“THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION” – A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND EVALUATION
WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE TRADITIONAL GREEK IDEOLOGY

by
Evangelos Coconas

Dissertation
submitted in fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Magister Artium
in Greek
in the Faculty of Humanities
(Department of Greek and Latin Studies)
at
the University of Johannesburg

Supervisor: Prof. B. Hendrickx
Co-supervisor: Prof. T. Sansaridou-Hendrickx

Johannesburg 2014/15
When I was in Primary School I recall hearing and reading about the exploits and conquests of Alexander the Great. To me, Alexander the Great or Μεγαλέξανδρος was more than a great warrior who tamed Bucephalus at a young age and then proceeded to conquer the known world before the age of thirty. Personally, he was a champion for Greece and for Hellenism. Alexander the Great ensured that Greece and Hellenism would become known and respected throughout the ages. Films have been made and books have been written about him. References have even made about him and his empire in Holy Scriptures like the Bible (in Daniel 7:6, 8:5-7, 11:3-4) as the Four-Horned Goat, the Four-Winged Leopard and the metal statue and the Quran (as Dhul-Qarnayn the Two-Horned One).

When I was in High School I recall how passionately the global Hellenic community reacted when a small republic on Greece’s northern frontier proclaimed its independence with the official name “Republic of Macedonia”. This event struck a deeply emotional chord within me. I viewed this occurrence as a theft of my heritage. A proud heritage that was being appropriated by a young republic that was desperate to clutch onto anything in order to assign legitimacy to its newly-found independent status.

For this reason, I did not hesitate to select this research topic when I decided to proceed with my postgraduate studies. This topic may not be the most unique one, especially within European and specifically Balkan academic circles, but it is a topic that has been deeply embedded in my conscience as a patriotic Greek who was determined to tackle this issue with the simple objective of proving that “Macedonia is Greek”.

But one cannot be subjective in academic and scientific research and provide a discourse that is based on evidence that has been fuelled by passion. An academic researcher has a moral obligation to be objective and to inform on the basis of factual evidence and reason. There is a fine line between subjective emotion and objective truth when it comes to matters of patriotism and nationalism. Patriotism and nationalism can lead to fanaticism which I believe can ultimately defeat logic. A person can love his or her country and heritage and at the same
time refrain from feeling a sense of entitlement and demanding exclusivity to national symbolic factors. The most critical element is to be free from prejudice when attempting to uncover the truth.

Firstly, I would like to thank the Lord for giving me courage, protection and inspiration during a challenging, yet satisfying period of my life. I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to my academic supervisors at the University of Johannesburg, Prof. Benjamin Hendrickx and Prof. Thekla Sansaridou-Hendrickx for their guidance, patience and encouragement throughout the duration of my studies.

Furthermore, I would also like express my deepest thanks to Dr. Minas Constantopoulos for his enlightening input, as well as to Mrs. Anastasia Krystalidis who had contributed to my love for Hellenism during my schooling career and provided generous financial support for the furthering of my tertiary studies. A huge thank you as well goes to my friend Jessica Keet for her time and assistance in the proofreading of my work.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents and my siblings for their support and interest and above all, I would like to express my fondest gratitude to my beloved wife, Joanne Karzis, whose strength, confidence and faith in my personal ability was paramount in the production of my academic dissertation.
Contents

Foreword iii
Contents v
List of Figures vii
Abbreviations viii

1. Introduction 1

2. Historical Outlook 4

2.1 The Early Kingdom 4

2.2 Expansion and Empire 6

2.3 Division and Decline 8

2.4 Roman, Byzantine and “Barbarian” Rule 9

2.5 Slavic Macedonia 10

2.6 Bulgar Rule 12

2.7 Tsar Samuel’s Macedonian Empire 13

2.8 Byzantine and Serbian Rule 16

2.9 Ottoman Rule 20

2.10 The Origin of the Macedonian Question 25

2.11 Modern Geographical Macedonia – The Country and the People 27

2.12 The Historical Background of the Dispute 31

3. Socio-Political Aspects of the Macedonians 44

3.1 The Slavic “Macedonian” Language 44

3.1.1 The History of the Slavic “Macedonian” Language 47

3.1.2 Views on the Slavic “Macedonian” Language 48

3.1.2.1 The Slavic “Macedonian” View 48

3.1.2.2 The Greek View 49

3.1.2.3 The Bulgarian View 50

3.1.2.4 The Serbian View 52

3.1.2.5 Other Views 53

3.2 The Macedonian Orthodox Church 54
3.2.1 The History of the Macedonian Orthodox Church 54
3.2.2 The Language of the Macedonian Orthodox Church 56
3.3 Macedonian Symbols 56
3.3.1 “Antiquitisation” and Macedonian Heroes 57
3.3.2 “Vergina Sun” and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) Flag 59
3.3.3 The “United Macedonia” Salute 61
4. The Macedonian Dispute Today 63
4.1 The Macedonian Question – A Political Overview 65
4.2 The Construction of National Identities, Cultures and Histories 69
4.3 Ancient Macedonia and the Macedonian Naming Dispute 71
4.3.1 Irredentism – “United Macedonia” 77
4.3.2 Irredentism – “Greater Greece” 79
4.4 Alexander the Great – A Greek or a Slav? 81
4.5 The “Vergina” Sun – A National Symbol 87
4.6 The First International Congress on Macedonian Studies 89
4.7 International Recognition of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) 91
4.8 The Slavic “Macedonian” Minority of Northern Greece 95
5. Geopolitical Considerations on the Macedonian Question 99
5.1 The Macedonian Question - Nationalism and Identity 99
5.2 The Macedonian Question - Nationhood and Citizenship 100
5.3 The “symbolic struggle” of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) 105
5.4 The Slavic “Macedonian” Argument 111
5.5 The Minority Question 119
5.6 The Greek Argument against the Slavic “Macedonian” Identity 125
5.7 Supporting the Greek Argument 131
6. Conclusion 143
7. Bibliography 146
8. Appendix: National Rulers 159
9. Abstract 165
List of Figures

Figure 1: The Ancient Greek Mainland
Figure 2: The Kingdom of Macedon at the death of Philip II
Figure 3: The Roman province of Macedonia
Figure 4: The Byzantine Empire under the Macedonian Dynasty
Figure 5: Byzantine Greece
Figure 6: Macedonia under Ottoman Rule
Figure 7: The statue of Alexander the Great in Skopje
Figure 8: The statue of Alexander the Great in Bitola
Figure 9: The Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) flag from 1992-1995
Figure 10: The Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) flag today
Figure 11: The “United Macedonia” Salute
Figure 12: The Serbian Salute
Figure 13: The Unification of Greece under the Treaty of Sevres
Figure 14: “United Macedonia”
Figure 15: The “Great Idea” and Greece’s territorial gains
Figure 16: The Vergina Sun
Figure 17: “Greater Albania”
Figure 18: The Rum or Orthodox Millet in the Ottoman Empire
Figure 19: The Balkans before the Balkan Wars
Figure 20: The Balkans after the First Balkan War
Figure 21: The Balkans after the Second Balkan War
Abbreviations

ASNOM: Anti-fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia (Антифашистичко Собрание за Народно Ослободување на Македонија), the supreme legislative and executive people's representative body of the Macedonian state from 1944 until the end of World War II

CSCE: Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

COMINTERN: Communist International

EAM: Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo (Εθνικό Απελευθερωτικό Μέτωπο), the main movement of the Greek Resistance during the Axis occupation of Greece during World War II

EBLUL: European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages

ELAS: Ellinikos Laikos Apeleftherotikos Stratos (Ελληνικός Λαϊκός Απελευθερωτικός Στρατός), the military arm of the National Liberation Front (EAM)

EU: European Union

EC: European Community

FYROM: Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

IMF: International Monetary Fund

KKE: Kommounistiko Komma Elladas (Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδας), the Communist Party of Greece

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

NOF: National Liberation Front (НАРОДНО ОСЛЮБОДИТЕЛЕН ФРОНТ), a communist political and military organisation created by the Macedonian minority in Greece
**PASOK**: Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Πανελλήνιο Σοσιαλιστικό Κίνημα) a social-democratic political party in Greece

**PDP**: Party for Democratic Prosperity (Партија за демократски просперитет), an ethnic Albanian political party in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)

**UCK**: Ushtria Çlirimtare Kombëtare (National Liberation Army), an Albanian militant organisation that operated in the Republic of Macedonia in 2001

**UN**: United Nations

**USA**: United States of America

**USSR**: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

**VMRO-DPME**: Внатрешна македонска револуционерна организация – Демократска партија за македонско национално единство (The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity), the largest and leading party in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)
1. Introduction

The “Macedonian Question” is a highly contentious issue in the Balkan Peninsula that spans back many years. The general impression is that this is a fairly recent dispute, but the fact of the matter is that it goes back almost two hundred years. Nevertheless, there is evidence that can be traced from ancient times.

The underlying issue is the modern-day use of the name “Macedonia”. With the collapse of Communism and the subsequent disintegration of Yugoslavia, came the creation of the “Republic of Macedonia” (FYROM), the southernmost republic of former Yugoslavia. This sparked a tremendous uproar in this new republic’s neighbour to the south, the Hellenic Republic (Greece).

The Greek perception is that “Macedonia” is Greek. Right from the times of Alexander the Great, and that nobody else has the right to use the name “Macedonia” as their own. They believe the Ancient Macedonians belonged to the Ancient Greek kingdom of Macedon and their language, religion, traditions and culture were essentially Greek. The Greeks believe that during the Cold war, a “Macedonian” identity was created by Marshal Tito (a Croat), as a form of Communist propaganda in order to diminish the power of the Serbs in the south.

The perception of this new republic, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), is that the Ancient Macedonians were a unique nation and by no means related to the Ancient Greeks. Their perception is also that the Ancient Macedonian language and religion were unrelated to that of the Ancient Greeks. The inhabitants of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) have fostered a belief that they can trace their ancestry right back to the Ancient Macedonians. They have also stated that Greece is trying to “rob” them of their national identity.

Upon independence, FYROM adopted the name “Republic of Macedonia” as well as the Vergina Sun as its new national flag, symbols largely considered Greek. These provocations caused a
great deal of tension in the Balkans, prompting Greece to impose an embargo on FYROM that was very detrimental to FYROM’s economy. Ultimately, FYROM agreed to replace its flag with a different one (maintaining the symbolic sun connotation), and adopted the name Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Yet, FYROM is still globally known by its constitutional name, the “Republic of Macedonia.”

Despite these measures, this issue remains unresolved. The region of Macedonia lies in present-day Greece, FYROM, Bulgaria and Albania. In view of this, Macedonia is a region comprised of peoples belonging to various nations, religions, ethnic and language groups. This makes it increasingly difficult to assign the modern-day region Macedonia to a nation. And with Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) being the most driven contenders for this title, fears of irredentism have also emerged.

The Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) has yet to be considered for admission into the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). This is due to the objection of Greece, a member-state of both organisations. An applicant’s request can only be considered if accepted unanimously by all member states. In the midst of this, the political situation in the Balkans remains uncertain. This is a region that holds the attention of countries from all directions. One of them is the United States of America (USA), especially in FYROM and Kosovo, as a way to counter a progressive, recovering Russia in the east. Greece too had invested heavily in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). This has created thousands of local jobs, yet at the same time garnishing large profits for many Greek enterprises.

An overview and thorough analysis of the Macedonian Question and its implications is intended, especially from a historical perspective, including the relevant social, linguistic, religious and politico-ideological factors. It is also intended to critically evaluate the differing views on the questions, especially in the ethnic context of the region. In this dissertation, special attention will be given to the traditional Greek ideological position at the hand of local Greek publications and propaganda.
The historical approach will be used as a research method to describe past and current occurrences, especially since the Macedonian Question is historical in nature. Furthermore, the analytical approach will be used in order to analyse and identify assumptions and evaluations, although to a lesser extent than the historical approach.

Taking all these factors into account, this is a dispute that needs to be resolved urgently. Its resolution can lead to regional stability, which the region has desperately been in search of over the past twenty years.
2. Historical Overview

2.1 The Early Macedonian Kingdom (600 BC-359 BC)

Much about the early history of the Macedonians remains unknown to historians. Macedon lay in the northern part of Greece and it began to form around 700 BC (Abbott 1902:3). During this period Macedonian tribes under King Perdiccas I began to migrate from western and northwestern “Upper” Macedonia to the central plain of “Lower” Macedonia. Perdiccas I would be the founder of the Argead dynasty (Farr 1850:36).¹

The core of the Macedonian state was situated between the Ludias and Axius (Vardar) rivers (Rossos 2008:12). The first capital of the Macedonian kingdom was Aegae, followed by Edessa and finally Pella (Cotterill 2004:445). The kingdom would later expand in all directions. In that process, it would subjugate or expel all tribes in those directions. The Macedonian kingdom was to reach its peak under the rule of Philip II between 359 BC-336 BC (Fox 2004:116). The kingdom would cover virtually the whole of regional Macedonia. Regional Macedonia was Aegean (Greek) Macedonia, Pirin (Bulgarian) Macedonia and Vardar Macedonia (the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

In the second half of the 6th century, Macedonia fell under Persian rule and King Philip I would become a Persian vassal or lord. Philip’s son, Alexander I, ruled from 498 BC-454 BC and it was under his rule that Macedonia became more active in the politics of the Eastern Mediterranean. His byname was “Philhellene” highlighting his appreciation of the culture of the Greek city-states (Shea 2008:69). A Philhellene is someone who loves anything essentially Hellenic.² This began the process of Hellenising the Macedonian court and elite. Macedonia

¹ The Argead dynasty was an ancient Greek royal house. They were the ruling dynasty of Macedonia from around 700 BC-310 BC. This dynasty was so named because it traced its origins to Argos in southern Greece (Cartledge 2006:11). The mythical founder of the Argead dynasty is Caranus, the son of Temenus who was the king of Argos (Green 2013:103). This is fundamental to the Greek narrative when arguing about the Greek nature of the Ancient Macedonians.

² This precise statement is key to the Macedonian (FYROM) argument when debating the Greekness of the Ancient Macedonians. Referring to Alexander I as a Philhellene means he couldn’t have been Greek because this byname was only given to non-Greeks who loved and appreciated anything Greek (Clogg 1997:37).
became independent of Persian rule in 479 BC in the Battle of Plataea (Cotterill 2004:447). Alexander I would expand the Macedonian kingdom by capturing the colony of Lydia and extending Macedonia’s eastern frontiers to the Strymon River, an area wealthy in minerals, particularly silver (Cartledge 2004:11). This action also clashed with Athens’ ambition to control the coastal area of Thrace.

In the second half of the 5th century BC, Macedonia’s political and economic development seemed vulnerable to Athens’ growing power. However, Alexander I’s son and successor, Perdiccas II, was politically astute and skillful. He ruled from 454 BC-413 BC and during this period was able to use to Macedonia’s advantage the intensifying animosity between the two dominant city-states, Athens and Sparta (Hornblower 2011:279).

He was masterful at playing off the Greek rivals against each other in order to safeguard the power and economic influence of the Macedonian kingdom (Farr 1850:40). He initially allied himself with Athens. He then allied himself with the northern Aegean city-states against Athens. After that he allied himself with the Spartan leader Brasidas and again with Athens (Hammond 1991:359).

The Peloponnesian Wars (431 BC-404 BC) created a more stable environment for further Macedonian consolidation (Cartledge 2004:34). Archelaus I, Perdiccas II’s son and successor, ruled from 418 BC-399 BC. During this period, he implemented reforms that enhanced the power of the court and the unity of the state (Hammond 1991:411). He moved the capital to the coastal city of Pella, which was also near the estuary of the Axios River (Rossos 2008:13), which led to further political and economic growth.

The court was designed by Greek architects and Greek artists and writers were also called in, thus affirming that Macedonia was the centre for the spread of Greek cultural influence. Archelaus built roads and fortresses (Cotterill 2004:448). He reformed the army and modernised its equipment. In terms of foreign policy, he maintained friendly relations with Athens and established a strong foundation for Macedonian influence in Thessaly, considered the gateway to the Greek world (Fox 2004:30).
In 399 BC, Archelaus I’s reign ended, giving way to decades of instability, internal anarchy and foreign intervention (Borza 1990:179). For about forty years, Macedonia would be ruled by nine rulers, until 359 BC, when Philip II ascended the throne. Philip’s rule quelled these problems and even though he was assassinated in 369 BC, his successor and son, Alexander III, would affirm that these problems had rightfully come to an end (Cantor 2005:51).

2.2 Expansion and Empire (359-323 BC)

Philip II succeeded his older brother, Perdiccas III, in 359 BC when Perdiccas was killed fighting the Illyrians (Budin 2009:84). This would launch the kingdom of Macedon into its most glorious era. The country was transformed from a weak, fragmented one to one of dominance (Hogarth 1897:55). The clan aristocracy and central administration were weakened. His financial reforms encouraged growth in trade and commerce, and Macedonia became a worthy political and economic factor in the Eastern Mediterranean. Philip II reorganised the army. He modernised its training, tactics and weaponry and thus prepared it for territorial expansion (Bowra 1970:157).

The crisis in the Greek world enabled Philip to establish hegemony there. By 338 BC, he was able to subjugate the whole Greek peninsula by defeating a combined Greek force in the Battle of Chaeronea (Matthews 2008:24). In the League of Corinth, Philip II was able to get the city-states to recognise the leadership of Macedonia (Shea 2008:70).

Philip planned to turn his attentions to the East, to Persia who was the common enemy, but his untimely assassination placed this task on his 20-year-old son, Alexander III, in 336 BC (Cartledge 2004:12). The most famous Macedonian in history, Alexander the Great defeated the Persians in three battles and in the Battle of Gaugamela, Alexander had realised his father’s plans and ambitions and became the lord of the Near and Middle East (Hanson 2001:95).

---

3 A critical tactical factor that emerges here is the well-known “Macedonian Phalanx” that would be employed by Philip and more successfully by his son, Alexander (Matthews 2008:41-3).
Alexander proceeded further east to Central Asia, but his plans were interrupted by a rebellious army that threatened a mutiny if they did not return home (Gergel 2004:127). By that time, Alexander’s empire stretched from Greece in the West to India in the East, the Danube River in the north to Egypt in the south (Engels 1978:111). Alexander the Great was to die in 323 BC in Babylon and it didn’t take long for his vast, ungovernable empire to begin dwindling (Cantor 2005:173).

Figure 1: The Ancient Greek Mainland

2.3 Division and Decline (323-168 BC)

Between 323 and 277 BC Alexander’s successors would engage in a long struggle for the spoils of his empire. Three Hellenistic states were governed by Macedonian dynasties (Fletcher 2008:40). The Seleucids would rule the former Asian Empire in Asia, the Ptolemies would rule Egypt and the Antigonids would rule Macedonia which included the Greek mainland (Wood 2004:218). The cultural fusion of Greek, Persian and Egyptian elements embodied the Hellenistic Age and dominated the eastern Mediterranean (Fletcher 2008:179).

Rome would be Macedonia’s next competitor for Balkan hegemony (Green 2007:99). Rome had already dominated the western Mediterranean and had turned her attentions to the eastern side of the sea. For about half a century Macedonia would engage in three wars with Rome. By

---

the end of the third Macedonian War in 168 BC, Macedonia would succumb to Rome, thus ending Macedonia’s independence (Hornblower 2011:319). Rome’s rule over Macedonia continued through the Byzantine Empire and lasted until the 6th century when the Slavs began to invade the region.

2.4 Roman, Byzantine and so-called “Barbarian” Rule (168 BC-600 AD)

Rome split Macedonia into four autonomous republics. These republics were dependent and often exploited by Rome. This oppression led to dissatisfaction and a revolt by Andrisclus (Gruen 1986:435). The Andriscan Rebellion was put down in 148 BC and Rome in return decided to deprive Macedonia of her autonomy by transforming her into a province. This province was to be governed by a Roman administrator and as a province it became the strategic centre in the eastern Mediterranean.

During the centuries of Roman rule, the administrative units shifted and so did the geographic-ethnic conception of Macedonia. Initially the Macedonian province consisted of Epirus, Thessaly and Illyria (in present-day Albania). Later, it would extend to the Danube in the north, the Rhodope Mountains in the east and Illyria in the west. In 27 BC, Augustus, the first emperor of the Roman Empire, created two types of senatorial provinces (Rossos 2008:17). Macedonia therefore became a smaller senatorial province and in the late 3rd century AD, it was incorporated by the emperor Diocletian into the diocese of Moesia (situated between FYROM, Bulgaria and Romania).

Twenty years later, Macedonia became part of the prefecture of Illyria under the emperor Constantine. At the end of the 4th century, Macedonia became two provinces (Burn 1971:382). They were Macedonia Prima and Macedonia Seconda. Macedonia Prima’s capital was in Thessaloniki and Macedonia Seconda’s capital was in Stobi, which today is known as Gradsko

6 Rossos 2008:16.
(Durant 1966:666). With the division of the Roman Empire in 395 AD, Macedonia and most of the Balkans became part of the Eastern Roman Empire, later known as the Byzantine Empire.

Between the 3rd and 5th centuries Macedonia was first invaded by the Goths (from present-day Germany) (Dalrymple 1997:13) and later on by the Huns (from the region of the Caspian Sea) (Bury 1911:51). In the 6th and 7th centuries, growing numbers of invading Slavs (from present-day Russia) settled in Macedonia; this permanently altered the ethnic structure of Macedonia which until then had been dominated by Greek and Roman segments (Shea 2008:56).

![Figure 3: The Roman province of Macedonia](http://www.forumancientcoins.com/Ancient-Maps/displayimage.php?album=18&pos=0)

### 2.5 Slavic Macedonia (600 AD-850 AD)

Macedonia was one of the first peninsulas in the Balkans where the Slavs settled (Dalrymple 1997:13). By 610 AD, most of Macedonia had been conquered, barring several major cities, such as Thessaloniki, Serres, Edessa and Veroia (Rossos 2008:22).

---

By the second half of the 6th century, these Slav-settled areas became known as Sklavinii and often a Sklavinia was identified with a Slavic tribe (Papavizas 2006:27). Such tribes were: the Berziti; the Strumjani; the Smoljani; the Rinhini; the Sagudati; the Dragoviti; and the Velegeziti. Therefore a Sklavinia of the Dragoviti would be known as the Dragovitia (Haussig 1971:95).

There was much fluctuation between the Byzantine Empire and the Sklavinii. Even though the Sklavinii governed themselves, they didn’t often acknowledge the sovereignty of the Byzantine Empire (Papavizas 2006:243). In fact, the Byzantine Emperor Constantine II needed to besiege Thessaloniki in 658 AD to ensure the Sklavinii recognised the authority of his Empire.

The Sklavinii would join the Bulgars when they threatened the Byzantine Empire in the northeast. In 814 AD, they joined Krum, the Bulgar Khan, in his march toward Constantinople. Three years previously, Krum had defeated and killed the Emperor Nikiphoros I (Baynes 1952:50). But Krum died unexpectedly, allowing the Empire to once again establish its rule over the Sklavinii in Macedonia.

The Empire would extend its administrative rule throughout Macedonia, and by 837 AD this dispensation eliminated the last Sklavinii.

It was vital for the Empire that Macedonia was totally reintegrated into the military and administrative structure. Macedonia controlled the communication between Constantinople and the Adriatic Sea, as well as the route into northern and central Europe.

It is important to mention here the role played by Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius. Saints Cyril and Methodius were Byzantine Greek brothers born in Thessaloniki in the 9th century (Baynes 1952:221). They were Christian missionaries among the Slavic peoples of the First Bulgarian Empire, Great Moravia, and Pannonia (Finlay 1861:36). Through their work they influenced the cultural development of all Slavs, for which they received the title “Apostles to the Slavs” (Shea 2008:57).

---

8 The Bulgars are not to be confused with present-day Bulgarians, although the former is regarded as a predecessor of the latter, along with Slavic elements. The Bulgars were a semi-nomadic Turkic people who flourished in the Pontic Steppe and the Volga basin in the 7th century AD (Shea 2008:57).
2.6 Bulgar Rule (864 AD-971 AD)

From the early 9th century, the Bulgars challenged the authority of the Byzantine Empire in the Balkans and particularly Macedonia (Haussig 1971:110). The Bulgars were a Turkic horde of mounted, nomadic warriors that originated from the Volga basin and the Pontic Steppe. They crossed the lower Danube in 679 AD and conquered the lands north of the Balkan mountains (Rossos 2008:46). There they founded their own state, recognised in 681 AD by Emperor Constantine IV. The Bulgars were militarily powerful, but they had few conquerors and by the 9th century the Slavs absorbed and assimilated them as the Slavs were culturally more advanced.

Between 802 and 814 AD, Khan9 Krum engaged in a military campaign to conquer Macedonia, Thrace and finally Constantinople. Khan Presian (836 AD-852 AD) conquered most of Northern Macedonia and Khan Boris (852 AD-889 AD) continued the expansion across Vardar into Western Macedonia. A peace treaty with Byzantium enabled him to keep a large part of Macedonia; in turn he swore to accept Orthodoxy and not Catholicism. Orthodox Christianity thus became the official religion of the Bulgar state (Crampton 2005:15).

Boris’ son Tsar10 Simeon (893 AD-927 AD) extended his frontiers in every direction, in particular further southwest into Macedonia (Baynes 1952:224). In doing so, he became master of the Northern Balkans and probably the most powerful ruler in Eastern Europe. He assumed the title “Tsar of the Bulgars and Autocrat of the Romans or Greeks” (Crampton 2005:16).

Simeon was succeeded by his son, Peter (927 AD-969 AD). The Byzantine Empire increasingly referred to the Macedonian Slavs as Bulgarian Subjects during Tsar Peter’s reign (Baynes 1952:225). The Macedonian lands became part of the Bulgarian military and administrative system of provinces, with a governor for each province. The Bulgarians continued the Byzantine way of centralised secular and religious authority, breaking the self-governing tribal and territorial communal system of the Macedonian Sklavinii (Rossos 2008:27).

---

9 Khan is a title of Mongol origin used to refer to a sovereign or military ruler.
10 Tsar or Czar is a Slavic title derived from the Latin “Caesar” that is used to indicate the position of the emperor.
But the Bulgarian Empire was to fall, late in Tsar Peter’s reign. The empire was attacked by the Byzantines in the southeast and the Rus in the northeast. The Byzantine Emperor John I Tzimisces defeated the Rus\textsuperscript{11}, Sviatoslav, on the Danube and saved Bulgaria from the Rus (Vasiliev 2007:494). But the Byzantines were to dethrone Peter’s son, Tsar Boris (969 AD-971 AD), and annex Bulgaria and the Serbian lands of Raska. This brought about the collapse of Simeon and Peter’s Bulgarian Empire.

2.7 Tsar Samuel’s Macedonian Empire (971 AD-1018 AD)

Following the death of Tsar Peter in 969 AD, four brothers seized power in the Macedonian lands. These were known as Cometopouli, as their father, Nikola, was a Comes. Their names were David, Moses, Aaron and Samuel. They began an uprising against the Bulgarian authorities. Taking advantage of Sviatoslav’s Rus invasion which had preoccupied the Byzantines and Bulgarians, the brothers managed to defeat all opposition in the region. Their territory was far from the conflict, between the Byzantines and the Rus, and remained neutral despite attempts from both sides to convince them to ally themselves with them. In mid-971 AD, Byzantine Emperor John I Tzimisces delivered a decisive blow to the Rus leader, Sviatoslav, near the Danube River and incorporated the Bulgarian Empire into the Byzantine Empire (Oman 2008:235).

The Byzantine victory over Rus meant the Byzantine borders were now extended as far as Dalmatia with Bulgaria and Serbia becoming Byzantine provinces (Crampton 2005:19). By 976 AD, the Cometopouli made several attempts to gain international recognition. They were even communicating with the Holy Roman Emperor Otto I in 973 AD, with the intention of contacting European rulers gathered in Otto’s capital at Kwedlinburg (Vasiliev 2007:475). In early 976 AD, following the death of John I Tzimisces, the Cometopuli revolted (Shea 2008:58).

\textsuperscript{11} The Rus were an ancient people who gave their name to the lands of Russia and Belarus. Russian and Western scholars consider the Rus to be a Southeastern Slavic tribe and forefathers of the Kievan State (Jones 2001:164).
John I Tzimisces was replaced by his son, Emperor Basil II (976 AD-1025 AD), and he needed to contend with a revolt that was turning into something of a war of liberation (Baynes 1952:226). This was a war to liberate Macedonia from Byzantium. Initially the brothers ruled jointly, but after the death of the two older brothers, Moses and David, Aaron and Samuel fought for power. The younger Samuel was to succeed as he was politically and militarily more able than Aaron (Finlay 1861:603). Samuel was to found an empire with its centre first at Prespa and then at Ohrid (Oman 2008:241).

Samuel’s ambitions lay in the west. He took advantage of the Byzantine Empire’s weakened state (Vasiliev 2007:495). At the time, Byzantium was preoccupied with internal strife, as well as attacks from the Arabs. Thus, he attacked Serres, Thessaloniki, Thessaly and all the way down to the Bay of Corinth.

Despite a counter-offensive by Basil II, by the early 10th century Samuel had succeeded in incorporating the entire territory of Macedonia (excluding Thessaloniki), most of the former Bulgarian Empire, part of Greece, a large part of Albania, Dioclea (in Montenegro), Serbia, Bosnia and a part of Dalmatia within his Macedonian Empire (Crampton 2005:20). Samuel’s Bulgarian Empire was internationally recognised when he was blessed by Pope Gregory V.

Some Bulgarian historians allege that Samuel’s empire was a continuation of the First Bulgarian Empire and that it was duly recognised by the Orthodox Patriarchate in Constantinople (Baynes 1952:226). There are others that claim Samuel’s empire was a manifestation of a new imperial line, founded on a new state and legal foundation, with dual capitals at Prespa and Ohrid (Poulton 2000:20). Also, his empire centred around Macedonia and with the Macedonian Slavs being the fundamental element of the new empire.

Samuel’s empire was therefore not merely a continuation of the First Bulgarian Empire which had been defeated by Byzantium, but rather a new political entity which had emerged independently. The first capital was Prespa, which was later transferred to Ohrid (Finlay 1861:605). At that time, Ohrid was a strongly fortified town and well-suited to repel any Byzantine attack. Samuel built a palace and a church in Ohrid to serve as the seat of the Macedonian Church (Haussig 1971:394).
The Byzantine emperor, Basil II, would successfully assault Samuel’s Empire, by defeating key Bulgar strongholds (Rossos 2008:31). Examples of fallen strongholds were Durres, towns on the other side of the Maritsa River, Greater and Lesser Preslav and occupied Bulgaria in the Danube region. The subsequent falls of Pliska, Veroia, Edessa, Adrianople, Dyrachium and Skopje considerably eroded Samuel’s power. The decisive battle between Samuel and Basil II was the Battle of Kleidion, which took place at the foot of Mount Belasica\textsuperscript{12} on July 29, 1014 AD (Oman 2008:242).

Basil’s strategist of Philippopolis, Nicephorus Sciphanus, bade the emperor stay in the pass of Kleidion and assault the barriers. Prior to the battle, Samuel had sealed the road where Basil II chose to enter Macedonia. Basil II took his soldiers and very vocally arrived at the hill. The enemy soldiers panicked at seeing this and began to flee. The emperor and his men broke through the sealed road and began to chase the Bulgars; Bulgar casualties numbered around 15,000 (Oman 2008:243). Samuel only just managed to escape death thanks to his son, Gabriel Radomir, who bravely fought off the Byzantines. He took his father on horseback to the fortress called Prilep.

Basil II was to celebrate his victory in a terrible fashion. According to the 11\textsuperscript{th} century Byzantine historian John Skylitzes, the 14,000 captives were blinded and dispatched in batches of a hundred, with each batch being led by a one-eyed soldier (Shea 2008:58).\textsuperscript{13} These batches with a one-eyed guide were sent to their Tsar in Prilep. Upon seeing this gruesome cavalcade, Samuel fell to the ground senseless. Tsar Samuel was so shaken and traumatised by the sight of his men in the condition that they were, that he fell to the ground (Shea 2008:59). His kinsmen tried to revive him with water and herbs, but he had suffered a heart attack and died two days later on 6 October, 1014 AD (Rossos 2008:32).

The death of Samuel sparked the demise of his empire. His successor to the throne was his son, Gabriel Radomir (Finlay 1861:617). He was killed a year into his reign by his cousin, John Vladislav, who also killed Gabriel’s wife and brother-in-law. Although John Vladislav took an

\textsuperscript{12} This mountain range lies between Greece, Bulgaria and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). It is shared by all three countries.

\textsuperscript{13} Hence Basil’s popular title of “Bulgar-Slayer”.
oath of loyalty to Basil II, he continued to fight against Constantinople. John Vladislav would die in February 1018 AD during the siege of Dyrachium. Basil II, upon receiving submission from Samuel’s widow, the royal family and nobles, crushed the remainder of Samuel’s resistance (Baynes 1952:227).

Basil II was to end a four-decade-long struggle in the summer of 1018 AD, when he captured Samuel’s capital, Ohrid (Haussig 1971:395). The territory of Macedonia was once again incorporated into the Byzantine Empire and divided into several administrative regions, called themes. The Byzantine Empire had become the master of the Balkans for the first time since the Slav occupation (Oman 2008:243).

2.8 Byzantine and Serbian Rule (1018 AD-1400 AD)

Basil II’s policy after the fall of the Bulgarians was more conciliatory. As mentioned previously, he divided Samuel’s empire into themes and integrated them into his imperial military administration. A great part of Macedonia formed part of the theme Bulgaria, with its capital in Skopie. Other major themes were Thessalonika and Dyrachium. Minor themes included Ohrid, Pelagonia, Prespa, Kastoria, Vardar, Seres and Strumica (Haussig 1971:400).

Even though he had disempowered the old ruling elite, Basil allowed local feudal landlords to expand their estates, granting them titles (Sewter 1966:62). He respected their traditions and customs and he eased their financial burden after many years of warfare (Poulton 2000:37).

But the most noteworthy was Basil’s treatment of the Patriarchate of Ohrid. Although it was reduced to an archbishopric, which controlled the bishoprics in Samuel’s former empire, he gave it a special status in the Byzantine Orthodox Church by making it autocephalous (Rossos 2008:35). Therefore, the Church was not subject to the Patriarch, but to the Emperor. This move secured Byzantium control of all the churches of the south Slavs without the intervention

14 Dyrachium is situated in present-day Albania.
of the Patriarchate of Constantinople (Poulton 2000:37). It also retained the ecclesiastical importance of Ohrid.

These policies of Basil would come to an end after his death in 1025 AD. His successors were anti-Slav and they alienated the Slavs in Macedonia by implementing measures to Hellenise them (Oman 2008:244). Such measures were to appoint Greeks to higher positions in the Ohrid archdiocese, to exclude the Slavonic language in the church liturgies and sacraments, to settle non-Slavs into Macedonia and to resettle the Slavs into Thrace and Asia Minor (Haussig 1971:433).

At the same time, the empire sent many lay officials to Macedonia to occupy positions that were valued by the feudal lords. Such positions were administrators, military personnel and tax collectors. These officials, as well as some ecclesiastical figures, received grants of lands and control over the peasant villages.

This hardship and Hellenisation caused unrest, opposition and organised rebellions (Oman 2008:247). Leaders of the first uprising claimed to be successors of the late Tsar Samuel. The first rebellion broke out in Belgrade in 1040 AD. The initial encounters were disastrous, but soon afterward they took the theme of Durres (Dyrachium) and then proceeded into Greece and Bulgaria. By the end of the year the rebellion had spread from the Danube to Bulgaria to Central Greece and to the Albanian coast. The rebel army turned its attentions to Thessaloniki. But the rebellion was defeated in the region of Prilep in 1041 AD.

The second rebellion broke out in 1072 AD at Skopje. This rebellion also did not last long. Once taking control of the Skopje-Prizren region, the rebels split, gaining control of the Ohrid region. But again the Byzantine forces defeated the rebels, first at Kastoria and then at Kosovo Polje.

All of these rebellions were suppressed with difficulty, thus highlighting the gradual weakening of the Byzantine Empire. In 1071 AD, the Seljuk Turks defeated the Byzantines in Armenia and within 10 years Byzantium had lost its wealthy position in Anatolia (Baynes 1952:57). Also in 1071 AD, the Normans captured Bari and the Empire lost its only remaining outpost in Italy.

---

15 The Normans came from Normandy in northern France.
The Normans then turned their attention to the Balkans. All of these cast doubt over Constantinople’s ability to quell the Empire’s decline. It also began a struggle for Balkan domination and Byzantine inheritance (Haussig 1971:3421). Control over Macedonia varied. Between 1081 and 1083 Macedonia was ravaged by the Normans. In 1090 Macedonia was ravaged by the Crusaders of the First Crusade and between 1107 and 1108 the Normans returned to do the same (Baynes 1952:138).

After the death of Emperor Manuel I Komnenos in 1180, the Normans looted Thessaloniki and Serres in 1185 (Rossos 2008:38). This affirmed that the imperial authority in Macedonia had disappeared. Bulgaria proclaimed her independence in 1185. Serbia followed suit.

The disintegration of Byzantium was completed in 1204 when the Crusaders from the Fourth Crusade captured and looted Constantinople (Poulton 2000:21). These victorious Latins held Constantinople until 1261 (Walker 1918:243). During that time they abolished the Orthodox Byzantine Empire and set up their own feudal states. The most important ones were the Latin Empire at Constantinople and the Kingdom of Thessaloniki and the Principality of Morea (Rossos 2008:38).

During this period of Latin rule, control of Macedonia shifted from the Kingdom of Thessaloniki to the Bulgarian Empire under Tsar Kaloian (1197-1207). The Nicaean Empire was the largest of the three Byzantine Greek successor states that were founded by the aristocracy of the Byzantine Empire that fled after Constantinople was occupied by Latin forces during the Fourth Crusade. It was founded by the Laskaris dynasty and lasted from 1204 to 1261 (Vasiliev 2007:751). In 1261 the Nicaeans forced the Latins out of Constantinople and re-established the Byzantine Empire (Rossos 2008:39). Once again and for the last time, Byzantium became the Master of Macedonia.

Twenty years later, the Serbs under King Milutin (1282-1321) and later his son, Stephan Decanski (1322-1331) invaded Macedonia (Baynes 1952:228). Despite the fact that Byzantium had allied itself with Bulgaria, it was not enough to prevent the Serbian Empire’s greatest medieval ruler, Stephan Dusan, from gaining full control of Macedonia and assuming the title “Tsar of the Serbs and Greeks” (Rossos 2008:39).
King Stephan ruled a multi-ethnic territorial empire which also included Albania, Thessaly, Epirus and reached the Gulf of Corinth (Haussig 1971:356). However, central authority hit a decline under Stephan Dusan’s son, Stephan Uros (1355-1371), where power was passed onto feudal lords. Two brothers, Vukasin and Uglesa, ruled Macedonia. Vukasin ruled in the northwest and Uglesa in the southeast. The Ottoman Turks now threatened Macedonia so the brothers joined each other to stop the Turks in the Maritsa Valley, but on 27 September, 1371, the Turks surprised the Serbs in a dawn attack and defeated them at the Battle of Chernomen (in present-day Ormenio in Greece).

This battle would mark the beginning of the Ottoman quest for Macedonia (Simons 1971:172). Before 1400, the Ottomans ruled Macedonia, excluding Thessaloniki, and this was only briefly done in 1387 (Oman 2008:313). Thessaloniki was to fall in 1430 and the whole of Macedonia was to remain under Ottoman rule for over five centuries (Finkel 2005:19).

Figure 4: The Byzantine Empire under the Macedonian Dynasty

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_Empire_under_the_Macedonian_dynasty
2.9 Ottoman Rule (1400 AD-1800 AD)

Macedonia was amongst the first Balkan lands to fall to the Ottoman Empire (Deans 2011:32). Ottoman conquests were to continue in the Balkans until the middle of the 15th century when Constantinople fell at the end of May 1453 (Mansel 1995:1).

Following the Balkan conquests, the Ottoman Empire was divided into large Beylerbeylics (administrative units). The rulers of these units were known as the Beylerbeys and were appointed by the sultan. They were the highest local military commanders in these administrative units (Rossos 2008:42).

The Turkish conquest of Macedonia caused unsettling ethnic changes throughout the region. Many locals were captured or forced to flee (Catherwood 2006:118). Many inhabited regions were abandoned and the Turkish authorities encouraged the settlement of Turks in the region in an attempt to build up the economy. The first Turkish settlements in Macedonia increased rapidly after the Turkish conquest.18

Many Jews also migrated to Macedonia from Spain and Portugal due to the introduction of the Catholic Inquisition in the late 15th century (Poulton 2000:22). The Ottoman Empire provided protection to the Jews. The Jewish merchants and craftsmen spurred economic growth in towns with Jewish settlers, like Thessaloniki, Bitola, Skopje, Ber, Kostur, Serres, Shtip, Kratovo and Strumica. During the 1500s there were about 3,000 Jewish households in Thessaloniki and the town was nicknamed “the mother-city of Israel.” In the 17th century, the Jewish quarter of Skopje had a number of schools and two synagogues.

The Turks out of principle tolerated the national and religious beliefs of the subjugated peoples in their empire (Dalrymple 1997:28). But religious fanaticism did occasionally occur and many of the conquered peoples converted to Islam for economic, social and political gratification. Many noblemen became Muslims so they could safeguard their privileges and property (Rossos 2008:43). Poor people also converted to Islam so they could be exempted from the high taxes that the ruling Turks had imposed on Christians (Armstrong 2002:53).

Banditry became the most common form of resistance against the Ottoman Empire. These bandits were known as klephts (or κλέφτες in Greek). They conducted their operations in and around Macedonia. Banditry was regarded as a product of the feudal system that had emerged out of the peasant movements which had been around even during the Byzantine period. Banditry took flight when the Ottoman Empire began to crumble during the late 1500s (Rossos

---

18 In 1455, there were 551 Muslim families and 339 Christian families that lived in Skopje. In 1519, however, the number of Christian families had declined to 302, whereas the Muslim families had increased to 717 (Poulton 2000:26). In Kichevo in 1476, there were 31 Muslim families, whereas the 186 Christian families had been reduced to 146 during the same period. In Bitola, from 1460 to 1519, the number of Muslim families increased from 295 to 756 and while Christian families did increase (due to the expansion of the town), they increased to only 330 from the original 185. Macedonia appeared quite suitable as well for the settlement of Yuruks. Yuruks were Turkic nomads from Asia Minor. They settled in the regions of Thessaloniki, Nevrokop, Strumica, Radovis, Kozani and Ovche Pole (Poulton 2000:27).
The Timar-Sipahi system of the feudal estates started to disintegrate and the central authorities began to lose control. Violence and lawlessness ensued, prompting many peasants to join the outlawed bands; thus banditry was regarded as a social protest against oppression.

The bandits played a key role in informing the subjects of the Ottoman Empire that Turkish rule could only end by means of force. The concept of banditry never did reach the character of a national liberation movement, but it did pave the way for the emergence of liberation movements in the Balkan region.

Vienna was besieged by the Turks in 1683 (Finkel 2005:285). The Turks were defeated and the Austrian General Picolomini marched his troops into the depths of the Ottoman Empire, up until Skopje. Picolomini entered Skopje on 26 October, 1689. The inhabitants of Skopje had fled because of the plague that infected the local population and because of the advancing Austrian forces (Catherwood 2006:123). The pasha and his supporters had fled to Serres and Sofia.

The Austrians did not pay much attention to the plague and they entered Skopje. They looted the town stores and warehouses. But the Austrian General Picolomini fell ill and died in Prizren on 9 November, 1689. But before he died, Picolomini ordered that Skopje be burned to the ground.

The rayas (infidels in Turkish) rebelled in Northeastern Macedonia. The klepht activities in Macedonia escalated. The klephts also seized the opportunity to take advantage of the chaos brewing in the Ottoman Empire. The advancing Austrian army also motivated the population to rise and join the rebellion.

In an attempt to stabilise the situation in Macedonia, the Ottoman Empire appealed to the leader of the Crimean Tartars, Khan Selim Girei, for assistance. The Ottomans and their allies convened on 14 November, 1689 at a conference in Sofia and decided to attack the rebels. Girei entered Skopje with ease as there was nobody there in defence (Rossos 2008:50).

---

19 The Tartars were another nomadic Turkic group that originated from present-day Russia. As the name suggests, the Crimean Tartars originated from the Crimean Peninsula which lies in present-day Ukraine.
The Tartars destroyed everything that was Christian in the region between Kumanovo and Skopje. Girei violently “cleaned up” in Tetovo, Veles and Mariovo. A large Turkish army from the Peloponnese led by Khoja Halil Pasha headed north for Skopje. Halil’s treatment of the local population proved to be just as vicious as that of Girei.

After this victory, a combined Ottoman-Tartar offensive pushed the Austrian forces north, past the Danube and Sava rivers. Many Macedonian Christians fled with the Austrians to escape retribution from the Turks. Some ended up in Russia where they set up military colonies such as the “Macedonian Regiment”. This was a regiment in the regular Russian army. What did change Macedonia’s ethnographic composition was the settling of Muslim Albanians in the region.

The 18th century was catastrophic for the Ottoman Empire and it created a multifaceted vacuum in the region (Armstrong 2002:116). There were military defeats and territorial losses to European powers which caused the central government to weaken internally. Also, anarchy was imminent as local feudal potentates with their own private mercenary armies tried to usurp imperial power.

Examples of such overlords were Mahmud Pasha Bushatiya in Ohrid, Ali Pasha Tepelen in Yannina, and in the Serres region there were Ali Aga and Ismail Bey (Finkel 2005:462). They used private armies and organised units of bandits made up of Turks and Albanians to terrorise the wealthy Christians in the towns and countryside. Such armies were about four to five hundred men in size (Finkel 2005:463).

This anarchy also affected most of the Christian peasants. Many peasants in Macedonia left their villages in search of greater security. Some went to the mountains to join adjut bands fighting the Turks. Others went to the towns and this boosted the population of the Christians in the urban centres. There, they worked as servants, labourers, craftsmen and merchants.

During the centuries of Ottoman rule, Orthodox culture virtually came to a standstill in Macedonia and the Balkans (Mansel 1995:44). In contrast, Ottoman culture flourished. The Ottoman state had no interest or influence in the culture of its Christian subjects. The Orthodox rayas were not only dominant from the Muslims in language, religion and customs, but also in
geography (Armstrong 2002:121). The Turks resided more in the urban centres, whereas the Orthodox Christians were overwhelmingly rural. Morally, the Orthodox Church was a source of culture. And ecclesiastical culture, such as teaching, reading and writing, were kept at a low level. Therefore, Orthodox intellectual life became stagnant (Rossos 2008:56).

Greeks dominated the church during the period of Ottoman rule. The Bulgarian patriarchate ceased to exist in 1393 and the Serbian one came to an end in 1459. In the 1500s, the autocephalous archbishopric in Ohrid began to lose its territorial jurisdiction. It ultimately was abolished in 1767. The Slavic churches could not question the Patriarchate of Constantinople (Mansel 1995:49). Greeks held the highest offices in the church. Greek influence was predominant and the Greek language became the language of the Orthodox Church and of education (Finkel 2005:159).

There were a few monasteries that possessed Church Slavic manuscripts. The most well-known monasteries were found in Prilep, Kratovo, Kumanovo, Demir Hisar and Debar (Rossos 2008:57). These monasteries would also train clerics. Later on they sponsored some elementary Slav-language institutions that were located in the towns nearby the churches.

Greek schools were emerging more rapidly, under the patronage of Greek bishops or metropolitans (Rossos 2008:58). These schools enjoyed the support of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and merchants that had developed a successful network in southern Macedonia. Their education was more advanced, symbolising the Greek control of education and culture in Macedonia on the eve of nationalism (Finkel 2005:525).
2.10 The Origin of the Macedonian Question

The Macedonian question came into being when Russia was successful in pressing Ottoman Turkey to allow the formation of a separate Bulgarian Orthodox Church (Crampton 2005:75). This new church had authority that extended over parts of Macedonia, which was a Turkish province. This step led Bulgaria to clash with Greece and Serbia. The Greek Patriarch in Constantinople immediately declared the new autocephalous Bulgarian Orthodox church as schismatic. The Greeks also contested the spread of the Bulgarian national, ecclesiastical and cultural influence in the region of Macedonia (Shoomkoff 2009:16).

Similarly, the Serbians complained of Turkey’s decision through diplomatic and ecclesiastical channels. Serbia was at war with Turkey at the time and this was briefly interrupted in 1876,

\[\text{http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/434996/Ottoman-Empire} \]
when Serbia tried to fight the Bulgarian influence in Macedonia (Pettifer 2005:3). All of this resulted in a three-sided contest for Macedonia. This contest was waged by priests and teachers, but later on by the armed bands and armies.

When Russia pressed for this in 1870, it was the result she had intended. Russia’s objective was to use the Orthodox Church to extend her own influence in the Balkans, through the support of newly liberated Slav peoples who had been under Ottoman Turkish oppression for the last few centuries (Crampton 2005:76). Russia needed to decide which country she would be using as an instrument in this policy of hers. The choice lay between Serbia and Bulgaria. Greece was not a suitable consideration as it was not Slavic.21

Bulgaria seemed the most viable option as her geographical position was the closest out of all the Slavic countries. Bulgaria commanded the land that approached Constantinople and the Aegean Sea and through Macedonia, to Thessaloniki. Bulgaria was still under Turkish rule at the time and therefore more docile and reliant on Russian aid than Serbia because Serbia’s de facto independence had already been confirmed in 1867.

Geographically, Serbia lay further away from Russia and was still quite far from the Adriatic Sea which didn’t suit Russia as much as the proximity that Bulgaria had to the Aegean (Papavizas 2006:35). Independent Serbia also kept alternating with her ruling dynasties and this was a concern for Russia, as Serbia was capable of falling into the Austro-Hungarian sphere of influence. So it was only natural that Russia’s choice would be Bulgaria. This would result in either the start or the revival of a bitter rivalry between two Slavic nations in the Balkans, which would also prove to be a stumbling block in Russia’s aspirations in the Balkans (Shoomkoff 2009:17).

---

21 Russia always had an affinity for Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, mainly because all four of these countries were of the Orthodox Christian faith (Pettifer 2008:8). Yet, Russia was even closer bound to Serbia and Bulgaria than to Greece, because the Greeks were not Slavic. The tie between Russia, Serbia and Bulgaria was strengthened in the second half of the 1900s during the Cold War. Unlike Greece, Russia (the Soviet Union), Serbia (Yugoslavia) and Bulgaria were Communist countries, although the Yugoslav leader, Marshal Tito, would at some point introduce reforms that would strain relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union (Pettifer 2008:273).
The creation of the Bulgarian Exarchate has been accepted as the origin of the Macedonian Question (Pettifer 2005:3). There are however some historians that dispute this. Some Serbian historians believe the Bulgarian infiltration of Macedonia began some years earlier.

1878 was a significant year during which two vital treaties were signed by the Great Powers. The Great Powers at the time were Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire (Rossos 2008:60). The first was the Treaty of San Stefano and the second was the Treaty of Berlin. Some historians believe the Treaty of San Stefano was where the trouble started, because it created an independent Bulgaria, where Russia gave Bulgaria nearly all of Slav Macedonia (Crampton 2005:83).

Subsequently, at the Congress of Berlin, the Great Powers took Macedonia away from Bulgaria (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2002:336). This has prompted some Bulgarian nationalists to blame the Congress of Berlin for the cause of the dispute. Once again, it must be affirmed that Russia’s endorsement of the Bulgarian Exarchate is the generally accepted cause of the clash (Shoomkoff 2009:19).

2.11 Modern Geographical Macedonia: The Country and the People

There are disputed questions on the exact area of Macedonia, as well as the national character of the Macedonians. There has been no Macedonian state since the existence of the Kingdom of Macedon in the 4th century BC. Between then and 1912, the region of Macedonia has belonged successively to the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the medieval Serbian and Bulgarian Empires, and the Ottoman Empire.

This is a region where the geographical borders have experienced much subsequent fluctuation. There are some Serbian historians that claim that the Skopje region in the northwest is not part of Macedonia, but rather of “Old Serbia” (Hudson 2003:11). But the generally accepted borders of the Macedonian region are as follows: the northern hills of Skopje and the Shar Mountains in the north; The Rila and Rhodope Mountains in the East; the
Aegean coast by Thessaloniki and Mount Olympus in the Pindus Mountains in the south; the Lakes of Prespa and Ohrid in the west, a total area of around 67,000 square kilometres (Poulton 2000:12).

Regional Macedonia is mainly mountainous with chief products such as cereals, tobacco, opium poppies and sheep. There are also chrome, lead, pyrites, zinc and copper mines in FYROM (The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) or Yugoslav Macedonia (Bideleux & Jeffries 2007:405). Aegean or Greek Macedonia has a large wheat-producing area northwest of Thessaloniki (Pettifer 2005:4). Bulgarian Macedonia is rich in timber.

But the primary economic importance of Macedonia is more a strategic one. Regional Macedonia controls the main northwest route from central Europe to Thessaloniki and the Aegean Sea down the Vardar and Moravia Valleys, and the lesser route down the Struma Valley (Borza 1990:31). Even the less valuable east-west route from the Adriatic to Istanbul runs through Macedonia. But what has been coveted the most by rival claimants is the Vardar route which today lies in FYROM. This route is poor and backward but also of extreme importance.

The most important city in the region of Macedonia is the wealthy city of Thessaloniki which lies on the Aegean Sea. A distant second is Skopje, which is also the capital city of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

Until 1923, the majority of the Macedonian population was Slav. This did subsequently change on account of the influx of Greek settlers into Greek Macedonia after the Greco-Turkish War (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2002:112). Looking at Yugoslav and Bulgarian Macedonia combined, Slavs form about three-quarters of the total population (Benson 2001:10). The national identity of these Slav Macedonians has been the most violently contested aspect of the Macedonian Dispute. This is an aspect which is still contested today.

These Macedonians are undoubtedly all Southern Slavs. They have the same language albeit in a group of varying dialects. Grammatically the dialect is related to Bulgarian but phonetically in some respects it is related to Serbian (Benson 2001:10). One typically Serbian custom that the Slav Macedonians have maintained is Slava. Slava, according to the tradition of the Serbian
Orthodox Church, is the ritual glorification of a family’s patron saint. Slavs generally regarded this celebration as their most significant feast day (Falicov 1991:219). Regarding their own national feelings, it would be safe to say that over the past eighty years, these Slav Macedonians consider themselves more Bulgarian than Serbian. Or at least they link themselves more closely to Bulgaria than to Serbia or the “Old Yugoslavia” of the 20th century (Pettifer 2005:5). Only in the northwest region where the capital city of Skopje lies, do the Slavs tend to regard themselves more as Serbs. The feeling of being Macedonian seems to be a fairly recent sentiment and it isn’t very deep-rooted today.

The neighbours of the Slav Macedonians have had inevitable conflicting views of the latter’s identity. The Bulgarians have had fluctuating views of convenience. On the one hand, all Slav Macedonians were Bulgarians, but on the other hand they have declared that they were a separate Macedonian people. The Serbian view has varied over the years. Up until 1941 the official Yugoslav or Serbian policy stated that Yugoslav Macedonia was in fact “South Serbia” (Shea 2008:13). However, between the two World Wars, certain Yugoslavian opposition politicians declared that the Macedonians were a separate people.

One such politician was Svetozar Pribicevic and theories of such politicians formed the basis of Marshal Tito’s policy (Benson 2001:34). The Slav minority in Greece was commonly regarded as Bulgarians, but officially “Slavophone Greeks” (Pettifer 2006:6). In fact, in September 1924, by the Kalfov-Politis Protocol, Greece was prepared to recognise her Slav Macedonian minority as a “Bulgarian” one (Poulton 2000:88). But this notion wasn’t to be as it was met with strong protest from the Yugoslav government and the idea was abandoned.

In addition to the Slavs, there were also Greeks in Macedonia and to a lesser extent Albanians, Turks, Jews and Vlachs (Campbell & Sherrard 1969:105). It must be said that Greeks account for about one-half of the population of the region of Macedonia today.

When the Turks took the census of the territory of Macedonia in 1905, they obviously exaggerated the number of Muslims. The vilayets of the Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs are shown below (Pettifer 2006:6). The Turkish census figures have been reckoned on a Church basis rather than a language basis. The census figures on the following page are stated as:
Greeks: 648,962
Bulgarians: 557,734
Serbs: 167,601

One could assume that the number of Greeks shown isn’t all “true Greeks”, but rather Slavs loyal to the Greek Patriarchate, not to the Bulgarian Exarchate or the Serbian Orthodox Church. What is significant in these figures is that there is a preponderance of “Bulgarians” over “Serbs”, indicating that the Bulgarian Exarchate was more dominant than the Serbian Orthodox Church (Pettifer 2006:7).

In 1912 another census was taken; this time on a language basis, not a religious one. The census figures are stated as follows:

Slavs: 1,150,000
Turks: 400,000
Greeks: 300,000
Vlachs: 200,000
Albanians: 120,000
Jews: 100,000

The Church plays an important role here, more important than language. A person’s membership to a particular faith often determined their national identity. Later on the subjects of the Patriarchate of Constantinople were considered Greek, the subjects of the Bulgarian Exarchate were deemed Bulgarian and members of the Serbian Orthodox Church were regarded as Serbs (Pettifer 2008:204). This fact will be affirmed on the following page’s footnote when discussing the Population Exchange following Greece’s defeat in the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922).
In 1928 a Greek official census was taken. This was in the aftermath of the Greco-Turkish War which saw a massive exchange between Greeks and Turks; approximately 600,000 Greeks left Turkey for Macedonia while 348,000 Turks left Greece for Turkey.23

The 1928 Greek official census gave the following figures for Greek Macedonia:

Greek: 1,237,000
“Slavophones”: 82,000
Other: 93,000

A reliable and objective estimate just before World War II in Macedonia as a whole was:

Greeks: 1,260,000
Slavs: 1,090,000
Other24: 440,000

The distribution of the Slavs would be as follows: 750,000 in Yugoslav Macedonia, 220,000 in Bulgarian Macedonia and 120,000 in Greek Macedonia.

If this estimate is accepted and allowing for natural increase, the total population of Macedonia as a whole in 1949 would have been around 3 million. Of these numbers, half would be Greeks living in Greek Macedonia (Pettifer 2008:7).

2.12 The Historical Background of the Dispute

The Slavs first came to Macedonia in the 6th century AD where they found a Greek-speaking population. Before then the inhabitants of Macedonia had been under Greek influence from

23 As a continuation of the previous footnote, the Greeks that were expelled were adjudged by the Turks as “Greek”, not because of the language they spoke, but because of the church they belonged to. In this case it was the Greek Orthodox Church (Pettifer 2008:6-7). Once again this emphasises the vital role the Church played when it came to determining national identity.

24 “Other” constitutes Albanians, Jews, Turks and Vlachs.
the 9th century BC until the 2nd century BC. After that they came under Roman influence and from the 4th century AD onwards under Byzantine influence.

Between 500 AD and 1000 AD the Macedonian region was under various rulers. In the 7th century AD the Bulgars followed the Slavs into the Balkans and the struggle with the Byzantine Empire began. In the second half of the 9th century, part of Macedonia succumbed to the Bulgarian Tsar Boris (Crampton 2005:11). By the start of the 10th century, Tsar Simeon had conquered most of the Macedonian region, except the coastline of Aegean Macedonia.

Toward the end of the 10th century, after a brief return to Byzantium, Tsar Samuel won a far-reaching empire that consisted of the whole of Macedonia (Crampton 2005:20). At this point it must be mentioned that Slav historians regard Tsar Samuel as the first “Macedonian” Tsar. It subsequently fell back into the hands of the Byzantines, and it was during this period that a Bulgarian Patriarchate was established in Ohrid.

Until the 13th and 14th centuries, possession of Macedonia alternated between Byzantine and Bulgarian rule. The Serbian Tsars who conquered Macedonia. The most well-known Serbian Tsar was Stephan Dushan who made Skopje the capital of his empire (Benson 2001:3). In 1346 the Archbishop of Serbia took the title of “Patriarch of the Serbs and Greeks”. The Serbian Empire broke up after the death of Stephan Dushan. The Balkans were then invaded by the Turks, and in 1371 Macedonia came under Turkish sovereignty (Pettifer 2008:8).

In 1459 the Turks suppressed the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate and placed its administration under that of the Bulgarian Archbishopric of Ohrid. It must be mentioned that in practice the Archbishops at that time were Greek. The Serbian Patriarchate was restored with its seat at Ipek in 1557, only to be suppressed again in 1776. In 1777 the Bulgarian Archbishopric of Ohrid ceased to be an autocephalous church and the Turks placed the Greek Patriarchate in control of both Slav churches (Clogg 1997:74). Therefore, from that time until 1870 the Greek clergy held spiritual control of the Orthodox population in Macedonia (Rossos 2008:57).

In 1870 the Bulgarian Exarchate was created by the Turks after centuries of skillfully exploited national-ecclesiastical wrangles. In the 19th century, the Greeks and Serbs had achieved
liberation and the Bulgarians began to experience their national awakening (Crampton 2005:65). All three had taken an increasingly nationalist character. The Great Powers would then take a big interest in the Balkans; they were hoping for the ultimate collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and it was Russia who chose to support Bulgaria as the best channel to expand her influence. This ultimately gave birth to the Macedonian Dispute (Pettifer 2008:9).

This dispute would develop quickly. In 1872 the new Bulgarian Church acquired the additional ecclesiastical districts of Skopje and Ohrid (Shoomkoff 2009:18). In that year the Greek Patriarchate declared the Bulgarian Exarchate schismatic. The Bulgarians then took the opportunity to send priests and teachers throughout Slav Macedonia to preach and teach. Such clerics and educators were normally ardent nationalists. The Greeks and Serbs were to retaliate in the same manner.

With time, the priests and teachers were supported by armed bands, who the Turks called komitadjis (“Committee Men”) (Papavizas 2006:45). These bands were sponsored, albeit on an unofficial basis, by either the governments or War Offices of Athens, Sofia and Belgrade. Despite the fact that such bands were formed to fight against the Turks, they were often fighting against each other. In fact, they would on occasion betray each other to the Turkish authorities.

The Treaty of San Stefano in 1878 injected a great dose of venom into the Macedonian Dispute. In this treaty, Russia imposed penalties on Turkey, resulting in greatly inflated Bulgarian frontiers (Winship 2011:21). Such frontiers have haunted the dreams of Bulgarian nationalists and even Bulgarian communists ever since. This treaty also awarded Bulgaria almost all of Slav Macedonia, a strip of southeast Albania and large parts of Greek Macedonia, which even included a small strip of the Aegean coast west of Salonika (Clogg 1997:72).

All of this was too good to be true for the Bulgarians. Duly, by the end of the year, the other Great Powers intervened and Russia was compelled to abandon the Treaty of San Stefano and negotiate another treaty. This new treaty would be the Treaty of Berlin, which would again restore Macedonia to Turkey (Crampton 2005:83).
Even though the Treaty of Berlin provided guarantees of religious freedom in Macedonia, it left Bulgaria with a massive grudge and unsatisfied ambitions (Winship 2011:6). Bulgaria even managed to add a few more bishoprics to the Exarchate after 1878. In 1895, Macedonian refugees in Sofia founded a “Supreme Committee” which would organise the struggle for the annexation to Bulgaria (Pettifer 2008:9). This Committee would become linked with both the Bulgarian government and the Bulgarian throne. A more “genuinely Macedonian” body was formed, known as the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation or IMRO (Benson 2001:10). This organisation was led by two ethnic Macedonian nationalist schoolteachers named Damian Gruev and Gotse Delchev.

These treaties were influenced by national, religious, ethnic, political, cultural and linguistic factors. These factors will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

From the early days, there were always two trends of the IMRO. The one tended toward closest collaboration with the Bulgarian War Office and Tsar through the Supreme Committee. This wing would speak of Macedonian independence or autonomy. This was more of a smokescreen for its true aim of annexing Macedonia with Bulgaria. Ideologically, this trend would develop into extreme right-wing nationalism and a bitter enemy of the Communists and leftist Bulgarian Agrarian Movement (Crampton 2005:145).

The other trend in the IMRO was toward the genuine independence or autonomy of Macedonia. In the early days, this trend preached brotherhood of all the peoples of Macedonia. It also tried to preserve an independence from the Supreme Committee and Bulgarian War Office. Despite this, Bulgaria was the primary source of money and arms thus limiting its independence. This trend would later become the left wing of the movement. In the aftermath of World War I, its members became either Federalists or Communists. The Federalists would advocate an autonomous Macedonia within a South Slav Federation (Pettifer

---

25 This deal would be satisfied in the two Balkan Wars especially the Second Balkan War. Greece, Serbia (and Montenegro) and Bulgaria fought victoriously against the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) in the First Balkan War (Benson 2001:19-20). Bulgaria was dissatisfied with her gains of the First Balkan War and a few months later declared war unsuccessfully against Greece and Serbia (and Montenegro). The consequences of this war cost Bulgaria heavily and gave both Greece and Serbia further gains (Crampton 2005:132-5).

26 This brotherhood would be between Slavs, Greeks, Turks and Albanians.
Thus, the name was left to the pro-Bulgarian right wing, even though the IMRO did display some tacit leftist tendencies.

The IMRO initially worked in secret, where it would organise and arm the population of Macedonia, as well as set up a shadow administration of its own. It finally came into the open in August 1903 in the Ilinden Risin\(^{27}\) (Rossos 2008:61). This uprising was against the Turkish garrisons and officers in Macedonia, and it was said to be forced by the Bulgarian War Office on the leaders of the IMRO (Papavizas 2006:48). Many accounts state that this uprising was encouraged by Russia. Despite some early successes, this insurrection was ultimately crushed by the Turkish army and according to Bulgarian figures, more than 9,000 houses were burned, leaving over 60,000 people homeless.

What was achieved though was a somewhat ineffectual intervention of the Great Powers in Macedonia. In October 1903, Russia and Austria-Hungary agreed on reforms in Macedonia, and they convinced the other Great Powers to create an international gendarmerie for the territory of Macedonia. A gendarmerie is something of a policing group which has authority over a territory’s people. This scheme caused considerable friction between the participants. With the exception of Germany, all participants assumed control of a gendarmerie zone in Macedonia (Pettifer 2008:10).

In 1905 Britain tried to secure international supervision of tax collection in Macedonia. Following much pressure from Turkey, this proposal was finally accepted. In mid-1908, it appeared as though Britain and Russia were very close to agreeing on new reforms in Macedonia, but the Young Turk Revolution broke out in July of that year (Campbell & Sherrard 1969:109). All attempts by the Great Powers to intervene in Macedonia were put on hold on the basis that the new Turkish leaders were liberals. However, after initial indications of progress, the Young Turks turned out to be extreme nationalists and the Macedonians ended up in a worse situation than before.

\(^{27}\) Ilinden Risin is Slavic for St. Elijah’s Uprising.
King Ferdinand had proclaimed the independence of Bulgaria in October 1908 and this was done with the agreement of Austria-Hungary. Austria-Hungary also annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina and this angered Serbia. Even though war was narrowly averted, the relations between the Great Powers became strained, impelling both Serbia and Bulgaria to seek solace in Russia (Crampton 2005:103).

In 1912 Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia put their differences over Macedonia aside and together with Montenegro, formed an alliance that—in defiance of the Great Powers—drove the Turks out of Macedonia (Papavizas 2006:79).

Various factors had contributed to the formation of this alliance. The first was that Russia had succeeded in reconciling Bulgaria and Serbia, albeit temporarily (Rossos 2008:126). The second was that Greece’s Prime Minister, Eleftherios Venizelos, was an unusually broad-minded and enterprising leader (Clogg 1997:73). The most volatile aspect of this alliance was the Serbo-Bulgarian Agreement signed on 3 March, 1912. This agreement contained stipulations on the partition of Macedonia, one which stated that Bulgaria was to get all territory east of the Rhodope Mountains and the Struma River.

In turn, Serbia was to get everything west and north of the Shar Mountains. As far as the most hotly contended area went, both parties agreed that on a diagonal line that ran from southwest to northeast. This line started from Lake Ohrid and ran between Skopje and Veles and ended just north of Kustendil. Serbia undertook to make no claim southeast of that line, and Bulgaria pledged to accept the line on condition that the Russian Tsar would arbitrate in its favour (Pettifer 2008:11).²⁸

The Greek-Bulgarian Treaty signed in May 1912 made no territorial arrangements, so Greece’s share of Macedonia was not particularly defined. What is interesting to note is that none of the three Balkan States ever considered Macedonia’s independence upon her liberation from the Turks (Petsalis-Diomidis 1978:15). This was probably because after four decades of a three-way

²⁸ To date, this line would have probably given the fairest settlement of Macedonia on the basis of partition rather than autonomy. Even though the Bulgarians would have lost Skopje, they would have received some rather reasonable compensation in the form of the southeastern half of Slav Macedonia where virtually the whole population was Bulgarian (Pettifer 2008:11).
cultural, ecclesiastical and armed struggle for power in Macedonia, none of the three states could conceptualise the existence of a genuinely independent Macedonia free of outside intervention (Pettifer 2008:12).

Unfortunately the First Balkan War wiped out the diagonal line the Serbs and Bulgarians had agreed upon. While the Bulgarians were busy conquering Thrace, the Serbs were advancing beyond that diagonal line, occupying the main part of the Vardar Valley. And the Greeks took southern Macedonia and Thessaloniki (Petsalis-Diomidis 1978:16). The Great Powers decided Serbia must relinquish the northern Albanian territory, so Serbia demanded more than her agreed share of Macedonia as compensation.

Bulgaria demanded her agreed share of Macedonia and also claimed Greece had advanced too far (Dakin 1966:224). Also, unlike in the past, the Russian Tsar was not asked to arbitrate. Bulgaria then turned on her allies and attacked Greece and Serbia, to which Greece and Serbia counterattacked by mutual agreement. Turkey and Romania also attacked Bulgaria (Campbell & Serrard 1969:115). All of this left Bulgaria badly beaten and by the Treaty of Bucharest in August 1913, was left with only the middle of the Struma Valley, the upper Mesta Valley and the westward salient in the Strumica Valley (Petsalis-Diomidis 1978:16). Bulgaria’s defeat had not prevented the incorporation of Macedonia into Bulgaria (Dakin 1966:48).

The Treaty of Bucharest was inevitably a bad blow to the Bulgarian government and people, but also to the Macedonian “Supreme Committee” and the IMRO (Schurman 1914:7). The latter had members who had fought with the Bulgarian army. Bulgaria had retained a small corner of Macedonia and even though Macedonia was liberated from the Turks, it was neither independent nor autonomous. Therefore neither trend of the IMRO was to be satisfied (Benson 2001:20).

When World War I broke out in 1914, it was evident that Bulgaria would ally herself with the side that offered her the largest part of Macedonia (Crampton 2005:137). The Triple Entente was allied with Serbia and thus unable to make a satisfactory offer to Bulgaria (Petsalis-Diomidis 1978:20). In September 1915, the Entente suggested that Bulgaria be satisfied with the territory east of the Vardar River which would also entail a population exchange (Leon
But this did not appeal to the Bulgarians and they subsequently joined the Central Powers who were said to be working closely with the IMRO for several months prior to Bulgaria’s entry into the war.

Bulgaria ended up occupying the whole of Serbian Macedonia as well as the eastern part of Greek Macedonia (Papavizas 2006:84). Many Macedonians served in the Bulgarian Army and some leading IMRO members became administrative officials in Macedonia. One such individual was Dimitar Vlahov who would serve in Marshal Tito’s government (Petsalis-Diomidis 1978:21). Apparently there was no talk of Macedonian autonomy and it was assumed that Serbian Macedonia was annexed to Bulgaria. The Bulgarian authorities began “Bulgarising” the Macedonian Slavs and incidentally forced them to change their surnames with ‘-ov’ suffixes.

Following the defeat of the Central Powers at the end of World War I in 1918, a well-known IMRO leader named Protogerov, who was also the Commandant of Sofia, prevented Bulgarian army deserters from invading the capital (Petsalis-Diomidis 1978:22). The Bulgarian Agrarian, Stambuliski, became the Prime Minister of a defeated Bulgaria. An agrarian is a person who advocates the redistribution of landed property. In accordance with the stipulations of the Treaty of Bucharest, Bulgaria lost all of Serbian Macedonia as well as the Strumica salient and “Aegean Macedonia” (Crampton 2005:144).

Therefore, at the end of World War I, Macedonia was partitioned into three parts. A resentful Bulgaria was left with only a small corner of 6,798 square kilometres, whereas Greece and Serbia received much larger shares (Leon 1970:266). Greece’s share was 34,600 square kilometres and Serbia’s was 26,776 square kilometres (Pettifer 2008:13). It must be noted that Greek Macedonia still had a large Slav-speaking population (Petsalis-Diomidis 1978:24). In view of these circumstances, it wasn’t surprising that Bulgaria became the base for Macedonian terrorist activities, activities that would strain Bulgaria’s relations with both Greece and especially Yugoslavia for the next twenty-five years.

Germany forced Bulgaria to join the Axis Powers in World War II in 1941. Germany wanted to invade Greece from Romania and then Bulgaria, and Bulgaria had no choice but to grant Germany permission to do so (Roudometof 2000:115). Bulgaria joined the Axis Powers on 6
April, 1941 but was not very actively involved in the early stages of the war and the invasions of Yugoslavia and Greece (Crampton 2005:167). The Yugoslav government surrendered on 17 April. The Greek government followed suit on 30 April. The Bulgarian Army entered the Aegean region on 20 April intending to gain an Aegean Sea outlet in Thrace and Eastern Macedonia (Hudson 2003:29). The eastern part of Vardar Banovina (or present-day FYROM) was awarded to Bulgaria and the western part was awarded to Italy (Rossos 2008:185). Bulgaria’s occupation of Macedonia was viewed as oppressive by the Slavic “Macedonians”, encouraging them to distance themselves further from any other prior Slavic “Macedonian” affiliation to the Bulgarian.

The Greek Communist Party (KKE) was the key resistance unit during the German occupation of Greece (1941-1944) through its military branch EAM-ELAS (the National Liberation Front) (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2002:70). Many members of EAM were Slavic-speaking as they were also Bulgarians and Slavic “Macedonians”. For political reasons, the KKE sought to take advantage of the situation and established the NOF (National Liberation Front). This was done with the cooperation of the Yugoslav leader, Tito, who had a desire to annex Greek Macedonia to Yugoslavia (Klok 1999:1).

The Anti-Fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) was thus created which gave the Macedonian region a liberating character. The KKE also felt confident about a “United Macedonia”, believing it would emerge triumphantly in the Greek Civil War. The EAM and the NOF would disagree on issues of policy and the NOF would ultimately be thrown out of Greece in 1944 (Papavizas 2006:194).

A bitter civil war between the Greek government and EAM followed World War II. Both sides experienced many casualties. The Communists were defeated in 1949. The Slav-speaking Communists either had to leave Greece or fully adopt the Greek language and surnames. 29 The

---

29 A good example is the family name of Nikolai Gruevski, the current Prime Minister of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). His paternal grandparents stem from the Ottoman village of Krushoradi. Krushoradi was under the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate until the Second Balkan War in 1913 when the area was awarded to Greece. In accordance with the Greek Orthodox Church’s regulations, the Greek administration later changed the names of the local villagers. In 1926 the village of Krushoradi was renamed by the Greek authorities to Achlada and the
Slav minorities faced discrimination and were not even recognised as a minority. The Muslims in Western Thrace, officially recognised in 1923, are the only recognised minority in Greece.

A large part of Yugoslav Macedonia was occupied by Bulgaria and therefore the communist leader, Josip Tito, did not manage to develop a Partisan movement there (Simos 1988:4). In 1943 the Communist Party of “Macedonia” was established with the hope that it would create solidarity in Yugoslavia’s fight against the Axis Powers.

After World War II, Tito separated Yugoslav Macedonia from Serbia (Benson 2001:88) and in 1946 it became a republic of the new Yugoslav Federation. The capital city of this republic would be Skopje. This new federal republic was known as the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. Tito would promote the notion of a separate “Macedonian” nation, in order to cut the ties of the Slavic “Macedonians” with Bulgaria (Bideleux & Jeffries 2007:408).

Although the Macedonian language is very close to Bulgarian, there was a deliberate emphasis on the differences between the two languages. Furthermore, the historical figures of the Macedonian region were referred to only as Macedonian as opposed to Serbian or Bulgarian (Bideleux & Jeffries 2007:409). A separate Macedonian Orthodox Church, which had split from the Serbian Orthodox Church, was established (Rossos 2008:241). Any pro-Bulgarian sentiment was severely dealt with by the Communist Party.

Tito did all of this for a number of reasons. Firstly, he was an ethnic Croat who sought to establish a territory which was formerly considered Serbian, to that of a level that was now equal to Serbia. By doing this, he aimed to reduce Serbian dominance in Yugoslavia. Secondly, he wanted to destroy all ties that the Slav “Macedonians” had with Bulgaria. Tito feared that the consideration of that Slavic “Macedonian” population as Bulgarian would have undermined the unity amongst the Yugoslav population. Thirdly, he desired to justify his Yugoslav ambitions about a “United Macedonia” (Pirin and Aegean), by “liberating Macedonia” (Benson 2001:89).

Gruevski family name was changed to Grouios. During the Greek Civil War (1946-1949), Gruevski’s grandmother and father fled north to Yugoslav Macedonia and changed their family name back to Gruevski (Savvides 2008).
According to Tito the unified “Macedonian” republic would continue to be a member of Federal Yugoslavia, but this time Yugoslavia would also be afforded access to the Aegean Sea.

Tito proclaimed his intentions regarding Macedonia in August 1944, when he stated his goal to reunify all parts of Macedonia that had been divided after both Balkan Wars (Rossos 2008:227). He began negotiating with Bulgaria to create a new federal state, which would have also included Albania, and would have also supported the Greek Communists in the Greek Civil War (Campbell & Sherrard 1969:182). The idea of a “United Macedonia” under a Communist regime was abandoned in 1949 when the Greek Communists lost the Greek Civil War and Tito clashed with the Soviet Union and Bulgaria which was also pro-Soviet (Campbell & Sherrard 1969:183).

The loyalty of the “Slavophones” in Greece was scrutinised and the existence of a separate minority Slavic “Macedonian” was also officially denied. Many Greeks also immigrated to other parts of the globe because of the hard economic conditions that prevailed after World War II and the Greek Civil War. Some liberalisation did occur between 1959 and 1967, until the Greek military dictatorship came into power and imposed certain harsh restrictions. These restrictions began to ease up after the dictatorship was deposed and Greece returned to democracy. The economic development in Greek Macedonia after the war was steady and the province swiftly became the most prosperous one in Greece. The coast was heavily developed for tourism, particularly that of the Halkidiki peninsula.

The Bulgarian leader was Georgi Dimitrov. He was a Soviet loyalist and also head of the Comintern (an abbreviation for Communist International). Under him Bulgaria did at first accept the existence of a separate Slavic “Macedonian” identity and the agreement was that Pirin Macedonia would join Yugoslav Macedonia. Thus the population declared itself “Macedonian” in the 1946 census. However this caused bitterness and many people were imprisoned (Crampton 2005:190). This position was to be done away with after Tito’s split from the Soviet bloc, a decision that led to the denial of the existence of a Slavic “Macedonian” nation and a “Macedonian” language.

Kiro Gligorov became the first president of Yugoslav Macedonia and he aimed to keep his country far away from the conflict of the Yugoslav wars in the early 1990s (Hudson 2003:80).
The existence of Yugoslav Macedonia had depended on the support of the Communist Party and the Yugoslav government (Bideleux & Jeffries 2007:413). Both of these entities collapsed, prompting the Macedonian authorities to encourage a stronger sense of “Macedonian” Slav national identity (Shea 2008:215). The Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) were very upset about the fact that their national rights were being underplayed in favour of a more distinct Slavic “Macedonian” identity (Cowan 2000:105). Some nationalist Serbs called for Yugoslav Macedonia to once again be incorporated into Serbia. This prospect did not appear to be very viable, because Serbia was preoccupied with wars against the Croats and the Bosnians (Kapsis 1991:4).

As the fall of communism continued in Eastern Europe in the 1990s, Yugoslav Macedonia followed in the footsteps of the other federation republics and declared its independence at the end of 1991 (Kapsis 1991:4). In 1991 a referendum on the independence of Yugoslav Macedonia was held. Despite a boycott from the ethnic Albanians the result was an overwhelming majority in favour of independence (Marakis 1991:1). The ethnic Albanians nonetheless created their own ethnic political parties and played key roles in the Macedonian government (Hudson 2003:150).

Yugoslav Macedonia subsequently seceded peacefully from the rest of Federal Yugoslavia under the official name of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. In February 1992 neighbouring Bulgaria became the first country to officially recognise the Republic of Macedonia’s independence. (Bideleux & Jeffries 2007:414). This motion was to be followed globally by other states as well.

Greek public opinion only gradually became aware of these developments. The Greek Prime Minister, Constantine Mitsotakis, did display flexibility on the emerging state’s name, but the main concern was that the new state should not use the term “Macedonia”, in view of the fact that the Socialist Republic of Macedonia had laid claim to Greek and Bulgarian territory in the past (Klok 1999:2).

The Greek foreign minister, Antonis Samaras, recognised Slovenia and Croatia in December 1991 and adopted a European Community declaration establishing conditions for recognition
These conditions included a ban on “territorial claims toward a Community state, hostile propaganda and the use of a denomination that implies territorial claims” (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2002:316). This was done to block European recognition of the Republic of Macedonia.

Another Greek objection was that the “People’s Republic of Macedonia” had a preamble in its constitution of 1944 which stressed “the demand to unite the whole Macedonian people around the claim for self-determination” (Valinakis 1992:27). Prime Minister Mitsotakis dismissed Samaras in April 1992 and assumed the office of the foreign ministry himself, but he maintained the stance of his predecessor. Antonis Samaras was to found a new party called “Politiki Anoixi” (Political Spring) which contributed to Prime Minister Mitsotakis losing the next elections.

In September 1995 the Interim Accord was signed between the Greek and FYROM foreign ministers, Karolos Papoulias and Stevo Crvenkovski. This was not a final agreement, but it did clear the way for a tacit normalisation between the two states (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2002:317).

The Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) new constitution came into effect on 20 November, 1991. It called for a democratic governance system. Kiro Gligorov became the first President of the new independent state. Gligorov was succeeded by Boris Trajkovski in 1999 (Rossos 2008:276). In early January 2001 armed conflict ensued between government security forces and the ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army (UCK) (Kenney 2006:73). The Ohrid Framework Agreement was signed on 13 August, 2001.

This ended the conflict but only to a certain extent. The signatories were members of the government as well as Albanian representatives. This agreement also provided for greater rights for the “Macedonian” Albanian population. In January 2002 amnesty was granted to Albanian irregulars and rebels, officially resolving the conflict.
3. Sociopolitical Aspects of the Macedonians

In this chapter I would like to examine the most important sociopolitical aspects which affect this question. Such aspects would include the ethnic Macedonian or Slavic “Macedonian” language, the Macedonian Orthodox Church and Macedonian symbols.

As far as the language goes, I would like to discuss the development of the Slavic “Macedonian” language as well as the views that other countries and academics have on it.

I would also like to discuss the development of the Macedonian Orthodox Church and its position in the Orthodox community.

Finally I would like to look at certain symbols that have been used and claimed as their own, leading to provocative circumstances.

3.1 The Slavic “Macedonian” Language

The official language used by the people and defined in the constitution of the Republic of Macedonia is Macedonian (Phillips 2004:36).

Due to the Macedonia naming dispute as well as other historical reasons, several other terms of reference are used when reference is made to the Macedonian language. The term “Macedonian” is an ambiguous one and some of the names use the family to which the language belongs, such as Slavic. This is done to distinguish it from the Ancient Macedonian language which was in fact non-Slavic, but rather a Greek one (Papavizas 2006:166). Often the autonym “Makedonski” will also be used for the modern Slavic language, instead of Macedonian which would refer to the ancient language.

There is a high level of mutual comprehensibility between neighbouring Slavonic languages Slovenian, Serbian, Croatian, Bulgarian and of course ethnic Macedonian (Barbour & Carmichael 2002:11). From a linguistic perspective the Balkans appear to be very fragmented. The Slavonic languages of Bulgarian, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, Slovenian and Macedonian are
similar and they might have been unified to form a single language. This had already been done in the disparate dialects that had been forged into modern German and English. But the formation of separate states prevented this. In fact, four of the abovementioned languages were codified as “Serbo-Croat”, but the concept of this single language did not survive the fall of Yugoslavia after 1991 (Barbour & Carmichael 2002:223).

In 1991 when the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia seceded from the Yugoslavian Federation, the population of FYROM was sitting at around two million people. According to the 1991 census, 1.3 million of those inhabitants regarded themselves as Macedonian, 400,000 were described as Albanian and the remaining population was a combination of Serbian, Turkish and Roma or Gypsy (Bideleux & Jeffries 2007:405).

As a language, Macedonian was originally more similar to Bulgarian, though historically it began to develop separately from Serbian from around 1912, when Macedonia was annexed into Serbia (Barbour & Carmichael 2002:229). This language development was encouraged by the regime of King Alexander (1889-1903), but when the Communists came into power in Yugoslavia after World War II, they rejected this policy of integrating the southern ethnic groups into the monarchy, instead creating a separate republic. This helped maintain the status of a separate Macedonian language (Hill 1992:108).

The Macedonian language (along with Bulgarian) is a member of the Eastern group of the South Slavic branch of languages, which is also a member of the Indo-European language family. The modern Macedonian language is not related to the Ancient Macedonian language (Mackridge & Yannakakis 1997:160). Macedonian’s closest relative is Bulgarian with which it shares a high level of mutual intelligibility (Danforth 1995:153). Some linguists regard “Macedonian” as a dialect of Bulgarian with the next-closest relative being Serbo-Croatian.

“Macedonian”, along with Bulgarian and Serbian, fall into a group of Balkan languages with the same typological, grammatical and lexical features that are based more on geographical location than ethnic composition. Other members of this group would be Greek, Romanian and Albanian. These languages belong to different genetic branches of the Indo-European language family. Greek and Albanian each comprise their own separate branches, whereas Romanian
belongs to the Romance or Latin branch, along with Spanish, French, Portuguese and Italian (Barbour & Carmichael 2002:11).

Macedonian dialects in the past were described by linguists as being either dialects of Bulgarian or Serbian, but later on ethnic Macedonian was codified as a standard language (Danforth 1995:67). Many Macedonian intellectuals, however, have maintained that their language “was neither a dialect of Serbian nor of Bulgarian, but a language in its own right” (Shea 2008:193).

An *Ethnologue* is a catalogue containing information on all of the world’s languages and it list variants of Macedonian Slavic. Such variants would be Macedonian Slav, Slavic Macedonian and Macedonian Slavonic. The Council of Europe uses the term Macedonian (Slavic) to refer to the Macedonian language.

In 1942 the term *Slavomacedonian* was introduced in Greece. During the Panhellenic Meeting of the Greek Communist Party, the KKE (Greek Communist Party) mentioned that it recognised the equality of the ethnic minorities in Greece (Papavizas 2006:12). Thus the KKE recognised the Slav-speaking population as an ethnic minority of *Slavomacedonians* and this was a term which brought much relief to the inhabitants of the region (Papavizas 2006:7). The first section of the term (Slav) determined their origin and classified the second section (Macedonian) in the great family of the Slav peoples.

Initially the term *Slavomacedonian* was introduced and accepted by the community because it brought a more widespread ethnic consciousness to any non-Greek living in Macedonia (Papavizas 2006:153). According to these non-Greeks, this term would later be used by Greek authorities in a discriminatory way, thus the Macedonians would be reluctant to accept it.

EBLUL, the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages, began to refer to both the Slavophone minority of the Greek region of Macedonia, and the majority ethnic group of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) as *Slavomacedonians*.

Microsoft Corporation uses “Macedonian (FYROM)” in its software, following a deal between Microsoft and the government of the Republic of Macedonia.
Most of the language speakers in Greece identify themselves ethnically as Slavophone Greeks. The Slavic language “Macedonian” is often avoided and rejected in the Greek context, as it carries different connotations. The language is often called simply “Slavic” or “Slavomacedonian”, or “Macedonian Slavic”. The largest group of Macedonian speakers are in the regions of Kastoria, Edessa, Giannitsa, Ptolemaida, Naousa and especially Florina (Mackridge & Yannakakis 1997:63).

3.1.1 The History of the “Macedonian” Language

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Slavs first came to the Balkan Peninsula in the 6th and 7th centuries AD (Rossos 2008:22). In the 9th century, the Byzantine Greek monks Saints Cyril and Methodius developed the first writing system for the Slavonic languages (Rossos 2008:33). Under the orders of Tsar Boris I, Saints Clement and Naum established the Ohrid Literary School in 886 AD (Poulton 2000:19).

Following the Ottoman invasion of the Balkans, regional Macedonia was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire. The Old Church Slavonic which was the written language remained unchanged, but the spoken dialects began to move apart. The creation of a National Consciousness also gave rise to the creation of standards for languages such as Slovene, Serbo-Croatian and Bulgarian. As Turkish influence in Macedonia waned, schools were opened, where the Bulgarian standard language was taught in areas with a profound Bulgarian population.

Regional Macedonia was divided between Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia after the two Balkan Wars. Serbia was later known as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and then Yugoslavia. The area that is currently known as the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) was incorporated into the aforementioned Kingdom of Serbia as “Southern Serbia” (De Soto & Dudwick 2000:31). During this time, Yugoslav Macedonia became known as Vardar Banovina or Vardar Macedonia (Phillips 2004:21). The language that was used in public, in church and in education was Serbo-Croatian. Greek was the official language of Aegean Macedonia and Bulgarian was the official language of Pirin Macedonia (Poulton 2000:101).
Bulgaria, which was an axis ally, occupied most of Yugoslav Macedonia during World War II. During this period standard Bulgarian was reintroduced as a language in the churches and schools. At first, the Bulgarians were seen as liberators from Serbia, but later Bulgaria was seen as nothing different to the old Serbian conqueror. There were, however, pro-Bulgarian groups that either wanted Yugoslav Macedonia to be a second independent Bulgarian state or a region unified with Bulgaria (Karakasidou 1997:100).

Toward the end of World War II, Vardar Banovina or Vardar Macedonia was incorporated as a republic into the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In this republic, the Macedonian language held official status within both the Yugoslav Federation and The Yugoslav Republic (Bideleux & Jeffries 2007:407). During the 1930s Kosta Racin had written poetry in Macedonian in literary journals. In 1939 he wrote “Beli Mugri” (White Dawns) which was basically a collection of poems. These poems included elements of oral folk poetry. These poems were prohibited by the Yugoslavian government prior to World War II because of the realistic and powerful way that the plight of the exploited and impoverished Macedonian people had been portrayed (Shea 2008:206).

3.1.2 Views on the “Macedonian” Language

The four nations affected by this “new” language—Slavic “Macedonians”, Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs—offer their own viewpoints on the legitimacy and credibility of this new language known as “Macedonian”. The viewpoints of the aforementioned nations are presented below.

3.1.2.1 The Slavic “Macedonian” View

According to the Macedonian (Slavic) view, Macedonian was the first official language of the Slavs. This is because Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius introduced the Slavic script through the Cyrillic alphabet. These two teachers were from Thessaloniki in Southern Macedonia (Rossos
Ironically, today Thessaloniki is the capital city of Greek or Aegean Macedonia. Macedonia would later fall under the rule of the Bulgars and it was at that time that the Byzantines regarded all of the Slavic Macedonians as Bulgarians. The government of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) states that the Bulgarian Tsar Samuel’s seat in the early Middle Ages was allegedly the first Macedonian Slavic state (Rossos 2008:30). However Krste Misirkov, the Macedonian philologist and ethnographer, who had set the principles of the Macedonian literary language in the late 19th century, disputed this by stating: “We speak a Bulgarian language and we believed with Bulgaria is our strong power” (Shea 2008:204).

3.1.2.2 The Greek View

Greece equates the term Macedonia to Ancient Macedon and the province of Macedonia in Northern Greece (Karakasidou 1997:22). Greece also stresses that the term “Macedonian Language” cannot be used for a Slavic language.

In 1944, Tito gave the southernmost province of Yugoslavia—previously known as Vardarska Banovina—the new name of People’s Republic of Macedonia. This was done to increase his regional influence. Tito subsequently renamed the local language Macedonian which up until then was regarded as a western Bulgarian dialect. By doing this, “Macedonian” became one of Yugoslavia’s official languages (Benson 2001:89).

Furthermore, there are some Greek scholars who believe the Slavic dialects spoken in Greek or Aegean Macedonia are more a combination of Greek and Slavic (Barbour & Carmichael 2002:256).

Macedonian Greek is a dialect of Greek spoken in Northern Greece and it is fully intelligible with other dialects of the Greek language. The dialect is known as “Makedonika” or Μακεδονικά which translates to Macedonian or Makedonitika or Μακεδονίτικα as referred to in Greek.
3.1.2.3 The Bulgarian View

Bulgaria was the first country to recognise the independence of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) (Poulton 2000:179). Bulgarian academics and Bulgarians in general regard the Macedonian language as a form of Bulgarian (Pettifer 1995:153). However in 1999, the Bulgarian government compromised by stating that “the Macedonian language is the official language of the country (Republic of Macedonia) in accordance with its constitution” (Crampton 2000:241).

Most Bulgarian linguists consider the Slavic dialects spoken in the region of Macedonia a part of the Bulgarian diasystem. A diasystem is a system that analyses the linguistic varieties and structural differences of a language or group of languages. Bulgarian scholars also claim that up until 1945 there was no consciousness in the Macedonian population about a language that was separate from Bulgarian. Therefore, the conclusion is that Macedonian is not a language separate from Bulgarian either but rather a Bulgarian dialect (Danforth 1995:153).

Bulgarian linguists also assert that the Macedonian and Yugoslav linguists who codified the new language purposefully introduced artificial differences from the literary Bulgarian to bring it closer to Serbian, but also to create a consciousness of a separate Macedonian ethnicity before 1944 (Crampton 1995:190). Some Bulgarian scholars and people believe Macedonian is one of three “forms” of the Bulgarian language, the other two being standard Bulgarian and Banat Bulgarian.

The Banat Bulgarians are a distinct Bulgarian group from the Banat region, a region once under Hapsburg rule; these Bulgarians are Roman Catholic. This formulation was detailed in 1978 in a document of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences entitled “The Unity of the Bulgarian Language Today and in the Past” (Crampton 1995:64).

Generally, the Bulgarian nation in Macedonia existed long before the idea that Macedonian Slavs would constitute an ethnic group separate from the Bulgarians. During Ottoman rule, the Slav-speaking people in Moesia, Thrace and Macedonia referred to their language as Bulgarian and called themselves Bulgarians (Rossos 2008:43). Stefan Verkovic was a Serbian researcher
who worked for many years as a teacher in Macedonia. He had been recruited by the Serbian government on the pretext of collecting Bulgarian folk songs. He claims to have named these songs Bulgarian rather than Slavic because the Macedonian Slavs he encountered in his research referred to themselves and their language as Bulgarian (Crampton 1995:265-269).

Early vernacular texts use the name Bulgarian when referring to certain Macedonian dialects. Such texts would be the four-language dictionary of Daniil of Moschopole, as well as the early works of Kiril Pejchinovich and Ioakim Kurchovski (Shea 2008:199). These works were written in Bulgarian in the 18th and 19th centuries and their authors referred to their language as Bulgarian (Shea 2008:201).

The Bulgarian national movement began toward the end of the 19th century. During this period some cities in Macedonia demanded that education be conducted in Bulgarian and that church services be conducted in Bulgarian (Shea 2008:202).

Up until 1918 it was the Bulgarian language that most Macedonians learned in the Exarchate schools. Bulgarian was the language used in documents, publications and other forms of correspondence and there was no indication that the Bulgarian language was seen as a foreign one (Barbour & Carmichael 2002:239).

Just before World War II, the Bulgarian Communist Party began to foster a separate Macedonian nationality in order to achieve autonomy for Macedonia within a Balkan federation. This was done with the support and encouragement of the Soviet Union (Papavizas 2006:97). From here, Bulgarian-educated Macedonians began to develop not only a distinct Macedonian language, but also a distinct culture and literature (Papavizas 2006:95).

These pioneers clashed with activists tilting more toward the Serbian sphere. And seeing that the Serbs held most of the political power, they were the ones able to impose their views as to which direction this new language should follow (Barbour & Carmichael 2002:239).

After World War II, the communist government in Bulgaria sought to give a “cultural autonomy” to the Pirin region in Bulgaria. This was done as a means of creating a Balkan Communist Federation. This prompted the Macedonian language to be seen as a language
distinct from Bulgarian by the Bulgarian Communists (Papavizas 2006:95). The plans for a Balkan Communist Federation were abandoned in 1948 when the Yugoslav leader Josip Tito split from the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin. This split occurred because Tito refused to make Yugoslavia a Soviet satellite state (Poulton 2000:107).

Bulgaria continued to officially support the idea of a Macedonian unification and nation but within a Balkan context, not a Yugoslavian one. This was because Bulgarian linguists felt the Macedonian language was in the process of being “Serbianised”—the belief that all South Slavs in the former Yugoslavia should regard themselves as Slavs (Shea 2008:112). This is done by the spreading of Serbian culture either by means of integration or assimilation.

**3.1.2.4 The Serbian View**

Serbia officially recognises the Macedonian language as a separate language from Bulgarian (Poulton 2000:117). The Serbs believe the Yugoslav government was encouraged by the Serbs to promote a separate ethnic and linguistic Macedonian identity, in order to sever any emotional link between the ethnic Macedonians and the Bulgarians (Kaplan 2005:60).

According to the British historian Dr. Hugh Poulton, the Serbs believe that since the creation of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia in 1944, the Macedonian language was used in the education system and by government officials in order to make the new language more common. Dr. Poulton has noted that initially a Serbian and Bulgarian mixture of the spoken dialects was more noticeable amongst the older generation. But he also noted that the younger generation went through the education system entirely to speak a “pure Macedonian” (Poulton 2000:117).
3.1.2.5 Other Views

Venko Markovski was a Macedonian Communist politician and literator. He was a member of the Commission that “created” the Macedonian Alphabet. He in fact had stated that “ethnic Macedonians and the Macedonian language did not exist and that they were a result of Comintern manipulation” (Shea 2008:113).

Vittore Pisani, an Italian linguist, said the Macedonian language is an artifact produced mainly for political reasons (Shea 2008:26).

The German linguist Friedrich Scholz argues that Macedonian was only initially promoted as a written language between World War I and II (Scholz 1966:61).

The Austrian linguist Otto Kronsteiner states that Macedonian linguists purposefully introduced differences from literary Bulgarian so Macedonian could bear a stronger resemblance to Serbian (Kostov 1996:86).

The American professor of history Dennis Hupchick states that the historical argument of the Macedonian nationalists for a separate Macedonian ethnicity was a plagiarised one that could only be supported by linguistic reality. Furthermore he states that up until the 1940s, most outside observers and linguists consented that the language spoken by Macedonian Slavs was in fact a Bulgarian dialect (Hupchick 1995:149). Another American professor Horace Lunt calls the Bulgarian scholars “silly” (Lunt 1984:110) and the Greek scholars “arrogant” for arguing that the Macedonian language did not exist (Lunt 1984:120).

Loring Danforth, an Australian professor of Anthropology, stresses that all languages in the standardisation process have a certain political and historical context. This also applies to the Macedonian language which was in fact standardised in the political context (Danforth 1995:53).
3.2 The “Macedonian” Orthodox Church

The Macedonian Orthodox Church unites and exercises jurisdiction over the Slavic “Macedonian” Orthodox Christians under the Archbishop of Ohrid and Macedonia.

3.2.1 The History of the “Macedonian” Orthodox Church

The Archbishopric of Ohrid was the centre of the Church of the Byzantine Bulgarians and Serbs in the Byzantine Empire. The first appointed archbishop was John of Debar and he was a Bulgarian, but his successors were Greek (Crampton 2005:22).

From the 12th to the 14th century, the Archbishopric was contested by the Byzantine, Latin, Bulgarian and Serbian Empires (Shea 2008:58). When the Latins seized Constantinople in 1204, the Greek Patriarchs would hold their titles in exile. The second newly founded Bulgarian Kingdom founded a new Archbishopric in Tarnovo. The Bulgarian monarch, Kaloyan, expelled the Greek Bishop in Ohrid and replaced him with a Bulgarian, but he couldn’t bring the Ohrid Archbishopric under the jurisdiction of Tarnovo. The jurisdiction of the Ohrid Archbishopric survived, even though it had been weakened by the Latin conquests as well as the founding of the Bulgarian and Serbian states (Ware 1997:61).

The Serbian ruler Stephan Dushan occupied Ohrid in 1334 (Rossos 2008:39). In 1376 the Ohrid Archbishopric once again became part of the Serbian Patriarch, during the rule of Lazar of Serbia and subsequent Turkish rule (Rossos 2008:40). In 1463 the last Serbian Patriarch died and the Ohrid Archbishopric laid claim to various eparchies of the Serbian Patriarchate based on its old 1019 territorial rights.

In the 16th century the Archbishopric of Ohrid had managed to put virtually the whole Serbian Orthodox Church under its jurisdiction. The same was done to surrounding dioceses that would stretch all the way along Southern Italy and Dalmatia. The members of this diocese were either of Greek or Albanian stock. The Ohrid Archbishopric would lose the Diocese of Veria but later
gain the Diocese of Durres (Dyrachium) from the Patriarchate of Constantinople, but would be abolished by the Ottoman Sultan in 1767 and placed under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople (Rossos 2008:57).

The Serbian Orthodox Church had been the sole church in Vardar Macedonia since 1919 (Phillips 2004:19). A resolution for the restoration of the Ohrid Archbishopric as a Macedonian Orthodox Church was drawn up by the First Clergy and People’s Synod in 1945. This resolution was submitted to the Serbian Orthodox Church which was subsequently rejected.

In 1958 a second resolution was submitted by the Second Clergy and People’s Synod. This resolution was in fact accepted on 17 June, 1959 by the Serbian Orthodox Church, but only once the Socialist authorities applied pressure on the Serbian Church to do so (Phillips 2004:42). Dimitrija Stojkovski, a Macedonian, was enthroned as the first archbishop of Ohrid and Macedonia’s first Metropolitan under the clerical name Dositheus II.

The Serbian Orthodox Church’s agreement with the resolution was celebrated in a common liturgy by the Macedonian priests as well as the Serbian Patriarch German in Skopje. By doing so, the Serbian church had officially recognised the autonomy of the Macedonian Church (Rossos 2008:241). In 1962 the Serbian Patriarch German and his Russian counterpart Alexey visited the Macedonian Orthodox Church during the feast of Saints Cyril and Methodius (Shea 2008:174). Here, the Macedonian Archbishop celebrated his first liturgy with heads of other Orthodox churches.

The Archbishopric of Ohrid was restored in 1959 when the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church afforded autonomy to the Orthodox Church in what was then called the Socialist Republic of Macedonia (Phillips 2004:42). The Archbishopric of Ohrid would remain in canonical unity with the Serbian Church under the Serbian Patriarch. In 1967 the Macedonian Church announced its autocephaly and independence from the Serbian Orthodox Church. This decision was denounced by the Serbian Holy Synod who condemned its clergy as schismatic. Since then the Macedonian Orthodox Church has not been recognised by the other national Orthodox Churches as well as by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (Poulton 2000:181).
The autocephaly of the Macedonian Orthodox Church remains unrecognised today by other national Orthodox churches and this is in defence of the Serbian Church’s opposition (Poulton 2000:118). The Macedonian Orthodox Church has about 1,200 churches in Macedonia which in turn is organised into ten eparchies or districts. Upon his enthronement in 1993 the Archbishop Mihail stated that “the church wanted to cooperate with neighbouring Greek, Bulgarian, and Serbian churches” (Shea 2008:175).

3.2.2 The Language of the “Macedonian” Orthodox Church

The official Slavonic language of the Archbishopric of Ohrid was gradually replaced by the Greek language. All documents and even hagiographies of Bulgarian saints were written in Greek, but the liturgy was conducted in Slavic for a few centuries (Shea 2008:199).

In 1874 the Ohrid Archbishopric became part of the newly established Bulgarian Exarchate. The Christian population in Skopje and Ohrid had voted in favour of them joining with the Exarchate. Thus the Bulgarian Exarchate became in control of most of the Macedonian region.

“Several of the Bulgarian Exarchate’s dioceses were forcefully taken over by the Serbian Orthodox Church when Vardar Macedonia became part of Serbia after World War I” (Poulton 2008:156).

3.3 Macedonian Symbols

Let us now look at traditional Macedonian symbols. Such symbols are important because they declare a national, ethnic or political representation. These symbols maybe modern or they may be very old, but they nonetheless form an integral part of a nation’s definitive consciousness.
3.3.1 “Antiquitisation” and Macedonian Heroes

In 2006 the nationalist VMRO-DPMNE government undertook to initiate a policy of Antiquitisation. This was introduced with the purpose of building the Slavic “Macedonian” identity, but also applying sufficient pressure for Greece to concede on the name “Macedonia”. The Macedonian Diaspora is a considerable proponent of Antiquisation as its lobbying has been effective in the USA, Canada, Germany and Australia. This policy of Antiquitisation has exacerbated the relations between the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Greece.

A key characteristic of this policy was the renaming of key places (such as airports and highways) after Ancient Macedonian figures. Statues of Alexander the Great and Philip II of Macedon have been built in several cities throughout the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Statues of Alexander the Great have been erected in the town squares of Prilep and Stip. The city of Bitola hosts a recently-built statue of Philip II. A large arch named “Porta Macedonia” was also built in Bitola. This arch features images of historical figures including Alexander the Great.

The Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) main airport in Skopje was renamed “Alexander the Great Airport”. Inside the airport, antique objects from the archeological museum in Skopje are featured. One of the main squares in Skopje has been renamed Pella Square. Pella was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Macedon and the birthplace of Alexander the Great. Pella also falls within modern Greece.

The main highway between the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Greece has been renamed “Alexander of Macedon” Highway and the largest football stadium in Skopje has been renamed the “Philip II Arena”.

The above actions are seen as examples of deliberate provocations in neighbouring Greece. They have worsened the dispute between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), and delayed the Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) application into the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).
Antiquisation has not only been condemned in Greece, but also in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM.) Academics have criticised this policy because they feel it exploits the disciplines of history and archaeology. Ethnic Slavic “Macedonians” have also been critical of this policy because they believe it causes a division between the local inhabitants trying to identify with classical antiquity, and those trying to identify with the Slavic culture of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Ethnic Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) see Antiquisation as an effort to exclude them from the demographics of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Bulgaria has also been critical of Antiquisation because considered national heroes in Bulgaria like Gotse Delchev and Dame Gruev are claimed to be Slavic “Macedonian” national heroes.

In June 2011, a statue of Alexander the Great was erected in Bitola in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) (Smith 2011). However, in August 2011 an even grander twenty-two metre statue resembling Alexander the Great was erected in the middle of Skopje, the Macedonian capital. This furthered the twenty-year dispute with Greece over ownership of the name Macedonia. The Slavic “Macedonian” government does not refer to the statue as Alexander the Great, but rather as “a warrior on a horse”.

Besides the aforementioned statue of Alexander the Great erected in Bitola in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) in June 2011, there is talk of erecting a statue in the Skopje city square. It is important to look at the symbols of the Republic of Macedonia, because this forms part of the controversy where Macedonia has adopted symbols that Greece believes are Greek. When the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) became independent from Yugoslavia, the country made some changes to its national symbols.30

30 During the 1990s Kiro Gligorov, the first democratically elected president of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), stated in two separate interviews that Slavic Macedonians are not descendants of Ancient Macedonians. In his interview with the Eastern European Foreign Information Service Daily Report on 26 February, 1992, Gligorov stated: “We are Slavs who came to this area in the 6th century...we are not descendants of the Ancient Macedonians”. Later, in his interview with The Toronto Star on 15 March, 1992 he stated: “We are Macedonians but we are Slav Macedonians. That’s who we are! We have no connection to Alexander the Great and his Macedonia. The Ancient Macedonians no longer exist. They had disappeared from history a long time ago. Our ancestors came here in the 5th and 6th century” (Buhayer 2012).
3.3.2 The “Vergina Sun” and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) Flag

When the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) became independent in 1991, the adopted flag depicted a red field with a yellow ancient Macedonian Vergina Sun. This Vergina flag was the Republic of Macedonia’s official flag from 1992 to 1995 (Danforth 1995:47). It was a stylised yellow sun centred on a red field with eight main and eight secondary rays being produced from the sun that would taper to a point.

The “original” Vergina Sun is a star with sixteen rays that covers what appears to be the royal burial larnax of Philip II of Macedon. This burial larnax was discovered in Vergina in Northern

---

Greece and is believed to have been associated with Ancient Macedonian kings such as Alexander the Great and Philip II (Danforth 1995:166). This Vergina Sun was also used as a symbol in Greek art long before the Macedonian period (Papavizas 2006:169). The Greeks have regarded the Vergina Sun as an exclusively Greek symbol since its discovery in the Northern Greek region of Macedonia (Papavizas 2006:225).

As mentioned before, the Vergina Sun on a red field was the first flag of the independent Republic of Macedonia in 1992. Greece viewed this as a threat and imposed an economic blockade on the Republic of Macedonia until 1995 after Macedonia agreed to change the flag (Brunwasser 2011). Greece has a virtually identical flag, but against a blue background instead. This flag is the flag of the Greek province of Macedonia (Aegean or Greek Macedonia) and it has been in use as such from the 1980s.

The current flag of the Republic of Macedonia depicts a stylised yellow sun on a red field, with eight broadening rays extending from the centre to the edge of the field (Znamierowski 1999:49). Many Macedonians still falsely regard the Vergina Sun flag as the flag of ethnic Macedonians.

3.3.3 The “United Macedonia” Salute

The United Macedonia salute is a salute with the thumb and pointing finger shaped in a circle and the left over three fingers pointing up, used by some Macedonian nationalists in Macedonia and abroad (Pettifer 2008:41). This salute advocates the irredentist concept of a United Macedonia.

According to Macedonian nationalists the two fingers in a circle symbolise the letter ‘O’, which is the first letter of the Macedonian word “Obedineta”. This means “United” and refers to a United Macedonia. The other three fingers of the salute symbolise the three regions of Macedonia which are Vardar Macedonia (FYROM), Aegean Macedonia (in Greece) and Pirin Macedonia (in Bulgaria). As a whole, the five fingers resemble the Vergina Sun. This salute is used to express a United Macedonia.

The Serbs have a similar salute which is comprised of the outstretched thumb, index and middle fingers (Benson 2001:16). These three fingers are significant as they are associated with the Holy Trinity in accordance with the Orthodox Church’s Sacred Tradition. Use of this sign has increased, particularly as a protest against the proposed name change in the name dispute with Greece (Pettifer 2008:42). Other Balkan peoples, especially Greeks, often find this salute

provocative and offensive on account of irredentist claims on the Macedonian region in Northern Greece.

**Figure 11: The “United Macedonia” Salute**

**Figure 12: The Serbian Salute**

In conclusion, we have seen the importance of sociopolitical aspects in a geographical region comprised of various ethnic and national groups. Yet, these groups share the abovementioned factors which are vital in developing a national identity. Such factors may date back to antiquity or may have evolved over time. Nevertheless, they prove that language and religion are fundamental in the formation of a nation.

These factors have proven to be a fueling source in the Macedonian Dispute and their actual significance will be dealt with in more detail in the following chapter.

---

4. The Macedonian Dispute Today

I would like to examine the role that Ancient Macedonia has played in the Macedonian conflict. This debate has not only been contested by Greeks in Greece and the Slavic “Macedonians” in the Republic of Macedonia (or FYROM), but also by the respective members of their diaspora around the world. This is a contest as to which group has the right to identify themselves as “Macedonians” (Poulton 2000:2).

As mentioned previously, Loring Danforth is an Australian anthropologist and an authority on the Macedonian conflict. He defines the use of two key terms on his analysis of the naming dispute. The first term is “Macedonia” and the second term is “Macedonian”. The name “Macedonia” can be used to make three different references. It can either refer to the geographical area in the central Balkans known as Macedonia (Cowan 2000:8). It can also refer to the independent Republic of Macedonia that emerged from the former Yugoslavia in 1991 (Mackridge & Yannakakis 1997:11). This republic is officially known as “FYROM” by the United Nations.

Finally, it can also mean the province in Northern Greece. This chapter will largely make reference to the Republic of Macedonia or “FYROM”. The term “Macedonian” is also used with different meanings. It is most widely used in a national sense in order to refer to people who identify themselves as Macedonian nationals. When used like this, the term “Macedonian” will contrast with other categories of national identity. Such categories would either be “Greek” or “Bulgarian” or “Serbian”. Therefore “Macedonian” and “Greek” would refer to people of two different nationalities.

When the term “Macedonian” is used in either an ethnic or a regional sense, it refers to people with a Greek national identity who are from “Greek” or “Aegean” Macedonia. These people also refer to themselves as Greek “Macedonians” (Pettifer 2005:109). This is a term that conveys both their national and their ethnic or regional identity.

Having said that, I would like to state that given the ambiguous nature of the terms “Macedonia” and “Macedonian” I have attempted to distinguish these terms in order to avoid
confusion. Mainstream scholars use the term “Macedonia” to refer to the Republic of Macedonia and the term “Macedonian” to refer to a national of the aforementioned republic. When using the term “Macedonia”, I am referring to the geographical area in the Balkans that lies in Greece, Bulgaria, Albania and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Otherwise I specify by attaching either the national, ethnic or geographical characters of these terms. Examples of such terms are Slavic “Macedonians”, The Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Greek “Macedonia”, Bulgarian “Macedonians” etc.

Loring Danforth is of the opinion that ancient history should not be the basis for determining present national identities (Mackridge & Yannakakis 1997:136). Danforth believes the name that one and others ascribe to are the most relevant principles to take into account in situations where conflict arises over the name and identity of a particular nation (Romanucci-Ross, de Vos & Tsuda 2006:90). Today Slavic “Macedonians”, scholars, human rights groups and political figures around the world agree on the appropriate nature of terms such as “Macedonia”, the “Macedonian” nation, the “Macedonian” language and the “Macedonian” minority in Greece.

The Greek nationalist position on the Macedonian conflict is really the only entity who lodges significant objections to this particular use. Greece in general uses the terms “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” or “FYROM”, “Slavic Macedonians” or “Skopians”. This term is given after Skopje, the capital of the Republic of Macedonia (Bennet 1995:219).

At the beginning of the 21st century Slavic “Macedonians” constituted a modern European nation that had been, like any other modern nation, constructed through complex historical and political processes. Greek nationalists claim that the Slavic “Macedonian” nation is an artificial invention of Marshall Tito, the former Yugoslav leader. Modern Macedonian nationalists claim they are direct descendants of the Ancient Macedonians (Poulton 2000:2). Danforth states that these “Macedonians” are a Slavic people who speak a Slavic language (Cowan 2000:55). Like the Greeks, they are an Indo-European people who speak an Indo-European language (Barbour & Carmichael 2002:193).

A brief historical discussion of the Macedonian conflict will now be presented. The aim of this presentation will be to offer an anthropological perspective on the construction of national
identities, cultures and history, seeing that these Macedonian factors constituted the previous chapter. What follows will be a detailed analysis of how Bulgarian and Serbian objections to this usage of the term “Macedonian” have had less political effect than Greek objections.

Since the Macedonian conflict is ultimately a dispute over national sovereignty, identity and history, the importance of Ancient Macedonia and her most famous son, Alexander the Great, are a critical focus of attention for both the Greek and Slavic “Macedonian” parties to this dispute (Papavizas 2006:16-17). There are several fundamental issues at stake here that ought to be considered. One important question that must be asked is: “Can either Greece or Macedonia (FYROM) claim Alexander the Great and the Ancient Macedonians as their legitimate ancestors?” The other is: “Does the name and the history of Ancient Macedonia belong to any one of these nations?” (Pettifer 2001:15).

Thereafter I shall examine the relevance of Ancient Macedonia to the current political conflict. And finally, I would like to briefly discuss the two main issues that have dominated the Macedonian conflict for the past twenty years. The first is international recognition of the Republic of Macedonia (or FYROM) by its constitutional name, which is the Republic of Macedonia. The second is the acknowledgment of the existence of an ethnic “Macedonian” minority in Northern Greece (Danforth 1995:33). By taking these issues into account, one will be able to understand the disputes over whether a particular national group (Greek or Slavic Macedonian) can claim to be the rightful heirs to Ancient Macedonia’s heritage.

4.1 The Macedonian Question: A Political Overview

The Macedonian Question has already been discussed in the second chapter but from a historical perspective. I would like to discuss it again, this time with more of an anthropological and political reference than a historical one. The Macedonian Question has been an important issue in Balkan history and politics for more than a century (Roudometoff 2000:1). During the Ottoman period the population of the geographical region of Macedonia was comprised of diverse linguistic, religious and ethnic groups (Danforth 2001:13).
Toward the end of the 19th century Greece, Bulgaria and to a lesser extent Serbia became involved in the “Macedonian Struggle” (Danforth 2001:39). Here, each state asserted its irredentist claims over the people and the geographical territory of Macedonia. At the end of both Balkan Wars (1912-13) the territory of Macedonia was divided between Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia (Benson 2001:19-20). The inhabitants of all three regions were subjected to policies of forced assimilation. The goals of such forced assimilation were to transform the diverse population of the area into three ethnically pure and homogeneous groups that exclusively consisted of Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs, or in other words Slavs (Danforth 2001:12).

Toward the end of the 19th century most of the Macedonian region’s inhabitants were uneducated and had no developed sense of national identity. Any form of national existence was mainly attributed to religious affiliation and educational propaganda. Many people at the time concluded that the Slavic-speaking inhabitants of Macedonia were in fact “Bulgarians” and that the term “Macedonian” was not used as a way to identify people that belonged to a distinct “Macedonian” ethnic or national group (Crampton 2005:94). It was rather used to refer to the Christian people that lived in Macedonia who spoke a Slavic language (Barbour & Carmichael 2002:11).

H.N. Brailsford was a British journalist who travelled through the Macedonia area in the first decade of the 1900s. He commented that the hold national identities had on the rural population of regional Macedonia at the time was purely a superficial one (Roisman & Worthington 2010:573). He spoke of a village that had been “Greek” four years earlier, but which had recently become “Bulgarian”. Here, the Bulgarians had sent to the village a teacher and a priest, while the Greeks had only sent a teacher. In this way, Brailsford observed that “the legend that Alexander the Great was a Greek goes out by one road, and the rival myth that Alexander was a Bulgarian comes in by the other” (Brailsford 1971:103).

By the early 20th century there is evidence that a definite sense of a “Macedonian” national identity started to emerge among the intellectual elite of the Slavic-speaking Orthodox Christians of the region (Hasapopolos 1990:1). An example is that in 1892, the parish school council in the city of Kastoria (Kostur), in Northern Greece, had adopted the proposal of a group
of teachers to remove the Greek and Bulgarian languages and introduce Slavic “Macedonian” as the instructive language in the town school.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the work of Krste Misirkov presented the most obvious example of the early development of a “Macedonian” national identity (Rossos 2008:164). Misirkov called unambiguously for the recognition of the Slavs in Macedonia as a separate nationality that would be called “Macedonians”. Furthermore, he stated clearly and simply that the Macedonians were a separate and independent Slav people. Misirkov did acknowledge that the construction of a Macedonian national identity was a recent phenomenon. He noted that the Slavic “Macedonian” forefathers had always been called Bulgarians (Rossos 2008:85). In fact, they even referred to themselves as Bulgarians.

Finally, Misirkov stated that the emergence of the “Macedonians” as a separate Slav people was a perfectly normal historical process which simply followed the process adopted by the Bulgarians, Croats and Serbs when they emerged from the South Slav group (Shea 2008:205). The Slavic-speaking people of Northern Greece experienced severe repression under the Metaxas dictatorship of 1936-1940 (Rossos 2008:145). Bulgarian troops occupied the eastern portion of Greek Macedonia during World War II and again during the Greek Civil War, fought from 1946-1949 (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2002:70). Both events threatened Greek sovereignty over “Greek” or “Aegean” Macedonia, because an autonomous Macedonia was being fought for that could have eventually come under Yugoslavian control (Benson 2001:89).

Many Slavic “Macedonians” supported the unsuccessful communist cause of the Greek Civil War. Following the defeat of the Communist forces, some 35,000 Slavic “Macedonians” from Northern Greece fled to Yugoslavia and other countries in Eastern Europe under extremely difficult circumstances (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2002:93). The conservative Greek governments continued a policy of forced Hellenisation over the decades that followed. In the mid-1980s, a small group of people from Northern Greece began to assert their existence as a Slavic “Macedonian” minority (Rossos 2008:256). This group began demanding increased linguistic and cultural rights.
Up until World War II, the official Serbian (and later Yugoslavian) position on the Macedonian conflict was that the Slavs of Macedonia were all “South Serbs” and not a distinct ethnic or national group (Pettifer 2005:18). However, in 1944, Tito established the People’s Republic of Macedonia with its capital of Skopje as one of the states of the new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Brown 2003:25). This move officially recognised the existence of a Slavic “Macedonian” nation. As mentioned in the previous chapter, by 1950 a standard literary Slavic “Macedonian” language had been developed, and in 1967 an autonomous Slavic “Macedonian” Orthodox Church had been founded (Pettifer 2005:30).

Thus, even though they did not achieve complete national independence, the Slavic “Macedonians” still did acquire a significant degree of cultural autonomy. The Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) declared its independence in September 1991 after the death of Tito and the disintegration of Yugoslavia, and so began FYROM’s campaign to gain international recognition under its constitutional name which is the Republic of Macedonia (Cowan 2000:104).

The Greek nationalist position on the Macedonian conflict was the following: The Ancient Macedonians were Greeks. Therefore Ancient and Modern Greece are bound in a continuous ethnic and cultural line. Therefore, it is only Greeks who have the right to identify themselves as “Macedonians”. Also, the Greek nationalist perspective states that the Slavs of Southern Yugoslavia were descendants from the Slavic tribes that settled in Macedonia in the 6th century AD (Rossos 2008:19). This was a thousand years after the death of Alexander the Great. Therefore they have no right to identify themselves now as “Macedonians”.

Taking the above perspective into account, a “Macedonian” nation does not exist. It was merely an “invention” of Tito, who took a variety of nationalities and gave them the Greek name “Macedonia” for his own political service (Klok 1999:3). Furthermore, the Greek government denies the existence of a Slavic “Macedonian” minority in Northern Greece. They claim that only a small group of “Slavophone Greeks” exist, who speak Greek and a Slavic dialect (Papavizas 2006:8). These Greeks nonetheless maintain a Greek national consciousness.
According to the Greek nationalist perspective, should the name “Republic of Macedonia” prevail and should the “Southern Slavs” be recognised as “Macedonians”, everything that is “Macedonian” (such as the accomplishments of Alexander the Great and the Ancient Macedonians) will no longer be regarded as a part of Greek history and civilisation (Papavizas 2006:27). They will in fact become exclusively Slavic.

On the other hand, the ethnic Slavic “Macedonians” are determined to affirm their existence as a unique people with a unique history, culture and identity. They therefore seek to gain recognition of this fact from different spheres, such as political and academic ones and the world public opinion in general (Roisman & Worthington 2010:576). The Slavic “Macedonians” insist that they are not Serbs, or Yugoslavs, or Bulgarians or Greeks (Cowan 2000:9). Not only do they seek to affirm their existence as a nation, the Slavic “Macedonians” are also committed to affirming the existence of a unique “Macedonian” language.

The Slavic “Macedonians” do acknowledge the similarities between Slavic “Macedonian” and other South Slavic languages, but they also do point to the distinctions that the Slavic “Macedonian” language has in comparison to the other Slavic languages (Rossos 2008:33-34). The Slavic “Macedonians” claim that despite the fact that standard literary Macedonian (Slavic) was only formally recognised in 1944, the Slavic “Macedonian” language has existed from the 9th century from the times of the Old Slavonic Church (Barbour & Carmichael 2002:229).

Finally, all of the Slavic “Macedonians” are in agreement that there is an existence of Slavic “Macedonian” minorities in Greece and Bulgaria, and that these minorities have been subject to the harsh policies of forced assimilation of their host governments (Shea 2008:107).

4.2 The Construction of National Identities, Cultures and Histories

The goal of nationalism is to create territorially bounded political units, or states, out of homogeneous cultural communities, or nations. According to nationalism, nations are regarded
as communities of people where a common culture, identity and origin are shared. This sentiment dates back to ancient times (Friedman 1985:35).

Barring some Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians, almost all linguists accept the existence of Slavic “Macedonian” as a standard language (Friedman 1985:35).

Victor Friedman, an American professor of linguistics, states that the establishment of Slavic “Macedonian” as the official language of the Republic of Macedonia in 1944, served as confirmation that a literary language existed in the 19th century (Friedman 1985:35).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Horace Lunt, another American linguist, notes that Bulgarian scholars who claim that a Slavic “Macedonian” language does not exist, are not only being dishonest but also silly. He also states that the Greek scholars who do the same are displaying arrogant ignorance of their Slavic neighbours (Roisman & Worthington 2010:577).

According to Loring Danforth, the persuasiveness of nationalist myths is a serious factor that seriously influences the anthropology of nationalism (Danforth 2001:97-98). Therefore anthropologists are tasked with analysing the process of nation formation, and the process by which nations, national identities and cultures are constructed from pre-existing cultural forms (Danforth 2001:57-58).

Clifford Geertz, an American anthropologist, called these forms “primordial attachments”. These attachments are conceptions of shared blood, race, language, descent and religion (Geertz 1973:259).

According to another American anthropologist, Richard Handler, nationalist discourse states a national culture is territorially based and mutually characterised by homogeneity and continuity (Handler 1988:51). Therefore, a nation possesses a national culture and the existence of a nation is constitutive of the national identity. This therefore proves that the nation exists.

In their extreme form national disputes involve literal and metaphorical attempts to treat some aspect of a nation’s culture or history as a trademark which assigns ownership to only one nation.
Another nationalist perspective states that a nation is responsible for the defence of national cultural property against another nation who wishes to appropriate it. Such threats are treated as threats to a nation’s territorial integrity, because culture, like territory, strives to manifest of a nation’s existence.

Linguists, archaeologists and historians believe that the state spreads national culture to its citizens by means of education and the mass media (Cowan 2000:12). This creates something of a national dogma in various fields. Here, material culture of national ancestors is excavated, a national history is written, a national folklore is collected and a national language is standardised. The construction of a national past is a vital component of the nation-building process (Cowan 2000:13). This component in turn is an essential act of national self-determination.

That is why nationalist myths of shared descent from common ancestors is one of the easiest ways for a national community to be envisaged, particularly if the ancestors are Ancient Macedonians with Alexander the Great being their most famous son. Therefore, historical and cultural patrimony or heritage is absolutely critical to nations who have enjoyed a more glorious ancient past compared to a more modest one of late (Roisman & Worthington 2010:579).

4.3 Ancient Macedonia and the Macedonian Naming Dispute

We looked at a summary of Ancient Macedonian history in the second chapter, but I would like to delve into it again. The reason for this is that I would like to point out the importance of Ancient Macedonia in order to examine the legitimacies behind the different arguments of the Macedonian Naming Dispute.

Greek and Slavic “Macedonian” nationalists base their arguments on a discourse of racial and cultural continuity where national identities existing in the present are subsequently made legitimate by going back into history, to the glorious age of Alexander the Great and the Ancient
Macedonians (Shea 2008:14-15). This discourse states that any nation that is able to demonstrate the longer historical presence in Macedonia will also be able to demonstrate the stronger historical ties to Ancient Macedonia. This proof will therefore entitle the relevant entity to identify itself as “Macedonian” (Shea 2008:18-19).

When Greece began demonstrating against FYROM’s use of the name “Macedonia” in the 1990s, there was a prominent slogan these Greek demonstrations adopted (Roisman & Worthington 2010:580). This slogan suggested that because Ancient Macedonia was Greek, Macedonia (FYROM) is and always will be Greek (Marakis 1992:3). Such Greek claims to Ancient Macedonia are presented in a great deal of books, pamphlets, films and websites.

There are two particularly impressive examples of Greek nationalist discourses on Macedonia. The one is Macedonia: 4000 Years of Greek History and Civilization and the other is a double-volume book titled Macedonia (Sakellariou 1993:9). Both discourses have been written by groups of well-known Greek historians and archaeologists and donated by the Pan-Macedonian Association (Danforth 1995:151). This is a Greek “Macedonian” diaspora organisation that intends to distribute material mainly to college and university libraries throughout the United States, in order to raise historical and cultural awareness concerning national issues of Greece.

The goal of such discourses is to affirm the Greek character of Macedonia from the times of antiquity which concludes with Macedonia’s National Liberation within a unified independent Greek state.

The Greekness of Ancient Macedonian is presented as a scholarly case by M.B. Sakellariou, the editor of Macedonia: 4000 Years of Greek History and Civilization. When looking at a passage referring to the nationality of the Macedonians, the reader reads that the Macedonians were Greeks and that there is reliable evidence to support it. There is also a definitive conclusion that the Macedonians were a Greek tribe (Sakellariou 1993:54).

It isn’t difficult to dispute Sakellariou’s conclusion, as well as the political implications that follow from it. One part of the dispute is use of the term “nationality”. The reason that it is
subject to dispute is the fact that nations did not exist in the 5th century BC. Also, Sakellariou considers evidence that Ancient Macedonians were not considered Greek, as unreliable.

The language spoken by Ancient Macedonians is another topic exploited by nationalists on both sides of the Macedonian Dispute. Greeks claim the language spoken by Ancient Macedonians was a form of Greek, while the Slavic “Macedonians” claim it was not (Gandeto 2002:25). Although it is clear that standard Attic Greek was the language spoken by the Ancient Macedonian elite, it is unclear and difficult to determine the exact nature of the Ancient Macedonian language (Borza 1990:78).

Furthermore, associating the Ancient Macedonian language with Ancient Greek is an extremely complicated issue where no scholarly consensus has been reached. There are many ancient historians and linguists that maintain there is not enough evidence to determine exactly the nature of the Ancient Macedonian language.

Greek nationalists go on to assert that because Ancient Macedonians spoke a language that was related to ancient Greek, it is incorrect to refer to the Slavic language spoken by “Macedonians” from FYROM as their own national “Macedonian” language (Papavizas 2006:167).

The language spoken by the Ancient Macedonians is in no way related to the South Slavic language of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), which is known as “Macedonian” and the official language of the Republic of Macedonia or FYROM (Bideleux & Jeffries 2007:407).

Extreme Slavic “Macedonian” nationalists from the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) have asserted the existence of an uninterrupted line of racial and cultural continuity between Ancient and Modern “Slavic” Macedonians (Roisman & Worthington 2010:581). These nationalists deny they are Slavs and claim to be direct descendants of Alexander the Great and the Ancient Macedonians (Danforth 1995:34).

In 1992, a pamphlet was published by the United Macedonians of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia. This pamphlet clearly protested the Greek government’s opposition to the international recognition of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) under its constitutional name
Furthermore, this pamphlet asserted that “The Macedonians (Slavs) lived within a naturally defined territory on the Balkan Peninsula for over 4,000 years and are the descendants of the Ancient Macedonians and Alexander the Great (Danforth 1995:35). A common language, traditions, customs and national consciousness are shared by the Macedonians (ancient and modern) and have been preserved through a succession of invasions and centuries of foreign rule including Byzantium, Serbian, Bulgarian and the Ottoman Turks (Borza 1990:250).

Again, such claims cannot be supported by any scholarly evidence. Due to this, these claims do not feature as prominently in the modern political dispute as Greek claims do. Most serious Slavic “Macedonian” scholars advocate a more moderate Macedonian position. A position as such, is that today Slavic “Macedonians” claim no direct biological relationship from either the Ancient Macedonians or to Alexander the Great (Phillips 2004:22-23). Instead, they accept that they are a Slavic people whose ancestors arrived in present-day Macedonia in the 6th century AD.

These moderate scholars also attempt to argue by utilising the ancient evidence. Unlike the Slavic “Macedonian” nationalist extremists, they do not attempt to stress their connection to the Ancient Macedonians. Their approach is a different one, whereby they attempt to remove the Greek character and association of the Ancient Macedonians. By doing so, they propose that the Ancient Macedonians were a distinctly non-Greek people and with this reasoning, they insist that the Greek claim to continuity with the Ancient Macedonians is as invalid as the Slavic “Macedonian” one (Roisman & Worthington 2010:580).

Despite this, there are still a number of moderate Slavic “Macedonian” scholars who make vague implications of historical or cultural continuity between the Ancient and Modern Slavic “Macedonians”. This can be viewed as a form of nationalist historiography (Roisman & Worthington 2010:581).

Andrew Rossos is a Canadian-based historian of Greek origin. In his work Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History, there is a short discussion regarding the origin of the Macedonians. Rossos states that there was a gradual formation of the Ancient Macedonian tribes and a
distinct Ancient Macedonian identity in the Early Iron Age. The Iron Age occurred from 1050 BC to 650 BC (Rossos 2008:12). He also discusses the establishment of the first (Ancient) Macedonian State in the early 7th century BC.

Examples of implicit suggestions such as these produce a kind of continuity which links Ancient Macedonia with the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), and may be seen as subtle attempts to counter the more convincing Greek claims for cultural continuity with the Ancient Macedonians and Alexander the Great. Again, such claims have no anthropological standing in determining the nature of Macedonian identity.

Again, it must be reiterated that in this global cultural war, two questions need to be asked. The first is whether the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) should be recognised under its constitutional name (Farkas 1995:218). The second is whether a Slavic “Macedonian” minority exists in Northern Greece (Danforth 1995:33). This global cultural war between the Greeks and Slavic “Macedonians” over who is entitled to claim the glorious heritage of Ancient Macedonia is woven into a complex web, the key issue being who controls Macedonia.

In a world of nation-states the sovereign territory of the state is the most valuable possession of the nation (Kelstrup & Williams 2000:7-9). Benedict Anderson, an American professor in International Relations, has pointed out that “maps of individual states are like detachable pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Such maps serve as logos that can be reproduced, marketed and recognised” (Roisman & Worthington 2010:582). The geographical map “Macedonia” is a perfect example of such a statement.

Maps in history and geography textbooks published by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) in the years following its independence from the former Yugoslavia in 1991, met with strenuous opposition by the supporters of the Greek position on the Macedonian Dispute (Papaconstantinou 1992:1). These textbooks may exalt the history of Ancient Macedonia, but they also present it as the ancient history of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).
These textbooks also focus geographically on the larger geographical territory of Macedonia, which not only includes FYROM, but also areas of “Macedonia” located in Greece and Bulgaria. As mentioned before these areas of Macedonia are known as “Aegean Macedonia” in Greece and “Pirin Macedonia” in Bulgaria. “Vardar Macedonia” refers to the Republic of Macedonia or FYROM.

These maps were used in Slavic “Macedonian” textbooks during the Yugoslavian period, and are described by Slavic “Macedonians” as historical maps showing the internal and external locations of the present boundaries of the Republic of Macedonia or FYROM (Heritage 1990:7). Greeks, on the other hand, claim that use of these maps proves that the Slavic “Macedonian” government promotes the goals of a Greater or United Macedonia. This clearly declares the irredentist claims territories that are located in Greece (Kofos 1994:18).

Similarly, the Greek government is responsible for the publication of similar maps whose significance is just as ambiguous. An example is in 2000 the Greek Parliament published a map entitled “A Historical Map of Greece”. This map hangs on the walls of many Greek public buildings. Another map titled “The Unification of Greece” documents the many changes the borders of the Greek state have undergone since its independence in 1832 (Roisman & Worthington 2010:582).

Both these maps, namely the “Unification of Greece” and the map of “Regional Macedonia”, can be interpreted in two ways—either as a simple representation of a national history that transcends the present boundaries of the nation’s state, or as pure propaganda promoting the irredentists ideal of either a United Macedonia or a Greater Greece. Therefore, one can perceive that maps have been used by both groups to assert a claim, more symbolic than literal, to the territory of Macedonia itself in the same way that history has been used by Greek and Slavic Macedonian nationalists to lay claim to the legacy of Ancient Macedonia.

37 This map is a rather controversial one, as it includes Eastern Thrace and the area around Izmir in Asia Minor. These territories were ceded to Greece by the Treaty of Sevres in 1920 and remained under Greek control only until 1923, when they were returned to Turkey by the Treaty of Berlin (Clogg 1997:94). The map also includes the island of Cyprus, which was never a part of the Greek state.
4.3.1 Irredentism – “United Macedonia”

*United Macedonia* is an irredentist concept among Slavic Macedonian nationalists that aims to unify the transnational region of Macedonia in Southeastern Europe (Heritage 1990:7). They claim this region as their homeland, asserting that it was wrongfully divided under the Treaty of Bucharest in 1913 (Clogg 1997:83). Irredentists aim to unite this region into a single state under Slavic domination, with the capital city being the Greek city of Thessaloniki (Soltaridis 1986:1). Thessaloniki is known as Solun in the Slavic languages.

The concept of a United Macedonian region first appeared in the late 19th century as a variant that was named by the IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization) Autonomous Macedonia. As mentioned previously, the IMRO was founded in 1893 in Ottoman Thessaloniki by a small band of anti-Ottoman “Macedonian” (Bulgarian) revolutionaries, who considered the region of Macedonia an indivisible territory (Sakellariou 1992:26). The IMRO claimed all of its inhabitants to be Macedonians, regardless of ethnicity or religion. This idea then was political and did not want to secede from Bulgarian ethnicity. Instead it wanted to unify all of the nationalities in the region.

The term United Macedonia has been in use since the early 1900s, especially when mentioning the Balkan Socialist Federation (Papavizas 2006:208). The IMRO was first suppressed in the 1930s, when the territory of the current Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) became part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Pettifer 2001:167). The current leading political party in the Government of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), VMRO–DPMNE claims ideological descendants from the old IMRO (Pettifer 2001:174).

Svetozar Vukmanovic was the Yugoslav leader Marshal Tito’s personal representative in the 1940s. According to him, “The slogan about a United Macedonia first appeared in the manifesto of the headquarters of the National Liberation of Army Macedonia, at the beginning of October 1943”.

Slavic “Macedonian” nationalists have called for a United Macedonia since 1989. Several maps have been produced and circulated since the late 1980s that depict United Macedonia as an independent country; this constitutes clear evidence of irredentist claims by Slavic “Macedonian” nationalists against both Greek and Bulgarian territory (Papaconstantinou 1992:1). In most maps all of Mount Olympus has been incorporated in the territory of United Macedonia (Grigoriadis 1978:22). The Slavic “Macedonian” nationalists have broken down the region of Macedonia into four particular constituencies (Soltaridis 1986:2).

The first is known as Vardar Macedonia which is comprised of the territory of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Southern Serbia and Southern Kosovo. The second is known as Aegean
Macedonia or Greek Macedonia in Northern Greece. The third constituency is known as Pirin Macedonia which is the province of Blagoevgrad in Southwestern Bulgaria. The last constituency is Mala Prespa and Golo Brdo in Southeastern Albania (Roudometoff 2000:13-17).

Figure 14: “United Macedonia”

4.3.2 Irredentism – “Greater Greece”

Greater Greece is an irredentist concept better known as the Megali Idea (Μεγάλη Ιδέα) or the Great Idea (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2002:130). It is a concept whereby Greek nationalism has expressed the goal of establishing a Greek state that would encompass all the areas inhabited by ethnic Greeks. These areas are where large Greek populations featured prominently even during the occupation of the Ottoman Empire before Greece’s independence (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2002:135).

This term initially appeared in 1844 during the debates between the Greek Prime Minister, Ioannis Kolettis, and the Greek King, Otto. These debates preceded the proclamation of the 1844 constitution. This visionary nationalist aspiration dominated foreign relations, but also determined the domestic politics of the Greek state for most of the 19th century.

39 http://the-macedonian-tendency.blogspot.com/2012/03/three-macedonias-great-greater-greatest.html
The goal of the *Megali Idea* was to establish a Greek state in order to revive the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2002:231). Ironically enough this was actually first envisaged by the ancient geographer Strabo when he wrote of a Greek world that encompassed the former Byzantine lands. The lands would begin in the west in the Ionian Sea and span to the Black Sea in the east. From the north it would start in Thrace, Macedonia and Epirus and reach Crete and Cyprus in the south. Constantinople would be the capital city and it would place Greece on two continents with five surrounding seas (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2002:286).

A major proponent of the *Megali Idea* was the statesman Eleftherios Venizelos (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2002:283). Greek territory doubled under his leadership thanks mainly to the gains of the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, where Greece gained Crete, Southern Epirus, most of the Eastern Aegean islands and the majority of Macedonia. Born and raised in Crete, Venizelos became Prime Minister of Greece in 1910 (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2002:289). He implemented a series of reforms not only in society, but also in the military and administration setup of the Greek state. These reforms helped Greece achieve the gains of the Balkan Wars (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2002:127-128).

The *Megali Idea* started to fade after the Greek forces were crushed by the Turks in the Greco-Turkish War in 1922 (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2002:130). This defeat subsequently led to the Great Fire of Smyrna also in 1922. These two events were followed by the population exchange between Greece and Turkey in 1923 (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2002:130). Despite the fading of the *Megali Idea*, the Greek state expanded five times in its history. This expansion was attributed either to military conquest or to successful diplomacy.

Overall, the following annexations have occurred to the Greek state since 1830: the Ionian Islands in 1864; Thessaly in 1881; Southern Macedonia, Crete, Southern Epirus and the Eastern Aegean Islands in 1913; Western Thrace in 1920; and the Dodecanese in 1947 (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2002:327-332).
4.4 Alexander the Great – A Greek or a Slav?

A number of symbols pertaining to the Macedonian Dispute were discussed in the previous chapters. They were discussed from a historical perspective. One such “symbol” is the historical figure Alexander the Great. To many Greeks and Slavic “Macedonians”, Alexander the Great is a famous national ancestor, a powerful symbol of their national identity and a central figure in their national history (Fox 2004:17).

Men dressed as an armoured Alexander the Great often led to demonstrations that had been held throughout the world in the early 1990s by Greeks and Slavic “Macedonians”. The purpose of such demonstrations was to either oppose or support international recognition of the Republic of Macedonia (Danforth 1995:163). Each demonstrating group would be outraged that the other had appropriated its own famous ancestor for political purposes.

---

40 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megali_Idea
Since the declaration of independence of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) in 1992, the use of Alexander the Great as a means of promoting either the Greek or Slavic “Macedonian” respective positions in the Macedonian Dispute has featured very prominently (Danforth 1995:164). The Greek government changed the names of the airports of Thessaloniki and Kavala to “Macedonia” Airport and “Alexander the Great” Airport respectively (Roisman & Worthington 2010:583).

In December 2006, the government of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) announced its decision to change the name of the main international airport in Skopje to “Alexander the Great” Airport (Kofos 2006:3). This lodged a great protest from the Greek Foreign Minister by saying that “History cannot be changed or falsified 2,000 years on” (Roisman & Worthington 2010:583). The Greek Foreign Minister would also state that “Alexander the Great was a Greek conqueror who established himself in history by spreading Greek culture across the entire known world” (Roisman & Worthington 2010:584). The Slavic “Macedonian” Foreign Minister responded rather insincerely by claiming that the decision had been a goodwill gesture and that Alexander the Great was an international figure who belonged to no particular country.

Certain decisions were made by the government of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) in response to the Greek veto of Macedonia’s proposed entry into NATO in 2008 (Brabant 2008). In 2009, the Slavic Macedonian government announced that the main highway running through the country from the Serbian border in the north to the Greek border in the south would be named “Alexander the Great” highway (“Macedonia debuts” 2009). In addition to that, the Slavic Macedonian government also decided to name the main soccer stadium in Skopje after Philip II, Alexander the Great’s father (Roisman & Worthington 2010:583).

Such are examples of the Slavic “Macedonian” government’s policy of “antiquisation” (Roisman & Worthington 2010:584). But there wasn’t a more blatant attempt at this policy than the erection of a bronze statue of Alexander the Great riding his horse, Bucephalus, erected in the main square of Skopje in 2011 (Smith 2011). As mentioned in the previous chapter, it stands twelve meters tall on a pedestal rising another ten meters above the ground—significantly
larger than a similar equestrian statue of Alexander the Great that stands on the waterfront of Thessaloniki in Northern Greece.

The municipal government of Skopje has also intends to erect statues of Gotse Delchev, the Slavic “Macedonian” revolutionary hero from the early 20th century, and Metodija Andonov-Cento, the first president of the People’s Republic of Macedonia under Yugoslavia.

But the most grandiose effort to claim Alexander the Great as a national hero belongs to the *Alexandros Foundation* (Danforth 1995:169). This is a foundation of Greek Americans who have developed plans to carve a 70-meter bust of Alexander into a mountain top overlooking the Aegean Sea in Greek “Macedonia”. Such a project will cost approximately 30 million Euros. Environmentalists are concerned about the damage to the local landscape and archaeologists intend to go to court to block this project.

In order to support their rival claims to the glorious legacy of Alexander the Great, both Greek and Slavic “Macedonian” nationalists have undertaken expeditions to Pakistan in search of people they believe to be the living descendants of Alexander the Great. These are said to be people who were left behind after Alexander the Great’s campaign in India in 327–325 BC (Wood 2007:7). These two tribes are the Kalasha (or Kalash) and the lesser known Hunzakuts (Wood 2004:8-9). The Hunzakuts are also known as Hunza. These are two indigenous tribal groups who live in the Hindu Kush Mountains of the Pakistani Northwestern Frontier. Their own traditions state that both groups are the direct descendants of Alexander the Great. Both groups have also welcomed the attention given to them by the Greeks and Slavic “Macedonians”, who view them as compatriots of sorts.

Some Slavic “Macedonians” have established relationships with the *Hunzakuts* and claimed them as fellow Slavic “Macedonians”, while some Greeks have established relationships with the *Kalasha* and claimed them as fellow Greeks. Slavic “Macedonian” explorers, journalists and amateur historians have visited the *Hunzakuts* and report that they have found linguistic, cultural and genetic evidence proving the *Hunzakuts* are Slavic “Macedonians”.

92
In the summer of 1995, two Slavic “Macedonians” from North America traveled to Pakistan to “meet some Ancient Macedonians” (Dimitri 1995:23). According to their research, these explorers claimed to have demonstrated “the continuity of Ancient Macedonian Civilization from the time of Alexander the Great until the modern age”. They also claimed they have proven “that (Ancient) Macedonians still existed in Pakistan and that a connection existed between the culture of the northern Pakistani people and modern (Slavic) Macedonians” (Dimitri 1995:49).

Furthermore, the Macedonian Institute for Strategic Research invited a delegation of Hunzakuts in July 2008. This delegation included the Hunza royal couple and their entourage. Upon arriving at Alexander the Great Airport in Skopje, the Hunzakuts were greeted by men dressed as soldiers of Alexander and welcomed and “treated like long-lost cousins”. Whilst touring Macedonia, the Hunzakuts met with Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, as well as the Archbishop of the Slavic “Macedonian” Orthodox Church. The Hunzakuts’ visit to Skopje was not only ridiculed by the Greek press, but also by educated Slavic “Macedonians” who considered it an expression of “Alexander-mania” and “shallow populism” by a “Slavic” Macedonian ruling party desperate to remain in power (Dimitri 1995:69).

Now the Greeks have made similar claims about the Kalasha. They assert this on the basis of their “European looks”, being fair hair and blue eyes, as well as certain cultural traits (Gergel 2004:4). Therefore, the Kalasha are considered “ethnic Greeks in Asia”. One Greek writer even goes so far as to claim that the Kalasha believe in Ancient Greek gods of Olympus and that their language is a “mixture of Sanskrit and Greek”. Also, it was noticed that their embroidered crafts are decorated with Ancient Macedonian suns, implying the Sun of Vergina.

A Greek NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation) named “Greek Volunteers” has carried out an impressive development program among the Kalasha with the financial support of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Roisman & Worthington 2010:585). They have built several schools and a community centre that includes a health clinic and a museum. Several of these buildings include in their design Ionic columns, said to be a feature of both Kalasha and Ancient Greek architecture. The goal of this NGO has been to help these “brothers of the Greek people” learn
about Alexander the Great and protect their culture and their race from the surrounding Islamic people (Roisman & Worthington 2010:586).

As a final example of the role the *Kalasha* play as living proof of the legacy of Alexander the Great and Ancient Macedonians, the following resolution passed in 2009 by the Pan-Macedonian Association, USA: “The *Kalash* of the Northern Himalayan region of the Hindu Kush Mountains of Pakistan are Hellenic descendants of the armies of Alexander the Great. The Kalash indigenous people have sustained their ancient culture and traditions since the 4\textsuperscript{th} century BC, yet they are in danger of extinction. And being our Hellenic Macedonian brothers and sisters, we support their efforts to sustain their ethnic values and identity” (Roisman & Worthington 2010:586).

As a detailed study of these events, Vasiliki Neofotistos, a Greek anthropologist, noted that “the appropriation of the *Kalasha* and the *Hunzakuts* as kin, allows Greeks and Slavic “Macedonians” to compete for exclusive ownership of the Ancient Macedonian past and Alexander the Great” (Kofos 1994:176).

“The Search for Alexander” was a well-publicised art exhibit that toured major cities in the United States in the late 1980s. When it opened in Thessaloniki in July 1980, Constantine Karamanlis, then President of Greece, described Alexander the Great as “the representative of all the Greeks”. Furthermore, he stated that Alexander the Great was “a symbol of indissoluble unity and continuity between ancient and modern Hellenism”.

Peter Green, a British historian, pointed out that there are several ways in which historical accuracy was subordinated to “the interests of national pride and publicity” (Green 1989:155). This was especially the case when the Greek government realised the enormous political capital that would have been made by using the exhibit as a vehicle for asserting the “Greekness” of the Macedonian region. This is proof that competing claims to the legacy of Alexander the Great have also politicised scholarly work in the fields of Ancient Greek art, archaeology and history (Green 2007:54).
The scholastic dealing with Ancient Macedonia and Alexander the Great has become a rather easy affair and can be used to make nationalist ideologies legitimate. An example of this was demonstrated by the controversy that arose around a lecture given by Eugene N. Borza, a Professor of Ancient History from Pennsylvania State University. At the Second International Congress on Macedonian Studies, held at the University of Melbourne in July 1991, he developed a lecture entitled “Images of Alexander the Great” (Roisman & Worthington 2010:587).

Borza looked at the long history of how Alexander the Great’s image had been used in the West. He concluded with a perceptive analysis of the way the Greek government attempted to control the manner in which Alexander the Great was presented in the abovementioned “The Search for Alexander” exhibit. Borza’s lecture was extremely controversial and a number of Greek scholars walked out of the room during the presentation (Danforth 1995:163).

The actions of Stephen Miller, Professor of Classical Archaeology Emeritus of the University of California at Berkeley, also provided a more recent example of the politicisation of the history of Macedonia. Miller wrote to President Barack Obama where he protested the recent efforts of the Slavic “Macedonian” government to “misappropriate the most famous of the Macedonians, Alexander the Great”. This letter was signed by over 300 classicists, ancient historians and classical archaeologists teaching at distinguished universities in Greece, the United States, Great Britain and Western Europe.

Miller claimed the inhabitants of the Republic of Macedonia have no right to call themselves Macedonians and they have “abducted Alexander the Great, a completely Greek figure and made him their national hero”. By ‘fabricating’ history and ‘perverting’ the facts in this way, Miller continued to say the Slavic “Macedonians” have “fabricated history” and thus “perverted the facts”. He called on President Obama to help the government of Skopje “understand that it cannot build a national identity at the expense of historic truth” (Macedonian Evidence 2009).

Andreas Willi, a Swiss classical philologist at Oxford, responded to Miller’s letter by publishing a short article titled “Whose is Macedonia, Whose is Alexander?” In this article he criticised Miller’s letter and called for greater methodological and factual level-headedness and caution
when attempts are made to instrumentalise the classical world in modern-day politics. Willi wrote that Miller did not take into account recent work in the social sciences on the construction of national and ethnic identities, arguing that there was no reason why the Slavic “Macedonians” should not be allowed to continue to call their country “Macedonia”.

In his conclusion, Willi warned, “By putting our academic authority behind tendentious political statements, we risk not only bringing into disrepute our disciplines and the institutions at which we are allowed to work and teach, but betraying the past whose guardians we ought to be” (Willi 2009:59-64).

4.5 The “Vergina Sun” – A National Symbol

Let us look again at the Vergina Sun. The sixteen-ray Sun of Vergina was virtually unknown to the public and had no political or national significance at all until it was discovered in 1977. It adorned a gold chest in an ancient Macedonian tomb at Vergina, a small village located 40 miles southwest of Thessaloniki (Cartledge 2004:62).

According to the archaeologist who discovered it, Manolis Andronikos, this larnax contained the bones of Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. Andronikos asserted that it was a symbol of the Macedonian royal family. In 1992, at the height of the Macedonian conflict, Andronikos was awarded the Great Cross of the Order of the Phoenix, the highest civilian honor bestowed by the Greek government (Cartledge 2004:62). When the Minister of Macedonia-Thrace presented the medal on behalf of the president of Greece to Andronikos, he referred to Andronikos as Greece’s “national archaeologist” and praised him for “arming the quiver of Hellenism with arguments that refute the false claims of those who misrepresent, falsify and distort Greek civilization and history” (Papavizas 2006:225).

In the late 1980s, Slavic “Macedonian” and Greek nationalists, especially those in Canada and Australia, eagerly seized on the star or sun of Vergina as a powerful national symbol (Roisman & Worthington 2010:588). They saw it as a way of expressing their competing claims to ancient
Macedonian civilisation. In the early 1990s, both Slavic “Macedonians” and Greeks carried flags depicting the gold sun or star of Vergina but on different backgrounds; the Slavic “Macedonians” on a red background and the Greeks on a blue background. This was most prevalent during demonstrations for and against the international recognition of the Republic of Macedonia (Danforth 1995:171). The sun or star of Vergina could be found on all kinds of paraphernalia such as T-shirts, lapel pins, key chains, medals, plaques and so forth.

At this time the Greek government also began using this symbol of Ancient Macedonia in more official contexts. It issued a postage stamp of the star or sun of Vergina, as well as a 100 drachma coin depicting the head of Alexander the Great on one side and the star or sun of Vergina on the other (Danforth 1995:172). In Greece the star or sun of Vergina was placed on the walls of airports, banks and other public buildings. It could even be found on receipts handed out at tollbooths on the National Highway.

The controversy over this symbol reached its peak in August 1992, when the Slavic “Macedonian” parliament selected the Vergina Sun as the state symbol of the newly independent Republic of Macedonia and voted to place it against a bright red background in the centre of the Republic of Macedonia’s new flag (Znamierowski 1999:49). With the support of Greeks throughout the world, the Greek government expressed outrage at what it considered to be misappropriation of a symbol of Macedonian Hellenism by a group of Slavs. A spokesman for the Greek Foreign Ministry referred to this action as “a theft of a Greek historical symbol” (Danforth 1995:173).

The Vergina Sun was found on Greek soil, so the Greek government claimed its use by the Republic of Macedonia constituted proof of the Republic of Macedonia’s irredentist designs on Greek territory (Bideleux & Jeffries 2007:418). Thus, the Greek government demanded Macedonia adopt a new flag and prevented it from flying its flag at the United Nations and the Olympic Games. The Greek parliament designated the Vergina Sun an official symbol of Greece in February 1993. The Slavic “Macedonian” government finally abandoned its claim to the Sun of Vergina when it signed the Interim Accord with Greece in 1995 (Pettifer 2005:247). This accord stipulated that the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) would agree to adopt a new flag.
and Greece in turn would end its economic blockade of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). The Slavic “Macedonians” replaced the Vergina Sun with a stylised image of a gold sun with 16 triangular rays in red and gold extending out to the edges of the flag (Pettifer 2005:249).

Such attempts to appropriate the abovementioned Macedonian symbols are regarded as provocative nationalist gestures that are not in the long-term interests of either Greece or Macedonia. According to Loring Danforth, they “do not contribute to the establishment of mutual understanding and respect, which are fundamental preconditions for peace and stability in the Balkans” (Danforth 1995:184).

![Figure 16: The Vergina Sun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vergina_Sun)

4.6 The First International Congress on Macedonian Studies

The three abovementioned symbols, namely Alexander the Great, the Vergina Sun and the name “Macedonia”, are major elements of the glorious heritage of Ancient Macedonia. They were bitterly contested at the First International Congress on Macedonian Studies in February 1988, at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia (Roisman & Worthington 2010:589). This Congress was organised by the Australian Institute of Macedonian Studies where participants

\[\text{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vergina_Sun}\]
were politicians from Greece, Australia and the Greek diaspora with the primary purpose of constructing and maintaining the “Greek Transnational Community”. This particular Congress examined the close relationship between the scholarship on Ancient Macedonia and Modern Macedonian politics.

In a planning session for the Congress, it was announced that some Slavic “Macedonians” were planning a demonstration to protest the Congress (Roisman & Worthington 2010:589). Furthermore, a pamphlet was passed around by a local Slavic “Macedonian” organisation charging that the goals of the Congress were the falsification of the history of the Macedonian people and the Greek misappropriation of the Macedonian term.

On the morning of opening day of the Congress a large crowd of demonstrators gathered in a parking lot on the edge of the university campus. Many demonstrators wore bright red shirts with red and black armbands. They carried signs that read “Macedonians Exist and They Are Not Greek”, “Macedonian Is a Literary Language, Not a Dialect of Greek”, “Aegean Macedonians Migrated to Australia to Escape Greek Terror and Racism”, “Movement for a Free, United, and Independent Macedonia” and “Salonica Belongs to Macedonia” (Roisman & Worthington 2010:589).

A few demonstrators held red flags emblazoned with the gold star or sun of Vergina and some demonstrators handed out a leaflet published by the Australian Diocese of the Slavic “Macedonian” Orthodox Church stating that the purpose of the Congress was to “Hellenise” the Slavic “Macedonian” Community of Australia and “inflame anti-Macedonian (Slavic) propaganda”. The leaflet also stated that the Congress violated the essential principles of Australian multiculturalism under which the Macedonians of Australia enjoyed full ethnic and cultural rights. A small group of Macedonian demonstrators entered the university’s theatre and shouted slurs such as “Fascists, Nazis, Anti-Christ, Racists, Vampires!” (Roisman & Worthington 2010:590).

At the opening session of the Congress, a well-known Greek politician called for “scientific research clearly free from any expediency to establish the essential truth that Macedonians are
a race exclusively Greek, indigenous since the most ancient times and with an incorruptible Greek conscience throughout the centuries” (Roisman & Worthington 2010:591).

Barring a few exceptions all the scholars participating in the Congress were Greek or Greek-Australian. They represented a wide variety of disciplines such as archaeology, ancient history, linguistics, folklore and anthropology. The conference’s focus was on the overall history of “Macedonia”, from antiquity up until recent times. Many of the participants offered serious scholarly presentations, but there were some speakers who blurred the boundary between scholarship and politics. Such speakers would draw overtly political conclusions that were not supported by their scholarly work (Roisman & Worthington 2010:591).

4.7 International Recognition of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)

The most important contemporary political issue pertinent to the heritage of Ancient Macedonia is the controversy surrounding the international recognition of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). This issue spreads beyond the sphere of local Balkan politics and has featured quite prominently in major international organisations such as NATO, the European Union and the United Nations (Farkas 2007:38-39).

Greece’s claim in this dispute is that the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) seeks to “monopolise the name “Macedonia” and challenge legally Greece’s long-established cultural property rights to its Ancient Macedonian heritage” (Shea 2008:302).

The Slavic “Macedonian” government’s position is equally straightforward. The Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) is located in the geographical region known as Macedonia. From 1944 until 1991 it was known as the People’s Republic of Macedonia and later the Socialist Republic of Macedonia (Bideleux & Jeffries 2007:407). The majority of its inhabitants have identified themselves as Macedonians for at least fifty years and they reject the name “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” or “FYROM” (Kenney 2006:73). They consider this abbreviation to be demeaning and insulting.
In September 1991, Greece actively opposed the recognition of the Republic of Macedonia’s constitutional name on the grounds that the name posed a cultural and territorial threat to the sovereignty of Greece (Marakis 1991:27). However, in January 1992, a European Community arbitration committee ruled that use of the name “Macedonia” did not imply territorial claims against Greece and furthermore, it recommended that Macedonia be recognised by the then European Community (EC).

Thanks to Greek pressure, the EC only recognised the Republic of Macedonia two years later. In April 1993, the Republic of Macedonia was admitted to the United Nations under the name “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, thus the acronym “FYROM”. FYROM took its seat in the General Assembly alphabetically under the letter “T” and was not allowed to fly its flag at UN headquarters, because Greece claimed that the sun of Vergina that was on the new Slavic “Macedonian” flag was an exclusively Greek symbol (Phillips 2004:56).

The United States of America recognised “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” in February 1994 and Greece decided to impose a devastating economic embargo against Macedonia (Phillips 2004:56). This embargo lasted until Greece and Macedonia signed an Interim Accord in September 1995. In this Accord, Greece agreed to end its embargo and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) agreed to change its flag. Furthermore, FYROM offered formal assurances that there was nothing in its constitution that could be interpreted as “a claim to any territory not within its existing borders” (Shea 2008:304).

Under the auspices of the United Nations, both countries agreed to continue negotiations in an effort to resolve their outstanding differences (Shea 2008:304). Of course, the most important difference involved the name by which the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) would be internationally recognised.

These negotiations have long since reached a stalemate, because neither side has been willing to make any significant compromise. Early in the negotiations Greek officials refused to accept a name for the Republic that included the word “Macedonia” in any form (Shea 2008:305-307). Among the suggestions put forward by Greek sources at the time were names used in antiquity to designate regions north of Ancient Macedonia, such as “Dardania”, “Paeonia” or “Illyria”
(Kazanis & Maligoudis 1992:1). Other names with more general geographical associations such as “The Central Balkan Republic”, “South Slavia”, or “South Serbia” were also put forward. Later on, Greek officials expressed a willingness to accept compound or composite names that did include the word “Macedonia” alone, such as “Upper Macedonia”, “Northern Macedonia”, “Vardar Macedonia”, or “New Macedonia” (Roisman & Worthington 2010:592).

All of these suggestions were rejected by the Slavic “Macedonian” government. Slavic “Macedonian” officials proposed “a double-name solution”, where the country’s constitutional name, “The Republic of Macedonia”, would be used in all international contexts and in communication with all countries except Greece. As far as bilateral communications with Greece go, another agreed name would be used. This “double-name solution” was rejected by the Greek government.

In December 2001, the International Crisis Group made three recommendations. The first recommendation was that the Republic of Macedonia in all international contexts use the name “Republika Makedonija”. This name is to be written in the Macedonian language and the Roman alphabet. The second recommendation was the short or informal name of the country should also be “Republika Makedonija”. The third recommendation was the country should be listed alphabetically under “R” and not “M” in the directory of the UN.

Slavic “Macedonian” officials objected to this proposal on the grounds that the Republic of Macedonia would then be the only member of the UN whose name could not be written or pronounced in English or French translation (Roisman & Worthington 2010:593).

In April 2005, Petros Molybiatis, the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, announced that Matthew Nimitz, the UN Special Representative for “Macedonia”, proposed the name “Republika Makedonija – Skopje” to be used in its Macedonian form, untranslated, and written in the Cyrillic alphabet (Papavizas 2006:15). A Slavic “Macedonian” official said his country had never officially received this proposal from Mr. Nimitz and quickly rejected it as an option for international use. He did, however, state that it might serve as a basis for negotiations on the name to be used in bilateral relations with Greece.
Both of these proposed solutions would reduce the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) to the status of the Republika Srpska\textsuperscript{42}, a political entity whose name is not translated into English and which is not internationally recognised as a legitimate sovereign state. Actually, Republika Srpska is effectively the “Bosnian Serb Republic” which is one of two political entities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The other political entity is the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bideleux & Jeffries 2007:381).

Both of these solutions would allow the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) the Slavic rights to the name “Macedonia”, but it would effectively deny it the English and French language rights, the international rights, to its own constitutional name (Roisman & Worthington 2010:594).

Another important development in the naming dispute occurred on 3 November, 2004. The United States recognised the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) under its constitutional name (Rossos 2008:271). This decision was explained by a State Department spokesman thus: “We have now decided to refer to Macedonia (FYROM) officially as the Republic of Macedonia. By recognizing Macedonia’s chosen constitutional name, we wish to underscore the U.S. commitment to a permanent, multiethnic, democratic Macedonian state within its existing borders” (Rossos 2008:272).

The name controversy has also played an important role in the Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) efforts to gain membership in the European Union and in NATO. Since Greece is a member of both organisations and since the unanimous agreement of all member-states is required for the admission of new members, Greece is in a position to prevent the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) from joining either of these two groups (Kenney 2006:137).

At the last NATO summit meeting held in Bucharest, Romania, on 3 April, 2008, Albania, Croatia and Macedonia (FYROM) sought invitations to join the alliance (Kenney 2006:134). Greece accepted the Albanian and Croatian requests, but vetoed Macedonia’s (FYROM) entry into NATO because of the unresolved dispute (Kenney 2006:138-139).

\textsuperscript{42} The Republika Srpska in Serbian translates to Serb Republic and is one of two entities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The other entity is the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The demonym of Republika Srpska is Bosnian Serb. Well-known Bosnian Serbs are Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, who have been accused of crimes against humanity for their part in the War for Bosnia and Herzegovina (Moss 2009).
Representatives of Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) continue to meet with UN mediator Matthew Nimitz in an attempt to negotiate a solution to the dispute. From an international legal perspective, however, the issue is perfectly clear.

4.8 The Slavic “Macedonian” Minority of Northern Greece

We have looked quite extensively at the one aspect mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. The Macedonian Naming Issue and the historical symbols that are attached to it is one. The existence of a Macedonian minority in Northern Greece is the other aspect of the Macedonian conflict, and a lesser-known one at that. Just like the international recognition of the Republic of Macedonia, the “Minority” question is also a dispute over the name “Macedonia” because it deals with which group (Greek or Slavic “Macedonian”) can claim to be the descendants of Alexander the Great and the Ancient Macedonians (Danforth 1995:4).

The majority of the inhabitants of Greek “Macedonia” has been assimilated into Greek society and has developed a Greek national identity. They claim they are not only “Macedonians”, but Greeks as well. They often refer to themselves as “Greek-Macedonians”. However, around 10,000 to 20,000 Slavic “Macedonians” in Greece have developed a Slavic “Macedonian” national identity. These people define themselves as Macedonians (Slavic) and not Greeks (Danforth 1995:45).

When the southern half of geographic Macedonia was incorporated into the Greek state in 1913, the Greek government adopted a policy of forced assimilation, or Hellenisation, toward local Slavic “Macedonian” inhabitants of the area (Danforth 1995:44). In the 1920s all Slavic personal and place names in Greek “Macedonia” were Hellenised, and under the Metaxas dictatorship (between 1936 and 1939) local Slavic “Macedonians” were beaten, fined and imprisoned simply for speaking Slavic “Macedonian”.

With the defeat of the Communist forces in the Greek Civil War in 1948, some 35,000 Slavic “Macedonians” fled to Yugoslavia and other countries in Eastern Europe to avoid the difficult
circumstances in Greece (Koliopoulos & Veremis 2002:206-208). Conservative Greek governments continued a policy of persecution toward the Slavic “Macedonians” of Greece. The Greek government still denies the existence of a Macedonian (Slavic) language, a Macedonian (Slavic) nation and a Macedonian (Slavic) minority in Northern Greece (Barbour & Carmichael 2002:223-224).

There are no more official restrictions on the use of the Slavic “Macedonian” language in Northern Greece. But older Slavic “Macedonian” folks recall a climate of fear and intimidation when remembering times of being beaten by Greek elementary school teachers for speaking Slavic “Macedonian” on the playground. Slavic “Macedonian” human rights activists have been subject to criminal prosecution as a result of provisions of Article 191 of the Greek Penal Code (Roisman & Worthington 2010:595). This article prohibits the spreading of false information and rumors among citizens that could incite rivalry and division, leading to the disturbance of peace.

A political organisation of the Slavic “Macedonian” minority in Greece known as the Rainbow Party opened an office in Florina on 8 September, 1995 (Poulton 2000:171). A bilingual sign was placed above the entrance of its headquarters in Florina (Lerin) in the Greek and Slavic “Macedonian” languages.

Five days later the public prosecutor of Florina ordered that the sign be removed. When the police did so, party members replaced it with another one. Later that night, an angry crowd set the office alight, destroying it. Nobody involved in the attack on the office was arrested. But leaders of the Rainbow Party were taken to court on charges of “disturbing the peace” and “insulting the national consciousness of the citizens of Florina” by “questioning the Greekness of Florina” and “supporting the territorial claims of Skopje” (Roudometof 2000:81). All of the leaders of the Rainbow Party were acquitted on 15 September, 1998 when the case was heard.

What was arguably the most significant effort in the struggle for Macedonian human rights began in 1989, when a group of activists in Florina tried to establish a non-profit organisation called the “Home of Macedonian (Slavic) Civilization”. Their application was rejected by a local court on the grounds that the main goal of the organisation was to assert the existence of a
Slavic “Macedonian” minority in Greece. Such an assertion posed a threat to the territorial integrity of Greece and ran contrary to the national interests of Greece, and was therefore deemed illegal (Roisman & Worthington 2010:595).

The Thessaloniki Court of Appeals upheld this decision by citing that the inhabitants of Ancient Macedonia were one of the most ancient Greek tribes and that their language was one of the oldest Greek dialects. The court also stated that their religion, traditions and myths were common to the Ancient Greeks. Furthermore, the Ancient Macedonian kings Philip II and Alexander the Great did not only act as Greeks, but also as “Pan-Hellenists”. In other words, they were the bearers and sowers of Greek civilisation. Following this decision of the Supreme Court of Greece in 1994, the founders of the Home of Macedonian Civilization took their case to the European Court of Human Rights (Papavizas 2006:173-175).

Nine years after their initial attempt to establish the organisation, the European Court ruled unanimously in favor of the founders of the Home of Macedonian (Slavic) Civilization on 10 July, 1998 (Roisman & Worthington 2010:595). The Court cited that the Greek government had violated their human rights by infringing on their right “to freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association” which had been guaranteed by Article 11 of the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Roisman & Worthington 2010:596). The aims of the founders of the Home of Macedonian (Slavic) Civilization were to preserve and develop the traditions and folk culture of the Florina region. The Court ruled that these aims were legitimate and that the opinions of the Greek courts were based more on suspicion than intention.

The court concluded by stating that all the arguments put forward by the Greek courts against the association’s founders were “baseless, vague and unproved”. The court went on to say that “mention of the consciousness of belonging to a minority and the preservation and development of a minority’s culture could not be said to constitute a threat to democratic society”. Finally, it stated that “the existence of minorities and different cultures in a country was a historical fact that a democratic society had to tolerate and even protect and support according to the principles of international law” (Hupchick 1995:224).
What is interesting is that the European Court, unlike its Greek counterparts, did not consider details of the history of Ancient Macedonia relevant to the legal issues before it. Unlike the Greek courts, which made specific mention of the relevance of Greece’s Ancient Macedonian heritage, the European Court of Human Rights made no mention of Ancient Macedonia in its decision at all (Roisman & Worthington 2010:597), focusing more on freedom of association and minority rights.

After the favourable ruling of the European Court of Human Rights, the founders once again attempted to register their organisation, but were unable to find a lawyer to take their case for a number of years. They eventually did find a lawyer, but again the local court on 19 December, 2003 rejected their application on the grounds that the preservation and cultivation of the Slavic “Macedonian” language and culture contained a direct danger to public order, and provided an opportunity for exploitation by external agents (Roisman & Worthington 2010:597).

On 11 June, 2009, the Supreme Court of Greece again upheld a lower court decision rejecting the application of the Slavic “Macedonian” human rights activists to establish a Home of Macedonian (Slavic) Civilization.

The Supreme Court’s decision included a long essay presenting the Greek nationalist perspective on the history of “Macedonia”, complete with references to Herodotus, Strabo and Aristotle (Roisman & Worthington 2010:598). The Supreme Court however did not mention the recent ruling of the European Court of Human Rights supporting the right of the Slavic “Macedonian” activists to freedom of association.
5. Geopolitical Considerations on the Macedonian Question

This chapter aims to discuss the “Macedonian Dispute” in the context of all certain geopolitical considerations such as: Nationalism and Unity; Nationhood and Citizenship; the Minority Question; the symbolic struggles of Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and the arguments of the two republics, Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

5.1 The Macedonian Question – Nationalism and Unity

The dispute between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) can be viewed as a symbolic struggle which concerns the legitimate rights over the name “Macedonia” (Cowan 2000:4). In such an instance, a legitimate right is the right of a national entity to exist on the grounds of either popular acceptance or of legal processes (Viotti & Kauppi 1993:586). Therefore such a right concerns the name of the territory as well as the affinity of the people of the geographic region of Macedonia (Pettifer 2005:18).

The dispute was created by two disputing national arguments. When it comes to nation-building in the Balkans, local national arguments have been instrumental in establishing the legitimate possession of a territory by a particular ethnic group (Hupchick 1995:5-6). One of the key functions of such local nationalisms is to assign and declare a territory as the exclusive homeland of a particular nation (Horowitz 2000:599).

The Slavic “Macedonian” argument sees the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) as an entity occupied by the Slavic “Macedonian” nation; it furthermore suggests existence of Slavic “Macedonian” minorities in neighbouring Greece and Bulgaria (Poulton 2000:162). The Greek narrative does not acknowledge the existence of a “Slavic” Macedonian nation; it considers the existence of a Slavic “Macedonian” minority within Greece to be a manifestation of Slavic “Macedonian” irredentism. The Slavic “Macedonian” argument directly questions the Greek argument which assumes historical continuity (Papavizas 2006:238).
According to the American politician and folklorist Michael Kleen, *historical continuity* is “the continuation of a cycle, rather than a progression of historical events over an extended period of time”. According to Kleen, the recognition of those historical events is not only inseparable but also interconnected.

Greece reacted very strongly to the Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) declaration of independence; this reaction is a response to the implicit threat on Greek identity (Ramet 2005:283).

In the following discussion, I would like to analyse the controversy between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), by displaying the origins and character of Greece’s response to the Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) declaration of independence.

The Macedonian Question is however a complex political issue. This political controversy can be viewed as a manifestation of Balkan nationalisms where the concept of nationhood is the essential element for nation-building which leads to the assigning of citizenship (O’Flynn & Russell 2005:132). Nationhood plays a very important role in Greek identity because it connects the Greek response to the Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) declaration of independence to the Greek historiography’s interpretation of the Macedonian Question (Farkas 2007:30).

Earlier in this chapter it was stated that most of the scholarship that surrounds the Macedonian Question is not only based on a biased cause, but also on emotions. The Macedonian Question is one where opposing sides try to prove the righteousness of their own beliefs (Mackridge & Yanakakis 1997:227). I would now like to go past the emotional appeal of this dispute by explaining how the interpretation of Macedonian history has become such a great political issue.

5.2 The Macedonian Question – Nationhood and Citizenship

Historical continuity was defined earlier on in the previous section. Let us now look into *imagined continuity*. The *imagined continuity* of a nation is a concept that has played a key role
in the arguments of the opposing parties, which in this case is Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). These arguments need to be interpreted in the context of the competing Greek and Slavic “Macedonian” nationalisms (De Soto & Dudwick 2000:31). The imagined continuity of a nation became a more prevalent phenomenon over the last two hundred years or so, although in the case of the Macedonian Question, there are arguments which trace the history of a nation even further (De Soto & Dudwick 2000:44).

The Macedonian Question is a prime example of how nationalism may begin as an ideology and then subsequently grow into a political movement. National identity is the subjective outcome of ideological, political, social and economic processes (Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff 2001:95-96).

I would like to look at how the role of nationalism led to the dispute between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). In doing so, I will need to discuss the national ideologies of Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and then examine the factors that have contributed to the development of these ideologies over the last number of decades (Danforth 1995:42).

National identity is the result of opposing claims that are resulted from interpretations of written and oral historical arguments. This process establishes a collection of beliefs in order to legitimise the claims to a territory or region (Kelstrup & Williams 2000:159).

The nationalisms in Southeastern Europe tend to place a large emphasis on a population’s cultural heritage as well as its ethnic continuity (Barbor & Carmichael 2002:227). This is a development that has resulted from the historical process of nation-building in the Balkans over the last two hundred years or so (Breslin, Hughes, Phillips & Rosemond 2002:49).

In the 18th century certain Balkan nationalists such as Rigas Feraios (or Velestinlis) offered an alternative view to the nation-state structure. The objective of such nationalists was to completely separate the state from national groups with the aim of creating a federation of states where different nations could coexist in peace (Dakin 1973:29). Unfortunately such attempts did not materialise in the Balkans and the proof lies in the partition of Macedonia in 1913. In this instance, the region of Macedonia was divided between Greece, Serbia and
Bulgaria, where the idea of a federation was replaced with the idea of a nation-state (Forster 1941:62-63). This historical contingency led to the belief that the Balkan states should be homogenous, which in turn led to nation-building in the Balkans and in particular Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria. The process of nation-building demanded that ethnicity and religion be the main prerequisites for assigning someone to a national community (Romanucci-Ross, De Vos & Tsuda 2006:7-9).

The very “first Yugoslavia” was created in 1918. This “first Yugoslavia” was known as “The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes” (Benson 2001:25). This nation-state strayed from the trend that stressed ethnicity and religion as the key criteria for a nation. And due to this, the new state had a plethora of problems to contend with concerning the coexistence of various ethnicities within the borders of a sole unit (Farkas 2007:42). The key ethnicities were not only the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (as the name of the kingdom would suggest), but there were other smaller groups as well (Hudson 2003:14).

When it comes to the Balkans both citizenship and nationhood represent two historical discourses that form the basis of an “imagined community.” Citizenship is universal because the citizens that are official members in a state adhere to the principles of that state (Breslin, Hughes, Phillips & Rosemond 2002:148). Nationhood is particularistic because a distinct national identity is assigned, by employing specific criteria which originated from a local culture (Reynolds 1994:24). This is a process where ethnicity is politicised through cultural

---

43 A nation-state is a geographical area that derives its political legitimacy by serving a sovereign nation. A nation is a cultural and ethnic entity, whereas a state is a political and geopolitical one. The term “nation-state” implies that the two coincide, but “nation-state” formation can take place at different times in different parts of the world, and has become the dominant form of world organization. The geographic boundaries of an ethnic population generally coincide within a political state (Kelstrup & Williams 2000:149). Here, there are few members of ethnic minorities within the state and by the same token, there are few members of the respective national ethnicity living in countries outside of their own. Examples of such countries would be Albania, Egypt, Lesotho and Japan.

A federation is a political entity characterised by a union of partially self-governing states or regions under a central government. Federations may be multi-ethnic and cover a large area (Horowitz 2000:241). Federations are supposed to create a stability that would encourage other common interests and therefore reduce differences between the various territories. Examples of such federations or federal republics are the USA and India.
characteristics such as language and religion (Barbor & Carmichael 2002:27-37). Such characteristics of citizenship and nationhood are found in almost every national culture. But the two cannot be placed on a par. The one needs to follow the other in terms of importance or priority.

During the 19th and 20th centuries nationhood was followed by citizenship in emphasis when it came to nation-building in the Balkans. During the period of Ottoman rule, the millet system was introduced where collective rights were granted to a millet (an association of members) rather than to individuals (Mackridge & Yannakakis 1997:104). On account of this system, this was the easiest way to identify prospective nationals in the Ottoman Empire in order for the Balkan nation-states to “claim” them as their own nationals.

An individual would need to first be a member of a nation based on religious or ethnic affiliation in order to be a member of a state (Dougherty & Pfaltzgraaf 2001:5). With time, state membership and national membership became closely intertwined because there was not much interplay between the two, because both memberships demanded that the individual participate in the ethnic or religious aspects of this “imagined community”.

Turkey’s victory over Greece in the Greco-Turkish War led to a population exchange between the two countries in 1923 in accordance with the Treaty of Lausanne (Mazower 2005:344). About two million people were forcibly relocated and denaturalised from their homelands. Greeks and Turks were identified by using religious criteria. In other words those who were Greek Orthodox Christians in Turkey were Anatolian Greeks and those who were Muslims in Greece were Turks (Mazower 2005:347). This religious feature stresses the role that particularistic criteria have played when it comes to defining national membership in the Balkans.

Ethnicity was also a critical characteristic in Macedonia in the 19th and early 20th centuries when it came to determining a person’s nationality. When the Bulgarian Exarchate was founded in 1870, its specific aim was to differentiate the Bulgarian from the Greek population on the basis of ethnic and linguistic criteria (Pettifer 2005:3-4). However using language as a way to distinguish Greeks from Bulgarians became problematic because a great number of
Slavophones remained faithful to the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople (Rossos 2008:81). The identity of this “bilingual” population became a key issue of the Macedonian Question in the late 1800s.

Using particularistic criteria to decide an individual’s national status in the Balkans has had serious consequences because of the minority groups that exist in the region. Due to the fact that it is nationhood that provides for membership in a Balkan nation, concerns of irredentist activity have emerged because of the existing minority groups (Romanucci-Ross, De Vos & Tsuda 2006:131). This minority gives rise to the irredentist concept of Greater Albania where surrounding lands are considered Albanian based on either current or historical presence of Albanian populations (Bideleux & Jeffries 2007:23). Greater Albania aims to incorporate the areas of Kosovo and the Presevo Valley in Serbia, certain territories in southern Montenegro, a part of western Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and the northwestern Greek regional units of Thesprotia, Preveza and Yanina (Phillips 2004:8). Taking this into account, it must be accepted that both minority rights and irredentism are also closely intertwined.

![Figure 17: “Greater Albania”](http://www.telegraf.rs/sport/1266506-flag-of-greater-albania-is-like-the-flag-of-nazi-germany-imagine-one-over-wembley-or-stade-de-france)
Both the Greek and the Slavic “Macedonian” identities stress the importance of particularistic criteria rather than universal criteria. The Greek national identity has been historically determined primarily by religion (Greek Orthodoxy) and secondarily by language (Greek) (Barbour & Carmichael 2002:225). The Slavic “Macedonian” identity is also based on the Macedonian Orthodox Church and Slavic “Macedonian” language (Ramet 2005:291). However, unlike the Greek identity, both criteria are disputed because the Macedonian Orthodox Church is regarded by the other Eastern Churches as a schismatic church, and the autonomy of the Macedonian language has also been debated (Dawisha & Parrot 1997:257).

The nation-states in the Balkans have developed historical arguments in an attempt to justify their irredentism and their historical rights in Southeastern Europe. The Greek Great Idea and the Slavic “Macedonian” United Macedonia were discussed in the previous chapter and Greater Albania has just been discussed. Other irredentist concepts of neighbouring countries such as Greater Serbia and Greater Bulgaria have also utilised historical arguments to justify their irredentist claims (Saideman & Ayres 2008:38).

The aims of such arguments are not only to establish a connection between a nation and the territory it occupies, but also of a territory it should occupy (Hupchik 1995:124). This connection is seen as an attempt to legitimise the possession of a territory by another territorial entity (O’Flynn & Russell 2005:119).

The dispute between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) concerns a similar issue to quite a large extent.

5.3 The “Symbolic Struggle” of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)

The Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) declared its independence on 17 November, 1991 and it immediately asked for international recognition. On 4 December, 1991, Greece stated that the recognition of the new state depended on three conditions (Dawisha & Parrot 1999:234). The first was the Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) constitutional guarantees that it makes no
claims on any Greek territory. The second was the Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) end to all hostile propaganda against its neighbour in the south. The third was to ensure that the term “Macedonia” was excluded from FYROM’s name (Dawisha & Parrot 1999:235).

The first of the three conditions was in response to an article of the Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) new constitution. Article 49 stated the following: “The Republic cares for the status and rights of those persons belonging to the Macedonian people in neighbouring countries as well as Macedonian expatriates, assists in their cultural development, and promotes links with them” (Perry 1992:40). It must be noted that Article 49 of FYROM’s constitution is actually similar to Article 108 of Greece’s constitution.

Be that as it may, Greece interpreted the “Macedonian” people in “neighbouring countries” as an indirect reference to a Macedonian minority within Greece (Glenny 1992:144). To Greece’s persuasion, the European Union stated in December 1991 that it would not recognise the new state until it gave assurance that it had no territorial claims against any neighbouring state and that it would not engage in similar acts against any such state. This included use of the name “Macedonia” which implied territorial claims (Jentleson 2000:179).

In January 1992, the parliament of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) adopted two amendments with the following three stipulations. Firstly, the republic (FYROM) had no territorial claims against any neighbouring state (Phillips 2004:57). Secondly, the borders of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) would not be altered unless it was done in accordance with international norms and thirdly, the Republic of Macedonia would not interfere with the affairs of other states (Phillips 2004:58).

Amendments were made and the Badinter Report was issued by the EU which found that the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) had met all of the criteria essential for recognition (Danforth 1994:327-328). However, Article 49 still remained in the constitution of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and this agitated Greece.

For Greece, the question of the name “Macedonia” stirred the fiercest debate in the international press. As stated earlier in the chapter, there were tolerant arguments stating that
the Slavic “Macedonian” people had the right to self-determination (Cowan 2000:53). But there were also condemning voices that regarded use of the term “Macedonia” by the new state (FYROM) to be a usurpation of Greek heritage by a small group of Slav nationalists (Klok 1999:5).

This issue provoked a strong emotional response not only in Greece, but in the Greek diaspora throughout the world (Cowan 2000:97). Most of the reactions to this issue consisted of an element of righteous indignation regarding the Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) claim to be the homeland of the Macedonian nation. *Righteous indignation* is an angry emotional response to an action that has been perceived as unfair or malicious.

The Greek press sought to belittle the Republic of Macedonia’s status as a sovereign state by referring to it as a *formation* or a *little state*. Such statements were also reflections of the Greek public. In Greece, the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) was called “the Republic of Skopje” only. The Slavic “Macedonians” were referred to as “Skopjians”, which is the demonym of the people of Skopje, the capital city of FYROM (Dawisha & Parrot 1999:231).

Several rumors were circulated in 1992 that suggested a coalition between Turkey and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) that could lead to war and the potential annexation of parts of Greece by both countries (Hitchcock 2004:455). This was particularly troubling given the fact that Turkey was Greece’s traditional political opponent. The reaction to these “threats” was obviously met with resentment and the Greek press wasted no time in encouraging an emotional and nationalist reaction from the Greek public (Hitchcock 2004:456).

But there were other rumors that suggested the new state known as the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) would not be deemed a viable political entity and would most likely be partitioned between the neighbouring states. The president of Serbia at the time of this crisis was Slobodan Milosevic. In 1992 he proposed to the Greek government that the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) be partitioned between Serbia and Greece (Michas 2002:49). The Greek Prime Minister, Constantine Mitsotakis, rejected the offer and reported Milosevic’s proposal to the European Union (Zahariadis 1994:663).
The Macedonian Question’s resurfacing prompted a strong response from the Greek public (Hudson 2003:101). Large demonstrations were organised, not only in Greece, but also abroad. On 14 February, 1992 and 31 March, 1994 over one million people flocked to the streets of Thessaloniki to declare, “Macedonia is Greek!” (Danforth 1995:31). On 5 April, 1992 10,000 Greeks took to the streets of Munich making the same claim. There was also a rally in Washington D.C. organised by the Hellenic-American Council and attended by twenty thousand people.

Private companies in Greece began advertising campaigns with the aim of “proving” the “Greekness” of “Macedonia”, specifically Greek or Aegean “Macedonia”. Greek Americans even issued pleas to President George Bush by means of advertisements in The New York Times, dated 26 April, 1992 and 10 May, 1992 (Hudson 2003:108).

There were governments in the European Union (EU) considered hostile to the Greek perspective, particularly the Netherlands and Italy. Greece even threatened these countries with a boycott of their exports. Greece suspended a $50 million credit to Bulgaria when the latter recognised FYROM by its constitutional name (Republic of Macedonia) (Zahariadis 1994:662). A great amount of pamphlets and stickers were circulated in Greece declaring, “Macedonia is Greek!”

Looking abroad, the Greek and the Slavic “Macedonian” diasporas have also played the role of international agents in this international struggle over “Macedonia”. Australia and Canada are countries with large Greek and Slavic “Macedonian” diasporas, where the issue became especially heated (Danforth 1995:87). A particularly serious spat broke out between the two diasporas in Melbourne, a city with over 100,000 Greeks and 20,000 Slavic “Macedonian” immigrants (Danforth 1995:88).

The severity for these two groups not only lay in symbolism; at issue was also the right to use the term “Macedonian” when it came to associations and clubs. If one group was to claim the right to use the name “Macedonia”, it had to deny the other group the right to do the same.
The involvement of diasporas in this dispute is a prime example of “long-distance” nationalism (Anderson 1993:19). “This was facilitated by the migration of Macedonian peasantry (Greek and Slavic) overseas during the late 19th century and also after World War II” (Petrovski 1981:76).

All of this activity is a demonstration of 20th century nationalism, when looking at an existing state’s (Greece) reaction toward the creation of a new neighbouring country (FYROM). This “Macedonian” issue became a dominant theme in Greek politics in the early 1990s. The current Greek Prime Minister, Antonis Samaras, was the Greek Foreign Minister at the time. He adopted a very stern position that denied the existence of a Slavic “Macedonian” nation as well as the recognition of the new state (Michas 2002:48).

The fears of Slavic “Macedonian” irredentism were prevalent and they helped to legitimise the Foreign Minister’s standpoint. A trade embargo was enforced as a means to pressurise the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) into complying with Greece’s demands. This embargo caused a great deal of economic damage to the new republic (Bennett 1995:221).

On 4 April, 1992, the Greek Prime Minister, Constantine Mitsotakis, dismissed Samaras from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Samaras’ strong political views nonetheless remained very influential in Greek Foreign Policy (Michas 2002:149). Samaras was persistent in voicing his independent views on the matter until he was obliged to relinquish his parliamentary seat as well as his membership in the ruling conservative “New Democracy” party, because he opposed the party’s official policy regarding this “Macedonian” issue (Shea 2008:302). The “Macedonian” issue was also used as a political weapon by the socialist opposition party known as “PASOK”.

In 1993, Samaras eventually broke ranks with the “New Democracy” party and started his own party, called the “Political Spring” party (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2004:316). New elections became imperative when his conservative allies from the “New Democracy” party withdrew their support of the government. The government was subsequently forced out of office in the 10 October, 1993 elections and the socialist party (PASOK) returned to power (Shea 2008:299).
The new government asserted that no negotiations would be possible between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). This proclamation by the then Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou led to the nullification of any form of dialogue between the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Greece (Shea 2008:304).

There was a meeting in Lisbon on 27 June, 1992, where the European Union (EU) aligned itself with the Greek viewpoint. The EU denied recognition of FYROM if the name “Macedonia” was used in its official title (Pettifer 2005:211). This problem remained unresolved even after June 1996 when more than sixty states had begun to recognise the new state as “Macedonia”. Countries that fell into this category were Turkey, Russia and Bulgaria (Cowan 2000:3). In early 1993, the Republic of Macedonia had successfully become a member in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), but under its official name which is the “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” (FYROM).

FYROM went on to apply for membership in the United Nations. Greek naturally opposed this and UN (United Nations) mediation began. But Greece’s socialist government withdrew from the negotiations, prompting the UN General Assembly to admit the new country into the United Nations under the provisional name “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” (FYROM). On 16 December, 1993, six European Union countries recognised the new state as FYROM and this was seen by the Greek media as a tremendous loss for Greece’s official position (Cowan 2000:4). To add insult to serious injury, the United States and Australia also began to recognise the new state as FYROM a month later.

The Greek government countered this by imposing a new, stricter trade embargo on 17 February, 1994. The movement of goods from Thessaloniki to the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) was banned. The new embargo reduced the Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) export earnings by 85%, while food supplies were dropped by 40% (Dunn 1994:19). The international community and especially the media were extremely critical of the Greek embargo against the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) (Klok 199:5). The EU Commission even tried to challenge the legitimacy of the embargo in the European Court, but it was unsuccessful in its bid to do so (Hupchick 1995:160).
When the new embargo was announced, more than 66% of Greeks in Athens alone supported the “hard line” stance adopted by the socialist government (Dawisha & Parrot 1999:269). The embargo was subsequently removed after successful negotiations with the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

5.4 The Slavic “Macedonian” Argument

The Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) can make a strong case regarding its people’s right to self-determination following the nation-building efforts undertaken over the last fifty years within the Yugoslav federation. There is a considerable amount of factual evidence that can be used to support this goal. Such evidence can be seen in the sociopolitical factors discussed in the third chapter, namely language and church (Dawisha & Parrot 1999:256).

By 1983, only 10% of the Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) population was born before 1923. This means that today a significant part of the Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) present population has already been socialised into the “Macedonian” national culture (Lunt 1984:114).

By openly acknowledging Slavic “Macedonian” national identity, a revisionist historiography with the goal of affirming the Macedonian nation has been created (Hudson 2003:153). However, legitimising Slavic “Macedonian” national identity by means of establishing the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the affirmation of Slavic “Macedonians” as a nation, does not necessarily mean Tito’s communist regime fabricated or even invented this separate “Macedonian” identity (Hitchcock 2004:383).

By saying this, one is assuming state agencies have the power to impose their will upon the people and to act by disregarding the cultural and institutional context in which they operate (Leroy-Bennet 1995:266). The existence of a large number of Slavs in the region of Macedonia during the 19th century is undisputed. But the national identity of the Slavic “Macedonians” has been subject to some strong competition between Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians and Slavic “Macedonian” nationalists (Farkas 2007:43).
In all likelihood, the majority of Slavs in regional Macedonia in the 1800s had no strong ethnic consciousness. They were quite happy to be labeled Christians (Orthodox), more for the reason of stating that they were not Muslims. It seems the remaining minority, especially those in the south (Greek or Aegean “Macedonia”), would be content to accept the label of ‘Greek,’ whereas others in the north would allow themselves to be called either Serbian or Bulgarian (Barbour & Carmichael 2002:229). Those who finally maintained that they were neither, proclaimed themselves to be “Macedonians”, for want of a better name. (Lunt 1984:108)

No clear distinctions can be made between Bulgarian and Slavic “Macedonian” intellectuals during the first half of the 1800s, because the thinkers of that period allied themselves in opposing the religious and cultural supremacy of the Greeks in the south. Considering this period the distinction between Slavic “Macedonian” and Bulgarian is not all that important (Friedman 1985:33).

The growing differentiation between Bulgarian and Slavic “Macedonian” elites began in the 1840s when their linguistic mediums or languages started becoming standardised. Both the Bulgarian and Slavic “Macedonian” side supported its own dialect (Barbour & Carmichael 2002:232). This increasing gap led to the Slavic “Macedonians” publishing textbooks in their own medium. Sixteen textbooks were published between 1857 and 1880 in the southeastern Bulgarian-Macedonian (Slavic) linguistic medium (Friedman 1975:90). These publications serve as indicators of the growing differences between the two Slavic entities.

The first open proclamation of Macedonian separatism was discovered in Krste Misirkov’s book, *On Macedonian Matters* (Danforth 1995:50). Originally published in 1903 in Sofia, Bulgaria, Bulgarian authorities confiscated it and he was prosecuted. Between World War I and II, the Serb authorities in control of Vardar “Macedonia” (FYROM, as it was known then) would acculturate the Slavic “Macedonian” population by force, by suppressing the locals of their ethnic culture (Glenny 1992:181). Such harsh treatment caused much resentment.

On the other hand, Pro-Bulgarian sentiments remained alive in Vardar Macedonia up until 1941, when Bulgarian forces occupying Vardar “Macedonia” were greeted as “liberators” (Karakasidou 1997:142) But the Bulgarians misruled Vardar “Macedonia” and this too caused
much resentment amongst its inhabitants. The Bulgarians had a heavy-handed treatment of the local population and their attitude was in particular very condescending (Kenney 2006:72).

Between 1941 and 1944, Yugoslav communists appropriated Misirkov’s “separatist” viewpoint and used it to create the foundation of the “Macedonian” homeland (Shoup 1968:144-149). This project was a successful venture because the local population from Bulgaria had become alienated and also because the ill memories of Serbia’s administration between the two World Wars were still quite fresh (Mazower 2004:265). In addition, the Yugoslavs allowed the local communist party to assume a strong nationalist position especially when it came to the issue of nationalism in the Yugoslav republics (Romanucci-Ross, De Vos & Tsuda 2006:104).

Defining the Slavic “Macedonian” nation’s homeland was contested as well. According to Slavic “Macedonian” authors, Macedonia refers to a regional territory in the Balkans that was partitioned amongst Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia between 1912 and 1920 (Ramet 2005:281). Macedonia in Greece was known as “Aegean Macedonia”, Macedonia in Bulgaria was known as “Pirin Macedonia” and Macedonia in Serbia was today’s the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), known as Vardar Macedonia (Poulton 2000:2).

The geographical borders of this region have not always been clear and neither has its ethnological composition. During the Ottoman rule the territory of “Macedonia” was not an administrative unit. Instead it was comprised of the three vilayets of Selanik (Thessaloniki), Manastir (Monastir or Bitola) and Kosovo which also included Uskup (Skopje) (Rossos 2008:43-45). Throughout the 19th century, the sides involved in the Macedonian Question have in all likelihood manipulated boundaries and ethnological data (please see pages 30 and 31).

Henry Robert Wilkinson, a British ethnographer, stated that “hardly two authorities can be found to agree on Macedonia’s exact delineation” (Wilkinson 1951:1). Wilkinson believed that “due to the misrepresentation of the facts by nationalist scientists, the major causes of this diversity of opinion stem from ethnographic ignorance”. This ignorance has been caused by changes that occurred with the passing of time, as well as differences in scholastic methods of depiction (Romanucci-Ross, De Vos & Tsuda 2006:21-23).
Let us look at the “official” Slavic “Macedonian” argument. This viewpoint states that Slavic “Macedonians” have been a nation since around 600 AD when Slavs first entered the Balkans and specifically the geographical territory known as “Macedonia” (Poulton 2000:19). For Slavic “Macedonians” it is a good enough reason that these people call themselves “Macedonians” given that they have inhabited the geographical Macedonian region since the Middle Ages (Karakasidou 1997:22-23).

As mentioned in the second chapter, an important part of what is considered Bulgarian medieval history—including the reign of Tsar Samuel—is regarded by Slavic “Macedonians” as part of their history as well. The Slavic “Macedonian” nation claims to have played a profound role in developing the Cyrillic alphabet, which was and still is the written language and alphabet of the Slavs (Rossos 2008:30-31).

The Illinden Uprising on 2 August, 1903 was a major turning point as far as the realisation of national consciousness went, as this was the start of the struggle for national independence (Cowan 2000:68-70). Other Slavic “Macedonian” historians trace nationalist activity even further back to not only the Eastern Crisis of 1875, but to the 1821 Greek Revolution (Apostolski 1979:110-111).

The Krusevo Republic was a short-lived political entity proclaimed in 1903 by rebels from the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) in Krusevo during the Illinden Uprising (Mackridge & Yannakakis 1997:107). As mentioned, the establishment of the Krusevo Republic was a short-lived one, but it was viewed as a foreboding of the independent status of the Slavic “Macedonian” state. The activities of the IMRO represented the most decisive step toward the national liberation of Slavic “Macedonia”.

As previously mentioned, the region of Macedonia was partitioned amongst Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 (Ramet 2005:281). This was a national disaster that divided the Macedonians between three different states. The Greeks, the Bulgarians and the Serbs were accused of trying to assimilate the local population by placing emphasis on the irredentism ideals of the three countries, namely the Great Idea (Greece), Greater Bulgaria and Greater Serbia (Saaideman & Ayres 2008:52).
The eventual champions of the Macedonian cause were the communists in Yugoslavia as they were responsible for creating a Slavic “Macedonian” state within the Yugoslavian federation (Bennet 1995:212). Once the People’s Republic of Macedonia was proclaimed in 1944 an attempt was undertaken by the Yugoslavian leader, Tito, and his Bulgarian counterpart, Georgi Dimitrov, to unify the Macedonian territory (Crampton 2005:189). They suggested that a Macedonian state should be comprised of all three parts of Macedonia. This proposed new state would be part of a broad Yugoslavian federation that would also include Bulgaria (King 1973:147).

The Yugoslavian and Bulgarian policies collided, causing the plan to fail. Tito disagreed with the policies of the Soviet Union (USSR), who in return forced Yugoslavia out of the pro-Soviet camp. Bulgaria had no choice but to also withdraw from the deal. The inhabitants of Pirin “Macedonia” (in Bulgaria) were officially classified as “Macedonians” (Crampton 2005:190). However in April 1956, the Communist Party of Bulgaria reversed its policy on its recognition of a separate “Macedonian” nationality within the Bulgarian borders. Looking at the national census in December 1956, there were 187,789 “Macedonians” in Bulgaria. However, the 1960 national census stated there was no separate “Macedonian” minority in Bulgaria (Cviic 1991:39-40).

Greece’s policy regarding the “Macedonians” in Aegean Macedonia (in Greece) aimed to assimilate them to Hellenism. This was a more consistent policy than that of Bulgaria’s. The Greeks supported the Slavic minority in Greece who identified themselves as “Bulgarians” and were part of the interwar Greek-Bulgarian population exchange in the 1920s (Pentzopoulos 1963:60). The IMRO did not support the implementation of the population exchange because it felt its claims to Greek or Aegean “Macedonia” would be weakened (Barker 1950:30).

Greece saw the remaining population as “Slavophones”, but Greek nonetheless (Mackridge & Yannakakis 1997:50). This meant they were ethnic Greeks who spoke a Slavic language. The Greek state also took particular measures to force the “Slavophone” population to speak Greek and assimilate into Greek society (Mackridge & Yannakakis 1997:63). The Greek government changed Slavic place names and personal names to Greek ones; they also demanded that
religious services be performed solely in Greek. These measures contained much force, especially during the regime of Ioannis Metaxas between 1936 and 1941. The use of the Slavic language was forbidden and education in Greek was enforced during this period (Hristov 1994:6-7). The 1950s and 1960s saw the application of more moderate tactics.

The objective of unifying geographical Macedonia into one nation-state was proposed by the partisan movement and this led to the foundation of the People’s Republic of Macedonia (in Yugoslavia). The Report of the Organising Committee of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM), issued in 1943, declared that “the fighting Piedmont of Macedonia has fiercely proclaimed it will not stint on support or sacrifice for the liberation of the other two segments of our nation and for the general unification of the entire Macedonian people” (Brown 2003:168-170).

This manifesto was issued at ASNOM’s first session and it made its desire quite explicit—“unify all of the Macedonian people” (Kondis 1993:36). The preamble of the Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) constitution, drawn up in 1991, makes direct reference to these proclamations. Therefore, although not legally binding, an emotional connection was established with statements that directly challenged Greece’s sovereignty (Brown 2003:213).

Thus it is implied by the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), that a large part of geographical Macedonia has yet to be “redeemed”. According to the official history of the Slavic “Macedonian” nation (Apostolski 1979:21), geographical Macedonia is the national homeland of the Macedonians, and other ethnic groups in the Balkans such as Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs and Albanians would not be included in the Macedonian nation. In fact they would have to be forcefully excluded from any “historical” claim to the geographical region of Macedonia regardless of the claim’s legitimacy (Brown 2003:45-49).

In 1993 a book by the Council for Research into South-Eastern Europe of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts was published. The book was titled Macedonia and Its Relations with Greece. The authors of this publication argued that “the Slavic “Macedonian” people were the product of an ethnic mixture between the Ancient Macedonians and the Slavs” (Roudometof 2000:100). The authors stated that the Slavic “Macedonian” people occupied all
of geographical Macedonia from the beginning of the 5th century. They furthermore noted that national consciousness was developed in the 19th century, and by the start of the 20th century the Slavic “Macedonian” nation had been created. According to the publication, in 1926 the Greek government changed the place names of Aegean “Macedonia” and this was in fact carried out through a policy of state terror (Roudometof 2000:102).

The authors even went so far as to say that in fact during the Balkan War of 1913, “Greece had begun the ethnic genocide of the Macedonian people. The cruelty displayed by the Greek soldiers in their dealings toward the Macedonian people was merciless” (Council for Research into South-Eastern Europe of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts 1993:72). Thus taking all of these factors into account, the occupation of Aegean “Macedonia” by Greece was deemed an infringement upon their national right to self-determination of Slavic “Macedonian” people and that the Greek occupation of the territory of Macedonia was achieved by means of brute force.

According to these Slavic “Macedonian” authors, Greece’s rule over Aegean “Macedonia” contained neither a historical nor a moral foundation. For them, Greek “Macedonia” was a segment of the Macedonian homeland. Such a mentality was reflected in school textbooks in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). These textbooks contained a crucial link between geographical-ethnic and national borders. The geographical-ethnic borders were the total of geographical Macedonia and the national borders included the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) only (Kofos 1994:14).

Therefore, the Slavic “Macedonian” nation’s homeland spanned well beyond the state boundaries of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). The political reasons of the Slavic “Macedonian” argument became more apparent at this point. According to the Slavic “Macedonian” argument, Greeks and Bulgarians were attempting to satisfy their irredentist aspirations by ignoring the right to self-determination of the Slavic “Macedonian” nation (Roudometof 2000:105).

During the elections of November-December 1990, irredentism became more active in the domestic politics of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) when the Democratic Party for
Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) adopted an irredentist program that asserted its desire to “unite” geographical Macedonia under the auspices of a single state (Danforth 1995:47).

At the time, the VMRO-DPMNE claimed a following of 150,000 members. Despite the fact that the VMRO-DPMNE did not get enough votes to even be included in the coalition government, Ante Popovski, leader of the VMRO-DPMNE, made public statements where he argued that “two thirds of Macedonia was under foreign occupation and still to be liberated”. In addition to this, slogans like “Solon (Thessaloniki) is ours” were extremely popular among Macedonian nationalists (Danforth 1995:101).

Greece saw the printing of maps including Greek Macedonia as part of the Macedonian state as indications of Slavic “Macedonian” irredentism. The VMRO-DPMNE also unsuccessfully suggested that bills be printed with depictions of the White Tower of Thessaloniki and the Vergina Sun (Saaideman & Ayres 2008:53-55). On 16 February, 1993, a law was submitted to the Greek parliament making the Vergina Sun a national symbol for Greece as well (Papavizas 2006:225).

Once the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) was accepted into the United Nations, Risto Nikovski, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated that due to the fact that this new Balkan state (FYROM) was officially recognised, the Treaty of Bucharest (signed in 1913) should be regarded as invalid (Holevas 1993:14-15). The Treaty of Bucharest guaranteed the boundaries of the neighbouring states and Nikovski’s statement was deemed to be the rhetoric of an expansionist policy.

A key aim of Greek foreign policy was to prevent a potential coalition between the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Turkey (Pettifer 2005:116). Such a coalition could be seen as a realistic one, because Turkey does have a concern when it comes to Muslim minorities in Southeastern Europe. Similarly, the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) has an interest for its own Slavic “Macedonian” minority groups in the Balkans.

The Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) would have welcomed a regional benefactor and protector like Turkey (Zahariadis 1994:664). By the same token, Turkey would have benefited
from such a coalition because there were 100,000 ethnic Turks in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), and because the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) could serve as a Turkish counterforce against Greece (Perry 1994:54).

5.5 The Minority Question

The matter of Slavic “Macedonian” minorities in Greece and Bulgaria has become a heated controversy (Hupchick 1995:157-158). Both Greece and Bulgaria see the recognition of Slavic “Macedonian” minorities as a transgression of their own territorial sovereignty and a potential springboard for future Slavic “Macedonian” irredentism (Cowan 2000:11). Such sentiments from Greece and Bulgaria are well justified given the aforementioned proclamations, statements, maps and textbooks.

Both Greek and Slavic “Macedonian” nationalists have amplified the minority question to an extent which is not supported by the correct demographics in Aegean or Greek “Macedonia” (Cowan 2000:13-14). In 1923 the Greco-Turkish exchange of populations took place where 354,647 Muslims left Greece and 339,094 Greeks arrived in Greek “Macedonia” from Anatolia in Turkey (Clogg 1997:101). For obvious reasons, this exchange of populations resulted in a complete transition in the ethnic composition of Greek “Macedonia”.

The 1913 mixture of ethnic groups was considerably different by 1928; Greeks constituted almost 89% of the population in Greek “Macedonia” (Pentzopoulos 1962:127-137). And the Slavic “Macedonian” population was located almost exclusively in the northwestern part of the Macedonian region following the population exchange (Forster 1941:150). The assimilationist policy of the Greek state in northwestern Greek “Macedonia” was compounded by the strife between the Turkish-speaking Greek refugees (expelled from Turkey) and the local Slavs (Campbell & Sherard 1968:129).
Such strife concerned land possession which was exacerbated by the difference in cultures. The Greek state naturally supported the Greek refugees and this made the Slavic “Macedonian” population doubt the legitimacy of the state even more (Simos 1988:2).

During World War II, Germany, Bulgaria and the Yugoslavian communists objected to the alienation of the Slavic “Macedonian” population. But these objections were not all that effective for the reason that not all Slavic “Macedonians” supported either the occupying forces (Germany and Bulgaria) or the communists. Some Slavic “Macedonians” had in fact joined the right-wing partisan forces (Shea 2008:113-114). Following their inevitable defeat, the occupation forces withdrew from the Macedonian region. This allowed the communists to attract the Slavic “Macedonian” population by forming the Slovenomakedonski Narodno Osloboditelen Front (SNOF) and other units (Danforth 1995:54).

This unit promised equal treatment to the Slavic “Macedonian” minority population. Due to this, the Slavic “Macedonian” population supported the communist forces during the Greek Civil War (1944-1949). This put the Greek Communist Party in a serious predicament, because although they had promised equal rights to the Slavic “Macedonian” population, they could not support the creation of a separate Slavic “Macedonian” state that would include parts of Greek Macedonia (Shea 2008:176). Such an action would never have been supported by the population of Greece. The nationalist pro-Western forces in the Greek Civil War emerged as victors, thus restoring the Greek boundaries prior to World War II.

Part of the remaining Slavic “Macedonian” population fled to Vardar “Macedonia” in Yugoslavia, today known as the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Some went to other countries in Eastern Europe, while a considerable number went to Western countries like Australia and Canada (Danforth 1995:83). This movement led to the creation of the Slavic “Macedonian” diaspora. When the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was officially created in 1944, the prospect of a Slavic “Macedonian” identity became more viable, as was the prospect of a national homeland for the Slavic “Macedonian” population (Brown 2003:22).

Slavic “Macedonian” sources claim around 300,000 Macedonians reside in Greek “Macedonia” (Popov 1989:40), while Slavic “Macedonian” human rights activists claim there are around a
million people (Hristov 1994:12). Objective third-party sources estimate approximately 15,000 Slavic “Macedonians” in Western Greek “Macedonia”. These third-party estimates are by far more reliable yet despite this, Greek authorities do not accept the existence of a Macedonian minority in Greece.

There are Slavic “Macedonian” refugees from the Greek Civil War who wish to return to their homes in Greece from the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). This could easily complicate the human rights of this minority group, because the people who fought against the government in the Greek Civil War and later fled Greece were deprived of their property and citizenship (Cowan 2000:122).

In 1982 and 1985 laws were introduced that allowed civil war refugees in communist countries to return to Greece and reclaim their property. But these laws also specified that only those who were ethnic Greeks would be the beneficiaries from these statutes (Hristov 1994:9). By not allowing the return of these refugees, the Greek state prevented the consolidation of a Slavic “Macedonian” national minority in Northern Greece. For Slavic “Macedonian” human rights advocates, there are no protected human rights neither for the Slavic “Macedonian” minority in Northern Greece nor for the Slavic “Macedonian” refugees who are not allowed to return to their homes (De Soto & Dudwick 2000:36).

Similar movements developed among the Pirin “Macedonians” in Bulgaria, following the collapse of Communism in the country (after 1989). Bulgarian authorities responded with great hostility to efforts that attempted to create cultural and political organisations. The Bulgarian courts denied registration for these organisations on the basis that they constituted a threat to national security (Poulton 2000:174). The Slavic “Macedonian” activists were persecuted and harassed by the Bulgarian police and their passports were confiscated. The Bulgarian police also raided a congress that the Slavic “Macedonian” movement held (Crampton 2005:265).

Slavic “Macedonian” activists in Bulgaria stated that the long-term goal of their movement was autonomy. Not only cultural and spiritual autonomy, but also regional autonomy from Bulgaria (Zang 1991:83). Bulgaria continues not to welcome Slavic “Macedonian” separatism. Slavic “Macedonians” are considered Bulgarians (Perry 1994:50). Bonka Boneva, a Bulgarian scholar
from Pirin “Macedonia”, reported that the local population would frequently avoid expressing an open and honest opinion as to whether they regard themselves as Slavic “Macedonians” or as Bulgarians (Boneva 1994:23), suggesting that in Pirin “Macedonia” (Bulgaria) there are unstable boundaries between these two identities.

Boneva feels that as far as the choice of ethnic identities go they are more a matter of personal decision than of cultural differentiation (Boneva 1994:25). He goes on to speculate that the Slavic “Macedonian” minority in Bulgaria will be consolidated, thanks mainly to the Slavic “Macedonian” propaganda from the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

In Greece, similar attempts were made by the Slavic “Macedonians” to gain cultural rights by forming voluntary associations. The Conference on the Human Dimension of the Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was held in Copenhagen in June 1990 (Bideleux & Jeffries 2007:36). The conference led to the first serious confrontation between Greeks, Bulgarians and Slavic “Macedonians”. The confrontation stemmed from the Slavic “Macedonian” use of human rights movements to pressurise Greece into recognising the Slavic “Macedonian” minority in Northern Greece as a national minority (Bideleux & Jeffries 2007:248).

Throughout the conference Greek, Slavic “Macedonian” and Bulgarian delegates presented very different perspectives on the minority question. Each side’s perspectives were mutually exclusive. This caused questions to be raised regarding the very definition of “Macedonians”. It was thus impossible for the CSCE to support any particular perspective, and this debate went on to raise important conceptual issues regarding the definition of a “national” minority (Danforth 1995:69).

As previously mentioned, in 1990 the Multimember High Court in Florina, Greece, refused to register a cultural association called the “Centre for Macedonian Culture.” The reason the court gave was that the true goal of the association was to highlight the existence of a Slavic “Macedonian” minority in Greece. This would have contradicted Greece’s national interests (Hristov 1994:21). Furthermore, it is uncertain whether such a vocal group has large enough numbers to warrant the creation of separate educational institutions. In terms of international
standards, “a minority population needs to be sufficiently numerous for such a demand to be justified” (Stavros 1995:6).

Greece sees the political mobilisation of the Slavic “Macedonian” minority as a form of propaganda that is used against the territorial integrity of Greece (Danforth 1995:78). This Slavic “Macedonian” minority is a small one and the loyalties of many of its members seem to alternate. Therefore there is a minimal possibility of a real threat to Greece’s national security.

Slavic “Macedonian” irredentism is not necessarily linked to the human rights of the Slavic “Macedonian” minority in Greek Macedonia (Saaideman & Ayres 2008:42). Greek society has a particularly negative attitude toward this minority group, affirmed by the unclear line between citizenship and nationhood.

The assimilationist policy of the Greek state in Northwestern Macedonia has been counterproductive (Romanucci-Ross, De Vos & Tsuda 2006:170). By politicising ethnic culture by turning the local Slavic “Macedonian” culture into an unwanted element. Although this strategy did not totally violate the international norms set before World War II, Greece has been accused of “pushing it far enough” as far as international treaties and norms go, when it comes to the status of minorities within particular states (Stavros 1995:27).

In November 2008, the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) instituted proceedings against Athens with the UN International Court of Justice whereby FYROM accused Greece of violating its obligations set out by the Interim Accord signed by the parties on 13 September, 1995. The specific violation that the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) was referring to was Greece’s blockade to the Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) bid for membership into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

Both parties submitted requests, memorials and they stated their legal positions as well. The Court delivered its judgment on 5 December, 2011, where it found that Greece had “breached its obligation under Article 11, paragraph 1, of the Interim Accord of 13 September, 1995 by objecting to the admission of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) into NATO” (Boycott & Wolfe-Robinson 2011).
The role of the state is to protect the non-Greek minorities equally as the “indigenous” Greeks (Romanucci-Ross, De Vos & Tsuda 2006:90). Perhaps the recognition of cultural differences between the two could be satisfactory enough, instead of going all the way and recognising the Slavic “Macedonian” minority? Perhaps this group could be regarded as Greeks with a Greco-Slavic cultural heritage, just like with the Vlachs and the Pontians? Such considerations could be a very sound example of how ethnic and national identity can be separated (Mackridge & Yannakakis 1997:43).

Recommendations such as these raise important issues concerning the role of “civil society”, individuality and human rights within the Greek cultural context (Breslin Hughes, Phillips & Rosamond 2002:26-27). The Greek state is viewed as the guardian of the nation. Therefore the Greek definition of the nation “does not encourage the inclusion of linguistic, religious, and other minorities as equal members of the national imagined community” (Roudometoff 1996:280).

The foundation of Modern Greek identity rests on the linguistic and religious unity of the Greek-speaking Christians and the Greek Orthodox Church (Koliopoulos & Veremis 2002:129). Primary characteristics of the Greek Orthodox Church are the church’s organic unity and its spiritual character. The Greek Orthodox Church considers itself synonymous with society at large. Greek national identity is synonymous with the close-knit relationship between public institutions and society (Koliopoulos & Veremis 2002:154).

The Eastern Orthodox commonwealth began to fragment in the 19th century, although the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople remained as the Church’s leading representative. In the early 1830s the modern Greek nation was created as a unit, one that inherited this organic conceptualisation of society. This conceptualisation emerged gradually in an attempt to reconcile the Church’s Byzantine-Orthodox tradition with the secular Greek state (Karakasidou 1997:90).

The matter of why minorities have not been the recipients of protection in Greece is attributed to cultural criteria, not civic criteria. Nation-building in general stresses national homogeneity and Greece is by no means an exception (Dougherty & Pfaltzgraaf 2001:5). Therefore, the
minorities that “do not share the ethnic attributes associated with those who are legitimate members of the Greek-speaking and Greek Orthodox community face sanctions from local society” (Pollis 1992:26). When examining the Greek context, the rights of the citizen are extended to an individual based on his or her membership in the Greek nation. That courtesy however is not extended to non-members. As far as the Slavic “Macedonian” minority goes, such treatment is based on the suspicion that their loyalty to the state is questionable. Such treatment, however, may very easily garnish sympathy and even active support for the cause of the Slavic “Macedonian” minority.

5.6 The Greek Argument Against the Slavic “Macedonian” Identity

It is a norm that national arguments should not be accepted with applying a critique to them as they contain a strong “mythical” element. The Greek and Slavic “Macedonian” national arguments are not exempted from this. Greek and Bulgarian historiographers have questioned the factual basis of the Slavic “Macedonian” argument. There are two points on this argument that are particularly controversial. The first is that the word “Macedonian” has not been used as a regional form of identification, but as a national one and this has been done since the second half of the 19th century. The second is that the majority of the Slavic population in the Macedonian region has been identified with the separatist movement (Pettifer 2001:227-228).

The relationship between Bulgarians and Slavic “Macedonians” has been a strong and ambivalent one. Slavic “Macedonian” national identity is understood by Bulgaria as a negative, because it denies Bulgarian identity (Bideleux & Jeffries 2007:414). A relationship between national identities such as this one is not unique to a case like this. A similar example is found when looking at Argentina and Uruguay in South America.

John Markoff, an American Professor of Sociology and History, when commenting on this issue noted that the identity of Uruguay is based on the validity of Argentinian national identity (Montecinos & Markoff 2010:30). According to Markoff, a new nation can accept as having derived from another nation, because such a premise nullifies the purpose of nation-building.
On the other hand, every nation needs a unique and honorable “myth” of ancestry (Montecinos & Markoff 2010:32). History thus becomes an instrument used to cultivate national consciousness and in turn establish a sense of loyalty and unity. Given these considerations, the relationship between Slavic “Macedonia” and Bulgaria has been an unclear one, because of the way the historical record has been interpreted. The relationship between the two countries was rather problematic in the 1960s; Yugoslavia had declared certain historical figures, monuments and events as “Macedonian”. These declarations caused considerable friction between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria (Bennet 1995:219).

The outcome of such declarations was a cause for cultural and political conflict between Greeks, Bulgarians, and Slavic “Macedonians” all vying to appropriate the historical record as part of a particular nation’s past. Historical record is very important because it gives a genealogy that displays a specific population’s cultural identity and distinction (Haglund & Macfarlane 1999:19). The use of the historical record is political because it creates and attaches strong conceptions in a population group’s national foundations which are aimed at creating cultural cohesion (Horowitz 2000:54).

Looking at the Bulgarian narrative, the existence of historical figures and medieval monuments has caused tension between the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Bulgaria (Pettifer 2001:55). The case of Gotse Delchev, a leading figure of the IMRO, is a very good example. Robert Kaplan is another American journalist who has provided much coverage in the Balkans. He gives a very different view when reporting on this issue (Kaplan 1991:98). Kaplan met a Bulgarian diplomat in Greece who scoffed at the suggestion of Macedonia. The diplomat stated to Kaplan that “Gotse Delchev was a Bulgarian. He was educated in Sofia. Bulgaria funded his guerrilla activities. He spoke a Western-Bulgarian dialect. How could he be something that does not exist?” (Kaplan 1991:99).

However, Kaplan went on to report contrasting statements made from the “other side of the fence”. Odre Ivanovski is a Slavic “Macedonian” historian. According to him, the Bulgarians too are guilty of falsifying history. He went so far as to call the Bulgarians ‘Tartars’ (Roudometof 2000:20).
As stated in the second chapter, a branch of Bulgarian descent comes from the Bulgars. The Bulgars were semi-nomadic Turkic or Tartar peoples (Baynes 1952:223). But this was not only a branch of descent. Nevertheless, Ivanovski stated the following to Kaplan: “The Bulgarians, you know, have specialised teams who invent books about Gotse Delchev. They bribe foreign scholars with cash and give them professorships in order to put their names on the covers of these books...How could Gotse Delchev be Bulgarian? He was born in Macedonia. He spoke Macedonian, not Bulgarian. How could he be a Bulgarian?” (Mtholyoke 2014).

This issue carries a very strong emotional appeal, when looking at the tone of this debate and the contrasting argumentative lines. It is quite problematic when local diplomats and historians become involved in these affairs. Diplomats and historians, by and large, adopt strong nationalistic viewpoints for professional reasons or gains (Reynolds 1997:23-25). Such gains are attached to power and prestige because the diplomats and historians support the popular beliefs of the people and the righteousness of their national argument (Reynolds 1997:56).

This issue has been raised a number of times in this discourse: the Greek reaction to the Slavic “Macedonian” argument revolves around the name “Macedonia” and the relationship between the Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) modern inhabitants and the legacy of the Ancient Macedonians (Foucalt 1984:28). Greece continues to accuse the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) of “creating a national history that implicitly links its inhabitants with those of Ancient Macedonia and in doing so of usurping the heritage of Ancient Greece” (Papavizas 2006:243).

Greek academics have and continue to present historical and archaeological evidence to prove the Ancient Macedonians were part of the Ancient Greek world in every sphere namely ethnic, cultural and linguistic (Klok 1999:2). Thus, non-Greek claims to Macedonia are illegitimate. Greece does not recognise the Slavic “Macedonians” as a separate nation (Poulton 2000:182). Greece insists they are of Bulgarian origin and that the term “Macedonia” was used as a regional republic in a communist attempt to annex Northern Greece to Tito’s Yugoslavia (Papavizas 2006:15).

This issue relates to the ethnic diversity of the Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) population (Hupchick 1995:97). The demographics in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) are mixed; this
fact is used in the Greek narrative to prove that only a minority in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) is in fact Slavic “Macedonian”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slavic “Macedonian”</td>
<td>1,297,181</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanian</td>
<td>509,083</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>77,959</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>53,879</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbian</td>
<td>35,939</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnian Muslim</td>
<td>19,021</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlachs</td>
<td>9,695</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14,887</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By examining the above figures, changes can be noted when comparing the census results of the People’s Republic of Macedonia in 1981 and 1991. The above figures may also offer an insight into the demographics of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) today. The conclusion would be that Slavic “Macedonians” are the majority in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Such findings would proclaim Greece’s claims regarding the non-existence of Slavic “Macedonians” as exaggerations.

The Albanian population in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) has a tremendous desire to unite with neighbouring Albania (Hudson 2003:150). They frequently complain they are oppressed by the Slavic “Macedonians”. In January 1992, ethnic Albanians were dissatisfied with their standing in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and took part in a referendum regarding their status. The Slavic “Macedonian” government proclaimed the referendum illegal. Nonetheless, out of the 92% of eligible voters that participated, 74% voted for autonomy (Perry 1994:36).
In 1993, there was concern that the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) would turn into another Bosnia (Tsoukalis 2003:190). This prompted the American government to send a small number of troops into the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) to prevent further ethnic conflict in the Balkans (Hudson 2003:66). More troops were sent in 1994 and by then the major Albanian party (the Party for Democratic Prosperity or PDP) split into a conservative and a radical wing, with the radicals being the most dominant in the party setup (Phillips 2004:97). This new radical leadership demanded more from the Slavic “Macedonian” government, which could have potentially caused further ethnic polarisation.

The Slavic “Macedonian” government was prepared to compromise and it made provision for greater inclusion of the Albanians into the army and the state (Phillips 2004:65). These issues may be of geopolitical and strategic importance, but they do not pertain to the content of the political disagreement between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

Scholars need to look at the Greek discourse on “Macedonia” very closely in order to understand why the affirmation of Slavic “Macedonian” national identity caused such a ferocious reaction in Greece (Klok 1999:2). There is a long tradition of writing in Greece when it comes to writing about the “Macedonian Question”. Yet, there is considerably less writing about the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) or as the Greeks call it, the “Republic of Skopje” (Shea 2008:4).

Greek historians are fully aware of the activities of IMRO and other lesser Macedonian separatist movements. I would like to briefly mention two important concepts which are pertinent to Greece’s narrative, namely Supremacism and Separatism. Greg Johnson, an American journalist with the Los Angeles Times, has provided clear definitions of the two concepts. Supremacism is the belief that a race should rule over other races. Separatism is the belief that all ethnicities have the right to survive, to flourish, and pursue their own destinies through political control in an exclusive living space.

Having taken the above concepts into account, the Greek narrative lacks persuasion because it does not distinguish the two concepts very effectively. In relation to the “Macedonian Question” both separatist and supremacist movements favored an autonomous or independent
Macedonia during the period of 1893 to 1913 (Aarbakke 2003:97). But because the Greeks lack the clarity that exists between these two movements, Slavic “Macedonian” separatists and supremacists are regarded by the Greeks as Bulgarian nationalist organisations with the objective of annexing “Slavic” Macedonia to Bulgaria (Hupchick 1995:124). The Slavic “Macedonian” nation is not given much serious consideration when looking at the Separatists’ argument that the Slavic “Macedonian” Slavs are a nation of their own.

From a historical perspective, Greece has maintained that the Slavic population that was faithful to the Orthodox Patriarchate between 1870 and 1913 was Greek on the basis of subjective national identification (Aarbakke 2003:45). The very same population group was claimed as their own prospective nationals by the IMRO. Given these considerations, the national arguments of Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) differ. Nevertheless, neither side has disagreed on the majority of the factual events of the period.

According to Greek historiographers, the Illinden Uprising was not a revolt by the Macedonian liberation movement but rather an attempt by Bulgarian agents to encourage an insurrection that would force the government of the Ottoman Empire to offer autonomy to Macedonia, thus initiating the first step to a Greater Bulgaria by ultimately annexing Slavic “Macedonia” (Aarbakke 2003:63). The responsibility of the revolt has been placed on the IMRO revolutionaries. They have also been heavily criticised by Greek academics for this, as they left a significant Greek and Hellenised Vlach population in Krusevo to be slaughtered by the Ottoman Turks (Brown 2003:110).

Greek authors respond to the Republic of Macedonia’s (FYROM) claim to represent the ethnic “Macedonian nation” by questioning the literary and historical foundations of this claim. The Greek linguist Nikolaos Andriotis published a book in 1960 about the Slavic “Macedonian” language’s artificial nature. Andriotis first gives a short historical account of the Ancient Macedonians, followed by the Slavic presence in Macedonia. Andriotis’ book then proceeds to examine the relationships between Serbian, Bulgarian and Slavic “Macedonian”.

He concludes by saying that standardisation of the Slavic “Macedonian” language after World War II in the People’s Republic of Macedonia was an artificial construction by Marshal Tito’s
Yugoslavian government for political purposes (Papavizas 2006:26). Other linguists who feel Slavic “Macedonian” should be treated as a language rather than a regional dialect have been very critical of Andriotis’ work (De Bray 1980:195). Critics of Andriotis’ work explain this difference in opinion because the consensus is that “language and dialect are in no way definite quantities” (Lunt 1984:91) and that “the decision as to whether a given transitional South Slav dialect belongs to one or another language is not a linguistic one but a sociopolitical one” (Friedman 1985:36).

Due to the fact that all South Slavic languages are closely connected, it would seem it is a political process that distinguishes a language from a dialect and not a scientific one (Barbour & Carmichael 2002:225). If that is in fact the case, the establishment of the People’s Republic of Macedonia occurred on the basis that the local linguistic medium was a language not merely a dialect (Barbour & Carmichael 2002:229). This naturally opposes the views of Bulgarian scholars who have always implied that Slavic “Macedonian” is a Bulgarian dialect. But to recap, Andriotis considered the creation of the People’s Republic of Macedonia a fabrication and his interpretation of the Slavic “Macedonian” language was distorted by his own value judgments and emotions.

### 5.7 Supporting the Greek Argument

The next important book espousing Greek nationalism was Nikolaos Martis’ *The Forgery of the History of Macedonia* written in 1983. Martis, a Greek “Macedonian” and a former minister of Northern Greece, writes that he was “inspired to start his project by the ignorance of foreign audiences concerning the “realities” of the Macedonian Question. Like Andriotis, but at considerable length this time, Martis sets out to describe the history of Ancient Macedonia and to trace the cultural and linguistic origins of the Ancient Macedonians back to Ancient Greece” (Martis 2007:29-47). He also insists that in antiquity “the name Macedonia was applied only to the Western part of Greek Macedonia, where the ancient kingdom of Macedonia was located. Later on, during the reigns of Philip II (359-336 BC) and Alexander the Great (336-323 BC), the
kingdom was expanded to include the Eastern part of Greek Macedonia as well as the Vardar region, and, later, to incorporate huge territories in the eastern Mediterranean” (Martis 2007:99).

From this, Martis concludes that the name Macedonia is falsely used by the Republic of Macedonia, since this part of the Balkans did not have any relationship with Ancient Macedonia. Martis’ book (which also includes a summary of interwar developments) won a distinguished award from the Greek Academy of Athens. Its line of argument has been adopted in various instances by Greek officials and by the Greek press, thus becoming the foundation on which the Greek reaction to FYROM is based (Grigoriadis 1978:22).

Martis’ narrative questions whether his conclusions are supported by his findings. Although the Macedonian side affirms that the Ancient Macedonians were not Ancient Greeks, they also affirm the Slavic character of the modern-day Slavic “Macedonian” identity (Poulton 2000:24-25). In addition to this, Martis’ argument does not focus enough on the modern character of subjective national identity.

The truth is that “Macedonia” was a term applied during the 19th century to a territory with unclear borders that was larger than the ancient kingdom of Macedon (Poulton 2000:1). During the Ottoman period, the term “Macedonia” emerged in the regional maps of the 19th century at the same time when Balkan nationalisms took flight (Wilkinson 1951:17). Thus, one may assert that the very definition of “Macedonia” stems from the national claims to this Ottoman territory by Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs.

Martis’ narrative is not necessarily about historical record or the origins of national identity. Such a narrative is based on a manipulation of the national ethnogenesis and its repercussions (Bideleux & Jeffries 2007:13-14). This narrative can only be understood by the Greeks who view it as official Greek history. The Greeks of Modern Greece regard themselves as the heirs of Ancient Greece. This claim plays a key role in the development of the Greek national argument, and is related to the influence of the Enlightenment in Southeastern Europe (Kitromilides 1983:199). The West had a preoccupation with the mythical nature of Ancient Greece during the 1700s. Greece was known as the birthplace of Western civilisation, and the neoclassical
intellectual discourse of that time inspired the Greek Orthodox intellectuals to develop their own genealogy that linked Modern Greece with Ancient Greece (Campbell & Sherard 1968:19).

Elie Kedourie was a British historian and authority on Middle Eastern history. He saw Greek nationalism as the predecessor of third-world nationalisms (Kedourie 1985:44). He believed that the Western idea of the nation had a considerable impact on changing the theocratic social structure of the Balkans. The Ottoman was always considered backward and Balkan intellectuals seized the opportunity to introduce the new idea of the nation in order to enhance the cultural and social conditions and thus modernise the Ottoman state.

This period was one of Enlightenment and consequently a period of Greek awakening. With the spirit of Enlightenment in mind, the introduction of the Western idea of the nation in Southeastern Europe allowed these intellectuals to merge the legacy of classical antiquity with the modern inhabitants of the region (Koliopoulos & Veremis 2004:163). One protagonist of this intellectual movement was Adamantios Korais (Dakin 1973:24). He “designed” a successful political “programme” that combined the ideas of Enlightenment with those of “national liberation” (Koliopoulos & Veremis 2004:230).

The role of foreign domination can be seen as the reason the nation declined during the modern era. The West preserved the knowledge of the Ancient Greeks which in turn was adopted by them and this allowed the Modern Greeks to rise again and reclaim their proper position in the world. The historical continuity between the Ancient and Modern Greeks was absolutely critical (Roudometof 1996:281).

According to Korais, an important reason for the modernisation of the Hellenic world was the claim of the historical continuity from the Ancient Greeks to the Modern Greeks (Woodhouse 1977:32). For Korais, the Greeks had to either become “worthy” of their name or they had to stop possessing it (Koliopoulos & Veremis 2004:42). Korais’ modernist political “programme” was a combination of Enlightenment rationalism and nationalist aspirations. As far as local society went, the aim of this “programme” was to strengthen the Modern Greeks’ claim as heirs of the Ancient Greeks by revitalising Greek cultural identity (Koliopoulos & Veremis 2004:361). This genealogical connection between the Ancient Greeks and the Modern Greeks
was soon afterward removed from the political context of Korais’ programme that promoted liberal doctrines, progress and modernisation (Roudometof 1996:282).

Paschalis Kitromilides is a Greek Professor of Political Science. In his book *Enlightenment and Ideologies* he identifies the intellectual trends and ideological traditions that shaped a religiously defined community of Greek-speaking people into a modern nation-state (Kitromilides 1983:55). According to him, “neoclassicism afforded Modern Greeks the opportunity to conceive themselves as the descendants and heirs of the Ancient Greeks whose land they inhabited and whose language they spoke. This conception of ethnic continuity between the classical and modern Hellenes was the direct product of the reception of Enlightenment neoclassicism into Greek thought, and it provided the basic ingredient of the self-definition of the modern Greeks” (Kitromilides 1983:59).

Greece’s geographical boundaries and ethnic characteristics have been unclear for quite some time, even though Modern Greek identity has been based on the assumption of historical continuity. Greece’s national argument really took flight during the second half of the 19th century (Roudometof 1996:282).

But between 1839 and 1852 three key ideological changes occurred in the Balkans. The first was the gradual rise of the Bulgarian national movement. The second was the religious revival within the Greek kingdom. Both of these changes have already been discussed. The third, which will now be discussed, was the introduction of Jakob Fallmerayer’s theory in 1830 which challenged the idea of historical continuity. These changes suggested the urgency for a different evaluation of Greece’s historical past (Politis 1993:36-39).

Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer was a Tyrolean historian, politician, journalist and traveler. He was born in present-day Italy, but his heritage was Hapsburg (Austrian). Fallmerayer is best known for his controversial theories concerning the racial origins of the Greeks (Gourgouris 1996:141-142).

Fallmerayer travelled to Greece and specifically “Morea”, today known as the Peloponnese. Based on what he saw, in 1830 he produced *Geschichte der Halbinsel Morea während des*
Mittelal ters (History of the Morea Peninsula during the Middle Ages) (Trudgill 2002:131). From this work, Fallmerayer developed his theory that the Ancient Greek population of the south Balkans had been replaced during the migrating Slavic peoples (Roudometof 1996:283).

The foreword to his central theory states the following: “The race of the Hellenes has been wiped out in Europe. Physical beauty, intellectual brilliance, innate harmony and simplicity, art, competition, city, village, the splendour of column and temple — indeed, even the name has disappeared from the surface of the Greek continent...Not the slightest drop of undiluted Hellenic blood flows in the veins of the Christian population of present-day Greece” (Roudometof 1996:283).

Fallmerayer interpreted this phenomenon further by indicating the possibility that the “Latin” and the “German” nations would gradually be overwhelmed with time by the “Slavic” nations. Fallmerayer had argued that the Great Powers (Britain, France and Russia) who had supported the Greek War of Independence had misjudged the character of the new Greek state because they had been consumed by “classical intoxication” (Roudometof 1996:284). Fallmerayer’s work was deeply ideological and it was driven by political motives and aspirations.

The reason behind Fallmerayer’s strong political sentiment was the threat of a Russian expansion to the Mediterranean. Fallmerayer thus wanted a strong Ottoman Empire and he appealed to the Great Powers to forget their philhellenic virtues and quell the Greek Revolution against the Turks (Veloudis 1982:14).

Fallmerayer’s work pitted him against the Philhellenes in Europe and particularly against the Bavarian King Ludwig I (Woodhouse 1977:111). Ludwig was a committed Philhellene who was advancing the candidacy of his son, Otto, for the Greek throne. Otto would later become King of Greece in 1832 (St. Clair 1972:348). Ludwig’s philhellenism was embedded in the belief that the Greek revolt against the Ottomans’ rule would bring about the return of Ancient Greek virtue (Leeb 1996:58). Ludwig’s disapproval of Fallmerayer’s writings delayed Fallmerayer’s election to the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities.
There were other academic reviews that were critical of Fallmerayer’s work. The Slovenian linguist Jernej Kopitar accused Fallmerayer of philological errors by misinterpreting the historical sources by the German historians Johann Zinkeisen and Carl Hopf. Scholars of the new Greek state fiercely opposed Fallmerayer’s ideas. This opposition further encouraged the search to prove historical continuity within Greek historiography by proving the connection between Ancient Greece and Modern Greece (Veloudis 1982:20).

I would like to once again return to Greek irredentism and the Great Idea. In 1844 in a speech to the Greek Parliament, the politician Ioannis Kolettis declared that the Greek kingdom’s boundaries were by no means consistent with the true boundaries of the Greek nation (Campbell & Sherard 1968:89). As mentioned earlier in the chapter, this was the first articulation of Greek irredentism as it led to the conceptualisation of the Great Idea (Clogg 1997:48).

The immediate aim of Kolettis’ speech was to protect the public sector positions held by the Greeks not born in the Kingdom of Greece. His speech didn’t do much to support its immediate aim, but it became a turning point for the development of Greek nationalism. Kolettis also supported Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, who went on to write the discourse The History of the Greek Nation from 1865 to 1874. Paparrigopoulos himself was born outside of the Kingdom of Greece, in Constantinople (Dimaras 1986:119-124).

Nassau William Senior was an English economist who for the better part of the 19th century advised the English government on economic and social policy (Roudometof 1996:285). In 1856 in the aftermath of the Crimean War, he reported the following comments that had been made by a Greek from Athens: “Do not think that we consider this corner of Greece as our country, or Athens as our capital, or the Parthenon as our national temple. The Parthenon belongs to an age and to a religion with which we have no sympathy. Our country is the vast territory of which Greek is the language, and the faith of the Orthodox Greek Church is the religion” (Clogg 1997:253)

During the second part of the 19th century, Greek Romantic historiographers were given the task of rectifying the Eastern Orthodox and Byzantine past. Rum millet is the Turkish term for
“Roman Nation” (Mackridge & Yannakakis 1997:104). This term was the name of the Eastern Orthodox Christian community into the Ottoman Empire. These historiographers provided an ideological legitimisation for the inclusion of this millet (Rum) in the Greek nation by constructing a history that assisted the plight of the Great Idea (Mackridge & Yannakakis 1997:118).

Paparrigopoulos’ official version of Greek history was firmly placed in the principle of an unbroken historical continuity between Ancient and Modern Greece. In his historical narrative he aimed at reinterpreting medieval Byzantium as a manifestation of Hellenism during the Middle Ages and in doing so was able to link the Ancient Greek world to the Modern Greek world. (Clogg 1997:2) Thus Greek ethnogenesis was able to date 3,000 years back given the historic continuity that had been assumed (Koliopoulos & Veremis 202:246).

Another official narrative for the modern Greek state is the Romantic historiography’s reinterpretation of Greek history (Koliopoulos & Veremis 2002:135). This narrative has hardly been disputed since the 1870s from the time of its consolidation.

---

45 http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millet_(Empire_ottoman)
An essential element of Paparrigopoulos’ work concerning strong historical continuity was the Greek nature of the Ancient Macedonian kingdom (Roudometof 1996:282). The initial boundaries of the Kingdom of Greece, affirmed in 1832, were deemed to be identical to those of Ancient Greece. The Ancient Macedonians were not seen as members of Ancient Greece at the time, but as conquerors (Shea 2008:38).

Greece’s irredentism policy (the Great Idea), is a good illustration to show how the Greek historical narrative and Greece’s nationalist aspirations had been drawn closer together during the 19th century. Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos was a vociferous nationalist and he was very involved in the political debates of that period (Koliopoulos & Veremis 2002:233). He was one of the founders of the Society for the Propagation of Hellenic Letters. Founded in 1969, this was one of the major nationalist organisations of the late 1800s (Dimaras 1986:241). The duty of Paparrigopoulos was not only national but it was also scientific (Politis 1993:147). His most important work, The History of the Greek Nation was partially funded by national societies and state agencies.

Copies of Paparrigopoulos’ project were distributed to the University of Athens as well as the municipalities of the city (Dimaras 1986:227-234). In 1877, the Greek parliament spent 6,000 drachmas so that Paparrigopoulos’ work could be translated into French the following year. A conference was held in 1879 in Athens where all active Greek associations outside the Kingdom of Greece participated. Paparrigopoulos oversaw the process to ensure the associations turned his work into a foundational text. In 1882, the Historical and Ethnological Society of Greece was founded with the aim of “proving” that an unbroken unity and continuity between Ancient and Modern Greece existed (Vergopoulos 1994:180-181).

Greece used The History of the Greek Nation as an effective weapon to counteract Bulgarian claims on “Macedonia” in the 19th century at the start of this dispute (Kofos 1989:238). The Greeks consolidated their “historical” claims to the Macedonian territory by emphasising the continuity between Ancient and Modern Greece. Taking this interpretation into account, “Macedonia” referred specifically to the ancient kingdom of Macedon during the rule of Philip II (Shea 2008:40). By utilising these interpretations, Greek historiographers did not accommodate
the development of digressing views. Owing to this, historical works over the last century remained faithful to the Greek national argument.

The Balkan Wars were two conflicts that took place in the Balkan Peninsula in 1912 and 1913. Greece, Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria defeated the Ottoman Empire in the First Balkan War (Rossos 2008:125). In the Second Balkan War Greece, Serbia and Montenegro defeated a dissatisfied Bulgaria (Petsalis-Diomidis 1978:16). These wars caused the Ottoman Empire to lose virtually its whole grip on Europe (Maloudis 1998).

The First Balkan War was fought from October 1912 to May 1913 (Benson 2001:19). The combined armies of Greece, Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria defeated the numerically inferior and strategically disadvantaged armies of the Ottoman Empire and they achieved much success (Mazower 2004:294). Greece, Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria captured and partitioned almost all of the remaining Ottoman territories in Europe (Petsalis-Diomidis 1978:17). Despite its success, Bulgaria was dissatisfied with the division of the territory of Macedonia and this led to the Second Balkan War.

The Second Balkan War began when a displeased Bulgaria attacked its former allies, Greece and Serbia, on 16 June, 1913 (Forster 1941:58-59). The Greek and Serbian armies resisted the Bulgarian offensive and after counterattacking, they entered Bulgaria’s borders. Bulgaria had previously engaged in territorial disputes with Romania and this war gave Romania the opportunity to intervene against Bulgaria as well (Crampton 2005:134). The Ottoman Empire saw the opportunity to regain some lost territories from the First Balkan War and also entered the conflict (Petsalis-Diomidis 1978:18).

When Romanian troops closed in on the capital city Sofia, an inundated Bulgaria called for a truce (Crampton 2005:135). This led to the Treaty of Bucharest where Bulgaria had to relinquish certain gains from the First Balkan War to Greece, Serbia, Montenegro and Romania. Under the Treaty of Constantinople Bulgaria had to cede Edirne (Adrianople) to the Ottoman Empire (Forster 1941:60).
The Macedonian region was officially liberated with the end of the Second Balkan War (Petsalis-Diomidis 1978:20). Greece was awarded most of the Macedonian territory and this pleased the Greek national aspirations (Clogg 1997:83). From a Greek point-of-view the complex Macedonian Question appeared to have been resolved.

Figure 19: The Balkans before the Balkan Wars

Figure 20: The Balkans after the First Balkan War in 1912

46 http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/his/CoreArt/maps/Balkans1911.jpg
47 http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/his/CoreArt/maps/Balkans1912.1stwar.jpg
In 1944 the problem resurfaced with the establishment of the People’s Republic of Macedonia in Yugoslavia. This problem became the source of political strain and tension between Greece and Yugoslavia (Rossos 2008:204). But this problem remained contained as long as the Yugoslavian Federation remained intact. With the collapse of Yugoslavia, the problem re-emerged, along with the controversies of the 19th century Macedonian Question.

Taking the above narrative into account, clarity is given to the significance and emotional character of Martis’ argument in *The Falsification of Macedonian History*. With the independence of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), “Macedonia is Greek” became the most prevalent statement made not only by Greek nationalists, but by the Greek public and the Greek diaspora (Papavizas 2006:238). There is no doubt that Greek “Macedonia” is Greek. But the Greek narrative has strived to proclaim a more abstract and different discourse. One that states that the name “Macedonia” plays a fundamental role in Greek identity and that no one can claim to be a “Macedonian” without being Greek (Martis 2007:169).

Martis’ argument is therefore considered a meaningful one only in the following context which argues that: “The Ancient Macedonians were Greeks and since Modern Greeks are the

---

48 [http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/his/CoreArt/maps/Balkans1913.2ndwar.jpg](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/his/CoreArt/maps/Balkans1913.2ndwar.jpg)
descendants of the Ancient Macedonians the name “Macedonia” and the territory “Macedonia” are legitimately Greek” (Danforth 1995:30). Any claim against this argument is an “attack” not only on Greek identity but also on the integrity of the Greek nation. In a nutshell, this is Greece’s accusation against the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).“

The purpose of the hype behind the Greek public to defend the “Greekness” of Macedonia by claiming exclusive rights to the name “Macedonia” and by denying Slavic “Macedonians” the right to employ this word for their own self-identification can be viewed as two-fold. Firstly, it is centred on the *political* objective that asserts that Greek “Macedonia” is overwhelmingly populated by Greeks. Secondly, it is also centred on the *emotional* objective that aims to affirm the Greek population’s sense of national identity (Roudometof 1996:284).
6. Conclusion

The Balkans and specifically the former Yugoslavia have provided sound examples when looking at the process of nation-building and national identity. Both of these processes are influenced by nationhood, and to a smaller degree, by citizenship. Citizenship is overshadowed by nationhood in this instance, because the latter is more specific (particularistic) whereas the former is broader (universal). Over the past century, states have been renamed on a number of instances and their borders have been shifted almost just as frequently.

Evidence suggests that the Ancient Macedonians were Greek. But that really isn’t the point considering the fact that the present ethnicities of the people in the Balkan Peninsula have evolved over the past three thousand years. Migrations and conquests have ensured that societies and peoples do not remain homogenous.

By adopting a historical approach and delving into the past, we have seen how a nation and its very own identity is influenced and determined by religious, linguistic, ethnic and cultural factors. We have seen the importance which the national churches have played in the Balkans when it came to determining a population group’s national identity, irrespective of the fact that the church belonged to the same religion (Christianity) and shared the same dogmatic beliefs (Orthodox).

We have also seen how language serves a fundamental purpose as far as the recognition of a national state is concerned. It isn’t difficult for a language to lose its unique, independent character when claims are made professing it to be merely a dialect of another language.

We have seen how ethnicities have evolved due to migration and conquest, and how these newly-founded ethnicities can be significant enough to seek to create a different nation, often very different to its ancestral progenitors.

History has shown us how political movements such as irredentism have emerged and whether or not they are indeed justified. It all depends on which side of the fence one is sitting when determining the just nature of irredentism, be it expansion, protection or retribution.
Greece’s traditional ideology seeks to prove its legitimate possession of Macedonia by relying on the notion of historical continuity. According to Greek ideology, historical continuity must be prevalent in the case of the “Macedonian Question” because the Greek nation has had historical ties with Macedonia for the past three thousand years. Despite the fact that evidence exists suggesting that the inhabitants of Ancient Macedonia were Greek, Ancient Macedonian historical figures (such as Alexander the Great) are regarded more as cosmopolitan than Greek, due to their conquering exploits of expansion. Thus, licence is provided to any state to claim these figures as their own, regardless of what the scientific evidence may suggest.

As mentioned previously, the Macedonian region today is one of mixed ethnicities where the rights of its citizens are linked to nationhood. Therefore these civil rights based on nationhood solidify the existence of minorities in neighbouring countries, which again try to justify the motives of irredentism by professing its role as that of the protector. For both Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), nationhood is a key component to nation-building. Greek and Slavic “Macedonian” national ideologies contain essential ingredients for the formation and preservation of their own national identity.

The Greek ideology states that Macedonia is a name and a territory that is a vital component of the modern Greek identity. For Slavic “Macedonians”, the territory of Macedonia is the single most important component they possess which not only allows them to distinguish themselves from Bulgarians, but also affords them the right to self-determination.

In 1991 the newly-proclaimed independent Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) claimed to represent the Slavic “Macedonian” nation in what was then the former Yugoslavian federation, which was in the process of disintegrating. Greece’s instant protest to the use of the name “Macedonia” confirmed that this new republic would pose a threat to Greece’s sovereign identity. Furthermore, such a proclamation would also put the credibility of Greece’s national ideology to the test.

National ideologies assist in defining a population. Ideologies also influence population groups when it comes to securing their loyalty and allegiance. When assessing the question of the Slavic “Macedonian” minorities in Greece, it is clear that traditional ideology is predominantly
politically orientated. Any form of recognition of a Slavic “Macedonian” minority in Greece could be disastrous for Greece, because it would ultimately recognise the existence of a separate “Macedonian” nation and ultimately a separate “Macedonian” state.

These are not reasonable times in a region that has been overcome by national and ethnic strife. National ideologies are located in the core of this strife. In order to create a peaceful platform that will accommodate the resolution of the Macedonian Question, it is necessary for both Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) to first accept and comprehend each other’s arguments. If peaceful symbiosis is to prevail between these two neighbouring states, it is critical for them to first review and moderate their ideologies in order to facilitate a solution or compromise that will be mutually accepted and respected.
7. Bibliography

7.1 Books and Articles


Hanson, V.D., 2001, Why the West has Won – Carnage and Culture from Salamis to Vietnam. London: Faber & Faber.


Hill, P., 1992, Language Standardization in the South Slavonic Area”. Sociolinguistica.


7.2 Electronic Publications


8. Appendix

List of National Rulers

Greece

Presidents (1974 – Present)

Michail Stasinopoulos: 18 December 1974 – 19 June 1975
Christos Sartzetakis: 30 March 1985 – 4 May 1990
Konstantinos Karamanlis: 5 May 1990 – 10 March 1995
Konstantinos Stephanopoulos: 10 March 1995 – 12 March 2005
Karolos Papoulias: 12 March 2005 – Present

Prime Ministers (1974 – Present)

Tzannis Tzannetakis: 2 July 1989 – 12 October 1989
Xenophon Zolotas: 23 November 1989 – 11 April 1990
Konstantinos Mitsotakis: 11 April 1990 – 13 October 1993
Andreas Papandreou: 13 October 1993 – 22 January 1996
Konstantinos A. Karamanlis: 10 March 2004 – 6 October 2009
George A. Papandreou: 6 October 2009 – 11 November 2011
Lucas Papademos: 11 November 2011 – 16 May 2012
Panagiotis Pikrammenos: 16 May 2012 – 20 June 2012
Antonis Samaras: 20 June 2012 – Present

The Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)

Presidents (1991 – Present)

Boris Trajkovski: 15 December 1999 – 26 February 2004
Ljupco Jordanovski: 26 February 2004 – 12 May 2004
Branko Crvenkovski: 12 May 2004 – 12 May 2009
Gjorge Ivanov: 12 May 2009 – Present
Prime Ministers (1991 – Present)


Ljubco Georgievski: 30 November 1998 – 1 November 2002

Branko Crvenkovski: 1 November 2002 – 12 May 2004

Radmila Sekerinska: 12 May 2004 – 2 June 2004

Hari Kostov: 2 June 2004 – 18 November 2004

Radmila Sekerinska: 18 November 2004 – 17 December 2004


Nikola Gruevski: 27 August 2006 – Present

Serbia

Presidents (1991 – Present)


Milan Milutinovic: 29 December 1997 – 29 December 2002

Natasa Micic: 30 December 2002 – 4 February 2004

Dragan Marsicanin: 4 February 2004 – 3 March 2004

Vojislav Mihailovic: 3 March 2004 – 4 March 2004

Predrag Markovic: 4 March 2004 – 11 July 2004
Boris Tadic: 11 July 2004 – 5 April 2012

Slavica Dukic Dejanovic: 5 April 2012 – 31 May 2012

Tomislav Nikolic: 31 May 2012 – Present

Prime Ministers (1991 – Present)


Nikola Sainovic: 10 February 1993 – 18 March 1994


Vojislav Kostunica: 3 March 2004 – 7 July 2008


Ivica Dacic: 27 July 2012 – 27 April 2014

Aleksandar Vucic: 27 April 2014 – Present
Bulgaria

Presidents (1990 – Present)

Petar Mladenov: 3 April 1990 – 6 July 1990
Nikolai Todorov: 17 July 1990 – 1 August 1990
Zhelyu Zhelev: 1 August 1990 – 22 January 1997
Rosen Plevneliev: 22 January 2012 – Present

Prime Ministers (1990 – Present)

Dimitar Iliev Popov: 7 December 1990 – 8 November 1991
Ivan Kostov: 21 May 1997 – 24 July 2001
Simeon Sakskoburggotski\(^49\): 24 July 2001 – 17 August 2005

\(^49\) Formerly Simeon II, Tsar of Bulgaria.


Plamen Oresharski: 29 May 2013 – 6 August 2014

Georgi Bliznashki: 6 August 2014 – Present
9. Abstract

The body of my dissertation is essentially divided into four parts: A historical outlook of the Macedonian Question; a discussion of the sociopolitical aspects of ethnic “Macedonians”; a political overview of the Macedonian Question; and an examination of the geopolitical considerations on the Macedonian Question.

When dealing with the first part, I looked at the history of the Macedonian region from antiquity up until the present. I began with the era of the Kingdom of Macedon or Ancient Macedonia, followed by Roman rule when Ancient Macedonia became a Roman province. The brief “Barbarian” occupation of the Macedonian region is followed by the period of the Byzantine Empire, where Macedonia was often caught in a tug-of-war between the Byzantines, the Bulgars and the Slavs. The regional competition between these three forces was to have a profound influence on today’s ethnic and political dynamics.

The Ottoman rule of Macedonia is next in the chronological line, because despite it being a long and turbulent period, it is a significant one because the demise of the Ottoman Empire was preceded by the independence of countries such as Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria and the subsequent awakening of an independent “Macedonia” consciousness. This independent “Macedonia” awakening is followed by the two Balkan Wars and the two World Wars. World War II is a very important period because it was during this time that Josip Tito becomes the leader of Yugoslavia and it was Tito who was instrumental in creating the People’s Republic of Macedonia in 1945, which would later become the independent Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) in 1991. This ultimately “unleashes” the Macedonian Question.

The second part of my dissertation deals with the sociopolitical aspects of ethnic “Macedonians”. These aspects play a fundamental role in determining any nation’s identity. Such aspects would include: the “Macedonian” language; the “Macedonian” Orthodox Church and traditional “Macedonian” symbols. According to Greece and Bulgaria, the “Macedonian” language is considered a dialect of Bulgarian. Thus the “Macedonian” language’s plight to be recognised as a unique language of an independent state is analysed here. Similarly, the
establishment of the autonomous “Macedonian” Orthodox Church is analysed, because the church also plays an important role when it comes to national identity, especially in the Balkans. The “Macedonian” Orthodox Church was declared schismatic by the Serbian Orthodox Church and is therefore not recognised by any of the other Orthodox Churches in the region.

The final sociopolitical aspect analysed in this chapter is that of traditional “Macedonian” symbols. Such symbols represent something deeply rooted in the history and the national pride of any nation. I have discussed the national flag of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and more importantly its utilisation of the “Vergina Sun”. The “Vergina Sun” was regarded as a Greek emblem since 1977 when its image was unearthed in Northern Greece by the archaeologist Manolis Andronikos.

Other symbols are historical figures from Ancient Macedonia (particularly Alexander the Great) and the assigning of their names to physical structures throughout the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). The final symbol is the “United Macedonia” salute. The “United Macedonia” salute strikes a more political and militant chord, as it prescribes the unification of Macedonia into one country. Such a suggestion is one of irredentism which has to be deemed as an implicit threat on a nation’s sovereignty.

The third part of my dissertation carries a political impetus. It deals with the political implication of the Macedonian Question, by examining the movement of irredentism and the symbols of the “Vergina Sun” and “Alexander the Great” from a political perspective. This examination also deals with the political consequences of the recognition of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and of the Slavic “Macedonian” minority in Greece.

The final part of the dissertation examines the geopolitical considerations of the Macedonian Question. One consideration is that of nationalism in relation to identity, and the other is that of nationhood in relation to citizenship. The Greek and Slavic “Macedonian” arguments in the Macedonian Question are appraised, which again become intertwined with the recognition of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and the recognition of the Slavic “Macedonian” minority in Greece.