Greek attitude towards the Macedonian issue had to be adjusted. The similarity and the cross-cutting cleavages between the Slavic speakers in Macedonia and the Bulgarian culture led to formation of a Macedonian (or Macedonian-Bulgarian) identity which was based on cultural grounds\textsuperscript{130}.

The Greek response to the situation, was what Harrison calls, the innovation strategy. As the Bulgarian Exarchate was pursuing its goal by ethno-linguistic influences, the Patriarchate condemned them of ethno-philetism. Yet, the cultural realm seemed to be dominated by the Bulgarian cause, and the innovation was the projection of a new symbolical meaning, as the Macedonian identity was now redefined as bounded to the territory of Macedonia.

Namely, after Thessaly (1881), and parts of Epirus were already put under the Greek rule, the physical proximity of the Greek Kingdom and the region of Macedonia suddenly became very close\textsuperscript{131}. Since the government had failed to secure foreign support, and at the same time had difficulties securing the affinity of the people on the field, a new Greek policy was introduced for “liberating” the Greeks in Macedonia\textsuperscript{132}. It was based on strengthening

\textsuperscript{130} Evangelos Kofos, “Dilemmas and Orientations of Greek Policy in Macedonia: 1876-1886”, \textit{Balkan Studies}, 21/1 (1980), pp. 45-55
\textsuperscript{132} See Kofos, Dilemmas, op. cit.
influence of the Greek schools and religious institutions as well as economic influence, but it
was also based on “counteracting similar Bulgarian tactics” and questionable “armed
activity”\textsuperscript{133}.

The arrival of the modern state in the regions beyond Western Europe and the
definition of its borders, as Agnew argues, were often justified with the affiliation with the old
gone state formations in order to prove the historical right of settlement\textsuperscript{134}. According to this
pattern, as a reference point for defining what Macedonia is, the territory of the Ancient
Kingdom of Macedon was taken. Furthermore the question about which version of the
Ancient Macedonian past was more usable was opened, since the territories of the ancient
Kingdoms varied frequently. The particular version of Ancient Macedon that was taken as a
defining unit was the one under the rule of Philip II, the father of Alexander\textsuperscript{135}. The reason for
selecting the precise version of the boundaries that Philip set was simple and practical. First of
all, it was a territory that did not include the northern and central territories of Macedonia, in
which in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century the Bulgarian and the Serbian influence were much stronger than the
Greek one as those parts were mostly inhabited with Slavic people. Projecting the historic
Macedonia not far from the Aegean coast was less demanding and far more achievable.

Secondly, the figures of Philip and Alexander played a decisive role in the history of
Ancient Greece, thus had a lot of symbolical potential. Under Philip's leadership, the
Macedonian army had annexed several Hellenic territories and Philip had presented the idea
of uniting the Hellenic armies (the Corinthian League) into a conquest against Persia,
something that later had been accomplished by his son\textsuperscript{136}. Through the time, that process had

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{133}{Ibid.}
\footnotetext{134}{See Agnew, op. cit.}
\footnotetext{135} {Evangelos Kofos, “National Heritage and National Identity in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century
Macedonia” in (ed.) Marting Blinkhorn and Thanos Veremeis, \textit{Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality}
(Athens : SAGE-ELIAMEP, 1990), pp. 103-143}
\footnotetext{136}{An emphasis has to be made on the Philhellenism of Ancient Macedonian kings: because of being treated as
barbarians from the Athenians, they had a complex of self-conscious. For instance, Alexander the Great was
a big fan of Achilles and his ultimate goal was the spread of Hellenism. Being fascinated by Greek culture,}
\end{footnotes}
been read as an integration, not as a conquest. What the Modern Greek historians, in the first place Paparrigopoulos did centuries later, was a particular re-interpretation of (in Harrison's terms, innovation in) the context. They emphasized the points of proximity of the neighboring Ancient cultures on the expense of the differences between them. Hence, Philip the Barbarian now was seen as Philip the integrator, and the annexation of the Hellenic territories was simplistically said to be the unification of the whole Hellenic world under the rule of Macedonians\textsuperscript{137}. The territory of Philip's kingdom (and the territory from the early stages of Alexander's rule) was not regarded being the Kingdom of Macedon anymore, but it was the united Hellenic commonwealth. That clearly implied that Macedonia had been an integral, if not the crucial part of the Hellenic world. This viewpoint although failed in the rational elaboration of the connection, turned out to be very acceptable for the Modern Greek nationalism and it soon was very successfully incorporated in the nationalist programme. Alexander the Great was projected as a role model of the unification of the Hellenic world that had to happen (the Megali Idea), being the hero who millennia beforehand had brought the Enlightenment to the Orient\textsuperscript{138}. In fact, it was plausible to the Greek cause to the extent that the fight against the Ottomans for liberation of the Hellenic territories was soon focused on the particular territory of Macedonia.

The sentiment that Greece developed towards Macedonia, culminated with the involvement of Greece in the Balkan Wars and the annexation of large parts of the Ottoman villayets of Monastir and Salonica, what came to be known as the region of (Aegean) Macedonia\textsuperscript{139}. Besides the sentimental satisfaction derived from the incorporation of Macedonia under the Greek rule, some of the new acquisitions were the port of Salonica, the

\textsuperscript{137} Loizides, “Balkan Historians as Nation Builders...”, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{138} Roudometof, Invented traditions in Greece and Serbia, op. cit. p. 108-109
\textsuperscript{139} On the Balkan Wars see Lampe, \textit{Balkans into Southeastern Europe}, op. cit.
main urban center in this part of the Balkans, and the peninsula of Athos, considered to be one of Orthodoxy's most sacred sites, that contributed to another redefinition of the Greek national 'self'.

Still, Modern Greece as a prototype of a nationalizing state, the narrative offered by the new State was sort of a pan-Greek, all-encompassing view that united multiple usable segments of the past that could be connected together in a line of development till the present, which was not necessarily rational, but it certainly was a strong mean of mobilizing the population. As the nationalizing policies of the Greek state were maintained throughout the time, other cultures were wiped out the region Macedonia. Partially it was the exodus and assimilation of the Slavic population, referred to by Macedonian historiography as ethnic Macedonians. The rigid treatment towards the Jews, for example transformed the demographics in Salonica, once the city with highest Jewish population in the world. Many of the Jews were deported or forced to leave. A significant numbers of Muslims, both Turkish and non-Turkish speakers, that were spread all across the newly annexed territory were later exchanged and Greeks from Asia Minor, Pontus and Bulgaria were brought to settle Macedonia. Albanians in Western Macedonia were also object of a hard assimilation process. That contributed to the perception of Macedonia, no matter if ancient or modern, as

140 According to the theory of the nationalizing state as proposed by Rogers Brubaker. See “Nationalizing states in the old “New Europe” - and the new” in Nationalism reframed..., op. cit. p. 79. Paschalis Kitromilides expresses this in the following quote: “It is precisely the political role of the state in consolidating and legitimizing its power that will emerge most clearly from a consideration of the two dimensions of nation-building in nineteenth-century Greece.” in Kitromilides, op. cit., p 35. Later in the text, Kitromilides describes the role of the state apparatus, for instance the role of the public education and the army as one of the crucial instances of achieving the Greek national identity. See Kitromilides, ibis., p. 38. On the same matter, Gourgouris argues that the nationalizing upbringing via education in Greece was based on the Humboldtian idea of Bildung. See Gourgouris, op. cit.

141 See Kitromilides, op. cit.

142 This matter will be discussed further in the paper.


144 For an in-depth analysis from a folk-centered perspective about the Turco-Greek exchange of populations see Onur Yildirim, Diplomacy and displacement: reconsidering the Turco-Greek exchange of populations, 1922-1934 (CRC Press, 2006)
an integral and indistinguishable part of Greece, yet at the same time, Macedonian remained as an internal Other\textsuperscript{145}. Thus, this perception remained uncontested until the 1940s, when a new political actor was introduced to the scene: the People's Republic of Macedonia.

\textit{“When Alexander met Tito (in front of the Church)”}: The Coming of Age of Modern Macedonia

At a first glance, the idea of any relation between the Tito-led Partisan resistance during the Second World War in Yugoslavia and the narrative of Ancient Macedonian nationhood seems very odd and even self-contradicting. Communist ideology is usually perceived as anti-nationalist, and sometimes even anti-national, as if it repressed every expression of national feeling or belonging. Yet, starting from the premise that communism never repressed nationalism\textsuperscript{146}, and furthermore, that in some cases it had even instrumentalized it and even encouraged it\textsuperscript{147}, in this section it is argued that to a certain extent, the roots of the idea of continuity between Ancient and contemporary Macedonia should be looked for precisely in the establishment of the Macedonian statehood in post-war Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavia, besides Albania, was the only country in the War that managed to defeat the Axis occupation mostly due to its own military resistance. That fact earned the liberation movement under Tito's leadership a high status on the regional scene, becoming the source of legitimacy of the newly created Yugoslav Federation\textsuperscript{148}. One of the ways it was reflected in Tito's political projects, was through his plan of the Yugoslav regional expansion, both in term

\textsuperscript{145} Kotsakis, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{147} Katherine Verdery, \textit{National ideology under socialism : identity and cultural politics in Ceausescu's Romania} (Berkeley : University of California Press, c1991)
\textsuperscript{148} John R. Lampe, \textit{Yugoslavia as history : twice there was a country} (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 293
of political influence but as well as in terms of territory. Briefly said, his plan was through close political and economic collaboration and de-facto unification, to create a broader Balkan federation that would include the communist-ruled Albania and Bulgaria, but also Northern Greece (the Greek territory of Macedonia) or at least the territory inhabited with Slavic speaking populations, where the communist movement was on the rise. Its ultimate goal was establishing a mini-communist international that would be independent from the guardianship of Stalin\textsuperscript{149}. The political development of this idea lasted in the period between the middle of the War and 1948, when the Tito-Stalin split happened, precisely because Stalin's fear of the possibilities of the fulfillment of Tito's plans and his hypothetical increased influence in the region\textsuperscript{150}.

Tito was sharp-minded and a very pragmatic statesman. Even though he was running on a communist platform, he utilized every possible means for pursuing his goals. For the purposes of the project for creating the Balkan federation, he played to a great extent on the national question card. In that respect, one of the key assets for him was Macedonia\textsuperscript{151}.

The territory of Macedonia, after the Balkan Wars, was partitioned by the four neighboring countries: the Greek Kingdom, Bulgaria, Serbia (consequently the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenians, after 1929 called Yugoslavia), and a small part was annexed to the new Albanian state. The already mentioned ethnographic diversity of the region perpetuated and national and ethnic identifications multiplied as the respective parts were now included in the separate nation-building processes. One of the narratives that prevailed throughout this processes, was the Macedonian identification, later to be the pillar of the Macedonian nation. It was basically an identification among Slavic-speaking Orthodox

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\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.

\end{footnotesize}
people, that were spread across the whole region, and consequently, across the four Balkan states, and were not identifying them with any of them, but with the name of Macedonia. The Macedonian identification grounds were traced to the anti-Ottoman resistance and the IMARO/IMRO that was formed during the late 19th century and to the Macedonian National Revival at the same period, and arguably there was a presence of the myths of Philip II and Alexander the Great. Although the Macedonian identification before the Second World War is a matter of dispute, it was later institutionalized as in 1944, the limited-independent and sovereign People's Republic was proclaimed, as a part of the Yugoslav federation. The Republic was founded on the part of the territory that was previously annexed by Serbia and on small parts that used to be under Bulgarian and Albanian rule, and was seen as a nucleus for the future unification of all the parts of the region of Macedonia, possibly within the Balkan federation.

Yet, what was proclaimed along with Macedonian statehood was the existence of the Macedonian nation which included not just the inhabitants of the Republic, but also to the other parts of what was claimed to be the territory of the region Macedonia. This meant that a part of the Macedonian nation is seated in Greece, Bulgaria and Albania. As the Albanian share here was insignificant, the main question remained to be the former.

The Bulgarian-Yugoslav cooperation after the war went smoothly and soon Bulgaria took many steps towards improving the position of the recognized ethnic Macedonian

152 See Keith Brown, op. cit. Chapter 2. See also Ines Crvenkovska – Ristevska – “Anthropological view upon the process of creation of the Macedonian national identity in the period of revival”, EthnoAnthroZoom no. 5 (2005), pp. 73-113. For the narratives of antiquity see Ivanka Dodovska, “The awakening of the Macedonian national identity in the 19th century through the myth of Philip and Alexander the Great”, Politichka Misla no.16 (2006), pp. 29-38

153 Stefan Troebst argues that the proposed grand narrative of the genesis of the Macedonian national identity from the IMRO days till the 1990s is imperfect. Framing the historical events into the Miroslav Hroch's model of “national movements through phases”, Troebst concludes that the Macedonian movement has a questionable Phase B. See Stefan Troebst, “IMRO+100=FYROM?...”, op. cit.

minority, in the Pirin as well as the numerous diaspora from Aegean and Vardar Macedonia in big Bulgarian cities, then seen as yet another pillar of the Macedonian nation. Still, after the “schism” in 1948, the Bulgarian attitude towards the Macedonian question had radically changed as Sofia leaned towards Moscow. In the years to follow, the Yugoslav reading of the Macedonian nation was altered proposing the role of the Macedonia as Bulgaria's little brother. However, after 1956, when Todor Zhivkov was into power, all the provisions made towards Macedonia, among which the recognition of the existence of the Macedonian nation and consequently the existence of the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria, which is a matter even nowadays. At the same time, a process of de-Bulgarization of the Macedonian culture, in terms of wiping out all the Bulgarian affiliations and influences.\(^{155}\)

On the other hand, the relations with Greece, were far more complicated. Greece was a country in which a proxy war between the what later will be the Eastern and Western blocs happened. After the victory over the German occupation, an open contest for power took place, involving the right wing, supported by the British and later the Americans on one side, and the tentatively pro-Stalinist Communist party on the other. As the Communist were on the way to allying with the British, it was no one else but Tito that encouraged them not to do so, promising them a full support in their struggle and even logistics in case of war, for taking over Greece under the condition of further tight cooperation. These events were happening a short period after the war, meaning that both the Communists' and the right wing's armies were still mobilized for warfare. As the confrontation escalated, the Civil War in Greece broke out. As this happened at the time when the Macedonian republic was established coupled with the recognition of the Macedonian nation, it also involved the Slavic speaking minority

declared as ethnic Macedonians in Northern Greece. Soon, a significant portion of the Communist army was comprised of ethnic Macedonian volunteers\textsuperscript{156}. Their stake this time was not exclusively seizing the power in order to conduct a Communist revolution. Another motive for joining the Communists was the prospective unification of the Macedonian nation and unification of the different parts of what was considered to be Macedonia\textsuperscript{157}. Tito wanted to utilize that – and similarly as in the case with Bulgaria, he stood for recognition and provision of rights of the part of the Macedonian nation in Greece, hoping that the fight for unification of the Macedonian could pave the way for expanding his “Empire” to the south\textsuperscript{158}.

Still, there was a clear break between the Greek communist and Macedonian nationalists. As Rossos argues, as the time passed the Greek communist leadership became very intolerant towards the autonomist ideas of the Macedonian fellow soldiers\textsuperscript{159}. Furthermore, after the Tito-Stalin split, the Greek communists openly decided to choose Moscow rather than Belgrade, which cost them the Yugoslav support. Tito, in a much weaker position after the split with USSR, had to bargain with the West for keeping Yugoslavia independent, and was under pressure to fully close the border and disband the bases of the Democratic Army on Yugoslavian territory\textsuperscript{160}.

The first targets for prosecution of the new very authoritarian regime despite the Communists, were the ethnic Macedonians. Many of the were expelled and forced to leave the country\textsuperscript{161}. Tito had to choose between the urge to help the Macedonians evicted from

\textsuperscript{156} See Rossos, op. cit. Drawing upon the data gathered from official documents, he argues that a number between 11,000 – 20,000 Macedonian partisans were involved in the Army, which is more than a third from the total forces.

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{159} See Rossos, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.
Greece and the Western pressure to keep the border with Greece closed. He finally did a compromise of granting political asylum to all the Macedonians that were expelled from the Aegean region. The Civil War story does not end here as the Macedonian refugees even nowadays have trouble returning to Greece, but their fate will be discussed later in the paper.

The legitimate question raising here is, where are the narratives from the ancient past in this chapter of the history? The direct link between Tito's imperialism and the narrative Alexander the Great, of course, is impossible to be proven. What was legitimized and politicized in this chapter was the innovation of the idea of Greater Macedonia, a narrative of the supposed cultural unit divided among three separate polities, that ought to be legitimized.

The creation of the Macedonian national identity as separate and bounded one, has been placed among of the central objectives for the institutions under and beyond government control since the foundation of the People's Republic of Macedonia as one of the six federal units of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). For that purpose, by a government decree in 1948, the Institute for National History was established, having a special monopolistic status in terms of historical research and being assigned the particular mission of identity creation and fortifying the cornerstones of the new nation. Soon, a process of making and remaking of the foundation national myths was started as the academia was put in the service of the national interest.

During the existence of Yugoslavia, the nation-building in every Yugoslav republic, hence Macedonia, was a task for the state apparatuses including the scientific and educational

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163 See Christian Voss, Great Macedonia as a”mental map” in the 20th and 21st century, Nationalities Affairs, issue 31/2007, pp. 163-169
164 Brunnbauer, op. cit.
institutions, under the supervision of the high Yugoslav authorities\textsuperscript{165}. The criteria of Brotherhood and Unity\textsuperscript{166} had to be met, and the national projects had had to be compatible with the Yugoslav meta-narratives and the ideology of the Communist Party\textsuperscript{167}. The myths also had to be standardized and correlated with other republics' myths. Among the ethnic Macedonians, two narratives of origin (that were in a valuation contest) existed – the ancient and the Slavic (Orthodox) ones\textsuperscript{168}. The former, as Dodovska argues, was reflected in some of the works dating back to the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and the Macedonian Enlightenment as well as in the oral literature. Authors like Gjorgija Puleski or Marko Cepenkov have also made notions of the memory of the myth of Alexander the Great among the alleged Macedonian ethnie in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century\textsuperscript{169}. The explanations for this are twofold: the first one, as Dodovska suggests, is the “organic” argument that the myths have been kept in the oral literature tradition for centuries among the folks. Another approach is the one suggesting that the folk myth of Alexander the Great amongst Macedonian Slavs – the basics for later institutionalized uses – was strongly influenced if not shaped by Greek cultural inputs, such as the Greek schooling system in the southern areas, also in Aegean Macedonia\textsuperscript{170}.

The Slavic myth, on the other hand was directly correlated with the Ottoman resistance. Even some of the old generation of the fighters against the Ottoman Empire, took part in the anti-fascist liberation and the establishment of the Macedonian statehood. Furthermore, the narrative of the ancient past was more esoteric, implying an ethnogenetic

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{165} Ibid.
\bibitem{166} \textit{Brotherhood and Unity} [\textit{Bratstvo i jedinstvo} in Serbo-Croatian] was “\textit{[t]he expression used to describe the relations between [Yugoslav] nations, nationalities and national minorities (while they existed); it was a compulsory motive of all the speeches, academic papers, articles etc. Tito, whenever he appeared in public, used the phrase: 'Protect the Brotherhood and the Unity as if it was the pupil of your eye'. The same phrase was used to name objects: for instance the highway “Brotherhood-Unity”. The excessive use of the term made it lose any meaning.}” N/A, \textit{Lekson koo mitologijata [Thesaurus of the YU mythology]} (Skopje: Templum, 2006), p. 61
\bibitem{167} Brunnbauer, op. cit, 269
\bibitem{168} See Dodovska, op. cit.
\bibitem{169} Ibid.
\bibitem{170} See Georgievski op. cit., as well as Kofos, “National Heritage...”, op.cit.
\end{thebibliography}
concept and an imperial legacy, which was not compatible to the communist ideals. All in all, the circumstances were such, that the Slavic narrative, rooted in the anti-Ottoman struggle was put, in Harrison's terms “higher in the hierarchy” of myths.

The idea of ancient nationhood was never abandoned. It may not have won the valuation contest, but it sure was an object of innovation strategies. For instance, the Yugoslav reference the Alexander the Great in the history books was “Aleksandar Makedonski” (“Alexander of Macedonia”), and the Communist-approved first edition of the “History of the Macedonian People” traced the beginnings of the Macedonian nation in antiquity. Still, this notion was treated with a reserve, and was mostly instrumentalized in the disputes with Bulgarian historiography – as the Bulgarians were claiming the proximity with the Macedonian culture based on the common Slavic roots, the symbolic capital of Alexander the Great was the argument of distinctiveness which Macedonian historiography employed to prove the authentic Macedonian pre-modern past. Nonetheless, both the Macedonian and Bulgarian historiography developed a common narrative – that the Slavs upon arrival in the Balkans assimilated the authochtonous population (Ancient Macedonians and Thracians respectively) – thus a link with the ancient period was forged. The Greek rhetoric in this period was tolerant towards this, although emphasized the distinctions between Macedonians (Greeks living in Aegean Macedonian) and “Macedonians” or later, SlavoMacedonians (what they referred to as Slavic speakers living in the People's, consequently Socialist Republic of Macedonia, whose name was not disputed). The contestation between the two sides,

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171 See Brown. op. cit.
172 Ibid. This choice was also supported by strong symbolism. Namely, the highlight of the anti-Ottoman resistance was considered to be the Ilinden uprising, after which a not long lasting independent Republic was established in the town of Krushevo. The uprising took place at the 2nd of August 1903, an Orthodox holiday named “Ilinden”. The Macedonian state in the World War Two was established on the 2nd of August, 1944, and it was said to be the Second Ilinden.
173 See Brunnbauer, op. cit.
174 Ibid.
175 See Kofos “National Heritage and National Identity...”, op. cit.
however, did not transform in a proprietary conflict yet, because a pre-requisite for a proprietary conflict is the silent consensus between the two sides about the ultimately highest value of the contested symbol at the two respective sides.

**The findings in Vergina and the Antiquity Significance Boost**

Archaeology has played an important role in the nationalist projects, in terms of providing reference points for national myths and legitimizing claims to historical rights. As a nation-state founded on the “ruins” of ancient Hellenism, Modern Greece's relation towards the ancient heritage has been marked with a strong pace and enthusiasm. The artifacts from the past, as Hamilakis argues, are central to the Greek national imagination, because they are seen as a materialization, a physical proof of antiquity and at the same time personifying the key feature of Greek nationalism, the “nostalgia for the past”. Regarding the contest over the narratives of the ancient past, archaeology is a key input in terms of re-evaluation of the symbolic capital, as every new discovery could possibly add up to the value one narrative has had.

While in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, Greek archaeology was concentrated on mostly the southern parts of Greece, in the last several decades, the focus of archaeologists shifted towards Macedonia. Before that, Macedonia had been less exploited in terms of archaeological research. As already said, the definition of the Greek nation had always been carried out by “othering” surrounding entities. Macedonia and its inhabitants, even after the annexation of the Aegean part of Macedonia, were seen as less Hellenic than Southern Greece, because of the various historical path of that region, most notably the late

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176 Harrison, “Four Types...”, op. cit.
178 Hamilakis, op. cit., Chapter 1
coming to being a part of the Greek state, but also because of the demographic 
heterogeneity\(^{179}\). However, after the developments from the Civil War and the involvement of 
the ethnic Macedonians (described in the section before), the Greek nationalist project sought 
to incorporate Macedonia into the Hellenic image in order to neutralize the unification claims 
of ethnic Macedonians. Still, the role assigned to Macedonia regarding the national 
imagination, at this period was more in terms of its Byzantine past\(^{180}\).

The turn around in terms of the meaning of Macedonia for the Greek national 
imagination, happened quite late\(^{181}\). Namely, in 1977 epochal archaeological findings were 
made in Vergina, the alleged capital of Ancient Macedonia, 40 km far away from 
Thessaloniki. Massive excavations were undertaken and the researchers managed to find the 
tomb of Ancient Macedonian Royal House, and among that the larnax (coffin) of Philip II and 
ancient Macedonian paraphernalia whose main feature was the later disputed 16-point Star\(^{182}\). 
The potential of this findings was prodigious, since they were not referring just to the Greek 
nationalism, but to the mere world history and the knowledge on Ancient Macedonia. At the 
same time, many archaeologists and experts in the field challenged the purity, accuracy and 
the academic objectivity during the research, mostly arguing that the tomb that was found 
might not have been the one of Philip II\(^{183}\). Still, for the public opinion, that was down and in 
despair after the years of the military junta, the value of this findings was indisputable. They 
were attributed with a sacred meaning for the Greek national identification, and Greek 
nationalism gradually became “archaeologized” as the Vergina symbols started being used

\(^{179}\) Kotsakis, op. cit.
\(^{180}\) Ibid.
593-612. The author stresses the interaction between the new archaeological findings, the Greek tendency to 
constantly redefine national identity and the emergence of the Macedonian nationalist rhetoric based claims 
to Alexander's legacy as determinant to the dynamic of this turn (p. 605)
\(^{182}\) Brown, “Seeing stars...”, op. cit.
\(^{183}\) See Phyllis Williams Lehmann, “The So-Called Tomb of Philip II: A Different Interpretation”, American Journal 
of Archaeology, Vol. 84, No. 4 (Oct., 1980), pp. 527-531 and E. A. Fredricksmeyer, “Again the So-
widely for political and commercial goals\textsuperscript{184}. Alexander the Great was referred to in political speeches, his portrait was put on the national currency (the coin of 100 drachmæ), and scholarly work on the “Northern Hellenism” was presented\textsuperscript{185}. That was a clear impulse of a valuation conflict between the narrative of Alexander the Great and the other national myths of Greece. At the same time, these findings only partially induced valuation contest among Macedonian nationalists, as they only tentatively claimed their right to the ancient past, being far from the mainstream.

The contest and probably the announcement for the dispute to follow were the reactions to the findings by the respective Greek and Macedonian diasporas. As Macedonia in the Yugoslav context had to stick up to the Slavic narrative, it was logical to assume that the expelled nationalists would be opposed to the mainstream Slavic narrative, and would search for alternatives, one of them being inspired the ancient imperial past. This myth was especially plausible to the ethnic Macedonians originating from Northern Greece, that were evicted after the Civil War. Hence, many cultural and civil society organization founded by ethnic Macedonians in Australia, Canada and the United States started using the symbols of Ancient Macedonia for their representation\textsuperscript{186}. The fellow Greek diaspora, in the meantime, responded their way, by using the symbols as their own and at the same time denouncing the Macedonians the right to it\textsuperscript{187}. That ultimately has led to several encounters between members of the diaspora communities, most notably in Melbourne, on a football match between Macedonian and Greek team and their fan groups whose iconography was inspired by the Sun of Vergina and the ancient Macedonian symbols\textsuperscript{188}. Though, the competition between the two diasporas in respect to the narratives of antiquity since has been also reflected in high politics\textsuperscript{184} Kotsakis, Triandafyllidiou, Triandafyllidiou et. al., Brown, “Seeing Stars...” op. cit., Danforth op. cit., 163-166\textsuperscript{185} Danforth, op. cit. 172\textsuperscript{186} See Voss, op. cit. Danforth, op. cit., Roudometof, op. cit., Ljubcho Georgievski quote\textsuperscript{187} See Danforth op. cit.\textsuperscript{188} Ibid.
much above the football fans clashes. For example, the Greek lobby in the United States Congress has constantly been promoting evidences about the “FYROM's attempts to steal history”\textsuperscript{189}.

Yet, that situation started changing as Yugoslavia was approaching to its end and the federal republics were heading to secession. The new situation and the rise of the meaning of the national 'self' opened the debate on national origin, setting the field for possible re-evaluation of the different narratives. As Ljubcho Georgievski, the nationalist frontrunner of the Macedonian independence has recently admitted, an inspirational story was needed “to awake the Macedonian people from the Yugoslav daydream” and that precisely was the purpose of the introduction of the myth of Ancient Macedonia\textsuperscript{190}.

The signs of Macedonian independence and the usage of ancient Macedonian symbols meant that there was the “prerequisite consensus” on the superior value of the contested symbol. After the promotion of the new state flag of the Republic of Macedonia that was representing the Sun of Vergina, the same symbol was protected by law as Greek national heritage\textsuperscript{191}. That meant that the contest over Ancient Macedonian nationhood now entered the proprietary phase.

The Greek elite's perception or at least their suspicion was that the Republic of Macedonia is a possible threat to the security and the territorial integrity. The inferiority of Macedonia compared to Greece in terms of power sometimes was usually ruled out in the

\textsuperscript{189} For example, see the recent initiative of international scholars called “Macedonia Evidence”. A letter, signed by 200 university professors from around the world, was sent to the United States president Barrack Obama, in which they demanded repeal of the recognition of “Skopje/FYROM” under the name “Republic of Macedonia”. As they state, “this silliness has gone too far, and [...] the U.S.A. has no business in supporting the subversion of history”. Furthermore, they urge president Obama “to help - in whatever ways you deem appropriate - the government in Skopje to understand that it cannot build a national identity at the expense of historic truth. Our common international society cannot survive when history is ignored, much less when history is fabricated.”. See “Letter to President Obama, May 18, 2009”, Macedonia Evidence, \url{http://macedonia-evidence.org/obama-letter.html}, last accessed 24.05.2009

\textsuperscript{190} Ljubcho Georgievski, “To the grand-children of Aminta”, Fokus Magazine, available online at \url{http://www.vmro-np.org.mk/sodrzini.php?idSod=200&action=2}, last accessed 22.05.2009

\textsuperscript{191} See Danforth, op. cit.
light of the arguments about the hypothetic Macedonian alliance with Turkey\textsuperscript{192}. Moreover, the debates in the Greek parliament in which the government was called to use the full capacity and to take advantage of the better position on an international scene in order to reclaim the identity, certainly can be seen as the opening of the expansionary phase of the contest.

\textbf{The Former Empire vis-a-vis The Former Yugoslav Republic vis-a-vis the Greek Expansionary Strategy}

The valuation conflict between the different narratives within the Macedonian context remained open as the value of the ancient and the Yugoslav narratives remained ambiguous and unclear. Besides the introduction of the Vergina Sun as the flag symbol (and as a main motive in the national anthem), the narrative of the establishment of the first Macedonian state during the antifascist resistance remained a mainstream discourse after the independence in the 1990s as well. The President Kiro Gligorov, a marquee political figure, often perceived as a father of the nation, in 1994 stated that “our country is created on the 2 August 1944 and based on the decisions of the ASNOM”\textsuperscript{193}. It was a clear statement that there was an undisputed continuity between the Macedonian independent statehood and the antifascist struggle, a central point in the Yugoslav foundation myths.

Another story that had been exploited in the myth-making in Yugoslav and in the same manner post-Yugoslav Macedonia, was the narrative of the Krushevo Republic. The historic Republic was a state-like formation that lasted only for 13 days, following an insurrection by people of diverse ethnic background, oppressed by the Ottoman Empire. The socialist causes and the egalitarian tendencies of the insurrection and the Krushevo Republic were close to the


\textsuperscript{193} Kiro Gligorov, Viorni Vreminja: Republika Makedonija - realnost na Balkanot [Times of Whirl: The Republic of Macedonia – a Reality on the Balkans] (Skopje: Kultura, 1999), p. 49
ideology of the Yugoslav leadership back in the 1940s, and the ethnic heterogeneity and mutualism along with the legends of epic struggles of the rebels was inspiring enough for the Yugoslav communists to symbolically choose the day of the establishment of the Republic as the day of the founding assembly of Yugoslav Macedonia. By the same token, the post-Yugoslav leadership, in first place Gligorov, referred to the Krushevo Republic as a forerunner of modern Macedonian statehood and to promote it as a starting point of the constitution of the Macedonian modern state\textsuperscript{194}. The Macedonian nation, gaining the independence in the 1990s, in terms of the official national historiography and the rhetoric of the elite, was very much based on its Yugoslav past. So, the question raising here is how, besides such a background of the Yugoslav and Slavic national mythology, the narrative of remote past managed to take over the Slavic discourse?

As mentioned above, an important factor was the declining Yugoslav federal harmony. The declaration of independence thus the change in the nationalist discourse seemed more and more possible but also necessary and many of the nationalist historians and politicians gained more freedom of expression, in terms of not having the obligations towards the Yugoslav leadership, and started promoting narratives from the past which were far more different and even incompatible with the previous versions of the national history, centered around the myth of the Ancient Kingdom of Macedon\textsuperscript{195}. For example, the edition of the official “History of the Macedonian People” published after independence, covers the period of the reign of the Ancient Kingdom in 200 pages, while the one published in 1969 devotes only 20 pages to the matter\textsuperscript{196}. As already argued, the narrative of Ancient Macedonia was nonetheless accepted in

\textsuperscript{194} For the myth of the Krusevo Republic in modern day Macedonia see Keith Brown, \textit{The Past in Question...}, op. cit. Stefan Troebst argues that the anti-Ottoman resistance was the Phase A in the national movement. See Troebst, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{195} For a literature review on the works produced on the topic by Macedonian authors, see Jasmina Mojsieva – Gjusheva, “Pomegju istorijata i psevdo-istorijata – golemata tema na Aleksandar Makedonski” [Between history and pseudo-history: the great topic of Alexander the Great], \textit{Slava Meriodinalis}, issue 5 (2005), pp. 61-74

\textsuperscript{196} Brunnbauer, op. cit., 274
the Yugoslav discourse, although as a mere lesson of history. Its political background was debatable.

The assumption that Macedonians were Yugoslav people (narod), meant that they had their origin in the family of several South Slavic peoples or tribes. That fact suggested that Macedonian nationhood had not much to do with the ancient history, the Kingdom of Macedon and Alexander the Great. Moreover, if one takes just a brief view on history, it seems that there are many contradictions and inconveniences in compiling the two narratives, since the Balkan has been undergoing numerous dynamic processes that affected the demography of the region. The gap between the reign of Ancient Macedonians and the emergence of the Slavic feudal kingdoms was spreading through a period of several centuries in which many rulers emerged and left the scene of history. First, the kingdoms in Asia Minor and the Balkans, succeeding Alexander's Empire have been conquered by the Romans, followed by the spread of early Christianity and the coming of age of the Byzantine Empire. After the arrival of the pagan Slavic tribes taking place from the 5th - 6th century and consequently, their Christianization, Slavs along with Greek speaking urban populations became primary bearers and reproducers of the Christian culture. During the centuries, numerous other tribes migrated towards the Balkans, such as the Kumans, Magyars, Huns and so forth. The establishment of the first independent polities ruled by Slavic nobility emerged earliest in 10th century AD. All of this was happening centuries before the organized resistance against the Ottomans, being the link between 1944 and the Slavic heritage. For many, it seems rather impossible to prove an ethnogenesis relation between any two peoples living before and after all of these episodes of history.  

In this respect, after the independence, the president Kiro Gligorov made couple of statements on the issue, causing many debates afterwards. Even more radical than usually, he

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197 See Georgievski, op. cit.
was often saying that Macedonians' predecessors are the Slavs that came on the Balkans in the Middle Ages; but not the Ancient Macedonians, which are a people that has been wiped off during the course of the historic developments – according to Gligorov, it meant that today's Macedonians are actually Slavic Macedonians\textsuperscript{198}.

Gligorov's claims were fundamentally opposed to the idea of continuity with the people that inhabited the same territory two millennia ago. For the standard perception, derived from the Yugoslav narratives, the idea for the historical continuity with the Ancient Kingdom of Macedon could be perceived as a departure from the already established (or perceived as established) South Slavic identity of the nation. This implies a clear case of even expansionary conflict within the Macedonian side, where the Slavic stream tried not just to prove that its narrative is more important, but also to change the symbolic practices of the contesting faction and finally, to terminate their myth.

Yet, the ancient narratives, except in the rhetoric of the Yugoslav hard-liners like Gligorov, were never presented disparate nor opposed to the Slavic character of the nation. Wroclawski, in his comparative research on the new trends and ideas of ethnogenesis among Croatians, Macedonians and Ukrainians states that the idea of ancient nationhood in Macedonia is not that opposed to the idea of Slavic origin, but it is simply used to neutralize other Slavic claims to the cultural heritage (in the Macedonian case, Bulgarian and Serbian\textsuperscript{199}). The argument he offers for elaborating this assumption is that the Slavic character of the Macedonians plays big role in the defense of the national status against the non-Slavic Greeks and Albanians\textsuperscript{200}.

\textsuperscript{198} Some of the most controversial statements of Gligorov about the Slavic origin of the Macedonians can be found in \textit{Foreign Information Service Daily Report, Eastern Europe}, February 26, 1992 and \textit{Toronto Star}, March 15, 1992, quoted in “Kontroverzni izjavi” [Controversial statements], \textit{Vreme Daily Newspaper}, no. 1057, 03 May 2007


\textsuperscript{200} Ibid.
The viewpoint of the new ethnogenesis standing for the claims that there is a continuity of the Macedonian national 'self' from the ancient history, in many ways is a narrative that is categoric in its both its inclusiveness and exclusiveness. As seen in Wroclawski's work, it is not a narrative that essentially tries to negate the Slavic features, because of the need of having a link between antiquity and modernity. Being descendants of the Ancient Macedonians, does not make the Macedonians distant to the Slavic culture, nor the Christianity. The Slavic heritage, being the Medieval link, is also being praised on the same level as the Ancient, especially its aspects related with the beginnings and spread of Christianity and the literacy among Slavic tribes around Europe\textsuperscript{201}. The Orthodox tradition is as inherent to Macedonian national identity as to the Serbian or Greek national identities, providing a necessary boundary from the Others (in the first place Albanians). Besides that, the Church is assigned a strong and active political role even though officially Macedonia was founded as a secular state. The narrative usually heard, about the importance of the faith, is that the faith in God helped Macedonians survive the 500 years under Ottoman hegemony, which is derived from the self-victimization myth of the “Turkish yoke”.

The symbolic capital that Alexander the Great provided, was the set of narratives derived from the glorious empire of Alexander offers a “true self” and all the needed exclusive symbolism for the Macedonians. Briefly, the link with antiquity satisfied the quest for authentic origin and the urge to differ from the neighbors and ethnically different compatriots. Portraying the Macedonians as direct descendants of the Ancient Macedonians means that they are actually older thus autochtonous than the other Slavic peoples. Having in mind that Macedonian identity overlaps in many aspects with the fellow Serb and Bulgarian South Slavic identities, what is a cause for expansionist claims of the both sides, it is clear that

\textsuperscript{201} Wroclawski, op. cit., 249-250. See also Lidija Slaveska, “Mistifikacii okolu obedinuvanjeto na Makedoncите i Helenite i za pojavata na Slovenite” [Mystification about the unifications of the Macedonians and the Hellenes and about the emergence of the Slavs], Makedonskata geneza, op. cit., pp. 129-193
the pre-Slavic genealogy here provides a strong and permanent distinction line. As well, for an identity that has been ambiguous and contested not just by similar identities, but also by totally other autochthonous identities, like the Albanian or the Greek, the emergence of self-centrism means strengthening the self-esteem of the whole community that shares that identity and feels threatened. The uncertainties brought by the inter-ethnic or international tensions, could be much eased and the complexities would be easily simplified by using the rhetoric of the myth of Ancient Macedonia. The narrative of being autochtonous seems to be exceptionally appealing in the Macedonian case because it means that Macedonians are the indigenous people of the territory they live in, contributing to the image of having a positive role in history, but also because autochtonism/authenticity argument is very common across South East Europe. Besides the Greco-Macedonian links with Alexander the Great, similar cases are the Bulgarian alleged link with the Thracians becoming paramount in the communist reinvention of nationalism in the 1970s and 1980s, and also the Romanian narratives of belonging stressing the Dacian/Thracian connection at the expense of the Romans typical for the inter-war right-wingers and Ceausescu’s nationalism. That is the norm rather than an exception in the Balkans, and what is more important is that the narrative of autochtonism always implies having much more historical rights on the territory and the resources than the others.

Another notion, is related to the fact that the process of othering the Albanians has been perpetuated during the turbulent 1990s, culminating with the military conflict in 2001. In such a divided society, where the obsession with the other takes over the public deliberation, the demands for (self)differentiation is urgent. In terms of the inter-ethnic tensions, and especially during its culmination with the military conflict and after, the narrative of Macedonians being the indigenous, unconsciously resulted with a rhetoric that Albanians
have come here from somewhere out there and now want to take over our the land. A popular Macedonians nationalist song devoted to the Macedonian victims of the conflict, addressing the Albanians, starts with the words: “where did you come from / better for us if you had never come”, which is in line with the Serbian myths that Albanians were a people “brought” from the Caucasus (the territory Albania in Azerbaijan) by the Ottomans.

However, not every functionalist portrayal is untenable. Much of the functionalist aspects concerning the revival of the myth of Ancient Macedonians could be ascribed to Vasil Tupurkovski, another marquee political and public figure from Macedonia, an important figure in the late years of Yugoslavia, and one of the most influential politicians during the 1990s. Tupurkovski in the beginning of the 1990s has authored several scientific works, but as well illustrated books for children, on the topic of the history of Ancient Macedonians. In the way he portrayed Ancient Macedonians, at least in the early phase of introducing the meta-narrative to the public, corresponded with the popular claims that Macedonians differed from the other former Yugoslav peoples, being peaceful, tolerant, enlightened and noble people that coexisted smoothly with members of different communities. Additionally, the Tupurkovski's “Stories about Ancient Macedonia” offered kind of a phantasmagoric and utopian narrative of pride, dignity and a perspective for the future, much needed in an environment full of uncertainty brought by the political and economic struggle.

However, Tupurkovski's version of the ancient past, had more of a scientific value than

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202 Vasil Tupurkovski, whose family originates from Aegean Macedonia, is a gray emminence on the Macedonian political scene. In the 1980s, he has been President of the Union of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia, and then a member of the Presidium of the Communist Union of Yugoslavia, as well as member of the Presidium of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. He had one of the key roles in the events leading to the disband of Yugoslavia. In 1998, he teamed up with Ljubcho Georgievski and their government was the first one not being formed by the communist-successor party SDSM. Tupurkosevski also was the mastermind of the process of the Macedonian recognition of Taiwan, which resulted with hostility from China. Subsequently, in the Security Council of the United Nations, China vetoed the mandate of the blue helmet peace forces in Macedonia. For many, this was the key point that had led to the military conflict in 2001. Some conspiracy theories argue that Tupurkovski was bribed to do so. In April 2009, he has been sentenced for money laundering during the Taiwan project.

203 Brunnbauer, op. cit.
a simple quasi-historian works, or as Kolstø says, an enlightening nuance, which was a balance to the functionalist or instrumentalist usage of the myths. In many occasions, he had repeated his stance that it is non-scientific and chauvinistic to say that history is “ours” or “theirs”, which makes him one of the few public persons in Macedonia ready for compromise over the historical heritage, with Greece or anyone else. He had always stressed that it is the “civilizing mission”, not his ethnic background what makes Alexander the Great special, and that in terms of “ethnicity”, he was a son of “the region”, thus belonging to “all of the peoples living here.” The attitude of Tupurkovski is in this respect significantly different from the exclusive claims and the insists of continuity by any means. In an interview for the Guardian about the national belonging of Alexander during the tensions caused by Oliver Stone's movie, Tupurkovski said: "Alexander lived long before nationalism and so is our common hero [and] would be laughing at us arguing about him now." 

The treatment of Alexander as a common historical figure, also leaves enough space for unification with Albanians under that myth, since there are notable claims in historiography that Alexander's mother was from Epirote and Ilyrian descent, two of the narratives of the ancient origin of Albanians. Thus the Albanian claims of the legacy of Alexander. Yet, this possibility of the myth has never found serious grounds in Macedonian social science nor politics.

Nonetheless, the political pressures as a result of the expansionary strategy (in terms of the symbolic contest) conducted by the Greek government resulted with a change in the

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205 Ibid.


207 See Albanian identities op. cit.
constellation of the sides in the conflict. The flag of the Republic of Macedonia was changed in 1995, and the dispute over the name was delayed by signing the interim agreement by which Macedonia became obliged to use the temporary reference “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” on the way to getting full membership in the United Nations. The international dispute with Greece was temporary shut down, and it was mostly due to the bargains that Gligorov and the rising Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski, Social-democrats, did over the state symbols, earning them the label of “cowards” or “traitors”. What was notable, but forgotten in present day historiography, that there was a political consensus about the change of the flag, especially in terms of the silent agreement by Ljubcho Georgievski, which also causes nowadays nationalist attacks on him. That was, barely the triumph of Greece, as its narrative had seriously silenced the Macedonian one.

**The Macedonian “Antiquization” and the Re-emergence of the Conflict**

The accounts on the national 'self' can be (de)legitimized by politics, but that does not mean that can easily invent and erase them. That notion has to be taken in mind when discussing the variable role that the myth of Ancient Macedonia in the contemporary Macedonian context has. Even though the official state politics backed off from the claims of ancient nationhood in the middle of 1990s, causing its total devaluation, the myths never ceased to exist and were contemplated among some of the academic and political circles. There is not much secondary literature written on this topic, and that is why in this section I will offer more primary source analysis.

The new tendency that seemed to take over historiography and social sciences in Macedonia, especially in the past few years, has been insisting on the supposed continuity and

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tried to shift from a more fictional and discursive to a more factual and scientific (or pseudo-scientific) interpretation of the ancient history. The hypothesis to be proved was that there was an uninterrupted ethnogenesis from Macedonian antiquity (and even prehistory) till the Macedonian presence. That was the leaning towards the stance that actually Alexander and the Ancient Macedonians were proto-Slavs, and that the whole Slavic civilization is in a way rooted in Ancient Macedonia\textsuperscript{209}. Of course, these explanations sometimes were accompanied by metaphysical and supra-natural narratives. As a short movie aired on the national television recently argued, God created the Macedonians before He created anyone else, and the Macedonians were the founding people of the white race\textsuperscript{210}. This widening of the narrative of Ancient Macedonia, was in Harrison's terms, innovation in the discourse, that lead to a substantial increase of the narrative's symbolic capital\textsuperscript{211}.

The innovative approach to the issue of the transcendental Macedonian continuity, seems to be focused mostly on the hypothesis about the similarity of the language of the Ancient Macedonians and the contemporary Macedonian language. Partially, it is based on pseudo-etimology. For example, in a so called Ancient Macedonian dictionary, many international words and even names are claimed to be of Macedonian origin\textsuperscript{212}. Yet, there have been also more scientific efforts to elaborate the linguistic argument. A research project titled “Tracing the Script and the Language of the Ancient Macedonians” challenged the perception of contemporary science and presented a different reading of the Rosetta Stone, a popular

\textsuperscript{209} Wroclawski, op.cit, 248
\textsuperscript{210} Sunchica Unevska, “Makedonska molitva protiv zdraviot razumi”, [Macedonia prayer against the common sense], Utrinski Vesnik, 02.03.2009, \texttt{<http://www.utrinski.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=8C528E7F34DD0D469B0365F14A444CAA>}, last accessed 27.05.2009
\textsuperscript{211} A recent study that embraces the new Macedonian approach towards the ancient history can be seen in Lidija Slaveska, \textit{Makedonskata geneza} [The Macedonian genesis] (Skopje : Matica, 2008)

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historical artifact from Ancient Egypt. Namely, the authors of the “Tracing...”, physicists, one of them member of the National Academy of Sciences and Arts (the supreme scientific institution in Macedonia), claimed that one of the three sections of the text on the Rosetta, which traditional linguistics recognize to be written in Demotic Egyptian, had been actually written in ancient Macedonian language using a demotic Macedonian script. They came up with these results by inventing complex physicist formulae. The ancient Macedonian language, in their work, is found out to be in many aspects similar to the contemporary Macedonian language. The scientific value of this discovery, however, was immediately disputed by Petar Ilievski, a classic philologist, who argued that the two researchers, “without any elementary knowledge of Egyptology, ancient history, nor basic principles of language development,” “by denouncing all the achievements in the field of Egyptology in the last 200 years” have manipulated the facts which brought them to totally incorrect results. Yet, the assumption of the specific language of the Ancient Macedonians is still being very plausible, as new discoveries are emerging, tracing the Ancient Macedonian literacy even 2000 years BC.

The decoding of the Rosetta Stone and the supposed discovery of the language of the Ancient Macedonians turned out to be a fruitful investment in the nation-building project and

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213 The Rosetta Stone is a historical artifact discovered by the French army of Napoleon in 1799. Since the beginning of the 19th century, it has been publicly displayed in The British Museum. The Rosetta Stone is actually a big stele with carved text on it. The text, a royal decree, is written in three scripts: the hieroglyphic and Demotic Egyptian and classic Greek. Because of the possibility to compare the meanings of hieroglyphs with the classic Greek language, the Stone gained major importance in decoding ancient languages and scripts. Information about the Rosetta Stone gathered from the official web site of the British Museum <http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/t/the_rosetta_stone.aspx> (last accessed 22.12.2008)


215 Ibid.


217 Ibid.

successfully completed the task of increasing the value of the grand narrative. For instance, while organizing a grassroots-inspired, but government approved protest intended for “protection of the Macedonian name”, the organizers have sent a callout for mass participation that was partially based on the findings about the Rosetta, as one of their main slogans was “7000 years of Macedonian literacy”\(^\text{219}\). The protest, held in spring 2008 just before the NATO summit where Macedonia's bid was blocked, turned out to be a massive one indeed, in which the choreography was mostly composed by symbols (flags and maps) resembling the Ancient Kingdom of Macedon, including a huge map of Greater Macedonia with the Sun of Vergina applied to it\(^\text{220}\). Its meaning was that the Macedonian nation had once again entered the valuation debate in which the narrative of ancient nationhood resurged with significantly higher capital than ever before.

Later in the year, another event related to the myth of Alexander the Great occurred. Namely, after gathering data from anthropological and linguist studies conveyed in the Himalayas in Pakistan, more precisely in the region Hunza, it was found out that a tribe called Burusho shared much of its historical memories with Macedonians, yet the most scientifically elaborated argument was the alleged obvious linguistic similarities\(^\text{221}\). Several years before that, in the same region in Pakistan, another tribe, called Kalasha was found by Greek explorers, and a trip to Greece was organized in order the Kalasha to visit their remote homeland\(^\text{222}\).

The Hunza tribe Burusho besides considering themselves successors of Alexander the

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\(^{219}\) A poster of the call for the protest can be found at <http://zborovi.info/sliki/protest.jpg> (last accessed 27.12.2008)


\(^{222}\) For a comparison of the Burusho-Kalasha experiences in Macedonia and Greece see George F. Will, “Homogenizers in Retreat”, Newsweek, August 11, 2008

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Great, believed Macedonia is their remote homeland and their language featured elements similar with the Macedonian and perhaps with the Ancient Macedonian as well. In 2005, Macedonian historians had travelled to Pakistan to meet them. While residing there, they shot a documentary called “Do krajot na svetot” [To the end of the world]. It begins with an emotional claim: “To depart from Macedonia, and after following the Sun for 10000 km to arrive in Macedonia, again!”

The next phase in the Macedonian – Hunza fraternization, during the summer 2008, was the tribe's visit back to their remote homeland. A non-governmental organization called “Macedonian Institute for Strategic Research 16.9” organized the trip. The Hunza royal family has been generously welcome and had the opportunity to meet the Prime Minister, the Archbishop of the Church and the Mayor of the capital. The report from the International Herald Tribune says that:

When the royal Hunza delegation landed in Skopje, the entourage got a boisterous Balkan greeting, complete with some 20 men dressed as Alexander's soldiers - with spears, helmets, shields and period uniforms. Several hundred well-wishers chanted "Macedonia!" and waved Macedonian flags. Some shouted "Welcome home!"

During the eight-day trip, the entourage was received by the prime minister, who offered 10 scholarships for Hunza students at Macedonian universities. They were blessed by the Archbishop Stephan, unrecognized head of the Macedonian Orthodox Christian Church.

Bishop Peter of Bitola proclaimed that the prince "looks like Alexander the Great." One man signed over to the prince a plot of land near Lake Ohrid "so that he would always have a place in his homeland."

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223 The documentary can be seen at Google Video <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=6029292977830105634&q=do+krajot+na+svetot&ei=ySdqSJjwI4Gw2OK0tqiNDw> (last accessed 22.12.2008) This opening quote from the movie is symbolically false: the Sun rises in the East, therefore, if one follows the Sun, means they are headed westwards, and not East, like the route of these travelers were.


226 Brunwasser, op. cit.
Although having much of a burlesque element, the Hunza story seemed not to end with their departure from Macedonia, but to begin with it. As their visit was ridiculed in some quarters of society, soon the term “Hunza” became being used as a pejorative reference for the apologists of the narrative of ancient Macedonian nationhood. Yet, it had much of political implications, especially during the recent presidential elections taking place in March and April 2009 as the two major candidates, one of them later elected president were associated with the Hunza visit to Macedonia.227

What have been then, the effects of the political use of the narratives of the ancient past in the dispute? The answer based upon the theory of Harrison, would be simply said, the perpetuation of nationalism in the political realm in the both countries. The social capital of the ancient past, in Greece and Macedonia, has been utilized as a strategic supporting cast to political power. That makes it an important political capital, and making itself being political symbol. As a political symbol, despite being a property in a contest, the grand narrative of Alexander the Great is a status marker, source of legitimacy and a focus of the poplar sentiments and loyalty.228 It was used to redefine the national 'self', its vision for the past and its perspective from the future. Since in the both the Greek and the Macedonian cases it was

227 First it was the candidate of the opposition, Ljubomir Frchkoski who was running on a “Slavic platform”, that attacked the government-supported candidate that later won the elections, Gjorge Ivanov, for being “the Hunza chief of the antiquization policies of the government”. Shortly after, a political analysis named “Who is the Hunza in Macedonian politics?” revealed the fact that it was Ljubomir Frchkoski who was in fact “the Hunza”, because he took part in the ceremonial dinner the royal Hunza family had with the Macedonian representatives. The situation was clear – “Hunza”, immediately associated with the Alexander the Great, became the synonym for the new “antiquized” Macedonian nationalism by its opponents, acknowledging that Alexander the Great had prevailed over the Slavic narrative, thus re-achieving the consensus between the Macedonian and Greek nationalism, setting the stage for the re-emerged proprietary conflict and the possible Greek expansionary strategy. See Emilija Geleva, “Koj e Hunza vo Makedonija?” [Who is the Hunza in Macedonian politics?], Nova Makedonija 16.02.2009, <http://novamakedonija.com.mk/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabindex=1&tabid=2>fCat=1&top=1&EditionID=3188&ArticleID=18188>, last accessed 27.05.2009
228 Harrison, “Four types”, op. cit.
the universal all-inclusive version of the national past, its exotic and mystical past was complementary with some of the Orthodox myths of the divine election thus imposing a strong moral component to it\textsuperscript{229}. As in the same all-inclusive discourses it has closely interacted with the other myths of origin (in the Greek case with the Byzantine, in the Macedonian with the Slavic), it surely added up to the mythologized reading of history and the metaphysical reading of the nation as amalgamation and a longue durée entity that originates back in antiquity.

That itself speaks enough for the value of the social capital generated in Alexander the Great. Yet, the point here made although important is too reductionist as it only refers to the discursive reflections of this process. Still, the Greco-Macedonian dispute is an objectively existing one and it is an objective concern, that is why once again the reasons behind the essentialism of the ancient past have to be revisited.

\textsuperscript{229} About the divine components of national myths, see Bruce Cauthen, “Covenant and continuity: ethnosymbolism and the myth of divine election”, \textit{Nations and Nationalism} 10 (1/2), 2004, pp. 19-33
Chapter III. Remembering the Myth, Forgetting the History

"He who controls the present, controls the past. He who controls the past, controls the future."
- an often exploited quote from George Orwell's 1984

*Ethnosymbolism and Beyond, and Back to Renan’s “Historical Error”*

The approach that seems most suitable for defining the value of the capital a political symbol offers in a nationalist context, is ethnosymbolism. The language of ethnosymbolism, unlike the Marxist or the modernist approaches, offers explanations for analyzing the complex of myths, sentiments and their influence on the developments of the ethnie and the nation.

The developments of the particular narrative of Ancient Macedonia and Alexander the Great in the two respective environments, so far in the paper, have been processed through normative lenses built mostly upon the insights offered by the founder of ethnosymbolism, Anthony Smith. The core argumentation on the role of the myth of the Golden Age as proposed by the ethnosymbolic theory assesses much of the functions of the myth of Alexander the Great. In the light of the ethnosymbolic arguments, it was argued that the name, the emblem and the myth of common ancestry of Ancient Macedonia are the realms crucial both to the Greek and the Macedonian national myth because not just of the universal symbolic capital Alexander the Great has, but also in regards to the claims of being indigenous and autochthonous people in the region.

Still, while the ethnosymbolic approach offers a suitable code for addressing certain aspects of the role and the function of the national myths, it is mostly some of the general shortcomings of this approach that lead me to raising further questions about the reasons of the ultimate selection and the essentialism ascribed to just one of the plurality of narratives of the distant past of the nation.
As Özkırımlı argues, Smith in his huge work on national myths offers many different and sometimes contradictory explanations on the precise issue\(^{230}\). On the one side, Smith argues that the nation always seeks a story that is “distinctive, unique and 'truly ours’”\(^{231}\). In “Nationalism”, on the other hand, opposed to this claim says that these stories were never certain and there was always a plurality of myths of origin implying the national identity has been a fluid and dynamic category that “was always being reinterpreted and refashioned by each generation”\(^{232}\). Hutchinson as well argues that the presence of differences within the nation and the rival symbols is inherent to the nation but never manages to make a point on the way one version of the past prevails over the others\(^{233}\).

This ethnosymbolic postulate is to a great extent correct and marks an efficient shift in its discourse from the basic perennialist tendencies towards more social-constructivist stances. Their insights here are provide that the formation of a national community is accompanied by more complex processes than the assumed transformation of ethnie towards the nation through modernization and institutionalization. Yet, that for itself, while being an epistemological improvement at the ethnosymbolic campus, signifies an obvious failure, in terms of answering the question of the supremacy of one myth of origin over the others. The question raising after the acknowledgment of the plurality of myths, is, as Özkırımlı puts it:

If there are many different pasts and cultural heritages, if there are counter-myths of origin and alternative memories, if there are rival symbolic and political projects which is the authentic one? Which past is the distinctive, unique and truly ours?\(^{234}\)

The answer Özkırımlı offers, is simple and obvious – it is the elites and institutions

\(^{231}\) Anthony Smith, Nationalism and Modernism, op.cit., p. 43
\(^{234}\) Özkırımlı, op. cit.
that have the power to promote one of the many narratives\textsuperscript{235}. And that is what is contrary to all the ethno-symbolic and perennial understanding of nationalism. Ethnosymbolists and perennialists argue that, since the nation is a formation from-below, it is rather the popular culture and the popular sentiment than the elites, that had set the basis and determine the way of nationalism. In the ethnosymbolic theory it has always been the popular myth, the grand meta-narrative and the bottom-up social dynamic that answered all the questions about the self of the nation. Of course, ethnosymbolists never denied that elites had some effects, but they have still seen the myth-for-itself evolving from ethnic myth to national one, as it there was no outside factors affecting the process.

In the case of Greece and Macedonia there are plenty of variations of the narratives of the ancient past, and there are even more alternative narratives of the not that distant past that have been part of the collective memory, thus the 'self' of the nation. What is striking is that in the discourse of the elites, despite, as Özkırımlı says, the “freedom of choice” they had\textsuperscript{236}, they singled out the narrative of Alexander the Great as dominant in the nationalist mythology\textsuperscript{237}.

There are also several other authors that offer variations of the Smith postulates, compromising between the ethnosymbolist and the constructivist approach. A brief overview of their arguments can assess the value of the symbolic capital of Alexander the Great in the respective contexts even more. Below, the Greco-Macedonian dispute will be analyzed in the theories of three authors that theorize the national mythology as an elite-controlled issue.

They all draw both on the accounts of the role of national myth, but also on the Hobsbawm’s

\textsuperscript{235} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{236} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{237} Recently, Alexander the Great has been chosen as the biggest Greek ever in a media campaign in Greece called “The Great Greeks”. See “Aleksandur Veliki be izbran za nai-velikiia Gruk na vsichki vremena” [Alexander the Great elected as the greatest Greek of all time], Dnevnik News [Bulgarian] 19.05.2009, <http://www.dnevnik.bg/razvlechenie/2009/05/19/721422_aleksandur_veliki_be_izbran Za nai-velikiia_gruk_na/>, last accessed 22.05.2009
notions of “usable past” and “invention and mass-production of tradition”\textsuperscript{238}.

One already mentioned author is Pål Kolstø. In his normative analysis on the national myths in South Eastern Europe, he considers precisely the academia and political elite as the faction in society that is mostly responsible for the deployment and the presence of myths in the public discourse. According to him, there are two ideal-type approaches to this matter: the enlightening and the functionalist one, the former characterized by a Hobsbawmian pledge to objectivity and the latter associated with the nationalist sentiment and the service “for the national interest”. Kolstø says that difference between them is that “enlighteners treat myths as the opposite of ‘facts’” while functionalists “see myth-making as an inevitable element of human existence” and they prefer the utility of the myth rather the objectivity and the facts. Sometimes the functionalist reading of the myths acknowledges the questionable truthfulness, but nonetheless they are put into service for a certain cause \textsuperscript{239}.

In the case of the Greco-Macedonian row over the right to claim Ancient Macedonian nationhood, building upon the insights presented in Chapter II, there is a clear situation that it was the functionalist approach that was characteristic in the both cases. The universalist Greek historians in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century seemed to ignore the ancient Athenian literature in which Ancient Macedonians were portrayed as barbarians and non-Hellenes; the Yugoslav communists seemed to silently approve the illogical genesis from antiquity till today; later, a common comment on the controversy over the excavations in Vergina in the archaeological public was that the Greeks are only consistent in the interpretation of the findings but never elaborated the facts; nowadays, the apologists of the linguistic proximity between Ancient and Modern Macedonian seem to ignore the objections made by philologists and

\textsuperscript{238}For the former, see Hobsbawm, \textit{Nations and nationalism...}, op. cit. For the latter see Eric Hobsbawm, “Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914” in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence O. Ranger, \textit{The Invention of Tradition} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 263-307
\textsuperscript{239}Kolstø, op. cit.
Egyptologists.

An important further reference on the functionalist approach to national myths is George Schöpflin. Starting from the premise that the instrumentalization of the myth-symbol complex has the crucial role in the process of nation-building. Borrowing Bourdieu's postulates, “one of crucial instruments in cultural reproduction”, in his essay “The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths”, he offers a systematic vivisection on the different purposes of national myths. At the same time he also stands on the same line as Özkırımlı and Kolstø that it is the political and intellectual elites are the ones “who control the language of public communication”, hence control the myth but also decides on the choice of which myth will be appropriated and how it will be interpreted.

One of the functions of the myth he proposes is the capacity of self-definition, which is similar to Smith's classic ethnosymbolic theory. Yet Schöpflin here introduces the notion of “identity transfer”, meaning that the elites might instrumentals a certain myth in order to re-shape the identification of the people. For example, he relates the identity transfer function both with the modernization process and with the post-Communist transition. The myth of Alexander the Great, in the Greek modernization case, along with the other narratives of the Ancient Hellenic civilization, certainly had the role of shifting the identity of peasantry into Hellenes, and in the Macedonian context it certainly helped abandoning the Communist identity.

Another proposition of Schöpflin's, is the myth's role of simplifying complexities, offering false explanations which could result in cognitive delimiting which can in some instances block the reforms and impact badly on politics. I propose here the term “escapist”

241 Ibid.
242 Ibid.
243 See Agnew, op. cit.
244 Georgievski, op. cit.
245 Schöpflin, op. cit.
functions of the myths, as in all these cases the myth here is used for simply bypassing the reality.

One very fitting example for the escapist function of the myths of the ancient past is a political cartoon from a Greek newspaper from the 1990s, when Greece faced the threat of mad cow disease. The cartoon portrays a worried clerk from the Ministry of Health calling the Prime Minister Simitis, explaining him: “It is not a minotaur Mister Simitis, it is a mad cow!”246. The message here is clear: the image of outraged cattle, associates Simitis primarily to a Minotaur, the ancient half-man, half-bull creature. He has hard time internalizing what is going on in the present day and that is why he can not see the obvious: a sick cow. That cartoon speaks much about the general essentialism attributed to the ancient past by politicians: the governments, consciously or not, put all the problems on the waiting list because what it matters most to them is antiquity. The over-exploitation of the myth as Schöpflin says, can even cause leaders to stop reform and change the general political discourse. That is especially the case in post 2006 Macedonia.

Similarly to the witticism about Simitis and the Minotaurs, one can make a parallel with Gruevski and the phalanges of Alexander. Simitis was mocked on about confusing reality with the mythological world of antiquity, mistaking the mad cow with Minotaurs; nowadays, Gruevski consciously prioritizes cultural policies over objective problems. A good example for this is the economic policy of the Macedonian government in the middle of the global financial crisis. Opposite to the common sense and the advises of domestic and foreign experts, vast amounts of the state budget are to be spend for cultural elevation by erecting monuments and archaeological excavations in which Ancient Macedonia has the central place, on the expense of solving some of the social upheavals caused by the crisis247. This

247 See Nina Nineska – Fidaniska, “Rebalans ili farsa na Vladata” [Rebalance of the budget or governmental phrase], Edotiral to Utrinski Vesnik 14.05.2009
notion can also fit in the Schöpflin's suggestion of “culturalization” of politics, meaning that the symbolic and mythological discourse are prioritized over objective problems\textsuperscript{248}.

A third author that theorizes myths as “nationalist images of history”, is John Coakley\textsuperscript{249}. He also starts from the premise that in one society, the action of the elites is the perpetuator of the nationalist image of history. The two most important assets that the elites have are the mechanisms of creation and dissemination of myths\textsuperscript{250}. In terms of the functionality of the myth, Coakley builds upon Breuilly's accounts\textsuperscript{251} on the interaction between the nationalist ideology and the state and comes up with five types of functions: definition of the boundaries, reinforcement of a sense of pride, promotion of commiseration over unjust suffering, legitimization of the national struggle and inspiration for the future\textsuperscript{252}.

The most important trait in Coakley's work, however, is the reference to the nationalist (ab)uses of history as if it was a “grab-bag” from which the myth-makers select some of the

\textsuperscript{248} Schöpflin, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{249} John Coakley, “Mobilizing the past: nationalist images of history”, Nationalism and Ethnic Politics, 10 (2004), pp. 531-560
\textsuperscript{250} Ibid., p. 534
\textsuperscript{251} See John Breuilly, Nationalism and the state (Manchester : Manchester University Press 1994)
\textsuperscript{252} Coakley, op. cit., p. 541. This point needs to be discussed. More or less, the functions as according to Coakley's typology has been discussed in the previous sections, as the definition, legitimization and the inspiration functions are somewhat common points of all theories on the role of national myths. The single of his five functions that has not been discussed so far is probably the function of providing commiseration. Self-victimization and commiseration in the Greek and Macedonian context though, are more associated with the Turkish yoke (Turcocratia in Greek). In respect to the myth of Ancient Macedonia, the capacity of commiseration arises from its contextual interpretation within the corpus of other national myths with whom it interacts - the myths of the fall of the Golden Age, the myths of traitors and oppressors and unfair treatment by history. That rhetoric can be seen in a quotation the Macedonian mono-drama “Philip II”, that was sponsored by the government. In the play, the ghost of king Philip condemns the traitors who caused the failure of his Kingdom, referring to the ones who are now willing to compromise the name of the Republic of Macedonia, portraying himself and the other Macedonians as betrayed and tormented. Nonetheless, the victimization component is marginal in this paper.
narratives while omitting the others on purpose. That is to a great extent in relation with Kolstø's argument that in the functionalist approach to national myths, there is no possibilities for critical re-examination of the factual accuracy\textsuperscript{253}. However, Kolstø does not emphasize enough the case that the omitted past events remain packed in the “grab-bag” and never see the daylight of academic debate. That argument by itself opens a whole new perspective about the not-remembering or rather forgetting some episodes of the history, leading us back to the postulates of the famous Ernest Renan.

“Forgetting, and I would even go far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation” was Renan's opening on nationalism\textsuperscript{254}. While nationalists are focused on remembering and commemorating their invented traditions, the actual historical events are being forgotten. Undoubtedly, no one could guarantee the accuracy of history, but here it is proposed reading the past contextually and as a continuity, rather than seeking the objective historical truth. The myth clearly does the latter – by generalizing the past, it creates a black and white image of history in which things are treated as inherently good or bad with no sensibility towards any ambiguous or inconclusive occurrences. Every peculiarity from the past is evaluated based on its interaction with the national 'self'.

That being the case, it is arguable that forgetting specified passages from the past, is a fundamental hallmark of myths, and an extension of their escapist function. Depending on the degree of divergence between the myth and the history, often the forgotten can be the crucial episodes of the past and their reflections in the present state of the nation.

\textbf{Greece and the Politics of Smearing Differences}

In the Greek context, the alteration of the image of the past can be seen as a replacement of the mosaic of different identities that have existed on the territory of Greece

\textsuperscript{253} Kolstø, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{254} Quoted in Calhoun, op. cit. and Coakley, op. cit.
with the image of an eternal monolithic continuum from antiquity. Insisting on the exclusively “pure” Hellenic character of Alexander the Great and Ancient Macedonia, the Greek nationalists tend to forget the historic diversity of the region. The ancient Greek tribalism has been gradually replaced with an imperial rhetoric of a broad Greek identity.\(^{255}\) The implications here concern not just the image of the ancient past, but the whole context of the Balkans. At the same time, implying that Alexander the Great had a Greek national identity, means a projection of the category nation back to the ancient times, which is . The assumption of the antiquity of nations, as Özkırımlı argues, is highly questionable.\(^{256}\) Here, it seems, that a short departure from the motive of the interpretation of the ancient past has to be made, in order its repercussions to be examined.

In the Greek nationalist image of the past, the Greek identity is perceived as the most durable one in the neighborhood, hence the most legitimate in terms of claiming historical rights. Every other identity is in some way seen as peripheral and subordinate to the Greek one.\(^{257}\) In this respect, the merging between the ancient Greek and Macedonian identities indicates that the Greek and Macedonian identity remained merged in modernity. That is why modern-day Macedonian identity is considered to be a regional sub-national identity of the Greeks that live on the territory of Macedonia. That, later, leads Greece to denouncing the notion of a separate Macedonian ethnic identity that was established in the late 19th and the

\(^{255}\) Michael Bakaoukas, “Modern Greek National Identity”, *The Origin of European Nationalism: Politics Resource Center* [http://www.radicalacademy.com/studentrefpolitics22mb.htm], last accessed 22.05.2009. As well, this goes in line with Bernal's proposed dichotomy of “ancient” and “Aryan” (racist) approaches to the Ancient Greek civilization. While in the “ancient” model the culture was not homogenized and was diverse and interacting with other cultures, the racist approach in an ignorant and instrumentalist manner omits those features. See Bernal, *Black Athena...*, op. cit.


\(^{257}\) A good trigger for this features of the Greek self-perception is a recent study on the attitudes of Greek students. See Christos Zagkos, Argyris Kyridis, Paraskevi Golia and Ifigenia Vamvakidou, “Greek University Students Describe the Role of Greece in the Balkans: From Equality to Superiority”, *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 35 (2), 2007, pp. 341-367. Although the premise on the antiquity of the Greek nation in the background of the research is questionable, some of the insights offered by the analysis on the opinions seem pretty valid. 72.5% of the respondents perceived Greece as leading in the region, in a great portion based on its cultural supremacy (p. 362).
20th century. Through forgetting about the differences, what is remembered is the homogenous, unitary, long-lasting Greek identity whose others, as Triandafyllidou argues, are not just the ones that are culturally different, but also the dissenters to the official Greek story.

One important example of the latter is the case of Anastasia Karakasidou in the 1990s. Karakasidou, an anthropologist, in the late 1980s and the early 1990s has been doing a research on the ethnographic diversity in the Greek region of Macedonia. The insights she offers on the matter of the collective memory of the Slavic speaking people in Greek Macedonia clashes with the official story of pure Greek national identity. Her work, however has been a matter of a fierce attacks and active other-ing. As she says, she has been accused of “stupidity”, “cannibalism” and being a “secret agent of the FYROM”. She goes on stating that she had felt “like a woman who unwittingly violated taboos by peering behind the veils and revealing the “sacred flutes” of Greek national ideology”. She has frequently been asked if she was still feeling Greek.

The Karakasidou case attracted a lot of international interest. As her book was about to be published by Cambridge University Press, the publishing house has unexpectedly decided to abandon this idea, because of threats by Greek nationalists, causing protests among academia who started questioning the freedom of expression. In the official statement of the Cambridge University Press, their exculpation was based on their concerns about Karakasidou's personal safety, but as well the possible risk for their own employees, as there

were death and rape threats sent before from nationalist organizations from Greece, but also from the Greek diaspora in the United States\textsuperscript{261}.

The aspect that makes Karakasidou's work controversial and disputed by Greek nationalism, is certainly the argument she makes on forgetting, ignoring and negating ethnic identities. As she argues, it was the Greek “invention of tradition” and the reference to the people claiming their Slavic Macedonian identity as people without history, or people attempting to steal Greek history\textsuperscript{262}. For the language they speak, it is said that it is a dialect of Bulgarian or Serbian or even Greek, and the same goes for the culture and the rituals they share\textsuperscript{263}.

Another anthropologist, that scrutinizes the concept of other-ing and forgetting in the Greek context is Rodanthi Tzanelli. Focusing not to the unrecognized Slavic, but to the unrecognized Albanian minority in Greek Macedonia. Tzallini analyzes the notion of the Greek national holiday, the “Ohi” day commemorating the refusal to abide by Mussolini’s ultimatum in October 1940 (“ohi” means no in Greek) and its celebration. Building upon a case when contrary to the practice, the best student in a local place was deprived of the honor to carry the national flag during the parade just because his declared Albanian ethnic identity, the author argues that it is the “solidary amnesia” that is the poetics of belonging in Northern Greece. Briefly, the point made in his work is that the purity of one's Greekness depends on their ability to abandon their collective memory. That is the same case on a state level. As Tzanelli argues, the purpose of the particular “Ohi” day celebration, is not the one assigned by the Greek authorities - commemorate the day when Macedonia became part of Greece and to perpetuate the sentiment of national belonging; rather, its purpose is to perpetuate the


\textsuperscript{263} Ibid.

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exclusion and to keep the politics of forgetting\textsuperscript{264}.

Of course, the forgetting, as well as the “remembering” is a process that is being adjusted to the political developments. As Karakasidou argues\textsuperscript{265}, and as it has been pointed in the exposition of the thesis, in the Greco-Macedonian context, an important event that shaped the further constellation between the two sides, was the independence of the Republic of Macedonia.

That can be seen in an analysis of the mainstream Greek nationalist rhetoric for such purposes. Regarding that, there is probably no example more representative for such an analysis than the works by Evangelos Kofos. Kofos is a famous Greek historian, born in Edhessa (Voden), a town of Aegean Macedonia, who has been working on the Macedonian Question for decades now. Some if his works have been referenced in the chapters above. In the 1990s he has been the principal associate to the Greek government regarding the relations with the Republic of Macedonia. It is expected that soon he will publish a large study on the name dispute and beyond, under the guardianship of the Greek government again.

Kofos in the period 1960s – 1990s, writing mostly about the War years and the Civil War in Greece, referred to ethnic Macedonians in Greece and the citizens of the (Socialist) Republic of Macedonia as 'Macedonians' or variations of the term Slavo-Makedones (Slavo-Macedonians, Slavic Macedonians, Macedonian Slavs)\textsuperscript{266}. Even in his piece published in 1990, he persisted using the same terminology\textsuperscript{267}. Yet, only couple of years later, he started shaprly shifting from the use of any word combination containing the noun “Macedonian” towards the use of FYROMians or more frequently, Skopianes (after the capital of the


\textsuperscript{265} Karakasidou, “Afterword” to \textit{Fields of Wheat...}, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{266} See for example, Evangelos Kofos, \textit{Nationalism and communism in Macedonia} (Thessalonike : Institute for Balkan Studies, 1964) and Kofos, “Dilemmas of the Greek policy in Macedonia”, op. cit. (1980)

\textsuperscript{267} Kofos, “National heritage and national identity...”, op. cit.
Republic of Macedonia).

Greece attitude of not recognizing “a so called 'Macedonian' minority” has persisted throughout the years and it has recently been flagged as an important minority issue by the Council of Europe. At the same time, the Macedonian government and a good portion of the civil society in the Republic of Macedonia acts in solidarity with the Greek citizens that claim to be ethnic Macedonians and struggle for recognition. Yet, if one takes in account some the well respected anthropological and ethnographic studies that argue for the existence and the alleged assimilation of Macedonian (or Slavic Macedonian) minority in Greece, than one of the approaches that can provide a decent comprehension of the complex of the two states and the minority in between, is the one offered by Rogers Brubaker on the complexity of national minorities, nationalizing states and external homelands.

A common argumentation in the Macedonian camp, often exaggerated and colored in emotions but nonetheless formulated around an idea that is valid, is the argument about the potential of the Macedonian issue for opening up the Pandora box of the Greek national question. In a word, the counter-factual analysis statement of some of the Macedonian intellectuals (most significantly, the newly elected president, Gjorge Ivanov), is that by the eventual recognition of an ethnic Macedonian minority in Greece, the Greek nationalist rhetoric would have to face an unpleasant reality check. The emergence of the forgotten and

268 His most recent paper even engages into discussion on the revision of terminology as being important factor in the solution of the Greco-Macedonian dispute. See Evangelos Kofos, “The Current macedonian Issue between Athens and Skopje: Is there an Option for a Breakthrough?”, ELIAMEP Thesis, April 2009

269“There is no ‘Macedonian’ minority in Greece. In this regard, Greece reiterates its position, that any recommendation by UN treaty bodies and, a fortiori, by other monitoring mechanisms, on the protection of rights of persons claiming to belong to a “minority” cannot determine the existence of a minority group or impose on States an obligation to officially recognize a group as a “minority”. “ See the Appendix [Comments of the Greek Authorities on the draft report of the Commissioner for human rights of the Council of Europe following his visit to Greece on 8-10 December 2008 (issue reviewed: human rights of minorities)] of the Report by Thomas Hammarberg (op.cit)

270 Rogers Brubaker, “Nationalizing states in the old ‘New Europe’ – and the new” in Nationalism reframed..., op. cit., pp. 79-107

271 As there is a lack of written sources on this matter, I recommend some of the public appearances of Ivanov. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKyS26s8EKE>, a fragment of an open forum where he exposes his ideas.
suppressed historical events would dismantle many of the national myths, Alexander the
Great being only one of the most benign of them. Besides the discursive havoc, there would
be an demographic shock\textsuperscript{272} as well, as all the expelled Macedonians after the Civil War
would now be set to return to their homeland and reclaim their properties. It would also
provoke a domino effect in terms of the rights of other ethnic minorities, in the first place the
Turkish and the Albanian one. Ivanov supposes that the opening of the minority issues might
result in tensions and possible legitimacy crisis as well, similar to the one the Republic of
Macedonia experienced with the struggles for political rights of the Albanians. On a regional
scale, the recognition of Macedonian minority in Greece would be a step forward to the
recognition of the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria, which might have similar consequences
in terms of destabilizing the country\textsuperscript{273}. The possibility of these issues opening in two
European Union member states, in the already disordered Balkans, in the end, leads us to the
re-acknowledgment of the bad karma the Macedonian Question carries with itself.

\textbf{The New Macedonism and the Honorable Quest for the Roots}

In the Macedonian case, the reasons behind the instrumentalization of the narratives of
the distant past are probably as far-reaching as in the Greek one. In spite of that, the
circumstances are patently different, generating a separate discourse with its own
specifications. The Republic of Macedonia, a small and socially tormented country, generated
nationalist sentiments which to a great extent were, in Hanák's words, a "compensation for
backwardness"\textsuperscript{274}. In a critique on the Macedonian obsession with the national self, Vladimir
Chupeski relates the national uncertainties with the failure of the system and the destructive

\textsuperscript{272} This hypothesis is exaggerated given the overall size of population in N. Greece vs. the likely numbers of repatriates.
\textsuperscript{273} This hypothesis might also be seen as exaggerated, given that the likely number of the minority will take a
tiny share of Pirin’s overall population (less than 1%).
\textsuperscript{274} Péter Hanák, “A National Compensation for Backwardness”, Studies in East European Thought, Vol. 46,
No. 1/2, Nationalism and Social Science (Jun., 1994), pp. 33-45

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force of the political parties, arguing that in the Macedonian case, the ethnonational mobilization over myths are cause and consequence of failed politics. As he proposes, the Macedonian political parties do not differ significantly in terms of their attitudes towards strategic political and economic issues, with the only exception being the national question. What appears to be the apple of discord, hence the ideological denominator in the Macedonian context is the approach to the Macedonian national identity and the related matters. The situation in Macedonia in that respect was resembling the typical post-Yugoslav case, in which the trained Marxist mutated into ideologues of nationalism. As Siniša Malešević argues, the void created with the downfall of Yugoslav communism, in the successor societies was filled with the politics of identity. The conformist and servile Marxist-trained elites adjusted themselves to the new settings where it was the national rather than the class 'self' that was the anchor of politics.

The fashion in which the Macedonian nationalist discourse developed was determined by the burden of the outside claims towards different aspect of Macedonian identity. That was reflected in the adoption of political language that embraced plenty of what Brubaker calls, “defensive” nationalist qualities adding to the “nationalizing” efforts of the Republic, typical for every newly independent state. The essential characteristic of that defensive kind of “national-populist nationalism”, is its juxtaposition as opposed to outside threats. After gaining the independence, the Macedonian position was subordinated towards the neighboring claims, which caused a self-perception of inferiority to be achieved. In respect to the

278 See Brubaker, “Myths and Misconceptions...”, op. cit.
relations towards the neighboring nation-states,

However, the defensive nationalist features were not essentially a novelty in the political discourse. As Troebst argues, since the establishment of the Macedonian state within Yugoslavia, historiography and politics were intertwined in the recycling of history, creating what he ironically labels as "historical 'Masterpieces'" that helped creating image of a Macedonian distinctiveness. In his viewpoint, the Macedonian case had been an exception in Yugoslavia, as Macedonia was the only federal republic where the Yugoslavist aspects of the nation-building were less intense than the Macedonianist ones, and even argues that in Macedonia, the doctrine of Yugoslavism was subordinated to the one of Macedonism.

The so called “Macedonism”, an approach towards history and the national question, that emerged in Yugoslavia, was primarily focused on proving the ethnogenetic uniqueness of Macedonians. As Mirjana Maleska elaborates:

"it represents a complex process of building and consolidation of a nation [...] to protect itself from assimilation [...]"

On a political level the "Macedonism" is simplified and manifested as an ideology [...] in favor of a status quo situation on the Balkans. According to them, the establishment of a Macedonian nation, Macedonian language and culture is a "fait accompli". Macedonian national identity [...] must not be questioned in order not to jeopardize Macedonian territorial integrity, for this could have negative political consequences to the stability of the Balkans."

Being engaged in a multilateral debate, Macedonism was never a phenomenon for itself. In its foundation, it interpreted the nation in ethnic terms, defining its allies and negative others. As that discourse emerged within the Yugoslav metatext, it is logical to assume that the narratives nurtured by Macedonism, were the ones what are in this paper

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281 Ibid.
classified as the “Slavic” ones. However, Slavic, or even South Slavic is a term that has a vague meaning and is certainly does not refer to a homogenous culture as there was the specter of Yugoslav identities (with different variations within all of the federal republics) and outside Yugoslavia, and the Bulgarian one\textsuperscript{283}.

The Macedonian statehood came into being much later than the Bulgarian and Serbian. While the Macedonian national movement was stuck in the prolonged and difficult Phase B (in Troebst's terms), Serbia and Bulgaria were already established and pursuing their national projects. One point where they met was Macedonia. The Orthodox, Slavic speaking population that lived in Macedonia had not had have the experience of living in a Slavic state until 1913. At that point, as soon as Vardar and Pirin parts of Macedonia were annexed to Serbia and Bulgaria respectively, the nationalizing processes that had commenced with the “propaganda” in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, now entered a more intensive phase, trying to impose the new identities to the population.

Of course, the interaction between the Slavic people and the identities was not strictly a process from-above. That was more obvious with regard to Bulgaria. Namely, many of the national heroes from the late Ottoman, but also from the 20\textsuperscript{th} century history were claimed by Bulgaria as Bulgarian national heroes. Moreover, part of those heroes had declared themselves as Bulgarians, or those who stressed a Macedonian identity rarely saw it as mutually exclusive with Bulgarianness – similarly as in the Montenegrin-Serbian case\textsuperscript{284}.

Additionally, there had been notions on undeniable similarities in the culture between the two sides. All of that, stimulated the Bulgarian position to claim even more the historical rights over the Macedonian heritage and to argue that the Macedonian identification is a sub-national variant of the Bulgarian national one.

\textsuperscript{283} The platform of Macedonism is reflected in the opinions of Atanas Vangelov. See Atanas Vangelov, Pro et Contra Makedonizmi (Pro et Contra Macedonianisms), (Skopje : Demokratija, Vesnik na SDSM, 1998)

\textsuperscript{284} See Frusetta, op. cit.
In the case of Serbia, the Macedonian case had fewer resemblances, although the Serbian claims that the Macedonian identity is a sub-variant of the Serbian national identity were also present. However, after 1945 and the establishment of the Brotherhood and Unity based federation of Yugoslavia, the Serbian claims had to be reduced on the expenses on the institutionalization of the Macedonian identity\textsuperscript{285}. Framed like this, the Macedonian national identity institutionalized after the World War Two, can be seen as a solution that at the same time was neither Bulgarian nor Serbian and was still addressing the need for belonging among Slavic speakers or the alleged ethnic Macedonians in the region\textsuperscript{286}.

After the federalization with Serbia within Yugoslavia, the only sound other for Macedonia remained to be Bulgaria. That was visible for instance, in the commemoration of the struggle against the short-lived Bulgarian occupation in 1941-44 and the lack of attention to the 1919-41 period, including the repressive policies of Belgrade, forceful colonization, and IMRO resistance\textsuperscript{287}. Hence, in the establishment and the development of the Macedonian official discourse towards the national question, a strong emphasis was made on the othering of the Bulgarians and un-remembering or forgetting the common characteristics and collective memories. As Maleska argues, besides the reinterpretation of history, the process of de-Bulgarianization was reflected in society, as the “post-war generations grew up “overdosed” with strong anti-Bulgarian sentiment, leading to the creation of mainly negative stereotypes for

\textsuperscript{285} There were other aspects of this process as well. Serb colonists expelled by the Bulgarian authorities were not allowed to return by the new communist rulers of Macedonia, stemming one of the sources of Serbianization. Also, the codification of standard Macedonian language rolled back the expansion of Serbo-Croatian as lingua franca.

\textsuperscript{286} “It could be said that Macedonians, declare themselves “Macedonians”, if, for no other reason, than at least because they are, first of all, convinced as to the necessity and all-inclusiveness of the ethno-national self-determination; and, second, because the identification “Macedonians” seems to them to be the most attractive option out of all that could have been chosen from 1944 onwards [...] The ethno-national connotation of the signifier “Macedonian”, which was aimed at the Christian Orthodox, south Slavic language nation, and additionally at the Bulgarians and Serbs, and was itself unknown in the central Balkan region of that time, gained significance only after the Second World War.” Troebst, “Historical Politics and Historical 'Masterpieces'...”, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{287} Brunnbauer, op. cit.
Bulgaria and its nation”\(^{288}\). The viewpoint characterized by the excessive negative sentiments towards Bulgaria and the denial of its cultural proximity, being the consequence of the Macedonianist rhetoric, is labeled by Maleska as “Bulgarophobia”\(^{289}\) (also known as “B-complex”).

The Macedonian and Bulgarian national identifications both were partially rooted in the Macedo-Bulgarian regionalist identity which was very strong both prior to the Balkan Wars and in the inter-war period\(^{290}\). Having in mind the plenty of crosscutting cleavages and a lot of converging past, the Macedonianist discourse could avoid the cultural influence from Sofia only by insisting on a narrative of autochtonism that could help proving the difference between the two. And that was the point where Alexander the Great fitted into the Communist rhetoric.

Namely, both the Bulgarian and Macedonian nation-builders had a consensus in reading the Slavism of their nations. The general narrative was that the Slavs had arrived on the Balkans invading from the North, and then mixed with the indigenous populations. In the Bulgarian case, Bulgarians were perceived as a breed between Slavic tribes, the Protobulgarians and the Thracians\(^{291}\), and in the Macedonian case, as a one between (another set of) Slavic Tribes and Ancient Macedonians. Thereby, the link with Ancient Macedonia, in the Yugoslav period was the one legitimizing the Macedonian nation vis-a-vis the Bulgarian.

However, this Macedonianist perspective has not been unchallenged within the


\(^{289}\) Maleska, “With the eyes of the ‘Others’”, op. cit.

\(^{290}\) That regionalist identification was cultivated by the IMRO and its legal institutions – the Macedonian Charitable Fraternities, Macedonian Patriotic Organization, Macedonian Scientific Institute, Macedonian Popular Bank, Macedonian faction in Bulgaria’s parliament, etc.

\(^{291}\) Protobulgarians are said to be nomadic tribes originating from Central Asia. For a deconstruction on the theory of the amalgamation of the Slavs, Protobulgarians and Thracians into the Bulgarian nation, see Ilia Iliev, “The proper use of ancestors”, Ethnologia Balkanica, Vol. 2, 1998, pp. 7-18
Macedonian public sphere. Another nationalist discourse developing within the Macedonian society was the one of the so-called “anti-Macedonism”. It has been defined as a tendency that seeks “returning the Bulgarian consciousness” of Macedonians\textsuperscript{292}. It has been associated with segments of the VMRO-DPMNE party under the leadership of Ljubcho Georgievski, prime minister of the Republic of Macedonia in the period 1998-2002 who later became a Bulgarian citizen.

Ljubcho Georgievski has been the political figure that has inspired the Macedonian independence from Yugoslavia. As well, he has been the one that had overseen the introduction of the Ancient Macedonian symbols as national symbols during the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. In his recently published article though, with a vast amount of historical background, quoted several times throughout this paper, he argues against the recent process of “antiquization” as it is highly instrumental and fallacious. As well, he tries to exculpate himself saying:

“\textquote{The main problem we faced [on the way to our independence] was the massive Yugoslavism among Macedonians. We could have used the story about Ancient Macedonia as a mean for wakening up from the Yugoslav daydreaming, but we never did that.}\textsuperscript{293}”

Although it is disputable to which extent Georgievski did not instrumentals the narrative of Alexander the Great, it is certainly clear that it was his successor in the VMRO-DPMNE, and Prime Minister since 2006, Nikola Gruevski, whose family originates from Aegean Macedonia, that was the one who introduced the rhetoric of the ethnocultural longue durée of the Macedonian nation with Alexander as its core myth.

Gruevski’s rhetoric regarding the Macedonian question is based on two pillars: the antiquity, and the belated salient sentiments of anti-communism. The latter is a new moment.

\textsuperscript{292} Maleska, “The Macedonian (Old-New) Issue”, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{293} Georgievski, op. cit.
in this analysis and deserves at least a brief elaboration. Namely, VMRO-DPMNE from its beginnings was oriented towards criticism of communism. However, the anti-communist attitudes of the party, were enacted into policy only since 2006. The most illustrative example is the building of a museum for the victims of the communist regime. The satanization of communism can be seen best in the rhetoric used by the party. For example, the recent protests against building a Church on the main square in Skopje, were commented by VMRO-DPMNE as “communist”. The same label goes with the opponents to the Antiquization, since communism is said to be anti-national as well. That clearly sharpens the image about VMRO-DPMNE's approach to the Macedonian question: besides the re-interpretation of the myth of Alexander, they propose a major review of the Yugoslav communist past. In the traditional Macedonism the communist years were perceived as the period when the Macedonian nation was established; in Gruevski's rhetoric it is a period when the national sentiments were repressed. That is why implicitly in this chapter the terms New Macedonism and NeoMacedonism were suggested for labeling this new approach. The new Alexander-inspired Macedonian populist nationalism can be inferred as representing a new major revisionist project towards history, being confronted with both the previous two dominant approaches towards the national question. First, by stressing the Ancient Macedonian distinctiveness it departs from the “anti-Macedonism” of the pre-Gruevski VMRO-DPMNE. The assumption of the ethnocultural durability of the Macedonian nation from the late neolith till today implies its cultural distinctiveness, thus transcending the Slavic meaning of Macedonia and any hypothesis on the proximity with Bulgarians. Secondly, by introducing the anti-communist rhetoric by presenting the “myth of the repressed national identity” and the demonization of

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294 In the recent archaeological discourse, the term “Macedonian neolith” is used, instead of the logical phrase “Neolith findings in the Republic of Macedonia”. A Center for Macedonian Neolith Research was established with a task “to prove the continuity of the Macedonian culture”. See “Vo Bitola otvoren Centar za istrazhuvanje na makedonskiot neolit” [A Center for Macedonian Neolith Research established in Bitola], A1 News, 19.05.2007, <http://www.a1.com.mk/vesti/default.aspx?VestID=79327>, last accessed 27.05.2009
the Yugoslav past, it amends the rhetoric of “Macedonism”, which glorifies the liberation struggle during the World War II and the nation-building role that Tito's communists have played. Building upon the inherently Macedonianist feature of over-emphasizing the uniqueness of Macedonians, it also borrows from the anti-Macedonianist rhetoric of objecting to the communist-approved nation-building process.

The maintenance of the “roots”, similarly as in the Greek case, results with un-remembering, or rather to say forgetting of important episodes from the past. In the Macedonian case, the Neomacedonianist rhetoric is not just a re-evaluation of the symbolic capital, but it is an attempt to transcend the burdens of history. In addition to the traditional anti-Bulgarian sentiment, the Neomacedonism generates an excessive anti-Yugoslav one as well.

295 An interesting point on this is made by Jasna Koteska. She suggests that besides the fierce opposition of this new nationalism towards the communist past, in fact the exploitation of esoteric narratives (stressing the Hunza case) are to a great extent in continuity with the communis rhetoric of appreciation of exotics. See Jasna Koteska, Komunistichka Intima, [Communist Intimacy] (Skopje : Templum, 2008)
Concluding Remarks

Writing about Southeastern European nationalisms is always a dangerous and thankless job. It is dangerous because it involves the author and the reader in a vortex of collective memories that could possibly lead to a blind historicist interpretation of the facts. It is thankless, because the author always ends up as an apologist of one's side perception: if it is their own, they are considered a hero back home and a nationalist abroad; if it is someone else's, they are treated as a traitor back home but the credit abroad can easily fail to come.

Generally speaking, this paper provides a study on the New Macedonian Question, much different from the studies before, entering the above mentioned dangerous areas of nationalism. First, unlike the other researches, the focus here is on the symbolic capital of the complexity of the myth of Alexander the Great. Then, the myth was examined in comparative perspective. Finally, the insights on the myth were processed through an analysis of the respective national discourses in a broader context.

The possible limitations in the paper for the sake of avoiding digressions is probably the lack of emphasis of the objective circumstances in which the Greco-Macedonian dispute was opened, brought by globalization.

In terms of politics, it was the context of democratization (Greece after 1974 and Macedonia after 1990). Democratization process arguably helps the perpetuation of national myths. Dankwart Rustow, one of the most significant authors on democratization, says the first thing (“single background condition”) a society needs to democratize is national unity, in terms of all fellow citizens sharing the same vision about the nation. Yet, the notion of national unity means the citizens are sharing the same myth, since everything what is national, especially the unity, is much dependent on the myths. First of all, sharing the same myth is

296 Dankwart Rustow, “Transitions to Democracy”, Comparative Politics, April 1970, p. 352
one of the basic conditions of belonging to the same nation – hence, no myth means no nation means no democracy. Second, many theorists recognize the relation between the demographic composition and democracy\textsuperscript{297} - the higher the homogeneity of the population is, that higher the prospects for democratization are. So, the relation between national myths and democratization becomes quite clear even out of the frame of political power. Especially, in the Macedonian case, the notion of the post-communist transition offers a lot of possibilities for exploring the democratization discourse and its interaction with nationalist myths\textsuperscript{298}.

In terms of social change, it was the technological advancement that had reshaped the fields of communication. The new fields of communication are \textit{deterritorialized} (since the distance does not matter), \textit{decentralized} (since the new media are available for most of the people) and arguably \textit{detemporalized} (since most of the communication is happening in real time, but also remains written down indefinitely). This novelty was expected to be accompanied with a strong and effective rationalization of the discourse around the world, but it turned to be another way around. The information that multiplied, spread and was processed around the globe, was still controlled by humans. The Internet, especially the user-generated content platforms, offered people an opportunity to express or satisfy their most hidden deeds anonymously, by using their computers. One consequence of that is the expansion of online nationalist content\textsuperscript{299}. A common feature of the Greek and Macedonian nationalists\textsuperscript{300} is their

\begin{itemize}
\item Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, “Statelessness, Nationalism and Democratization”, \textit{Problems of democratic transition and consolidation : southern Europe, South America, and post-communist Europe}, (Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 16-37
\item Thomas Hylland Eriksen, “Nationalism and the Internet”, \textit{Nations and Nationalism} 13 (1), 2007, pp. 1-17
\item Though, of course, Macedonians start from a much lower position given the cultural capital associated with Hellenism.
\end{itemize}
effort to “promote your culture to the world” was seen as the major utility. In that respect, technology reinforced myths, and even advanced it, as the nation now got deterritorialized, decentralized and detemporalized, thus stimulating diaspora nationalism and transnational nationalism, and giving the myths possibility to multiply and spread around much more effectively than before. These insights could be also used in a study of the role of the diaspora in the Greco-Macedonian conflict.

Otherwise than that, the contribution of this study was in the “autopsy” of the myths of ancient nationhood.

The first part of the thesis engaged in exposing the Greco-Macedonian dispute in a broader perspective. Arguing that some of its aspects were inconceivable for the normative approaches, it was followed by a discussion on the role of the symbolical capital of Alexander the Great and the Ancient Macedonian Kingdom in the context of the feud.

In the anthropological framework of symbolic contestation, it was argued that the confronting claims over the historical rights to the myth of Alexander has been developing in four different phases, according to the model offered by Simon Harrison. First of all, in 19th century Greece and in 20th century Macedonia, there were inner debates over the value of the myth. These processes were nevertheless catalyzed by innovation efforts, most notably inspired from the archaeo logical findings in Vergina and the researches on the language of the Ancient Macedonians. At the time intervals when there was a consensus among the Greek and Macedonian elites that Alexander the Great stood highest in the hierarchy of myths (early 1990s, 2006-present), Macedonia and Greece openly confronted in the international arena,

\footnote{For example, until recently, the most commented video clip on YouTube was a clip titled “Macedonia is Greece” created by Greek user called “makedoniatruth”, featuring the Sun of Vergina, Alexander the Great and data from academic and media sources. As I am writing this, the clip is now only second with astonishing almost 650.000 comments. See \url{http://www.youtube.com/browse?s=md&t=a}, last accessed 25.05.2009.}

\footnote{Eriksen, op. cit.}
opening a proprietary contest over the exclusive ownership of the myth. Greece, due to its advantages in terms of longer statehood and wider political capacity, exercised expansionary strategies that had an interim success of making the Macedonian side repeal the claims on the myth of Alexander (1995-2006). After the innovation and the re-evaluation of the myth in Macedonia however, the conflict re-entered the proprietary phase.

In the next part of the thesis, a dissection of the functionalism behind the myth was undertaken. Building upon the instrumentarium of ethnosymbolism of Anthony Smith, some of the basic roles of the myth were assigned, and by using some of the combined theories by Özkırımlı, Kolstø, Schöpflin and Coakley, two aspects were flagged: the role of the elites and the function of forgetting. Hence, the last part was engaged in a discussion of the forgotten sequences from the history on the expense of the remembering the myth. In the Greek context, it was the multiculturalist image and the assimilation forces that were unremembered, and in the Macedonian it was the belated nationhood and the cultural proximity and its alteration that were forgotten.

As a final statement, although it used much of the insights by Anthony Smith and the ethnosymbolic approach, I would rather place this paper in the constructivist campus. The understanding of Özkırımlı's that the assumption of antiquity of nations is highly erroneous has been implicitly confirmed in both the cases of Macedonia and Greece, as it confirms the basic postulates of Hobsbawm's about the elite and the selection of the “usable past” and the “invention of tradition”. Yet, the very existence of this paper goes in line with the Calhoun's statement that nations, although they might not exist objectively, even in the globalizing world, still matter.
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