Battlefields of Memory
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The Macedonian Conflict and Greek Historical Culture

Erik Sjöberg
Abstract

In 1991, a diplomatic controversy arose between Greece and the newly independent Republic of Macedonia, regarding naming, minority rights and the use of historical symbols. The claims of the new state to the name Macedonia and the historical heritage associated with it were perceived as a threat against Greek national identity and history itself. Within months, the so-called Macedonian question came to dominate the Greek domestic and foreign policy agenda. In Greek public debate, the conflict blended with concerns about the nation’s past, present and future, which played into the challenges brought about by the end of the Cold War. The Macedonian conflict can thus be understood as symptomatic of a crisis in Greek historical culture, as well as a catalyst for broader concerns about the role of history in contemporary society.

This study explores the contexts in which the conflict evolved and how history was perceived, narrated and used by institutions, communities and individuals who sought to influence public opinion and policy-makers. The theoretical point of departure is the concept of historical culture, defined as the totality of discourses through which a society makes sense of itself, the present and the future through the interpretation of the past. In the study of historical culture, the notions of narratives and uses of history have been employed, with the notion of boundary-work as a supplementing analytical tool. The material of the study is primarily drawn from mainstream press, but also includes historiography. The study shows how the Macedonian controversy was intertwined with the identity- and memory-political demands of substate actors. Particular attention is paid to the emergence of a narrative on genocide among Greeks of Pontian origins. This happened in an age when traditional notions of national pride were being challenged by transnational history-cultural concerns about human rights and the notion of national guilt.

The study also sheds light on how academic historians dealt with issues brought about by demands for politically committed scholarship, objectivity, legitimacy and the need to adjust in a transnational setting.

Keywords: Greece, history, 20th century, historical culture, uses of history, Macedonian question, historiography, nationalism, genocide, identity politics.
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**Abbreviations**

AHII – American Hellenic Institute.

ASKI – *(Archeio Synchronis Koinonikis Istorias)*, Contemporary Social History Archives.

CUP – Cambridge University Press.


EAR – *(Elliniki Aristera)*, Greek Left; successor party of KKE Interior, later integrated into SYN.

EEE – *(Ethniki Enosis tis Elladas)*, National Union of Greece; interwar nationalist organisation.


ELAS – *(Ellinikos Laikos Apeleuztherotikos Stratos)*, Greek Popular Liberation Army; the armed wing of EAM.

EMS – *(Etaireia Makedonikon Spoudon)*, Society for Macedonian Studies.

FYROM – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

IMXA – *(Idryma Meleton Chersonison tou Aimon)*, Institute for Balkan Studies.

KAM – *(Kentro Apodimon Makedonon)*, Centre of Macedonians Abroad.

KARFI – *(Kinisis Aristeron Filosofikis Scholis)*, Left Movement of the Faculty of Humanities; student organisation at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

KEPOME – *(Kentro Pontiakon Meleton)*, Centre for Pontian Studies.


MAKIVE – *(Makedoniki Kinisi Valkanikis Evimerias)*, Macedonian Movement for Balkan Prosperity; (Slav) Macedonian minority rights movement in northern Greece.

ND – *(Nea Dimokratia)*, New Democracy (centre-right).


OESV – *(Organismos Ekdoseos Scholikon Vivlion)*, Organisation for the Publication of Schoolbooks; later OEDV *(Organismos Ekdoseos Didaktikon Vivlion)*, Organisation for the Publication of Textbooks.

ONNED – *(Organosi Neon Neas Dimokratias)*, Organisation of New Democracy Youth.

OSE – *(Organosi Sosialistikis Epanastasis)*, Organisation of Socialist Revolution (Trotskyite).
PPEI – *(Protovoulia Prostasias tis Ellinikis Istorias)*, Initiative for the Protection of Greek History; student organisation.
SAE – *(Symvoulio Apodimou Ellinismou)*, World Council of Hellenes Abroad.
SYN – *(Synaspismos tis Aristeras kai tis Proodou)*, Coalition of the Left and of Progress.
VMRO – *(Bulgarian: Vatreshna Makedonska Revolyutsonna Organizatsiya)*, Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation.
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1. Introduction

History is not the arena of some tricky politician or party-leader. History is a sacred thing, as worthy of reverence as God. And her enemies, within and outside of Greece, must be isolated as if they were the most harmful parasites.¹

This statement, written by an adolescent aspiring to become a journalist, was published in the letters to the editor section of a Greek weekly magazine in 1994. As such, it was by no means isolated. On the contrary, the stilted rhetoric of the letter reflected more widespread concerns about the nation’s past, present and future, expressed on numerous occasions in the national media. These concerns had by the early 1990s produced a discourse on (national) history as an object, in need of protection from sinister forces bent on its exploitation. The speech of Dinos Kosmopoulos, mayor of Thessaloniki, Greece’s second city in size, at a mass rally in 1992, captures this general spirit:

For us, whose history is counted in millennia, the past is sacred. […] This past the leaders of Skopje today try to rob us of. But they have no history. Peoples without history have no future. That is why we roar today: The Macedonians are us.²

The Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia’s declaration of independence in the fall of 1991, following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, sparked off a diplomatic controversy between the new state and its neighbour to the south, Greece. The Greek government perceived its choice of name, the Republic of Macedonia, along with the official use of historical symbols associated with the ancient Macedonian kingdom of Philip II and Alexander the Great³, and a passage in its newly adopted constitution about the republic’s responsibility for what was referred to as Macedonian minorities in neighbouring countries as an implicit threat against the territorial integrity of Greece. According to the view presented by Greek government officials and diplomats, Macedonian history was an integral part of Greece’s history and hence the label ‘Macedonia’ could only refer to the northern Greek province by the same name. Thus, within months and following massive domestic pressure, a hard-line policy toward the new neighbour state was adopted. The objective of that policy – an objective that soon came to dominate the agenda of Greek foreign policy – was to block the international recognition of the new state, as long as its name and flag remained unaltered. Since the policy of the Republic of Macedonia was equally uncompromising, the result was a diplomatic deadlock between the two countries for years to come. The deadlock remains to

¹ Giorgos Sideris, “Ιστορία: Αν απαντάς σωστά µηδενίζεσαι” [“History: If you answer correctly you are given no marks at all”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 12/5 1994, pp. 78-79.
² Dinos Kosmopoulos, cited in “Υπέροχοι Μακεδόνες, µπράβο σας” [“Glorious Macedonians, bravo”], Makedonia 15/2 1992, p. 4.
³ The symbolic use around which official Greek resentment revolved was the display in the flag of the new republic of the so-called star, or sun, of Vergina, that was decorating a golden chest found during the 1977 excavations of the ancient tomb believed to belong to Philip II at the village Vergina, west of Thessaloniki in northern Greece. See Chapter 3.
this day, in spite of the 1995 compromise agreement, whereby Greece established diplomatic liaisons with its neighbour, recognising it under the temporary denomination Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

Dealing with the Macedonian crisis was not the sole concern of diplomacy, but caught the attention of the public in its widest sense. Both official and private campaigns of what was labelled ‘national rights’ and ‘historical truth’ were launched in the media, resulting in what Greek historian Evangelos Kofos would later call “the ‘archaeologization’ of Greece’s foreign policy” as well as, one might add, of public discourse in general. The crisis carried in its wake a revival of nationalism, reflected in the public promotion of ‘national’ values, which had previously been thought to be a thing of the past. Mass rallies were organised all over Greece at different occasions, the largest ones in Thessaloniki in February and in Athens in December 1992 which were reported as numbering around one million participants each under the battle cry “Macedonia was, is and always will be Greek”. The neighbouring state’s choice of name – and to some its very existence – was presented in mainstream media not only as an assault on Greece but even more as an assault on history.

Perceptions and interpretations of history were thus at the centre of the conflict. At one level this might be understood as an effect of the perceived threat against the nation’s territorial integrity, which brought about the need for orientation. Historical consciousness is moulded by dramatic events and becomes particularly manifest in times of and as a response to crisis. But this public display of concern regarding history was perhaps not so much caused by the Macedonian crisis, as much as it reflected concerns, views and ambitions which had been communicated for several years. Already in 1983, a debater, Nikolaos Martis, had argued that “scientific institutes which occupy themselves with Macedonian subjects should be assisted both morally and materially in order to continue their work” while universities “should be encouraged to pursue studies around these subjects”. Furthermore, he argued, Greek Macedonian culture and history ought to be systematically promoted abroad as well as at home, something that all Greek “scientists, the press and state-owned means of publicity must contribute to”. Eight years later, Martis’ demands were in the process of becoming reality.

Writing in March 1992, at the time when the Macedonian conflict dominated the news coverage of Greek mass media, another debater, Sarantos Kargakos stated his intent to convince public opinion not to panic in view of the unfolding crisis in the Balkans, but rather to see it as providing “golden opportunities” to mend political ‘mistakes’ of the past. The question, he continued, is not how to avoid the

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5 The concept of historical consciousness will be described and discussed in the theoretical chapter.
repercussions of the crisis but how to profit from it. The crisis indeed provided various institutions, communities and individuals with memory-political ambitions, who had been – or presented themselves as having been – marginalised in the public arena, with “golden opportunities” to promote their interests. The conflict with the new neighbour state thus constituted a contemporary political context, in and through which claims to historical expertise, especially the history of Macedonia – here referred to as *macedonology* – but also other topics of history which were deemed to be of national importance, could be launched, by individuals who sought to influence public opinion and policy-making with their historical interpretations. Heated debates over the meaning of the present crisis and the interpretations of the historical developments that had led to it, often paired with accusations of distorting and denying historical truth, became a common feature in the Greek media of that time.

Cleavages over the interpretation of the past in conjunction with conflicting political agendas were of course nothing new in a Greek context. Competing narratives, rooted in the different conceptions of Hellenism implied in the conflict between the *autochthones* (native Greeks) and the *heterochthones* (Greeks of the Ottoman Empire and/or the diaspora) of the Neohellenic kingdom, have since the 19th century both shaped and been shaped by national history, understood as the grand narrative of the nation.\(^9\) The transition to democracy after 1974 and PASOK’s rise to power in 1981 carried in its wake similar conflicts over the interpretation of recent history, as schoolbooks were being rewritten in accordance with new political conditions. What was unprecedented in the early 1990s was the scale of this phenomenon, magnified through the public attention given to it, both domestically and internationally.

Explanations have been sought in domestic conditions; for example, the general sense of disenchanted with the corruption and scandals that had marked PASOK’s reign in the previous decade, which by the time of Yugoslav Macedonian independence expressed itself in a longing for ‘national’ ideals that could fill the ideological void after the end of the Cold War.\(^11\) However, it can also be analysed as related to a broader international phenomenon. By the early 1990s, a generalised movement sometimes known as the “memory boom” was in full swing across the world. This expressed itself both in an outbreak of public controversies over divisive historical legacies and an increase of academic interest in studying memory

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8 Sarantos Kargakos, *Από το Μακεδονικό Ζήτημα στην εµϖλοκή των Σκοϖίων* [From the Macedonian Question to the Skopje imbroglio], Athens: Gutenberg 1992, p. 12.
9 The concept is discussed more elaborately in the section entitled “Contested concepts and definitions”.
as a broader social and cultural phenomenon. Historian Pierre Nora, one of the most influential scholars in this ‘memory industry’, argues that there is a general obsession in the modern age with remembrance and the chronicling of the past. This obsession with memory, he argues, stems from a sense of loss. Remembering by the act of creating and collecting materials that record the past becomes a way to reconnect with a past that is in danger of being forever lost. Nora refers to an “upsurge in memory”, in which he includes neoconservative concerns with the preservation of knowledge and values associated with a ‘national past’ in public awareness, the commemoration of trauma as well as the demands of interest groups (ethnic, social, sexual etc.) for recognition of their particular histories.

A term which will be used frequently in this dissertation is ‘history war’. History wars – here understood as the history-cultural dimension of the broader, so-called culture wars – is originally a term coined to describe the fierce political debates concerning history teaching standards and curricula in the United States and Australia, but has come to encompass similar controversies around the world, toward the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. The common denominator in these conflicts is the relation between historical knowledge and national identity, especially in countries whose pasts are perceived as troubled or burdened. The growing frequency of such controversies after the 1980s that some scholars have identified has been attributed to a number of causes. The first explanation takes its point of departure in the observation that “authoritarian states don’t have history wars, but democracies frequently do”. Increasingly after 1989, the transition from authoritarian regimes to democratic systems has paved the way for public controversies regarding aspects of the past, often in conjunction with political and educational reform. Scholars of ‘memory’ point to the presence of numerous “unmastered pasts” on both sides of the old iron curtain, meaning that historical legacies once suppressed or thought of as long since settled surfaced anew in public debate. This is closely connected to a second

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12 Gavriel D. Rosenfeld makes a distinction between “memory boom”, as the proliferation of public controversies over the past, and the scholarly “memory industry” devoted to studying them. The trends are distinct if related phenomena and must be studied as such. Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, “A Looming Crash or a Soft Landing? Forecasting the Future of the Memory ‘Industry’”, The Journal of Modern History, 81 (1) 2009, pp. 124-125.


17 Ibid., p. 260.

18 An “unmastered past”, Gavriel D. Rosenfeld writes, “essentially refers to a historical legacy that has acquired an exceptional, abnormal, or otherwise unsettled status in the collective memory of a given society”. The concept of an “unmastered past” is drawn from the vast literature on the German struggle to come to terms with the legacy of the Third Reich – a struggle frequently described by the German term Vergangenheitsbewältigung, which in English roughly translates as “mastering the past”. For one of many examples, see Charles Maier, The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust and German National Identity, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press 1988. The German context is the
aspect, or explanation, namely the redefinition of national identity concepts in many old and new nation-states following the end of the Cold War. Thirdly, the processes of globalisation and, in Europe, the emergence of supranational power structures pose a challenge for the nation-state and traditional national identity, which gives rise to counter-movements. An effect of this public upsurge in memory that Nora and others have identified – worrying in the eyes of some historians – is that the monopoly on interpretation of the past which professional scholars used to enjoy is being undermined by forces outside of their community. According to this observation, politicians, legislating assemblies and judges more and more frequently demonstrate an interest in deciding upon matters regarding ‘historical truth’.

Each case of public controversy on the national past, each history war, historian Susanne Popp argues, must be recognised as having many causes and much complexity, and it must be studied in the context of national and international comparisons. While it is admittedly difficult to accomplish an in-depth study that does equal justice to all of these national and international contexts, the notion of history wars nevertheless offers relevant perspectives to the research on the Macedonian conflict, especially since several of the above mentioned aspects were present in the public Greek debate that is the focus of this study.

**Scope of the thesis**

Despite the fact that perceptions and interpretations of history were at the heart of the Macedonian controversy, it is not historians that have studied it as much as anthropologists and scholars in the field of media studies. These scholars have largely been concerned with the study of ethnic conflict between Greeks and (Slav) Macedonians, of how ethnocentrism and stereotypes of national Others were produced in public discourse, as reflected in the Greek print media, which, in the latter case, often read like a damning verdict on the mainstream journalists’ lack of professionalism. What is lacking from previous research is a perspective on the

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21 Nora 2002. See also Winfried Schulze, “Erinnerung per Gesetz oder ‘Freiheit für die Geschichte?’”, Yearbook of International Society for History Didactics 29/30 2008/2009, pp. 9-37, which, among other things, illuminates the contemporary historical setting of French legislation on certain historical issues – les lois memoriales – that Pierre Nora has been a vociferous critic of.
24 See especially Skoulariki 2005.
controversy as a history-cultural phenomenon. The conflict raises questions about which historical narratives a contemporary society is considered to need and who are entitled to tell them.

By focusing on issues concerning historical authority and the use of history, I hope to be able to contribute to this field of research. The aim of my thesis is to trace the contexts in which the Macedonian history war of the 1990s evolved. Specifically, I aim to analyse how history has been perceived, constructed, narrated, contextualised and used in Greek debate. I believe that studying the debate as struggles over meaning and the legitimacy of certain narratives (and of the narrators behind them), as well as the intellectual practices involved in them, can contribute to our understanding of how the Macedonian crisis was perceived at the time and contextualised historically. It can also yield insights into the strategies by which historical and epistemic authority is either sought for or defended. Due to the entanglement of politics with history, it was only natural that questions on the responsibility and ethics of historians would arise in the debate. This debate, within the framework provided by the Macedonian name dispute, offers itself as a case study of how a history war is constructed and fought in an age of transnational history-cultural concerns. My argument is that this public controversy not only is to be understood as a political crisis but also as a crisis in the historical culture of Greece. The study of it can therefore yield insights into the forces that shape a society’s historical culture at a given time and bring about its change.

The focal point of the study is the Macedonian conflict 1991-1995, i.e. the heyday of the diplomatic crisis, which, due to its dominant position in public debate, enables the study of a history war related to a set of interrelated topics and can be followed over a reasonably long period of time. Bearing in mind that no controversy exists in or arises from a void, these timeframes will be exceeded, where and when contextualisation is considered necessary. My research questions are the following:

- In which ways and for which ends was history put to use?
- How was the Macedonian crisis used to advance memory-political demands?
- Which claims to historical authority emerged in the public sphere and how were they narrated and contextualised historically?
- Which are the contexts in which the Macedonian crisis evolved?

**Theoretical framework: Historical culture**

History wars are a phenomenon that only in recent years has become a topic of scholarly attention. This means that there, as of yet, are no established methodological traditions in the study of these ‘wars’. There is, however, a wide, steadily growing international field of research concerning the significance of the past for the present and the future, which is essentially the issue that these conflicts revolve around. This research has given rise to a number of analytical concepts aimed at capturing this relation with the past. A point of departure for many is

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25 This concept will be explained and further elaborated below.
sociologist Maurice Halbwachs’ work *On Collective Memory*. Halbwachs regarded memory as an essentially social phenomenon, meaning that individual memories largely depend on a social framework for their framework. While individual memories inevitably fade away, collective memory remains. Collective memory is however not synonymous with history, according to Halbwachs, who distinguished between memory as an act of bringing the past to matter in the present and history as its opposite, the scholarly study of the past detached from the present.26 This perceived difference between memory and history has had an enduring impact on subsequent research on what is called ‘memory politics’. Thus, influenced by Halbwachs’ work, French historian Pierre Nora has expressed this relation in the form of a binary opposition between memory and history. According to his much cited and influential introductory essay in *Realms of Memory*, the absence of *milieux de mémoire* in a society characterised by globalisation, democratisation and mass culture has been counterbalanced and replaced by *lieux de mémoire*, places of memory, meaning that the once genuine ‘memory’ which was living and absolute has been succeeded by artificial ‘history’, with the result that “the past is a world from which we are fundamentally cut off.”27 It is, however, unclear as to how this approach provides fertile analytical insights regarding the ways in which the past is being brought to sense in the present. Also those who study the past in their professional capacity, e.g. historians, create meaning through interpretation. In this role, they also help to shape the social framework within which societies ‘remember’ the past. The distinction is not convincing and the approach must therefore be supplemented with more elaborated concepts.28

This study takes its point of departure in a theoretical discussion with its origins in German history didactics that began in the late 1970s and concerned the nature of history as a living relation of the present with the past, i.e. different modes of thinking and discourses on history. Historian Jörn Rüsen, a leading theoretician in the field, has suggested a synthesis covering all forms of historical thinking which overcomes the problematic division between history and memory.29 The theoretical concept he uses is ‘historical consciousness’ (*Geschichtsbewusstsein*),30 by which is meant all human activities and mental procedures whereby the past is represented as interpretation. It has generally been defined as all forms of

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30 The concept itself was introduced by Karl-Ernst Jeismann in 1979 to denote the symbiotic relation between interpretation of the past (Vergangenheitsdeutung), understanding of the present (Gegenwartverständnis) and perspectives on the future (Zukunfts perspektive). Karl-Ernst Jeismann, “Geschichtsbewusstsein”, in Klaus Bergmann & Werner Bolt (eds.), *Handbuch der Geschichtsdidaktik* vol. 1, Düsseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann, 1979, p. 42.
awareness of the processes through which past, present and future are interconnected, where the processes are seen as dependent on or caused by actions of human beings. \(^{31}\) History is here understood as narration of the past as a way to make sense of the experience of time. \(^{32}\) Historical consciousness is thus a way of dealing with and overcoming the uncertainty and threat of time by seeing a meaningful pattern in its course. \(^{33}\) From this follows that it is especially in exceptional situations, such as crises, that it becomes especially manifest and important. This reasoning suggests that historical consciousness first and foremost ought to be understood as individual. Nevertheless, the concept has been used in several studies as a metaphor for or as synonymous with collective memory (in itself a problematic concept), as if society itself possesses a consciousness. Its analytical value for historical studies has therefore become disputed, a process which started already in the 1980s, with the result that ‘historical consciousness’ has become supplemented with (and in some contexts replaced by) another similar concept, ‘historical culture’ (\textit{Geschichtskultur}). \(^{34}\)

Historical culture has by Rüsen been defined as the totality of discourses, in which a society understands or makes sense of itself, the present and the future, through interpreting the past. \(^{35}\) While historical consciousness is better understood along the lines of individual construct, historical culture offers the possibility to move beyond the confines of individual experience, memory or ‘consciousness’ to the public sphere. \(^{36}\) Viewed thus, it covers the whole system of how history is communicated as well as the framework of knowledge, attitudes and values that provides the individual with meaning and society with cohesion. Benedetto Croce, who much earlier than Rüsen laboured with the concept of historical culture, comes close to this interpretation. He understood it as a structure, as a reservoir of meanings, experiences and beliefs, a repository of knowledge in the service of society. \(^{37}\) However, the advent of modern cultural theory, associated with the cultural turn in the humanities, has brought about a new distinction between a


\(^{33}\) Ibid.


\(^{36}\) Jan Assmann has suggested a distinction between ‘communicative memory’ and ‘cultural memory’, which denotes the difference between the personally experienced recollection and the culturally and collectively mediated memory. Assmann, Jan, “Kollektives Gedächtnis und kulturelle Identität”, in ibid. & Tonio Holscher (eds.), \textit{Kultur und Gedächtnis}, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1988; ibid., “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity”, \textit{New German Critique} 65 1995, pp. 125-133.

structural and a processual definition of culture. In a much cited statement, Clifford Geertz asserted that culture should be regarded as webs of significance which humans themselves spin. Culture is thus structure and process at the same time, both the web and the act of spinning.\(^{38}\) I prefer not to get bogged down in the vast and complicated theoretical discussion surrounding this concept.\(^{39}\) I will simply stress the analytical value of defining historical culture both as structure and process, since the latter definition opens up what might otherwise be a static concept for the notion of change. While cultural patterns, or what the *Annales* historians referred to as *mentalités*, may be slow to alter, there is never a state of total permanence. Human beings are both part of and shape culture. When they gain new experiences, and thus tell and remember the past in new ways, the overarching structure also changes, especially in times of unrest and upheaval.\(^{40}\)

Rüsen categorises historical culture into three dimensions, the *aesthetic*, the *cognitive* and the *political*, respectively. The first has to do with aesthetic considerations made by individuals when narrating the past, so as to please their audience and stimulate interest. To this dimension, a commercial aspect can also be added. The cognitive dimension is where Rüsen situates history as a learned profession, whose aim is the scientific inquiry into the past. In the political dimension, historical narration and interpretation expresses a will for power.\(^{41}\) Although Rüsen does not devote much attention to political struggles for power and legitimacy in his discussion of historical culture, it is clear that the political and cognitive dimensions are the site where controversy over historical interpretation occurs. The study of history wars within a given society, I argue, is essentially the study of the historical culture(s) of that society.

The plural ending given in parenthesis above points to an inherent complexity in the culture concept, which Rüsen does not specifically address.\(^{42}\) The most common point of departure in the study of historical culture is that it is connected to the nation; for long the dominant source of collective identification. If each nation, or society, has an historical culture of its own, it follows that there are as many historical cultures as there are nations. However, it is arguable that each society or national historical culture contains variations, which might be understood as a set of subcultures that either supplement or challenge dominant interpretations of the past. A community within a given society, for example the followers of a political movement or the members of an ethnic/religious minority, can thus theoretically possess its own cultural framework of historical

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\(^{42}\) For Rüsen, historical culture denotes the all-embracing, i.e. the sum of all of society’s parts. Jörn Rüsen, *Berättande och förnuft: Historieteoretiska texter*, edited by Martin Wiklund, Gothenburg: Daidalos 2004 (German original 1990-2002), p. 150.
interpretation, which differs from that of the majority. Since a lot of these interpretations or discourses about the past are never articulated in public or recorded in writing, it becomes difficult to inquire into the historical culture(s) of many marginal groups. A culture is studied through the artefacts it produces. For this reason, the ‘grand’ or ‘master narratives’ of nation-states have become the given topic of inquiry for students of historical culture, since the material they provide (textbooks, monuments, museums, state-sponsored historiography etc.) are easy to access. In authoritarian societies, where the state controls the means of production and distribution, these artefacts become the only visible exponent of a nation’s ‘memory’ or historical culture (save for the occasional dissident account).

An additional reason for a national focus in the study of historical culture is the belief that collectives primarily identify with the nation. However, it has in recent decades become more common to argue that the nation has lost its salience as the provider of collective identity and historical orientation. The notion of culture(s) tied to political ideologies (that per se are no more recent phenomena than the nation-state), class, gender, religion or ethnic communities that transcend national borders suggests that historical culture, like nationalism, be viewed as part of a larger transnational context. Arguably, historical events, processes and periods with no immediate relation to insular national experience (classical and biblical history or the French and Industrial Revolutions), usually described as ‘world history’, have always occupied a place in national history curricula. National history is thus always viewed in relation to something else, for example a sense of the nation’s belonging to European and Western civilisation. With the ongoing exhaustion of nationalism as the dominant framework of collective self-understanding, noted by many scholars in recent decades, the question of alternative historical cultures has emerged. Some scholars argue that the ‘collective memories’ associated with nations and their histories are being transformed in the age of globalisation, in the direction of narratives which emphasise the universal over the national. For example, the moral lessons of the Holocaust have toward the end of the 20th century become universalised, to the extent that they are rendered greater significance in contemporary historical culture than those of the old national success stories. This particular circumstance is central to the argument of sociologists Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, which claim that “alongside nationally bounded memories a new form of memory emerges which we call ‘cosmopolitan memory’”. Using a different terminology, what they essentially make a case for is the existence of a transnational historical culture.

The relation between historical culture and identity, whether of national or other communities, sketched here will be addressed further below. The question remains how to turn this overarching concept into analytical tools, or in other words, how to study historical culture through its manifestations. Here, different approaches offer themselves, some of which will be discussed in further detail below.

Studying historical culture: Uses of history

One analytical approach that has been common in much of the Swedish research related to historical culture in recent years is based on the typology covering various uses of history, which has been developed by historian Klas-Göran Karlsson. He has in a study of the late and post-Soviet society identified five essential categories of the use of history that can be applied as an analytical tool in the study of a society’s ways of dealing with the past: a) scholarly- scientific, b) existential, c) moral, d) ideological and e) non-use of history.\(^{44}\) Karlsson has in later publications added two further categories to this typology: (f) commercial use of history and (g) the political-pedagogical use.\(^{45}\) According to him, these uses are to be understood as ways in which an historical culture or aspects of thereof are activated in a communicative process, satisfying the needs and interests of certain groups in a society.\(^{46}\) Even though commercial interests of, for example, publishers are a not negligible factor in the emergence of history-related disputes that are fought out in public, since the attention to the issue under debate offers the opportunity of profit on the book market,\(^{47}\) it is primarily the first five categories, along with the seventh, the political-pedagogical use, that are of concern here.

The **scholarly-scientific** use of history has its primary objective in the gathering and interpretation of sources, i.e. empirical material, on the basis of established academic traditions and theories. “Normally”, Karlsson writes, “the scholarly-scientific use holds the strongest position in a modern, liberal Western society, where the scientific sphere possesses a high degree of autonomy”.\(^{48}\)

The **existential** equivalent of this use is the manifestation of a profoundly human need of remembrance, in order to orient oneself in a changing world and as means of understanding the realities of the present. This particular use is to be found in any given society, but it is perhaps more commonplace in a society that has experienced war and/or a hasty and traumatic process of modernisation.

The **moral** use of history is in Karlsson’s typology characterised by rediscovery of facts or historical circumstances that are considered to have been denied or suppressed by an oppressive or negligent government. Most often these rediscoveries are accompanied by demands for a restoration of true historical memory. The users of history in this particular category are, according to Karlsson, identical with society as a whole, or large segments of it, but the demands for restoration are also likely to derive from intellectual or political elites, with an explicitly political agenda.

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\(^{46}\) Karlsson 2003, p. 38.

\(^{47}\) Popp 2009, pp. 118-119.

The moral use of history thus has much in common with its ideological counterpart, which is used in order to establish legitimacy for a political regime or an existing social order, to make a particular policy rational in the eyes of the citizens by constructing or even inventing an historical context.

The fifth category, the one Karlsson terms non-use, is perhaps the one among the uses of history that is most difficult to identify in an empirical material. This is not to be understood as having to do with ignorance; rather it is a deliberate choice not to make any references to the past, where such might have been expected. The main users are, in Karlsson’s typology, to be found among political and intellectual groupings or elites aiming toward the denial or suppression of, in their view, inconvenient historical facts and circumstances. As such, the non-use is in effect a subdivision of the ideological use of history referred to above.49

The political-pedagogical use of history, finally, denotes deliberate comparison “in which the transfer effect between ‘then’ and ‘now’ is rendered simple and unproblematic”.50 The main purpose of this use is to summon history as an aid in confronting what is thought of as concrete political problems in the present. The past is considered relevant on the basis that it offers guidance for political decisions or helps in securing political advantages.

None of these uses can ever fully be separated from its counterparts, who are to be understood as ideal types, in the Weberian sense, both of different ways of conduct with regard to the past and of the motives served when making reference to – using – history. Karlsson’s categories have had a certain impact among researchers in Sweden concerned with the study of the public use of history,51 i.e. debates on and ways of dealing with the past outside of the scholarly community or the confines of history as an academic discipline. However, it is a typology that raises certain questions regarding the theoretical assumptions behind the categorisation of the uses. On what grounds does one determine what constitutes scholarly-scientific, ideological use or non-use of history? Here, Karlsson is somewhat imprecise. This vagueness is reflected also in other, similar attempts at defining ways of dealing with the past, which often is expressed in the opposition between the use and abuse of history.52

The concept of ‘ideological use of history’ was introduced into Greek historical research and debate by the Marxist historian Filippos Iliou in 1976, in an

49 Karlsson 1999, p. 60; Karlsson 2003, p. 41.
50 Karlsson 2003, p. 40.
article on a dispute concerning politically motivated interpretations of modern Greek history between two of the pioneers of leftwing historiography in Greece. As such, it quickly gained recognition in certain academic circles and appeared in the public debate on the Macedonian crisis, often used by participants who – like Iliou – defined themselves in opposition to the dominant state policy. The ideological use of history was defined by Iliou as the “distorted reconstruction of history by [forces in] posterity, which seek to find their reasoning and their discourses in the, more or less, conscious ignoring or the vulgar alteration of verifiable [...] social conditions, in order to serve the inner cohesion and the programmatic pursuit of certain [...] social groups.” Even though the explicit label ‘abuse’ tends to be avoided, the presupposition of Iliou, as well as of Karlsson, seems to be a more or less clear-cut distinction between true history, as represented by science (and its practitioners), and distorted historical knowledge, mobilised in the service of political expediency. Dutch historian Antoon De Baets has in recent years attempted to formulate a more precise distinction between what he labels ‘responsible’ and ‘irresponsible use of history’, respectively, and ‘the abuse of history’. However, his definition of the latter – that the “abuse of history is its use with the intent to deceive” – raises the same question as the above mentioned definition by Iliou and the typology of Karlsson, which point to an inherent problem in the way the analytical categories ‘abuse’, ‘ideological use’ or ‘non-use’ have been formulated. The problem is that of how to prove the intent to distort, to deceive, which the researcher has little way of knowing, unless this intent is not explicitly demonstrated by the user, which, for obvious reasons, is rarely or never the case.

This is not to say that political interests of certain groups and individuals are not discernible in the way(s) history is used within certain contexts, or that some historical facts and circumstances are neither downplayed nor omitted, quite the contrary. The point stressed here is rather that the researcher who is studying their discourse on the past cannot make normative assumptions regarding historical facts and circumstances – the body of ‘proper’ knowledge – that the users ought to be or

53 Filippos Iliou, "Η ιδεολογική χρήση της ιστορίας: σχόλιο στη συζήτηση Κορδάτου-Ζεύγου" ["The ideological use of history: comment to the Kordatos-Zevgos debate"], Anti 46, May 1976, reproduced in Filippos Iliou, Ψηφίδες ιστορίας και ψολιτική του εικοστού αιώνα [Pieces of history and politics in the twentieth century], edited by Anna Matthaou, Stratis Bournazos & Popi Polemi, Athens: Polis 2007, pp. 197-207. Iliou’s concept and understanding of the ideological use of history is to be seen in its contemporary setting; not only as a symptom of the new, pluralistic political and intellectual climate in the years after the collapse of military dictatorship and a reaction against the authoritarianism and state-sponsored nationalism which for decades had permeated official historiography, but also as a part of the Greek reform communists’ reckoning with what they perceived as the ideologically doctrinaire history-writing of the Moscow-loyal camp within the Communist Party of Greece (KKE). See chapters 3 and 5.


57 De Baets 2008, p. 163.
are aware of, but yet make the conscious choice to distort for the sake of expediency (ideological use) or ignore/omit/repress (non-use). One can of course make qualified guesses about the intentions of a user, but these, I argue, should not exclude the possibility that the user believes him- or herself to be doing historical truth a service rather than consciously aiming at its distortion. The labels therefore entail the risk of arbitrariness if used in an analysis of someone else’s way of dealing with past events. Karlsson himself is not unaware of the problems that come with a rigidly normative approach. His suggested solution to the question of determining what constitutes misuse of history is to replace scholarly criteria with social and moral reasons: “a use of history that violates human dignity and rights, by discriminating, stigmatising or stirring up conflicts, is abuse of history”. While this can be considered a commendable attempt to avert morally dubious relativism, it is not a definition which easily lends itself to analytical purposes (and is probably not intended as such).

Another aspect of the discussion about the ideological use of history is its relation to the concept of ideology. This is a term that has been appropriated for sometimes different purposes within a number of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. According to political scientist Michael Freeden, who sets out to reclaim ‘ideology’ for political studies, it has been used by historians to denote a system of ideas or an organising idea, while literary and cultural students tend to use it as “a critical concept referring to the structures of dominance around almost any idea”. It is clear that the term in the eyes of many carries negative connotations. As Freeden notes, these can be traced back to the writings of Marx and Engels, who conceived of ideology as philosophy that conceals objective reality. Ideological illusions, they asserted, are the instruments by which the ruling class, through the state, exercises control and dominates society, indeed ‘manufactures history’ to suit its interests. The way both Karlsson and Iliou define ideological use of history comes close to this understanding of ideology. However, it is reasonable to argue for a definition of ideology as a set of political ideas, opinions and values held by groups which seek to justify, contest or change the social and political reality of any given political community. This is how students of politics tend to think of ideologies, i.e. as modes of thinking about politics, associated with the political movements of conservatism, liberalism, socialism etc.

If, then, the concept of ideological use of history is given a different definition than the ones by Karlsson and Iliou respectively, stressing instead that this particular use is characterised by a discourse on the past, which carries the imprint of perspectives derived from or associated with a (clearly defined) ideology, setting aside the issue of ‘objectivity’, then the concept is opened up for alternative analytical insights. However, this is an option which I have abstained from elaborating on in the present study. One reason for this is, as noted above, the fact

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58 Karlsson 2003, pp. 42-43.
60 Freeden 2003, pp. 5-6.
61 Cf. Freeden who expands on this definition. Freeden 2003, pp. 32-66
that the very term ‘ideological use of history’, with its intentionally negative connotations, emerged in the controversy that is studied here, much due to the fact that the historian that had coined it in Greek also was a participant in the public debate. This study is not primarily an analysis of ideologies of the sort outlined by Michael Freeden. Nevertheless, for some of those involved in the debate, ideology mattered in profound ways, and there is reason to assume that this influenced their discourse on and understanding of history. In recognition of this, the term ideology will be employed merely to denote political ideologies.

Apart from the risk of reproducing the polemic labels of the discourse being studied here, there is, in my view, generally good reason for caution when making reference to Karlsson’s notion of ideological use and non-use of history. That does not mean that the whole typology is flawed. The other uses, chiefly the existential and moral counterparts to the ones referred to above, appear less problematic as analytical categories, (if we take into account what they appear as, framed within discourses on the necessity of remembrance, knowledge of one’s roots, vindication etc., rather than what they are). However, there are other typologies that in my view can supplement Karlsson’s as tools in the analysis of historical culture. These will be addressed in the following.

**Historical narratives of identity**

Another analytical approach to the study of historical culture – or rather of some of the ways in which this culture manifests itself – has been introduced by Jörn Rüsen. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the central idea that sustains Rüsen’s reasoning on the nature of man’s relation to and experience of the past, is the need of orientation in time. According to him, this orientation is the primary function of historical culture. The means of making sense of the present is narration, i.e. stories of how ‘we’ – be that an individual, group or community – ended up in the present and what the future might hold in store. In fact, he suggests that narration is central to the whole process of historical thinking. The manifestations of historical culture are best studied in these narratives, according to Rüsen, who in a number of publications has presented a typology consisting of four different ideal type forms of historical narration, or “historical narratives of identity”: the a) traditional, b) exemplary, c) critical and d) genetical narrative.62

The *traditional* narrative is the type in which traditions are articulated as necessary conditions for orientation in time. Examples of traditional narratives are “stories which tell about the origin and the genealogy of rulers, in order to legitimate their domination” and within communities “stories of their foundation.”

The vital elements of these stories are continuity and a sense of permanence. The function of this type of narration lies in the affirmation of present conditions and

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of identity, by Rüsen understood as given or pre-given “cultural patterns of self-understanding”.

The exemplar y narrative is, in many ways, to be understood as supplementing its traditional counterpart, by presenting the reader with historical situations held to be applicable as guiding examples of conduct. Its function is to demonstrate the eternal validity of certain values and to “form identity by generalizing experiences of time to rules of conduct”.

The critical narrative, on the other hand, is “based on humans’ ability to say no to traditions, rules and principles”, which have been handed down to them, thus serving as an ‘anti-story’ that denies tradition by exhibiting history as a negative example. It is, as Rüsen puts it, “the identity of obstinacy”, of protest, formed by denying the given cultural patterns of self-understanding and replacing them with new.

The genetical narrative, the fourth and final type, projects history as a constantly ongoing process of transformation. Change is, in this context, perceived as a natural and indeed necessary element of history. The function of this narrative in terms of identity formation is the mediation between permanence and change in a process of self-definition.63

As is perhaps evident to the perceptive reader, there is in some respects a certain congruency between Rüsen’s typology of narratives and that of Karlsson’s concerning the uses of history, which has to do with their respective origins in the same school of theoretical and conceptual discussion on historical culture and historical consciousness. What Rüsen terms the traditional narrative can be said to correspond both with Karlsson’s notions of the existential and ideological uses of history. The critical narrative can, in part be seen as constituting an analogy to the moral use of history, both of which be described as characteristic of forces which seek to alter dominant perceptions within the historical culture of a society. Certain similarities are also to be found in how the exemplary narrative and the political-pedagogical use of history have been defined.

This is not necessarily to be understood as typologies that are two sides of the same coin, i.e. identical. Uses of history often manifest themselves as narratives; however, a narrative is not by necessity or per se a use of history.64 The genetical narrative, identified by Rüsen, does not correspond to any of the uses in Karlsson’s typology, nor is there an equivalent of the scholarly-scientific use; there is, in other words, no privileged position from which historical knowledge and its manifested forms can be judged.65 In my view, Rüsen’s typology avoids the pitfall of normative assumption, thus bypassing the opposition between use and abuse which is

64 An alternative view of how the two typologies supplement each other is to interpret the uses of history identified by Karlsson as the conscious activation of corresponding (latent) narratives of identity. However, as I have understood Rüsen, narration is per se an active process and thus not consistent with the above interpretation.
65 This is unless, of course, the genetical narrative is to be understood as the equivalent of the scholarly-scientific use of history. One can argue that Rüsen’s definition of this type of narration corresponds with ideals and insights associated with modern historiography. However, there is in my opinion not sufficient congruency between the respective definitions of Karlsson and Rüsen to support such an interpretation.
inherent in some of Karlsson’s categories, despite the author’s stated intent to move beyond this binary opposition.66 Another advantage is that Rüsen’s terminology appears as less charged than Karlsson’s with regard to history serving the purpose of domination and legitimacy. An alternative term, which perhaps better captures this aspect, is ‘state narrative’, i.e. stories told from the viewpoint of states which aim for societal cohesion. While not all forms of traditional narration serves this purpose – here Karlsson’s notion of existential use is more nuanced – this is how I chiefly understand and use the concept.

However, Rüsen’s narrativistic approach to historical culture does not cover all the processes involved in the ongoing formation of this culture, which is why it sometimes can be of analytical value to supplement it with the categories employed by Karlsson. As mentioned above, a moral use of history can be expressed through a critical narrative, but from this does not follow that all critical narratives are identical with the moral use of history. A critical narrative might be a rejection of history’s and tradition’s contemporary relevance altogether just as much as it can be a demand for the restoration of an alternative historical memory, perceived to have been repressed. In this study, I will therefore make reference to both typologies when this serves an analytical purpose.

**Boundary-work**

An issue that has emerged in the above discussion is the nature of scientific knowledge and whether this represents something fundamentally different from other forms of – in this context – historical knowledge. While Rüsen bypasses this issue, Karlsson lists what he calls ‘scholarly-scientific use of history’ as one of the ideal types in his typology, attributing it to the domain of historians by profession, while the other uses are identified with intellectual and/or political elites.67 If scholarly use of history is to be understood as knowledge production within the discipline of history, aimed at peers, as opposed to public use, which is situated outside the scholarly community, where the public is the intended audience and consumer, the terminology seems adequate. It is chiefly this division of the intended audiences that Karlsson seems to have in mind;68 but, as has been demonstrated above, matters are not that straightforward and simple if one bears in mind that historical research is not being conducted in a societal void. As Karlsson himself admits, no historian is isolated from the surrounding society and the intellectual currents and political and social contexts which shape it at any given time.69 Revisionist debates, launched in newspapers and other public media by scholars who wish to revise dominant views regarding certain historical issues, serve to remind us that historians, in many cases, are active participants in public discussion and that they often use this as the platform of interventions in scholarly

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67 Karlsson 2004, p. 56.
68 Ibid., p. 54.
69 Karlsson 2003, p. 42.
controversies. As historian Giorgos Antoniou has noted, “[i]t is this public venue of the debate that determines, sometimes, the final outcome of the scholarly conflict.”

This would suggest an orientation toward sociological perspectives on science and the scholarly-scientific community. Yet, this is an aspect that, to my knowledge, has gone largely unnoticed in research on historical culture. Since historical culture, in conflicts where professional scholars become involved, is a matter of authority and legitimacy, manifested in the question on who has the right to represent historical knowledge and therefore to set the agenda of debates on the past, basically the question around which history wars revolve, it is of utmost relevance to consider the social organisation of scholarly communities.

During the past decades the notion of boundaries has been the focus of much research within the social sciences, notably in anthropology, sociology and social psychology, but also political science and history. Boundaries, or rather the making of boundaries, is a concept that is used in this research in order to illuminate the process of identity formation – whether cultural, social, ethnic, national, sexual or professional, to list a few examples – through the employment of classification and demarcation.

Of special interest in this study is the concept of boundary-work, a term launched in 1983 by sociologist Thomas F. Gieryn that has come to exert a profound influence over studies of the social organisation of scientific knowledge. Science is, in Gieryn’s view, like other human activities, the result of social processes and something whose contents are subject to constant negotiation and change. This is not to be understood as a perception of knowledge as fabricated, i.e. inherently ‘false’, but rather as dependent of social and cultural contexts, in which it acquires meaning and authority as true. Boundary-work is the concept that Gieryn employs to describe the discourses by which scientists attempt to attribute “selected qualities to scientists, scientific methods, and scientific claims for the purpose of drawing a rhetorical boundary between science and some less authoritative residual non-science.” He argues that this rhetorical drawing (and re-drawing) of boundaries is especially manifest in ‘public science’, i.e. the venue “in which scientists describe science for the public and its authorities, sometimes

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70 Giorgos Antoniou, ”The Lost Atlantis of Objectivity: The Revisionist Struggles Between the Academic and Public Spheres”, History and Theory, 46 2007, pp. 97-112. It should be noted that by the term ‘revisionist’, Antoniou refers not only refers to Holocaust deniers – the most narrow sense in which this term is understood by the public in general – but basically any scholar who seeks to challenge conventional historiographical views, in the attempt at accomplishing a paradigmatic shift.

71 Antoniou 2007, p. 111.


75 Gieryn 1999, pp. 4-5.
hoping to enlarge the material and symbolical resources of scientists or to defend professional autonomy.”

The professional ambitions of different scientists, engaged in the quest for these resources, for example public funding, lead to clashes of interests, which may express themselves in what Gieryn refers to as ‘credibility contests’, i.e. strategic struggles over the legitimacy of a certain view or claim to expertise. It is in these contests that boundary-work becomes an important resource for the purpose of establishing epistemic authority. Gieryn identifies three types of boundary-work that are employed in the credibility contests, depending on the situation: a) expulsion, b) expansion and c) protection of autonomy.

**Expulsion** characterises contests between rival authorities when each claims to be scientific. In this context, boundary-work becomes “a means of social control”, as each involved party seeks to have the other expelled and exposed as pseudoscientific.

**Expansion** is used when rival epistemic authorities attempt to monopolise jurisdictional control over a disputed ontological domain.

**Protection of autonomy**, finally, is a strategy of demarcation that is employed when professional autonomy is deemed to be threatened by powers outside of the scientific community, for example legislators and policymakers who encroach upon or exploit scientists’ epistemic authority for their own purposes.

Gieryn’s concept of boundary-work resonates with the work of several sociologists and historians of science, for example Steven Shapin, who uses the term ‘boundary-speech’ to denote the role of boundary-making rhetorics in the institutionalisation of academic disciplines. Objections might of course be raised against the dominant focus on controversy inherent in this approach, which entails the risk of seeing conflicts of interests where there may have been none or over-emphasising disagreements that may not have been perceived as very significant in the eyes of the participants involved in the debate under study. This objection is essentially the same as the one mentioned above in connection with Karlsson’s notion of the non-use of history, namely that a researcher has little means of knowing the intentions of the individuals he or she studies. One can also argue that all researchers at some point engage in boundary-work of some kind when they make their cases for funding or struggle to define their particular niche in the field of research.

Nevertheless, there are analytical benefits that compensate for eventual flaws. “Boundary-work would be expected in settings where tacit assumptions about the contents of science are forced to become explicit”, Gieryn stresses in a phrase which seemingly echoes Kuhn’s famous notion of paradigmatic shifts. This very circumstance, I argue, highlights the aspect of crisis and change within historical

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76 Gieryn 1983, p. 782.
77 Gieryn 1999, pp. 5-17; Lamont & Molnár 2002, p. 179.
culture. The concept of boundary-work has chiefly been used in studies of the natural sciences, but I argue that it can be well suited also to the study of similar phenomena in the social sciences and the humanities. It is true that the conditions of history as an academic endeavour and the natural sciences differ in some respects, but their respective practitioners share the need to convince audiences – in academies as well as in public – that their knowledge is both useful and scientifically founded. There are also parallels to be seen in the science wars, described by Gieryn, and history wars since these, to a high degree, concern questions of legitimacy and epistemic authority, when conflicting views are played out in public media. In my view, the concept of boundary-work sheds light on an important aspect of historical culture, namely the rhetorical strategies by which authority and credibility are either sought for or defended. It has received remarkably little attention in the research of this social phenomenon, in spite of Rüsen’s assertion that historical narratives cannot exist without elements of reasoning and arguing – or what might be described as rhetorical figures – which make the stories credible.80

**Historical culture, nationalism and identity politics**

As already implied historical culture cannot really be discussed without reference to its relation with identity. The relation between nation building and historical representation from the 19th century and onwards has been studied exhaustively by numerous scholars. It is not my ambition to review this vast body of literature here. Suffice it to say that visions of the past have been a constitutive element in national imagination, and as such pivotal in mobilising the members of the national community. The social constructivist or ‘Modernist school’ that has prevailed in the contemporary study of nationalism perceives the emergence of this doctrine as a political project, which mainly occurred over the past two centuries. Nations and national identity are, following this line of thought, not given by nature nor existing since primordial time, but rather rooted in movements, which in the age of print capitalism, emerging secularism and declining dynastic states sought to conceive a new principle of governance and political identification.81 In this pursuit, the ‘memory’ of the past is seen as instrumental. Like the nation itself, history understood as the nation’s collective memory tends to be viewed as social construction, which rationalises past experiences of the group to support its cohesion. Both Iliou’s and Karlsson’s notions of a particular ideological use of history echo this perception, although this is not stated explicitly in their works. Many have along with sociologist Anthony D. Smith, one of the most influential theoreticians in the scholarship on nationalism, argued that myth and memory are indispensible to the concept of the nation in that “there can be no identity without memory (albeit selective), no collective purpose without myth.”82 Often, these

80 Rüsen 1987, p. 96.
myths can be studied as a series of motifs which work as cohesive elements in the mythology of nations, or the ethnic community that, according to Smith, precedes the modern nation. These cornerstones of identity rooted in perceptions of past, present and future include myths of origins in time and space, a myth of ancestry and one of a golden, heroic age, as well as myths of decline, aimed at explaining a current sense of decay, and of future rebirth.\textsuperscript{83}

As we can see, there is much in this that corresponds to the traditional and exemplary types of historical narration, identified by Rüsen. The self-congratulatory ‘national success story’ nowadays associated with traditional historiography is by and large a traditional narrative of identity, which aims to harmonise the given social order and affirm the continuity with the past. To some extent this reflects the relation history as an academic profession has enjoyed with the nation-state. History’s emergence as a discipline, based on a scientific inquiry into the past, during the 19th century coincided with the rise of nationalism as a dominant political doctrine.\textsuperscript{84} This does not mean that all historiography produced at state-run universities or in learned societies deliberately served the state or sought to glorify the nation. Nevertheless, national history, understood as the evolution of states, before long enjoyed a privileged position both as an interpretative framework and as a topic of scholarly investigation.

However, as I have written earlier, there are also views that challenge the nation’s perceived hegemony in historical culture as well as in the realm of self-identification. In the late 20th century, the period in history of specific interest to my study, the nation-state had been around for a long time in Europe, thus no longer being in any formative phase. On the contrary, its legitimacy was being questioned as the result of a wide range of developments in the political, academic, financial and social spheres. In an age of increased international cooperation, economic interdependence and individual human rights (usually summed up in the label ‘globalisation’), the nation – or rather the state – seems to have lost much of its traditional salience. This is also true for its role in historical representation and what is often referred to as ‘collective memory’. Some, like Anthony D. Smith, view these developments in terms of a binary opposition between the ‘memory’ of the national community and the rootlessness of an artificial universal culture. He states that “a timeless global culture answers to no living needs and conjures no memories”.\textsuperscript{85} The only culture that is historical, in Smith’s view, is that which is rooted in the shared memories, myths and symbols of ethnic nationalism.\textsuperscript{86}

Smith has been criticised for coming close to the determinism of the perennialist position on national identity which he claims to reject, i.e. the view that nations are perennial by nature.\textsuperscript{87} Another critique emanates from the advocates of

\textsuperscript{83} The complete typology of myth motifs is found in Smith 1986, p. 192.
\textsuperscript{86} Smith thus uses the term ‘historical culture’ in a different sense than Rüsen and me.
\textsuperscript{87} See, for example, Lars-Erik Cederman’s review of Smith 1995 in \textit{The British Journal of Sociology} 47 (4) 1996, pp. 736-737.
the ‘new cosmopolitan memory’, i.e. what I here choose to refer to as transnational historical culture. Levy and Sznaider dismiss Smith’s claim as “breathtakingly unhistorical”. Their critique of Smith, which also explicitly targets Pierre Nora, focuses on the “fixation on the nation-state as the sole possible (and imaginable) source for the articulation of authentic collective memories”. What Nora does is to construct an artificial opposition between ‘memory’ (the living and authentic past) and ‘history’ (the dead and inaccessible past). The first is associated with what is perceived as an authentic, ‘natural’ community within fixed boundaries, while the latter is tied to how “hopelessly forgetful modern societies, propelled by change, organizes the past”. However, as Levy and Sznaider point out, this assumption that modernity somehow destroys tradition and alienates people from their past is little different from the objections once raised against the (then) modern nation-state in the late 19th century. This does not render the nation ‘inauthentic’ and should therefore not mean that ‘memory’ cannot be cosmopolitan.

Diaspora communities offer a special case in this context, since they span over multiple national and cultural contexts. In an age perceived as increasingly global, their experience becomes especially relevant in discussions on historical culture and ‘memory’. While many such groups can be analysed as ethnic in their core, and thus possessing the shared memories and ‘myths’ identified by Smith, they do, nonetheless, form part of even larger communities in their host societies. There are thus no clear boundaries between cultures, which mean that also perceptions of history move from one context to another. Previous research has pointed to the role of diaspora communities in the Macedonian conflict, as well as in other cases of contested ‘memories’ around the world. However, intellectual trends and scholarly interest in the past are also transnational by nature. The conclusion of this is that the historical culture of any given society is always subject to external influences of various kinds. In other words, no historical culture exists as an island, untouched by forces of change, as Rüsen’s notion of critical and genetical narratives also implies. Although my study does not primarily deal with historical culture outside of a national Greek context, there is a transnational dimension which cannot be wholly omitted from the analysis.

An important aspect in this context is the rise of (post-) modern identity politics. Beginning in the late 1960s, historian Eli Zaretsky writes, ‘identity politics’ emerged as “a new form of political life” in the United States. It emphasised difference rather than commonality and made a particular community rather than the nation the central point of identification for the self. Zaretsky distinguishes between movements that situate themselves within a universalistic polity but insist upon forms of cultural separation (‘multi-culturalism’) and movements which seek full self-determination as separate states. A further distinction is made between the identity politics of racial and ethnic groups on the one hand, and on the other hand, sexual minorities (i.e. HBT activists) and women (i.e. feminists), for which

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identity also is of central concern. At a general level, political scientist David B. MacDonald writes, group members demand respect for and recognition of group rights by the dominant society. The goal of identity politics is legal recognition, sometimes also political and social power, not as individual members of a universal community but as members of disadvantaged groups.

The common denominator for most groups concerned with identity politics was a sense of both present and historical injustice, the sense that dominant society and above all the state had wronged them. These movements, which by no means were restricted to a North American setting, incriminated the traditional nation-state and its historiography with neglect for the experience of their respective groups, ‘hidden from history’ . ‘Subaltern’ perspectives were to have an impact upon scholarship, not in the least within the history profession. It is important to note that this new wave of identity politics coincided with the rise and work of hegemony theorists, with their analyses of how official histories and ‘national memories’ were tailored to serve the goals of dominant social groups. The Modernist school of nationalism theory, referred to above, was largely premised on the belief that elites manufacture myths and national identity to consolidate control over society. Scholars and theorists more explicitly oriented toward postmodernism contributed their own radical challenge to established Western readings of linear history, truth and identity. While far from all activists concerned with identity politics were/are theoretically informed or seek recognition from scholarly communities, this scholarship could add academic clout to some of their claims.

Identity politics is arguably about more than concerns about historical representation. Nevertheless, the past is an important source of legitimacy when advancing claims in the present. This has the result that memory politics, or the “politics of the past”, have become a vital task for many groups, who invoke past victimisation as grounds for legal redress. No longer is public commemoration the exclusive privilege of states, as Nora and many other analysts of the ‘new memory boom’ point out. MacDonald observes the new role of museums, funded by non-state actors and created as places devoted to promoting a particular group’s perception of history. He has in his research highlighted how indigenous populations and ethnic diaspora groups around the world have developed an interest in past persecution and genocide, using the Holocaust as the prism to frame their own historical experience and identities. His argument, citing that of

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96 MacDonald 2008, pp. 10-11.
Levy and Sznaider, is that the Holocaust now forms a collective past shared by Western nations (i.e. a transnational framework of historical interpretation), which provides an unrivalled moral clarity in historical representation. As such, the imagery of this historical experience has become a means for both state leaders to legitimise their policy decisions and for substate actors to draw attention to their specific agendas.\(^\text{97}\)

This resonates with ideas and arguments developed by scholars like historian Elazar Barkan and sociologist Jeffrey K. Olick. An important factor in the quest to mend historical injustice, which accounts for much of the ‘memory boom’, they argue, is that states are willing to listen. Barkan notes a dramatic shift by which a new sense of morality has come to dominate public attention and political issues, displaying “the willingness of nations to embrace their own guilt”.\(^\text{98}\) Olick has written extensively of what he terms “the politics of regret”, which he describes as a new principle of political legitimacy.\(^\text{99}\) Recognising past wrongs is a way for the political establishment to enhance its prestige in a time when the old national identities and master narratives have lost their salience. According to Olick, the politics of regret can in reality be a strategy to preserve societal cohesion by integrating alternative ‘memories’ and histories into a new unifying narrative.\(^\text{100}\)

These are all issues of great pertinence to the study of historical culture in recent time. The concepts and considerations referred to above will therefore be revisited throughout the analysis and especially in the concluding discussion of this dissertation. To sum up the theoretical part of this chapter, the guiding analytical tool throughout the study is primarily Karlsson’s typology. This is supplemented by Rüsen’s typology, while Gieryn’s categories of boundary-work are chiefly employed within the context of scholarly involvement described in Chapter 5.

**Material of the study**

The sources to this study are primarily drawn from the leading newspapers, journals and weekly magazines in Greece, due to their significance as arenas of public debate. A word is due about the general situation of the Greek media at the time, before the main sources are presented. The print media market in Greece, especially the press, has traditionally been characterised by an excess of supply over demand, which means that even substantial papers tend to have a low circulation. Starting in the late 1980s and reflecting contemporary international trends, the press was rapidly losing ground to the ever growing television medium.\(^\text{101}\) In 1989, the monopoly previously held by public television was abolished by the so-called ecumenical all-party government, after allegations that it had been abused to serve

\(^{97}\) Ibid., pp. 2-3.


\(^{100}\) Olick 2007, pp. 188-192.

the interests of the previously governing PASOK party. As a result, privately owned commercial channels flourished as well as a plethora of local TV channels, which soon began to rival the print media.\textsuperscript{102} From 1990 and onwards, press editors and media group owners were struggling to make means and ends meet. This has led to the disappearance of several renowned newspapers and magazines toward the end of the decade.

The transformation and decline of the press at the hands of the new electronic media may suggest a focus on the latter, i.e. TV and radio. However, the lack of fully functioning audiovisual archives makes the task of research a difficult and time-consuming one.\textsuperscript{103} A more important reason for the emphasis on written sources – apart from any eventual prejudices against non-traditional sources that scholars of oral history sometimes notice among their peers – is that the press, in spite of waning readership, at least during the period in question still remained the leading forum for public debate. Even though articles in most newspapers and journals are subject to certain limitations of space, the traditional print media offer generally better conditions for debaters to develop their reasoning, thus maximising the potential impact of their arguments. Mainly for this reason, I have chosen to focus my research on what is considered to be the flagships of public debate in Greece on a national level. These papers are the following:

\textit{I Kathimerini} ("The Daily"),\textsuperscript{104} one of the oldest morning papers still in print (founded in 1902) and deemed to be of high quality. Due to its conservative profile it is considered to be oriented toward the Nea Dimokratia party.

\textit{I Eleftherotypia} ("Press liberty"), is in terms of circulation and prestige one of the leading evening papers. It was founded in 1975, in the wake of the transition to democracy, originally owned by its staff and later by the Tegopoulos media group. Politically, it is considered as representing the broad Left, spanning from viewpoints associated with PASOK (often characterised as centre-left) to more radical ones, although not officially affiliated with any particular party. Of particular interest for this study is the editorial group, working under the joint pseudonym \textit{o Iós tis Kyriakís} ("The Sunday virus") – sometimes just \textit{o Iós} ("The Virus") – which from 1990 until its shutdown in 2010 appeared in the Sunday edition of the

\textsuperscript{102} See Skoulariki 2005, pp. 219-227.

\textsuperscript{103} Another medium that in recent years has become increasingly relevant both for the study of the Macedonian conflict as a history war and historical culture in general is the Internet, which offers earlier undreamt-of possibilities to individuals with memory-political ambitions to communicate their views of history. Certain websites have been consulted in the work process. However, this medium was in the early 1990s, the most intense phase in the Macedonian name conflict, still rather undeveloped and did not constitute a significant platform of debate. Historian Vlasis Vlasidis has in a study on the Macedonian question and the use of the Internet until 2007 observed that scholars, research centres and universities – i.e. the agents involved in historical knowledge production – both in Greece and in Yugoslav Macedonia were slow to make use of this new medium well into the 1990s or even the beginning of the 21st century, preferring instead the traditional means of communication and publishing. See Vlasis Vlasidis, “Η ιστορία σε διατεταγµένη υπηρεσία: Internet και Μακεδονικό Ζήτηµα, 1990-2007” ["History in commanded service: Internet and Macedonian Question, 1990-2007"], in Ioannis Stefanidis, Vlasis Vlasidis & Evangelos Kofos (eds.), \textit{Μακεδονικές ταυτότητες στο χρόνο: ∆ιεϖιστηµονικές ϖροσεγγίσεις [Macedonian identities through time: Interdisciplinary approaches]}, Athens: Pataki 2008, pp. 463-494; see especially pp. 483-485.

\textsuperscript{104} The names of Greek newspapers and journals are in this section given with their definite articles in Greek when presented for the first time. However, throughout the study and in references, these definite articles have been omitted.
newspaper (I Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia). The editors, Tasos Kostopoulos, Dimitris Trmis and Dimitris Psarras, position themselves as critics of the rightwing establishment and its policies in national matters. As such, they have taken a keen interest in the modern history of Greece, exposing and revealing inconvenient facts and circumstances about the nation’s past, thus contributing to the public discourse on history with critical, not to say confrontational, perspectives. Of the editors, Kostopoulos especially has published extensively on historical topics with a polemical touch.

Ta Nea (“The News”) had by the early 1990s, in spite of or due to the stagnation of the press, emerged as one of the country’s leading national newspapers. Together with the high profile Sunday paper To Vima (“The Tribune”), founded in 1922, Nea is owned by the Lambrakis press group, whose owner Christos Lambrakis traditionally has been aligned with PASOK, which is reflected in the political stance of its editors. Vima, the other flagship of the Lambrakis press, is considered a high quality paper that functions as a leading platform for public debate. Besides some prominent journalists, several university scholars and politicians feature as regular columnists.

O Oikonomikos Tachydromos (“The Economic Courier”) was a weekly magazine of considerable circulation during the period studied. Although belonging to the above mentioned Lambrakis group, the magazine was not aligned with the centre-left camp. Its editor-in-chief during the 1990s, Giannis Marinos, was on the contrary known for his conservative viewpoints, reflected in his columns that sometimes also appeared in Vima. The staff of regular contributors at Oikonomikos Tachydromos also included university scholars, political scientists as well as analysts of international relations and defence policy. Together with Vima, the magazine had a wide readership outside Greece, which was reflected in letters to the editor as well as in feature articles on diaspora matters.

The above mentioned newspapers and magazines share the common feature of being published in Athens, the political centre of Greece. In order to broaden the perspective, I have included a newspaper of regional importance, I Makedonia,
the oldest Greek newspaper in Greek Macedonia (founded in 1911) and the leading one in Thessaloniki, the ‘second capital’ of Greece. Politically, it is aligned with ND. These newspapers can be considered representative for the two major political camps that together have accounted for approximately 85% of the votes in the elections held since the transition to democracy in 1974. They are not to be understood as mouthpieces of the respective parties. Rather they have been chosen because they are of substantial circulation and broadly representative for public opinion. These papers have been systematically researched between September 1991, when the referendum on Yugoslav Macedonian independence was held, and September 1995, when the New York Interim Accord was signed.

There are other mainstream newspapers, mostly consisting of evening tabloid press, such as O Eleftheros Typos (“The Free Press”), I Apogeummatini (“The Afternoon Paper”) and To Ethnos (“The Nation”), which in terms of average national circulation can rival or even be deemed more significant than the above mentioned. Earlier media studies have paid attention to these papers, with regard to language and national stereotypes. However, they do not function as platforms of public debate to the same extent as the above referred press organs. Samplings of the tabloid press were made at an early stage, but these produced little in terms of insights that differed from the conclusions of previous media research. This is the reason why it has not been systematically researched in this study.

In order to cover the views expressed within the divided Left, whose history was linked to the Macedonian question and because of that became a topic in the debate surrounding the name conflict, the daily O Rizospastis (“The Radical”), the official organ of the Central Committee of KKE, the Communist Party of Greece, and I Avgi (“The Dawn”), the daily newspaper aligned with the leftwing party Synaspismos (SYN), have been included in the survey along with publications of smaller leftwing groups. It should be stressed that it is not the question of how the political orientation of the respective newspapers is reflected in the discourses on history that determines which ones that are included in the survey. Rather it is their above mentioned function as platforms of public debate, and also the notion that the choice of forum in which to publish might reveal something about the authors who present their claims to historical expertise.

Apart from the mainstream press, several small circulation journals have been researched, since they often provided platforms for intellectuals and university academics involved in the public debate on historical issues during the Macedonian crisis. Such journals are O Politis (“The Citizen”), Anti, I Epochi and Ellopia; the last of which carried the subtitle “periodical for the national issues”.


111 A large collection of press sources on the contemporary Macedonian conflict – 500 letters to the editor of mainstream press as well as in other media from the years 1991-1995 and 2004-2005 – is reproduced in Giorgos Petsivas, O Νέος Μακεδονικός Αγών [The New Macedonian Struggle], Athens: Ekdoseis Petsiva 2008. This collection was on some occasions gauged for clues to popular responses to certain events during the early 1990s. The process of cross-checking samples from it with the newspapers where the letters were originally published revealed no anomalies.
In addition to these, various publications from relevant institutions involved in historical knowledge production at the time of the crisis have been researched for clues on Greek historical culture and knowledge claims. These include the historical journals *Mnimon* (founded in 1971) and *Ta Istorika* (founded in 1983), as well as the educational journal *Nea Paideia* (“New Education”). Also, the English language journals *Balkan Studies* (published by the Institute of Balkan Studies in Thessaloniki) and *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* (published by the John Hopkins University Press) are subject to scrutiny, in their capacity as fora of scholarly exchange.

Other important sources are, of course, historiographical publications, such as books on historical topics where a claim to expertise is put forward in connection with demands for political action, i.e. history-writing aimed at the public. Here a longer temporal perspective is due, since a great number of the publications which set the tone for public debate in the 1990s were written in the preceding decade (though often reprinted during the Macedonian crisis). Other publications which might shed further light on positions held during the controversy and/or perceptions on history and claims are for example memoirs, published diaries etc. that have come into being after 1995. The timeframes largely correspond with the timing of the Macedonian crisis 1991-1995, but ought not to be regarded as absolute.

An alternative source for the contemporary historian is interviews with surviving participants of the debate. This option was considered initially, but was for practical reasons abandoned. The task promised to be a difficult and time-consuming one, not in the least due to the fact that for some the Macedonian controversy of the early 1990s remains a charged issue.\textsuperscript{112} The press writings and additional publications are a vast material in their own right, which in my opinion enables a fairly substantiated inquiry into Greek historical culture during this period. All translations from Greek and other languages are my own, if not stated otherwise.

**Methodological considerations**

My methodology involves using a qualitative method of discourse analysis, to identify and analyse uses of history in the material presented above. Initially, samplings were made of the press material, in order to gauge how history was used on a more general level, through metaphors and particular historical references. Key words included “history”, “memory”, “Macedonia” and various denominations thereof. In this phase, important themes of debate were identified. While the employment of history (usually in the form Rüsen describes as ‘narrative abbreviations’) in everyday media and political communication is a vast and interesting study object in its own right, my concern has been to identify historical narratives and claims to historical authority connected to the Macedonian crisis.

\textsuperscript{112} This does not mean that it is an impossible task. Media scholar Athena Skoulariki presents a list of 31 named politicians, diplomats, journalists, scholars, activists and one anonymous mayor interviewed between 1997 and 2002. Skoulariki 2005, pp. 33-34, 482-484. Unfortunately, no transcripts of these interviews are reproduced.
and/or to identity politics. Specific agents, agendas and interests were thus identified. The results of this early collection and secondary literature partly came to guide the selection of sources in later stages.

The analysis of texts has been done through isolating the most important themes. This is in line with Oliver Thomson’s suggestion of paying attention to “the more obvious pattern frequencies that come from a general overview of contents”.\(^\text{113}\) As far as it is possible, the contents of the narratives presented in the source material will be described and contextualised, so as to enable the reader to understand the claims and reasoning of a specific agent. This approach entails allowing significant space for the sources to “speak for themselves”. This may seem problematic, but there are good reasons to support this choice. The debate on the Macedonian conflict, as in many public controversies, abounds with allegations of bias, misquotations, misconceptions and deliberate omissions. To the extent that it is possible, I aim to do justice to the arguments of the individual debaters studied in this dissertation by letting them develop their reasoning. It does not mean that this happens on their terms or on an entirely unbiased basis. Scholarly historians are always selective in some regard when citing or quoting sources because they have to, due to the mass of material. Furthermore, the research questions asked and the theoretical point of departure of the historian may always be criticised as moving toward a preconceived conclusion. This is a critique which applies to all scientific or scholarly inquiry. Few if any today, however, suggest the existence of an entirely objective historical science, unattached to time, place and social context which might shape perceptions of the studied object. What the historian can do, besides recognising circumstances, limitations and any eventual personal bias, is to contextualise the phenomenon and the cited accounts of the object, an approach with roots in hermeneutical tradition.\(^\text{114}\) This means that it is not only the historical contexts evoked by the publicity studied in this dissertation that guide the analysis, but even more the contemporary contexts through which the sources can be understood.

**Contested concepts and definitions**

There are a few concepts that will be used throughout the study which require some clarification. The first one is as obvious as it is inescapable, given the fixation with the name ‘Macedonia’ that fuels the still unresolved controversy. Macedonia can denote a kingdom in antiquity, conquered and turned into a Roman province in 168 BC; a wider geographic region in the southern Balkans, as identified by 19\(^{\text{th}}\) century cartography; an administrative region of Greece, with a smaller counterpart in Bulgaria (the Blagoevgrad district); and a republic within the Yugoslav federation which in 1991 gained independence. In the vocabulary of the said republic, a distinction is made between Vardar Macedonia (the territory of the republic), Aegean Macedonia (in Greece) and Pirin Macedonia (in Bulgaria). I have chosen


not to employ this terminology, since it suggests a point of view that is otherwise lacking in this study. The word ‘Macedonia’ is employed chiefly to denote geography, with added qualifiers, such as ‘Greek’ or ‘Yugoslav’ to specify which territory or part of the wider region is intended. The state carrying this name is referred to by its self-given denomination, the Republic of Macedonia, alternatively Yugoslav Macedonia. Historical denominations covering the period 1944-1991 include the People’s Republic of Macedonia, later the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. Especially after 1993, the UN compromise denomination FYROM (the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) has come into use in international relations and in some scholarship. However, I do not see this compromise name as more neutral or useful than the other. Citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, to the extent that they appear in the study, are for practical reasons referred to as ‘Yugoslav Macedonians’, whether of Slav ethnicity or other. The group of Greek citizens, present or former, which claims recognition as a Macedonian minority or ethnicity, is referred to as ‘Slav Macedonians’ in order to distinguish them from those who claim a particular Greek Macedonian identity. Occasionally, the term ‘Slav-speakers’, favoured by Greek authorities and publicity, is employed in cases where self-ascribed denominations or ‘identities’ are unknown. These choices have been made in order to avoid confusion. They are thus not motivated out of any wish to be aligned with certain agendas. It goes without saying that the terms used in quotations, whether translated or in English originally, are those of the cited authors.

The second concept, the use of which might alert or possibly offend readers, is macedonology. It is a partly polemic term that in Greece is sometimes used in a slightly derogatory sense, with reference to scholarship on Macedonia. Macedonology is not to be understood as something in the line of an established academic discipline in Greece, carrying this denomination. Rather I use the term to denote a form of historical knowledge concerning the region Macedonia that originally evolved in conjunction with and in support of Greek national claims. As a historiographical genre, it has traditionally been associated with the Greek Right and the concept of ethnikofrosyni (national-mindedness), a form of nationalism that emphasises anti-communism. A person concerned with it is sometimes referred to as a macedonologist (in Greek: makedonologos). The term does not refer to a denomination commonly agreed upon or generally in use in Greek debate, or as self-application. It has been used by some debaters and scholars, sometimes – but far from always – in a derogatory sense within quotation marks, with reference to people that claimed a certain expertise with regard to Macedonian affairs.\footnote{An example of its use is given in a statement, reproduced in a publication which dealt with “the Macedonian question and the ideological use of history”. “At this moment we are discussing the so-called Macedonian question. This has nothing to do with us having decided to all become macedonologists, but a political and social issue has arisen that pushes us to react against this hysteria.” Kostopoulos, Embeirikos & Lithoxoou 1992, p. 51.} Nevertheless, the use of it does not by necessity imply intent to ridicule or derogate. Greek historian Vasilis Gounaris, himself specialised in the modern history of the Macedonian region, refers to macedonologists in analogy with
turcologists, i.e. scholars of Turkish studies. One might even argue that anyone dealing with the study of Macedonia – be that in Greece, in the Republic of Macedonia or anywhere else in the world – may be labelled with this term. This is also how Gounaris occasionally employs the term in his recent survey of historiography on the Macedonian question. To him, macedonology is synonymous with writings on Macedonia and the history of this region, regardless of whether these writings are scholarly or journalistic works.

In this study, I have chosen to use the term macedonology in a similar sense in order to denote a discursive field within the larger framework of national historical culture in Greece. The historical setting in which macedonology evolved will be further described in Chapter 3.

**Earlier research**

Research on and analyses of the Macedonian conflict started to appear already in the first half of the 1990s, written in attempt to make sense of the ongoing political feud and the nationalistic excitement it had triggered. The diplomatic controversy thus served as a catalyst for research within a range of disciplines, most notably anthropology, political science, sociology and media studies. From a Greek viewpoint, it has been the topic of analyses of the interplay between domestic political concerns and foreign policy agenda setting, as well as the role of media in the moulding of public discourse on the Macedonian issue; the most extensive of which is Athena Skoulariki’s above mentioned dissertation. The conflict brought scholarly as well as public attention to ethnocentrism and the cultivation of stereotypes of the national Other(s) in mass media and education, producing studies which extend beyond the more narrow context of the name issue. The renewed attention to the century-old Macedonian question also had an impact on the existing research environments with a previous focus on the history of the Macedonian question, which came to focus on the study of identity formation. As Mark Mazower once noted, an intellectual shift in studies concerning Macedonian affairs has been under way since the early 1990s, resulting in a different approach to matters of ethnicity and national affiliation in the past.

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118 Skoulariki 2005.


“History and its interpretation lie at the heart of the Macedonian saga”, sociologist Victor Roudometof noted in 2002. Yet it is a topic that has received very little attention from historians who have tended to stick to traditional historiography and studies of the earlier stages of the Macedonian question, thus avoiding the decade of the diplomatic conflict. One reason for this, Roudometof suggests, is unwillingness to confront what is considered a politically controversial, contemporary issue. To this observation might be added a sense of embarrassment over scholarly complicity in the discourse produced by the controversy, which proved bitterly divisive also for the academic community. Historical research on the Macedonian crisis is limited to a few short accounts of how the conflict played out in politics and public debate; the most notable of which is the essay of Evangelos Kofos, a towering figure of Greek scholarship on modern Macedonian history since the 1960s. These accounts are written by participants in the public debate at the time and to a large extent serve to defend and vindicate positions held during the conflict. Much of the research produced in the wake of the Macedonian conflict is thus artefacts of the historical culture under study here and in that sense is functioning as source material for my own research.

It is largely anthropologists, like Anastasia Karakasidou, Riki van Boescoten and – on the other side of the border between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia – Keith Brown, who, with their emphasis on oral testimony and field research in rural areas, have come to shape the scholarly debate on the region’s past and present. As for the transnational dimension of the contemporary Macedonian conflict, Loring Danforth’s study has highlighted the struggle over the Macedonian name and associated historical symbols waged between Greek and (Slav) Macedonian expatriate communities in Australia and Canada. Danforth and Karakasidou, as well as some historians, have paid attention to how historiography on the Macedonian region, or rather rivalling historiographies of the

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countries sharing the region, has served the interests of nation-states by justifying national claims, thus erasing from history the groups that did not fit into the national project. Since emphasis is put on the construction of national identity at large, this research does not, however, address the function of history in the identity politics emerging in the Macedonian conflict in the 1990s, nor in public debate of that period. A rare exception is Piero Vereni’s micro-level case study on how individuals – in this case a Slav-speaking farmer in north-western Greece, who in a series of notebooks inscribed the history of his family into that of the Greek nation – make sense of the past in order to come to terms with personal trauma; i.e. a use of history identical with what Karlsson terms ‘existential’. Overall, these studies are not concerned specifically with historical culture and the uses of history.

An important study in this context, which to some degree seems to overlap my own, is sociologist Victor Roudometof’s work on the role of collective memory in this particular conflict. Arguing that the Macedonian question provides “one of the best research sites worldwide for studying the relationship between collective memory and national identity”, Roudometof inquires into the “Greek, Bulgarian and Macedonian narratives that shape collective memory” and produce the “mutually exclusive political identities” whose presence in his view is the source of conflict in Macedonia. Roudometof employs the concept of “national narrative” throughout his analysis, uncovering the “specific cultural logic” which provides the premises and structure of a general narrative that in its turn shapes public perceptions. “The national narrative emerges out of our forgetting of possible or alternative pasts and constructing a past that is meaningful in the present context”, Roudometof writes. According to this sociologist, the Macedonian conflict is thus to be understood as caused by a clash of mutually antagonistic national narratives. The Greek and, to some lesser degree, the Bulgarian responses to [Yugoslav] Macedonian claims are in his view to be understood as a defence of their respective national narratives. International recognition of the new state as Macedonia would in the eyes of Greece and Bulgaria lead to demands for minority rights for Macedonians inhabiting these two countries. Such a development, Roudometof concludes, would “delegitimize each side’s carefully crafted national narratives and question the historical canvas upon which the modern national identities have been constructed”. Roudometof’s main concern is to deconstruct these narratives, whose grip on the collective minds perpetuates the Macedonian conflict, and in so doing make a case for a civic definition of national identity as a way of solving the problem of ethnic nationalism in the Balkans. The role of Roudometof becomes, just like in the case of Danforth, that of a ‘myth buster’.

128 Roudometof 2002, p. 3.
129 Ibid., p. 191.
130 Ibid.
who exposes what is perceived as the official/national ‘truths’ of each side and replaces them with his or her own corrective account of the history in question.

While the work of this sociologist has many poignant observations and a great deal of useful information on the Balkan context of the Macedonian question, there are, however, aspects of it that are imperfect. What in my opinion constitutes a weak point in Roudometof’s analytical approach is a lack of attention to nuances within the national narrative under study. Part of the problem lies in his understanding of the concept of narrative, which is largely shaped by Anthony D. Smith’s definition of myth. Structured around a quest for origins in the distant past, continuity, identification of periods of glory and decline, and of a higher purpose, or destiny, revealed in the progression of history, the national narrative outlined by Roudometof corresponds with the traditional narrative identified by Rüsen. The former’s approach fails to take the alternative types of narration highlighted by the latter into consideration. In this particular case, it has the effect that the narrative(s) are analysed as only serving the needs of the nation-state, or the national community, not of groups or individuals within the community. Critical elements within these narratives are overlooked as well as the fact that alternative narratives, which run counter to official dogmas, might in a sense also be understood as narratives of the nation, thus being ‘national’. The result is, paradoxically, an analysis which reproduces the notion of external threat against national identity inherent in the discourses the author sets out to analyse. Furthermore, why this notion of threat and the concerns for national identity and heritage, which for many decades had received scant attention, emerged at all is a question that remains largely unanswered.

Another critique that can be levelled against Roudometof’s work is that it, despite its title, does very little to explore how the national narrative relates to collective memory, a concept rather loosely defined and used. Roudometof, like Danforth, notes the importance of regionalism in Greek Macedonia and the traumatising experiences of war, expulsion and occupation in shaping the local inhabitants’ perception of the Macedonian controversy. The recurrent Bulgarian occupations of eastern Greek Macedonia and Thrace during the first part of the 20th century, and moreover the Asia Minor refugee population’s experience of forceful expatriation and resettlement, produced bad memories. These play a pivotal role in making the Greek Macedonians particularly sensitive to perceived national threats. According to Roudometof, national narratives shape collective memory and influence political decision making. To some extent, national narrative and collective memory become synonymous in Roudometof’s reading. However, no attention is really paid to how the ‘memory’ and the identity politics

133 This is especially evident in Roudometof’s reading of Greek ex-politician and amateur historian Nikolaos Martis’ work on the ‘falsification’ of Macedonian history, which he analyses only as a manifestation of the Greek national narrative, rooted in 19th century Romantic nationalism. It is only in a footnote, citing journalist-cum-historian Tasos Kostopoulos, that he mentions the political context of the early 1980s, in which Martis’ work came into being. Roudometof 2002, p. 80, footnote 18.
134 Ibid., p. 76.
of these communities contribute to shaping ‘national narratives’ or the public discourse on the Macedonian conflict. In part, this has to do with Roudometof’s broader aim of bringing three – four with the Albanian dimension of the Macedonian conflict which he rightly highlights – different national contexts and historical narratives into comparison. This emphasis on the clash of incompatible historiographies on a general national level means that domestic politics and local agents shaping historical culture only receive scant coverage.

The historical experiences of Asia Minor Greek refugees and their descendants in Greece and the diaspora have from the late 1980s drawn the attention of scholarly research. Also in this case, the research has largely been conducted by anthropologists and sociologists who, on the basis of oral sources, have studied social and cultural aspects of the refugees’ integration into Greek society. The anthropological approach to the topic has also shed some light on the relation between the refugee community and Greek nationalism, often with a focus on what has been described as the state’s national ideology’s suppression of refugee identity, thus bringing attention to previously, and presumably, neglected voices.135 Some of this research on exile identity formation among refugee descendants has in recent years come to include perspectives on memory work.136 Refugees, not only from Asia Minor, but also from other parts of the Balkans have in the 20th century contributed in shaping, or at least attempted to influence, the policies adopted by states in the region. The most notable examples, studied by historians as well as sociologists, are the refugees from various parts of the Macedonian region who after the Balkan wars and later the world wars ended up in Bulgaria, Greece and, subsequently, Yugoslav Macedonia. Marked by bitter memories of expulsion, refugee lobbies played a role in the domestic politics of their respective countries by keeping irredentist sentiment alive, thus contributing to strained relations between the Balkan states, particularly during the interwar period.137 Save for a few occasional references,138 this body of research has not discussed the emergence of


identity and memory politics among Asia Minor Greek refugees in connection with the parallel Macedonian conflict or addressed it in relation to transnational phenomena and historiographic developments of the late 20th century.

It is my hope that the study that I aim to undertake here will contribute to pre-existent research in this regard. My approach is admittedly more limited in scope than those of Roudometof and Danforth, who in their studies cover several ‘national narratives’, or historiographic traditions, in their attempt to do justice to each side, or national camp, of the larger Macedonian conflict. If we, however, assume – and there is much justification for assuming this, based on observations made by previous researchers – that the controversy was largely motivated by domestic political concerns, a deeper focus on one national context, or historical culture, has advantages over the, in my view, at times superficial country-comparative perspective on the evolution of the Macedonian question. Relevant developments in Greece’s neighbouring countries and the conclusions of country-specific research will be accounted for when it sheds light upon the Greek historical culture that is in focus in this study.

Outline of the study

This dissertation is, apart from the introductory section on the theoretical framework and the material studied, organised into six chapters. The first of these, chapter 2, is a general introduction to the history of the Macedonian question, with its many twists and turns, from the late 19th century to the name conflict in the 1990s, while the subsequent chapters are case-studies that cover specific aspects of and agents concerned with the Macedonian conflict. The following chapter 3, “Macedonian narratives and the rise of macedonology”, deals with the emergence of a certain regional historical narrative on Macedonia in postwar Greece, and its connection to local institutions and interests, as well as the transnational diaspora. Chapter 4, “The other Hellenism: Pontian memory politics and the narrative of genocide”, focuses on the proponents of an alternative regional identity in northern Greece and elsewhere, the Pontian Greek, and the analysis of its supporting historical narrative. In the subsequent chapter 5, “Contested history: scholars, politics and dissent”, the role of professional historians and the academic community is at the centre of attention, as they intervened in the debate. The final chapter 6 summarises and discusses the findings of the study.
2. Background: The Macedonian question

In order to set the discourses on the past and some of the recurring themes in public debate in the 1990s which are studied in this dissertation into some kind of context accessible to readers that are unfamiliar with Balkan affairs and the Greek public’s set of historical references, it is inevitable to engage at some point with the in some respects highly disputed knowledge domain that is the historiography (or to be more precise, historiographies) on Macedonia. One might of course ask if not any researcher who engages in an attempt to describe the ‘historical reality’ beneath the Macedonian controversy automatically becomes a ‘macedonologist’, someone who lays claim to a certain expertise on Macedonian history. The irony – or what seems to be irony – is not lost on the author of this dissertation. However, it should be made clear that what is referred to as macedonology in this study is but one branch of knowledge out of several. First and foremost, it should be noted that the historiography on Macedonia is the total amount of at least four different national historiographies – Greek, Bulgarian, Yugoslav Macedonian and, to some extent, Serbian – to which can be added the works produced by scholars with no formal affiliation to either one of these national contexts. The one that primarily is of concern in this study is the Greek historiography and discourses on Macedonia and its past, as represented chiefly by macedonology as a form of knowledge that has evolved in conjunction with Greek national claims. This choice has the result that other historiographies, primarily Yugoslav Macedonian and Bulgarian, which might be considered as relevant for the understanding of Macedonian affairs in the larger Balkan context, will only be addressed in exceptional cases, since it is not the purpose of this dissertation to provide a new, all-including history of the Macedonian region.\(^\text{139}\)

\(^{139}\) The problem of finding a ‘neutral’ approach to the study of the contested Macedonian past makes itself felt in one of the first studies on the Macedonian controversy, anthropologist Loring Danforth’s *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* (1995). In an attempt to do justice to both “the Greek and the Macedonian positions”, Danforth delivers two accounts of the region’s history “written in the voices and from the perspectives of Greek and Macedonian nationalists themselves” and then proceeds to present “a third history of Macedonia, a history of the construction of Macedonian national identity written in my voice, from an anthropological perspective”. In doing so, Danforth writes, “I have attempted to step outside both Greek and Macedonian nationalist ideologies, to show how they both reify national identities and cultures and project them into the past in order to construct oversimplified, polarized nationalist histories in which everything is either black or white, Greek or Macedonian. In this way I hope to deconstruct both nationalist versions of Macedonian history, to depict the subtle shades of gray they both fail to capture.” Danforth 1995, pp. 29-30. This approach received fierce criticism by scholars who felt themselves targeted, notably Greek historian Evangelos Kofos, who accused Danforth of assuming the role of an arbiter, who “lacking the historical background to comprehend the issues at hand, sought to construct his ‘own’ revisionist history of Macedonia, by conveniently ignoring, misquoting or even degrading specialist historians of long standing”, a reaction that amounts to the form of boundary-work that Gieryn identifies as expulsion. See Kofos 1999, pp. 389-390, footnote 43. While not sharing Kofos’ assessment of Danforth’s work, I contend that the latter’s approach to Macedonian history, as it has been formulated by himself, might be considered as somewhat naïve, from an epistemological point of view. Furthermore, by juxtaposing the “Greek position” and its (Yugoslav) Macedonian counterpart, Danforth does not pay sufficient attention to internal differences in either one of these national contexts. All nationalist discourses do not by necessity reflect the official position, and vice versa; rather ‘national’ or ‘official’ historiography might be conceived of as the contested arena of different discourses or narratives.
The history of the Macedonian region in the last two centuries has traditionally been regarded as the history of the Macedonian question. This Macedonian question originally referred to an offshoot of the larger Eastern question of the late 19th century and concerned the fate of the Macedonian region, whose territories were contested by at least three national movements (later four), as the Ottoman empire gradually disintegrated. Later, the Macedonian question would acquire new meanings in the different national contexts, between which the geographical region was partitioned, especially at times when the territorial status was considered disputed and uncertain. The notion that Macedonian history as a knowledge domain is contested ought not to be understood as a general disagreement over historical events (for example the Ilinden uprising) associated with the Macedonian question or the historical contexts (the emergence of competing national movements in the Balkans) in which it evolved. Rather it is a conflict of interpretations (as historiographical disputes usually are) not only between competing nationalist historiographies, but also between scholars with different conceptions of and theoretical approaches to nationhood. The main dividing line within national historiographies is, roughly, between scholars who understand national identity, ‘national consciousness’, as basically inherent and timeless, and their counterparts, often a younger generation of researchers, who along with Benedict Anderson and other influential nationalism scholars perceive the national community as socially constructed.\footnote{Both in his work on the Macedonian conflict (1995) and in journal reviews, Danforth has thus been highly critical of Kofos, which he accuses of misusing Benedict Anderson’s concept of ‘imagined communities’ in order to serve a nationalist agenda, by suggesting that (Yugoslav) Macedonian national identity is “imagined”, whereas Greek national identity is “real”. See Danforth 1995, p. 33, footnote 5.}

Even though the history which loomed in the background of the Macedonian controversy of the 1990s, i.e. the raw material of some of the claims to historical expertise that emerged in public debate, is not the primary topic of discussion in this dissertation, I see fit to address this issue, since it concerns a body of knowledge that many of the debaters took for granted that their audiences would be familiar with. This chapter is therefore intended as a general introduction to the at times seemingly confusing history of the Macedonian question, aimed at the general reader. In addition to this, a brief overview of the Macedonian crisis in the 1990s concludes the background chapter. Other historical contexts than the Macedonian question, which also shed light on various aspects of the Macedonian controversy, will be referred to in the following chapters of the dissertation. It should be noted that the following account is based on previous research, some of which was conducted by scholars who were involved in public debate, rather than the study of primary sources, for reasons already stated. This means that this background chapter takes its point of departure in an interpretation of the region’s history, which is influenced by a social constructivist understanding on the process of nation building. The point of departure is thus situated in the 19th century and the arrival of nationalist doctrine into a once polyglot and multi-religious society.
The rise of Greek nationalism

Geographically, Macedonia is a region which extends from the lakes of Prespa and Ohrid in the west to the river Nestos/Mesta in the east, from Kosovo in the north to Mount Olympus and Thessaly in the south, i.e. an area larger than the present-day Republic of Macedonia and the Greek province of Macedonia. The borders of this region have, however, been unclear and the name Macedonia was never attached to an administrative entity prior to 1913, when the territory was carved up between the victors of the First Balkan War. From an ethnological point of view the Macedonian lands were a bewildering mix of peoples. Greek-speakers dwelled in the towns and along the coastlines, while the peasantry in the country-side was largely made up of Slav-speakers and Vlachs (whose language sometimes is described as a Romanian dialect). Other ethnic groups were the largely Muslim Albanians, Gypsies and – especially in Thessaloniki – Sephardic Judeo-Spanish-speaking Jews. Over them all ruled, still in the beginning of the 20th century, the Ottoman Turks. Along with present-day Albania and Thrace, Macedonia – or to be more precise the vilayets of Üsküb (Skopje), Monastir (Bitola) and Selanik (Thessaloniki) – was the last remaining territory in the Balkans of the crumbling Ottoman Empire. However, it was not until a very late stage of Ottoman reign that the concept of nationality was introduced in the Balkans and elsewhere in the vast empire; to the Ottoman authorities and probably also to most of the Empire’s inhabitants, it made little sense to define themselves in terms of ethno-national categories, such as Greeks, Bulgarians or Serbs. Instead, the Ottoman authorities categorised their subjects according to their religious affiliation.141 As of old, the peoples of the Empire formed separate, partly self-governing entities, so-called millet or ‘flocks’ of believers, the religious leaders of which were held accountable before the sultans for the doings of their flock members.142 One such millet – perhaps the most powerful in terms of numbers beside the Sunni-Muslim flock – was the one of the Orthodox Christians, headed by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. The Patriarchate had survived the fall of Byzantium unscathed, even more privileged under the sultans, who did not interfere in matters of religious dogma, than it had been under the emperors.143

However, this state of affairs was about to change, as the old order was being challenged by the forces unleashed by the revolution in France and the Napoleonic Wars. The ideas of the Enlightenment and of German Romanticism, and along with them the concept of national self-determination, were from the end of the 18th century spreading among the Christian – in most cases Greek-speaking – intelligentsia of the Ottoman Empire, which until then had been largely unaffected by the intellectual movements of Western Europe.144 The early 19th century saw the emergence of two nation-states in the Balkans, which came as a result of successive

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142 In modern Turkish, the word millet has acquired the meaning of ‘nation’. It is, however, of importance to separate this contemporary meaning of the word from the older, Ottoman concept.
144 Clogg 2002 (1992), p. 3.
rebellions against the Ottomans and Great Power intervention on behalf of the insurgents, one being Serbia, the other one Greece.

Throughout the 19th century the ruling elites of the Greek kingdom that had emerged after 1830 faced the dual task of creating the institutions of a state as well as the nation. The very concept of Ellas (Hellas/Greece) and Ellines (Hellenes/Greeks) had to be (re-)invented. For centuries the Byzantines had referred to themselves as Romaioi, later Romioi (‘Romans’, often used in the sense of ‘Orthodox Christians’), reflecting the claims of the emperors to be the sole legitimate heirs of the Caesars. The denomination Romioi continued to be in use long after the fall of Constantinople.\textsuperscript{145} In the eyes of the Church, the term ‘Hellenes’ referred to the pagans of late antiquity who had opposed Christianity and the use of it was regarded with much suspicion by the clergy. The coming of nationalism in the late 18th and early 19th centuries brought about a revival of the name among the secularising forces within the emerging Greek-speaking merchant class, who strove to rid themselves and their countrymen of what they considered the double yoke of Ottoman rule and the obscurantism of Orthodoxy. To the proponents of this so-called New Hellenism, men who had studied at European universities and had come under the influence of Enlightenment ideas as well as the idealised Western perception of ancient Greek culture, the Church and its clergy were responsible for having kept the ‘flock’ in spiritual darkness, enslaved under the Ottoman Turks. As a consequence of these views, they rejected the Byzantine heritage and sought to build a national identity which emphasised ancient Greece as the cradle of Western civilisation, thus providing modern Greece with the necessary European credentials. Only through the re-discovery of a national, Greek culture could the Greeks find their rightful place among the nations of Europe. The road to modernity thus led through the revival of a glorious past.\textsuperscript{146}

Throughout the second half of the 19th century, however, a growing number of intellectuals came to question the Western orientation expressed in the emphasis on classical antiquity, arguing that the set of ideas associated with this distant past were alien to the mind of the common man and that a modern national identity therefore must rest on popular traditions rooted in the Byzantine heritage of the more recent past.\textsuperscript{147} A rift had appeared in the intellectual circles of the young nation-state, which was about to have consequences for all attempts at defining ‘Greekness’.

The opposition from domestic anti-Western forces was not the only challenge that the national ideology of the small Europeanising elite in Greece had to face. In addition to this came the challenge posed by certain Western scholars whose work raised awkward questions about the very foundations of Modern Greek identity. The defining characteristic of this Neo-Hellenic ideology was the idea that present-day Greeks were the direct descendants of the ancient Hellenes. In 1830, however,

\textsuperscript{146} Clogg 2002 (1992), pp. 1-2, 13, 19-31
\textsuperscript{147} Marianna Spanaki, Βυζάντιο και Μακεδονία στο έργο της Π.Σ. Δέλτα [Byzantium and Macedonia in the writings of P. S. Delta], Athens: Ermis 2004, pp. 17-18.
the same year that the newly independent Greek state was internationally recognised, the Austrian historian Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer published his *Geschichte der Halbinsel Morea während des Mittelalters*, in which he argued that the Hellenes of late antiquity had perished following the Slavs’ migrations into the Balkans in the 6th and 7th centuries AD. In his view, the Christian populations of the Greek lands were mongrels, the result of a mixture between a perceived Hellenic bloodline with that of an inferior race, the Slavs, in the early Middle Ages.

Fallmerayer’s interpretation of the past became the subject of much criticism among Greek and European scholars alike, but it did cast doubts on the foundations of 19th century Greek nationalism. This was a threat that could not be ignored by the nationalist intelligentsia that saw classical antiquity as the key element in Greece’s identity as a European nation, especially not in the second half of the 19th century when Greek intellectuals and politicians began to perceive the Slavs to the north as the age-old enemies of Hellenism (for reasons which I will address later). Fallmerayer had hit a sensitive spot that the proponents of New Hellenism themselves had overlooked when they rejected the heritage of Byzantine Orthodoxy; if Hellenic culture had perished in the Byzantine period, then their own claim to a Greek identity would seem dubious.

In the light of this challenge, the previous negative attitudes towards things Byzantine shifted and attempts were made at incorporating this neglected past into what can be labelled the grand narrative of Neo-Hellenic historical culture. In a series of works on the history of Greek civilisation published in the years 1860-1874, Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, considered to be the founding father of Modern Greek historiography, managed to bridge the gap between ancient Greece and Byzantium by stressing the continuity of Hellenism throughout the millennia. Contrary to the proponents of a secular Greek identity of the previous generation, Paparrigopoulos and his disciples ascribed the survival of Hellenism to the Church, which through keeping its liturgy intact through the ages was thought to, simultaneously, have kept the Greek language and thereby the ‘Hellenic spirit’ alive up to modern times.\(^{148}\) This interpretation of the past, known as the tripartite scheme of Hellenic history, enabled the two conflicting concepts of Modern Greek identity to merge, and it is this concept of unbroken continuity that is still being reproduced in the Greek educational system.\(^{149}\)

The paradigm shift in the intellectual debate concerning Greek identity did not come solely as a result of the challenge posed by Fallmerayer’s speculations, but


reflected the rise of a dominant theme in Greek politics in the second half of the 19th century. The Greek state entity that had emerged from the turmoil of the Liberation War was much smaller than what the insurgents had initially hoped for, consisting only of the Peleponnese and the territories to the north of the Corinthian Gulf along with Attica and Athens, i.e. what in present time is southern and central Greece. None of the prosperous centres of commerce in the Greek-speaking world – Thessaloniki, Smyrna and Constantinople – had been incorporated into the Kingdom of Greece, which meant that the large majority of the Christian population thought to be Greek was still living outside the nation-state. To some of the intellectuals oriented toward a classical, European definition of Greek identity this had mattered little, since the territories of the kingdom were considered more or less identical with the heartland of classical Greece, i.e. a definition of Greece that excluded the Macedonian region and Asia Minor. To the proponents of a revived Byzantium, however, the outcome of the War of Independence was an utter disappointment, and the theme that came to dominate the political aspirations of the young nation-state was that of the Megali Idea, the Great Idea. It was an irredentist vision of a Greater Greece, consisting of all of the Byzantine lands still inhabited by a Greek population and with Constantinople – in Greek vernacular simply known as ‘the City’ – as its resurrected capital. In this vision Darwinian ideals of the modern age mixed with Messianic beliefs of an earlier period and the realisation of this national project was thought to be the solution to all problems that had plagued Greek society since independence. The second part of the 19th century saw a series of failed attempts at fulfilling the irredentist aspirations of the Greek nation-state, but the general prospects were promising; the once powerful Ottoman Empire had entered a state of decline and its eventual disintegration seemed to be a matter of time.

The rise of Bulgarian nationalism
In the eyes of most Greek irredentists, all Christians belonging to the flock of the Ecumenical Patriarch throughout the Ottoman Empire were Greeks, either by descent, language or religion. The fact that for many of the Ottoman Christians Greek was not their mother tongue did not constitute a problem for the proponents of the Great Idea. Greek had long been the lingua franca of commerce and learning among the Christians of the Balkans and the Near East, which meant that the gospel of New Hellenism found its adherents throughout the region. In fact, many of the architects behind national ideology in Greece were Hellenised Vlachs.

However, times were changing and the seeds of nationalism were spreading to other ethnic groups of the Empire as well. The mid-19th century witnessed the rise of another, explicitly Bulgarian national movement among the Slavs of the eastern

Its political objective was the liberation from the Turks, but it was as much a reaction against the cultural and ecclesiastical predominance of Greeks, exercised through the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Starting in the 1840s demands for the replacement of Greek liturgy with masses held in the Slavonic tongue in parishes with a predominantly Slav-speaking population were being adressed to the Sublime Porte, demands which in due time were backed up by Russian diplomacy.

In 1870, the sultan agreed to establish an independent Bulgarian Orthodox Church, known as the Exarchate, in the hope that this might prove an effective counterweight to the Patriarchate, whose loyalty to the Porte had been put into question ever since the Greek uprising in 1821. This decision was to have an impact on Balkan affairs for years to come, since it caused an ever-growing rift within the ‘flock’ of the Orthodox Christians. Within two years from the sultan’s decree, the Holy Synod of Constantinople, headed by the Ecumenical Patriarch, condemned the adherents of the Exarchate as schismatics and engaged in a bitter struggle for the believers of the divided millet, a struggle that was to rage for decades. The Patriarchate, now increasingly identified as Greek, was left with few other options than to solidarise itself with the irredentist aspirations of the Greek Kingdom, if it was to keep its grip over the southern Balkans, where the Christians now defined themselves against each other in terms of either Patriarchists or Exarchists.

Just a few years after the schism between the Orthodox churches, the Balkans became the scene of a long awaited showdown between the Ottomans and the Russians, prompted by the failed Bulgarian April uprising in 1876. The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 resulted in the establishment of an independent Bulgarian state, which according to the Treaty of San Stefano was to include all of present-day Bulgaria along with Thrace and the entire Macedonian region, save for the city of Thessaloniki. The diplomacy of the Great Powers, who did not wish to see a powerful Russian vassal state in the Balkans, intervened within six months after the treaty, restored Ottoman authority over the Macedonian and Thracic lands and downsized Bulgaria to more modest proportions by dividing it into two separate entities. But the Bulgarian nationalists did not forget the Greater Bulgaria that had been promised them in San Stefano.\footnote{Mazower 2001 (2000), pp. 88-90.} Within seven years from the date the treaty was signed, Bulgaria had annexed the semi-autonomous principality of Eastern Rumelia, after which the attention of the Bulgarian irredentists was directed toward Macedonia, the very territory that the proponents of the Great Idea had previously earmarked for the future Greater Greece.\footnote{Clogg 2002 (1992), p. 67.} A potent rival to the Greek national movement had thus arisen in the north.

\footnote{On the emergence of Bulgarian nationalism, see Roumen Daskalov, \textit{The Making of a Nation in the Balkans: Historiography of the Bulgarian Revival}, Budapest: Central European University Press 2004.}
The ‘Struggle for Macedonia’ and the Balkan Wars

The events of the 1870s and 1880s had made it painstakingly clear for the Greek irredentists that the Russians, the ‘fair-haired race’ of liberators of the old prophecies, now effectively under the influence of Pan-Slavism, would never aid the Greeks and that their Bulgarian protégés henceforth were to be regarded as enemies of Hellenism. In Ottoman Macedonia, where the claims to hegemony of the new nation-states now clashed, agents from Athens and Sofia, in alliance with local Patriarchist and Exarchist leaders respectively, competed for the hearts and minds of the local Christian peasantry. There were also other contenders in this scramble for Macedonia – Serbia, whose expansion into Bosnia had been effectively blocked by the Habsburg monarchy and which had redirected her efforts toward the Slav-speakers of northern Macedonia instead, and Romania, who acted as the protector of the region’s Vlachs. In the eyes of the Greeks, Bulgaria nevertheless remained the main adversary.

The nationalist cause was initially fought through the means of education and religious propaganda in the many schools that were established in Macedonia, aimed at the illiterate Slav-speakers of the country-side, but despite hard efforts the Greeks were never quite able to match the achievements of their Bulgarian co-competitors in this field. Starting from the 1890s, armed bands made their appearance on the stage, as means of a strategy to employ force in order to achieve what had not been achieved through education. These bands – in the Bulgarian case known as komitadjis, ‘revolutionary committees’, while their Greek equivalents were referred to as makedonomachoi, ‘Macedonian fighters’ – were most often made up from local Macedonian brigands, loyal to either the Greek or the Bulgarian – or to be more precise, the Patriarchist or the Exarchist – cause. They were headed by trained officers from the ‘motherlands’ who with the secret support of the authorities and the patriotic societies of Athens and Sofia slipped in and out of Ottoman-ruled Macedonia. Loyalties were, however, shifting back and forth, and many of the most ardent Greek makedonomachoi were Slav-, Vlach- and Albanian-speakers, more or less Hellenised. To further complicate matters, the Exarchist activists were divided among themselves between those who fought for a Greater Bulgaria and those of the indigenous Slavs who rejected the claims of Serbian, Bulgarian and Greek nationalists alike, choosing to identify themselves as Macedonians. The latter were organised within a movement known as VMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation). Ethnicity, as historian Mark Mazower puts it, was as much the consequence as the cause of the unrest.

When the 20th century dawned, organised violence was spreading rapidly throughout the Macedonian region. In 1903, VMRO launched the so-called Ilinden uprising, seized the town of Kruševo and proclaimed a Macedonian republic.

The rising was quelled within two weeks by superior Ottoman forces, but it marked the beginning of a period of intensified guerrilla warfare known as the ‘Struggle for Macedonia’. A year later, the Greek army officer Pavlos Melas was killed in a skirmish between a band of makedonomachoi and Ottoman forces, an incident which served to galvanise Greek public opinion for the irredentist cause in the north. The death of the ‘national martyr’ Melas was used by Greek Macedonian activists and semi-official patriotic societies to bring what was now known as the Macedonian question to the policy-makers’ attention. Arms and volunteers were, with the secret support of the Greek government, being sent up north to combat the enemies – primarily the komitadjis – and by the end of the following year, 1905, a reign of terror had descended upon the Macedonian country-side.\textsuperscript{158}

The Struggle was to last for a number of years, but the fighting brought very little in terms of lasting results. When the Young Turks revolted against the Porte in 1908 and seized power in Constantinople, promising constitutional reforms and equal civic rights for all Ottoman subjects, regardless of faith, Greek and Bulgarian irredentists agreed to end the armed hostilities. The détente in Greek-Bulgarian-Turkish relations, heralded by the Young Turks’ reforms, was not to last for more than a few years. The Ottoman Empire was rapidly disintegrating under the pressure of modern nationalism, and in 1912, when the Porte was already at war with Italy, the governments of Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria saw it fit to temporarily set aside their disagreements and combine their efforts at ending Ottoman rule in the Balkans.

In the First Balkan War, 1912-1913, the Ottomans stood no chance against the armies of the three Christian nation-states, and at the peace conference in London the Sublime Porte was forced to cede all of its Balkan territories, with the exception of Eastern Thrace and the capital itself. However, the three victorious powers could not agree on how to divide the Macedonian region between themselves. Especially the Bulgarians, who had borne the brunt of the fighting, were displeased at the meagre outcome of the war, in terms of territorial compensation, and deeply suspicious of their Greek and Serbian allies. Within weeks after the peace-treaty, the former allies turned their weapons against each other. In the Second Balkan War of 1913, Bulgaria stood alone against the onslaught of the Greek, Serbian, Romanian and Ottoman armies and suffered a devastating defeat. Most of the territories gained by Bulgaria in the First Balkan War were lost, which enabled the Greek and Serbian victors to divide the larger part of the old Ottoman vilayets of Macedonia between themselves, disregarding the aspirations of Bulgarian irredentists and the Slav-Macedonian activists of VMRO alike. As a result of the Balkan Wars, Greece doubled in size and population, a fact which served to strengthen the credentials of the Great Idea.\textsuperscript{159}

\textsuperscript{159} Clogg 2002 (1992), pp. 77-83.
Disaster and consolidation

A year after the conclusion of the peace treaty of Bucharest, which ended the Second Balkan War and brought the southern part of the Macedonian region under Greek control, the outbreak of the First World War brought about the prospect of further territorial expansion. Greece entered the war in 1917 as an ally of the Entente, after a murderous split between the cautious King Constantine I and the expansionist Premier Eleftherios Venizelos which had threatened to divide the nation, and was duly rewarded by the victorious Great Powers. In 1919, Greece was granted a zone of occupation around the Ottoman city of Smyrna (Izmir) on the western coast of Asia Minor, home of a large ‘unredeemed’ Greek Orthodox population.

However, the Greek authorities had gravely underestimated the Turkish nationalist movement that resisted the occupation, and the dream of Greater Greece quickly turned into a nightmare. In 1922, the Greek frontline collapsed at the onslaught of Mustafa Kemal’s armies, an event which spelled the doom for Hellenism in Asia Minor. Hundreds of thousands of Christian refugees, fleeing Turkish reprisals, poured into a Greece already weary and financially bankrupt from a decade of warfare and civil strife. This event, known in Greek vernacular as the Disaster, represents a watershed in the modern history of Greece which marked the end of the Great Idea and the beginning of a period of social and political unrest. Following an agreement on ‘exchange of populations’ between the government of Greece and the victorious Kemal, as many as 1,5 million ‘Greeks’ (i.e. Christians of the Orthodox faith, many of whom spoke Turkish as their native language) were forced to leave their homes in Asia Minor for Greece, while simultaneously c. 400 000 ‘Turks’ (i.e. Muslims) – mostly from Crete and Greek Macedonia – were deported to Turkey. A similar agreement was concluded between the governments of Athens and Sofia, which led to the expulsion from Greece of those Exarchists who considered themselves Bulgarians and who had ended up on the ‘wrong’ side of the borders created by the Balkan Wars. These population movements were to have a significant impact on Greek Macedonia, whose ethnography in the 1920s was altered in favour of the Greek element, due to the expulsion of the Muslim and Exarchist populations and the influx of the Asia Minor refugees, who were being directed to the ‘New Lands’ by Greek authorities. The newly acquired territories were to be ‘re-Hellenised’, a campaign which culminated in 1926 when the government decreed all Slavic and Turkish place names to be replaced by Greek toponyms.

Greece of the interwar period was a country struggling to come to terms with the legacy of the Disaster. In the field of foreign policy she sought peaceful relations with her neighbours, while domestically her efforts were directed at the integration of the refugees and the consolidation of the territories won in the Balkan Wars. This was not a process without frictions. In western Macedonia, in

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160 For an account of the Greek entanglement in Asia Minor, see Llewellyn Smith 2000 (1973).
162 Karakasidou 1997, p. 189.
the prefectures of Florina and Kastoria, the re-distribution of land previously owned by Muslims to the newly arrived refugees, in a region where natural resources were already scarce, caused tensions with the indigenous, pre-dominantly Slav-speaking population. The result was ethnification. A number of Slav-speakers, many of whom had been staunch Patriarchists – seemingly, at least – in the years of the ‘Struggle for Macedonia’, embittered by the Greek authorities’ favourisation of the so-called ‘baptised Turks’, were now increasingly identifying themselves as Macedonian Slavs, or simply as Macedonians.163 This was in the eyes of Greek authorities a worrying development, in light of the political violence exercised by the remnants of VMRO in Serbian Macedonia and the revengeful attitudes still festering in Bulgarian politics. Attempts made by the Greek government in the mid-1920s to safeguard the cultural and linguistic rights of those who were now called the ‘Slavophone Greeks’, following pressure from the League of Nations,164 were during the dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas in the late 1930s replaced by a series of harsh measures. These included a ban on public use of the Slav Macedonian tongue and has been interpreted as aiming to wipe out potential separatist movements among the minorities.165

The turmoil of the 1940s and the Cold War period
The German invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece in 1941 led to the revival of the Macedonian question. Among the allies of the Axis powers was Bulgaria, whose ruling circles had not forgotten their country’s humiliation in the Second Balkan War, as well as in World War I, and was ready to take revenge on Greeks and Serbs alike. The Bulgarians were allowed to occupy both Yugoslav Macedonia (by that time still referred to as South Serbia) and parts of Greek Macedonia and Thrace, in which they embarked on a policy of ethnic cleansing and re-settlement of ‘Greater Bulgaria’s’ regained lands. In the end this last Bulgarian attempt at revising previous misfortunes in the field of foreign policy proved to be in vain. The German withdrawal in October 1944, following the Red Army’s advance into the Balkans and the subsequent surrender of Bulgaria, brought about the end of the Bulgarian irredentist dream. In the newly liberated territories known as South Serbia, or Serbian Macedonia, the vacuum left by the discredited Bulgarian nationalism was rapidly being filled by another nationalism, the one of the Macedonian Slavs, which adhered to the old VMRO vision of “Macedonia for the Macedonians”. This was a movement encouraged by the Bulgarian and Yugoslav Communist parties alike, especially by Tito who perceived it to be an effective counterweight to both Serbian and Bulgarian nationalism. A Macedonian People’s Republic was proclaimed within the new Yugoslav federation, with its capital at Skopje, in the months following the

163 van Boeschoten 2000, pp. 36-37.
Liberation, thereby seemingly settling Yugoslavia's Macedonian question. At this time, Greece was already sliding into civil war.

The many twists and turns which led to the Greek Civil War 1946-1949 between the communist-controlled ‘Democratic Army’ (DSE) and the right-wing government, who with Anglo-American support sought to restore the old order, are of no concern to this study. However, the entanglement of the Greek communists in the Macedonian Question during this period is one of the key elements that would later echo in Greek debate and history-writing on Macedonian affairs. The Communist Party of Greece (KKE), founded in 1918 as SEKE, had during the interwar period been the chief champion of civic rights for the Slav-Macedonian minority in Greece, as an effect of its adherence to the Communist International. This had in the 1920s adopted the policy of the Bulgarian Communist Party that called for an autonomous Macedonia. In Greece, this choice of policy was regarded with much suspicion, and the Slav-Macedonian association severely damaged the cause of KKE among the often socially marginalised Asia Minor refugees, who had paid a heavy price for the Great Idea and among whom the Party chiefly found its proselytes. During the Occupation and the subsequent Civil War, many of the Slav-speakers of Greek Macedonia, sympathetic to the promises made by both KKE and Tito, joined ranks with the communists and fought alongside them in the units of Narodno Osloboditelen Front, the ‘People’s Liberation Front’ (NOF). This co-operation made it possible for the right-wing establishment to brand both the communists and the Slav-speakers as traitors and enemies of the Greek nation. Following the defeat of the DSE in 1949, many Slav-speakers saw themselves forced to leave Greece along with the fleeing partisans. After 1952, when the last census to give details on the citizens’ religious affiliation and mother-tongue was held, the Slav Macedonians had turned into a ‘non-existent’ minority. Greek rule of the Macedonian region south of the Yugoslav border was now firmly established. In the minds of the victors, the ideological foe of the recent Civil War merged with the ‘enemies of Hellenism’ of an earlier age into a phenomenon called Slavokommounismós, ‘Slav-Communism’. The perceived threat of this was to haunt Greek politics throughout the Cold War and serve to justify the dictatorship of the Colonels 1967-1974.

The Macedonian question seemed settled, once and for all. Within a few years after the Civil War, Greek diplomacy established working relations with Tito’s Yugoslavia, and a Greek Consulate General started to operate in Skopje. For much

of the postwar period, successive Greek governments regarded Yugoslavia as a useful buffer state against Soviet domination in the region. Gradually the atmosphere of imminent threat gave way for if not cordial so at least relaxed relations between the Balkan states, especially after the downfall of the Greek military regime in 1974. A perception of threat persisted in certain circles in northern Greece, who sought to sound the alarm regarding the potential dangers posed by the Macedonian nation-building process within the Yugoslav federation. This, they feared, might grow into an irredentist movement, seeking the establishment of a ‘Greater Macedonia’ out of the lands that had been divided following the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913.\footnote{See Chapter 3.} However, the Macedonian question was seldom a subject of public debate in postwar Greece, nor did it feature on the agenda of foreign policymakers after the signing of a Greek-Yugoslav treaty. Official Greek policy rejected the existence of a Macedonian nation, but this was not an issue that pre-occupied Greek governments prior to 1988, when Yugoslavia was already crumbling under the pressure of economic crisis and re-emerging nationalist movements.\footnote{Kofos 1999, pp. 361-363.}

\textbf{The Macedonian crisis 1991-1995}
The dissolution of Yugoslavia coincided with a period of political turmoil in Greece, after a long period of relative stability since the transition to democracy in 1974 and the entry into the European Community in 1981. The Socialist PASOK government, led by Andreas Papandreou, in office since 1981, had more or less been forced to resign in 1989, in the wake of a major corruption scandal, known as the Koskotas affair. Since none of the political parties managed to secure a majority of the votes in the following elections, the subsequent months saw the rise and fall of two coalition governments. In the first, the conservatives (ND) sought to govern in alliance with a coalition of far left parties; one of which was KKE, the vanquished party of the Civil War that had been re-legalised in 1974, while the second was an ‘ecumenical’ all-party government, the result of an inconclusive election in October the same year. New elections in April 1990 gave the right-wing Nea Dimokratia (ND) a narrow majority by only two seats, which enabled its leader Konstantinos Mitsotakis to form a new conservative government, however vulnerable.\footnote{Clogg 2002 (1992), pp. 195-200; Crampton 2002, pp. 229-230.} The process of Yugoslav Macedonian secession from the Federation was therefore well under way before it caught the attention of Greek policy-makers. Elections held in Yugoslav Macedonia in 1990 had proved successful for a newly established nationalist party, known as VMRO-DPMNE (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation – Democratic Party of Macedonian National Unity), which challenged the old monopoly of the local Yugoslav-oriented Communist Party. In a later referendum held in September 1991, a majority voted in favour of full national independence. The new Greek government, worried by the recent developments in Yugoslavia and the vociferous irredentist rhetorics of VMRO-

\footnotesize{172 See Chapter 3.}
\footnotesize{173 Kofos 1999, pp. 361-363.}
\footnotesize{174 Clogg 2002 (1992), pp. 195-200; Crampton 2002, pp. 229-230.}
DPMNE, initially hoped that a strong Serbia under Slobodan Milošević would curb Slav-Macedonian nationalism, but was within short left to face the reality of Yugoslav Macedonian independence. In November 1991, a new constitution was adopted by the parliament in Skopje, proclaiming the sovereign Republic of Macedonia. A new Macedonian question had seemingly arisen.

The following months witnessed a massive increase in the attention given to the emerging conflict with the new neighbour state in Greek media and political debate. Save for KKE, who rejected what it termed ‘nationalist hysteria’ over the name issue, the challenge posed by what was now referred to as the ‘Skopje Republic’ seemed to unite the entire political spectrum in Greece, from the conservative ND to PASOK and the small Alliance of the Left and of Progress (Συνασπισμός, the remnants of the late 1980s coalition of leftist parties) – at least at first glance. Mitsotakis’ government was under pressure from both the major opposition party – Papandreou adopted a policy of non-compromise over the name ‘Macedonia’ from the very beginning – and from forces within his own party. The latter found a representative in Antonis Samaras, Minister of Foreign Affairs, a young politician with family ties to Greek Macedonia, who made the battle for the name his own core issue. Samaras’ diplomacy initially succeeded in securing the support of Greece’s EC partners, who declared that one of the main criteria for the recognition of the new republic would be “constitutional and political guarantees ensuring that [the applicant state] has no territorial claims towards a neighboring Community State [Greece] and that it will conduct no hostile propaganda activities versus a neighboring Community State, including the use of a denomination which implies territorial claims”.

The government in Skopje agreed to make the required amendments excluding territorial claims but refused to yield in the name issue and thereby to give up an already established national identity. Samaras in his turn pursued a policy, the so-called maximalist line, which ruled out any compromise over the name. Even the derivatives of the word ‘Macedonia’ were to be excluded from the denomination of the new republic, as a pre-condition for its formal recognition. A clash with Mitsotakis led to his dismissal as Foreign Minister in April 1992 and a revision of the maximalist line in foreign policy. Mitsotakis was apparently hoping for some kind of honourable compromise over the name which would enable him to get out of the Macedonian quagmire that now overshadowed Greek politics, but the mounting tensions within ND and his narrow majority in the parliament imposed limits on his options. A draft treaty prepared by UN mediators Lord David Owen and Cyrus Vance, suggesting the compound name Nova Makedonija, ‘New Macedonia’, was therefore turned down as a gesture of appeasement toward the hard-liners. Nevertheless, it failed to bridge the gap within the party. In September 1993, two Nea Dimokratia deputies deserted Mitsotakis for Samaras’

175 Kofos 1999, p. 4; Crampton 2002, pp. 245-246.
new party ‘Political Spring’ and thus brought down the government. Instead, the
new elections in October returned Andreas Papandreou and PASOK to power.

Papandreou, who had won a convenient majority of the parliament seats and,
contrary to Mitsotakis, enjoyed the loyalty of all of his party cadres, had spent the
past years in opposition condemning all moves towards compromise in the name
issue as yielding. He commenced his new term in office by confirming the
Macedonian policy of PASOK; no compound name would be accepted and no
negotiations held, unless the government in Skopje did not abandon its position.
However, patience was running out within the international community; the United
States and the EC/EU partners, that initially had supported the Greek line over the
name, decided to recognise the new republic as the ‘Former Yugoslav Republic of
Macedonia’ (FYROM), a provisional denomination suggested by the UN in 1993
pending a permanent solution of the name issue. This was a major setback for the
confrontative policy of the PASOK government, which nevertheless continued to
raise the stakes. In February 1994, Papandreou imposed a total trade embargo, with
the exception of food and medicine, on Yugoslav Macedonia, hoping that this
would bring US diplomacy back into the game and the Skopje government to its
knees. The embargo had the opposite effect; though suffering economically due to
the blockade, the Republic of Macedonia was now able to take diplomatic
advantage of its underdog position, while Greece was increasingly being perceived
abroad as an aggressive bully. Furthermore, the embargo damaged the local
economy in northern Greece as well, and commercial interests thus joined forces
with those segments of Greek society already concerned by Greece’s growing
isolation in the international community who called for a revision of the reigning
Macedonian policy. Thus, while publicly continuing to portray himself as the
unyielding defender of Greek national interests, Papandreou quietly opted for
renewed negotiations, under the auspices of the UN.

In November 1995, shortly after the Dayton agreement on Bosnia, Athens
and Skopje finally agreed to open diplomatic liaisons with each other. Greece put
an end to the embargo and recognised her neighbour under the same provisional
name (FYROM) as her EU partners had previously done, while the government in
Skopje agreed to remove the contested star of Vergina from the state flag. The
Macedonian crisis had passed, but the core issue, the name, that had provoked it
remains unsolved and continues to reemerge in Greek domestic as well as foreign
politics, notably after the United States’ recognition of the Republic of Macedonia
in 2004 (thus abandoning the compromise denomination) and in connection with
this state’s bid for NATO and EU membership in recent years.

178 Nikolaos Zahariadis, "Greek Policy toward the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 1991-1995", Journal of
3. Macedonian narratives and the rise of macedonology

In a book, published in 1986 and carrying the title Εμείς οι Μακεδόνες [We the Macedonians], journalist-cum-local politician Nikolaos Mertzos set out to warn public opinion in Greece about what he and others perceived as the gathering storm in the Macedonian region. The threat was found in Yugoslav Macedonian irredentist propaganda as well as in the resurrected Bulgarian nationalism of the late Zhivkov regime. The stated purpose of the author, however, was not so much to counter foreign claims on the historical heritage of Macedonia, as the attempt at setting the record straight, by giving the Macedonians their rightful place in national history-writing.\(^\text{179}\)

Mertzos commenced his book with a prologue, in which the scene was located to the battlefield of Plataiai in 479 BC, on the eve of the battle that was to deliver Greece from the Persian threat. While the Athenians and their Spartan allies were quarrelling among themselves “as usual”, a lonely horseman approached the Greek lines, according to Herodotus. It was Alexander I, king of Macedon, who had come to warn the Greeks about their enemy’s battle plans, saying that he too was a Greek, of ancient descent, who did not wish to see Greece enslaved. Nevertheless, Mertzos writes, this gesture of Hellenic patriotism fell into oblivion, and 140 years later Demosthenes, the famous Athenian orator, would dismiss the Macedonians as barbarians. “Since then, essentially nothing has changed for the past 2500 years”, the author suggested.\(^\text{180}\) Athens in southern Greece, he claimed, remains deeply sunk into self-admiration, oblivious of the borderlands and the national sacrifices of its inhabitants. “A cry in the desert”, the back cover of a later re-edition read, issued in the spring of 1992. “Nobody heard it because nobody wanted to hear it back then, when there still was time […].”

Time, it seemed, would however bring vindication. Six years later, the perceived threat of Yugoslav Macedonian irredentism had made it to the front pages of the major newspapers and the prime time television shows, to the offices of policy-makers in Athens and other capitals of the world, creating a market for publications like that of Mertzos and for expertise on Macedonian history.

In this chapter, I aim to explore and discuss the themes touched upon above – the relation between the national centre and the regional periphery in the production of historical knowledge, the historical narratives and contexts emphasised in these as well as the interests, political and other, involved in the shaping of a public discourse on the threat against Greek Macedonia. The first part of the chapter is a description of the historiographical and institutional contexts in which macedonology had evolved and the principal agents – organisations and institutions as well as individual actors – which contributed into bringing regional Macedonian interests into the centre of political and media attention in Greece. The purpose of this overview of the institutional contexts, official as well as semi-official, in and through which local knowledge of the past was produced and

\(^{179}\) Nikolaos Mertzos, Εμείς οι Μακεδόνες [We the Macedonians], Athens: P. X. Levantis 1992 (1986), pp. 8-11.
channelled, is to point at the professional interests involved in the history war at home, which in its turn was fuelled by – and provided fuel to – the larger Macedonian conflict.

In the second part of the chapter, the narratives of the past will be analysed, with attention attributed to the present needs that are articulated in these narratives or are discernible in them. Also, the future expectations in which the macedonologists’ narratives are embedded will be subject to analysis. Attention is given to the perceptions concerning the nature of history itself and central concepts in their understanding of the past, which both emerge from and shape the accounts of history. Special attention is also paid to diverging views with regard to the historical contexts that ought to be emphasised in official argumentation in the name conflict and in national historiography, taboo topics and the existence of counternarratives which contributed to shape macedonology. The chapter concludes with a summarising analysis, which also constitutes a bridge to the following chapter.

**National and local history-writing**

The growth of nationalism in Greece and elsewhere in Europe, over the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries, was closely interconnected with the emergence and gradual professionalisation of history as an academic discipline. The symbiotic relationship between historical scholarship and the dreams and policies of territorial expansion, nurtured by intellectuals and political elites in the ascending nation-states of Southeast Europe, was particularly evident in the case of Greece. Historians were involved in the ongoing drawing and redrawing of the cultural and ethnological boundaries of Hellenism, as well as students of folklore and philology, whose knowledge production often served the ends of irredentism. The Great Idea, articulated in a nowadays much cited speech by the politician Ioannis Kolettis, addressed to the Greek parliament in 1844, was founded upon a reading of the past which stressed the connection between territory and historical presence, as a prerogative for the present definition of Greekness. “The Greek kingdom is not the whole of Greece, but only a part, the smallest and poorest part. A native of Greece is not only someone who lives within this kingdom, but also one who lives [...] in any land associated with Greek history or the Greek race”.

The question that historians, geographers, ethnographers and policy-makers, both inside and outside of the Greek Kingdom, grappled with was how to determine which territories and which people belonged to the fatherland, past, present and future. Few of the intellectuals involved in the struggle for independence and the process of turning the Greek-speaking diaspora community

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181 The difference between scholarly history-writing and the historical work produced outside of the academia, implied in the word ‘professionalization’, is historically a rather recent phenomenon in Greece. Paparrigopoulos, for example, the alleged father of Modern Greek historiography, who held a chair at the University of Athens, had no formal educational background. Papailias 2005, p. 50. On the emergence of Modern Greek historiography, see Effi Gazi, “Scientific”National History: The Greek Case in Comparative Perspective (1830-1920), Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang 2000.

into a nation, within the confines of a modern state, ever presented a clear conception of the territorial boundaries of the imagined nation-state, nor how statehood was to be achieved. These boundaries were subject to continuous redefinitions and negotiations, as the state gradually expanded and national expectations for more continued to rise, a development that was reflected in the historical output of the period.

As mentioned earlier, a reorientation from an initial emphasis on the classical past toward the inclusion of the medieval Empire of Byzantium into what was considered national history, paved the way for a geographically much broader definition of Greece and of Greekness. By and large, this has been credited to the work of one man, Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, who was to leave a lasting imprint on subsequent Greek historiography. His case is instructive since both his personal experience and the history that he wrote reflected the internal divisions and antagonisms that permeated the Greek society of his time, which also contributed in the shaping of national as well as local historical culture.

The Great Idea had emerged in response to sharpened social and political tensions in the newly independent Kingdom of the 1830s and 1840s. These expressed themselves in a bitter competition for political influence between the autochthones, the indigenous population of the Peloponnese, Attica and present-day central Greece, and the heterochthones, Greeks from Constantinople and other parts of the Ottoman Empire, and/or from the diaspora communities in Western Europe. Since in many cases were both wealthier and better educated than the former, they tended to be favoured by the Bavarian authorities, to the dismay of the old veterans who had fought in the War of Independence. These felt themselves pushed aside and the spoils of their revolution usurped by outsiders.

“As for... those who sacrificed”, the autochthon wartime commander Makrygiannis wrote in his memoirs, “… let them loiter barefoot and wretched in the streets and cry for their bread... [while] the filth of Constantinople and Europe abound... They are our masters and we their serfs... They took the finest sites for their houses and took fat salaries in the ministries.”

When the autochthons gained the upper hand in the power struggle, legislation was passed, which was aimed to prevent their outside rivals from holding office in the Kingdom. Paparrigopoulos, who was born in Constantinople, was dismissed from his government appointment in the Ministry of Justice in 1845, as a result of this.

It is against this backdrop that the dreams of national aggrandisement were formulated, chiefly by heterochthon Greeks, like Kolettis. The Great Idea, which

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184 Particularly with regard to the attitudes toward Macedonia, repercussions can be seen in Paparrigopoulos’ writings concerning the ancient Macedonians. In 1849, he still adhered to the idea of them as a ‘hybrid race’, but four years later he fully asserted their Greekness during antiquity. Shannan Peckham 2001, p. 40, 42. This re-evaluation of the Macedonians was, however, not solely motivated by the impact of Greek politics, but closely reflected – and indeed was boosted by – European developments in historiography, in this case particularly the works of Prussian historian Johann Gustav Droysen, whose Geschichte Alexanders des Großen (1833) and Geschichte des Hellenismus (1836-1843) introduced the idea of Alexander’s conquests and the Macedonian Hellenistic period, commonly seen as an era of decay, as the crucial for the emergence of Christianity and, by extension, Western civilisation.
favoured the interests of those who saw Constantinople, not Athens, as the true
centre of the Greek world, would in a couple of decades emerge as the dominant
national ideology, unifying the various components of Greek society with a
common cause. The tensions between Greeks of what would become present-day
southern Greece and those of the exterior nevertheless persisted. Ion Dragoumis, a
leading advocate of the Greek nationalist cause in his native Macedonia in the
beginning of the 20th century, but also a staunch critic of the Westernising Greek
opposed to Ellines, ‘Hellenes’], identified in their minds the Greek state, the Greek
Kingdom, the small Greece, with the Greek nation. They forgot the Greek nation,
Romioysin and Hellenism.”

In his view, it was among the rural populations in
Macedonia and Greek diaspora communities elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire,
still unaffected by the modern state and foreign contamination, that a genuine
national consciousness had been preserved.185

The nationalisation of Greek society was thus intertwined with – and
sometimes in conflict with – strong local interests and loyalties. This was also to be
seen in the histories written, from the 1880s and onwards. Local history-writers and
ethnographers, often schoolteachers, sought evidence of their regions’ glorious
pasts, manifested in their loyal commitment to the struggle against the Ottoman
Turks in the 1821 uprising and the ways in which ancient customs and values had
been preserved in their local homelands (patrides) better than anywhere else.

Arguing for the inclusion of geography in the school curricula in 1894, a scholar
asserted that “every corner, every inch of territory is linked to an historical event
worthy of being remembered and celebrated.”186 This emphasis on the local and
regional – in no way unique to Greece, since it in fact reflected common European
trends, such as the German Heimatkunde movement, and its counterparts in France,
Britain, the Scandinavian countries and elsewhere, where national identity toward
the end of the 19th century tended to be constructed through celebration of the
rural – entailed an inversion where the periphery, as Robert Shannan Peckham has
remarked, became the centre of national culture. In fiction as well as in history-
writing, the frontier emerged as the true Greece, a repository of national values and
memories, and as the hero of the borderland the klepht, the outlaw, who through
his perceived valour, patriotism and love of freedom was considered – especially in
irredentist imagination – true to the revolutionary spirit of 1821.187

186 Shannan Peckham 2001, p. 83.
188 Konstantinos Papamichalopoulos, translated and quoted in Shannan Peckham 2001, p. 76.
189 Shannan Peckham 2001, pp. 49-60; John S. Koliopoulos, Brigands with a Cause: Brigandage and Irredentism in Modern
Local history-producers and institutions: The Society for Macedonian Studies and the Institute of Balkan Studies

It was not until several years after the incorporation of Greek Macedonia into Greece in 1912 that attempts were made to formalise and institutionalise the knowledge production concerning the region’s past. A step in this direction was taken through the inauguration of the Greece’s second university in 1925, the future Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Of more crucial importance was the Society for Macedonian Studies (EMS), founded in Thessaloniki 1939, by a group of local businessmen, politicians and academics, some of which were also affiliated with the university. The aim of the Society, according to its later president, Konstantinos Vavouskos, who at several occasions in the 1980s chronicled its history, was to research “everything concerning the Macedonian people and the Macedonian land”, to preserve, study and publish “every linguistic, archaeological, historical and ethnographical material [...] proving the indisputable and incontestable incorporation of Macedonia within the entire national framework”, thus contributing to raising the “educational, spiritual and civilisatory level of the Macedonian people”. In plain language, the goal of EMS was to assert the past and present Greekness of Macedonia. This task was considered to be of such vital significance that the Society, in the midst of the German occupation, managed to secure government support. The Bulgarian attempts at the annexation of Eastern Macedonia at the time, and the uncertainties regarding region’s future status in the years following the Second World War, made the Society all the more important, from the viewpoint of the Greek state. EMS, located in downtown Thessaloniki, thus continued to draw political and financial support from the subsequent governments during the Civil War and in the Cold War era, enabling the Society to expand its activities over the years. In 1953, the Institute of Balkan Studies (IMXA) was formed as a separate branch of the Society, followed by the inauguration of the Historical Archive of Macedonia; all the while a steady flow of publications emanated from its research centres.

The establishment of this society was motivated by educational needs that the University of Thessaloniki presumably did not meet. The role of the Society for Macedonian Studies, it was stated, was to popularise local knowledge and make it accessible to the broad public, which was unable to follow the austere programmes of the university and lacked the “special scientific knowledge”; to teach the

\begin{itemize}
  \item Apart from the Aristotle University, the University of Macedonia, also located in Thessaloniki, was established in 1991. It had existed as a School of Higher Industrial Studies since 1957.
  \item The first publications of EMS after the Second World War were thus written within the framework of the national claims activism, which aimed at Greek territorial compensation for the nation’s wartime ordeal. Cf. Gounaris 2010, pp. 66-69. On the subject of Greek early post-war irredentism, see Stefanidis 2007.
  \item Especially Balkan Studies, the English-language journal of IMXA, provided an international venue for Greek scholarship on Macedonia.
\end{itemize}
common man the “lessons of science and of art”.\textsuperscript{194} A number of scholarly societies with similar goals had already existed for several decades, but all of them were centred in Athens; the founders of EMS had thus, in Vavouskos’ view, performed a task of national significance, since the Society “filled a void in the spiritual life of Macedonia and generally of Northern Greece”\textsuperscript{195}

For all the wording on the Society’s ‘civilising’ mission among the locals in Vavouskos’ writings, reminiscent to colonialist discourse, it is important to keep in mind that it existed due to local initiative, rather than as a result of decrees from the ruling circles of the nation’s capital. Although subsidised in part by the central government, the board of this semi-official institution remained in the hands of men born in, or with close personal and professional ties to, the region, whose perceived interests were the focal point of its activities. This point was stressed by Vavouskos. The analysis of his writings show that most of the deceased colleagues mentioned in his chronicles are referred to as “distinguished Macedonian[s]”, whose main characteristic was their ardent patriotism, as expressed in love for the fatherland – the distinction between Macedonia and the Greek nation as a whole is not always clear – and commitment to the aims of the Society. EMS served a central purpose in the ongoing nationalisation in the region so recently incorporated into the Greek state, but the process also entailed the opposite end of bringing the periphery to the centre, by posing local knowledge as a vital component of national knowledge. The explicit aim of the publications in the various library series of the Society was “first and foremost the defence of the national [Greek] positions in Macedonia”, although Vavouskos maintained that this activity, even during the Axis occupation, was “based completely upon science”. “It is to the credit of the Society’s founders that they wanted to set up a serious scientific association and not a centre of propaganda.” Evidence of this was said to be seen in the fact that publications of the Society were to be found in almost all of the known libraries of the world.\textsuperscript{196}

The Society for Macedonian Studies thus represented one of the most important and powerful agents claiming scientific and historical authority before and during the name crisis. Even a political adversary, such as the former leader of the Greek reform communists, Leonidas Kyrkos, felt compelled to acknowledge the work and the importance of the Society.\textsuperscript{197}

Other institutions: Museums
Apart from EMS and IMXA, historical knowledge of Macedonia was also promoted through the establishments and activities of museums, located in Thessaloniki. A Museum of Folklore and Ethnology was set up in 1956, but of

\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., p. 1497.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{196} Ibid., pp. 1499-1500.
greater importance was and is the Archaeological museum, dedicated to the preservation and marketing of Macedonia’s ancient past. The interests of archaeologists and museums in securing public funding were, arguably, an aspect of history politics that lay at the heart of the later Macedonian conflict during the 1990s. The traditional prestige attributed to antiquity – mainly the classical and Hellenistic periods, before the Roman conquest – in Greece, meant that the needs of classical archaeology for long had priority before those of disciplines preoccupied with the study of later historical periods. In contrast to the national capital, Thessaloniki, albeit founded toward the end of the 4th century BC, lacks significant remains from the celebrated ancient past. This shortage was compensated through the promotion of an image of Thessaloniki as a metropolis of Byzantine culture – here understood as a purely Greek civilisation – by means of the city’s many churches. It meant that the tension of the original divide in the evaluation of the ancient versus the medieval past, found in Greek history-writing prior to Paparrigopoulos, at times emerged, not only in museum circles but in public discourse as well. An example of this was provided by an architect and city-planner, who – during the midst of the diplomatic conflict – suggested that, since the traditional architecture found in Macedonia is rooted in an indigenous medieval tradition and the “Hellenic-Byzantine spirit”, it followed that Macedonia’s architectural heritage was more genuinely Greek than the Neo-classical Western style, imitated in Athens and elsewhere in southern Greece. Thus, a dichotomy between eternal Hellenism, as embodied by indigenous Byzantium, and artificial Greekness, resulting from contamination through foreign influence, in the south was inherent in the local historical narrative on Macedonia.

Another institution of some importance as a local history-producer was the Museum of the Macedonian Struggle. As the name suggests, it was devoted to the preservation and promotion of memories and remains associated with the period that had preceded and led up to the incorporation of the region into Greece. Located in the old Greek consulate of Ottoman Salonika, from which the activities of the armed irregular Greek bands had been planned and coordinated in 1904-1908, it was inaugurated in 1982, after decades of planning and negotiations. The museum was established with backing both from authorities at the regional level, through Nikolaos Martis, until 1981 Minister of Northern Greece – more of whom below – and at the national level, through president Konstantinos Karamanlis (himself Greek Macedonian by birth), as well as by commercial interests. In 1988, it was supplemented by a research centre, which through a publication programme of its own has asserted its scholarly expertise, not only on the period covered by the Struggle but generally on regional history in the 19th and 20th centuries. “Even today when the Macedonian Question is to be found in the front-page of the newspapers, many cabdrivers are ignorant of the address to the Museum of the Macedonian


199 The landmarks in the city’s centre, the Rotunda and the Arch of Galerius, both date from the late Roman period.

Struggle”, historian Vasilis Gounaris, director of the museum’s research centre, complained in 1992. Nevertheless, he admitted, the public attention attributed to the diplomatic developments in the Balkans of the early 1990s was undoubtedly something that both the museum and the centre were able to capitalise on, as a growing number of visitors and school classes found their way into the old consulate.\textsuperscript{201}

This is an admittedly brief and in many regards incomplete account of the most significant institutions involved in claiming historical expertise on a regional level in Greek Macedonia – setting aside, for now, the academic environments of the universities, and for that matter the local historical associations outside Thessaloniki. In the following, we will turn our attention to some of the main agents, networks and individuals, which were instrumental in the promotion of alleged Macedonian interests at the crossroads of the discourse on history with that of contemporary politics.

**The Greek Macedonian diaspora**

The Society for Macedonian Studies did not solely devote its energies to the preservation and promotion of Macedonia’s past through ambitious publication programmes. An important aspect of its activities was its contacts with organisations catering to the needs and interests of expatriate Greeks, with family ties to the region. The early and mid-20\textsuperscript{th} century Macedonia had seen several waves of labour emigrants, who had settled chiefly in North America, Australia and northwest Europe. In 1967, shortly after the inauguration of military dictatorship in Greece, the Society’s board established the Centre of Macedonians Abroad (KAM), the declared objective of which was to assist Macedonian 	extit{omogeneis} (fellow Greeks) to cultivate their ties with the homeland.\textsuperscript{202} To this end, the Society initiated a series of what was called Pan-Macedonian congresses in the 1960s and 1970s. Its president also participated at the annual gatherings of the leading Greek Macedonian diaspora organisations, the Pan-Macedonian Union of America and Canada as well as its equivalent in Australia.

Through these organisations, channels were also opened to universities and other scholarly environments in the host countries of the Greek Macedonian migrants, to which Vavouskos was invited to lecture, and to political circles abroad, which could be lobbied for support.\textsuperscript{203} The Greek Macedonian diaspora, a subcategory of the even larger Greek diaspora, constituted an audience and a distributor of the Society’s historical output. Material emanating from EMS and its various branches was often reproduced in newsletters and other publications of


\textsuperscript{202} The Centre of Macedonians Abroad was dismantled in 1997, following a decision by the then PASOK government. No explanation is given as to the cause of the decision at the homepage of EMS, but a plausible reason might be the inauguration two years earlier of SAE, the World Council of Hellenes Abroad, which was made the consultant body of the Greek state in all its contacts with the organisations of the Greek diaspora. The existence of such a powerful, new organisation, with overlapping functions and with its headquarters also situated in Thessaloniki, may have made the older Centre obsolete. http://www.ems.name/history.html, accessed 17/1 2008.

various expatriate cultural associations. Apart from forming channels for contacts and influence in a scholarly context, the diaspora could be mobilised for political purposes. Its potential for pressure and promotion of Greek ‘national interests’ in foreign lands of vital importance to Greece, such as the United States, was often stressed by Greek politicians; one of which referred to it as “the largest and most powerful weapon which Hellenism possesses”.  

The above statement reflects a process of transition in the Greek state’s relations with the diaspora in the postwar decades. Greek historian Ioannis Stefanidis has in a recent study charted the intricate interplay between nationalism, public opinion and the shaping of foreign policy regarding the fate of Cyprus. In this process, the diaspora in the United States especially came to play a vital role. As a result, the so-called Greek-American lobby came into being. In 1974, the year which saw the Turkish invasion of Cyprus and the subsequent downfall of the Greek junta, the American Hellenic Institute (AHI) was founded. Located in Washington DC, its proclaimed task was to enlighten American opinion on Greek national interests – primarily the Cyprus issue – and to facilitate access to the policy-making centres of the US capital. One of its declared objectives has since become a ‘special relationship’ between the United States and Greece, similar to the one that Israel enjoys.

From the mid-1970s and increasingly toward the 1990s, Greek authorities in the motherland developed an interest in expatriate matters, which expressed itself in a number of decrees aimed at formalising the relations between the state and the various diaspora organisations. “The growing importance of the Greek presence in the US”, a recent Greek government publication states, “led to the awareness that the Greek Diaspora constitutes a national asset and that preservation of its national identity is an obligation for the Greek State.” The identity of expatriate Greeks had previously been a task for their own lay and religious organisations, which catered to schooling in the ‘mother tongue’. Sociologists Roudometof and Kalpathakis have pointed to a growing rift within the Greek-American community between proponents of a transnational Greek identity and those of a non-ethnic Pan-Orthodox. The latter, represented by a group called the Orthodox Christian Laity, lobbied for the creation of a pan-American Orthodox patriarchate, which would replace and unite the Orthodox churches of various ethnic and immigrant communities. With this end in view, the group called for the replacement of Greek with English as the language of services. Pan-Orthodoxy could thus be viewed as a

205 Stefanidis 2007, pp. 24-25.
209 Dollis 2004, p. 156. Presidential decrees in 1982-1983 established a General Secretariat of Greeks Abroad as an autonomous body within the Ministry of Culture. In 1993, the Secretariat was transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a decision which reflected the diaspora’s perceived importance in Greek foreign policy. It was followed by the establishment of SAE in 1995 and a permanent parliamentary committee for diaspora relations in 1996.
210 Stefanidis 2007, p. 25.
threat against the ethnic Greek identity and national loyalty of the Greek-American community.\textsuperscript{211} Although not explicitly stated by Roudometof and Kalpathakis, the presence of this alternative identity in North America and elsewhere played into the concerns for the preservation of national identity in the diaspora, expressed by Greek authorities and expatriate associations. Also for the Greek Orthodox Church abroad, the reality of flock members turning their backs on it in favour of rivalling Orthodox churches, such as the Macedonian autocephalous church, gave cause for concern.\textsuperscript{212} In earlier research on the contemporary Macedonian conflict, it is the anthropologist Loring Danforth that first and foremost pays attention to its links with diaspora politics and ecclesiastical nationalism.\textsuperscript{213} The name conflict unfolding toward the end of the century thus served a purpose of rallying the diaspora around a Greek identity perceived as endangered.

Although the Greek-Macedonian diaspora organisations were not primarily history-producers, they proved instrumental in the promotion of macedonology. They were of immense importance as one of the main factors contributing to pushing the Macedonian conflict onto the political agenda in Greece and abroad toward the end of the 1980s. The contacts of EMS with the diaspora were facilitated by the Greek state, through its embassies, as well as regional authorities in the homeland, chiefly by the Ministry of Northern Greece – which in 1988 was renamed the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace, in order to enhance the importance attributed to the name of Greece’s largest province.\textsuperscript{214} Top officials of the Ministry were, like the president of EMS, regular attendants and speakers at the annual meetings of the expatriate associations. These associations, located in multicultural societies where the paths of several ethnic minority groups involved in cultural politics inevitably crossed, took notice of the ethnic mobilisation of corresponding Slav Macedonian associations in the 1980s, partly in response to mounting national and ethnic tensions in the Yugoslav federation, long before the national media in Greece caught attention of the issue. The Pan-Macedonian world conventions, which took place in Thessaloniki on an annual basis toward the end of the decade, therefore, apart from its function as occasions where the ritual bond between homeland and diaspora was reaffirmed, turned into platforms, where a discourse of imminent threat against Greek Macedonia, its name and its historical heritage thrived. The discourse of threat was reproduced in many of the publications of the Society and affiliated history-producers, contributing to revive


\textsuperscript{212} The Macedonian autocephalous church was proclaimed in 1967, as the ecclesiastical expression of Macedonian nationhood within the Yugoslav federation. However, the Serbian and Greek Orthodox churches refused to recognise it. Cf. the official website of the Macedonian Orthodox Church – Archdiocese of Ohrid: http://www.mpc.org.mk/English/default.asp, accessed 22/9 2011.


\textsuperscript{214} Mackridge & Yannakakis 1997, p. 15.
and perpetuate already existing tropes of writing about Macedonia, as well as in contemporary political speeches.

The diaspora activists ought thus not be regarded as solely the passive recipients and mouthpieces of the institutions and individuals in Greece that were concerned with macedonology. Rather they formed a significant factor in the cluster of interests that contributed to put Macedonia on the agenda of political and societal debate, with their own interests to promote. As I have argued in Chapter 1, diaspora communities add a transnational dimension to national historical culture in their countries of origin. Although the media and identity politics of Greek diaspora organisations in their host societies is not primarily a topic of closer scrutiny in this study, it is an aspect that will be revisited in the final analysis.

The ‘new’ macedonology of the 1980s

Writing in 1964, a young historian of IMXA, Evangelos Kofos, confidently concluded that the Macedonian question nowadays “can and should be considered a subject for the student of history rather than an issue for the policymaker.”

Two years earlier, a settlement had been reached between the governments of Greece and Yugoslavia not to make any public reference whatsoever to the infamous Macedonian question that had poisoned relations in the region for almost half a century. By way of this, controversial issues, such as minority rights and territorial claims, were to be seen as settled. The historians, to whose exclusive domain this once highly politiciced topic had been assigned, were in the mid-1960s chiefly Kofos himself, whose English language publication *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia* (1964) became known as the standard account of this particular aspect of Greece’s turbulent 20th century history. However, Kofos’ activities as a scholar were not confined to the academies or to historical research. In 1962, he was appointed to a position as scientific expert on Balkan matters at the Ministry of Foreign affairs, which meant that he for decades to come was directly involved in the shaping of Greek foreign policy with regard to the neighbouring states in the north.

The same statement, in which the Macedonian question was separated from the sphere of contemporary politics, was reproduced by Kofos two decades later at a conference in Thessaloniki in 1984, organised by IMXA on occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Greek army officer Pavlos Melas’ death, which in traditional Greek historiography marks the outbreak of the Struggle for Macedonia. However, the twenty years that had passed since the publication of Kofos’ authoritative study had seen changes, whose impact was to be felt in the sphere of politics as well as in the field of history-writing.

The first major change is the transition to democracy after 1974, the rehabilitation of the communist Left and the electoral victory of PASOK in 1981,
which broke the traditional Right’s long political hegemony. The other change came as a side-effect of the first. The transformation of Greek society meant that a number of previously exiled historians, which due to their Marxist orientation and political association with the Left had been banned from state service, now entered Greek universities and history departments. These historians had spent the postwar and junta years in academic environments in Western Europe and in North America, or at Greek research centres that did not depend on public funding, where they had come under the influence of international intellectual trends in the approach to the study of the past, unfamiliar to the old academic establishment in Greece. The so-called “new history” included fields such as social and economic history and, simultaneously, brought about a sharp decline in the interest for the ‘traditional’ topics that had dominated the bulk of modern Greek historiography until recently, such as the Greek War of Independence, the continuity of Hellenism and the Macedonian question. By the end of the 1980s, the number of historians in Greece had multiplied and new research centres had been established, which co-existed with older institutions less receptive toward “new history”. This expansion of the history discipline, in terms of numbers of historians by profession, ought also to be seen within the context of the rapid growth of universities in Greece, as a result of regional political demands, which competed for the scarce funding resources available.  

The decline in academic as well as public interest in the type of historical research represented by EMS, IMXA and the Museum of the Struggle for Macedonia might of course be considered a blow to their prestige, but it also meant that the study of Greek Macedonia and the Macedonian question was left almost exclusively by the “new” historians to the expertise of the regional institutions in Thessaloniki.

If the “new” historians appointed to university posts did not constitute a direct challenge to the authority of Kofos and members of the above mentioned academic establishment, their appearance, as well as the recent changes in the political and intellectual climate, was partly linked to the development that was to unfold, with regard to history-writing and public discourse on Macedonia. The 1980s saw the emergence of a group of individuals, who all claimed expertise on Macedonian matters – past and present – that in effect would rival the conventional wisdom. In the media, they would sometimes be referred to as the ‘new Macedonian fighters’. They asserted that the Macedonian question, far from being buried in the past, was a contemporary issue of the utmost importance, due to the propaganda emanating from Yugoslav Macedonia, with potentially damaging repercussions on national security and the territorial integrity of Greece.

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217 Lois Lambrianidis, Περιφερειακά πανεπιστήμια στην Ελλάδα. Από το αίτημα για στρατόπεδα νεοσυλλέκτων στο αίτημα για περιφερειακά πανεπιστήμια [Regional universities in Greece: From the demand for military recruit camps to the demand for regional universities], Thessaloniki: Paratiritis 1993. See also the review by Fanis Malkidis in Oikonomikos Tachydromos 24/8 1995, p. 78.

The most known and senior of them was undoubtedly Nikolaos Martis. A local politician from Kavala in eastern Greek Macedonia and a deputy of ND, Martis had served as Minister for Northern Greece from 1974 to 1981. Before that, between 1955 and 1961, he had held office in the ministries of commerce and industry during the first premiership of Konstantinos Karamanlis. This background in both regional and national politics, as well as his wartime service in Macedonia, Italy and the Middle East, was often invoked by himself as a token of his patriotic credentials and intimate knowledge of things Macedonian. In 1983, he published the book _I plastógráfisi tis istorías tis Makedonías_ [The falsification of Macedonia’s history], which was to become central in the ‘new’ body of literature on Greek Macedonia. Addressed to the scholarly society and the international community, the book presented a long list of ancient sources, passages from the Bible, the Quran and early Christian hagiographic literature, which according to the author refuted the claims of a particular (Slav) Macedonian nationality and demonstrated the connection between historic Macedonia and timeless Hellenic civilisation. The book was awarded by the _Akadimía Athinón_, the Academy of Athens, an institution made up from retired university professors of conservative orientation. It was one of the few works of a layman ever to be translated into major foreign languages.\(^{219}\) This meant that it by the time of the diplomatic crisis, when the international campaign to promote the official Greek position caught speed, could readily be distributed abroad.

Another regional politician, with an interest in promoting a similar view of Macedonian history, was the PASOK deputy Stelios Papathelelis, Martis’ successor as Minister for Northern Greece. Papathelelis was the author of several publications toward the end of the decade, calling for “national awakening” in view of the alleged threat against Greek Macedonia.\(^{220}\) Due to his commitment to the promotion of the Macedonian question as a contemporary “national issue”, he would assume the status as his party’s semi-official expert on Macedonian matters during the name crisis – “the ‘Macedonologist’ of PASOK”,\(^{221}\) as the former reform communist leader Leonidas Kyrkos would refer to him as. He was thus, at least initially, in a position through which he could exercise influence on his party’s policy. Papathelelis had a wide network in diaspora circles and travelled extensively abroad to advocate Greek Macedonian interests, often in the company of Martis.

A third central representative of the ‘new’ macedonology in the 1980s was the journalist Nikolaos Mertzos, a native and mayor of the small Greek Macedonian town Nymfaio (which he in his writings on local history, however, referred to by its older, Vlach name Neveska). Mertzos was the editor of a local newspaper, _Ellinikos Vorras_ [Greek North] and of the periodical _Makedoniki Zoi_ [Macedonian Life], which


 counted many Greek Macedonian expatriates among its readers. In 1986, his contribution to the literature on Macedonian history was published with the title *Emeís oí Makedónes* [*We the Macedonians*]. Mertzos, also a member of ND, was tied to Konstantinos Mitsotakis, prime minister of Greece from 1990 to 1993, as an adviser on Macedonian affairs. In 2006, he succeeded Konstantinos Vavouskos as president of the Society for Macedonian Studies.222 At that time, in connection with the “war” over the contents of a secondary school history textbook, it was revealed to the public that Mertzos also had been vice-president of the Committee of Councillors set up by the dictator Giorgos Papadopoulos in the early 1970s, to render his regime a democratic façade.223 Had this past connection to the junta been publicly known at the time of the Macedonian name conflict, it is possible that he might have been marginalised in the public debate, much in the same fashion as another publicist, Kostas Plevris, who appeared on television promoting his expertise on national issues, was more or less ostracised after having been exposed in leftwing newspapers as a former collaborator of the old military regime.

Over time, as the prospect of a new conflict over Macedonia grew more intense and occasionally made it to the headlines of the newspapers in the months leading up to the Yugoslav Macedonian referendum on independence, the works on the topic multiplied. Other debaters that appeared as experts on the Macedonian question, both in its historic and its contemporary setting, included writers such as the journalist Sarantos Kargakos, historian Konstantinos Vakalopoulos, archaeologist Dimitris Pantermalis, besides, of course, representatives of institutions like EMS. One should bear in mind the differences between the various individuals concerned with macedonology, with regard to personal background – and, by implication, the possible objectives behind their commitment to this branch of history-writing – as well as to the positions held and/or abandoned in the course of the period under study. Some were well-connected and had channels to political decision makers at both regional and national level (Martis, Papathemelis, Mertzos), and/or within the scholarly community (Vavouskos, Vakalopoulos, Pantermalis), while others, like Ioannis Holevas and the above mentioned Kostas Plevris, essentially lacked these ties to powerful circles, due to their former association with the junta and marginal groups at the right extreme of the political spectrum. In the case of the latter, the commitment to national and/or regional Macedonian interests might chiefly be attributed to a wish to (re-)gain respectability in the eyes of the public. Some, like Martis, were retired politicians and had little to lose, in terms of career opportunities, by sticking to entrenched positions in the name issue, while others were still active politicians and had to adapt to current political developments, for example by downplaying the importance of the name in attempts at resolving the conflict. This was the case with local historian and Minister of Justice Michalis Papakonstantinou, who in 1992 was assigned the task

223 Ιός τις Κυριακής (Kostopoulos, Trimis, Psarras), “Ο κ. πρόεδρος και η χούντα” [“The Mr. president and the junta”], *Eleftherotypia* 30/9 2007.
of shaping foreign policy, after the dismissal of Antonis Samaras as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

A common denominator for many of these individuals was their attachment to their region of birth, Greek Macedonia. This does not mean that all who claimed expertise on Macedonian history and current affairs were native Greek Macedonians or had formal ties to the political world and the knowledge-producing institutions of that region. As the Macedonian question gradually emerged as one of the ‘national issues’ which called for public attention, a number of debaters with a platform in the national media started to advocate the national significance of Macedonia and knowledge about its past. One of the most noticeable among these was journalist-cum-philologist Sarantos Kargakos. His main contribution to macedonology, besides his regular columns in Oikonomikos Tachydromos, was the book *Apó to Makedonikó Zitima stin emblokí ton Skopíon* (*From the Macedonian Question to the Skopje imbroglio*), in which he presented his version of Macedonian history and called for an active and aggressive foreign policy.224 Kargakos’ main interest as a publicist was, apart from foreign policy, the politics of education in which he took part in debates concerning the contents of history teaching, as well as the status of ancient Greek in school curricula. He had also acted as councillor of the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, Vasilis Kontogiannopoulos, during the short-lived coalition government (conservative/communist) in 1989.225 His commitment to the promotion of macedonology might derive from the potential it had, from a conservative educational debater’s point of view, to be used in the argumentation for traditional, national values.226

The research interests of the “new” historians as well as social scientists, and the lack of references to the Macedonian question in mainstream media for a long period of time, were to prove advantageous for those concerned with the topic. It meant that their claims to expertise was largely unrivalled by scholars with views diametrically opposed to their own. As the new Macedonian crisis approached in the early 1990s, the newspaper columns of the press and the studios of radio and television were opened for the only individuals known for having been concerned – as well as for those who claimed to have been concerned – with the Macedonian question for the past ten years.227 The main competition for influence and public recognition came, at least initially, from people with similar perspectives on the perceived Yugoslav Macedonian threat.

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226 In addition to the debaters mentioned already, a wide array of other individuals, with or without ties to academic institutions, appeared as experts in the media or publically claimed expertise on Macedonian matters. However, these will be presented separately as they appear in the source material, whenever information on the personal background is needed for an understanding of their statements and positions in the debate.
The Macedonian Committee

On the evening of Tuesday the 14th of January 1992 a group of individuals, which all held key posts in the political, academic and industrial establishment in Thessaloniki, met at the roof garden of Hotel Macedonia Palace to discuss the diplomatic crisis under way. Almost a month had passed since the European Council, in response to Greek diplomatic pressure, had imposed conditions on Yugoslav Macedonia for her international recognition, but since then essentially nothing had occurred. In the press, calls were occasionally made for more drastic measures to be taken, in order to put pressure on the regime in Skopje as well as the government in Athens to do more to protect Greek interests in the Macedonian issue. In the press, a sociologist had suggested that the Greeks of Macedonia should take matters into their own hands and reclaim their “stolen” identity from Skopje by organising mass rallies in the cities of Macedonia, thus achieving through popular action what the politicians in the capital had failed to deliver.

The initiative to the meeting at Macedonia Palace had been taken by Faidon Giagiozis, a journalist at the local morning paper Makedonia. In his diary entry for the date in question, Giagiozis writes of how he, after having been contacted by two adolescents with a letter protesting the “historic lies of the Skopjans”, made a list of his connections and a series of phone calls, urging them to meet him on the same evening to discuss how to combat the “provocations”. Later that night the formation of a “Macedonian Committee” was decided upon, by the group that convened at the hotel.

The list of founders of this citizen initiative and of the persons who joined the Macedonian Committee in the following days is a revealing account of the principal agents as well as the political, institutional and individual interests involved at the regional Greek level in the name conflict. The Society for Macedonian Studies (EMS) was represented by its president, Konstantinos Vavouskos, and its secretary Tereza Valala, IMXA by director Antonis Tachiaos and the Museum of the Macedonian Struggle by its director Dimitris Zannas. Antonis Trakatellis, rector of the Aristotle University, and Giannis Tsekouras, rector of the newly inaugurated University of Macedonia, represented the two universities in Thessaloniki, along with several university professors, like archaeologist Dimitris Pantermalis. Among more prominent members were Nikolaos Mertzos and Stelios Paphathemelis (though not Martis), as well as an array of politicians associated with Nea Dimokratia: Dinos Kosmopoulos, mayor of Thessaloniki; Minister of Justice Michalis Papakonstantinou; the deputy Giorgos Tzitzikostas; former general secretary of the Ministry for Macedonia and Thrace (Ministry of Northern Greece) Giannis Tsalouchidis as well as former minister Nikolaos Zardinidis, who was made chairman of the Committee. Besides the PASOK deputy Paphathemelis, the other main political parties in Greece were represented by the lawyer Stelios

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228 Faidon Giagiozis, Η αλήθεια ϖίσω αϖό την ιστορία [The truth behind the story], Thessaloniki: Ianos 2000, pp. 290-291.
229 Ioannis Filippidis, "Να εξεγερθούν επιτέλους οι Έλληνες της Μακεδονίας" [“Let the Greeks of Macedonia finally rise up"], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 20/1 1992, p. 32.
Nestor, a local strongman of the Coalition of the Left and of Progress (SYN), while KKE assumed an unsympathetic attitude toward the Committee’s work. Thus, the group, although aspiring to represent a wide array of Greek Macedonian interests and displaying national unity, was imbalanced in favour of rightwing politicians. Apparently, the heavy interspersion of active politicians among its members was internally considered a problem, since the chairman Zardinidis (a retired former Minister for Public Works), according to Giagiozis, expressed the opinion that the Committee ought not to be represented by political figures. He said to the complaining deputies that they would have to settle with being informed on a regular basis about the proceedings.\textsuperscript{231} The demand that the Macedonian Committee should not be the platform of party-political ambitions might reflect the internal power struggles that perhaps are inevitable when a wide array of different interests come together, but it does not seem as if the active politicians were excluded from influence. Their networks were of vital importance for the Committee’s work and deputies, such as Papathelemis, acted as its spokesmen during trips abroad.

Other members included prominent industrialists in Northern Greece as well as local professional organisations (lawyers, pharmacists, dentists, newspaper editors and so forth), and representatives of KAM and the Pan-Macedonian Association of Greece, whose services in rallying the diaspora and especially “the Greek American lobby in Washington” were considered valuable. Among groups with an interest in memory politics and the promotion of the Greek Macedonian past, albeit for different reasons, and apart from the academics of EMS, IMXA, museums and universities, were representatives of the Association of Macedonian fighters and [their] descendants “Pavlos Melas”, the Association of Veteran Army Officers of Northern Greece and the Tourist Agents of Macedonia and Thrace.

The Macedonian Committee, which issued its first public statement on the 17\textsuperscript{th} of January, thus brought together a number of persons, institutions and associations involved in or concerned with the production and promotion of local historical knowledge, which was reflected in its communiqué that will be subject to further analysis in the section “Narratives of the present and future Macedonia”. Through its appearance, according to Giagiozis, the Committee took charge of the co-ordination of activities that previously had been initiated by isolated individuals, among which reference was made to Martis, Papakonstantinou, Mertzos, Nestor, Vavouskos, Tachiaos, Tsalouchidis and Evangelos Kofos, several of which were among the constituent members. Kofos, the expert at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Athens, remained on the outside, but received the journalist Giagiozis and explained to him the government’s policy on the Macedonian question, presenting his views on “what the Committee must do”. Unfortunately, Giagiozis’ diaries give no specific details as to the contents of their conversation, but it is possible that the decision to downplay the role and influence of prominent politicians in the Committee was taken as a result of Kofos’ advice, since the issue

\textsuperscript{231} Ibid., p. 302.
came up for discussion right after Giagiozis had reported the outcome of his visit in Athens to the other members.232

The overriding concern of the Macedonian Committee in the following weeks was to figure out what to do with its powers. Some of its members, spearheaded by chairman Zardinidis, called for immediate and spectacular action, while others urged caution. Early in February, the far from unanimous Committee decided upon the organisation of a mass protest rally in Thessaloniki, set for the 14th of February.233 The arrangements were left to the municipal authorities and in newspaper advertisements, mayor Kosmopoulos urged the citizens to join in.234 Also, business companies ran full page ads which stressed the historic continuity and overall national significance of Macedonian Hellenism, in what best is described as a performance of patriotic duty through a commercial use of history, in all likelihood calculated to reflect positively on the company brand.235 Similarly, local newspapers – chiefly Makedonia, where Giagiozis worked – covered the preparations for the upcoming rally with unbridled enthusiasm.236

The mass rally, held in the presence of representatives from all political parties except KKE,237 attracted according to the organisers and the media reports close to one million participants. School pupils, university staff, students, workers and municipal employees had been given the day off to join the rally and the atmosphere conveyed in the media coverage of the event was that of a football derby, except this time the city’s rivalling teams were united behind the common national cause.238 The main speaker of the event, mayor Kosmopoulos, dwelled on the historic significance of the rally – “Thessaloniki is in one afternoon living the memories and the history of 23 centuries of Hellenism” – and the glories of Macedonia’s past. The Metropolitan Panteleimon II of Thessaloniki, representing the Church, contributed to the outdoor history lesson by stressing how Alexander the Great had been the means of divine providence by uniting and civilising the peoples of the East paving the way for the coming of Christ.239 The overall response of national media reflected the agenda of the organising Macedonian Committee. “The rally of Thessaloniki was necessary and had to happen, […] in order to bring about a solid mobilisation and sensitisation for our national issues”, the editorial of Eleftherotypia stated. The people were said to have done their
patriotic duty. Now it was up to the political leadership to overcome ideological and party-political differences and carry on the struggle to “inform international opinion, to neutralise the anti-Greek propaganda, to restore truth and right”.

The Committee had succeeded in organising the largest manifestation of its kind in recent Greek history. It would in December 1992 be followed by an even larger rally in Athens. The effect of the rallies was that the Macedonian conflict was pushed to the centre of media attention, turning the country’s policy makers into the hostages of ‘popular will’. The Macedonian Committee continued to spearhead initiatives, but with the passage of time rifts appeared in its façade. After Mitsotakis replaced the ‘maximalist’ Antonis Samaras with the more reconciliant Michalis Papakonstantinou as Minister of Foreign Affairs, the ND members of the Committee were thrown into confusion regarding their loyalties. Some, like Mertzos, eventually spoke in favour of compromise in the name issue, while the PASOK deputy Papatiermelis remained “unyielding”. The initiative for organising protest rallies was taken over by the Metropolitan Panteleimon, who was not a member of the Committee. In early 1994, he organised a rally (much smaller than the ones of 1992) in response to the US decision to recognise the neighbour state as FYROM, a decision which prompted the Greek trade embargo imposed in the days following Panteleimon’s rally. The Macedonian Committee nevertheless remained active up until and even after the 1995 compromise agreement, courted by journalists and foreign diplomats in its capacity as a significant interest group wielding influence on Greek foreign policy.

Narratives: the past(s) of Greek Macedonia

Macedonology and the archaeologist approach

At the archaeological excavation site of Dion, beneath Mount Olympus, a ‘Pan-Hellenic’ ceremony was held in early May 1992 as part of the ongoing campaign to defend the ‘national’ and ‘historic rights’ of the region. The main speaker of the event was Dimitris Pantermalis, professor of archaeology at Thessaloniki’s Aristotelian University, who had led the excavations at the site – or as the press report put it, the man who had “brought the treasures of the Macedonian soil into

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the light of day” – and who also was one of the prominent members of the Macedonian Committee. His address to the crowd that had gathered that day, in the place which he had identified as the ‘sacred city’ of the ancient Macedonians, is worth citing, since it reveals some of the key features around which local historical culture had come to revolve since the 1970s.

Every spring […], at precisely this location, the [ancient] Macedonians came together to celebrate the rebirth of nature. Today they have come together to celebrate, not the rebirth of Macedonia, but the living Macedonia. […] Here, the matters are tangible […] This means that we don’t have to turn to the dusty books of some library, it suffices to bend down and scratch the ground. […] All of this was and is Greek. […] Here, at this location, were the statues of the Macedonian kings in descending order… we have found their foundations.246

Pantermalis’ speech, with its emphasis on senses and emotions brought about by the material remains of antiquity, the conflation of then and now, and the idea that the past could be felt and experienced through direct contact with the soil of Macedonia rather than appropriated through the abstract knowledge of books, echoed recent and spectacular developments in the archaeology of Northern Greece and the impact of its chief ambassador: Manolis Andronikos, the ‘national archaeologist’ of Greece.247

In order to grasp the developments that had contributed in shaping the ‘new’ macedonology and its predominant narrative, one has to briefly assess the state of archaeology in the north and its connection with national historical imagination. Philip II of Macedon and his son Alexander had, for obvious reasons, had a prominent position in national propaganda and attempts at demonstrating the unbroken continuity of Hellenism in the region – at the time of the educational struggle between Patriarchs and Exarchists, Greeks and Bulgarians, to gain ground among the Slav-speaking populations of Macedonia, the Greek consulate in Thessaloniki issued a pamphlet called “The prophesies of Alexander the Great” in both Greek and the local Slavic tongue, which stressed this point.248 Well into the 20th century and the region’s incorporation into Greece, the material evidence, in the shape of actual, physical remains from the remote era of the world conqueror, nevertheless remained scarce. As noted earlier in this chapter, with regard to the local archaeologists and museums as history-producers, the city of Thessaloniki lacks significant monuments that link it with its pre-Roman past. Eternal Hellenism in the region was therefore something that had had to be taken for granted, while waiting for the excavations begun in the interwar period and continued after the turmoil of the 1940s to yield results.

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246 "Από το ∆ίον υψώθηκε η φωνή των Μακεδόνων" ["From Dion the voice of the Macedonians rose up"], Eleftherotypia 6/5 1992, p. 5. Pantermalis has been deeply involved in turning the excavation ground at Dion into an ‘archaeological park’ and has in recent years been involved in similar projects in Athens, in his capacity as head of the New Acropolis Museum, inaugurated in 2009.


Manolis Andronikos (1919-1992) was the one which would bring the much yearned for glory to the archaeology of northern Greece. A philologist turned archaeologist, recognised as one of Greece’s most prominent intellectuals, who throughout his professional life sat on several academic boards – including the one whose task was to bring about the democratisation of the universities after the fall of the junta –, he spent over two decades working in the vicinity of the village of Vergina, to the east of Thessaloniki; according to his own memoirs, dreaming of spectacular finds. Excavations had started there, and at Pella further to the north, in the 1950s, with the active support of the then Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis, himself a Greek Macedonian (and the only leading politician that Martis credited for having seen to the interests of northern Greece and having realised the ‘threat’ from Skopje at an early stage). In 1977, Andronikos finally – and in a double sense – struck gold. In the presence of a large number of prominent politicians and colleagues, he opened an unrobbed tomb, which besides from the remains of a long dead ruler or notable, revealed exquisite objects of gold – including a golden larnax (chest) which featured the sun symbol, the so-called “Star of Vergina”, which would later become one of the apples of discord in the Macedonian conflict – weapons, armory and, in another tomb, a wall painting depicting a hunting scene. At the time, Andronikos – who was under the influence of his friend and academic tutor Nicholas Hammond – was already convinced that Vergina was the ancient city of Aigai, mentioned in written sources as the funerary place of the Macedonian kings. The encouragement of Karamanlis – again the Prime Minister of Greece, after the sudden collapse of the military regime in 1974 – made him set aside some of his initial doubts, concerning the dating of the tombs, and announce to the world the sensational discovery of the tomb of Philip II. The missing link had been found.

In his writings and speeches, Andronikos would refer to the highly emotional aspect of his discovery, how he – and the other persons present at the opening of

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252 Several archaeologists, in Greece as well as abroad, have from the start and increasingly over the recent years disputed the dating of the tombs, arguing that they rather belong to one of the successors of Philip and Alexander, and implicitly accusing Andronikos of having seen what he wanted to see. Andronikos himself had initially contemplated the possibility that the tomb had belonged to Philip Arrhidaios, Alexander’s less than heroic half-brother and successor, later murdered by Kassandros, before deciding upon the arguably more prestigious identification of Philip II. Hamilakis 2007, pp. 148-153, 159-160; Panayiotis B. Faklaris, “Aegae: determining the site of the first capital of the Macedonians”, American Journal of Archaeology, 98 1994, pp. 609-616; Konstantinos Childis, “New Knowledge Versus Consensus – a Critical Note On Their Relationship Based On The Debate Concerning the Use of Barrel-Vaults in Macedonian Tombs”, European Journal of Archaeology, 11 (1), pp. 75-103. This is, however, a scholarly debate of no immediate relevance for the topic concerned here. Seen in a larger regional context, the archaeological boom in northern Greece, with its markedly identity-political connotations, coincided with and was mirrored in Bulgarian archaeologists’ (re-) discovery of the ancient Thracian culture. Their excavations yielded almost equally spectacular finds of golden objects, leading to the Thracians replacing the proto-Bulgarians and the Slavs of the 6th and 7th centuries AD as the venerated ancestors of the Bulgarian nation in the 1980s. As historian Ulf Brunnbauer has noted, this Bulgarian quest to push the origins of national culture further back in time might have urged Yugoslav Macedonian nationalists to assert the independence against Bulgaria by promoting the idea of ancient Macedon as the cradle of their nation, and in the process to appropriate the Star of Vergina as a national symbol. See Brunnbauer in Kolsto 2005, p. 275.
the tomb – had been overcome with feelings of religious piety, while standing, so to speak, face to face with the national ancestor, with history itself. Several scholars – among them archaeologist Yannis Hamilakis, who has described Andronikos as nothing short of a ‘shaman’ – have been highly critical of the sort of ‘sensory archaeology’ that Andronikos and his disciples (among them Pantermalis) represented, which emphasises emotion and the sensational over historical interpretation and critical evaluation. In an analysis of the personal motivation behind his work, Hamilakis, stressing the fact that Andronikos, like many other of the inhabitants of northern Greece, had come as a refugee from Asia Minor to the region, points at chiefly non-professional needs. “Andronikos was ‘uprooted’ but in his new homeland in Greek Macedonia, […] he was determined to plant new roots, not only for him but for all his fellow Asia Minor immigrants too. That was what he was doing: he went down that tomb not to find roots, but to plant them.”

Hamilakis’ description of Andronikos’ motifs may at times sound more like an allegation than a substantiated and detached analysis; however, this does not necessarily prove the speculation of an existential use of history wrong. The result of Andronikos’ work and other excavations was undoubtedly the making of a new, more prestigious past for the region and its inhabitants. Professional doubts concerning dating and identification were of no concern to the broad public, for which the finds and their perceived link with the ancient Macedonian kingdom were a source of national and regional pride, as manifested in the soon popular use of the golden Vergina star, featured against a blue background, as the semi-official emblem of Greek Macedonia. Another effect was the already mentioned boost given to local archaeology. Government funding for new excavations in the region reached new levels of generosity, while the travelling exhibition “Search for Alexander” toured the New World with the finds from Vergina in the early 1980s. The support of Karamanlis during his first presidency (1981-1985) also paved the way for lavish publications which stressed the millennia long continuity of Hellenism. As Hamilakis, among others, has remarked, Andronikos had succeeded in the material incorporation of northern Greece into the national historical and archaeological imagination, previously dominated by the antiquities of southern Greece, thereby transforming Macedonia from the periphery to a position of centrality.

Apart from professional prestige and a possibly existentially motivated quest for ancestral roots, other and perhaps more profane needs were met, namely the interests of local economy and the tourism sector. Tourism began to be developed in Macedonia in 1960, which at the time accounted for 10, 3% of the

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253 Hamilakis 2007, p. 163.
total amount of foreign visitors to Greece. As a result of the finds at Vergina and elsewhere in the region, archaeological excavation grounds became of interest to tourist agencies. In 1979, all according to statistics published in the monumental *Macedonia – 4000 years of Greek history and civilization*, the region had increased its share of the national figure to 25% out of the six million foreign tourists who came to Greece that year.\(^{258}\) Greek Macedonia could now boast a world-famous discovery, on par with Schliemann’s discovery of Mycenae or of the ones on ‘Minoan’ Crete. Still, however, the sites of Vergina, Pella and Dion could rival neither these, nor the other archaeological tourist magnets in the south – Delphi, Olympia, the Acropolis and the museums of Athens.

It is perhaps commonplace to stress the intersecting interests of archaeology and tourism, but it nevertheless gives a vital clue to the inclusion of leading local archaeologists, such as Pantermalis, and tourist agents in the Macedonian Committee formed in 1992, as well as the prominence of archaeology in the emerging narrative about Greek Macedonia in the 1980s. If it is as Hamilakis argues that the politicians and the public needed Andronikos and his ‘sensory’ national archaeology – his death in early 1992, in the midst of the unfolding name crisis, was publicly described as a great loss for Hellenism in its hour of need, and his funeral in Thessaloniki was attended by leading political figures and thousands of onlookers – the reverse might be said about the local archaeologists and tourist branches, namely that they needed the Macedonian crisis and the attention it brought to their ‘product’. Thus, Vergina and other excavation grounds emerged as sites of pilgrimage for Greek politicians, from whence public statements concerning national and historic rights could be issued, reinforcing a quid pro quo relationship between the spheres of politics, local economy and academic interests. Even the leader of KKE, Aleka Papariga, made the journey to Vergina – at a time in the midst of the diplomatic crisis when she and her party were under attack for national ‘treason’ by refusing to commit to the rally against Skopje – making announcements in favour of a local archaeological museum at the site of the “capital of the Macedonian kingdom” and stressing the need to “promote and study our civilisation”\(^{259}\).

The excavations during the postwar decades and the spectacular breakthrough of Andronikos in the late 1970s were thus instrumental in elevating archaeology to a position of unprecedented supremacy in the discourse on Macedonia, its history and the new Macedonian question that was about to unfold, as represented by Nikolaos Martis.\(^{260}\) The timing of the discovery with, as he saw it, the increase of


\(^{259}\) ”Στη Βέργινα χτες η Παπαρήγα” [“Papariga at Vergina yesterday”], *Rizospastis* 6/6 1992, p. 5; ”Στη Βέργινα η Παπαρήγα” [“Papariga at Vergina”], *Eleftherotypia* 6/6 1992, p. 11. Regarding the plans for an archaeological museum at Vergina and the conflicting interests between municipal authorities and the archaeological museum in Thessaloniki, where the finds from the excavations are exhibited, see Hamilakis 2007, pp. 153-155.

\(^{260}\) This new supremacy of archaeology also manifested itself visually in the regional and national iconography, as front covers of books and newspaper articles on Macedonia and the Macedonian question started to feature pictures of ancient coins, mosaics, the golden chest with the contested star and other finds from Vergina, even if the contents of the publications were entirely unrelated to antiquity. For illuminating examples of this practice, see Michalis
propaganda efforts from the north, aiming at the appropriation of the name Macedonia, was interpreted by him as if “the Macedonian kings could not endure it and came out of their tombs to chase away the counterfeiters of Macedonian history”. Martis stressed the usefulness of the recent finds from Vergina and other sites as weapons in the struggle over the name, and of the excavation grounds themselves. During his years in office as Minister for Northern Greece, he had taken several foreign dignitaries to these places, men who allegedly had marvelled at the glories of ancient Greek civilisation and thus testified to the Greekness of Macedonia.

Since the material artifacts on display at museums across the province as well as passages from ancient sources were the cornerstones around which Martis’ line of arguments was built, the historical narrative of Macedonia presented to the public came to be oriented toward a very remote past. Martis stated in the preface to his 1983 work that it was not his aim to add one more book to the body of literature on the history of Macedonia, but this was in effect what he seemed to do, and his priorities as to which historical periods that were to be emphasized were clear. A content analysis of his book reveals this heavy emphasis on antiquity – 51 out of a total of 72 pages narrating historical events in the region up until 1944 are devoted to various aspects of the regional culture during pre-classical and classical time, while only four pages are assigned to Macedonia’s history from the Roman conquest to the end of the Middle Ages, five to the “struggles of the Macedonians to regain their freedom” during Ottoman reign, and another ten pages to a description of the Balkan communist parties’ Macedonian policies up until the birth of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. While not entirely neglecting more recent history – Martis listed the “Christian-Hellenic civilization of Byzantium” as largely a Macedonian achievement and stressed the importance of the local inhabitants’ heroism in keeping Macedonia Greek during the liberation struggles of the 19th and early 20th centuries, thus paying homage to the traditional national pantheon in the historiography on Greek Macedonia – the emphasis on the classical past came (or would soon be perceived as coming) at the expense of other historical periods that could be deemed vital to the understanding of the contemporary problems Macedonia was facing.

The main argument put forward by Martis and other proponents of what might be dubbed the archaeologist approach to the Macedonian question was that the ancient epigraphs, written in Greek, and artifacts found in the region, implying that its inhabitants had worshipped the same Olympian deities as in southern Greece, proved that the ancient Macedonians identified themselves as Hellenes – in


The dignitaries in question were French president Valéry Giscard d’Estaing and his successor François Mitterand. Their respective visits to Greece took place in the context of the country’s entry into the EC in 1981, which was framed in a discourse on Europe being reunited with its cultural Hellenic roots. See Clogg 2002 (1992), pp. 1-2, 174; Martis 1984 (1983), pp. 110-112.

spite of what the Athenian orator Demosthenes, Philip II’s arch-enemy in the south, and some other classical authors suggested in the 4th century BC. From this followed that the name Macedonia could not be used with reference to the Slavs, who had migrated into the Balkans many centuries later, in order to forge a new nation. Due to the impact of Martis’ book, which with the support of President Karamanlis and several authoritative organisations was translated into the major Western European languages and distributed through the embassies and diaspora associations, this line of arguments became predominant in the discourse of Greek politicians and diplomats in the initial stage of the Macedonian crisis. It was also adopted by a wide range of editors and analysts in mainstream media.

This concentration on archaeological evidence entailed a focus on antiquity in the analyses of the origins of the Macedonian “problem” that were to be found in abundance on the pages of newspapers in the first months of 1992. A telling example is the historical survey published as a special issue in Kathimerini, which took the readers from prehistoric times, when the Makednoi – the ancestors of the Greek-speaking Macedonian and Doric tribes, according to what the editors described as the “present scientific expertise” – descended into the region around 2200 BC, right up to the “Skopje republic’s” declaration of independence in 1991. The “archaeologization” of the Macedonian question, as Evangelos Kofos later would dub it, was also due to and reinforced by conservative educational debaters, who used the diplomatic crisis and its roots in a perceived lack of knowledge of Macedonia’s ancient past to support their argument that the educational reforms of the previous PASOK government had been aimed at diminishing national values, by deliberately neglecting classical history.

The outcome of this orientation toward what might be termed the imagined dawn of national time, with its emphasis on the ‘sacred’ bonds with the land and the ancestors, was a reinforcement of the traditional narrative, whose main function and purpose, according to Rüsen, is to preserve a given identity –which in this case was portrayed as being under attack – by stressing the continuity of the nation. This traditional narrative was of course not an innovation of Martis and likeminded proponents of local archaeology – the demonstration of the perceived continuity of Hellenism across the millennia had been a primary concern of Greek mainstream historiography and history education since the 19th century – even though the

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264 In his 1983 book as well as in an article in the highly esteemed Vima during the diplomatic crisis, Martis put particular emphasis on ‘refuting’ Demosthenes’ ‘allegation’ that Philip of Macedon was a ‘barbarian’ – i.e. a word that in ancient Greek chiefly refers to a person of non-Hellenic descent. He suggested it to be a misinterpretation of the orator’s position against the Macedonians, adding that it was in fact Demosthenes the Athenian, according to other sources the son of a Scythian slave woman, who was a ‘barbarian’; Greek only by language. Martis 1984 (1984), p. 45-50; ibid., “Yποβολιµαίες πλάνες για τη Μακεδονία” [“Spurious delusions about Macedonia”], Vima 22/3 1992, p. A16.


267 See Ioannis Toulomakos, “Εγχειρίδια ιστορίας που σπιλώνουν τη ∆ηµοκρατία, καταργούν τους ‘Ελληνες και υµνούν τις καταλήψεις” [“History textbooks which tarnish the Democracy, suppress the Greeks and celebrate the occupations”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 2/1 1992, pp. 36-37, 77; Dimitris Stergiou, “Συναγερµός για επιστροφή στις ελληνικές ρίζες και αξίες” [“Rally for the return to Greek roots and values”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 6/2 1992, pp. 3-7, 84.
excavations in the region had added further prestige and emphasis on this particular past. The preferential treatment of classical antiquity in the public discourse on the history of Greek Macedonia (and of Greece), nevertheless, I argue, led to a sort of historical imbalance. This would manifest itself as clashes between advocates of different chronological and contextual perspectives on regional and national history, and on the historical causes of the present Macedonian crisis. The clashes did not emerge in the form of any outright questioning of the classical foundations of the traditional narrative of identity, nor of the patriotic credentials of Martis or any named advocate of the ‘archaeologist approach’. Debaters, like Sarantos Kargakos repeatedly stressed the importance of classical philology and historical knowledge about antiquity in fostering national sentiment, which they claimed was badly needed as means of coping with and finding an exit from the “Skopjan imbroglio”. Rather it was the dominant emphasis on archaeological evidence and classical history in the arguments presented to the public and policymakers in Greece and abroad with regard to the name dispute, which became the object of criticism from debaters who disputed the relevance of the ancients for a proper historical understanding of the crisis. It thus did not suffice to bend down and scratch the Macedonian soil, as Pantermalis, Andronikos and likeminded archaeologists seemed to suggest, feeling the bond with the ancestors through the tangible, material remains of the ancient past, rather than through the historical understanding that derives from “dusty books”.

This was a critique that gained momentum as the failure of Greek diplomacy to muster support abroad for Greek demands with regard to the naming issue of the Republic of Macedonia became more and more evident from 1993 and onwards.268 Researchers like Skoulariki (2005), who has noted this trend in her study on the Greek press discourse on the Macedonian conflict, attributes it to the impact of social scientists which gradually broke the initial predominance of archaeological and historical interpretations of the problem, with perspectives more oriented toward the contemporary setting of the conflict, aimed at its solution.269 But the criticism against the archaeological approach was, I argue, something that was also the product of conflicting historical interpretations and narratives within the ‘nationalist camp’. Time and again, Sarantos Kargakos, and his editor-in-chief Giannis Marinos, known for their commitment to ‘national issues’, would lament the fact that official Greek argumentation in the name conflict centred upon ancient history instead of modern, where the true roots of the present Macedonian crisis were situated, by which they meant the ‘anti-Greek’ policies of the Communist International and of Tito, the ‘betrayal’ of KKE and in the trauma of the Greek civil war. This ‘flaw’ of argumentation, they argued, had led the international community to misunderstand the Greek concerns regarding the

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268 See, for example, the criticism of the political editor Richardos Someritis in Vima, who remarked that most domestic debaters have failed to take account of the fact that “the European Council and the Security Council of the United Nations are not academies [made up] of historians and archaeologists, they deal with contemporary problems with contemporary means”. Richardos Someritis, “Οι τελευταίες µάχες,” [“The final battles”], Vima 7/2 1993, p. A15.

269 Skoulariki 2005.
naming of the neighbour republic and the serious nature of Slav Macedonian irredentism, something which they attributed to the domestic policy of reconciliation between Right and Left in Greece, which had led to an official ‘silence’ regarding the crimes of the Greek communists against the nation. 270

Macedonology was not exclusively identical with the ‘archaeological approach’ to the Macedonian question, and several of the writers who emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s as experts on Macedonian matters had little or nothing at all to say about antiquity, choosing instead to construct their argumentation and interpretation on other, more recent periods and historical events and contexts. The choice of these varied with the intent(s) of the individual authors.

Some, like Dimitris Michalopoulos, assistant professor of history at Thessaloniki’s Aristotle University, insisted that the origins of the present conflict were to be found in the medieval clashes between Byzantium and the Bulgarian ‘hordes’ in the Macedonian region and a culturally and biologically rooted antagonism, not in antiquity, nor in Tito’s creation in 1944 of a Macedonian republic in the Yugoslav Federation. According to him, the public had been presented with the ‘wrong’ historical contexts, the ‘wrong’ causes and the ‘wrong’ national enemies, by state-sponsored publicity. Following Michalopoulos’ argument and narrative, the present conflict with the ‘Skopje state’ could be traced to the racial idiosyncrasies of the early medieval Bulgarians, with their inherent tendency to ‘appropriate’ the religious and historical symbols and relics of other peoples, i.e. the Greeks. 271 Alternatively, the present conflict’s roots were to be found in the Bogomil heresy and its Manichean concept of a struggle between the heavenly Good and the earthly Evil of the visible reality, represented by the established, ‘visible’ order of the Greeks and the Orthodox religion of Byzantium.

The impression that these beliefs and memories have disappeared completely constitutes a grave miscalculation. Indeed, the designs that are materialising at the northern borders of our country have roots which penetrate deeply into the period prior to the dawn of the Modern Age; besides, in accordance with the view that […] has been sanctioned in Western Europe, the key to the interpretation of many contemporary problems is to be found in the History of the Middle Ages.

And what does Greece do? It is simple: instead of seeing where the danger really lies and confront it there, she opposes the threat with ‘arguments’ like ‘Macedonia, Greek Land’. […] Under these circumstances, the wonder is not that Skopje is vindicated by the international community, but that the international community has kept itself busy with us for such a long time. Furthermore, Greek public opinion has been convinced that the ‘Macedonian’ issue is more or less on its way to be resolved. Unfortunately, however, the exact opposite is about to unfold: it is now that it begins. 272

270 See Sarantos Kargakos, "Πολύ αργά για δάκρυα" ["Too late for tears"], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 1/4 1993, pp. 46-47; Giannis Marinos, "Μακεδονικό: Έχες μηδέν" ["Macedonian question: The hour zero"], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 23/12 1993, pp. 3-4.


272 Dimitris Michalopoulos, "Το έπος των βογομίλων" ["The epic of the Bogomils"], Vima 16/5 1993, p. B9. The wording ‘Macedonia, Greek Land’ is in English also in the original.
The boundary-work of the academies would ensure that Michalopoulos’ alternative narrative of Macedonia would go largely ignored, but as a call for public attention to the history of Byzantium and its significance for modern Greek identity, in a time when public discourse on history was increasingly revolving around the classical past, it was not isolated in the press of the period studied. Such attempts at highlighting different epochs of national time and within the traditional narrative of the nation, might, following Gieryn’s notion on boundary-work within the scholarly community, be understood as a strategy from those parts of the community concerned with fields other than the one that at the time was publicly and officially promoted, to assert the relevance of their knowledge and expertise for understanding the contemporary reality, with the aim of enlarging their symbolic resources. These professional interests will be subject to further discussion in Chapter 5.

Other interventions in the debate, where the heavy emphasis on classical history and archaeological evidence was questioned in favour of an alternative chronological perspective on Greek Macedonian history, seem to have been motivated less by professional concerns than by political. Kargakos, along with Michalopoulos, objected to the textbook on Macedonia prepared by EMS and distributed in the schools in early 1992 through government decree, accusing it of emphasising the ‘wrong’ historical contexts and arguments. He did so out of an apparent conviction that political ills that, in his view, had befallen Greek society and the educational system since the transition to democracy and the decade of PASOK rule. The primary target of his and, perhaps even more, his editor Giannis Marinos’ columns on the Macedonian conflict was what they portrayed as the leftwing hegemony over societal debate and history-writing after 1974. To this end, an emphasis on historical events and contexts in the 20th century – ‘silenced’ for ideological reasons and purpose of domestic policy – was evidently more appropriate than the ancient past of Macedonia promoted by the archaeologist approach. This ideological history war, which concerned the national narrative rather than a regional one, will be discussed at greater length elsewhere. The nature of the external threat, around which this narrative was constructed, meant that the artisans of it, in one way or another, had to address an aspect of the region’s history that on a national level was also largely intertwined with the history of KKE: the presence of the Slav-speaking population of Greek Macedonia, which in its turn was connected to the issue of national and religious minorities in a society, accustomed to think of itself as one of the most homogenous nation-states in the Balkans as well as in the world.

273 See for example Eleni Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, “Είναι νησίτη να μην ξέρουμε το Βυζάντιο” [“It is a shame that we are unfamiliar with Byzantium’], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 26/8 1993, p. 34.


275 Giannis Marinos, “Το Μακεδονικό δημιουργήθηκε και μας απειλεί και με την αδίστακτη συνοδοποιία του ΚΚΕ” [“The Macedonian question was created by KKE whose unscrupulous fellow-travelling also threatens us”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 13/2 1992, pp. 70-71.
The minority issue: Slav Macedonian identity politics and the moral use of history

The thorny issue at the heart of the diplomatic conflict between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia, besides the cultural struggle over the name and the historical symbols – which many analysts have considered as merely the symptoms of the real, underlying controversy – was the question of the Slav-speaking population, its connection to the Macedonian region, in the present as well as in the past, and the Greek state’s official policies with regard to this matter. Put more simply, the apple of discord was whether there existed – or ever had existed – a Slavic population, Macedonian as opposed to Greek, and whether it ought to be referred to as ‘Macedonian’, ‘Slav-Macedonian’ or something else. Thus, the issue of the naming of the neighbour state was, or became, linked to the public discourse on minorities in Greece. If Martis’ first declared aim with his 1983 publication was to refute the claim that there existed a Slav Macedonian minority in Greece, his second was to refute the claim that there existed a Slav Macedonian minority in Greece. In this respect, his view was in accordance with the legal view sanctioned by the Greek state, which, as a result of the Lausanne peace treaty in 1923, recognised only the Muslim population in Eastern Thrace as a minority, entitled to certain rights. However, along with the small Jewish community of Greece, the Muslims were acknowledged only in the capacity of religious minorities, entitled to the right to worship, not as national, with the result that cultural and linguistic groups, which in unofficial contexts often were described as alien to the Greeks, tended to be made invisible in official statistics and legal documents. The Hellenisation of toponyms in the newly acquired territories and of family names among their inhabitants no doubt contributed to this process.

A side-effect of Martis’ heavy focus on antiquity was that he rarely touched upon the historical periods, where reference to Slavic presence in the region might have been considered inevitable. The archaeological finds which were used to prove the Hellenic character of ancient Macedonian civilisation, along with the bravery of the Greek population in the uprisings against the Ottomans, supposedly also proved that a Slavic population never had existed on Macedonian soil. Others were less categorical in their views concerning the historical presence of Slavs in Macedonia, but nevertheless maintained that a particular Macedonian nationality – here understood as a Slav Macedonian national community – had never existed. In an article with the title “Existing and non-existing nationalities”, Michalis Papakonstantinou, Minister of Justice and in 1992 to 1993 of Foreign Affairs, which apart from his political career also was an associate of EMS and IMXA, presented, or rather represented, the view that the diversity of communities, tongues and creeds in Macedonia was indeed a “historical fact”, but that Hellenism had always been the dominant ‘national’ element. Whatever Slav-speakers that once inhabited the region, they had identified themselves either as Greeks or Bulgarians. As a result of the forced migrations following the Balkan wars and the First World

War – Papakonstantinou described them as “ethnic cleansing” – the Bulgarian-minded ones had disappeared and become replaced by the Asia Minor refugees, which had had the outcome that “Greek Macedonia is only inhabited by Greeks”.

Hence, neither a Macedonian nation in Yugoslavia nor a Macedonian national minority in Greece could exist.

The view presented to the public in publications such as the above did not entirely reflect the official discourse and the historical knowledge represented by the scholars in government service. Evangelos Kofos, the expert on Macedonian and Balkan history employed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, made no secret at all of the, at least until quite recently, historical presence of a Slav minority in Greek Macedonia in his academic writings – albeit he distinguished between ‘Slavophones’ loyal to Hellenism, or at least indifferent to Bulgarian and/or Yugoslav national propaganda, and “Slav-Macedonians” (deliberately using quotation marks, whenever reference was made to them) “with an alien conscience”, i.e. with a ‘national consciousness’ other than Greek. Writing the history of the Macedonian question during the first half of the 20th century and the role of KKE and the Communist International inevitably entailed a narrative on the relations between the Greek, Bulgarian and Yugoslav communists and the Slavs in northwestern Greek Macedonia. This narrative ended in the defeat of the communist-led Democratic Army of Greece (DSE) and subsequent mass escape over the borders in 1949, which according to Kofos had its “beneficial side-effects” as the Slav-Macedonians left the country in large numbers along with the fleeing partisans, leaving only Slav-speakers loyal to the Greek nation behind. “Thus, Greece was delivered of an alien-conscious minority which had actively threatened her security and internal peace.”

As Kofos would state in a later publication, written at the end of the 1990s with the Macedonian name dispute in fresh memory, official Greek policy – both of ND and PASOK governments – had in the past used the name Slav Macedonians to identify the inhabitants of Yugoslav Macedonia and their diaspora supporters, in lack of other terms, while steadfastly denying the presence of such Slav Macedonians in Greece after the Civil War.

In a later much cited statement from 1995, then ex-Prime Minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis sought to explain the policy he had adopted with regard to the Macedonian conflict. According to him, the name of the new neighbour state, historically and emotionally laden as it was, had never been the real issue at stake. The problem, as he saw it, was the possibility that a new minority issue, similar to the one poisoning Greek-Turkish relations, would arise in western Greek Macedonia.


278 Kofos 1964, p. 186. This was also the viewpoint adopted by the editor G. A. Leontaritis in *Kathimerini’s* special supplement on Macedonian history. “Μακεδονία – ιστορική επισκόπηση” [“Macedonia – historical survey”], *Kathimerini* 19/1 1992, pp. 10-11, 19.

279 Kofos 1999.

For me, the objective has always been [to make] this Republic [of Macedonia] declare explicitly that there is no Slav Macedonian minority in Greece and to agree through international treaties that it will cease any irredentist propaganda against Greece. This is the key to [understanding] the Athens-Skopje dispute.

It is quite certain that such a minority has not existed in our country after 1950, since the citizens with Slavic consciousness, who had fought on the communist side, left after the end of the civil war. They left, and all the Greek parties (including the orthodox Communist Party) have for many years agreed that they cannot return.281

This agreement had come into being already during the military regime, according to Mitsotakis. Together with Karamanlis he had in negotiations with the Greek Left made it a condition for legalising KKE that any repatriation of political refugees in post-dictatorial Greece would exclude the Slav Macedonians. The passage of time, Mitsotakis calculated, would turn the ‘problem’ of the surviving non-Greek refugees into a ‘non-existent’ issue, as long as the neighbour republic did not stir up irredentist sentiments.282

There was, in other words, a semi-official discourse on Slav Macedonians, albeit with a number of reservations and inhibitions, within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Greek authorities, but also within historiography on the Left in Greece. As journalist-cum-historian Tasos Kostopoulos noted in a panel discussion on the Macedonian question in February 1992, one week after the mass rally in Thessaloniki, the term ‘Slav Macedonians’ was to be found in a number of books on the Greek socialist movements written in the 1970s and 1980s, regardless of their authors’ political affiliation as well as of the very same authors’ denial and self-censorship during the present name crisis.283 The Macedonian conflict that erupted in 1991 had, as Kostopoulos observed, the effect that an already established vocabulary, albeit semi-official, was being altered in favour of a maximalist foreign policy, whose aim was international recognition of the view that ‘Macedonia’ could only be used as a denomination for northern Greece. As a consequence of this, the Republic of Macedonia and its inhabitants were in Greek media and common parlance referred to as ‘Skopje’ and ‘Skopjans’.284 The effects of this inhibition on publicly acceptable speech and overall confusion of labels were soon to be noticed.285 Above mentioned Michalis Papakonstantinou would eventually, in his

281 Prologue of Konstantinos Mitsotakis in Thodoros Skylakakis, Στο όνομα της Μακεδονίας [In the name of Macedonia], Athens: Euroekdotiki 1995, pp. 3-4.
282 Ibid.
284 Ibid.. See also Ios tis Kyriakis (Kostopoulos, Trimis, Psarras), "Η η'=ακεδονική σαλάτα' του Υπουργείου Παιδείας" ["The ‘macédoine’ of the Ministry of Education"], Eleftherotypia 6/2 1992. The practice, however, was still subject to variation in the press material studied. The editor of Oikonomikos Tachydromos and several of the magazine's columnists never stopped using the label 'Slav Macedonians' – with or without quotation marks – in articles referring to the ‘national treason’ of the Greek communists, with regard to KKE’s past and present Macedonian policies. See, for example, Giannis Marinos, “Το Σλαβοµακεδονικό και το ΚΚΕ” [“The Slav-Macedonian issue and KKE”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 28/1 1993, pp. 3-4, 6-7.
285 An aspect that contributed to the confusion of labels and sometimes misunderstanding of concepts was, as Mark Mazower has noted, of linguistic nature. The Greek words for ‘national’ and ‘nationality’ are ethnikós/ethnikótita, which often entailed a tendency to conflate it with or misunderstand the English terms ‘ethnic’ and ‘ethnicity’, with the result that the suggestion that there existed ethnic minorities in Greece was perceived of as claims to the existence of foreign nationalities on Greek soil that, by the logic of nationalism in the Balkans, ought to belong to
capacity of the politician in charge of negotiating an end to the Macedonian dispute, suggest ‘Slav Macedonia’ or alternatively ‘New Macedonia’, as the official name of the neighbour state, (still without addressing the minority question). However, due to the maximalist logic, which had ruled out any connection between Slavs and Macedonia, the proposition was met with fierce domestic opposition, on grounds of ‘national treason’.

As mentioned earlier, Kofos’ 1964 account on the Macedonian question had been written at a time of Greek-Yugoslav détente, which was perceived of as having put an end to territorial claims and the issue of national minorities, pushing it into the “dustbin of history” as he later would phrase it. However, important developments within Greek society itself would soon prove the prediction premature. The first major change was the rehabilitation of the Greek Left after 1974, culminating in the PASOK government’s amnesty for political refugees and combatants of the vanquished DSE in 1982, which as a side-effect brought the issue of the departed Slav Macedonians from Greece to the surface of contemporary politics again. The amnesty was only said to apply to individuals that were “Greek by descent”, here understood as having a Greek ‘national consciousness’, tacitly implying the existence of ‘alien elements’ among the political refugees and Civil War veterans, who were to be denied the right to return and property restitution. It was little doubt among contemporary observers that the ‘non-Greeks’ implied in the law were the Slav-speakers who had fought in NOF, along the ranks of DSE, and the demand for their return would from time to time emerge from politicians associated with the communist Left in Greece as well as in the leftwing press.

Partly as a consequence of this, but also reflecting the growing international concerns and discourses about human rights, demands were voiced by Slav-speakers in Greece and in the diaspora who now openly identified themselves as Macedonians, as opposed to Greeks. Several of the individuals which would emerge as leading activists in this movement had been members of leftwing parties who had come into conflict with their respective parties over the Slav Macedonian issue. In 1984, a manifesto was published in Thessaloniki by a group who called for the Greek state’s and the international community’s recognition of their basic human rights. Among these were mentioned the right to speak and teach the Macedonian language and adopt Slavic Macedonian names, along with the preservation of local culture, here understood as a distinct ethnic culture, as well as the right for expatriates to return. At the beginning of the following decade, the Slav Macedonian human rights activists had organised themselves in a small but determined organisation, known by its Greek initials as MAKIVE (Makedoníki another nation-state, thus making minority groups appear as rival bidders for national loyalty. Some Greek scholars had in the early 1990s introduced the term *ethnotikótita* as a Greek equivalent to the concept of ethnicity as different to nationality, but to most Greek debaters the distinction was too subtle. See Mazower 1996, p. 232.


See Giorgos Votsis, “Τα αυτονόητα υπονομεύονται διεκδικούμενα” [“The self-evident are undermined when claimed”], *Eleutherotypia* 17/2 1992, p. 9.

van Boeschoten 2000, p. 29.
The minority activism of MAKIVE also entailed the appearance of a new narrative of the regional Macedonian past, as well as of national (Greek) history. Following the example of other ethnopoliitical interest groups, who as a consequence of global changes in minority legislation and the international status attributed to indigenous populations found their arguments in particularistic narratives of history, MAKIVE and its sympathisers framed their demands within a discourse of ancient origins as well as past and present oppression. An illuminating example of how history was employed to this end is to be found in an open letter, signed by six MAKIVE activists and addressed to the UN, CSCE (later OSCE), as well as to political parties and mass media in Greece, which was issued in September 1991, at the eve of the referendum on national independence in the neighbouring Yugoslav Macedonia. The letter was issued in Aridaia in the prefecture of Pella in western Greek Macedonia, a small town where Moglena – in 1993 renamed Zora (“Dawn”) – the monthly newspaper of the movement was published. The activists stated that the present unrest in the Balkans, reminiscent of the preparations for the Balkan Wars back in 1912, was a consequence of chauvinistic state policies and human rights violations, especially those carried out by the Greek state against the “indigenous Macedonians”. Approximately two thirds of the letter consisted of a narrative, which presented the arguments for the Macedonian nation’s historical existence as well as the story of the hardships endured during this community’s two centuries long struggle for freedom. This struggle was, initially in the letter, placed within the framework of the traditional Greek narrative of national liberation, in which it was stated that the “participation of Macedonians in the uprising of the Greek Nation in 1821 is well known”. Reference was further made to a series of other Macedonian uprisings against the Turks, culminating in the “famous Ilinden revolution” of 1903 and the proclamation of an independent Macedonian republic, quelled in blood because the “chauvinistic monarchical regimes” of the neighbouring states Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia had refused to come to its aid. Yet the struggle for Macedonian freedom

289 The establishment of MAKIVE (in Greek: MA.KI.BE.) is usually dated to January 1993, when the group had a constituent meeting. Karakasidou 2000 (a), p. 82. However, both the name of the group and the activism associated with it had appeared earlier.


292 Moglena was written in Greek and contained articles ranging from complaints about discrimination and legal persecution of indigenous (Slav) Macedonians by Greek officials to comparisons of the minority’s situation in Greece with the hardships endured by other stateless nations like the Kurds and the Palestinians. The newspaper was forced to close in the early 1990s, due to difficulties of finding printers who were willing to print it, but publication was resumed again in 1993, this time under the Slavic name Zora, which included texts written in Slavic Macedonian. Danforth 1995, p. 126.
persisted in the following years, as the indigenous Macedonians had heeded the call and the promises made by the neighbour states, thus joining forces with the Greek Macedonian fighters. However, once the Turks had been expelled in 1912, the “authoritarian regimes” failed their promises of liberty to the Macedonian lands, choosing instead to partition these between themselves. The estates that the Turks once had taken by force, it was stated in the letter, were not handed over to the rightful owners but turned into public property and later, it was implied, distributed to the newcomers from Asia Minor. Worse was to come for the indigenous population.

The Macedonian people were split in three and did not even have the right of free communication. Persecutions, expatriations, killings, oppression, humiliations, [forcible consumption of] castor oil followed. They [the Macedonian people] were regarded as second degree citizen[s]. They were stripped even of the right to cultivate their own culture, to speak their own language, something that not even the Turks had done [to the Macedonians]. As members of this [population] element, we are still today living this senseless absurdity. The state continues to deny us the right to freely cultivate our culture, or to call ourselves Macedonians by descent, as we know from our ancestors, and as we are known internationally. The repatriation and free visits of the Macedonian political refugees were not permitted because the law was made only for Greeks by descent, while they had been declared Macedonians. But if they are not considered to be Greeks, why should their relatives here be [Greeks]?

The authors of the letter went on to rebut the claim of the official view in Greece that the Macedonian nation had been forged by Tito as late as 1944, pointing out that the term ‘Macedonian’ had been in use already in the late 19th century when VMRO rose to arms for Macedonian liberty. The roots of Macedonian distinctiveness were traced even further back in time. According to the MAKIVE activists, the fact that ancient Greek authors and later Greek historians had asserted that the Macedonians in antiquity were regarded as barbarians by the Hellenes vindicated their own claim to this denomination and heritage. The fact that the Greeks had fought the Persians at Marathon and Thermopylae, not in Macedonia, the battle at Chaironeia in 338 BC between Macedonians and Greeks and the Greek city states’ support for the Romans at the battle of Pydna in 168 BC, where the Macedonians fought in defence of their freedom, was listed as further evidence. The activists rhetorically asked if it was possible that the strong “ancient Macedonian nation” could have disappeared, while the “lesser nations” of the region had survived up until the present. Evidence of the continuity of the nation from antiquity to medieval times was found in the so-called Macedonian imperial dynasty, during whose reign (867–1056) Byzantium experienced an era of greatness. “Certainly”, the authors argued, the Macedonian nation had over the centuries been

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mixed with other peoples, “chiefly with the Slav neighbours”, and their culture had been heavily influenced by both Greek and Slavic culture, to the degree that “some Macedonians speak Greek [due to the influence of the Greek Orthodox Church] and others Macedonian”. Nevertheless, it was stated, both ancient and modern Greeks and Macedonians “are kindred peoples”. Since the Macedonians had a history of mixtures and peaceful coexistence with “alien racial elements”, the MAKIVE activists argued that they were especially suited to become “a bridge of friendship” with the other states in the troubled region. 294

Thus the notion of indigenous origins from time immemorial and a basically essentialist understanding of the concept of nationality merged with a discourse on the duty of a modern, multicultural and postcolonial society to meet the needs of indigenous peoples and minorities in accordance with internationally recognised human rights. 295 Understood in Rüsen’s terms, MAKIVE’s discourse on history was both a traditional narrative about roots and a critical one, with strong moral implications, which was further emphasised in the minority activists’ demand to be heard in the contemporary political and historiographical debates on Macedonia.

We are being asked not to concern ourselves with the Macedonian question. Nevertheless, many non-Macedonians concern themselves with it. Why should not we the Macedonians have that right? 296

The result of MAKIVE’s activities was a growing attention paid to the minority policies of Greece, which was reflected in one of the US State Department’s annual country reports on human rights practices, issued in 1990. 297 The critique against the Greek state, found in the report, caused a public uproar in Greece and fuelled the anxieties that the suddenly resurrected minority question and the demands for cultural and language rights were connected with the ‘theft’ of the Macedonian name and historical heritage, and reflected an expansionist agenda, aimed at the territorial integrity of Greece and Greek Macedonia. Since this was what the ‘new Macedonian fighters’ had been writing and publicly talking about for the past decade, the new public attention to the Macedonian question constituted a breakthrough for their claim to expertise in the mass media, where macedonology became slowly but increasingly in fashion toward the end of 1991.

The Slav Macedonian memory discourse(s) on oppression and persecution by the Greek state, which was one of the key themes in the historiography developed on the one hand by historians at the Institute for National History (Institut za natsionalna istorija) in Skopje in the postwar decades, several of which themselves were refugees that had crossed the Greek-Yugoslav border following the defeat of

294 Ibid., pp. 1851-1852
295 See Elenius 2010 (b) for a discussion of similar practices within the Sámi political movement in northern Scandinavia.
DSE and NOF in the Greek civil war, on the other hand by minority and leftwing activists in Greece, was the great counternarrative against which Greek macedonology was set. EMS president Vavouskos, who reproduced the letter of the MAKIVE activists, considered it to be an alarming example of “how some people write history”. His own response to the contents of the controversial statement amounted to 28 pages, in which he mustered his knowledge of Macedonian history from antiquity to the 20th century to refute any non-Greek claim to Macedonian identity (though stressing his praise for those Slav-speakers who had fought for Hellenism).

The attention brought to the minority issue by the Macedonian crisis of the 1990s, along with the upsurge in public and scholarly interest in nationalism, ethnic conflict and civil war engendered by the contemporary wars in Yugoslavia, as well as a growing emphasis on human rights in contemporary political discourse, ensured that research interest has come to focus on the Slav-speakers of western Macedonia in Greece. Conducted chiefly by anthropologists, with the exception of a few historians, this research has over the last two decades produced a number of studies, some of which, as we will see, are tangent to the moral use of history, employed by MAKIVE.

It is safe to say that it is not only ‘pure’ academic interest – here understood as a scholarly quest to fill a void within the existing historiography or other body of research literature – that has led several of the researchers in Greece to the topic. Equally important was its inherent potential for radicalism and for individual and social liberation, by challenging present Greek nationalism, identified with the state establishment, and what is perceived as its charter myths in official history-writing. Leftwing journalist Dimitris Lithoxouou stated the following in the above mentioned panel discussion at the University of Athens in February 1992:

So many lies [have been told in the past decades] that when you start to confront the facts and not the myths, the first thing you feel, and I felt it, is Hellenism being broken down inside you. You feel ashamed for being Greek. Perhaps you’ll reach a

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298 Michailidis 2000, pp. 70-71, 76-77.
299 It should be pointed out that the activists of MAKIVE – in much of the contemporary media discourse accused of being “agents of Skopje” – never publicly adopted the rhetoric of irredentism, nurtured by nationalist circles in the Republic of Macedonia. Instead, the emphasis in their argumentation is on cultural rights and recognition of minority status within Greece.
300 Konstantinos Vavouskos, “Απάντησις εις επιστολήν επί του ‘Μακεδονικού’” [“Response to a letter concerning the ‘Macedonian question’”] in Vavouskos 1993, p. 1849. Not only history was invoked in search of arguments to refute the existence of a Macedonian nationality. Also lexicographers such as Professor Giorgos Babiniotis, head of the Pedagogical Institute and later rector of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens contributed to the campaign by arguing that the Macedonian language was an artificial product of ‘Skopje’ propaganda. Cf. Giorgos Babiniotis, “Ψευδώνυµη γλώσσα ψευδεπίγραφου κράτους” [“Pseudonymous language of a spurious state”], Vima 16/2 1992, p. B4. On the entanglement of linguistic studies with political concerns regarding the Slavic dialects of Greece, see Alexandra Ioannidou, “Τα σλαβικά ιδιώµατα στην Ελλάδα: Γλωσσολογικές προσεγγίσεις και πολιτικές αποκλίσεις” [“The Slavic idioms in Greece: Approaches from linguistics and political aberrations”], in Vasilis K Gounaris, Iakovos D. Michailidis, & Giorgos V. Angelopoulos, (eds.), Ταυτότητες στη Μακεδονία [Identities in Macedonia], Athens: Ekdoseis Papazi 1997, pp. 89-101.
301 Vavouskos 1993, pp. 1853-1881.
By attempting to expose how population statistics had been historically manipulated in order to stress the numbers of Greek nationals in Macedonia before 1912, while simultaneously downplaying or eradicating the presence of Slavs and other ethnic groups, Lithoxou, along with Kostopoulos and musicologist Leonidas Embeirikos presented an alternative narrative of the Macedonian struggle at the dawn of the century and the history of the Macedonian question in Greece. This emphasised the hollowness of concepts like ‘national consciousness’, the Balkan wars’ character of conquest as opposed to the traditional view of national liberation struggles, and the Greek state’s “racism” and human rights abuse against the Slav-speakers of the country.303 Their works are best characterised as moral use of history, expressed as critical narratives of what is often framed as a dark chapter of Greek history. These are narratives with strongly moral implications, centred on denial of certain aspects of the past and the exposition of previously hidden facts and inconvenient truths.304 One can conclude that a narrative about the Slav Macedonian minority has surfaced in the national historical culture in Greece, as an effect of the Macedonian crisis, even though it has not yet passed into the official narrative of the nation presented in the history textbooks, which presumably mould the public’s national and historical ‘consciousness’.

Nevertheless, studies of the Greek Macedonian Slav-speakers’ own narratives and discourses on history remain scarce.305 A reason for this might be found in the absence of representatives of this minority in the public debate in Greece during the early 1990s. Unlike other communities with an identity-political interest in claiming a place in national or regional history, MAKIVE and the Slav-speakers generally lacked access to mainstream media, with the result that public debate on the topic was conducted by second or third parties, who either claimed to defend

303 Ibid., pp. 4-25, 35, 38-48.

305 A study of the contents, among which historical narratives are also to be found, in the chief journal of MAKIVE, Moglena, later renamed Zora [“Dawn”], during the 1990s has been presented in Angelos A. Chotzidis, “Αρίθμηση και δοµή του µειονοτικού λόγου. Το µακεδονικό υφάσµα των Μογλένων και της Ζόρα” [“Articulation and structure of minority discourse. The case of Moglena and Zora”], in Vasilis K. Gounaris, Iakovos D. Michailidis & Giorgos B. Angelopoulos, (eds.) Ταυτότητες στη Μακεδονια [Identities in Macedonia], Athens: Ekdoseis Papazisi 1997, pp. 143-170. The memory-work embedded in the notebooks of a Slav-speaking native of Florina in western Greek Macedonia, in which personal recollections merged with a narrative of Greek Macedonian collective identity, has been the topic of inquiry in Vereni 2000, pp. 47-67.
minority rights or denied their existence, in the present as well as in the past. Suggesting the existence of an ethnic minority in a historically contested area, in a time when Greece was being portrayed as threatened by the expansionist aims of the neighbouring ‘Skopje republic’, was not an enterprise without certain risk. The sensitive nature of the issue meant that anyone who publicly claimed a linguistic Macedonian identity, understood as separate from a Greek Macedonian one, ran the danger of legal persecution, on the grounds of damage to the national interest, as was the case of two Slav Macedonian minority activists interviewed in the Greek magazine *Ena.*

The atmosphere of fear and official taboos surrounding this ‘unmentionable’ group explains to a great extent why active participation in the debate was shunned. Anthropologists, such as Anastasia Karakasidou and above mentioned Embeirikos, have testified to how reluctant inhabitants of Slav-speaking villages in west (Greek) Macedonia are (or were at the time of their fieldwork in the late 1980s and early 1990s) to talk of their language, their sense of identity and beliefs in the presence of outsiders. When informants do (or did), they have tended to avoid labels such as ‘Slavs’ or ‘Slav Macedonians’, preferring instead to talk of themselves as ‘Macedonians’, but more often just the more neutral *dopioi*, ‘locals’, and the mother tongue as ‘the local idiom’. It is also possible that this practice simply reflects indifference to or lack of commitment to identity-political projects, such as that of MAKIVE or the nation-building across the border. The reasons behind this might be found either in a generally low educational level among the rural population – according to anthropologist Riki van Boescoten, the Slav-speakers of west Macedonia are chiefly preoccupied with agriculture – with the result that they have not been particularly receptive toward ethnopolitical appeals and intellectual arguments concerning cultural self-determination, either in identification with Greek society and national identity. Perhaps needless to say, the latter explanation has been stressed by some Greek researchers and debaters, who have tended to minimise the significance of MAKIVE and the influence it might have had on the majority of Slav-speakers in Greece, evidence of which they have perceived in the generally low following that the political incarnation of the movement, the Rainbow party (*to Ouránio Táxo*), has had in the regional and Euro-parliament elections held during the 1990s. However, as van Boescoten has aptly noted, the demonstration of national loyalty toward Greece was traditionally the channel of upward social mobility among the stigmatised and economically marginalised Slav-speakers. This was of course another incentive to keep quiet on the topic of ethnic difference.

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310 See, for example, Chotzidis in (eds.) Gounaris, Michailidis & Angelopoulos 1997.
311 van Boeschoten 2000, p. 38.
The dominant focus on this aspect of the Macedonian controversy between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia in previous research, important as this context is for an understanding of the name dispute, has led to an emphasis on the official policies of the Greek state versus this particular minority, sometimes at the expense of other, equally significant contexts and developments. The argumentation of Martis and other advocates of the ‘national rights’ in the Macedonian controversy tends to be viewed as chiefly motivated by an interest to serve a government policy of nationalisation, which sought to deny the existence of the Slav Macedonians. The conventional wisdom is thus that this population had no place at all in the dominant historical narratives. This is, or seems to be, the case when macedonology is analysed as a narrative of the Greek nation, i.e. of the national community as a whole. Nevertheless, as I have implied throughout this chapter, macedonology is just as much, or even more, to be understood as a regional narrative, a history or branch of knowledge which emphasised the region and its place in the nation, and the inhabitants’ identity as Greek Macedonians as opposed to just Greeks. And in some versions of this narrative, the Slav-speaking population of Greek Macedonia could be incorporated, not as national enemies – ‘Others’ – but as a part of the national community which had suffered injustice from the national centre.

Greek macedonology as critical narrative

In a traditional narrative, which emphasises ancestral bonds and the origins of a particular community in remote antiquity, it is perhaps evident that elements, which may be perceived as disturbing the internal harmony inherent in this form of storytelling, tend to be downplayed or absent. Such elements are usually civil unrest, injustices and criminal acts committed by parts of the community with which the narrator identifies him- or herself. The form of narrative that dominates in Martis’ version of Macedonia’s history was an argumentation that relied almost exclusively on archaeological artifacts, epigraphs and text passages. It entailed the exclusion or downplaying of more problematic, recent history, where the Yugoslav Macedonian historians, whose claims and allegations he allegedly set out to refute, tended to place the core of their argumentation, with the effect that the role of the Slav-speaking populations in the 19th and early 20th century struggles in Macedonia were only mentioned in passing. However, this absence was not always the case

312 Martis 1984 (1983), pp. 91, 96-100. The mentions that there had existed a Slav-speaking population in Greek Macedonia prior to 1912 are made in connection with a passage on the Slav Macedonian language, which the author claims is an idiom consisting of a mix of Greek, Bulgarian, Vlach and Turkish words, used as a lingua franca in Ottoman times by “poor Slav immigrants” and their indigenous Greek neighbours, which nevertheless kept their Greek national consciousness. Martis concludes that some of the inhabitants who fought in the liberation struggles of Macedonia spoke this Slavic ‘idiom’ but that they participated out of Greek patriotism, not out of loyalty toward any (Slav) Macedonian nation. This is the only time the author touches upon the issue; the bulk of claims and counterarguments concerning the relations between language, dialect and ethnicity in Macedonia are concentrated on antiquity, where Martis goes at great length to demonstrate that the fact that Alexander the Great is cited (by Arrian) as having addressed his soldiers in the ‘Macedonian tongue’ prior to a battle does not mean that their language was not Greek. To this end, he draws a parallel to contemporary Greek politicians of Pontian origins who address their constituency in the Pontian dialect in order to induce enthusiastic responses, arguing that this does not make the Pontians less Greek.
in accounts of the more recent past, written by ‘new Macedonian fighters’, where
critical perspectives of Greek state policies formed a not negligible component of
the narrative.

The suffering of the Slav-speakers as well as other ‘bilingual’ groups in
northern Greece in fact formed a vital part of Nikolaos Mertzos’ account of
Macedonian history. His main contribution to the historiography on Macedonia
was published in 1986, three years after the publication of Martis’ work, and like
this, it set out to inform the presumably ignorant Greek public of the perceived
menace, emanating from Skopje as well as from Bulgaria. Unlike Martis, Mertzos
paid less attention to antiquity and put more emphasis on historical developments
during the last two centuries. It is not the foreigners – i.e. the ‘Skopjans’ and their
allies – that have caused the current crisis over the name ‘Macedonia’, he concluded
in the introduction to the second edition of his book, dated March 1992. They were
said only to have taken advantage of a long history of the Greek capital’s neglect of
the Macedonians, in spite of their many sacrifices made in the defence of
Hellenism.

The book, with its significative title, reads as a catalogue not only of the
ordeals the Greek Macedonians have endured at the hands of foreign foes, but also
the many injustices done to them by the ‘establishment’ in Athens. Demosthenes’
slandering of Philip II and the Macedonians in the 4th century BC was, following
Mertzos’ line of argument, but one example of a historical pattern that re-emerged
in the 19th century, when southern Greece achieved its independence, with Athens
as its capital, while the other Greek lands remained under Ottoman rule. It is this
period, i.e. the Macedonian question of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which
was the focus of the author’s attention. Mertzos maintained that ‘the Struggle for
Macedonia’ had remained a largely forgotten history, one of the great battles for
Hellenism that had passed unnoticed in national historiography as well as in school
teaching. Even in the few existing official accounts of it, the role of the indigenous
Macedonian ‘freedom fighters’ had been downplayed in favour of the volunteers
from independent Greece who, like the army officer Pavlos Melas, went up north
in order to fight for Macedonia’s liberation. In this, Mertzos was in agreement
with the argument laid down by Nikolaos Martis, who had claimed that only three
lines in the schoolbooks on national history were assigned to the description of ‘the
Struggle’, despite the fact that it was largely because of this struggle that Macedonia
had remained Greek, a neglect that the former minister described as “almost
criminal”. Mertzos argued that this incongruity was due to the fact that the focus
of most accounts is the years between 1904 and 1908, i.e. the period of intense
guerrilla warfare and active government involvement in the activities of the Greek
irredentists. However, this was but the final stage of a lengthy process of
Macedonian freedom aspirations, according to Mertzos, who dated the outbreak of
the ‘Struggle’ as early as 1878, the year of the San Stefano peace treaty and of a

314 Nikolaos Martis interviewed by Eleni Bistika, “Ενα βιβλίο, ένα πάθος, μια Μακεδονία” [“A book, a passion, one
revolt among the Greek Macedonians, aimed at securing their ‘national survival’.\textsuperscript{315} In his view, the Macedonians owed little or nothing to the ‘Athenian establishment’, which prior to the turn of the century did nothing to protect the lives of the Greek population in Ottoman Macedonia or aid the Macedonians in their lonely struggle against the Turkish authorities and the Bulgarian komitadjis. It was as if Macedonia had remained Greek, \textit{in spite of Athens’} meddling in local affairs.\textsuperscript{316}

There are, however, significant differences between the historical circumstances highlighted by Mertzos and Martis respectively. Contrary to the former Minister for Northern Greece, Mertzos took a keen interest in what he described as the once multilingual character of Macedonian Hellenism. Mertzos, despite his emphasis on Greekness, made no secret of his Vlach descent, i.e. his belonging to one of the ethnic – or in his view rather linguistic – groups in the wider Macedonian region that, to a large extent, chose to assimilate into Greek society and among whom several of the most noteworthy proponents of 19\textsuperscript{th} century Greek nationalism were to be found. Mertzos, and many local history-producers along with him, did not perceive Greekness and ‘Vlachness’ as mutually excluding concepts; in fact, the rally of Vlach-speakers to the Greek cause in late 19\textsuperscript{th} century Macedonia was a recurring theme in the traditional historiography on the province, which interpreted it as a token of the Vlach population’s inherent Greek consciousness.

This assertiveness on behalf of indigenous linguistic groups – which for the reasons mentioned above never were referred to as minorities – ought to be seen within the context of historiographical disputes that from time to time emerged in the local press of Thessaloniki and other regional newspapers in the 1980s, regarding the so-called Koutso-Vlach problem. In short, the debate touched upon the national identity and loyalty of Vlach-speakers, their receptiveness toward Romanian irredentist propaganda during the Macedonian Struggle at the dawn of the century, and later on, during the Axis occupation, the collaboration of some Vlach-speakers with Mussolini, demonstrated in the ill-fated attempt to set up an autonomous Vlach republic in the Pindos Mountains.\textsuperscript{317} The stigma of national treason, an allegation which tended to be implied whenever reference was made to the religious and/or linguistic minorities in Greece in public discourse, was something that debaters, such as EMS president Konstantinos Vavouskos, and others who identified themselves as descendants of Greek Vlach-speakers, felt compelled to repudiate in public. This was done through downplaying the number of individuals who had possessed an ‘alien’ national consciousness and by listing the persons of Vlach descent who had in any way contributed to the welfare and

\textsuperscript{315} Mertzos 1992 (1986), p. 61. The author also lists several precursors that date back to the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, i.e. the period of ‘national revival’. ibid., pp. 157-235.

\textsuperscript{316} This becomes particularly evident in Mertzos’ account of the Greek schools in 19\textsuperscript{th} century Macedonia, which, according to him, the governments of the Greek Kingdom for a long time refused to support financially, arguing that the inhabitants of the region were Slav-speakers and hence no proper Greeks. Mertzos 1992 (1986), p. 110-111.

defence of the Greek fatherland, thereby, through exemplary narratives, proving the Greek patriotism of primarily the Vlachs, but also of the Slav-speakers.318

Due to these circumstances, Mertzos’ approach to Macedonian history in some respects differs markedly from other debaters associated with Greek macedonology. His book might in certain ways be read as a kind of memorial to the groups – Vlachs as well as Slav-speakers – wronged by the Greek state, which questioned their loyalty and ‘Greekness’. Mertzos argued that these groups were in fact more of genuine Greeks than their countrymen in the south, since they fought out of sheer love for the Greek fatherland, despite the fact that many of them did not know a single word of Greek.319 Mother-tongue is, however, not a reliable criterion for determining someone’s nationality, according to the author, who listed other particularly ‘Greek’ qualities, such as courage and patriotism that the Macedonians were said to have.320 According to this narrative, the Bulgarian komitadjis found it impossible to grasp that Slav-speakers, with a language similar to their own, were fighting against them, in order to secure Macedonia for Greece. Equally slow to grasp this reality were the authorities in Athens.

Every bit as “inexplicable” was the phenomenon in the eyes of Athens and the well-nourished stiff collar ‘Westerners’ [the Greek word frankothremménos used here alludes to Greeks who dressed in the ‘Frankish’, i.e. Western European style], who foolishly thought – and many still think – that the Greek Macedonians “had” to be in every way identical with the ancient Macedonians of Alexander [the Great]. In their minds, their faithfulness, their morale and their customs, they were. But in their language they were not. Athens forgot – and perhaps still forgets – that between the ancient world and the present two thousand years and three multi-national empires have passed in Macedonia: the Roman, the Byzantine and the Ottoman. The Macedonians had to use some other language in order to communicate with the alien races that ceaselessly came and went through their lands; Latin for the Romans, Slavonic for the Slavs and the Bulgarians, Albanian for the Albanians, Turkish for the Turks.321

Precisely because of this, Mertzos continued, the adjective ‘Hellenised’, routinely attached to those Vlach- and Slav-speaking Macedonians who fought for the Greek cause, was utterly misleading. They were not Hellenised, in the sense that they received a Greek identity from Athens. Rather, they were to be regarded as Greeks

318 See especially “Ο 20ός αιώνας στα Βαλκάνια” [“The 20th century in the Balkans”], Makedonia 1/12 1988; Konstantinos Vavouskos, “Μόνο θερμοί βλαχόφωνοι πατριώτες και όχι ‘Κουτσόβλαχοι’ υπήρξαν και υπάρχουν στην Ελλάδα” [“Only devout Vlac-speaking patriots and no ‘Koutso-Vlacis’ have existed and exist in Greece”], Makedonia 9/12 1988, “Απάντηση στον κ. Κ. Βαβούσκο” [“Response to Mr. K. Vavouskos”], Makedonia 14/12 1988; N. G. Fistas, “Η αντίδραση των Βλάχων” [“The reaction of the Vlachs”], Makedonia 20/12 1988; reproduced in Vavouskos 1993, pp. 1617-1626. See also Dimitris Stergiou, “Αυτοί οι Βλάχοι είναι ‘εθνικές µειονότητες’?” [“Are these Vlachs ‘national minorities’?"], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 7/4 1994, p. 30, in which the author – himself of Vlach descent – uses the same line of arguments and historical examples to assert the Greekness of the Vlachs. This article was written in response to an article in Eleftherotypia 1/4 1994, with the title “Να µιλήσουµε ανοιχτά για τις µειονότητες” [“Let us speak openly about the minorities"], in which sociologist Pantazis Terlevis urged the abandonment of the official taboos surrounding the topic of ethnic minorities in Greece, among which he counted the Vlach-speakers. According to Stergiou, such a suggestion constituted per se ‘national treason’.

319 Mertzos goes so far as to claim that as much as 80 % of the Greek makedonomachoi, ‘Macedonian fighters’, in the ‘Struggle for Macedonia’ were either Vlachs or Slav-speakers. Mertzos 1992 (1986), p. 130.

320 Ibid., pp.10-11, 46, 50, 146, 154.

321 Ibid., p. 119.
since time immemorial, albeit with a mother tongue that was not Greek. Linguistic patterns may vary, but the essence of Hellenism remains unaltered, according to Mertzos’ line of argument. In fact a number of well-known figures in the national pantheon of Greece were such Vlachs – the author mentioned, among others, Rigas Velestinlis, the first ‘martyr’ of the Greek national movement, and Ioannis Kolettis, the ‘father’ of the Great Idea. He furthermore accounted for a number of contributions made by bilingual Macedonians in service of Greek cultural life in the 19th century, contributions to which “the Greek capital owes everything it has”.

Nevertheless, the ‘Athenian state’ had rewarded its loyal Macedonian citizens with the utmost ingratitude, after the incorporation of the province into Greece following the Balkan Wars. Here Mertzos touched upon the sensitive issue of Greece’s Macedonian Slav-speakers and the harsh measures taken against them during the first half of the 20th century.

Such a racist “apartheid” regime, of oppression and exploitation against the bilingual Macedonian Greeks in some parts of Macedonia was often established by many lesser representatives of the Greek State, following the liberation. And on such ground fell once again the seeds of Bulgarian propaganda in the period 1912-1943, during which organs of the Greek State with the use of force proclaimed the Macedonians, until death loyal to Greece, to be “Bulgarians”. When the Greek State collapsed during the Occupation and EAM proclaimed its struggle for national, as well as social liberation, it is no wonder that some Slav-speaking villagers rose up in arms for the autonomy of Macedonia. The wonder is that the overwhelming majority of the Slav-speaking Macedonians remained loyal to the Nation, patiently endured the torments, the threats, the misfortunes and steadfastly fought in the first line of fire so that Macedonia would remain Greek and they themselves Greeks. For in their hearts, it was not any public servant, gendarme or any other dignitary that represented Greece. It was their love and the flag that represented her.

The Slav-speakers of Greek Macedonia – perhaps also the local population in general – were thus described as victims of what might be labelled internal colonisation, emphasised through the metaphor on apartheid rule and the use of words, such as ‘oppression’ and ‘exploitation’ to describe the relationship between the national centre and the regional periphery. The tendency of public servants, most of whom came from southern Greece, to blur the categories of ‘Bulgarians’ and ‘Slavophone Greeks’, the difference between which Mertzos made considerable efforts to point out and explain, was in this narrative interpreted within a larger framework of meaning, where the policies of the central government in Athens were portrayed as being opposed to the interests and well-being of the Greek Macedonians.

This notion of victimhood might indeed be considered a fundamental component in the critical narrative of history, whose primary objective in Rüsen’s

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323 Mertzos 1992 (1986), p. 135. Mertzos was in this respect inspired by the journalist Georgios Modis; the author of several articles on local history and popular historical fiction in the interwar years. Together with the veteran Nikostratos Kalomenopoulos, Modis had co-authored the entry for the Struggle for Macedonia in the first large Greek encyclopedia, Pyrso (1927). Cf. Gounaris 2010, p. 65.
view is to introduce the element of protest into the public discourse on history, through which, possibly, change of national historical culture can be achieved. It would thus seem as a moral use of history. This being said, it should be noted that the critical narrative presented by Mertzos entailed no radical break with established ways of writing about Greek history or with the national interpretative framework. The dichotomy between the national capital in the south and the borderland in the north, between centre and periphery, discernible in Mertzos’ text, reflected a discourse on the nation that was common in the writings of nationalist critics of Greek state and society around 1900, particularly of the Greek Macedonian intellectual Ion Dragoumis.324 This could in its turn be traced back to the rival conceptions of Greek identity between autochthones and heterochthons mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. It was certainly no coincidence that Mertzos devoted an entire chapter to the life and work of Dragoumis, presented as an inspiring example, whose akritikó pnevma, “borderland spirit”, patriotism and pure “Macedonian blood” was contrasted against Athens’ “narrow horizon”.325 After all, it was Dragoumis who had articulated the notion of a divide between the State, as embodied by imported Western institutions and rootless cosmopolitanism, and the Nation, as embodied by the ‘people’ outside the Kingdom, firmly rooted in indigenous Romeic (Byzantine Greek) tradition.

Nevertheless, the traditional elements of Mertzos’ narrative were supplemented by elements with negative connotations that are usually to be found in modern, critical discourses on the history of state oppression against stigmatised groups. These elements contributed to shape narrative similar to the moral use of history employed by the Slav Macedonian minority activists of MAKIVE, and for that matter the national historiography across the border in Yugoslav Macedonia, even to the point of identifying the same group as victims and the same state as perpetrator. To some extent, this had to do with the fact that the same geographical region, its past and present inhabitants were being appropriated by groups with differing identity-political agendas – not only the ‘Star of Vergina’ and Alexander the Great, but also heroes of more recent vintage, from the Macedonian struggles at the turn of the century.326 However, this is not the only factor that explains the similarity between the respective identity-political narratives.

These, to some extent competing, discourses on history and identity had evolved simultaneously and were thus mutually reaffirming, utilising certain elements borrowed from each other. Scholars who have preoccupied themselves with the study of nationalism, such as Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson, have observed a similar tendency of ‘piracy’ between different national movements’ ways

326 Examples of this practice can be found in the writings of both Vavouskos and Mertzos, who claimed the fighters who defended the town of Kruševo, in present Republic of Macedonia, during the Ilinden uprising in 1903 – iconised in Yugoslav Macedonian national historiography as the precursor to Macedonian independence – as Greek Vlach-speakers, defending a Hellenic-Vlach town. Konstantinos Vavouskos was himself born in Kruševo by Vlach parents and is therefore likely to have had personal motives for participating in the struggle over these ancestors and historical symbols. See Mertzos 1992 (1986), pp. 117-118.
of defining their own identities. Since allegations of ‘theft’ were at the heart of the Macedonian conflict, a perhaps more neutral term for the phenomenon might be found in the notions of travelling concepts and cultural transfers – the concepts travelling, or being transferred from one context to another, in this case being the accusations of apartheid-style racism and oppression.\footnote{Cf. Michel Espagne, \textit{Les transferts culturels franco-allemands}, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1999, pp. 1-49; Mieke Bal, \textit{Travelling Concepts: A Rough Guide}, Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2002, pp. 3-55.}

A conclusion in this analysis is that a history-producer with the intent to change a dominant societal discourse on history must mould his or her interpretation of past and present conditions as a critical narrative – even if the narrative per se aims at the preservation of traditional values and knowledge, perceived to be in peril. The means to achieve this purpose was the existential and moral uses of history. A purely traditional narrative that merely confirms the given order of things and established views of the past is, for precisely these reasons, unsuitable for debaters hoping to alter popular perceptions on a certain issue. It is evident that it was this Mertzzos hoped to achieve with his book, which after all was not an ordinary account of Greek Macedonian history but an attempt to sound the alert by pointing out the dangers of continued neglect. To this end, the history of discrimination against Slav-speakers in Macedonia, “until death loyal to Greece”, could be used, as long as the interpretative framework of Greek nationalism remained unchallenged. This framework of interpretation was in itself traditional, even if the discourse within which it was employed was shaped as a critical narrative. Vlachs and Slav-speakers were to be regarded as silent members of the Nation who, like their Greek-speaking countrymen, possessed and always had possessed national Hellenic consciousness.

This was an argument developed for domestic consumption and thus it rarely surfaced in the arguments and narratives of Greek Macedonia presented to the world. However, a conflict of interpretations emerged when this traditional and, to some extent, critical narrative clashed with the type of historical narration that in Rüsen’s typology is referred to as genetic, i.e. the type that stresses history as temporal change and ongoing transformation of values. In the case discussed here, the genetic perspective was to be found, first and foremost, among anthropologists under the influence of the constructivist paradigm in the study of nationalism, in which identity – whether national, ethnic, cultural or social – is viewed not as inherent in people’s minds but as something which is constructed on multiple levels of society and always subject to change. This paradigm, which had gained momentum in the humanities across the Western world in the 1970s and 1980s, much due to the influential works of Gellner and Anderson, had been introduced at some academic departments in Greece, where “new history” had established itself, at the beginning of the 1990s. To the public at large, however, these theories were terra incognita. To the advocates of nationalism who encountered them, they seemed offending, since the researchers who suggested that the Vlachs and Slav-speakers in northern Greece had come to identify themselves as Greeks (or alternatively as followers of other national movements that had laid or laid claims
to the Macedonian region) over the course of time, instead of having possessed national consciousness all along, seemed to call the present-day Macedonians’ identity as Greeks into question, even if this was not the stated intent of the constructivist scholars. This clash of differing interpretations of concepts, and by extension views of history and claims on expertise, was at the centre of one of the most heated debates in the public press during the Macedonian crisis, which attracted international attention among scholars of anthropology and Modern Greek studies: the so-called Karakasidou controversy, initiated by the journalist Sarantos Kargakos at the pages of the magazine *Oikonomikos Tachydromos.*

My study of the narratives of the past has so far focused on the historical contexts emphasised in them, disagreements with regard to chronology and the controversial topic of the Slav-speaking Macedonians. Attention has also been given to how their history of suffering, or rather elements of it, could – paradoxical as it may seem – be incorporated into a discourse, whose main function was to put Macedonia into the centre of public and political attention in Greece. The analysis has touched upon some of the professional interests that emerged during the 1980s, chiefly within local scholarly environments, sometimes overlapped by the interests of local tourism agencies. In order to put these narratives on Macedonian history and by extension the claims to expertise, into a larger perspective, certain developments on the field of regional politics will have to be taken into account, developments and aspirations that were inextricably connected to the regional Greek Macedonian identity construction implied in this chapter. In the following, I aim to explore the perceptions of Macedonia’s present and the hopes and fears with regard to the future, in which the dominant interpretations of the past were embedded.

### Narratives of the present and future Macedonia

In order to better grasp the emergence (or rather re-emergence) of macedonology during the 1980s, as represented by Martis and the local history-producers who portrayed Yugoslav Macedonia as a threat and who later came to exert considerable influence in and through the Macedonian Committee, I argue, one has to take into account the public and political discourses on local economy and regional development, in which the historical narratives evolved. It is after all the definitions of the present reality and, by consequence, the expectations regarding the future that shape and determine the understanding of the past. This is a point stressed by Rüsen and other scholars who, along with him, have attempted to define the complex processes implied in the notion of ‘historical consciousness’.

### The possibilities of Europe

Greece’s entry into the European Common Market in 1981 meant that the country now could access the vast regional structural funds, which, along with the Common Agricultural Policy, over the years have come to make up the great bulk of EC (later EU) spending. A new arena had thus been opened, where the competition for

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328 See Chapter 5, for an extensive account and analysis of this particular controversy.
economic resources could take place, and the administrative regions could, possibly, bypass the national centre. The highly centralised nature of the Greek state was, or was perceived by many, as the main obstacle in the process. This was a view that would be adopted by several editors and analysts at the time of the Macedonian crisis of the early 1990s, in the local but also in the national press. The editorial of the daily *Eleftherotypia*, commenting on the mass rally for Macedonia and Hellenism which took place in Thessaloniki in February 1992, made a strong argument for the decentralisation of administrative and financial powers that ought to be granted to the Ministry for Macedonia and Thrace (before 1988, the Ministry for Northern Greece). The region of Northern Greece was said to possess enormous possibilities and sources of wealth that had yet to be exploited, and the only thing preventing development, according to the editor, was the local authorities’ lack of right to decision making, which led to local initiatives getting stuck in the cogwheels of Athenian bureaucracy. Administrative reform, it was implied, was just as much of a ‘national duty’ as the defence of the name Macedonia. Editors in the local press tended to mould their argument around resentment toward the authorities of Athens, whose policy on economic aid was portrayed as only catering to the interests of the South, while rural districts in the North were systematically disadvantaged and deprived of badly needed infrastructure development.

This resentment sometimes expressed itself in rhetorical figures alluding to colonial attitudes, as implied by an editor in *Makedonia* who wrote that to “the people of the centre [...] we still today belong to the ‘new lands’ [the label used to refer to the territories which had been incorporated into Greece in 1912], which as of yet have not been explored”. It could also manifest itself in a critical narrative of decay and state neglect toward the borderland in the north, following the wars of the 1940s. According to an analyst in *Eleftherotypia*, the real problem that Greek Macedonia faced was the economic decline and depopulation of border areas, which had led to the emigration of “the most dynamic element” of the region’s inhabitants. All of this was paired with the allegedly blatant neglect of successive governments and the “Athenocentric” state machinery’s “contempt” for the countryside outside Thessaloniki. The rural districts most hit by depopulation, unemployment and lack of prospects were the prefectures of western Macedonia.

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329 "Εθνικό χρέος" ["National duty"], *Eleftherotypia* 15/2 1992, p. 8. It should, however, be pointed out that the call for administrative reform and local decision-making was never framed within a discourse on regional autonomy. This became clear in the reactions against Italian politician Flaminio Piccoli’s proposal to grant Thessaloniki some kind of autonomy, which in the local press of that city was interpreted as lack of historical knowledge about the region. “Θέλει... αυτονόµηση της Θεσσαλονίκης ανιστόρητος Ιταλός!” ["History-less Italian calls for... autonomy for Thessaloniki!"], *Makedonia* 8/2 1992, p. 1, 13. The reaction was due to the fact that the word ‘autonomy’, used in connection with Macedonia, in a Greek context is inextricably linked to the Comintern policy of Macedonian autonomy in the interwar period, which in Greece made it the equivalent of national treason.


331 Viktoras Netas, "Δεν υπάρχει ούτε πολιτική για τα σύνορα" ["There is not even a policy for the borders"], *Eleftherotypia* 11/2 1992, p. 9; ibid., “Πώς εφαρµόζεται η πολιτική στα σύνορα” ["How politics is put into practice at the borders"], *Eleftherotypia* 18/2 1992, p. 9.
that were home to the Slav-speakers and therefore perceived as the primary targets of Skopje’s irredentist propaganda, which added a dimension of imminent threat to the above mentioned discourse on economic necessity with regard to the borders.

This discourse on the threat against Macedonia and the rest of northern Greece, as a result of negative development reinforced by the national centre, was also accompanied by writings and statements, which emphasised the bright prospects presented to Greece, and even more to Greek Macedonia and Thessaloniki, following the end of the Cold War and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989 to 1991. As the iron curtain ascended, Thessaloniki was envisioned to become reunited with her Balkan hinterlands in the north and once again emerge as the principal centre of trade in southeast Europe.\textsuperscript{332} Thessaloniki could be the economic capital of the Balkans and the Black sea region, the PASOK deputy Thodoros Katsanevas argued, if only the Greek government could forge a conscious policy catering to the interests of “dynamic Macedonia” and its inhabitants, along with the “hardworking” Pontian Greek “refugees” which had come to Greece from the disintegrated Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{333} The main obstacle for the future prosperity of Macedonia and Thrace, Greece’s largest administrative region, with all its perceived potential, was in this discourse the centralised character of the Greek state. As Sarantos Kargakos expressed it in a plea for action that accompanied his book on the Macedonian question, “the future of Greece is situated in Macedonia”, whose population, he claimed, along with the people of Thrace were more industrious than the southern Greeks, and “closer situated to Europe, which determines our economic fortunes”.\textsuperscript{334}

What is of particular interest is how this discourse coexisted and came to be intertwined with the discourse on history and the perception of threat. In his book on the “falsification of Macedonian history”, Nikolaos Martis implied the economic interests at stake in the region, when he wrote of a meeting he had, in his capacity of Minister for Northern Greece, in the late 1970s with a representative of an international bank, for the purpose of negotiating loans to various regional development projects. In the course of conversation, it turned out that the bank had already granted such a loan to Macedonia, signed by the same representative in Skopje. This misunderstanding of terms was portrayed by Martis as the result of a worldwide campaign of “brainwashing”, directed from Skopje, with the aim of creating confusion over the identity of Macedonia and its inhabitants, which could pave the way for internationally vindicated territorial demands.\textsuperscript{335} Martis did not explicitly link this perception to any discourse on the region’s economic disadvantage versus the capital when he lamented “the complete ignorance of […]

\textsuperscript{332} See especially local journalist Faidon Giagiozis’ diary entry for 2/1 1991, published in Giagiozis 2000, pp. 266-269.

\textsuperscript{333} Thodoros Katsanevas, “Εθνικές προτεραιότητες και Μακεδονία” [“National priorities and Macedonia”], \textit{Oikonomikos Tachydromos} 15/7 1993, pp. 55-56. Katsanevas, a politician of Pontian Greek origins, was also known for his commitment to another national issue, the so-called Pontian question, in part intertwined with the Macedonian one, which will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{334} Kargakos 1992, p. 270.

the intellectual, political and other leaders of our country, regarding what is happening against our historical and cultural heritage”. However, he pointed to the centralisation of perspectives in national politics and education as the main reasons for the present state of Macedonian affairs. Besides a few exceptions, “all those who serve in public life, absorbed by the political climate of Athens” had failed to see or refused to admit the threat against Greek Macedonia, while “the existing educational system and [school] book content is fit only for the children of Athens”.

This is where his traditional narrative of the past turns into a critical narrative of contemporary Greek society. According to Martis, the ignorance of the politicians in Athens and the “academic arrogance” of most scholars and intellectuals in Greece had contributed to a general silence in the media concerning the threat against Macedonia, while the people at the northern frontier – exposed on a daily basis to the ‘propaganda’ of Skopje radio and television – along with the Greek Macedonian diaspora in North America were left alone in their struggle for Hellenism. By contrasting it against the ‘national issue’ that concerned the Greek foreign policy-makers in the 1980s, the most, besides European integration, namely the recurring border disputes with Turkey in the Aegean, the former Minister of Northern Greece advocated his cause; the billions of drachmas spent on military rearmament in order to avert the violation of a few square kilometres of national sea or air space, his argument implied, would be better spent on averting the threat against Macedonia, which was not only aimed at territory but at the history and cultural heritage of Greece.

Writing in 1995, political scientist Dimitris Keridis would criticise the elected mayors and other politicians of northern Greece for ignoring the problems of their region, admittedly difficult to resolve, by preferring instead to make public statements on matters of foreign policy, for which they did not risk to be held accountable in case of failure. To this observation on the local political elite’s interest in foreign policy issues might be added the profound and often demonstrated interest in matters relating to history and identity. As noted earlier in this chapter, several of the individuals associated with the macedonology of the 1980s were, or had been, politicians: Martis and Papathelemis, successively, as Minister of Northern Greece and Mertzos as mayor of the Vlach-dominated Nymfaio, in the rural backwater of the Florina prefecture in western Macedonia. However, this interest is also likely to have been linked to the European discourse on regional renaissance that was taking shape at the time, which besides economic development also tended to stress the historical and cultural distinctiveness of regions.

Which regional historical past that ought to be emphasised in the Greek

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336 Ibid., pp. 113-114
337 Ibid., p. 115.
338 Ibid.
340 This in turn might reflect the more common trend in recent decades to view historical and cultural heritage as economic assets, in attempts to attract tourists and investors to a certain region. See Josefina Syssner, What kind of Regionalism? Regionalism and Region building in Northern European Peripheries, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang 2006, pp. 185-205; Fredrik Persson, Skåne, den farliga halvön: Historia, identitet och ideologi 1865-2000 [Scania, the dangerous peninsula:
Macedonian context was sometimes subject to conflicting and quite heated views, as local politicians chose the history of the region and the perceived threat to the Macedonians’ identity as a battleground where they could show their ability to act. An example of this is the local history war launched in 1987 by then mayor of Thessaloniki, Sotiris Kouvelas, who called for the exclusion of the chapters on the city’s history after 1912 from the official account *Thessaloniki 2.300 chronia* [Thessaloniki 2.300 years], accusing the university scholars involved in the writing of it of political bias and serving the interests of Skopje.\(^{341}\)

The Macedonian Committee’s written declaration of the 17\(^{th}\) of January 1992 – the drafting of which, judging from journalist Faidon Giagiozis’ diaries, chiefly seems to have been the work of the journalist Nikolaos Mertzos, EMS chairman Konstantinos Vavouskos and archaeologist Dimitris Pantermalis\(^ {342}\) – presented a regional historical narrative and line of arguments, framed within a discourse that presented Thessaloniki as a European city and Macedonia as the cradle of Western civilisation.\(^{343}\) According to the Committee, the fact that Alexander the Great (whose sister the city was named after) had created “the world’s first cultural and political community of Nations, without any discrimination – ideals more appropriate than ever today and stable guiding principles for the European Community toward the European Unification”, that Paul in Thessaloniki had established the first Christian congregation in Europe and that Kyrillos’ and Methodios’ Christian mission toward the Slavic peoples during the 9\(^{th}\) century had emanated from there, proved the region’s central importance in and for Europe. This national Greek heritage, which was also a European heritage, commanded the Macedonians – and by extension Europe – to “defend our national, historical, cultural and European identity” against “a small group of Slavic descent in the multinational Yugoslav Republic of Skopje” which along with Bulgaria aimed at the annexation of Greek Macedonia. For these reasons, the authors argued, but also with the ongoing war in Yugoslavia and the two world wars in fresh memory, the European community should be, and would be, they were confident of, obliged to commit to the cause of Greek Macedonia. The authors of the communiqué, addressed both to the European Community, the government in Athens and – allegedly – the neighbours in the north, expressed their conviction that Macedonia’s future belonged to Europe, making explicit reference to how the Community, on the level of regional development, was already committed to the “Greek community region of Macedonia”. In this way, the rhetoric of eternal Hellenism in Macedonia was combined with a discourse that stressed certain aspects of the regional past that could be construed as a cosmopolitan heritage. The text of the declaration is worth quoting at length, since it so amply illustrates how the

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\(^{341}\) Aris Skiadopoulos, “Κι αν τη διαβάσουν στα.... Σκόπια;” [“What if they read this in… Skopje?”], *Tachydromos*, June issue 1987, pp. 14-16.

\(^{342}\) Giagiozis 2000, p. 292.

\(^{343}\) Makedoniki Epitropi (Macedonian Committee), “Εμείς οι Μακεδόνες διακηρύσσουμε” [“We the Macedonians declare”], Thessaloniki 17/2 1992, reproduced in Giagiozis 2000, pp. 296-301.
discourses of history and ancestral roots, national and regional identity, local economy, future expectations, fear and attempts at marketing the region tended to blend.

Our Thessaloniki is since at least two thousand years, uninterruptedly until today, the capital of Macedonia. In the course of three subsequent multinational empires, the Roman, the Byzantine and the Ottoman, up until her liberation in 1912, she was a bridge of peace between the Balkan peoples, Europe’s central gate in the East, a fertile ground for intellectual currents and political ideas, a spiritual beacon of the Balkans, but she never lost her Greek cultural and historical character [...]. Today, elevated once again to [the position of] strategic economic crossroads of the Balkans, already being an organic city and harbour of the European Community and by calling open to all peaceful activities of all peoples, as moreover her International Fair testifies to [...], she constitutes, due to her monuments, one of the greatest living museums of Christendom, of the millennium old Byzantine art and of Greek civilisation in direct linking [with] Mount Athos, [...] with World-conquering Pella, once the capital of Alexander the Great, with Vergina, the first capital and necropolis of the Macedonian Kings and with Dion, Holy City of the Macedonians at [the foot of Mount] Olympus, mythical seat of the Greek pantheon’s twelve Gods. [...]

With such character, such stand and such a mission of peace, fraternisation of peoples and culture, modern Thessaloniki, now flourishing freely in this geopolitical position, has worked efficiently and will surely continue to work for the cooperation, the economic development, the international trade and, finally, the civilisation of all peoples, chiefly the neighbouring. This is, moreover, her life and success, which all neighbours can and must sympathise with. This they did in the past, but also in the recent years. Given this factually proved mission, Thessaloniki [...] firmly believes that the leadership of Skopje and of the present Bulgarian government, which echo [...] very dangerous nationalistic superstitions and explosive residues of a hegemonism, condemned by European history and failed in practice, do exceptional damage to their peoples, to which we the Macedonians address ourselves once more [...]: their cooperation with Greece constitutes their only path to peace, security, freedom and progress. The river does not turn back. And the future is ahead. Redeem yourselves of the fanatics of megaloïdeatismós [irredentism]. It will not resurrect, nor has it the material prerequisites for resurrection, but might [rather] kill the many, vital [things] that unite us in our common path to the United Europe.344

Safeguarding the name and promoting historical knowledge about Macedonia’s glorious past, national and cosmopolitan at the same time, was thus presented as a way of securing future prosperity and proving the region’s belonging to Europe. Inherent in this discourse was a view of Thessaloniki and of Greece as a beacon of Western enlightenment, with a civilising mission in the Balkans and in the East. Eleni Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, Professor of Byzantine history at Sorbonne and one of the co-signers of the statement “Our name is our soul”, expressed it in an interview: “Greece might very well become a bringer of civilisation, democratisation and modernisation to the Balkans. This is the role that befits her.

344 ibid., pp. 298-299. The Greek word megaloïdeatismós alludes to the Great Idea (Megáli Idéa), the national irredentist project of the 19th and early 20th century, but also to similar, competing projects of other Balkan states.
The role of Alexander the Great, of Kyrillos and Methodios.” 345 Statements like these, and the historical narratives and contexts invoked in support of the argument made, point to something which might be analysed as the situational appropriation of the past, in which certain elements of Macedonia’s past with positive connotations – peaceful coexistence with neighbours, common cultural roots in ancient Hellenism and Christianity perceived as uniting Greeks, Europeans and the Balkan peoples in the north – are emphasised, with a European audience in mind.

Europe as a threat

Europe could, however, also be portrayed and perceived as a threat rather than a possibility, in accounts of the region’s history, intended for domestic consumption. Mertzos, who had helped in drafting the Committee’s first declaration, which so emphatically stressed the Greek Macedonians’ European identity, had in his book with the almost identical title revealed a perception of past and present Macedonian Hellenism as under attack, not only by the Slavs in the north but also by (western) Europe. In this version of history, there was continuity between the ‘Frankish’ crusaders which had sacked Constantinople in 1204 and the European Community in the present, which threatened to deprive the Greeks of their national identity and reduce them into an anonymous population in the periphery of Europe. “The spirit of the Frankish crusaders had not changed”, Mertzos wrote in a passage on Western European missionaries who were attempting to proselytise in Ottoman Macedonia in the 19th century. “Catholics, Uniates, Protestants attempt by all means to wrest the Macedonians away from Orthodoxy and, when they fail, make common cause with the Bulgarians against them.” 346 The defence against this European menace versus national identity, Mertzos concluded, paraphrasing turn of the century-nationalist critic Ion Dragoumis, was to be found in the Macedonian borderlands and its spirit of unshakeable Hellenism. 347

This discourse reflected in its turn a traditional uneasiness with regard to the concept of Europe (and increasingly during the postwar period the West, as embodied by American political, economic and cultural hegemony), always present in political and, one might add, historical culture in Greece. In times of national foreign policy setbacks, this unease took the form of anti-Western sentiment, shared across the entire political spectrum. 348 These perceptions and attitudes were present in Greek political debate and, as the initial diplomatic success at securing EC support with regard to the name issue turned into a series of ‘defeats’, due to the international community’s irritation at the ‘irrational’ Greek behaviour, would become expressed with growing intensity during the 1990s. The efforts of US diplomacy in the Balkans, as well as its counterpart among Greece’s European partners, which insisted on the acceptance of a compound name (FYROM) as a

345 Lena Pagoni, “Με προ-Σκοπάκια θ’ αποσχολούμαστε τώρα;” [“Are we to spend time on boy scouts now?”], interview with Eleni Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, Eleftherotypia 22/4 1992, pp. 20-21. [The pun with the words ‘boy scout’ and ‘Skopje’ is left untranslated.]
347 Ibid., p. 156.
speedy solution to the Macedonian conflict, could easily be – and very often were – portrayed in the press as ingratitude toward Greece, despite her contributions to the civilisation of Western mankind during antiquity and to the allied war effort in the 1940s. The cause of it was often found in a particular malevolence against Hellenism, whose roots could be traced in a history of ‘Frankish’ betrayal in hours of need, from the Fourth Crusade to more recent events. Perceptions like these were also reinforced by the quickly and radically diverging views on and interpretations of the contemporary wars in Croatia and Bosnia between the mass media of Western Europe and North America and their counterparts in Greece. While the former blamed Serbian nationalism for the outbreak of the war and highlighted war crimes committed in its name, Greek mainstream media and public opinion tended to view the Serbs as the victims of aggression.\(^{349}\) The coverage of and debate on the Yugoslav imbroglio and the Macedonian conflict, the impending prospect of armed conflict with Turkey and the discourse of threat toward national identity and cultural heritage, even national survival as reflected in the drop of birth rates,\(^{350}\) increasingly overlapped each other in the Greek press of the 1990s.

The discourse on European integration deserves special attention, since the perception of threat toward national identity at the time in part was a response to this future prospect, both of Greek Macedonia and the rest of the country. This was not a phenomenon that was by any means unique to Greece, as several Greek analysts and debaters observed at the time, but reflected a trend noticeable around Europe already before the Maastricht treaty. This foreshadowed a future disintegration of nation-states and the disappearance of old borders, along with the emergence of alternative conceptions of collective identities, supranational as well as regional.

‘Europeanness’ was not the only supranational framework of identity available at the time. The collapse of the Soviet bloc and its dominant ideology, the disagreements with Western opinion over the course of action to be taken in Yugoslavia, along with the political mobilisation of the Greek Church in defence of ‘national’ values brought Orthodoxy to the forefront as the foundation of an alternative political and supranational community, where Greek foreign policy interests could be met.\(^{351}\) Columnists (often members of the high clergy) and deputies of the two major political parties discussed the possibility of an ‘Orthodox arc’, extending over the Balkans and the former Soviet Union, which would function as a counterweight against a perceived Turkish expansionism in the guise of an ‘Islamic arc’, encompassing countries with Muslim populations such as Bulgaria, the ‘Skopje republic’, Albania and Bosnia, threatening to encircle Greece


A common past, consisting of the Byzantine heritage and a shared history of suffering at the hands of the Ottoman Turks, was projected as the main unifying element. This, in turn, echoed perceptions of national identity as determined by religious belonging, with the result that other peoples identified with Orthodoxy by the Greek advocates of the Orthodox arc tended to be de-nationalised and viewed as an extension of Hellenism (no reference was in this context made to the Slavic nationality of most of these peoples, and thus in many cases identical in other contexts with the ‘historical enemies’ of the Greek nation, said to be plotting for Macedonia’s secession from Greece, sometimes even by the same debaters who advocated Pan-Orthodoxy).353

The renewed rhetoric on identity and religion in Greek public discourse should, as implied above, be seen in the context of European integration, where history was increasingly deployed in the quest of predecessors and possible role models for the European project. The attempts to define a common European identity has shown a tendency to be constructed around the lines of religious difference, which in many cases meant a Europe built on the foundation of Western Christianity, implicitly and explicitly excluding its Eastern counterpart, not to mention the Islamic world. This was essentially the view presented in political scientist Samuel Huntington’s analysis of the post-Cold War world, in which the notion of the ‘clash of civilizations’ made its appearance.354 “All Orthodoxy must declare that we do not accept the Europe of Charlemagne”, a Greek cleric, cited by the columnist Konstantinos Cholevas, urged, since this both historically and in the present was founded upon the ideological opposition with Orthodox Byzantium.355

The ‘Orthodox arc’ was an echo of the European identity project, not always perceived of as in opposition to each other – the ND deputy Vasilis Korachais, for example, envisioned the arc as a complement to the European Union and a counterweight against nationalism in the Balkans.356 Most often, however, antagonism versus the West was the core of the concept.

This narrative of identity, in response to European integration, and the political discourse, relating to issues of national security, was in the public debate closely interwoven with the perceptions of the Macedonian crisis, its roots in


353 Pan-Orthodoxy was thus not seen as the threat to Greek identity in Greece as it was perceived of in diaspora circles in North America. Cf. Roudometof & Kalpathakis 2002, pp. 41-54.


356 Vasilis Korachais, “Ορθόδοξη: ο γίγαντας που ξυπνά!” [“Orthodoxy: the giant that awakens!”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 12/8 1993, pp. 54-55.
history and the causes of European and American disagreement with the views sanctioned in Greece. Sometimes the reason was found in ignorance, due to lack of ‘proper’ historical perspectives. Kargakos stated in his book on the Macedonian question that the Europeans and the Americans must be brought to understand that a new age of barbaric invasions from the north and the east was at hand, and if the ‘bulwark’ of Hellenism in Macedonia fell, the intruders “will reach Poitiers”, with no Charles Martel there to stop them.\(^\text{357}\) Other times it was malevolent intent to harm the Greeks that was portrayed as the root of disagreement with the West. Sinister plots aimed at the annexation of Greek Macedonia, with the ‘Skopje republic’ in alliance with either Muslim (and NATO partner) Turkey, Bulgaria, Albania, the Vatican, reunited Germany and/or the America of the ‘New Order’ as the culprits, were commonplace in current affairs analyses, especially in the tabloid press but also in high profile newspapers and magazines. Kargakos had a regular column, in which he embedded his historical narratives of Greece and Greek Macedonia, into “political weather forecasts”. These were scenarios and advice for future action, premised on the argument that the study of history “does not only assist us in getting to know the past but also the future.”\(^\text{358}\) The future that the past held in store was, in Kargakos and several other analysts’ views, military confrontation over Macedonia. This was not necessarily to be understood as a worst case scenario, even if the perception of threat was central in most of these accounts. It was also presented as an opportunity to mend some of the historical ‘injustices’ resulting from the peace treaty of Bucharest in 1913. Kargakos pointed in his book to two possible solutions to the present Gordian knot in the Balkans. The first was to be found in the federalism advocated by Rhigas Ferraios 200 years earlier, who envisioned the peaceful cohabitation and fraternisation of all Balkan peoples. “The second solution is purely Macedonian”, he wrote. ”Alexander taught it. A Gordian knot is dissolved by the sword. The only thing required is for an Alexander to hold it.”\(^\text{359}\) The foreign policy of an Alexander, he clarified in an article written almost four years later, in which the metaphor was repeated, meant mobilising one’s army.\(^\text{360}\)

Also, the historian Konstantinos Vakalopoulos, employed at the Aristotle University, nourished similar views on what Greece ought to do about “the cancerous growth in the Balkans”.\(^\text{361}\) His call for a more aggressive foreign policy was embedded in a seemingly moral use of history that highlighted the perceived plight of Vlachs living in the “Skopje state”. In his view, this group was by and large Greek in its national orientation and collective consciousness, and would welcome the re-unification with Greece. Instead of safeguarding the rights of this

\(^{360}\) Sarantos Kargakos, "Τα Σκόπια και οι άσκοπες πολιτικές µας ενέργειες" ["Skopje and our futile political efforts"], Oikonomikos Tachydomos 21/9 1995, pp. 21-22.
\(^{361}\) Konstantinos Vakalopoulos, "Η µακεδονική λύση ή το τέλος του κύκλου των χαµένων ευκαιριών" ["The Macedonian solution or the end of the circle of lost opportunities"], Eleftherotypia 19/4 1992, p. 13.
minority, the Greek state had abandoned the unredeemed “Helleno-Vlachs” of “Upper Macedonia” for most of the 20th century. If Greece and the other neighbours of the new state in their midst could settle the Macedonian question once and for all by dividing its territories according to ethnological boundaries, he argued, then the Balkan peoples would finally live at peace with each other, free from intervening Great Powers and the Turkish menace. If not, the century-old Bulgarian threat would persist. Greece would continue indefinitely to face the demands of “artificial” (Slav) Macedonian minorities, geographically cut off from her Serbian ally and subjected to the traditional ‘divide and conquer’ strategies of Western Europe, Turkey and the United States.

The prospect of territorial expansion had traditionally been a cornerstone in Greek scholarship on Macedonia, as well as in popular discourse of the region’s past, present and future. Since publicists like Vakalopoulos and Mertzos relied heavily on older literature, it was hardly surprising that they reproduced the belligerent rhetoric and claims of Greek irredentism. This legacy was perhaps not as salient in the public debate on the Macedonian conflict, as critics of them would have it to be. However, what was being reproduced was also the view of Dragoumis on Europe and the cosmopolitanism it represented as something alien to a perceived Greek way of life. These ideas blended well with present concerns and growing unease regarding Greece’s future in the new Europe – as an integrated member state of the European Community or, as Kargakos and others had it, a country in the Balkans, forever tied to the region’s history of feuding.

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363 Konstantinos Vakalopoulos, “Η μακεδονική λύση ή το τέλος των χάθων ευκαιριών” [“The Macedonian solution or the end of the circle of lost opportunities”], *Eletterotypia* 19/4 1992, p. 13.
364 See Chapter 5.
The perception of Europe in a political-pedagogical use of history by the cartoonist Statios. The cartoon is a comment on the deadlock in the negotiations over the Republic of Macedonia's future name and status, caused by the Greek trade embargo launched in February 1994. It is also a comment on the communication difficulties between Greece and her European partners, which are portrayed as extending back to medieval times. The setting is a Byzantine court where an envoy from the West, dressed up as a crusader and carrying a letter from President Kiro Gligorov of the Republic of Macedonia, is being received by the Emperor. Councillor to the Emperor: “But if the Frank reads you the Gligorov letter and you listen to it, it will be like you [at least are pretending to] have a dialogue.” Emperor to the councillor: “Good! Then he can pretend that he’s reading it, I can pretend that I’m listening to it and you can pretend that you didn’t understand [it].” Source: *Ta Nea* 24/2 1994, p. 6.

**Trauma and perception of history**

The various scenarios relating to the possible future(s) of both the Greek Macedonian region and the Greek nation in the writings of those who included such in their publications, sometimes also reveal the respective authors’ perceptions concerning the nature of history. This is to be understood as beliefs regarding what history is and which forces it is that shape historical evolution and human conduct, i.e. perceptions on a more abstract level than the views on which historical facts and circumstances that ought to be at the centre of (national) historical knowledge and political argumentation in the name issue. It should be noted that most of the publicists studied here never explicitly wrote of their views regarding theoretical matters or the philosophy of history, nor of what they considered to be the criteria of scientific objectivity, even if the falsification of historical truth was at the heart of their argumentation. To Martis, the question was a straightforward matter of demonstrating the “irrefutable evidence” of written sources and archaeology, historical facts which “make the alteration of Macedonian history impossible”;\(^\text{365}\) proving the “counterfeiters” of history wrong, while at the same time showing the

centrality of Macedonia in the history of the nation as well as of Europe and Western mankind. Nevertheless, some observations can be made on views regarding the forces that shape history, which are of analytical interest here, as they constituted an element around which the claim to historical expertise was constructed by the publicists in question.

The writings of Kargakos on the topic of the threat against Macedonia, which he saw in the context of the war in Yugoslavia which he portrayed as rooted in the biological conditions of the peoples there, reveal a perception of history as cyclic. One must keep in mind, the author states, that the quest for vengeance is fundamental in human behaviour. An historical example which proved this was to be seen in Alexander the Great and his campaign of conquest in the East, which started as a punitive expedition to avenge the suffering that the Persians had brought upon Greece 150 years earlier, a trauma which the Hellenes had never forgotten, nor forgiven. The same observation applied for the enemies of Hellenism. This was the reason why the Bulgarians – according to Kargakos, among others, the real instigators behind the menace of ‘Skopjan’ irredentism – would always conspire against Greek Macedonia, in spite of declarations of peaceful intent.

This was also true of the Germans, who had set out to avenge their defeat in the Second World War by conspiring against those who had resisted her back then, first by destabilising the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, then by turning against Greece through the support of her enemies. History repeats itself, Kargakos concluded, envisioning a re-enactment in reverse of the First Balkan War, this time with Greece as the defenceless victim, and Turkey, Albania, Bulgaria and ‘Skopje’ as victors. 366 The defence, he argued, laid not only in military resources, but also in knowledge of history. 367 “Our politicians do not have a feeling for the metaphysical, no historical consciousness”, Kargakos complained in a comment to the compromise agreement in 1995. He warned that the lack of reverence toward the “shadows of the ancestors”, to which the Greeks owed everything they had, would make the ‘psychological divide’ between northerners and southerners grow even deeper, due to the formers’ sense of betrayal committed against them, with the dissolution of Greece as a possible outcome. “They are ignorant of what [poet Kostis] Palamas wrote: ‘[The] dead and the countless unborn will judge us...’”. They ought to reflect on the meaning of this and ask themselves “what kind of Macedonia do we want to pass on to our children”, Kargakos concluded. As for the Left and the ‘comrades’ of progressive culture, the alleged instigators of the diplomatic failure, he asked them to consider the statement of “one of their own”, Lenin. “The man of the future is the one who possesses the strongest memory”. 368

The forces that governed history were, besides the collective quest for vengeance, national interests, as expressed in the wish for territorial expansion.

368 Sarantos Kargakos, “Τα Σκόπια και οι άσκοπες πολιτικές μας ενέργειες” [“Skopje and our futile political efforts”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 21/9 1995, pp. 21-22.
Nikolaos Mertzos stressed a similar view of history as essentially classes of interests, which reoccur and reproduce themselves over the course of time. This perception of history was shared by a number of debaters who appeared as experts in the press, since it was at the heart of their attempts to find the roots of the Macedonian conflict, whether it was in recent history or further back in time – the further back the historical context, the more pronounced this tendency emerged. The outcome was a narrative, or narratives, that emphasised eternal enmities, eternal threats against Hellenism, with no peaceful solution in sight.

The view of history as a self-fulfilling prophesy and, tied to it, national consciousness as constant was, in the cases of Mertzos and Kargakos, explicitly linked to suffering and trauma. The history of Macedonia was according to Mertzos to be understood as a continuity of Macedonian suffering, an “unremitting series of holocausts at the sacred altar of the Nation”, shattering and largely unknown. This suffering could also have the dimension of personal trauma, as in the case of Kargakos, who at one point stated that the fears of which he wrote, regarding the Macedonian question and the future of Greece, had been born “within me through the study of history, through the knowledge of Balkan reality and through the traumatic experiences which I obtained during the Occupation and the Civil War”. In an article written in response to scholarly criticism against him, Kargakos, born in 1937, made reference to the execution of half of his family in 1943 as well as the physical maltreatment he had suffered by German soldiers in 1944. The fact that his generation was the one which had lived through the ordeals of the Civil War, and the fact that fathers and grandfathers had shed blood for the liberation of Macedonia, were thus invoked to support the claim to represent historical truth – despite reassurances that he wished to confront his critics with “scientific poise”, not with an “emotional load”.

Suffering – collective as well as individual – could thus be constructed as an argument for historical authority. But Kargakos’ recurring references to recent trauma could also be analysed as part of his already mentioned critique against the dominant antiquity approach, which in his view had led to an essentially misguided...
focus on self-evident archaeological truths, while the ‘proper context’ of Slav Macedonian irredentism and the bloody experience of the Civil War in the 1940s, still within living memory, had been ignored or downplayed as a favour to the Greek Left. An understanding of the great trauma that these recent events had been for the Greek nation, it was argued, would have served the interests of Greek foreign policy regarding the name conflict better. The view of history as suffering, which did not limit itself to Kargakos, might in its turn have reflected a growing prestige being attributed to the concept of victimhood, which is something that will be explored in Chapter 5.

**Concluding analysis**

I have in this chapter described and analysed Greek macedonology as a branch of historical knowledge, which had the aim and function of demonstrating the significance of the Macedonian region within the larger conceptual framework of the Greek nation. The focus of attention has been put on the institutional frameworks, in which it had evolved – chiefly during the second part of the 20th century – as well as the local cluster of interests involved in shaping it in the years that preceded the diplomatic crisis over Macedonia. These interests – represented either by individuals, associations or institutions – have in their turn been related to the contemporary discourses on regional development and European integration, as well as with a number of simultaneous, partly interconnected political developments in Greece in the late 1970s and the 1980s; the process of democratisation after 1974, PASOK’s coming to power in 1981, historiographical changes and the advent of ethnocultural identity politics, of Slav Macedonian minority activists, but also within the Greek Macedonian diaspora.

The ‘new’ macedonology that emerged in the 1980s was in part a response to these developments. Its proponents were, initially, a small group of individuals, chiefly of rightwing orientation with overlapping political and professional interests, who by engaging in public debate sought to push macedonology into the centre of national historical culture and, simultaneously, promote the region’s overall significance for the nation, by turning it into a national issue. This push manifested itself in different ways, but mainly as criticism against what was portrayed as the present intellectual and political establishment’s neglect of the threat against Macedonia’s identity as a historically Greek territory. The promotion of knowledge – both at a national and an international level – concerning the history and ‘true’ identity of the region was posed as the principal solution to the Macedonian problem.

The historical narrative(s), written and emphasised in support of the present needs, or perceptions of the contemporary reality, and future expectations, have been analysed both as traditional and critical, in the sense outlined by Jörn Rüsen. Macedonology as a traditional narrative reflected an orientation toward roots in the distant (mostly classical and Hellenistic) past, reinforced through the exploits of archaeology in the region during the late 1970s which due to the tremendous cultural capital attributed to antiquity contributed into making archaeological
evidence – material artefacts and ancient epigraphs – and the testimonies of ancient authors the core of argumentation in the naming conflict. Thus the discourse on ancestral bonds was pushed to a dominant position in public debate. This predominance of perspectives, which seemed to favour archaeology and classical philology, was not undisputed among debaters associated with or claiming expertise within macedonology. Some, especially under the impression of diplomatic failure, lamented this emphasis on the ‘wrong’ historical and chronological contexts, arguing instead that attention ought to be given to the more recent historical settings, in which the Macedonian conflict was embedded.

Macedonology could also be a critical narrative, which incorporated elements of counternarratives on state oppression against stigmatised groups and the capital’s – the “state of Athens” – long historical neglect of and discrimination against the Macedonian borderland. This sort of narrative, presented as an attempt to restore true history, could, perhaps more than any traditional narrative on ancestral bonds, confirming established truths, be used in the quest to alter popular perceptions of the past as well as of present political priorities. I have analysed this narrative as partly reflecting the themes of the identity politics of Slav Macedonian activism, albeit with some fundamental dissimilarities, which stressed regional difference versus the national centre – but not ethnic. The regionalism manifested in this discourse on both history and the contemporary reality, sometimes interwoven with demands for administrative reform, can in part be understood as a reflection of the regional movements that came to the forefront in response to European integration, but the parallel is also somewhat misleading. Unlike the regionalism – or rather regional nationalism\(^{375}\) – found in, for example, Scotland or Catalonia, the Greek Macedonian narrative of identity was never framed within a discourse of secessionism. The concept of autonomy was in a Macedonian context inextricably linked to the history of Bulgarian komitadjis, Slav Macedonian nationalism and the interwar policies of KKE that had been branded ‘national treason’, and hence impossible to use in combination with domestic political demands. The interpretative framework of Greek nationalism remained unchallenged and the historical narratives presented to the public reproduced easily recognisable features of traditional, national-minded (ethnikóZron) historiography.

Macedonology thus manifested itself as a narrative of the region, of the borderland as the repository of national values. One must of course keep in mind that it was not the only narrative of regional identity in Greece. Such narratives also existed about Crete, which stressed the local distinctiveness of the island, as well as

\(^{375}\) The relation between the concepts of regionalism and nationalism has been the topic of political scientist Michael Keating, who has analysed separatist and autonomist movements in Europe and Canada, using the term ‘minority nationalisms’, without specifying, though, how these are conceptually different from ‘majority’ nationalism. Keating, Michael, Nations against the State. The New Politics of Nationalism in Québec, Catalonia and Scotland, Basingstoke: MacMillan Press 1996, pp. 3-10, 47-58. Historian Fredrik Persson has in a study of local history-production in and on the Scania region in south Sweden coined the term ‘regio-nationalism’, which he defines as “the demand for regional self-determination within the framework of (and at the expense of) an existing nation state, by invoking a community and attendant political unit based on a combination of identity creation drama and ideological history production.” Persson 2008, p. 276. However, Persson does not address the relation between centre and periphery that is characteristic of many national movements. The concept is thus at risk of obscuring more than it illuminates.
about other regions in the country. A borderland narrative, similar in many ways to the Macedonian, had emerged about Epirus in western Greece, which claimed ‘Northern Epirus’ on the other side of the Albanian border as its unredeemed other half. Northern Epirus had held a prominent position in the Greek irredentist imagination during the national claims activism after the Second World War. It re-emerged in public debate as a result of the Albanian communist regime’s collapse, the minority rights activism of those in South Albania who claimed a Greek Orthodox identity, as well as the flood of Albanian migrants who poured into Greece in the 1990s. Greek Epirus could, just as many other administrative regions in the periphery of the country, claim to have been neglected by the national centre. However, neither its supporting historical narrative, nor any other, could really rival the Greek Macedonian one, in terms of the popular and political attention attributed to it. This imbalance in favour of macedonology among historical narratives on regions was not only due to the fact that Macedonia (along with Thrace) constitutes the geographically largest administrative region, centred on the second largest city of the country, in terms of population size and economic significance. The narrative of identity cultivated within macedonology had, increasingly during the 1980s, come to revolve around the notion of external threat – a component missing from most other regional narratives – which could be, and was, used as an argument in support of the claim that knowledge of Macedonian history was a matter of national significance, not only local.

However, the presence of other narratives of identity that competed for influence, not only in the political sphere but also in the official historiography, in the years leading up to the Macedonian crisis is a vital component in the understanding of the complex forces that shaped national historical culture. Local identity as a subnational category can have multiple layers, shaped by social status and political allegiance, which is a phenomenon that anthropologists have observed and which in the case of the Slav-speaking districts in western Greek Macedonia also manifested itself as ethnic difference. The Slav Macedonian identity political project advocated by MAKIVE is one example – perhaps the most striking – of how a local identity was given other contents than just geographical location, but it is not the only one in Greek Macedonia. As has been implied in the analysis of Mertzos’ and Vavouskos’ writings, Macedonian regional identity spanned over other ethnic identities, such as a sense of Vlach linguistic and historical distinctiveness, although framed in the discourse of Greek nationalism.

Beside these discourses on history and local identity among native inhabitants of Greek Macedonia – whether descendants of Greek, Vlach or Slav-speakers – there were also the identity conceptions and, as will be shown, distinctly memory-political ambitions of the Asia Minor refugee descendants that ought to be taken into account. As archaeologist Hamilakis has suggested, Manolis Andronikos’ excavations at Vergina could be understood as partly motivated in an existential (and perhaps ideological) quest for roots, which aimed at (or at least resulted in) the construction of a more prestigious past for the region and its inhabitants, many of which, as Andronikos himself, had come from Anatolia, following the population
exchange of 1923. The coming of the refugees had decisively altered the ethnic composition of the Macedonian region, making it a profoundly Greek territory. In the prefectures of western Macedonia, their arrival had resulted in a bitter antagonism between them and the native Slav-speakers, the effects of which still could be felt in the 1990s, according to anthropologists Riki van Boeschoten and Piero Vereni who performed their fieldwork in these districts at that time. “To Pontians [Asia Minor refugees from the region of Pontos] perhaps the [ancient] Macedonian State [of Alexander the Great] never existed”, Vereni’s Slavophone Greek informant stated. “But to Makedones Ellines [Greek Macedonians] it certainly did.”

This statement, uttered with resentment, should of course not be taken as evidence of widely spread attitudes toward the Asia Minor refugees. Nevertheless, it points to other conceptions of regional identity that did not necessarily emphasise the ancient past uncovered by Andronikos. There existed alternative identities, and as a result of that alternative narratives and claims to historical representation in national historical culture, among those of the Macedonian region’s inhabitants which descended from Asia Minor. These narratives had implications for identity politics and historical culture, at the regional and national level as well as within the Greek diaspora. It is a dimension that will be further explored in the following chapter.

376 Hamilakis 2007, p. 163.
377 Vereni 2000, p. 54.
4. The other Hellenism: Pontian memory politics and the narrative of genocide

At a congress dedicated to the remembrance of Hellenism in Asia Minor in 1990, EMS president Konstantinos Vavouskos delivered a speech entitled “The Asia Minor Greeks’ contribution to the formation of modern Macedonian Hellenism”. In his address, marked by references to the imminent threat said to be emanating from Skopje, he praised the diligence of the refugees and “their love for their new fatherland”, who with their arrival in the 1920s had kept and strengthened the Greek character of Macedonia. By mixing their blood with the local inhabitants, they had given birth to a new type of Macedonian Hellenism that would guarantee the “Greek future” of the northern borderland.\footnote{378 Vavouskos, Konstantinos, "Η προσφορά του Μικρασιατικού Ελληνισμού εις την διαμόρφωσιν του συγχρόνου Μακεδονικού Ελληνισμού", Λακωνικός Ελληνισμός, vol. 5 – Μελεταί Κωνσταντίνου Αν. Βαβούσκου [Studies of Konstantinos A. Vavouskos], Thessaloniki 1993, pp. 1779-1783.}

However, little or no attention was given to the refugees themselves and their history before their forced “repatriation”, i.e. the transfer to the newly acquired territories of the Greek state stipulated in the treaty of Lausanne in 1923 that ended the war between Greece and Turkey. This might seem as a rather tendentious reading of Vavouskos’ speech, based on normative assumptions regarding what ought to be included in a narrative on a particular topic, especially since it in this case is safe to assume that the author’s intention was to praise rather than downplay the refugees’ historical contribution to the region. Yet, the example is far from isolated. In the traditional narrative of debaters like Vavouskos (who often were of native descent, as opposed to the children and grandchildren of the Anatolians), the history and the historical presence of the refugees in Greek Macedonia went largely unnoticed,\footnote{379 Cf. Filoktitis Veïnoglou, “Μακεδονία και Μικρασιατικός Ελληνισμός” [“Macedonia and Asia Minor Hellenism”], Kathimerini 29/12 1992, p. 9.} due to these history-writers’ preoccupation with the period preceding the region’s incorporation into Greece in 1912.

This is also indicative for much of the scholarly literature and research on the Macedonian conflict of the 1990s. Although some scholars have acknowledged or made reference to the existence of what one might label the ‘refugee dimension’ of the Macedonian question\footnote{380 Cowan (ed.) 2000; Clogg 2002 (1992), p. 208; Gounaris & Michailidis (eds.) 2004.} – and although historians participating in the debate of that period, such as Filippos Iliou and Angelos Elefantis, rhetorically asked why everyone seemed so keen to forget that Greek Macedonia is Greek because of the massive influx of the Asia Minor refugees, “not because of Vergina and Alexander the Great, not because of the ideological construct of the unbroken continuity of Greek Macedonianness”\footnote{381 Angelos Elefantis, “Μακεδονικό – Απ' την εθνικιστική έξαρση στο περιθώριο” [“Macedonian question – From the nationalistic exaltation to the margins”], Politis, No. 120, October-December issue 1992, pp. 32-33.} – few if any attempts have been made at integrating this dimension by linking the discourse on Macedonia with the identity politics of what was sometimes labelled “the other half of Hellenism”. This identity-political
movement of the Anatolians’ descendants emerged simultaneously with the name conflict and manifested itself chiefly through the promotion of explicit memory-political demands. Especially that of the Greeks descending from the region of Pontos in Asia Minor will be in focus in this chapter. To a large extent it emanated from nongovernmental associations and refugee circles in Thessaloniki. Just as its native Slav Macedonian counterpart and in some respects Greek macedonology, this discourse on what was referred to as the “right to memory” was a claim to historical authority, framed as a critical narrative of the Greek nation, in Rüsen’s sense, as well as the moral use of history.

This “Pontian question”, as it came to be called, and the Macedonian question of the 1990s were, I argue, to a great extent interconnected, especially since they both touched upon issues concerning the identity of the population of Greek Macedonia and the Greek diaspora, and how their experiences ought to be incorporated and represented in national historiography and historical culture, in Greece as well as abroad. The identity politics of the Pontian Greeks have in recent years become a topic of inquiry among scholars, chiefly among Greek anthropologists – such as Eleftheria Deltso and Efthia Voutira – and geographers like Michel Bruneau. In this body of research, attention has been given to the functions of commemorative ceremonies in keeping memory alive and creating bonds with the ancestral lands, and the visualisation of historical memory through the erecting of monuments across Greece. None of these scholars have, in their turn, related this identity political phenomenon to the context of the Macedonian conflict and the history war implied in it, nor have they, with some notable exceptions concerning the diaspora dimension, explicitly related it to international developments and contexts. I therefore find the study of this movement, and especially the analysis of its historical output and claims, in the context of the Macedonian conflict, but also against the background of related international phenomena, to be of relevance for this dissertation.

While the preceding chapter dealt with emergence of a certain regional narrative on Macedonia, this chapter will, as its focal point, explore the emergence and framing of a particular historical narrative in support of a distinct regional or even ethnic identity, which emphasised the descent from the ‘lost homeland’ in the East, revolving around the concept of genocide. Particular attention will be given to how the proponents of the narrative placed it within a larger context of similar experiences of other communities, here analysed as the rhetoric of shared martyrdom, but also of the tensions that emerged as a result of this as well as contesting political interpretations. These will be further analysed and discussed in the concluding section of the chapter.

383 Voutira 2006. This article is primarily concerned with the formation of a Greek diaspora in the former Soviet Union and the reception of migrants in Greece, but also touches upon the identity political agenda of Pontian lobbyists in Greece, their interest in and contacts with Greek cultural associations in the Black Sea region and in Central Asia, which makes it relevant in this context.
The emergence of refugee identity politics and Pontian revivalism

The narrative laid out in Vavouskos’ speech can be said to be characteristic of how the refugees had thitherto been represented in Greek historiography and the traditional role assigned to them – that of human raw material, with whose help the new lands to the north had been populated and secured for Greece, while in the process forging Modern Hellenism. There were however other, less appreciative accounts of the impact of the Asia Minor refugees upon Greek society. The massive influx of newcomers to an already impoverished and war-weary country was, as the debater Michalis Charalambidis put it, the means of mass proletarianisation in Greece.\(^{384}\) Although many individual Asia Minor Greeks eventually established themselves and made their way to the higher echelons of society, the great bulk remained economically and socially marginalised for decades to come. This made them the natural constituency of the emerging Left during the interwar period.\(^{385}\)

The attitudes of the rightwing establishment that dominated Greek politics up until the 1970s toward the refugees were for long of an ambiguous nature. In the prevailing national ideology, they performed a vital function as guardians of the North, whose loyalty toward the fatherland was seldom publicly disputed. The stigma of national treason, in the form of collaboration with the Axis powers during the occupation or with the communists in the subsequent Civil War, was reserved for minorities perceived as non-Greek, such as the Slav Macedonians or the Albanian-speaking *Chams* of Epirus. For this reason the authorities were prone to take the side of refugee settlers in their land disputes with the indigenous Slav-speaking population in Western Macedonia, now considered an unreliable, alien element in the Greek nation. Nevertheless, the Eastern mores of the newcomers – many of the first-generation refugees remained unable to fully master modern Greek – along with the proneness toward political radicalism – it was no secret that the majority of the Central Committee members of the at times outlawed Communist Party of Greece (KKE) were of Asia Minor descent\(^ {386}\) – made them suspect in the eyes of indigenous Greeks with rightwing sympathies. The word ‘refugee’ became a social marker in the interwar years, which had a hampering effect on the social mobility of the newcomers.\(^ {387}\)

Gradually, as a new generation with no personal recollections of the Disaster grew up, the divide between indigenous Greeks and refugees disappeared, along with the marginalisation of the latter, as urbanisation and economic growth reshaped postwar Greek society. With the completion of the refugees’ assimilation, a reappraisal of their cultural features came under way, beginning in the 1960s and exploding in the 1970s, following the downfall of the military regime. The reappraisal was, according to the sociologist Maria Vergeti, the result of an

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\(^{387}\) Vergeti 2000, p. 279.
emerging quest for roots and identity. This quest ought, in its turn, to be seen within a larger context, namely the revived interest for Greek folk culture. The aspects in focus were primarily music and dances, popular art and cuisine. Nevertheless, a perhaps inevitable offspring to this interest, which stressed the non-European heritage of Greece, was the attention given to the collective experience of the Asia Minor Greeks; stories and memories which centred upon massacres, deportations, famine and mourning.

The refugees were by no means a homogenous mass. Of those who had come from Asia Minor, at least three major categories are discernible: the Ionians, from the region around Smyrna (Izmir), sometimes referred to as Mikrasiates (Asia Minor or Anatolian Greeks) in a geographically more narrow definition of the term; the Pontians, from the easternmost region of the old Ottoman Empire, and the Cappadocians, from the Anatolian interior. The various degrees of integration into Greek society often corresponded to the geographic location of origin and the extent of linguistic affinity with Modern Greek, as spoken in Greece. Some, like the immigrants from western Anatolia and the Aegean coastal region were to a large extent native Greek-speakers at the time of their arrival. Others, like the refugees from the interior of Asia Minor or the Black Sea coast, spoke either Turkish as their mother tongue or various idioms of Greek that were unintelligible to other Greek-speakers. The common characteristics seem mainly to have been adherence to the Greek Orthodox Church and the shared experience of forced migration.

One of the subgroups to emerge from within the Asia Minor refugee community was the Pontian Greeks, i.e. Greeks or Orthodox Christians originating from the Black Sea – Pontos Euxeinos, in ancient Greek – and the Caucasus region. This remote region, which had been the theatre of several Russo-Ottoman wars from the 18th century and onwards, had already seen multiple waves of migration in different directions over the years, chiefly into territories held by fellow Orthodox Russians, before the compulsory population exchange in 1923. Following the Lausanne treaty of that year, most of the Christian inhabitants left for Greece. Some of these refugees settled in the Athens-Piraeus region, but the majority ended up in the newly acquired territories in the north, especially Greek Macedonia.

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388 Ibid.
391 Mazower 2005, p. 360. Not all refugees had come from Asia Minor either; some had come from Eastern Thrace as well as from other parts of the Balkans, following similar agreements on population transfers between Greece and Bulgaria.
The Pontian or Black Sea Greeks could already by then, thus, be described in terms of a transnational community, something which was further enhanced through continuous labour migration from Greece to northwestern Europe, North America and Australia, starting in the 1950s. Being Eastern Anatolians, who spoke either Turkish or the Pontian dialect, the Pontian Greeks belonged to the category of Asia Minor refugees most exposed to social marginalisation in Greece. Like other refugee groups, once they had settled and secured their survival in their new homeland, they set out to recreate their community life through associations which commemorated their regions of origin.

Commemoration was, however, not the initial purpose of the associations that sprung up in the 1920s. Rather they functioned as guilds, whose raison d’être was to help their members out in urgent matters relating to housing and employment, as well as to provide the newcomers, who lacked the networks so crucial to Greek societal life, with the necessary political connections. The long-term effect was nevertheless a recreated attachment to the place of origin. Some of these associations were, according to Vergeti, dissolved by suspecting authorities during the reign of the junta, only to reemerge and multiply in the years following 1974. These were the years of the so-called Pontian cultural revival. Like the general upsurge in the interest in folk culture in the 1960s and 1970s, this revival expressed itself chiefly through the promotion of the music and dances of the Anatolian homeland, as well as attempts at preserving and revitalising the Pontian dialect of Modern Greek. However, unlike most other groups involved in folk culture revival and (re-)discovery of Eastern exotica, the Pontian intellectuals aimed to halt or even reverse the process of assimilation with the majority culture of Greek society, the major threat to a particular Pontian identity. This process of ‘repontianisation’ of the younger generations gradually took the shape of a de facto ethnification of the Pontian refugee community, albeit within the larger framework of a national Greek identity. In this process, dances and folksongs were deemed insufficient means by leading advocates of a specific Pontian identity. During the second half of the 1980s, the Pontian revival became more explicitly and consequently oriented toward the cultivation of memory.

The Centre for Pontian studies and the “right to memory”
The new turn toward memory was symbolised by the foundation of a nongovernmental organisation, the Centre for Pontian Studies (KEPOME), at Athens in May 1985, one year later followed by a filial in the “refugee mother” city

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393 Deltsou 2004, p. 258; Mazower 2005, p. 361-362. Also the reconstruction of the five principal monasteries of Pontos in Greek Macedonia, which was undertaken between 1950 and 1980, was a way of recreating the bonds with the old homeland. Michel Bruneau, “Τα ποντιακά µοναστήρια στη Μακεδονία: Εδαφικοί σηµατοδότες της διασποράς” [“The Pontian monasteries in Macedonia: Territorial signifiers of the diaspora”], in ibid. 2000, pp. 289-310; Bruneau & Papoulidis 2003, p. 38-39.
396 Vergeti 2000, p. 281.
KEPOME was founded by second and third generation Pontian refugees, i.e. individuals of Asia Minor descent born in the interwar period and in the 1950s respectively, who, allegedly, represented different ideological camps and were dedicated to the promotion of Pontian consciousness and identity. As stated above, this was not the first attempt in this direction. Pontian cultural associations, the most notable of which were Panagia Soumela (named after Pontos’ most famous monastery) and Euxeinos Leschi (the Black Sea Club) in Thessaloniki, established already in the interwar years, had pursued a similar agenda for years. By the early 1980s they had evolved into political lobbies concerned not only with cultural activities, but also with labour recruitment and various forms of political peddling, especially after PASOK’s coming to power.

KEPOME, however, represented a more markedly memory-political ambition, which soon came to wield an ever growing influence on the activities of other associations. As the explicit statement read in its first publication (1987), with the tell-tale title Pontians: Right to memory, the Centre’s aim was to restore the collective memory of the Pontian Greeks through the official recognition of their past sufferings as genocide. According to the authors of the publication, Michalis Charalambidis and Konstantinos (Kostas) Fotiadis, the ordeal that had befell the Christian population of Pontos during and after the First World War constituted genocide; a deliberate attempt at wiping out an entire people from the surface of the earth, on par with the great crimes against humanity in the 20th century. Between 1916 and 1923, when the Lausanne peace-treaty put an end to Greek-Turkish hostilities and the surviving Greeks still present in Asia Minor were deported, as many as 350,000 Pontians had perished in massacres, famine and forced marches in the interior of Anatolia, the story read.

This was a narrative that bore a close – not to say, deliberate – resemblance to the more publicised history of the annihilation of the Armenians, as well as other Christian minority populations of the late Ottoman Empire, in this case even with the same perpetrator, in the shape of the Young Turk and latter Kemalist regimes. The “right to memory”, defined as knowledge of one’s own history and the political and historical causes behind the present reality for Pontian Greeks all over the world, was presented as the first “basic precondition for the Pontian existence and continuity”, while the second was said to be the international community’s recognition of the genocide and the Turkish state’s responsibility for it.

399 Voutira 2006, p. 389, 404; Deltsou 2004, pp. 256-261. According to the Pontian lobbyist Fokionas Fountokidis, some 150 local associations existed in Greece in 1992 – more than one third of which were located in Thessaloniki – all of which were represented at a national level by two leagues. In addition, four major leagues operate at an international level, encompassing various Pontian associations of the Greek diaspora in North America, Australia, Germany and, more recently, in the former Soviet Union. Fokionas Fountokidis, “Για µια παγκόσµια ποντιακή οργάνωση” [“For a global Pontian organisation”], Ellipia, Issue No. 9, February-March 1992, p. 47.
401 Ibid., pp. 11-13.
The struggle for vindication was also presented as a fight against historical oblivion in Greece, due to decades of governmental neglect and “the violent logic of states”, which paid no attention to the history and interests of peoples. The causes of this domestic oblivion were, according to the authors, to be found in the foreign policy choices of the rightwing political establishment, which through the friendship pact between Greece and Turkey in 1930 and, later, the entry into NATO, had sacrificed refugee interests in favour of good relations with Ankara. Also, the political Left was accused of having contributed to the silence surrounding the Pontian refugee problem through treating it as solely class-based, ignoring the dimension of cultural identity in spite of the fact that Anatolian refugees made up the bulk of the Left’s constituency. Recent evidence of this policy of oblivion was reportedly found in the way that the history of Pontian and Asia Minor refugees had made it into primary school textbooks in 1982, for the first time, only to be removed four years later. The policy of states and great powers, as the perpetrators of crimes and sponsors of oblivion, was effectively contrasted with the popular quest for truth and justice, as expressed in the demand for history written from the perspective of “peoples” instead of governments and states.

The Pontian people were stripped of the right to existence, the right to keep and possess their territory peacefully, the right to respect for their national and cultural identity. Plundering of possessions and, as consequence, enrichment took place at the expense of the Pontian people.

The greatest crime, however, committed against the Pontian people with the Turkish state as perpetrator and which admits neither prescription nor oblivion, - and even less – neither forgiveness nor excuse, is that of the genocide. If the logic of states, geostrategic and geopolitical dogmas and expediency downgraded, hid, pursued the oblivion of the events, the injustices that were committed against the Pontian people, today – even more because of these reasons – the wish and the demand for their recognition intensify. All peoples have the right to insistently demand the official recognition of the crimes and injustices committed against them.

The cultivation of memory in the Pontian case thus, through the activities of lobbyists, came to be synonymous with the promotion of the narrative of genocide. As Charalambidis confidently put it in the preface of a later edition of Pontians: Right to memory, the book “was the beginning of the awakening and the rebirth of a people, the Pontians, the beginning of their return to history, politics and geography.” In order to put this particular moral use of history into a wider context, it is necessary to trace its relation to both domestic and international developments, starting with the historical context in which the crimes referred to above allegedly had taken place.

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402 Ibid., pp. 21-23, 30.
403 Ibid., pp. 28-29.
404 Ibid., p. 15.
The Armenian genocide and the Greek connection in scholarly debate

With the claim developed in Charalambidis and Fotiadis’ book, a powerful narrative had entered into Greek historical and political discourse, difficult to refute without running the risk of being branded a genocide denialist akin to Holocaust ‘revisionists’, even though the factual ground for the claim could be considered disputable. The factual veracity of this claim is not the topic of investigation in this study. Rather it is the interpretative framework surrounding the genocide claim, its connection with identity politics and its impact upon the memory-political landscape in Greece that is of interest here, since it informs us of the larger context against which the Macedonian controversy (and the overlap of different regional and ethno-political agendas) can be understood. However, discussing these processes and frameworks inevitably entails at least some reference to the historical context that the activists and debaters themselves were referring to.

This is a far from unproblematic undertaking, given the relative scarcity of bibliography on the matter and most outside observers’ lack of familiarity with primary sources. The fate of the Greek Orthodox population of Pontos during and after the First World War is an unexplored topic in international scholarship on genocide. Because the available research on the events is written in Greek by Pontian activists-cum-historians like Konstantinos Fotiadis and thus inaccessible for the larger part of the international scholarly community, assessments of the claim largely depend on the degree to which outside observers are willing to rely on the scholarly credentials of this research. Some of these authors are indeed historians by profession, but as I will argue in this chapter, their interest in Pontian matters is more likely to have been motivated by an identity-political agenda than by ‘purely’ scholarly-scientific considerations. One can of course question whether there is such a thing as a ‘pure’ scholarly-scientific use of history, detached from the societal and political context in which research is done. In this particular case, however, the aim for political recognition originally made the Greek public and politicians the target audience of Pontian Greek scholarship rather than the international scholarly community, even if the latter’s support is desirable in this process. The 2007 resolution of the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS), recognising Greeks among the victims of genocide in Asia Minor, has provided the claim with some academic clout.⁴⁰⁵ However, this does not mean that the history it alludes to is well known and/or generally accepted as an undisputed case of genocide among the international and Greek scholarly community.

A point of departure for understanding the historical background referred to here is the Armenian genocide of 1915, since this is the context invoked also by Pontian Greek scholarship. It is by now a well known history, documented and discussed in a growing body of research, carried out largely (but not only) by Armenian diaspora scholars.⁴⁰⁶ While fiercely disputed by official Turkey and some

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⁴⁰⁶ See, for example, Christopher Walker, Armenia: The Survival of a Nation, London & New York: Routledge 1990 (1980); Vahakn Dadrian, The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus,
scholars of Turkish studies, most academics concerned with the topic agree that the events, widely reported at the time by foreign diplomats and missionaries indeed constituted wilful mass destruction of the Ottoman Armenian community.

The Armenians were, like the Greek Orthodox, a Christian community whose presence in Anatolia predated the coming of Seljuq and Ottoman Turkish rule. In the late Ottoman age of reform, heralded by the shortlived 1876 constitution, Armenian demands for increased autonomy caused tensions within the Empire, since Ottoman officials came to view them as a threat to internal cohesion. Particularly in the 1890s, these tensions erupted into widespread violence, in which the Armenian minority was targeted for massacres. It was, however, not until the overthrowing of Hamidian rule and the Young Turks movement’s coming into power after 1908 (which also signalled the end of the so-called Macedonian Struggle) that these sporadic persecutions turned into something that can be labelled a more definite ‘solution’ to the Armenian question. The catastrophic defeats in the Balkan Wars 1912-1913, due to which the Empire lost Macedonia along with nearly all other European possessions and the subsequent entry into the First World War radicalised the Young Turkish leadership. Originally influenced both by constitutional, egalitarian ideals and by modernising nationalism, the Young Turks now aspired to transform the Empire into a European style nation-state, with Islam and Turkish culture and language as unifying elements. Religious minorities, such as the Christian Armenians, whose loyalty to the Ottoman state was already questioned, were by this rationale an obstacle to national unity. Whether preconceived since long before the Great War, as argued by sociologist Vahakn Dadrian, Christopher Walker and a school of ‘intentionalists’, or ‘accidental’, caused by the upheavals of war and revolution, as ‘functionalist’ scholars like Robert Melson has suggested, the physical annihilation of the Ottoman Armenian community was soon a matter of fact.

During the spring of 1915, a series of deportation orders issued by the Young Turk government set the process in motion. Across Anatolia and particularly in the East, Armenian men were rounded up for compulsory military service, killed or worked to death, while women and children perished from starvation and forced marches. Forcible conversion of Christians to Islam also took place. Within a year, the heartlands of the Empire were cleansed of its Armenian population. Rough estimates of the casualties vary between 600 000 and 1, 5 million. The defeat and subsequent dissolution of the Ottoman Empire brought the issue of legal trial of the Young Turk leadership to the forefront, which was a demand of the victorious Entente. The rise of Mustafa Kemal’s (Atatürk’s) Turkish nationalist movement, its military victories over invading French and Greek forces and the establishment of

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the Turkish Republic in 1923, however, meant that the issue of legal persecution and accountability evaporated. With the interest of foreign governments and international opinion in the once infamous ‘Armenian massacres’ gone, a long time would elapse before the events became the object of widespread public, political and scholarly attention, from the 1960s and onward. Considering that Raphael Lemkin coined the concept ‘genocide’ – later adopted in the United Nations’ Genocide Convention of 1948 – much with the Armenian massacres in mind, their classification as the ‘archetypal genocide’ of the 20th century has some justification.410

This is, in part, the immediate historical context crucial to an understanding of where the notion of a Pontian Greek genocide fits in. There are some similarities between the experiences of the Ottoman Greek and Armenian communities. Both were Christian minorities and economically strong groups within late Ottoman society. Both were also potential security threats in the eyes of the Ottoman authorities at the eve of the Great War; in the case of the Greek minority also due to its association with a neighbouring nation-state with irredentist designs, which recently had materialised in the First Balkan War. The subsequent war and turmoil also resulted in the expulsion of the Greek Orthodox population from Asia Minor. However, whether this also means that this population suffered similar persecution – indeed genocide – as the Armenians is a different issue.

In a 1992 collective work on aspects of the Armenian genocide, Greek historian Ioannis K. Hassiotis (who elsewhere in this dissertation appears under the differently transcribed spelling Chasiotis) brought attention to the reprisals against Aegean Greeks in 1913, following the Balkan wars, and the later forceful conscription of Greek men into labour battalions, the so-called ame le taburu.411 These were set up by Ottoman military authorities in 1914 on the advice of their German ally, in order to clear the Dardanelles Straits area from unreliable Christian population elements, expected to rise up in view of an Entente landing. Able-bodied male Greek and Armenian subjects of the Aegean region were thus marched off to the Anatolian interior, where many perished. “It is strange that both Greek and Armenian historians should have treated the first persecutions of the Greeks in 1913-14 and the Armenian Genocide of 1915 as two separate phenomena”, Chasiotis argued.412 Citing Fotiadis’ contribution to the above mentioned “right to memory” publication, Chasiotis pointed to the persecution of Greeks as “the first systematic phase of the unified plan for the elimination of the foreign elements in the Ottoman Empire”, while the Armenian genocide “in its turn set the pattern for the extermination of the Greeks of the Pontus in 1919-21”.413 The conscription of Greeks and Armenians into the labour battalions at

about the same time, the purpose of which he concluded was “the biological annihilation of both elements”, meant that “despite quantitative differences, the Greek persecutions and the Armenian Genocide were but two sides of the same coin”. The Armenian historians, he furthermore argued, had been too weighed down by the significance of their own genocide to discuss the connections.

However, Chasiotis reserved the term ‘genocide’ for the Armenians. Although referring to a policy of extermination against the Greeks of Pontos and a sense of shared fate between the two Christian groups, Chasiotis was not a Pontian lobbyist, seeking recognition for a particular Pontian or in any other sense Greek genocide. Rather than depicting the Greeks of Asia Minor as co-victims, his angle was to present them as bystanders and witnesses of the unfolding Armenian genocide, who in some cases tried to help, “sometimes sharing the fate of their persecuted fellows”. The losses of the Greek community dwarfed in comparison with the Armenians in 1915, according to Chasiotis, while the mass flight and subsequent exchange of populations agreement in 1923 ipso facto averted a repetition of the Armenian genocide.

Chasiotis’ approach to the issue, with emphasis of contemporary Greek testimony to the fate of the Armenians, drawn from diplomatic correspondence and oral history archives of the Centre for Asia Minor Studies in Athens, as well as establishing a link between the persecutions of Greeks in Ionia and the later Armenian genocide, has attracted some following in international scholarship. None of these scholars discuss the fate of Asia Minor Greeks in terms of genocide. Often the less problematic term ‘ethnic cleansing’ is used. Rouben Paul Adalian has in a comparative study on the persecutions of Ottoman Greeks and Armenians in 1914 even suggested a distinct difference between a Turkish policy of expulsion against the former and one of genocide, exclusively targeting the latter. His argument is that the Greeks of the Empire in fact were protected by their association with Greece, which until 1917 remained neutral in the Great War. Fearing that an active policy of extermination would provoke Greece and the European powers, the ruling Young Turks allegedly settled for intimidation against the Greek Orthodox subjects, whereas the Armenians, a stateless nation with no given protector, bore the full brunt of annihilation. “The Greeks were exchanged”.

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415 Ibid., p. 132, 139.
Adalian concludes, “The Armenians were disposed. That is the difference that makes a genocide”. 419

A different and perhaps more fruitful approach to the issue is found in the work of historian Benjamin Lieberman. 420 He brings attention to how the experiences of civilian populations during and after the Great War were interpreted and defined by contemporary publicity. More specifically, he highlights how “parallel narratives of extermination” evolved through which both Greek and Turkish leaders sought to justify their own policies and counter-measures in the eyes of the world. Publicity for the Greek cause during and after the First World War described a continuing “program put into operation by the Young Turks in the year 1913, with the object of annihilating Hellenism”. 421 However, as Lieberman points out, it was not always clear whether this meant a campaign against Greek culture in Turkey or an effort to destroy the Greeks themselves (the word ‘Hellenism’ has both meanings). Occasionally, explicit comparison was made by contemporary Greek publicity between the ongoing “annihilation” of Ottoman Greeks and the fate of the Armenians in 1915. 422 The suffering of Greeks in Asia Minor was invoked by the Greek Premier Venizelos at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, where the fate of the defeated Ottoman Empire was to be decided. Venizelos, who in open confrontation with King Constantine I had pushed Greece into joining the Entente in 1917 as a way of fulfilling the Great Idea, claimed that 300,000 Ottoman Greeks had been annihilated, while another 450,000 had escaped to Greece. 423 Still, neither he nor any other Greek publicist at the time described any such campaign as having been completed by the war’s end. Significant Greek communities remained in Turkey in 1918, though many Ottoman Greeks had already been forced to flee their homes and in many cases ended up in Greece. The remaining provided the Greek state with the legitimate grounds to intervene and claim an occupation zone of its own in Thrace and in Asia Minor (which, however, did not extend to the remote Pontos further to the east). This created a precarious situation for the Greek Orthodox populations in the Black Sea region and in the interior of Asia Minor, which were made targets of reprisals and deportations by the Kemalists.

419 Adalian 2001, p. 45. Adalian, a director of the Armenian National Institute in Washington DC, has been accused by Greek lobbyists of establishing a “hierarchy of victims in which only the fate of Ottoman Armenians can be considered of genocidal quality”. For this reason these critics conclude that his article should be classified as “genocide denial literature”, alongside the works of David Irving and other ‘revisionists’. “Review of Rouben Adalian’s paper on comparative treatment of Ottoman Armenians and Greeks”, dated 21/6 2008: http://www.greek-genocide.org/review_adalian.html, accessed 17/6 2011. This is in my view an uncalled for allegation. In defence of the (anonymous) critics, however, Adalian’s comparative study is made up of a survey of US diplomatic reports, which cover only a few months of the spring and summer of 1914, a period of time that arguably is too limited to support the overall conclusion made by the author.


In a similar fashion, Turkish nationalists accused the occupying Greek army of carrying out a policy of extermination against the Ottoman Turks, with the active help of the Greek minority. The key to labelling any given series of Greek ‘atrocities’ as extermination, Lieberman writes, was the sense that each episode of violence fit into a long-term pattern of driving out Muslims and Turks, which dated back to the recent Balkan Wars and even back to the 19th century. This interpretation remains a major theme of scholarship on Ottoman and Turkish history to the present day, as demonstrated by the work of Justin McCarthy, often identified as a key ‘denialist’ of the Armenian genocide. These parallel narratives of extermination provided no other alternatives to escalating conflict that targeted civilian populations. According to Turkish delegates to the Lausanne Peace Conference in 1923, there was no other alternative to ending the vicious cycle and the threat of extermination than to expel the Greek population from Turkey. The peace treaty and the ‘exchange of populations’ confirmed this logic. In 1930, a convention was signed in Ankara by Venizelos and Kemal, whereby the Greek state agreed to drop all claims at reparation, cementing a period of Greek-Turkish détente which was to last into the 1950s.

Nevertheless, as already mentioned, a growing bibliography in Greek on the Pontian genocide has come into being over the last decades. The Greek sociologist Efthia Voutira has argued that the core of the argument, supporting the claim of genocide in the Pontian Greek case, is based on confusion and even manipulation of Ottoman population census data group categories for sensationalist purposes.

If one were to take such arguments seriously enough to refute them, one would have to start from some reliable source. Kitromilidis and Alexandris (1984-1985) estimate the size of the Orthodox Greek population in the regions of Eastern and Western Pontos (i.e. Sivas, Trabzon, Kastamonu) at a total of 482,404 in 1916. Of these, approximately 200,000 fled to Russia, while 183,000 went to Greece. It is thus difficult to imagine how 350,000 could have been killed between 1916 and 1923.

This objection does not necessarily entail claiming that killings never took place in the time period prior to the expulsion of this population. The more serious issue, as stated by Voutira, is the interpretation of the events leading up to the population exchange as genocide, a concept “which is being used rather loosely in both scholarly and journalistic writings”. Defined in the 1948 UN Genocide convention as “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a

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national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such”, academics debate about whether the official definition is too broad or too narrow. Meanwhile, international criminal tribunals have in recent years come to focus on issues of how clearly intent to annihilate or how large a ‘part’ of a target group must be killed for an act to be considered genocide.\(^\text{429}\)

This, however, is a conceptual and in part judicial debate that cannot be related and discussed at length within the framework of this study, which deals with the meanings imbued in the term outside of scholarly confines. In the Pontian case, as Voutira notes, the core of the argument has to do with the use of statistics, in order to prove the size of the Greek population of Pontos (and for that matter Asia Minor as a whole) and estimate the number of casualties. This is far from unproblematic, given that the Greek population estimates often reproduced in support of the claim date from a time when Greece nurtured territorial aspirations, in view of the Paris Peace Conference after the Great War. As historian Iakovos Michailidis has pointed out, early 20th century statistical data estimating the size of one’s ‘own group’ in Ottoman held territories were often manipulated in order to provide demographics which could justify the irredentist designs of the competing Balkan states.\(^\text{430}\) An additional obstacle is the nature of Ottoman census data, which categorised the subjects of the Empire according to religious belonging rather than national or ethnic categories, which have to be deduced by present researchers.\(^\text{431}\) Also scholars (and non-scholars) who have embraced the notion of genocide against Greeks have raised questions on how statistics are used to emphasise Pontian suffering.\(^\text{432}\) This critique, which in particular targets Fotiadis and by extension Charalambidis, has however more to do with identity politics and tends to surface chiefly outside scholarly forums.\(^\text{433}\)

Denial in posterity is often identified as the final stage of genocide. This is especially the case of scholarship on the Armenian tragedy, which has been met with formidable resistance by the Turkish state and allies of it. Richard Hovannisian has listed what in his view are points of similarity between denial of the Holocaust and denial of the Armenian genocide. Among these are allegations which dismiss claims of genocide as wartime propaganda; deny any intent of the perpetrator to annihilate the target group; and reduce the group’s losses or submerge them within

\(^{429}\) MacDonald 2008, p. 8.


\(^{431}\) This fact was frequently capitalised on by Greek debaters, such as Martis, who referred to pre-1912 Ottoman statistics in order to disprove the existence of a (Slav) Macedonian population, since the only categories referred to there, besides Muslims and Jews, were Christians belonging either to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate (and therefore Greeks) or to the Bulgarian Exarchate.

\(^{432}\) See Speros Vryonis Jr., “Greek Labor Battalions in Asia Minor”, in Richard Hovannisian (ed.), \textit{The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies}, New Brunswick NJ: Transaction Publishers 2009 (2008), p. 287. Although full of praise for Fotiadis’ “systematic effort to marshal thousands of documents and to write an orderly history of the event”, Vryonis Jr. laments that “it is not always clear whether the total numbers refer to conscriptions in Pontus or to more general figures of Greeks conscripted everywhere [in Ottoman Turkey]”.


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the general carnage of war. Other points include alleging that the ‘myth’ of genocide was created merely to profit the group and that powerful lobby interests prevent the “denier’s” ‘truth’ from coming forth. All of these merit careful consideration when discussing the Pontians’ experience as well. Buried beneath contemporary controversies over labels, definitions and death tolls is a history of human suffering and loss. It is important for any scholar to acknowledge it in critical discussions of how the past is put to use in the present, so as not to diminish this history. Nevertheless, there are circumstances which call for caution when it comes to the Pontian narrative of genocide. There is ample reason to treat the narrative discussed here as a claim, or narrative of identity; especially bearing in mind that the claim for genocide recognition is essentially a claim toward historical authority, not yet fully recognised as scholarly.

Changing perceptions of victimhood

Several factors, domestic as well as external, contributed to the emergence and subsequent success of this particular narrative. One was the change of the political climate in Greece after PASOK’s coming to power in 1981, the rehabilitation of the previously outlawed Left and its repercussions in official historical discourse, as the memory of the leftwing wartime resistance – whitewashed and suitably disconnected from the history of KKE and the Civil War – was being deployed to legitimise socialist rule. A side-effect of this attempt at coming to terms with the country’s recent past was the possibilities it offered to other groups that thitherto had been absent from official memory discourse. The populist, anti-establishment rhetoric of Andreas Papandreou (“The people don’t forget what the right means”), as well as the anti-American and anti-Turkish sentiments it appealed to, provided favourable preconditions for the Pontian narrative, and also helped shaping it.

The lobbyists of KEPOME were not the first to try to raise public awareness of the persecutions and suffering of the Greeks in the Pontos region during the First World War – this had, for example, been the subject of some historical publications already in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Stories and memories of massacres, famine and violent uprooting were by the beginning of the 1980s already an established feature in literature and cinema dealing with the Asia Minor

436 Liakos 2009, p. 60.
refugee experience. What was new was the concept of, and focus on, genocide, which in its turn reflected larger international trends.

At about the same time as the Pontian revival movement emerged in Greece, popular TV-series such as the 1978 NBC production Holocaust and cinema were bringing back the Nazis’ annihilation of European Jewry to the attention of large audiences in North America and Western Europe. The Holocaust re-emerged as a contemporary event in public debates – not so much through the efforts of the scholarly community, which in fact itself was on the receiving end, as the Holocaust and memory studies related to the wartime experience entered the research menu due to the influence of this public interest – but because of the impact of popular culture and media. The same year as Holocaust aired, President Jimmy Carter launched a commission on the topic, which eventually paved the way for the establishment of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The new attention to the horrors of the Jewish tragedy, the ‘Americanisation’ of Holocaust memory, in its turn entailed a sort of spill-over effects, since it brought about an upsurge in interest and sensibility toward genocide in general. Other communities, which had or perceived themselves as having experiences similar to the Jewish, were not late to take advantage of this. As the historian Johan Dietrich has argued, it was not a mere coincidence that Ukrainian émigré scholars and activists in North America in the following years made explicit references to the Holocaust as the most appropriate context in which their own tragedy, the 1930s terror famine in Soviet Ukraine, ought to be understood. Similar campaigns for the recognition of past atrocities were either launched or reignited by other groups in other national or transnational contexts in the 1980s.

Of greater importance to the Pontians – perhaps greater than the evocation of the Jewish Holocaust – were the efforts of the Armenian diaspora, whose lobbying activities gained a momentum in 1986 and 1987, when the United Nations’ Commission of Human Rights and the European Parliament respectively recognised the Armenian genocide. The timing of this breakthrough with the appearance of the Pontian “right to memory” manifesto is crucial. The manifesto contained passages which linked the Pontian cause with the Armenian, with reference to the efforts of Turkish-sponsored American scholars’ attempts to deny or downplay the significance of the genocide. Furthermore, Charalambidis would

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440 Dietsch 2006, p. 125, 133.

441 On the Assyrian/Syriac communities, see Nordgren 2006, p. 130. For a scholarly treatment of the fate of these communities during the First World War, the so-called Seyfo, see David Gaunt, Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia During World War I, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press 2006. For other examples, drawn from indigenous peoples and diaspora communities across the world, see MacDonald 2008.
later cite the Armenian struggle for vindication as the source of inspiration for his Pontian activism.\footnote{Michalis Charalambidis, "Η 19η Μαίου Ημέρα Μνήμης όλων των λαών ενάντια στο ρατσισμό" ["The 19th of May Day of Remembrance of all peoples against racism"], letter to the Armenian National Committee of Greece, dated 18/5 2003, reproduced in Charalambidis & Fotiadis 2003, pp. 141-142.}

These developments did not owe their existence solely to the impact of Holocaust interest. Rather they – as well as the attention given to the Holocaust – could be viewed as symptoms of a still larger international trend, or rather set of interrelated phenomena emerging in the 1970s, which scholars such as Pierre Nora have attempted to epitomise as the “outbreak” of or “upsurge” in memory. This worldwide “memorialist trend”, which according to Nora has profoundly altered the relationship which societies traditionally have enjoyed with the past, has taken a variety of forms, the most notable of which he terms “the ‘democratization’ of history”. Included in this process is the criticism and sometimes collapse of official versions of history, the postmodern fragmentation of historical knowledge and the demands of various minority groups for the rehabilitation of their histories as a way of reaffirming their identities in the present.\footnote{Nora 2002.}

This change of perspective in history-writing, where the downtrodden and forgotten replaced the ‘great men’ at history’s centre stage, consequently brought about a shift of focus from heroes to victims in the historiography and popular perceptions of the Holocaust and of the Second World War at large. The concept of victimhood thus attained a notion of prestige never enjoyed before. Peter Novick has argued that being a victim in the 1940s and 1950s “evoked at best the sort of pity mixed with contempt”, in Jewish-American circles as well as in Israeli society, where the celebrated ideal was the war hero, embodied by the death-defying Jewish fighters of the Warsaw ghetto uprising; not the millions who had, the implicit accusation read, allowed themselves to be slaughtered like sheep.\footnote{Novick 2000 (1999), p. 121; Rosenberg, Göran, Det förlorade landet: Israel, en personlig historia [The lost land: Israel, a personal history], Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag 1996; Tossavainen 2006.}

The shift of perspective was heralded by the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem in 1962. Unlike the earlier Nuremberg trials, where the prosecutors based their cases on written documents linking the defendants to the crimes they faced charges with, this trial relied heavily on the oral testimony of Holocaust survivors. These were called forth, not so much for the purpose of providing evidence against Eichmann personally, as for conjuring up the horrors of the crime, emphasising the magnitude of the Jewish tragedy in emotional terms.

The effect of this approach to the Holocaust was a lasting shift from viewing the perpetrators and the instigators of war at the centre of what constitutes monumental history, to viewing the victims as history’s main protagonists and their suffering as the grounds for historical authority.\footnote{Shoshana Felman, The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century, Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press 2002, pp. 106-130. Cf. Papailias 2005, pp. 95-96.} As the sociologist Penelope Papailias has argued, a parallel transformation of roles has occurred in Greek historiography on the Asia Minor Catastrophe in the course of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. In
this particular history-writing, the refugees themselves and the loss of their
homelands were usually treated as a mere side-effect of the real drama, the defeat
of the Greek army in Asia Minor and the subsequent, and irreversible, collapse of
the Great Idea that had nurtured the dream of national fulfilment for a century.
This, not so much the civilian casualties, was the Disaster.446

Perhaps this perception of agency in history contributed more to the
perceived silence in discourse on refugees and their homelands than the Greek-
Turkish rapprochement between 1930 and 1950. The turn from political and
military to social history in academia during the decades after 1945, which
eventually reached Greece, as well as the 1940s wartime experience altered the
perception of the events in 1922, paving the way for the notion of victimhood.
Also, the recurring crises in Greek-Turkish relations from the 1950s and onwards
played an important role in the process, notably the Istanbul riots in 1955 and the
Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, which both resulted in new Greek refugee
waves.447

This redefinition of academic as well as public perceptions in Greece
regarding the protagonists and the contents of history – where victims and
suffering if not replaced statesmen and war heroes, at least supplemented them at
the centre of attention – was to have consequences. It meant that it was only a
matter of time before the main commemorative events of state and society, the
outbreak of the 1821 revolution and the “epic” of 1940, which both celebrate the
victorious heroism central to national self-esteem,448 would be rivalled by demands
for commemoration also of the Asia Minor refugees’ tragedy. Initiatives to this end
were during the 1980s taken in the municipality of Nea Smyrni, one of the suburbs
in the Athens-Pireus region which owed its existence to refugees from the city and
hinterland of Smyrna (Izmir). There a day commemorating the exodus was
organised by local authorities on the 14th of May each year, the date of Smyrna’s fall
and subsequent destruction by Kemalist forces. In 1986, the Greek parliament
passed a law which made this date a “National day of remembrance for the victims
of the 1922 Asia Minor disaster”.449 It not only symbolically reimbursed the
refugees and their descendants for past sacrifices, but in fact produced an incentive
for further demands.

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446 Papailias 2005, p. 95. This perspective, which emphasises the roles and responsibilities of key actors in the
political, military and diplomatic sphere, in Greece as well as among her European allies, is the predominant one in
the standard English-language account of these events, Michael Llewellyn Smith’s Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor
1919-1923, (1973), which relies heavily upon diplomatic correspondences.
448 These events are celebrated as national holidays with parades of school pupils and military personnel on the 25th
of March and 28th of October, respectively. For a discussion on when and why these dates were elevated to the
status of national holidays, see Anastasia Karakasidou, “Pageantry and Protocol: Celebrating the Nation in Northern
Greece” in Mark Mazower (ed.), After the War Was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation and State in Greece, 1943-1960,
The new Pontian question: Glasnost and political mobilisation

Another factor, external and to some extent unforeseen, that favoured the agenda of Pontian identity politics was the new glasnost’ in the Soviet Union during the late 1980s, which brought public attention to the existence of the Soviet Greek minority. It was a population of very diverse regional and historical origins that in the Soviet nationalities model had been lumped together in the category ‘Greeks’. Some communities, like the Greeks in Ukraine, traced their roots back to the ‘New Russia’ colonisation project of Catherine the Great in the late 18th century. Others, who lived scattered in the Caucasus region, were descendants of Greek Orthodox Anatolians who had opted for Russian exile in Ottoman times. A third group was to be found in Central Asia, where many Greek communists (many of which also were of Pontian descent) had ended up after their defeat and subsequent flight in 1949. The amnesty for ethnic Greek combatants of the Civil War issued by the PASOK government in 1982 and the reforms ushered in by Gorbachev in the Soviet Union a few years later created favourable conditions for these largely forgotten Greeks, who now were able to organise themselves in cultural associations and even to contemplate their ‘return’ to Greece.

This process timed well with the first attempts to organise the various Pontian associations in Greece and the diaspora in a common forum, which convened for the first time in 1985, in Thessaloniki. Three years later, representatives of Soviet Greek associations made their appearance at the Second World Congress of Pontian Hellenism, and were greeted as long-lost Pontian brethren, who presumably had kept their Greek identity intact, despite the fact that far from all of them were actually able to communicate in Greek. In the following years, as the Soviet Union began to disintegrate, an ever-growing flow of Soviet citizens, claiming Greek consciousness, made its way into Greece. The arrival of these newcomers brought reminiscences of earlier refugee waves, and the Pontian associations of Greece were quick to capitalise on this, by claiming the Soviet Greeks as Pontians – regardless of their own self-proclaimed identities⁴⁵⁰ – and targeting the immigrants for “re-pontianisation”, in addition to the state-sponsored re-Hellenisation efforts at language schools and civic courses. Vlasis Agtzidis, active in involving Greek authorities to evacuate Soviet Greeks from the fighting in Abchazia, took the very existence of Pontian “refugees” from the USSR as evidence that the Asia Minor question thought to have been solved in 1922 still remained open and needed to be politically revisited. He called for attention to the “blank pages in Greek history” and demanded the official apology from those who “knew and kept silent” about the crimes committed against the Pontians. Among these, he claimed, was the refusal of Greek authorities in the interwar years to receive Pontian refugees from the Soviet Union, making them co-responsible for the deaths of 50,000 Greeks in the “Stalinist genocide against the Greeks” in 1937-⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁵⁰ According to the Greek sociologist Eftihia Voutira, many of her Soviet Greek informants were accustomed to thinking of themselves within the framework of the Soviet nationalities scheme simply as ‘Greeks’ and had no knowledge of a particular Pontian identity prior to their initial contact with ‘mainland Greeks’. “[W]e didn’t know we were Pontic Greeks before we came to Greece or before the Greeks came to the FSU”. Voutira 2006, p. 390.
The coming of the “new” Pontians seemed to confirm the existence of a “Pontian question”, which contributed to the efforts of the lobbyists concerned with identity and memory politics to elevate their cause into the pantheon of *ethniká thémata*, “national issues”, on par with the contemporary Macedonian question. In this process for external recognition, the role played by the World Congresses of Pontian Hellenism which convened in Thessaloniki at a couple of year intervals, starting from 1985, proved crucial. These gatherings provided the forum for the interventions of the various lobbyists, apart from the press. It was thus at the first congress that one of the participants, Polychronis Enepekidis, a historian of Pontian Greek origin at the University of Vienna, called for public attention to what he referred to as the “Holocaust against the Greeks of Pontos” in a concluding remark. The “genocide issue” was raised once again, this time more decisively, at the second congress in August 1988, where Soviet Greeks were present for the first time, by Michalis Charalambidis, KEPOME’s vice-president and leading spokesman. He called for the delegates’ support in favour of his demand for political recognition of the Pontians’ historic plight. For this purpose, he proposed that the 19th of May be made an official day of commemoration for the victims of the alleged genocide; a tragedy which, evidently, was to be regarded as a separate event from, or within, the whole of the Asia Minor disaster, commemorated through the national day of remembrance on the 14th of September. Charalambidis did not make any reference to this already existing commemoration day and thus never addressed the question of why an additional Pontian was needed. A plausible explanation might be that the established date highlighted the suffering of Greeks from the Ionian region around the city of Smyrna, i.e. not specifically the ordeals of the Pontian population.

The choice of date proposed by KEPOME was not accidental. The 19th of May 1919 was the day on which Mustafa Kemal arrived in Samsun, at the Black Sea coast of Asia Minor, taking charge of the nationalist resistance against the occupying forces of Greece and the Entente. Ever since 1927, when Kemal mentioned it in the opening sentence of *Nutuk*, “the Speech”, which was to provide the guidelines for the Turkish state narrative on the foundation of the Republic, this date has acquired a mythical aura in Turkish nationalist discourse and

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452 A way of creating a link between the two national issues was to call attention to the plight of co-ethnics outside Greece. In another article, Agtzidis made reference to everything from Soviet Pontians to Northern Epirotes and the 100,000 Greeks of Northern Macedonia/Monastiri under ‘Skopje’ domination. Agtzidis also incriminated the Greek Left for having contributed to an ideologically motivated “terror of silence” with regard to this topic. Vlasis Agtzidis, “Οι ελληνικές µειονότητες στην Ανατολική Ευρώπη” [“The Greek minorities in Eastern Europe”], *Ellèfia*, Issue No. 9, February-March 1992, p. 31.

453 Bruneau & Papoulidis 2003, p. 37; Voutira 2006, p. 391. See also Vlasis Agtzidis, *Έλληνες του Πόντου: Η γενοκτονία απο τον τουρκικό εθνικισµό* [Greeks of Pontos: The genocide by Turkish nationalism], Athens: Ellinikes Ekdoseis 2005, p. 232, where Enepekidis is described as the pioneer in the research on the “tragic events of the genocide.” See also Enepekidis’ own article “Αυστρίτικες εν ροή τη θητειας γενοκτονία” [“The Pontian genocide a moving Auschwitz”], *Kathimerini* 17/8 1997, p. 24.
is celebrated as a national holiday.\textsuperscript{454} The very same date and event, Kemal’s coming to the Pontian lands, marked the beginning of a new, intense phase in the persecutions against the Pontian Greeks, according to KEPOME’s lobbyists. Therefore, it was an appropriate candidate for commemoration. The inauguration of this day of remembrance, save for the need for vindication that it would satisfy, Charalambidis argued, would give the benefit of a “fixed day of the year when Pontians all over the world – in Greece, in the Soviet republics of Georgia, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Armenia, in the United States, Canada, Argentina, West Germany, Sweden, Australia – will honour the hundreds of thousands of our unjustly lost relatives and countrymen with petitions, protestations and marches”.\textsuperscript{455}

What Charalambidis offered to the delegates at the congress was, in other words, a common historical memory and an annual ritual that would unite the Pontians of Greece and the diaspora, strengthening their Pontian consciousness. The support of the organising committee of the Second World Congress on Pontian Hellenism proved to be a first major breakthrough for the “right to memory” campaign.\textsuperscript{456} The scheduling of the next all-Pontian congress to the period 14-20\textsuperscript{th} of May 1992, i.e. in a time-span covering the date marked out for commemoration, was in itself a guarantee that the “genocide issue” would be revisited and dealt with extensively. At that time the Macedonian conflict was already unfolding.

**Pontian memory politics and the Macedonian question**

Given the – literally – short distance between the seat of the Macedonian Committee and other branches of what a journalist referred to as the “Thessalonikan lobby”\textsuperscript{457} on the one hand, and on the other the various Pontian associations operating in the very same city, it was perhaps inevitable that their respective agendas to some extent became intertwined. “It is a bitter discovery that Pontos and especially our history, but also Macedonia and Thrace, have been neglected in history schoolbooks”, a delegate noted in an address to the Second World Pontian Congress in 1992.\textsuperscript{458} This intertwining was partly due to the fact that the great bulk of the Pontians living in Greece are either residents of Greek Macedonia or have family ties to the region, resulting in an overlap of identities; in this case of a regional Macedonian one with the emotional attachment to the “lost homelands”. Declarations of loyalty to the Macedonian home province, in view of the alleged threat from the “Skopje republic”, where Pontian identity was explicitly


\textsuperscript{456} Voutira 2006, p. 391.

\textsuperscript{457} See Thanasis Georgakopoulos, “Άφηστε το ‘Stratego’ στα παιδιά” ["Leave the ‘Stratego’ to the kids"], *Avgi* 29/1 1992, p. 4.

linked to the idea of the Northern Greeks as the guardians of Hellenism’s borderlands, emerged from time to time in the newspapers’ letters to the editor sections, and in the news coverage of spontaneous manifestations for Macedonia’s Greekness. But it is also rather safe to assume that more conscious efforts were made from 1992 and onwards to try to link the different agendas, although evidence of direct contacts between Pontian and Greek Macedonian lobbyists are hard to extract from the press sources alone. It is however evident that much stood to be gained from making common cause with each other. By publicly participating in the struggle for the name, the Pontian associations could demonstrate their patriotic credentials and thus gain further publicity for their own cause. The same was true for the advocates of Greek Macedonian interests, who stood to benefit from the association with Pontian networks and the prestige attributed to their identity-political ends.

The intertwining of interests is clearly to be seen in what was presented as a scientific conference in Thessaloniki, entitled “Macedonia and Pontian Hellenism”, which was organised in April 1992 by the Pontian cultural association and lobby group *Euxenios Leschi* (The Black Sea Club). Although the title of the conference suggests topics related to the experiences of Asia Minor refugees after their arrival in 1923, all the contributions referred in the press were in fact devoted to aspects of the Macedonian question and Macedonian Hellenism prior to the 20th century, presented as evidence of Macedonia’s Greek character through the millennia. Even the speech of the linguist Charalampos Symeonidis, entitled “The Pontian dialect in Macedonia”, seems to, by and large, have been a rebuttal of the “Skopjan” claim regarding the existence of a (Slav) Macedonian language, rather than an account of the Pontian idiom in the new homeland. Prominent speakers included British classicist Nicholas Hammond, friend and tutor of Manolis Andronikos, and Professor Polychronis Enepekidis from the University of Vienna, an historian with old ties to the Society for Macedonian Studies who had raised the issue of the persecutions against the Pontian Greeks already in the late 1950s and once again in 1985. His contribution, drawn from Austrian archives, was a list of individuals from the Macedonian region, active as merchants in the Habsburg Empire from the 18th century and onwards, who at various occasions had expressed a Greek Orthodox identity, which Enepekidis equated with Greek national consciousness. This was presented as evidence for the Greek cause in the current naming dispute, which also concerns the historic identity and national affiliation of the Macedonia’s past inhabitants. “No attempts whatsoever of the Skopjans, whose artificial state was created after the Second World War for known reasons, can falsify these [facts]”, Enepekidis concluded. “Against these forgers we contrast through historical archives names of families from the wider region of Macedonia, from Thessaloniki to Monastiri, who stated of their own accord and with pride even in

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foreign lands that they were Greeks”, i.e. not Yugoslav Macedonians.461 Other contributors presented evidence that supposedly proved the Greek identity of the ancient Macedonians, to which a number of sources, ranging from Herodotus in the 5th century BC to the Quran and medieval Arab chroniclers, were said to testify;462 in other words, the type of evidence and ways of arguing employed by Nikolaos Martis and other advocates of the Greek Macedonian identity narrative. Although manifestations of this kind emphasised the idea of eternal Hellenism in Macedonia rather than the Pontian narrative of suffering and lost homelands, the conference itself constituted a link between the lobbyists of Greek Macedonian regional interests and the memory politicians of the Pontian cultural associations. By adapting to the arguments of the former and showing commitment to the ‘national course’ with regard to the name issue, the latter stressed their national loyalty while gaining ground for the promotion of their own core interests. A later statement of Polychronis Enepekidis to the media in view of the upcoming Third World Congress of Pontian Hellenism points to how closely interwoven the interests of regional Macedonian politics with those of local Pontian as well as diaspora organisations tended to be at the time of the Macedonian crisis.

We who live outside of Greece sense that the political forces who come from the southwestern parts of the country, are exhausted and yet they keep determining our fates without showing the inclination to yield any of this power or responsibilities of theirs to the healthy and vivid potentiality of Northern Greece, which originates from the marriage of the Macedonians, the Mikrasiates [Asia Minor Greeks] and the Pontians. As long as this does not occur in our country, we will find ourselves in a political nightmare.463

Statements like these and other favours provided by Pontian lobbyists were in their turn reciprocated by politicians at local and regional as well as on national level. As noted by the sociologist Eleftheria Deltou, the Black Sea cultural associations in Thessaloniki have acquired the function of forums for local politicians who, recognising the significance of the Pontian constituency in the “refugee capital”, make promises in return for votes.464 Well aware of this quid pro quo relationship with the powerbrokers, some debaters argued for the politicisation of the Pontian organisations in view of the upcoming Third World Congress, in order to wield a more profound influence.

462 Ibid.; “Η παραποίηση της Ιστορίας συνεχίζεται επί µισό αιώνα” [“The distortion of History continues after half a century”], Kathimerini 21/4 1992, p. 3. According to the media coverage of the conference, a great deal of interest was also devoted to the achievements of the Indo-Greek civilisation that existed for a couple of centuries in present-day Afghanistan and Pakistan. There blond and unpolluted descendants of Greek Macedonians were said to have survived to this day; something, which one of the speakers, Marinos Charalampous, bitterly noted, has not been the subject of the historians’ interest. Other speakers at the conference referred to the descent and language of the ancient Macedonians, reaching the conclusion that they not only had the same religion as the other Hellenes, i.e. the worship of Olympian deities, but that their religious practice was a purer form of this cult; an implicit claim that the Macedonians were even purer Greeks than those living in other parts of the ancient Greek-speaking world.
over Greek politics. The congress in May 1992 attracted prominent visitors, not only local notables but also representatives from the political establishment in Athens, including Prime Minister Mitsotakis and Andreas Papandreou, leader of the then main opposition party PASOK. Representing the Coalition of the Left and of Progress (SYN) at the congress was Stelios Nestor, who also was one of the founding members of the Macedonian Committee and a leading figure for the part of the crumbling Left which had opted to rally to the defense of ‘national rights’ in the name issue. Nestor is reported as having been one of the most vociferous speakers at the congress, who spoke most ardent about the Macedonian question, stressing the significance of national unity to counter the dangers lurking around Macedonia. This was a topic that all the speakers touched upon in their addresses to the plenum, although the representative of KKE in the press coverage is contrasted against Nestor as the least outspoken on this particular issue, due to the allegedly unpatriotic position taken by his party in Macedonian matters, in the past as well as in the present.

It was easier to find common ground in discussions relating to other topics of history, such as the one having to do with the Pontian past, where especially the representatives of the Left were very active participants. A demand put forward by the chairman of the organising committee, Vasilis Intzes, that the history of Pontian Greeks be incorporated into school textbooks – and thus into the state narrative – drew the support of KKE’s representative as well as of Nestor. The latter is also noted as having protested against the terminology used by the Prime Minister as well as by representatives of PASOK in their speeches regarding the Soviet Greek migrants; instead of referring to these newcomers as “repatriates”, they ought to be recognised as “uprooted Greeks”. The very choice of words was a signifying identity-political statement, since the distinction made stressed the perpetual victimhood of Pontian Greeks all over the world and the concept of lost homelands, deprived of their Hellenic element, which was at the core of Pontian memory discourse. By paying homage to the Pontian narrative of loss and suffering, as well as advocating its incorporation into “national memory”, Nestor simultaneously strengthened the credentials of the Macedonian Committee’s agenda, through the means of implicit comparison, which could be summarised in one statement: Do not let Macedonia turn into another lost homeland. The atmosphere in which the congress convened, and to which speakers like Nestor effectively contributed, as well as the historical events on the congress agenda conjured up the image of an ever diminishing Greek world, beset from all sides by the danger of new “uprooting”.

466 “Ανάβασις Ποντίων” [“Anabasis of Pontians”], Anti 15/5 1992, p. 8; “Ο Πόντος ενώνεται” [“Pontos unites”], Eλεύθεροτητισ 18/5 1992.
467 Namely the refusal of KKE to participate in the manifestations for Macedonia’s Greekness earlier in February 1992, which, according to its critics, echoed the Greek Communist Party’s adherence to the Comintern policy of an autonomous Macedonian state in the interwar years and its wartime alliance with the Tito-backed Slav Macedonians.
468 “Ο Πόντος ενώνεται” [“Pontos unites”], Eλεύθεροτητισ 18/5 1992.
The same strategy of comparison, implicit as well as explicit, was employed by
the organisers of the Pontian congress and various lobby groups, who skillfully
linked their own agenda to other issues related to foreign policy and national
security. The greater part of 17th of May, the day when the Macedonian question
and other national issues were discussed, was assigned to the commemoration of
Pontian suffering. In the Church of Agia Sofia in downtown Thessaloniki,
Metropolitan Panteleimon II held a mass for the “350 000 victims of the
genocide”. It was followed by another commemorative ceremony in the city and a
manifestation outside the Turkish consulate, the birthplace of Mustafa Kemal, on
whose door a proclamation signed in the name of the congress was attached. The
text, addressed to the United Nations’ Human Rights Committee and the Greek
Parliament, as well as to “the entire civilised world”, stated that “the refusal of
Turkish governments up to this day to recognise the genocide of the 350 000
Greeks of Pontos that was carried out by cadres of the Young Turk government
[means] that there is a lurking danger that the present governments of Turkey will
repeat the same policy against other peoples.” It was therefore urgent that the UN
Human Rights Committee and the international community condemn the
perpetrators as “enemies of the human rights and of mankind”, according to the
signers who called for the international recognition of the 19th of May as a day of
remembrance of the genocide against Pontian Hellenism. The proclamation ended
in a statement that the contemporary tensions between Greece and Turkey, as
expressed in the conflicts over Cyprus and the Aegean as well as minority issues
related to the Greeks of Constantinople and the Kurdish question, would not have
sprung up if the genocide against the Armenians and the Pontian Greeks had been
acknowledged from the start.

Simultaneously, KEPOME issued a statement of its own, where the link
between then and now was further stressed, as the parliaments of Greece and
Cyprus were asked to recognise “this vast crime” as means of bringing justice and
rehabilitation to the victims, but also as a way of preventing the “genocide under
way against the Kurdish people that is carried out by the ever same victimiser”.
That the same victimiser’s finger was also to be seen in the contemporary
Macedonian question was evident to many contemporary analysts in Greece, who
saw Turkey’s recognition of the Republic of Macedonia in early 1992 as a direct
blow at Greek interests, possibly foreshadowing a military alliance between Skopje
and Ankara aimed at annexation of Greek territories.

What could thus be described as a strategy of attaching the Pontian memory-
political agenda to other issues deemed to be of national (and international)
importance had been there from the start. Both Charalambidis and Fotiadis set the
genocide issue in a contemporary context of Greek-Turkish conflicts and the

469 Ibid..
470 Roudometof 2002, p. 31; Konstantinos Cholevas, “Η ‘Νέα Μακεδονία’ και η παλαιά τουρκική φιλοδοξία” [“The
‘New Macedonia’ and the old Turkish aspiration”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 6/5 1993, p. 37; Dimitris Kalloudiotis,
“Υπάρχει κίνδυνος σοβινισµού στην Ελλάδα;” [“Is there a danger of chauvinism in Greece?”], Eleftherotypia 29/4 1992,
p. 35.
Kurdish rebellion in eastern Turkey;\(^471\) as did Vlasis Agtzidis, another leading lobbyist, when he took the coming of the Soviet Greeks as evidence for the perpetual existence of the Asia Minor question, thought to have been buried at Lausanne.\(^472\) The history of Pontian suffering, just like the Macedonian question, could not be allowed to be just a historical question. The key to success was to bring it on par with contemporary problems, by posing recognition of past wrongs as a necessary precondition for mending today’s ills. This strategy found resonance in political circles, which is evident from the attendance of leading political figures at the Third World Congress, eager to demonstrate their sensitivity toward grass-root concerns, who willingly made the lobbyists’ arguments their own. The main opposition leader and future Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou’s address to the congress at the 19\(^{th}\) of May read like a blue-print of Charalambidis’ own texts and line of arguments, with their characteristic conflation of now and then, of Pontian suffering and of the tragedies of Armenians and Jews.

The 19\(^{th}\) of May is the day of remembrance of the Pontian Genocide and of the unforgettable homelands of Pontos and of Asia Minor. The institutionalisation through legislation [of this date] by the Greek Parliament and the promotion for its international recognition constitute an obligation of honour to all of us. No oblivion and no silence can hide the murder of our 353 000 fellow Greeks of Pontos during the years 1916-1923. Every reference to the Pontian question is devoid of any value whatsoever, if one ignores the dimensions and the significance of the Genocide against the Greeks of Pontos and the responsibility of the Turkish state for this international crime. On the dark pages of history, with the holocaust of the Jews, the Genocide against the Armenians, the slaughter of the Kurds, the page of the Genocide against Pontian Hellenism becomes even darker, when the elementary moral vindication is taken away from the thousands of victims.\(^473\)

However, the politicians were not simply the mouthpieces of exclusively Pontian interests and concerns; on the contrary, the reading of statements issued by politicians and state officials suggests that the narrative of Pontian suffering could be deployed to achieve other goals than those of the lobby, and a dialectical relation. The message to the Greek diaspora organisations issued by the deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vyron Polydoras, on the occasion of the Pontian day of remembrance in 1993 – a “day of national pain and national memory” – seemed to de-emphasise the Pontian element and stress the genocide’s character of a national


\(^473\) Andreas Papandreou’s address to the Third World Congress of Pontian Hellenism, quoted in Fotiadis, Konstantinos, Η Γενοκτονία των Ελλήνων του Πόντου [The Genocide of the Greeks of Pontos], Athens: Idryma tis Voulis ton Ellinon gia ton Koinonoleutismo kai ti Dimokratia 2004, p. 16-17.
Greek tragedy. According to the statement, the events that lead to the annihilation of almost half the Greek population in the easternmost outskirts of Hellenism obliged all Greeks to “determine our national conduct”. The fact that the victims of ethnic cleansing were Greek, something which was said to make the Greeks more sensitive and understanding toward contemporary phenomena of similar kind, made it particularly important to remember them as a way of confirming the nation’s identity as Greek.

Our nation in the difficult times that we expect derives, without hatred, the lessons of historical memory. We the Greeks, with our deep historical consciousness, are able to confront our historical past with dignity. And with the strength of life for the future.

The diaspora was in Greece increasingly viewed as an international resource that could be used to promote Greek interests and demands abroad. It was therefore, arguably, of vital importance that its members’ identity as Greeks be reaffirmed. The Pontian genocide narrative, as well as the Macedonian question, could potentially be instrumental to this end, thus serving the foreign policy of the nation, while simultaneously the demands of the Pontian constituency at home were being met.

Diaspora concerns
Linking one’s own memory-political agenda too closely to the Macedonian name issue however entailed the risk of having it completely overshadowed, in spite of the politicians’ reassurances and moral support, as long as the genocide was not formally recognised. Despite common denominators, similar goals and various declarations of solidarity between the different lobbies in the Thessaloniki region, a conflict of interest, arguably, existed between the agents concerned with the Pontian and the Macedonian questions, respectively. This conflict was reflected in some of the historical explanations for the perceived silence in Greek historiography regarding the Asia Minor refugees, that was expressed within the “right to memory” discourse, namely that the Greek state’s preoccupation with the threat of “Slav Communism” in the North during the Cold War favoured an orientation toward Macedonia and the Balkans among history-writers, at the expense of the Asia Minor refugees and the crimes committed by Turkish nationalists.

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474 Vyron Polydoras, “Τιµή στους 353. 000 ‘Ελληνες που εξοντώθηκαν στον Πόντο (1919-1923)” [“Honour the 353 000 Greeks who were annihilated in Pontos (1919-1923)], communiqué to the Greek diaspora, reproduced in Oikonomikos Tachydromos 2/9 1993, p. 25.
475 Ibid.
476 See Konstantinos Cholevas, “Μητρόπολη Ελληνισμού ή Ακρόπολη Ελλαδισμού;” [“Metropolis of Hellenism or Acropolis of petty Greekness?”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos, 25/3 1993, p. 16-17; Giannis Marinos, “Οι Έλληνες, η ομογένεια και το Μακεδονικό (ή όταν δεν υπάρχουν εθνικοί στρατηγικοί στόχοι)” [“The Greeks, the diaspora and the Macedonian question (or when there are no strategic goals)”), Oikonomikos Tachydromos 7/4 1994, pp. 3, 6-7; Voutira 2006, p. 400.
477 Bruneau & Papoulidis 2003, pp. 36-37.
Already in the spring of 1992, concerns were expressed that the Macedonian question was taking more than a fair share of the politicians’ time and that it was stealing attention from other urgent national issues. These concerns were more frequently expressed as time passed and the diplomatic deadlock became more profound. For the activists concerned with the promotion of the Pontian genocide issue, or for that matter anyone concerned with memory-politics related to modern and contemporary history, the heavy emphasis on ‘evidence’ for the Greek character of ancient Macedonia in the argumentation for the official Greek position in the name conflict, in Greece and abroad – basically the sort of history-writing that favoured the perspective of archaeologists and classicists – risked to backfire on their particular interests. After all, the ethnicity of Philip II and Alexander the Great were of little or no relevance to the narrative on Pontian Hellenism.

In June 1993, a petition signed by 111 scholars and intellectuals of Greek descent, working at universities abroad and/or in diaspora associations in North America and Western Europe, was published in the Greek weekly magazine Oikonomikos Tachydromos. It called for the teaching of modern and contemporary history in Greek schools as well as an abandonment of the thitherto dominant line of arguments in the name conflict. The scholars were part of a network devoted to the promotion of Greek interests – chiefly in the context of the Macedonian name dispute – and prided themselves in having organised protest rallies and written responses to various articles of “anti-Greek” content in foreign media. However, they had come to the conclusion that the attempts to inform the Greek diaspora, and by extension non-Greeks, on the historical roots of the Macedonian question and other contemporary problems Greece was facing, were severely hampered by the lack of basic knowledge of modern Greek history.

The cause of this ignorance, the petitioners argued, was to be found within the educational system of Greece, which, allegedly, assigned no time at all to the teaching of Greek history of the 19th and 20th centuries, in secondary education, due to the “politically charged events of this period” [i.e. the Civil War and other political and social upheavals]. This had the effect that Greek citizens, in Greece as well as abroad, were unable to see contemporary problems in their proper historical setting and, as a result of that, were unable to find the right arguments in disputes with “those who injure Greece either out of ignorance […] or out of designs”. Regardless of the eventual outcome of the name dispute with Skopje, the diaspora activists argued, the “Macedonian problem”, along with other issues concerning national security, would continue to haunt Greece for many years. It was therefore of the utmost importance that the young should be educated about the historical causes of the present challenges to Hellenism. For these reasons the

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478 “Η Λευκωσία φοβάται” ["Nicosia fears"], Vima 22/3 1992; Richardos Someritis,”Εμείς, ο πόλεµος και η ειρήνη” ["We, the war and the peace"], Vima 25/12 1992, p. A4.

479 Nick Hatzigeorgiou et al., "Ν’ αρχίσουµε να διδασκόµαστε τη σύγχρονη ιστορία” ["Let’s start teaching the modern history"], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 3/6 1993, p. 34.

480 Ibid.

481 Ibid.
111 proposed the immediate implementation of a history course in secondary schools, exclusively oriented toward the historical developments in Greece (and by extension, the Balkans, Europe and the rest of the world) between 1830 (the year of national independence) and 1974 (the year of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus and the transition to democracy in Greece). Special emphasis was to be put on the history and problems of the borderlands – Macedonia and Thrace – but also of Pontian Hellenism, Cyprus and the Greek diaspora.

This presumably modern approach to history, although highly ethnocentric in its scope, was also justified through references to a future convergence of European history educations, predicted to be the outcome of the rapidly growing EC cooperation. Since history education in Western countries tended to focus on the 20th century, it would, according to the petitioners, be counterproductive to Greek national interests not to teach Greek adolescents the modern history of their country. The petition was a critique on the perceived dominance of classical history in school curricula, which was pointed out as one of the main reasons for the apparent failure to successfully communicate the official Greek standpoint in the Macedonian conflict home and abroad, but it also carried a dimension having to do with present-day identity politics. The Greek diaspora, which by and large is the result of late 19th and 20th century migration, has, arguably, no place in a history discourse that only sees to ancient glories, even though the Hellenistic world that arose from Alexander’s campaigns could be construed as a predecessor to the contemporary transnational community of Greeks, venerable by the virtue of its distant location in time. A reorientation of the discourse on national history toward the modern era, however, would make it possible to highlight the narratives of suffering and forced exile around which Pontian identity, in Greece as well as overseas, was increasingly being woven.

As Robin Cohen has argued, all scholars preoccupied with the study of diasporas “recognize that the victim tradition” – i.e. the notion of victimhood through exposure to a traumatic historical event as the main cause of a certain group’s dispersal from an original homeland – “is at the heart of any definition of the concept”. Nevertheless, as Cohen continues, the concept of diaspora has in contemporary parlance come to encompass a multitude of other meanings and historical, social and economic circumstances that create diasporas around the world, for example trade or labour migration. Regardless of the varying causes behind the emergence of the present-day Greek diaspora, the notion of victimhood – exile as the result of persecutions in the historical homelands – and the prestige attributed to it, provided a powerful incentive for framing an historical narrative that paid particular attention to more recent events that Greek expatriates around


483 Cohen 1996, pp. 513-517. See also Cohen, Robin, *Global Diaspora: An Introduction*, Seattle: University of Washington Press 1997, where the author introduces a typology of global diasporas in terms of the conditions for their emergence and a distinction among such communities concerning the different causes that give rise to their subsequent trajectories.
the world could relate to.\textsuperscript{484} It was this potential that was in danger of being lost, as long as school curricula and the argumentation for the official Greek position remained fixed on antiquity.

Although the petitioners were not primarily advocates of Pontian interests and made no explicit reference to the genocide issue, save for including Pontian Hellenism among the topics that deserved special attention in history education, it is reasonable to assume that the concerns expressed in the text also reflected growing concerns among the Pontian lobbyists that their own agenda might be overshadowed, instead of served by the Macedonian question. However, the overemphasis on the ancient past could also be a benefit to the Pontian lobbyists, as the ‘archaeologist approach’ to the Macedonian question became more and more discredited, from 1993 and onwards. As the scholars Athena Skoulariki and Evangelos Kofos respectively have observed, the failure to convince foreign opinion about the accuracy of the official Greek view regarding the naming dispute, along with Greece’s growing isolation within the international community, paved way for more contemporary perspectives on the causes of the present conflict, and pragmatic suggestions for how it could be solved.\textsuperscript{485} The demise of the dominant Macedonian narrative in public debate concerning the national issues toward the mid-1990s meant that advocates of other causes at least hypothetically had the opportunity to direct public attention toward their own agendas. It is difficult to ascertain to what degree the Pontian lobbyists consciously, so to say, seized the opportunity, as public opinion grew wearied of the Macedonian question and more and more public figures sought to dissociate themselves from earlier maximalist positions. Nevertheless, the general trend in favour of conflict resolution grounded in contemporary realities, rather than justification in history, coincided with a scaling-up of the campaign for the genocide narrative and the quest for political recognition.

\textit{The Parliament’s recognition}

The scaling-up did not manifest itself so much through public debate – save for some articles written by leading lobbyists, the press made only short and sporadic references to this issue. Rather it was direct contacts between Pontian pressure groups and politicians from different parties that paved way for the Greek Parliament’s decision to acknowledge the alleged genocide and recognise the 19\textsuperscript{th} of May as a national day of remembrance, on the 24\textsuperscript{th} of February 1994,\textsuperscript{486} just one

\textsuperscript{484} The Swedish historian Johan Dietsch makes a similar observation with regard to the campaign for the recognition of the terror famine in the Ukraine 1932-33 as genocide, launched by scholars and activists among the Ukrainian diaspora in North America in the 1980s, as a way of urging the community itself “to remember the famine, in order to reinforce the notion that they, at least the third-wave of immigration, had left Ukraine because of political and cultural persecutions. Such an existential use of history simply confirmed an understood image of victimhood.” Dietsch 2006, p. 145.


week after the PASOK government’s imposition of the embargo against the
Republic of Macedonia, (which produced far more headlines in the newspapers
studied). The details of this process are therefore somewhat obscure, not in the
least because various, competing individuals and organisations concerned with the
promotion of Pontian interests ever since 1994 each claim the final success in
Parliament as the result of their own particular lobbying activity.\footnote{Deltsou 2004, pp. 277-283.}
Even scholars of Pontian identity politics disagree. According to Michel Bruneau and Kyriakos
Papoulidis, the official recognition was prepared by a group of PASOK deputies,
all of which were of Pontian descent, which secured the support of Andreas
Papandreou and the socialist parliamentary group.\footnote{Bruneu & Papoulidis 2003, p. 40.}
However, as the social
anthropologist Eleftheria Deltsou points out, the Parliament’s decision was
unanimous, which reflects the fact that representatives of all the political camps,
and regardless of descent, had been courted by the lobbyists, or offered their
services of their own accord, in return for votes.\footnote{Deltsou 2004, pp. 275-277, 282-283. See also Voutira 2006, p. 391.}

What is certain, and perhaps more important, is that the Pontian refugee
community – once the underdogs of Greek society – had been recognised as a
political and electoral force to be reckoned with, through the recognition of both
its lobby groups’ claim to historical authority and of the national and international
importance of its core issue. The promotion of the genocide narrative was all the
more effective since it met with virtually no opposition at the time – all parties
represented in the Parliament voted for the law that established the Pontian
genocide as a given historical fact. The decree was supplemented in 1996 by the
decision to publish a series of volumes with documentation that would prove the
veracity of the claim, a task which was assigned to one of KEPOME’s leading
lobbyists, the historian Konstantinos (Kostas) Fotiadis.\footnote{Apostolos Kaklamanis 1996; cited and reproduced in Charalambidis & Fotiadis 2003, pp. 117-119.}
None of the scholars dealing with the study of Pontian lobbying have, as far as I have been able to
discern, attempted to explain the apparent lack of counterarguments and
opposition to these ambitions in the public debate, in the early to mid-1990s. One
can therefore only make general assumptions about the underlying causes.

One possible explanation might be that the intellectuals, academics and
politicians who defined themselves as critics of nationalism were too preoccupied
with the Macedonian question and the ongoing war in Yugoslavia to take notice of
the genocide lobby’s push toward recognition, or object to it. This in turn ought to
be seen within the context of the general political atmosphere of the period, which
up until 1998 was marked by the quite realistic prospect of armed confrontation
with Turkey in the Aegean; this grim scenario was something that even advocates

\footnote{Apostolos Kaklamanis 1996; cited and reproduced in Charalambidis & Fotiadis 2003, pp. 117-119. It is
noteworthy that the scientific committee appointed for the peer review of this work consisted of scholars known for
their commitment to “national issues”, such as Konstantinos Vakalopoulos, Professor of History at the Aristotle
University of Thessaloniki, Neoklis Sarris, Professor of Historical Sociology at Panteio University of Social Sciences,
Athens, and Panagiotis Iliastos, Professor of International Relations and Strategic Studies, also at Panteio University.
Due to conflict, which appears to be grounded in a changed political climate as well as personal antagonisms, the
final publication of the volumes were delayed until 2004.}
of moderation in the policy toward the Republic of Macedonia, such as the editor Angelos Elefantis and the former Leftist leader Leonidas Kyrkos, took into account in their prognoses for the near future.\textsuperscript{491} It is also possible that the agenda of the “right to memory” activists was not perceived of as a cause having to do with nationalism, in spite of its connotation with the “national issues”, due to the way in which the claim was framed, namely as a critique of past policies of the Greek nation-state as well as a contemporary struggle against racism, as embodied by the “racist” Turkish state.

\textit{Tensions within the Pontian genocide narrative}

None of the scholars concerned with the identity and memory politics of the Pontian community have produced any elaborative study of the underlying framework and contents of the genocide narrative, despite its vital significance for the claim to historical authority and political recognition. It is chiefly the ways in which the memory of genocide, and memory in general, manifest themselves, through the erecting of monuments, inauguration and commemoration ceremonies, the roles played by politicians in these and how memories of the lost homelands are kept alive within the associations, that have been at the centre of attention in earlier research. Even though Deltou notes the differences between Pontian associations, when it comes to political allegiances and goals, which from time to time take the form of bitter infighting, she concludes that their “memory narratives” constitute a “uniform discourse about the past”.\textsuperscript{492} Departing from this assumption, however, entails the risk of overlooking dimensions and components of crucial importance to the understanding of how the Pontian narrative (or, to be precise, narratives) of genocide was shaped.

A detailed and consistent analysis of how this narrative was framed by and negotiated between its proponents, as well as its evolution in the course of time, would go beyond the scope of this dissertation. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to dwell in some detail upon the nature and variations of Pontian historical discourse, since it, as I have argued earlier, informs us about the parallel historical context in which the narrative(s) of Macedonia, with which it shared characteristic features, had evolved. This approach entails trying to pinpoint signs of disagreement regarding which historical facts and circumstances that ought to be emphasised in the genocide narrative, as well as turning attention to the larger historical settings that were being evoked in order to support the claim. As I have argued earlier in this chapter, this is not to be understood as a recounting of errors in this particular historiography, which is a fruitless undertaking when the subject of inquiry is the functions and uses of history; rather it is the ways in which the historical narrative are constructed and metaphors are used in order to construct meaning to the past that is of interest here.


\textsuperscript{492} Deltou 2004, pp. 268-269.
Although many agents were involved in the promotion of the claim for recognition and commemoration of the Pontian genocide, at both the individual and organisational level, the architects of the underlying narrative were a very limited number of individuals. Save for Charalambidis and Fotiadis, its most prominent advocates, in terms of published books and articles, and, as a result of that, media exposure, were the above-mentioned Polychronis Enepekidis and Vlasis Agtzidis. Also the authors Charalambos Tsirkinidis and Miltos Pagtziloglou\textsuperscript{493} can be added to this group, albeit to a lesser degree. Of these at least three were historians by profession – Enepekidis at the University of Vienna, as mentioned elsewhere, while Agtzidis and Fotiadis were employed as lecturers at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki – which, as Deltsou has noted, rendered their accounts the status and authenticity of official history.\textsuperscript{494}

The historical narrative that emerges from the various publications of said individuals is uniform, in the respect that the authors depart from the shared assumption that a genocide, aimed specifically at the Greeks of Pontos (in some accounts the entire Greek population of Asia Minor is included among the victims), took place in the second decade of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century; some time between 1908, when the Young Turks rose to power, and 1923, the year of the population exchange. The exact chronological framework of this genocide was subject to variation, mostly depending on when the author in question considered that an earlier phase of persecutions passed into full-blown genocide. There seems to have been a general agreement that the 19\textsuperscript{th} of May 1919 only marked the commencement of a new phase in an already ongoing genocide. Also, the larger historical contexts, in which the events of the 1910s were placed, and the frameworks of interpretation could vary from one writer to another. Kostas Fotiadis’ point of departure in his text from 1987, entitled “The persecutions against the Greeks of Pontos”, was the question on how it had come to pass that Asia Minor, present Turkey, once the cradle of Christianity and home of 22 million largely Greek-speaking Christians, today is synonymous with the spread of Islam. The disappearance of the Christian element from Anatolia was, according to him, to be understood as an historical process that extended across a time-span of almost a millennium, starting from the 11\textsuperscript{th} century, when the migrating Turks first came into contact with the Byzantine Empire. Ever since this first encounter, the Turks had methodically worked for the linguistic, cultural, religious and, eventually, physical annihilation of Greeks and Armenians alike, through diplomacy, violence and forced mass conversion; the Young ‘Turks’ and later the Kemalists’ persecutions against the Christian Anatolians in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century was thus only the culmination and epilogue of a vastly larger drama.\textsuperscript{495}

\textsuperscript{493} See Miltos Pagtziloglou, Η γενοκτονία των Ελλήνων και Αρμενίων της Μικράς Ασίας [The genocide of the Greeks and the Armenians of Asia Minor], Athens 1988.

\textsuperscript{494} Deltsou 2004, p. 266.

\textsuperscript{495} Kostas Fotiadis, “Οι διωγμοί των Ελλήνων του Πόντου” [”The persecutions against the Greeks of Pontos”], in Charalambidis & Fotiadis 2003 (1987), pp. 41-43. The history of religious conversion in Asia Minor had also been the topic of Fotiadis’ doctoral dissertation, Die Islamisierung Kleinasiens und die Kryptochristen des Pontos, at the University of Tübingen in 1985.
Such a perennialist perspective on Greek-Turkish animosity was not an alien concept in Greek popular perceptions of history, especially not within circles and among individuals with ties to the Church of Greece, within which the modern notion of, and emphasis on, victimhood found resonance in the traditional concept of the *neomartyres*, the “new martyrs”. These were the men and women who, from the fall of Constantinople in 1453 up until 1922, had died at the hands of the Turks and thus were thought of as having borne witness to their Christian faith. However, this approach to the Pontian tragedy, i.e. genocide as a *longue durée*, was not a prominent feature of writings dealing with the topic, whose authors rather tended to stress the contemporary setting of the events and their resemblance to other, already recognised genocides in the 20th century. It is possible that the lobbyists involved in shaping the genocide narrative thought that the emphasis on the modern context was more likely to find resonance with an international audience, but since I have not studied the claim’s reception abroad this explanation remains a more or less qualified assumption.

Most accounts of the genocide took developments that had occurred in the late Ottoman period as the point of departure. This was the case with a feature article on “[t]he unknown genocide against Pontian Hellenism”, written by Vlasis Agtzidis, that appeared in the weekly *Oikonomikos Tachydromos* in the early autumn of 1993, which can be read as a representative sample of the genocide narrative. In it, Agtzidis traced the roots of the plans for the annihilation of Anatolian Christendom in Turkish animosity toward the Greek and Armenian populations of the Empire for their economic wealth and their demands for political autonomy and democratic reform. The Young Turk movement’s coup d’état in 1908 is thus cast as countermeasures against the movement for reform. The role of German political and military support for the Young Turk regime, grounded in economic interests in the Ottoman Empire, in the years leading up to the Great War is especially stressed in this narrative (as well as in its Armenian counterpart), since it was the advice of German counsellors that proved crucial to the decision to forcibly deport Christian populations from vitally strategic areas at the outbreak of the war. The plight of the Ionians was followed in 1915 by the genocide against

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498 The German “connection” to the Young Turks’ policy versus the Christian minorities of the Empire was something that had been highlighted already in 1962 by Polychronis Enepekidis, who had claimed that the measures taken against the Greek population in Asia Minor by the Young Turks in 1914 reflected not so much “Asian methods” of governing as a “genuine European spirit made in Germany”. The concept of ‘genocide’ had not yet appeared in the discourse on the suffering of Asia Minor Greeks (nor had the emphasis on the Pontian experience as something distinct from the experience of other Anatolian Greeks) by the time when the article was written, but the choice of wording suggests that the author’s intention, although not explicitly stated, might have been the conflation of (Pontian) Greek suffering with the later Holocaust; by pointing to this common denominator between the two tragedies, the notion of Greek victimhood stood to gain from the associations evoked. However, it is also quite possible, not to say likely, that Enepekidis alluded to the suffering of Greeks during the German occupation that in the early 1960s was still in recent memory. Polychronis Enepekidis, “Οι διωγµοί των Ελλήνων του Πόντου (1908-
one and a half million Armenians, and from 1916-1923 by a similar genocide that according to Agtzidis and his colleagues claimed the lives of 350,000 Pontian Greeks. Agtzidis found the historical explanation and the motive for the genocide in the writings of a certain Colonel D. Katieniotis, who had claimed that the annihilation was carried out by the Turks with the intent to wipe out the best elements of the Greek race, namely the Pontians, whose virtues lay in the fact that they, unlike the population of mainland Greece, were uncorrupted by Western mores. 499

After dwelling in some detail on the horrors wrought upon the Pontian population, consisting mainly in the forced marches in the snow and occasional massacres, Agtzidis turned to the stories of armed resistance by Pontian men and women against their executioners. 500 Thus the Pontians were transformed from victims into heroes, feared by the Turks. All over Eastern Thrace and Asia Minor, the Greeks took up arms against their oppressors, but it was in Pontos that this movement of resistance was most widespread and successful. Agtzidis, like other Pontian history-writers, highlighted the attempts of certain Pontian activists at creating a Greek Republic of Pontos after the Ottoman defeat in the Great War, but also stressed the national loyalty of some of them, who sought the unification of Pontos with Greece. The arrival of Kemal to the Pontian lands in 1919, however, heralded the second, more intense phase of Pontian suffering.

It was in this hour of need that the Greek state, unable to see the “dynamic potential” of Pontian resistance, failed to come to their aid. The electoral defeat of Eleftherios Venizelos, the leading champion of the Great Idea, in 1920 to the royalists, who had campaigned on the promise of ending the war and disengaging from Asia Minor, sealed the fate of this struggle. The pro-royalist vote of the minorities in Northern Greece, “the Turks, the Jews and others determine[d] the future of Eastern Hellenism”, which was no longer treated as belonging to the Greek nation. In this context, Agtzidis cited the work of Georgios Ventiris (1931), who claimed that Venizelos’ responsibility for the disaster was that he ignored the necessary precondition for national completion, namely the need for coercing “old Greece”, even by force, to commit to the cause and make the necessary sacrifices. 501

After having been abandoned by Greece, and having the supply routes from Russia cut by the Bolsheviks, now in support of the Kemalists, the Pontian resistance was doomed. Despite the heroism of the Pontian fighters, the Turks were able to consummate the genocide, while further to the west of Asia Minor,

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499 Vласис Агтзидис, “Η άγνωστη γενοκτονία του Ποντιακού ελληνισµού” [“The unknown genocide against Pontian Hellenism”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 2/9 1993, p. 24. The publication cited by Agtzidis is in all likelihood Dimitrios Katheniotis, Η σύγχρονος οχύρωσις εις την άµυναν των κρατών [The contemporary fortification in the defence of states], Athens: Rythmos 1939.

500 Especially the contribution of women is highlighted, as reference is made to a certain Pelagia, who after the death of her husband took charge of the most significant guerilla group.


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the Greek frontline collapsed and Smyrna was consumed in flames. With the treaty of Lausanne in the following year, the process was brought to an end and the surviving Pontian population shipped off to Greece. The article ended in the present, by referring to demands for recognition of the Pontian genocide as “the first Greek mass attempt to condemn the processes in which the Turkish state was created”; something which was judged to be of importance in a period in which Turkey once again strived to dominate the region.

The causes of the Pontian genocide were commonly found in a particularly aggressive form of racism, which supposedly had motivated the Turkish nationalists in the early 20th century and still guided the practices of the Turkish state. Because of this racism, most of the studied authors argued, the crimes against the Pontians ought to be seen and judged in comparison with the genocides against the Armenians (especially since the perpetrators in this case were considered one and the same) and the Jews. From this comparison an often explicit equation between the ideologies of Kemalism and Nazism followed. This trend has become more profound during the 1990s and early 21st century than it was in the 1980s. Most likely, it reflects the growing international attention paid to the Holocaust after the end of the Cold War and the Pontian lobby’s campaigning for international recognition, after having secured the support of the Greek state in 1994.

Some reservation against this reading has, however, been expressed by Polychronis Enepekidis, who in an article in Kathimerini pointed to two fundamental differences between the Holocaust and the genocide against the Pontians, namely that the perpetrators in the latter case lacked the ideology and pseudoscientific world view about the supremacy of certain races inherent in National Socialism, as well as the industrial means of mass killing. While the Nazis brought their victims to concentration camps and death factories, the Turks finished off their Christian minorities in a more “Oriental” fashion through starvation and forced death marches in the snowy mountains of Pontos, in what he referred to as “a moving Auschwitz”. Nevertheless, the very choice of metaphor implies the historical context and comparison through which even Enepekidis made sense of the Pontian tragedy. “[The] Pontian genocide must pass into the history books, just as the ‘Holocaust of the Jews’ and just as the ‘Armenian genocide’ must be recognized internationally. [The] Greek and Armenian genocide[s] are twin tragedies”.

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503 Polychronis Enepekidis, “Αουσβιτς εν ροή η ποντιακή γενοκτονία” [“The Pontian genocide a moving Auschwitz”], Kathimerini 17/8 1997, p. 24. Enepekidis was not only a pioneer for what was to become the Pontian genocide narrative, but also a scholar of the wartime Jewish tragedy in occupied Greece. There was thus a link between the two phenomena in his research interests. The view, proposed by Enepekidis, that the differences between the Turkish nationalists and the Nazis, in terms of the ideological motivation for genocide, must be taken into account when comparison is made between the Pontian genocide and the Holocaust, has later been adopted by Konstantinos Fotiadis, in a textbook concerning national issues for the upper secondary school’s eligible history course. See Konstantinos Fotiadis, “Παρευξείνιος Ελληνισµός” [“Black Sea Hellenism”] in Maria Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou et al., Θέµατα Ιστορίας [Issues of History], Athens: Organismos Ekdoseos Didaktikon Vivlion 2002, p. 244.
Whether explained through reference to racist ideology or not, the existence of the Pontian genocide was a fact that was generally agreed upon among the above mentioned writers, as was the moral responsibility of the present-day Turkish state. However, a closer reading of the publications on the “Pontian question” reveals signs of disagreement and conflicting views on the past, which indicate that the memory discourse was less uniform than earlier research suggests. The “right to memory” movement had emerged during the 1980s, in a climate of socialist rule and attempts at re-writing official history through the inclusion of perspectives associated with the Left, among whose rank and file several of the leading Pontian activists had their ideological background.

Especially the writings of Michalis Charalambidis, who had coined the rallying slogan and initiated the campaign for recognition of the 19th of May as the day of remembrance, reflected a predominantly Leftist, anti-imperialist perception of Greek and international history. Charalambidis had fled the country during the junta period and had even served as a member of PASOK’s Central Committee in the late 1970s, before leaving the ‘movement’ due to disagreements. This legacy was expressed in numerous references to the rights and the memory of the people, as opposed to the logic of the establishment that only sees to the interests of states and great powers – in the Greek case manifested in the adherence to NATO and the policies of various rightwing governments throughout the interwar and postwar periods.\(^\text{504}\) This perspective also had repercussions on Charalambidis’ perception of the (Pontian) Greek minority’s situation in the Soviet Union. According to him, the “great October Revolution” in 1917, in which many Pontians had participated, had come as liberation for the Pontian population in Russia and the Caucasus, who under Bolshevik rule for the first time in centuries enjoyed cultural, political and national liberty. Even though Charalambidis mentioned in passing that persecutions were carried out against them during “the dark moments of 1937”, and once again in 1947, for “reasons […] that we cannot understand”, in spite of their services and heroism in the “Great Patriotic War against Fascism”, his belief that the Soviet Union was the one country that had solved the national question on the basis of equality, liberty and the “respect for the national identity of a people” remained unaltered in his manifesto on the “right to memory”.\(^\text{505}\) He further clarified this view by stating that the history of the Pontians in the Soviet Union must not be allowed to become the subject of anti-Soviet propaganda, in the service of “forces alien to the interests of the Pontian people”.\(^\text{506}\) Even if the Greek state and the Soviet Union had a moral obligation to defend the rights of this victimised group, it was the Turkish state alone that was to be held accountable for the crimes committed against Pontian Hellenism.\(^\text{507}\)

\(^\text{504}\) See, for example, Michalis Charalambidis, Για την αυτοδιαμόρφωση - επαναθεμελίωση της ελληνικής αριστεράς [For the self-formation – re-foundation of the Greek Left], Athens: Stocìastis 1982; ibid., Πώς μπορεί να χειρεθεί η αριστερά [How the Left might govern], Athens: Stocìastis 1986.


\(^\text{506}\) Ibid., p. 35.

\(^\text{507}\) Ibid., p. 29, 36.
The collapse of the Soviet Union and the coming of the so-called “new refugees” after 1989, however, perhaps inevitably brought attention to the atrocities committed by the Stalinist regime against these ‘brethren’ during the Great Terror of the 1930s. This paved the way for a different perspective on Pontian history, which apart from the demonisation of the Turks and the slaughtering of the Greek state establishment, highlighted the role played by Moscow in the Pontian tragedy and, by implication, its followers in the Greek Left, notably KKE. According to this branch of Pontian history-writing, the Pontian Greeks of Russia had since Czarism been the target of Greater Russian racist policies, aimed at the extinction of their language and cultural identity. In the words of Vlasis Agtzidis, this ought to serve as an example of “the limitations of Greek-Russian relations and the range of the common Orthodox traditions”. The purges of the 1930s were to be understood as a continuation of these policies, as the Pontian Greeks were branded a counterrevolutionary nation and as many as 50,000 fell victim to what was referred to as “the Stalinist genocide against the Greeks”. Thus it was not only one genocide against Pontian Hellenism but two that the public in Greece and the rest of the world supposedly had been kept in the dark about. Even if this second genocide could not rival the supremacy that was given to the first within Pontian circles, it did raise awkward questions about the Greek Left, which was accused of having contributed to the perceived, official silence about the “Pontian question”, and the ordeals of other Greek minorities in Eastern Europe, for ideological reasons – just as the Left was accused of having done with regard to the Macedonian question.

The allegation of ideologically motivated collaboration with the nation’s enemies was also reflected in the narrative of the Kemalists’ annihilation of the Pontian Greeks, where the Bolsheviks’ support to the Turkish nationalist movement after the treaty of Brest-Litovsk and the Entente powers’ intervention in the Russian Civil War was highlighted, as was the Greek communists’ resistance against the “imperialist” war against the Turks in the period 1919-1922. This latter was seen as having sabotaged the Pontian resistance and contributed to the Greek defeat in Asia Minor. This view was chiefly propagated by historian Vlasis Agtzidis – who himself had a background in Leftist circles, which rendered him accusations of ideological betrayal – and adopted by the conservative editor of

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508 Vlasis Agtzidis, “Ε, όχι κριτική και από τους Ρώσους!” [“Hey, not criticism from the Russians too!”], *Oikonomikos Tachydromos* 2/6 1994, pp. 37-38. The author’s remark on the limited value of a unifying Orthodox Christian heritage can also be seen as a warning contribution to the ongoing struggle for the Greek identity of the diaspora, in view of the Pan-Orthodox challenge. Cf. Roudometof & Kalpathakis 2002, pp. 41-54.


511 Vlasis Agtzidis, “Η άγνωστη γενοκτονία του Ποντιακού ελληνισµού” [“The unknown genocide against Pontian Hellenism”], *Oikonomikos Tachydromos* 2/9 1993, pp. 22.

512 See the leftwing editors of *Iós tis Kyriakís* (Kostopoulos, Trimis, Psarras), “Οι εθνοσωτήρες σώζουν πάλι το έθνος” [“The nation-saviours are saving the nation again”) and “Με σηµαία το ράσο” [“With the cassock as banner”].
Oikonomikos Tachydromos, Giannis Marinos, whose magazine provided a platform whereby Agtzidis and others could launch their agitation for the recognition of the Pontian genocide, albeit in a rightwing form.

Thus the “Pontian question”, along with the Macedonian question, at least by some was used as a rhetorical weapon in the history war against what was often described as the Left’s “ideological terror” in political discourse as well as within the educational system. Those who initially might have hoped that the Pontian question and the struggle for the “right to memory” would serve to invigorate the Left were mistaken; the elevation of the genocide issue among the “national issues” meant that it too was made an arena for contesting interpretations and claims on historical authority in the war over the past between different political camps.

Shared and opposing martyrdoms: the case of the Jews

Conflicting views reflecting ideologically driven disagreement were not the only tensions to emerge in conjunction with the Pontian narrative of genocide. Agtzidis’ reference to the impact of Stalinist terror, as an additional cause of Pontian suffering, as well as the rhetorical equation of Kemalism and Nazism point to the importance of other national contexts in Pontian lobbyists’ attempts to make sense of their community’s history. As noted earlier in this chapter, the emphasis on genocide in the identity politics of the Pontian associations reflected the impact of international developments, where the Holocaust had witnessed a revival in public discourse and its moral lessons had been universalised, i.e. detached from its traditional association with the Jewish and applied to various other contexts. Just as the Pontian genocide lobby attached their core issue to that of other “national issues” in Greece, in the international arena its proponents needed to demonstrate the resemblance of their group’s victimhood to that of other communities, better known, which in this case was the Armenians and the Jews.

The Holocaust had by the 1980s turned into the emblem of fundamental evil and suffering, and as such the means of measurement according to which other horrors and atrocities were judged. It is this function of the Jewish tragedy as the emblematic genocide of all time that suggests the relevance of further exploration into how the Holocaust was used as a metaphor for understanding another tragedy deemed to have similar characteristics, if not to be of similar magnitude. The

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513 See especially Giannis Marinos, “Οι ‘Ελληνες, η ομογένεια και το Μακεδονικό (ή όταν δεν υπάρχουν εθνικοί στρατηγικοί στόχοι)” [“The Greeks, the diaspora and the Macedonian question (or when there are no strategic goals)"], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 7/4 1994, pp. 3, 6-7.
rercuring comparisons of Pontian suffering with that of the Jews during the Holocaust, deployed by the Pontian lobbyists as a way of making sense of the genocide and promoting a particular narrative about it, suggest this to be the case. However, such metaphors were not limited to just the Pontian context. Explicit comparisons between the suffering of the Jewish people and that of the Greeks, almost to the point of stating the existence of a common destiny, emerged from time to time in the Greek mainstream press during the 1990s. This shared fate was all the more intensely felt by some, due to the perceived isolation of the country within the European Community that had resulted from Greece’s support for the Serbian side in the ongoing Bosnian war and the differences over Macedonia. “[W]e are to the West the new Jews of the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century”, a teacher wrote in a letter to the editor, in which he interpreted the negative coverage on the Macedonian dispute in foreign media and the general animosity toward Greece as signs of a new “anti-Hellenism” that had come to replace anti-Semitism in the West’s eternal quest for scapegoats.516

Nevertheless, the Holocaust was also an event that had affected Greece in more profound ways, especially Greek Macedonia and its capital Thessaloniki, home to a sizable Jewish population before the Second World War. The history of this group, and of the Nazis’ annihilation of it, was to a certain degree interconnected with the history of the Macedonian question, even if this dimension rarely emerged in the writings concerning that topic. This is an additional reason for addressing it, if only briefly, when analysing the Pontian discourse on genocide and contextualising the Macedonian conflict.

The incorporation of the Holocaust into various national historical cultures, as means of creating common standards in the attempt of writing a unified European history, has in recent years drawn the attention of several scholars, associated with the research project “The Holocaust and European historical culture”.517 Of their studies, it is particularly the work of Johan Dietsch, Making Sense of Suffering – Holocaust and Holodomor in Ukrainian Historical Culture,518 which is of interest here, since it deals with a phenomenon that is to a large extent related to the identity- and memory politics of the Pontian Greek community. Dietsch explores not only how this historical event has been represented in history textbooks and school curricula in Ukraine after independence, but also – more importantly – how it is portrayed in relation to another tragedy, the manmade famine of 1932-1933. Interpreted as aimed at the Ukrainians in particular, it has become a focal point of Ukrainian historical discourse around which national identity is woven. In this process, the author pays particular attention to how the narrative of scholars and Ukrainian diaspora activists in the West on this ‘national’ suffering was reshaped in the early 1980s due to the impact of Holocaust debates.

518 Dietsch 2006.
In [...] the Western world, the famine attained its meaning, or rather was brought to
sense, from a conscious comparison, or perhaps rather conflation with the
Holocaust. By relating it to an already prominent and well-known genocide, the
famine stood to gain from short-hand associations, that is a sort of transfer effect or
inference. Certainly, this treatment was only possible in a societal context in which
there already existed discussions on the Jewish tragedy.519

Dietsch’s observation of the conditions and memory-political realities Ukrainian
émigré scholars in the West were facing when working for the recognition of ‘their’
genocide, might very well be applicable to the Greek diaspora activists concerned
with the promotion of Greek identity-political claims, whether they concerned
claims on Macedonia’s name and heritage or the Pontian genocide narrative, in
North America, Australia and Western Europe; societies where public discussions
on the Holocaust and, presumably, public awareness, undoubtedly existed at the
time that this study is concerned with.520

The question remains as to what degree this was also the case in Greece.
Although several scholars have taken an interest in the history of the Jewish
communities in what today constitutes Greece in recent years, and especially how
the “Final Solution” played out there,521 no study similar in scope to the research
project “The Holocaust and European historical culture” has, to my knowledge, yet
been written on the Greek context. Information on how the Jewish tragedy has
been incorporated into national historical discourse is, at best, given in the form of
statements, based on general assumptions. The Austrian-Greek historian Hagen
Fleischer has thus noted that the annihilation of the Jews during the Second World
War in Greece, just as in other Eastern European countries like Poland and Russia,
has not been considered as more of a dramatic event than the losses suffered by the
populations of said countries in general.522 A reason for this might be found in the
existence and predominance of local victim traditions and historical narratives
revolving around the suffering of the nation in these contexts, among which the
notion of a particular Jewish tragedy, separate from the hardships endured by the
non-Jewish peoples under Axis rule, face difficulties to gain common acceptance.
This is especially, as Dietsch has aptly shown with regard to Ukrainian historical
culture, in cases of competing narratives, where an emphasis on the ordeal of the
Jews might be perceived as undermining the tragic conceptualisation of the
majority population’s past.523

In the case of Greece, the selective official amnesia that surrounded the
occupation and Civil War of the 1940s, which up until the early 1980s were more
or less excluded from the school history curricula, also might have contributed to

519 Ibid., p. 143.
520 Cf. MacDonald 2008.
521 See Mazower 2001 (1993); Mazower 2005; Fleming, K. E., Greece: A Jewish history, Princeton: Princeton University
Press 2008. See also Liakos 2004, p. 377, footnotes 84-85 for a list of recent Greek publications on Greek Jewry.
522 Hagen Fleischer, "The Past Beneath the Present. The Resurgence of World War II Public History After the
Collapse of Communism: A Stroll Through the International Press", Historin, 4 2003-2004, p. 94. See also ibid., Οι
πόλεμοι της μνήμης: Ο 2ος Παγκόσμιος Πόλεμος στη δημόσια ιστορία [The wars of memory: The 2nd World War in public history],
keeping discussions on the wartime annihilation of the Jews – which, admittedly, even in a wider, international context is a rather recent phenomenon – out of the public sphere. An indication of this can be found in an article written in late July 1993 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the deportation of Thessaloniki’s Jewish population to Auschwitz. In this article, the journalist Vasilis Thasitis pointed out to his readers that the Jews had suffered the same horrors – in the form of starvation and mass executions – as the Greeks during the German occupation, while at the same time giving an account which suggested the unique character of the Jewish tragedy, as the Greek Jews were singled out from the rest of the population, for the purpose of extermination.524

The eventual impact of the Holocaust on Greek historical culture or absence thereof is something that cannot be discussed or explored without considering how the historical Jewish presence in the territories that today make up Greece as a whole has been incorporated into the state narrative. As historian Katherine E. Fleming has pointed out, a history of the Jews of Greece is by and large a history of the Judeo-Spanish-speaking Jews of Thessaloniki, who prior to 1912 had no reason at all to think of themselves as Greek Jews.525 Thessaloniki, once the “Mother of Israel”, a centre of Sephardic Jewry and its branch of rabbinic learning, had for centuries been the home of one of the largest Jewish communities in the Balkans, which, in terms of percentage of the total population at the beginning of the 20th century, made it one of the largest Jewish cities in the world. The expulsion of the Muslim element in 1923, the simultaneous mass influx of Asia Minor refugees and the rapid Hellenisation process of the interwar period significantly altered the demographic composition of the city, but the Jews still formed a sizeable part of Thessaloniki’s population when the German occupation began. Within a few years approximately 90% of the city’s (and the entire country’s) Jewish population had perished. After the liberation, many of the few that had survived the concentration camps and made it back to Greece, or went out of hiding, opted for Palestine or America, in order to avoid conscription into the Greek army at the eve of the Civil War.526 At the end of the 20th century, only 5000 Jews still remained in Greece, roughly 1200 of which lived in Thessaloniki.527

Today, the Jewish communities of Thessaloniki and Athens are active in preserving and documenting their past, as well as advocating for Jewish rights in Greece. During the first years of the 21st century, the efforts of these groups as well as Greek responsiveness toward international initiatives led the government to acknowledge the contribution of the Greek Jews to national history, which has mostly focussed on the losses suffered by their community during the occupation. In 2004, for the first time ever, the Holocaust Remembrance Day on the 27th of

524 Vasilis Thasitis, “Η γενοκτονία των Εβραίων της Θεσσαλονίκης: 50 χρόνια μετά το μεγάλο φονικό 50,000 συνανθρώπων μας” [“The genocide against the Jews of Thessaloniki: 50 years after the great murder of 50 000 of our fellow human beings”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 29/7 1993, pp. 77-80.
525 Fleming 2008, pp. 6-8, 51.
526 Ibid., pp. 183-189.
January, which marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by Soviet forces, was observed in Greece.\textsuperscript{528}

In the 1990s though, these developments had yet to unfold. On the contrary, the Jewish community’s insignificance in numbers, both at the local and national level, and the nationalising tendency in contemporary, popularised history-writing relating to Greek Macedonia’s and Thessaloniki’s past, which revolved around the notion that this region and its capital never had been anything else than predominantly Greek, seemed to work against the incorporation of the Jewish experience into the state narrative. “How many of us know, for example, that when the Greek army entered Thessaloniki in 1912 the majority of her population was Jews?”, leftwing student activists accusingly asked in a manifesto condemning nationalism and the February rally for Macedonia’s eternal Greekness in Thessaloniki.\textsuperscript{529}

Nevertheless, assuming that the history of the Jews was entirely excluded from official narratives and public discourse on national and regional history in Greece at the time would be misleading, which the references to Jewish suffering in many writings suggest. Nor would it be anything but misleading to assume that the smallness of the Jewish community meant that it lacked means to pursue a memory-political agenda of its own and to stake a place in the historical narrative about Macedonia that was being promoted in Greece and abroad.

Hints at how this was, or could be, achieved are to be found, among others, in the diaries of the Thessalonikan journalist Faidon Giagiozis, who had spearheaded the creation of the Macedonian Committee. In his entry for the 17\textsuperscript{th} of January 1992, Giagiozis writes of how he was contacted by Heinz Kounio, a leading representative of the Jewish community and a Holocaust survivor,\textsuperscript{530} and was asked to undertake the promotion of the planned 500\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the expulsion of the Sephardic Jews from Spain and their coming to Thessaloniki.\textsuperscript{531} Giagiozis, who elsewhere in his diaries has written extensively about his sense of admiration for the Jewish people, evoked during a trip to Israel in 1989, and his sympathy and pity for the fate of his city’s Jews, accepted the task.\textsuperscript{532} Nothing is being said in the published version of the diaries about the details of the agreement, but one wonders if it was entirely coincidental that Kounio’s request was made at the time when the Macedonian Committee was being constituted. Giagiozis hints at the existence of a quid pro quo understanding, as he in his diary entry for the 19\textsuperscript{th} of February 1992, five days after the grand rally, makes specific reference to a meeting between the Macedonian Committee and the Thessalonikan Jewish community’s Board of Trustees. During this meeting the members of the former expressed their

\textsuperscript{528} Fleming 2008, p. 205.

\textsuperscript{529} “Si vis pacem, para pacem (αν θέλεις ειρήνη, αντιστάσου στον πόλεµο!)” ["If you want peace, make a stand against war!"] , unpublished leaflet by Kinisi Aristeron Filosofikis (Κ.Α.Φ.), Athens, March 1992.

\textsuperscript{530} Heinz Salvator Kounio, Εζήσα το θάνατο [I lived through death], Thessaloniki 1981. See also Erika Kounio-Amarilio, Πενήντα χρόνια μετά: Αναµνήσεις µιας Σαλονιώτισσας Εβραίας [Fifty years later: Recollections of a Salonican Jewess], Thessaloniki: Paratiritis 1995, pp. 163-164.

\textsuperscript{531} Giagiozis 2000, p. 293.

\textsuperscript{532} Ibid., pp. 231-239, 293.
gratitude for the contribution to the cause that the latter had done by sending the Committee’s resolution on Macedonia to Jewish synagogues around the world.533 Like the Pontian associations, the Jewish communities, arguably, stood to benefit from aligning their cause to the dominant position in Greece with regard to the Macedonian name conflict. The reasons for doing so, and thereby displaying loyalty toward the nation, were in their case, however, even more pressing, due to the Greek Jews’ outsider status in a society where national identity traditionally – and during the early 1990s even increasingly – was being equated with religious affiliation, i.e. the belonging to Orthodox Christendom.

An illuminating example of how the Macedonian question could be used in order to promote the agenda of a religious minority in such a societal context appears in an edition of *Oikonomikos Tachydromos* in January 1993. It was a statement, signed by Nisim Maïs and Mousis Konstantinis, chairman and general secretary, respectively, of the Jewish Central Council of Greece and addressed to various Jewish organisations of Europe, Australia and the United States. In it a variety of sources and statements made by allegedly authoritative ‘Jewish’ figures, ranging from the prophets Daniel and Isaiah to Henry Kissinger, were listed as evidence in support of the present Greek position in the dispute over Macedonia’s name and heritage. “Jewish religion and philology constitute the unquestionable witnesses of the ancient ethnological character of the Macedonians as Greeks”, Maïs and Konstantinis wrote and referred to passages in the Old Testament and texts by Flavius Josephus, Philo of Alexandria, Maimonides and “numerous well-known rabbis”, where the Macedonian Alexander was identified as a Greek, something that modern Jewish scholars in Israel and Europe were said to have confirmed.534 This list of “unquestionable witnesses” was, according to the English version of the statement, dated the 8th of January 1993 and reproduced in Nikolaos Martis’ appeal addressed to the international scholarly community (1995),535 cited from Martis’ *The Falsification of Macedonian History*, and thus not the result of the Central Council’s own inquiries into the history of Greek-Jewish relations. Rather it might be seen in the context of the sort of performative patriotism that the name conflict gave rise to in Greece, in which professional guilds, unions, associations, business corporations etc. felt compelled to make their national solidarity public by adopting the arguments of the Macedonian Committee as their own.

However, in doing so, by presenting what was perceived as tokens of friendship between Jews and Greeks, ancient and modern, such as the Talmud’s mention of “the friendly meeting between Alexander the Great and the High Priest Simon the Just on the former’s entry into Jerusalem in the year 333 BC” and Maimonides’ recognition of the impact Greek learning had had on Judaism, and vice versa, Maïs and Konstantinis were able to demonstrate that the history of Macedonia and Hellenism belonged to the Jews as well. The immediate benefit of

533 Ibid., p. 309.
534 “Ενηµερωτική διεθνώς εκστρατεία των Εβραίων για τη Μακεδονία” [“The Jews’ international campaign for Macedonia”], *Oikonomikos Tachydromos* 28/1 1993, p. 71.
presenting a positive image of perennial friendship was evident from the editor’s introductory passage, in which the Jewish Central Council of Greece was being commended for its “impressive initiative” to inform its co-religionists abroad on the Greekness of Macedonia. “Almost everyone [is] against Greece, except for the Jews!”

Such utterances of recognition and sympathy toward the Jews of Greece in a prominent national magazine, as well as in other media, were undoubtedly needed. As the international media’s coverage of the conflict between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia, as well as the pro-Serb sentiment frequently expressed in the former country, grew increasingly negative, something that in the overwhelming part of Greek print and other media was interpreted as the outside world’s outright hostility against Greece, signs of tension began to emerge in the field of inter-communal relations. The journalist Faidon Giagiozis mentioned in passing, in his diary entry for the 28th of June 1992, the dismay within the Macedonian Committee that an article containing what he labelled “historical inaccuracies about the Macedonian question” in a French magazine provoked. “Some people tell me that Jews are behind this publication”, Giagiozis wrote, adding that this was something that Stelios Papatemelis, member of the Committee and as a deputy of PASOK one of the leading champions of the campaign for Macedonia’s Greekness, was particularly outraged about.

Anti-Semitism was perhaps inevitable in the climate fostered by the Macedonian conflict, which both nourished and fed on conspiracy theories, in spite of occasional reassurances of the bonds that united Greeks and Jews. Giagiozis, for example, wrote sympathetically of the Salonikan Jews’ initiatives in 1993 to commemorate the Nazis’ annihilation of their community 50 years earlier, but had nothing to say in his diaries about the Greek government’s decision to boycott the commemorative ceremony at Auschwitz on the anniversary of its liberation two years later, on the grounds that the Republic of Macedonia would be represented there under the flag with the contested Star of Vergina. The decision made it painstakingly clear that official Greece at the time deemed the symbols of ancient Macedonia and the contemporary bone of contention with a neighbouring country (as well as the domestic support for the governing PASOK) to be of greater importance than the victims of the Holocaust.

536 "Ενημερωτική διεθνώς εκστρατεία των Εβραίων για τη Μακεδονία" ["The Jews’ international campaign for Macedonia"], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 28/1 1993, p. 71. This text has recently been reproduced on the Pontian Leftist homepage “Πόντος και Αριστερά” ["Pontos and Left"], where it is being referred to as evidence of the eternal bond between Jews and Greeks, and of international Jewry’s unanimous support for the Greek position in the Macedonian conflict. In this capacity, it is also explicitly framed as a counterargument against anti-Semitism in Greece. See the article "Οι Εβραίοι για το Μακεδονικό" ["The Jews on the Macedonian question"], published on the 1/3 2008: http://pontosandaristera.wordpress.com/2008/03/01/1-3-2008/#more-1576, accessed 22/9 2009.
538 Ibid., p. 347-348.
539 Strong criticism against this decision came from historian Filippos Iliou in the leftwing Avgi, who nevertheless stressed its character of “insult against the dead of the anti-Fascist struggle and the victims of Fascist racism” rather than as a token of anti-Semitism, thus reflecting an interpretation, predominant within leftwing historiography, that has tended to view the crimes of Fascism/Nazism as crimes against either mankind or its ideological foes, rather
The boycott against the international remembrance ceremony is less likely to have been motivated by any particular malevolence toward Jewry, as much as it reflected anti-Western sentiment and government officials’ efforts to appease a popular opinion that had grown frustrated with the West’s perceived lack of sensitivity toward the national interests of Greece. Nevertheless, it did point to the uneasiness of popular Greek attitudes toward Jews and things Jewish. These attitudes were not the product of the Macedonian conflict of the 1990s, but could be traced back to the anti-Americanism and, by extension, anti-Zionism of the preceding decades that thrived in mainstream Greek press and were to be found across the political spectrum, though perhaps predominantly within the Left, as well as among certain clergymen of the Church. Only as late as 1990, when Konstantinos Mitsotakis formed his conservative government, the state of Israel was officially recognised by Greece.

That public opinion and foreign policy reflected strongly anti-Israeli sentiment with regard to the Palestinian question is not per se evidence of an anti-Semitic societal climate in Greece. However, the tendency to conflate Zionism with Judaism in mainstream media (which, admittedly, is inherent in Zionism itself) meant that little care was taken to distinguish between Israel, its policies and supporters, and Jews in general. This has, together with the strengthening of diplomatic ties between Israel and Turkey, as Katherine E. Fleming has put it in her study of Greek Jewry, “helped to sustain and perpetuate various forms of anti-Semitism”. Gallup polls carried out in March 1986, and cited in by the editorial group Iós tis Kyriakís of the daily Eleftherotypia in the spring of 1992, revealed the extent of anti-Jewish attitudes among a good part of the general population. The Iós editors, whose trademark is the revelation of inconvenient truths related to Greece’s turbulent history and the positioning of themselves as critics of nationalism and the national policies of the rightwing establishment, referred to these data in a piece on the history of Greek anti-Semitism, occasioned by the 500th anniversary of the Jews’ expulsion from Sepharad (the Iberian peninsula). In their article, an image was produced of almost perennial enmity between Greeks and Jews, rooted in social and economic competition within the Ottoman Empire — which stood in sharp contrast to the rhetoric of friendship expressed elsewhere in media and political discourse. The editors had delved into the history of these

540 Fleming 2008, p. 206. This did, however, not prevent the journalist Gerasimos Apostolatos from presenting evidence in an article written on the occasion of Shimon Peres’ visit to Greece in 1993, which was said to prove that the Greek statesman Eleftherios Venizelos, and by extension Greece, had been the first to express support for the Balfour declaration on a Jewish national home in 1917, something that the journalist remarked that all Jews and Israelis ought to know, and, implicitly, show gratitude toward Greece for. Gerasimos Apostolatos, “Ο Ελευθέριος Βενιζέλος πρώτος υποστήριξε τη δημιουργία ελεύθερου εβραϊκού κράτους” [“Eleftherios Venizelos the first to support the creation of a free Jewish state”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 2/12 1993.

541 According to these polls, 57% of the respondents declared that they did not trust Jews, 49% that they did not wish to see a Jew run for Parliament and 43% that they would not seek medical assistance from a Jewish doctor. Iós tis Kyriakís (Kostopoulos, Trimitis, Psarras), “Δεν έμειναν ούτε τα µνήµατα” [“Not even the graves remained”], Eleftherotypia 3/5 1992, section F, pp. 46-50.

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ethno-religious categories’ inter-communal relations and related outbursts of pogroms and anti-Semitism as far back as the 16th century. Particular emphasis was put on the massacres against Muslims and Jews carried out by Christian Greek insurrectionists in 1821, and the so-called Campbell riots in 1931, when a Christian mob ramped through Jewish quarters in Thessaloniki. Especially the interwar period was highlighted as a period when the cosmopolitanism of Thessaloniki’s Jews came under attack from the forces of nationalism, as Northern Greece became “the hotbed of fascist-leaning or even openly Nazi paramilitary groups”, thus simultaneously implying a historical continuity from these to the contemporary nationalists operating in this city.\footnote{Ibid.} The \textit{Iäs} editors’ critical narrative of Greek-Jewish relations and especially their interest in attempting to expose the historical connection between anti-Semitism and rightwing extremism in Greek Macedonia – an alternative perspective on national history that was quite exceptional in the mainstream press at the time – are noteworthy since they point to an underlying tension that also had surfaced in some versions of the Pontian genocide narrative. This was specifically the case in the lobbyist Vlasis Agtzidis’ feature article in \textit{Oikonomikos Tachydromos}, cited earlier in this chapter, in which the votes of Thessaloniki’s Jews, along with those of the Muslims, in the 1920 elections were portrayed as an ultimate cause of the subsequent Asia Minor disaster and thus liable for the tragic destiny of “Eastern Hellenism”.\footnote{Vlasis Agtzidis, “Η άγνωστη γενοκτονία του Ποντιακού ελληνισµού” [“The unknown genocide against Pontian Hellenism”], \textit{Oikonomikos Tachydromos} 2/9 1993, p. 26.} Even if the resentment of Agtzidis primarily was directed at “old Greece” and the royalists, considerable blame for the catastrophe was thus also put on the ethnic and religious minorities of Northern Greece.

This scapegoating of ‘inner enemies’ for national shortcomings was per se a phenomenon that predated the 1922 disaster, but the dramatic changes in demographics in the wake of the refugee tragedy had worsened conditions and added a dimension of modern anti-Semitism in daily inter-communal disputes. The Jews of Thessaloniki, who had been particularly harshly hit by the great fire that had devastated large parts of the city in 1917 and left them increasingly marginalised as the process of property restitution dragged on for years, and the Asia Minor refugees, struggling to secure their survival in the new homeland, soon found themselves pitted against each other in economic competition. Despite good intentions on the part of Greece’s political establishment to safeguard the rights of the minorities that had remained within the borders after the population exchange, in accordance with the League of Nations’ norms, the fact that Greek authorities perceived of themselves as having a nationalising mission in the newly won lands of the North, meant that they tended to side with the refugees, whose Greekness, contrary to what was the case with the Jews, lay in their adherence to Orthodox Christendom. It was well known that the overwhelming part of Thessaloniki’s Jews back in 1912 would have preferred the continuation of Ottoman rule, or political
autonomy, to the incorporation into Greece, and after the forced exodus of the Muslims in 1923, they remained as the sole representatives of and link to the city’s Ottoman past, so actively shunned in national historical imagination. In the eyes of many refugees, themselves the targets of native Greek xenophobia, the presence of and rivalry with the city’s Jewish community served to remind them of their recent suffering at the hands of the Turks in Asia Minor and led them to join the ranks of ultranationalist organisations, such as the National Union of Greece (EEE), which grew prominent in the late 1920s and early 1930s.345

Another factor that contributed to the growth of anti-Semitism in the interwar period was the appeal the KKE had among parts of the Jewish population, apart from the support it drew from the refugee community, a party which at the time paid at least lip-service to the Communist International’s unanimous support for an autonomous Macedonian state. By the logic of guilt by association, this, together with pro-Ottoman sentiments expressed in the recent past, was taken as evidence of the Jews’ perceived anti-Hellenism and the existence of a Zionist conspiracy to part Macedonia from Greece. This view was the cornerstone of the Thessaloniki daily Makedonia’s editorial policy, serving as the then mouthpiece of EEE. The Campbell riots in June 1931, when the inter-communal tensions reached their boiling point and burst into violence, were largely the result of allegations printed in Makedonia based upon (unfounded) rumours of recent contacts in Sofia between a member of Maccabi, a Zionist sport association in Thessaloniki, and Bulgarian komitadjis plotting for the annexation of Greek Macedonia.546

There was, in other words, a history of tensions between the Jewish and the Asia Minor refugee communities of Thessaloniki, both the subjects of marginalisation in interwar Greek society, albeit for different reasons, which threatened to surface in Pontian memory narrative as well as in public discourse concerning the Macedonian question. Whether it was intentional or not, Agtzidis, by means of his heavy and seemingly uncritical reliance upon literature from the 1920s and 1930s, reproduced the anti-Semitic perceptions of this period concerning the causes of the national disaster, in a way that ran the danger of undermining the narrative of shared victimhood and the tragic conceptualisation of the Pontian past. Historical cultures, as Dietsch argues, incorporate events and processes into a narrative within which it makes sense, but “some […] events are of such a critical nature that they can force a reconceptualisation of the relationship between past, present and future”.547 The Holocaust, here understood as a specifically Jewish tragedy, is one such event that might challenge the national and ethnocentric conceptualisation of history and victimhood. Narratives of shared martyrdom, if pushed too far, might turn into opposing martyrdoms, in which Jewish and Pontian Greek, as well as other Greek, victims risk being locked in competition with each other. Although it is far from obvious that journalists, politicians, history-writers

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345 EEE was dissolved by the dictator Ioannis Metaxas after 1936, but was resurrected by the SS during the German occupation. Mazower 2001 (1993), p. 238.
and other agents involved in memory-politics made deliberate calculations of this sort, this too might explain the absence or the very partial incorporation of the Holocaust, as well as the historical presence of the Greek Jews, into dominant Greek historical culture.

The earlier cited article by Vasilis Thasitis, written on occasion of the 50\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the annihilation of Thessaloniki’s Jews in 1943, is a telling example of how the tragedy was mobilised to make sense of contemporary events and which function the victims were deployed to perform in a nationalist reading of past and present.\footnote{Vasilis Thasitis, “Η γενοκτονία των Εβραίων της Θεσσαλονίκης: 50 χρόνια μετά το μεγάλο φονικό 50,000 συνανθρώπων μας” [“The genocide against the Jews of Thessaloniki: 50 years after the great murder of 50 000 of our fellow human beings”], \textit{Oikonomikos Tachydromos} 29/7 1993, pp. 77-80.} Thasitis’ account of the Final Solution in Greece was fairly detailed, even to the point of naming anti-Semites in the quisling press who were instrumental in preparing the ground for the deportations. Great emphasis was furthermore put on pointing out the positive impact that the Jews had on Thessaloniki in the 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, in terms of bringing bourgeois culture and cosmopolitan values to the city, as well as on what was portrayed as the peaceful cohabitation of Jews and Greeks, and on the efforts made by Christian Greeks to save the former from the persecutions. Thasitis’ use of history in his reference to the non-Greek heritage of Thessaloniki points to a phenomenon that was also to be found in other writings, namely the situational appropriation of the past, in which the capital city of Greek Macedonia is being celebrated for its cosmopolitanism in certain contexts, while its history elsewhere is made synonymous with eternal Hellenism.\footnote{See for example the proclamation of the Macedonian Committee, dated 19/1 1992, whose authors incorporate elements of the former to support the latter. “Εμείς οι Μακεδόνες διακηρύσσουμε” [“We the Macedonians declare”]; reproduced in Giagiozis 2000, pp. 296-300.} Yet, it was the larger historical and political context in which the journalist placed the events of the 1940s that seemed to matter the most, as he pointed to the connection between the German Fascists of that period and the contemporary racism against \textit{Gastarbeiter}s in “this very same country”, i.e. Germany, which also in the field of foreign policy was perceived of as ‘anti-Greek’.

Worrying associations – even if they are exaggerated – are at the same time evoked by the dramatic events which in our days take place in the neighbouring Yugoslavia, where, with the very same country as a protagonist, the impression is created that yesterday’s collaborators of German Fascism (Slovenians, Croats, Albanians, Muslims and Slav Macedonians) are being rewarded, and the peoples who made a stand against their plans of conquest (Serbs and Greeks) are being punished.\footnote{Vasilis Thasitis, “Η γενοκτονία των Εβραίων της Θεσσαλονίκης: 50 χρόνια μετά το μεγάλο φονικό 50,000 συνανθρώπων μας” [“The genocide against the Jews of Thessaloniki: 50 years after the great murder of 50 000 of our fellow human beings”], \textit{Oikonomikos Tachydromos} 29/7 1993, p. 77.}

The Holocaust of the Greek Jews, which according to Thasitis was “to the eternal shame of the German Nation, which ought to be more cautious, so that peoples will not cease to distinguish it from German Fascism”, thus brought meaning to a contemporary political reality, in which reunited Germany was perceived of as
being on the side of Greece’s enemies in the Macedonian conflict. In this way the Jewish wartime experience could be incorporated into national Greek and local Greek Macedonian history, and deployed to reinforce the notion of Greek martyrdom.

The example cited above is not an isolated one. Besides the traditional notion of wartime heroism, the reference to suffering and victimhood appears as one of the key concepts around which public discourse on the Macedonian question – as well as on its Pontian counterpart – revolved and claims on historical authority were constructed. In this discourse on victimhood, the notion of Jewish suffering could perform an auxiliary function, as long as it did not disturb or challenge the overarching national interpretation of history. Thus, Nikolaos Martis included the losses of the Greek Jewish population in the statistics of wartime casualties implying that Greece, in terms of percentage of the total population, had suffered the biggest losses of all participating nations in the Second World War, something that he meant had to be taken into account by foreign as well as domestic opinion when considering the Greek claim to Macedonia’s name and heritage. This was primarily the function of the rhetoric of shared martyrdom, namely to make sense and render meaning to what the politician Polydoras had termed ‘national pain’, through conscious evocation of other, better publicised tragedies. This was particularly evident in media references to the Armenian genocide and the coverage of events commemorating this tragedy, which, perhaps even more than the Holocaust, was something that the Greek public was considered to be able to relate to, since it was, as one journalist put it, “our own drama”. Mapping the relations between the two genocide narratives, Armenian and Pontian, and more generally how a common destiny between Greeks and Armenians has been forged in public historical discourse – itself a topic with wider implications – would lead further beyond the scope of this study. Suffice it to say that some more general

551 See Chapter 3.
552 Martis 1995, Document 26. See also ibid., “Τριήμερη εκδήλωση για τη Μακεδονία” [“Spurious delusions about Macedonia”], Vima 22/3 1992, p. A16, in which Martis argues that the Western world “which today enjoy[s] freedom and democracy” ought to be reminded that they to a large extent owe this to the Greeks, which due to vast sacrifices during the early years of the Second World War had “paved the way for the defeat of Fascism and Nazism, and that all the neighbouring countries that [today] threaten Greece […] at one point or another signed friendship treaties with Hitler.” This suggests that Martis was not exclusively oriented toward archaeology in his argumentation, although this type of evidence is predominant also in his later publications.
553 Vyron Polydoras, “Γιορτή στους 353.000 Έλληνες που εξοντώθηκαν στον Πόντο (1919-1923)” [“Honour the 353 000 Greeks who were annihilated in Pontos (1919-1923)"], communiqué to the Greek diaspora, reproduced in Oikonomikos Tachydromos 2/9 1993, p. 25.
555 This topic was addressed in 2005 when the editors of Ios, through a series of articles in connection with the 90th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, initiated a polemic with the leading expert on Greek-Armenian relations, the historian Ioannis Chasiotis, whom they accused of having omitted or glossed over evidence of Greek-Armenian enmity in the Ottoman Empire, in favour of a whitewashed image which emphasised the ‘eternal bonds’ and ‘common destiny’ that supposedly united these peoples throughout history, as a way of promoting a nationalistic agenda. Ios tis Kyriakis (Kostopoulos, Trimis, Psarras), “Ο ξεχασµένος ‘εθνικός εχθρός’” [“The forgotten ‘national enemy’"], Eleftherotypia 24/4 2005 & ibid., “Αρμένιοι: ‘φίλοι’ ή ‘εχθροί’?" [“Armenians: ‘friends’ or ‘foes’?”], Eleftherotypia 22/5 2005.
observations on the benefits, but also pitfalls, of this rhetorical strategy, as I have analysed it, can be made, which is something that will be addressed in the concluding section of this chapter.

**Concluding analysis**

As noted earlier in this chapter, the historical narrative of the Pontian genocide lobbyists was, just as its Greek Macedonian counterpart, a discourse about longstanding government neglect against populations in the periphery of the Greek state and world, here perceived as the guardians of the borderlands and, hence, the true representatives of the nation. Theirs was a struggle against historical ‘obliteration’ and a popular demand for ‘justice’, which was deemed all the more important since this ‘obliteration’, perceived to be state-sponsored and perhaps even ideologically motivated, was thought to have immediate and damaging repercussions on present and future national security. This is the sort of representations of the past that Rüsen has epitomised as the critical narrative of history, characterised by resistance against established norms and a critique of dominant historical traditions. This phenomenon of protest and demand for change is, in its turn, intimately connected with what Karlsson has termed the moral use of history, in which the re-discovery of past wrongs leads to calls for the rehabilitation of, say, an oppressed group and the restoration of true, historical memory.

The refugees of Pontian descent had traditionally, as noted earlier, been a marginalised group within Greek society, with ties to the political Left, which – contrary to what was the case with the narrative(s) about Macedonia propagated by debaters of chiefly rightwing orientation – was reflected in the Pontian “right to memory” discourse. However, this terminology, which at first glance would seem applicable to the Pontian context, ought not to divert our attention from the fact that the narrative about the Pontian genocide also reproduced many recognisable features of the traditional narrative of Greek history. These were ways of thinking about the past, figures of speech and thought about the Greek nation and its history that, in some cases, could be traced back to the 19th century and the conception of the nation-state.

One such thought, which the narrative about Pontos and the ills that had befallen her Greek population shared with its Greek Macedonian counterpart,\(^556\) was the sense of bitterness against “old Greece”, here understood as the Greek kingdom of the borders from before 1912 (the present-day southern and central mainland Greece). It was symbolised by the capital of Athens with its central government, which at numerous occasions had “betrayed” the interests of their fellow Greeks in the borderlands of Hellenism, whether in Macedonia or in Asia Minor, in their time of need. Greek authorities had allegedly failed to see the “dynamic potential” of Pontian armed resistance, just as they, the “mandarins” of Athens, historically had ‘failed’ to see the “vivid potentiality” of Northern Greece.

The memory-political initiatives and the narrative that emerges from the historical writings of the leading Pontian lobbyists might be – and has occasionally

been – described as a story of protest against the nation-state and its nationalistic ideology. As Mark Mazower has written in his much acclaimed *Salonica – City of Ghosts*, “[t]he identity politics of the second and third refugee generations began to chip away at the smooth façade of official Hellenism and broke down the emphatic nationalism of the Cold War era”.

Also, the work of scholars like Michel Bruneau and Kyriakos Papoulidis reveals a similar reading and understanding of the discourse on the “right to memory” as standing in opposition to *ethnikofrosyni*, the xenophobic and fiercely anti-Communistic ‘national-mindedness’ traditionally associated with the Right, that had been the dominant doctrine for decades and which was still very manifest in debates concerning the Macedonian question. This, in my opinion, seems to be too close a reading of statements made by representatives of the Pontian lobby and other refugee organisations. As I have sought to demonstrate in this chapter, these different narratives of the Greek nation were by no means mutually exclusive; rather they supplemented and incorporated elements borrowed from each other. The anthropologist Eleftheria Deltou’s analysis of Pontian identity as “a new form of nationalism” seems more adequate in this respect, if cultivation of a particular Pontian collective memory and consciousness also is to be understood as a new way of emphasising Greekness – and, one might add, Greek Macedonnianness – at home as well as in the diaspora. Furthermore, the conscious efforts to promote the “Pontian question” as a national issue had the effect of turning the history of Pontian suffering into a battlefield of contesting political interpretations, as certain aspects of it could be deployed to call the Greek Left’s patriotism and commitment to refugee rights into question.

What was innovative about the Pontian narrative was the way it had been able to place itself within a larger, international conceptual and interpretative framework – that of genocide and the Holocaust – and adapt to a contemporary discourse on the struggle against racism, which also gave it an advantage abroad over the Greek Macedonian narrative of identity. The latter’s supporting argumentative framework relied on traditional Greek nationalism and was therefore, arguably, more difficult to successfully communicate to a foreign audience, unfamiliar with Greek historical culture and generally unsympathetic to the language of nationalism. Much of the success of the Pontian genocide narrative overseas can be attributed to the American author Thea Halo’s bestselling account of her mother Sano Halo’s ordeal during a forced march in the east of Asia Minor, *Not Even My Name*, which appeared from the publishing house Picador in 2000. As Eleftheria Deltou has

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557 Mazower 2005, p. 469.

558 Thus, during the first years of the 21st century, the legislating assemblies of the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Florida, Illinois and Massachusetts passed resolutions recognising and condemning the atrocities against the Greek population of Asia Minor as genocide, due to the lobbying efforts of diaspora activists. A further statement issued on the 19th of May 2002 by Governor George Pataki (himself of Greek descent), designated the date in question as the “Pontian Greek Genocide Remembrance Day”, to be observed in New York State. Charalambidis & Fotiadis 2003, preface to the 4th edition, p 16. The resolutions of recognition of said states are to be found at http://notevenmyname.com/8.html, accessed 23/9 2009.

noted, Halo’s book represented something new and unique in Pontian memory discourse, namely an individual life-story which stood out among the fairly anonymous victims of the alleged genocide.\(^{560}\) This, more than the writings of the Pontian lobbyists in Greece, has contributed in raising public awareness about the genocide issue abroad. Furthermore, in December 2007, the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) issued a resolution condemning the genocide against the Christian populations of Ottoman Turkey, in which not only the Armenians were mentioned as victims, but specific reference was made to the “Pontian and Anatolian Greeks”.\(^{561}\)

The reception history of the Pontian genocide narrative in North America and elsewhere extends beyond the confines of this study. However, taking it into account may shed some light on the process of transformation of it that is discernible, which has to do with the rhetoric of shared martyrdom. This rhetoric may be described as a manifestation of what nationalism scholars like Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson has termed ‘piracy’, based on the observation that national movements borrow elements from or rather ‘pirate’ on other national groups’ ways of defining themselves.\(^{562}\) Following the emergence of a public discourse on the Holocaust and on genocide, and resulting from that there was a new emphasis on and prestige attributed to the concept of victimhood, copycat movements have sprung up across the world. ‘Genocide’ has thus, to use the language of Michel Espagne,\(^{563}\) become one of our time’s most characteristic cultural transfer phenomena, a concept travelling from one national or cultural context to another,\(^{564}\) acquiring new meanings as well as bringing meaning to old and new narratives of identity. This has been the case with the Armenian narrative of suffering, which gained new momentum as public attention to the Holocaust grew in the Western world.\(^{565}\) As Michalis Charalambidis explicitly stated, the Armenian genocide and the Armenian diaspora’s long struggle for vindication


\(^{561}\) IAGS Newsletter, No. 8, Winter-Spring 2008. The full text of the resolution is to be found at http://www.genocidescientists.org/newsletters.html and the accompanying press release at http://notevenmyname.com/. The resolution was largely the result of the lobbying activities of IAGS members Adam Jones and the above-mentioned author Thea Halo, herself of mixed Pontian Greek and Assyrian descent, who argued against the perceived hierarchy of genocides, with the Armenian one in the top, overshadowing the “co-victims” of the other Christian populations in Asia Minor. It was this resolution that was cited in the bill which urged the Swedish parliament to recognise the “genocide against Armenians, Assyrians/Syrians/Chaldeans and Pontian Greeks” in March 2010. Motion 2008/09: U332 Folkmordet 1915 på armenier, assyrier/syrianer/kaldeer och pontiska greker [The genocide 1915 against Armenians, Assyrians/Syrians/Chaldeans and Pontian Greeks] submitted by Hans Linde (Left) et al.; see also the earlier Motion 2008/09: U280 Erkännande av folkmordet på pontiska greker [Recognition of the genocide against the Pontian Greeks], in which Social Democrat deputy Nikos Papadopoulos called for separate recognition of the Pontian genocide. These sources, along with the Swedish parliament’s recognition (though not the Swedish government’s) were retrieved from www.riksdagen.se on 17/4 2010.


\(^{563}\) Espagne 1999, pp. 1-49.

\(^{564}\) Bal 2002, pp. 3-55.

\(^{565}\) Mark Mazower, “The G-word”, London Review of Books 8/2 2001. This is especially evident in the much quoted statement made by Hitler at the eve of the invasion of Poland, recorded in the diaries of Wilhelm Canaris, saying that crimes against the enemy would soon pass into oblivion since no-one remembers the annihilation of the Armenians, which in writings relating the Armenian tragedy is used to illustrate the connection between it and the Holocaust, thus using the latter to make sense of the former.
inspired the Pontian struggle – “the 19th of May is our own 24th of April, our own Day of Remembrance” – which in its turn spawned similar initiatives among the descendants of Ionian refugees from Smyrna, and, supposedly, the Assyrian Christians and the Kurds.\footnote{Michalis Charalambidis, "Η 19η Μαίου Ήμερα Μνήμης όλων των λαών ενάντια στο ρατσισμό" ["The 19th of May Day of Remembrance of all peoples against racism"], letter to the Armenian National Committee of Greece, dated 18/5 2003, reproduced in Charalambidis & Fotiadis 2003, pp. 141-142.}

However, this dialectic relation to other narratives of suffering, agendas and claims for recognition entails its own set of problems, as the genocide narrative through the shared martyrdom rhetoric becomes subject to the effects of both national and international developments, especially after its incorporation into various diaspora groups’ identity narratives, which not necessarily are dictated by the concerns of Pontian lobbyists in Thessaloniki and Athens. In 1998, four years after the official recognition of the 19th of May and the Pontian genocide, the Greek parliament passed a new law which elevated the previously existing national remembrance day for the victims of the 1922 Asia Minor disaster on the 14th of September to the day of commemorating what was referred to as the genocide against the Greeks of Ionia and the wider Asia Minor region.\footnote{Εφημερίς της Κυβερνήσεως της Ελληνικής ∆ηµοκρατίας, [Government Gazette of the Hellenic Republic], issue 2645/98. As one might have expected, the law was fiercely condemned by the Turkish government, but also in Greece criticism was expressed most vociferously by the historian Angelos Elefantis, who reportedly stated that the Greek Parliament had acted “like an idiot”. Robert Fisk, “Athens and Ankara at odds over genocide”, The Independent 13/2 2001.} Clearly, this was the result of pressure from non-Pontian refugee associations. Although greeted by leading Pontian activists as a further vindication of their own cause, the stage was arguably set for competition, since the Greek state (and the Republic of Cyprus) now recognised no longer one but two genocides against the Greeks of Asia Minor, committed at the same time by the same perpetrator, yet supposedly distinct from one another. The strength of a martyrdom perceived to be shared between two groups with similar identity-political agendas thus proves illusory, as the two narratives of genocide, in effect might undermine each other rather than be mutually reaffirming. The existence of two parallel commemorations of alleged genocides against Pontian and Ionian Greeks, resulting from different groups’ demands for national recognition of their particular identities and histories, points to the eventual nationalisation of these as one, the “Greek genocide”, encompassing the whole of Asia Minor and the Anatolian Greeks,\footnote{An indication is to be found at the webpages of Wikipedia; when typing ‘Pontian genocide’, the visitor is automatically redirected to an article on the ‘Greek genocide’: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pontian_Genocide, accessed 20/11 2009.} especially by external agents such as the IAGS, which arguably see little reason to take the subtleties of regional and ethnocultural identity-markers in Greece into account.

On the Internet, bitter feuds are already raging, in which leading Pontian lobbyists are accused of having eclipsed the suffering of other Anatolian Greeks by monopolising the notion of genocide to serve their own identity-political ends.\footnote{Cf. “A critical review of Konstantinos Photiades’ publications on the Greek Genocide”, dated 22/5 2008: http://www.greekgenocide.org/review_photiades.html, accessed 19/4 2011. See also “The ‘Pontian genocide’: Distortions, Misconceptions and Falsehoods”, http://www.pontiangenocide.com, accessed 17/6 2011.}
Similar developments are discernible in the Pontian “right to memory” movement’s relations with the Armenian lobby and other non-Greek groups united by demands for recognition of past suffering and moral retribution from Turkey. Just as a concept is transferred between national historical cultures, the changes and trends that occur at an international level have repercussions in smaller contexts, bringing about the need to adapt. In the case that is of concern here, the European Holocaust Remembrance Day has presented the Pontian lobbyists with a problem. “All peoples have a Remembrance Day of their own holocausts”, Michalis Charalambidis stated at an international symposium in Berlin in 2002, and then again in a letter addressed to the Armenian National Committee in Athens, dated the 18th of May 2003. In this letter, while paying tribute to the efforts of Armenians, Pontians, Ionians, Assyrians and Kurds alike to face the common enemy with charges of accountability, he recognised the multitude of separate commemoration days as constituting a growing problem. The time had therefore come “for us to pass over the national into collective, supranational regional circles, all our peoples together, from Olympus to Ararat”, so that the world would be presented with the ‘true’ history of Kemal as “the butcher of our peoples, the founder of the ideology of death, genocide and racism in the region”.

This was, according to Charalambidis, to be accomplished through the institutionalisation of the 19th of May as a “Day of National Remembrance against racism by all peoples, political movements and parliaments of the free countries”. The Pontian day of remembrance was thus to replace or complement the Armenian, Assyrian and Ionian Greek counterparts as a common commemorative date. Charalambidis argued that this date would be appropriate as it marked the beginning of a new circle of genocides against all peoples, not only the Pontians, and the conception of the ideology of racism. This was deemed to be particularly important due to the establishment of the European Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Just as the European peoples, but also the Jews and the Gypsies, knew racist violence in the shape of Nazism, our peoples knew and know racist violence in the shape of Kemalism. The European countries have set their own Day of Remembrance against racism with Nazi violence as the point of departure. We are obliged to set our own, with Kemalist violence as point of departure.

Kemal was the Hitler of our peoples, the forerunner of Hitler. The European peoples, but also the Jewish people, just as the people of Israel, can, are obliged to say that Hitler was their Kemal.

This, I believe, is the course of history. The course of a new humanitarianism and pacifism. The victory of the ideology of life over that of death.

As demonstrated earlier in this chapter with particular reference to Greek-Jewish relations, the rhetoric of shared martyrdom often disguises tensions and fierce rivalry between different narratives of suffering and victimhood, which threaten the

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570 Charalambidis in Charalambidis & Fotiadis 2003, p. 142
571 Ibid.
572 Ibid.
573 Ibid., p. 143.
perceived unity of two or several communities. Charalambidis’ proposal might thus be analysed as a thinly disguised attempt at saving the Pontian genocide narrative from being overshadowed by the better known Armenian genocide and the Holocaust, through claiming the supremacy of the 19th of May to other commemorative dates, and by posing knowledge about the crimes of Kemalism as a necessary prerequisite for understanding Nazism and the modern phenomenon of racism. As he put it in a speech delivered in February 2001, “[t]he youth must learn in school what it is that causes racism [...]. It must learn what happened in Mauthausen via Pontos, via Ionia”.

Although the Armenian National Committee of America as late as in 2007, in a press release issued on the date of the Pontian day of remembrance, reaffirmed its “determination to work together with all the victims of Turkey’s atrocities to secure full recognition and justice for these crimes”, some activists and scholars concerned with the Armenian genocide have been reluctant to deploy the term ‘genocide’ in relation to persecutions against other Christian minorities of Asia Minor and the Near East, in order to prevent their magnification through comparison with the Armenian case. It seems as if the resolution by IAGS in 2007 to call for recognition of not only the genocide against the Armenians, but also the “qualitatively similar genocides against other Christian minorities of the Ottoman Empire” as well was motivated chiefly by identity-political concerns of the latter populations’ descendants. The text of the resolution is somewhat unclear about whether the atrocities against the Assyrians and the Pontian and Anatolian Greeks are to be recognised as separate genocides supplementing the Armenian one or whether they all are to be regarded as one and the same, a single genocide committed against all of Christendom in the Ottoman Empire. The issue at stake here, although not explicitly stated, is that if such an overarching interpretation, which downplays the ethnicity of the various Christian groups that fell victim to genocide, were to gain international recognition, the very raison d’être of a separate Pontian identity – to a large extent constructed around the ‘memory’ of genocide, and trapped in the logic of shared martyrdom – would be lost in the process. The similar emergence of a parallel notion of the ‘Ionian genocide’ at a national level in Greece points to such an eventual outcome.

The Pontian genocide narrative, which originally had been explicitly oriented toward the cultivation of Pontian consciousness – seen as something qualitatively different from national Greek or even a superregional Asia Minor Greek consciousness – seems to have sprung from deeply rooted individual emotions and needs, which according to Karlsson’s typology usually are expressed through the

574 Michalis Charalambidis, "Οι φιλοκεµαλικοί- φιλορατσιστές στην Ελλάδα είναι πολλοί: η ρατσιστική αναθεώρηση της ιστορίας" ["The friends of Kemalism and racism in Greece are legion: the racist revision of history"] in Charalambidis & Fotiadis 2003, p. 146.

575 Thus, in the debate on IAGS Blog concerning the Greek/Assyrian genocide resolution in 2007, several scholars having researched and published on the Armenian genocide, such as Peter Balakian, Stephen Feinstein, Eric Weitz, Taner Akçam, Richard Hovanissian and Robert Melson, voiced serious reservations concerning the label ‘genocide’ in this particular case, which they argued ought to have been better researched before endorsing the resolution, as well as expressing their dismay on how the claim had been pushed by certain lobbyists: http://www.genocidescholars.org/blog/?cat=40, accessed 23/9 2009.
existential use of history. The leading lobbyists associated with this narrative were/are themselves of refugee descent, something which was often stressed in their writings. As Mazower has aptly put it, by the 1980s, the refugees (or rather their descendants) had become the powerbrokers in Thessaloniki and “stood for something more than funny accents and peculiar music”.576 One might additionally argue that they needed to stand for something more than being rebetes, the outcasts of society and the antiheroes of the interwar refugee slum quarters immortalised in the musical genre of rebetiko.

This was evident in a virulent attack on Mikis Theodorakis, one of the protagonists of the Greek folk music revival of the 1960s and 1970s, launched by Kostas Fotiadis in KEPOME’s first publication.577 In this text, Theodorakis was accused of having greatly insulted the “vivid element of Greek society” by stating in interviews printed in both the domestic and foreign press that the victims of the Asia Minor disaster that settled in Greece had been “weak people, with no other means to fight the law and the dominant society, than the resort to narcotics”.578 Fotiadis’ text can be analysed as a reaction against the insignificant underdog status and stereotypes attributed to the refugees in popular perceptions and discourse, as well as a way of protesting against the view of them as simply raw material in the Hellenisation of Macedonia, discernible in the speech made by Konstantinos Vavouskos referred to in the introduction to this chapter. The narrative of the Pontian genocide thus became a way of creating or emphasising a more prestigious past to the group with which Fotiadis and his colleagues identified themselves, in a time when particular prestige was being attributed to the notion of victimhood.

However, emotional motives and existential needs might not be the only incentive for the emergence of this particular branch of history-writing. As Greek authorities grew increasingly interested in the Greek diaspora’s potential for political and economic pressure abroad – as well as the Pontian associations’ usefulness in domestic politics – and initiatives were taken to formalise the state’s ties with its organisations, it takes little imagination to realise that profit stood to be gained by the individuals and interest groups that managed to get involved in this process. Thus, historian and lobbyist Vlasis Agtzidis appears as one of the editors behind the statutes of the World Council of Hellenes Abroad (SAE), which was established in 1995 as the consulting body of the Greek state in all its contacts with the organisations of the diaspora.579 Permanently located in Thessaloniki, SAE has grown into a new seat of power in the city and, as a result of that, a new arena for contesting Pontian associations struggling for influence.580

576 Mazower 2005, p. 469.
578 Ibid; Mikis Theodorakis, quoted in ibid., p. 49.
A final factor that has to be taken into account when speculating on the motivation that might have been at hand is the identity of some lobbyists as scholars. Of the leading Pontian history-writers, at least Enepekidis, Fotiadis and Agtzidis were historians by profession (although Agtzidis mainly had his educational background in mathematics and computer engineering). Understood along the lines of boundary-work, the work of these historians might be characterised as expansion, through the establishment of a new epistemic domain – or an old, Asia Minor studies, given new contents and meaning (genocide) – over which they could exercise control. This branch of knowledge – pontology as it might be called, in analogy with macedonology – could in its turn, with its explicit moral implications, be characterised as a public science, since the target audience seems to have been not so much the scholarly community, as the public and political authorities. Considering the political function of historians as consultants – especially during the 1990s, due to the nature of the Macedonian conflict – as well as societal expectations on the historians as experts able to guide the nation through difficult times, they could hope to secure funding for the field of research in which they were – or aspired to be – the undisputed masters, such as the funding Fotiadis received from Parliament in 1996, as he was assigned the task of providing factual evidence for the genocide claim.

This dimension, especially evident in public debate about the Macedonian conflict, yet hardly addressed in previous research, will therefore be further explored in the following chapter 5.

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581 Agtzidis 2005.
582 A significant element of this process was, as in any scholarly discipline, the quest for external recognition from the scholarly community, at home as well as abroad. This is a dimension of Pontian identity politics which begs further study. An early example of this process is the conference on the Pontian Greek diaspora held at the French School of Athens in March 1995, which was arranged in cooperation with KEPO ME and the history department of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and subsidised by the Centre National des Recherches Scientifiques. See Michel Bruneau, (ed.), Η διασπορά του ποντιακού ελληνισμού /The diaspora of Pontian Hellenism/, Athens: Irodotos 2000, pp. 11-13.
5. Contested history: scholars, politics and dissent

In December 1992, the readers of Politis – a small journal aimed at leftwing intellectuals – could acquaint themselves with the contents of an article, written by historian Giorgos Margaritis. The topic of his article was the role of the professional historians in the contemporary societal crisis. Roughly a year had passed since the neighbouring republic’s declaration of independence and some ten months since the escalation of the diplomatic crisis; a period of time, during which hecatombs of articles on the new Macedonian question had flooded the press, rallies had been held and the internal split over the Macedonian issue within the ruling Nea Dimokratia party had begun to seriously undermine the power of Mitsotakis’ government.

Margaritis’ article conveyed a gloomy image of the ills that plagued Greek society: the suffocating conservatism, the decline of ideas, the inability to accomplish and the overall failure of modernisation. “In our moonstruck modern Greek society, among the shouts of countless radio stations, television commentators and columnists,” he wrote, “the historians’ possibility to offer seems not only inexhaustible but also urgent. What else, outside of knowledge, education, could […] seek the exits from a situation where hatred without perspective, rivalry and intolerance tend to become the sole values of society [?]” Nevertheless, the author had few flattering things to say about his peers. According to him, the historians’ community in Greece had essentially failed to play a constructive role in the public debate on history and the Macedonian crisis. “Now when the historical discourse, the scholarly and sound, is needed, thirstily awaited by the bewildered society, now the nakedness of what we call modern Greek historical studies appear intolerable.” He conveyed the image of scholarly historians in Greece as slaves under quantitative methodology and the study of insignificant detail, as opposed to scholars who engage with contemporary social issues. The result of what Margaritis perceived as an overall orientation toward introvert science, combined with fear of commitment to controversial issues that might jeopardise career opportunities, was a community of historians completely out of touch with the realities of contemporary society. The uninformed public was said to be left to find answers among ‘fortune seekers’, who flood the book market and the mainstream media with simplistic and chauvinistic histories, making profit in the service of fanaticism. Society, he concluded, is left with the feeling that the money entrusted to the historians, the large number of people hired and paid for the sole task of producing history and thereby educating the citizens, has been badly invested, while the historians themselves are left with a sense of guilt.

584 Margaritis is mostly known as a scholar of the occupation and the Greek civil war in the 1940s. See Margaritis, Giorgos, Από την ήττα στην εξέγερση: Ένοπλη 1941 – φθινόπωρο 1942 [From defeat to uprising: Spring 1941 – autumn 1942], Athens: Politis 1993; Margaritis 2001, vol. 1-2.
585 Giorgos Margaritis, “Τι λοιπόν χρησιμοποιεί η ιστορία;” ["How then is history of service?"] Politis No. 120, October-December 1992, pp. 6-8.
Margaritis’ article is of course more of a damning accusation than a detached analysis of the historians’ responses to the Macedonian crisis and its implications for their discipline, but his overall assessment has been verified by other observers. The reaction of the greater part of the scholarly community – historians in the universities as well as their peers in related disciplines – was slow to materialise. "When the Macedonian crisis exploded, mainstream historians were unprepared and underestimated its dimensions", historian Antonis Liakos would write in a later survey of Greek historiography during the years 1974-2000.\textsuperscript{586} The topic remained largely absent from major historical journals of the country for the time span under closer scrutiny in this study.\textsuperscript{587} As far as mainstream media were concerned, it was not until May 1992 that historians in larger numbers began to actively participate in public debate, several months after the mass rally in Thessaloniki that brought the Macedonian crisis to the front pages and centre of political discourse.

The reasons for the delay or in some cases lack of scholarly response have in previous studies been sought in circumstances similar to the ones highlighted by Margaritis. As one could expect, the reactions of the community’s members were by no means uniform, ranging from active participation in the rallying behind the ‘national position’ to explicit opposition to the official policy. Analyses of the Macedonian name conflict’s impact upon academic environments in Greece are ultimately few and largely marked by the time and atmosphere in which they were written. In 1994, social anthropologist Anastasia Karakasidou – whose doctoral work at that time was at the centre of one of the most widely publicised controversies provoked by the Macedonian conflict in Greek public and scholarly debate – analysed the scholarly response to the crisis and the revival of nationalism in terms of a dividing line between what she dubbed “sacred scholars” and “profane advocates”.\textsuperscript{588} The former of these were identified as the academic establishment in Greece, often older fulltime professors at state-run universities, controlling access to both symbolic and material resources, such as research funding and job opportunities. Due to their privileged position and conservative outlook, they had, following Karakasidou, taken it upon themselves to defend the ‘national truth’, thus turning historical knowledge into the handmaiden of state ideology. The latter category, “the ‘profane advocates’ of critical knowledge”, were according to Karakasidou mostly younger intellectuals with junior positions, either at state-run universities or at independent research institutes, people that were “more progressive in their political views [and] more universal in their approach to history”.\textsuperscript{589} Athena Skoulariki offers a less schematic interpretation of the scholarly responses and attitudes toward the crisis. She identifies four larger tendencies – active or tacit support of the official policy, more elaborate support of the Greek diplomatic efforts, clear opposition and, finally, abstaining from participation in public debate. Nevertheless, she arrives at a similar, structural explanation, which

\textsuperscript{586} Liakos in Brunnbauer 2004, p. 355.
\textsuperscript{587} These are mainly the two journals associated with the so-called ‘new’ historians, \textit{Mnimon} and \textit{Ta Istorika}.
\textsuperscript{589} Karakasidou 1994 (a), p. 46.
emphasises the role of the academies’ inherent hierarchies.\textsuperscript{590} Few could afford the luxury of dissent.

However, the target of Margaritis’ critique was not solely the hierarchal system in which ‘history’ was a way of professional and social survival. Rather it was the very nature of historical studies in Greece, which he meant had turned its back on history’s most vital task: to liberate human beings and to make them wise. His article touches upon issues and ideas regarding the nature and purpose of historical knowledge and the role of historians in society that are relevant to this study.

In this chapter, I aim to address and discuss these issues against the backdrop of political developments, the intervention of critical historians into public debate and their role in the evolving counter-discourse to the dominant macedonology. A central question in this chapter is how scholars, chiefly historians, used history to make sense of the Macedonian crisis. Connected to this question are also the issues of how they understood the notion of the use of history, the purpose of historical knowledge and of their own role. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that it is not only the views, ideas and actions of historians that is of relevance here, simply because these questions tend to arise in a wider social and political context rather than within the disciplinary community, as was the case with the Macedonian conflict. This has to do with what Gieryn describes as public science: science as it is being presented to audiences outside the confines of the discipline and the comfort of closed academic seminars. From this, it can be concluded that scholars’ views on and uses of history are formulated in response to external expectations on their expertise and that their taking of position cannot be separated from the public concerns and political context in which history is both used and debated. For this reason, attention is given also to agents and circumstances outside the scholarly community. As noted earlier, the roots of history as a fullfledged academic discipline in Greece did not run deep and the boundaries of the historians’ community were not clear-cut, as history was considered an open arena for politicians, activists and journalists.\textsuperscript{591} The issue of boundaries between the professional and the laymen would also emerge as an important aspect of the debate, as the legitimacy of certain views and claims to represent historical knowledge was being contested. There are significant overlappings between this chapter and chapter 3 in some of the themes addressed, for example the issue of the Slav-speakers’ role in Macedonian history and historiography. However, while chapter 3 dealt with the emergence of macedonology this chapter deals more extensively with the critical discourse on politicised history that contributed to its decline, which is also the reason why I address these issues here.

As in chapter 4, the chapter commences with a section on the institutional and political contexts which provided the framework for the history war involving the scholarly community at the national level. The trajectory of this chapter will move between a chronological narrative of events and more thematic approaches, between the weaving of contexts and the analysis of issues raised by certain texts.

\textsuperscript{590} Skoulariki 2005, p. 295.
\textsuperscript{591} Liakos 2004, p. 354.
Attention is given to both the impact of the Macedonian crisis on educational policies as well as the roots of the crisis in textbook debates of the 1980s. The following section traces the emergence of protest in student circles, resulting in legal prosecution, which in turn ignited parts of the scholarly community. In conjunction with this, some prominent critical historians’ views of the Macedonian crisis and the use of history are scrutinised, as well as the turn of the debate. In a subsequent section, the most publicised controversy that involved academics is under scrutiny, the so-called Karakasidou affair. The final section deals with the decline of the hegemonic macedonology in the public sphere. The findings are summarised and discussed in a concluding analysis toward the end of the chapter.

**History, old and new: the framework of historical research and debate after 1974**

As noted in chapter 3, the fall of the military regime in 1974 had brought about changes in the conditions for the writing of history in Greece. The political radicalism that permeated intellectual environments and public debate is not to be understood solely as the expectable reaction against the seven-year rule of the Colonels. Rather it was the backlash against the several decades long period of rightwing hegemony that had preceded the dictatorship. With the transition to parliamentary democracy and legalisation of the Left, an era of political turmoil and vicious civil strife, dating back to the First World War, came to a close. In this respect, the situation in Greece was similar to those of Spain and Portugal at the same time, or those of Eastern and Central European societies after 1989.

The immediate consequence of the new liberal climate for the scholarly community was, as mentioned before, that a number of intellectuals previously banned from state service for political reasons were able to embark upon academic careers. For the field of historical studies, the post-junta decade was marked by rejuvenation and expansion, to an extent unparalleled by earlier periods of scholarship. Especially the study of modern Greek history, i.e. the period covering the coming of Ottoman rule to the present, which well into the 20th century had been subordinate to the study of the more prestigious ancient and Byzantine epochs, benefitted from this proliferation. The output of books relating to history grew steadily and reached a peak in the mid-1980s, maintaining a considerable volume in the following years. Interests in the book market were a vital component in the wave of publications relating to macedonology which both paved way for and fed on the Macedonian crisis. Skoulariki has in her dissertation noted a peak in publishing interest in 1992 – of the total share of publications on historical topics at the book market that year, 21.9% were on Macedonia, while in 1995 that share had dropped to 4.9%. Not all books consisted of newly written material; several publishing houses saw in the crisis an opportunity to reissue older,

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592 History was at the time of the Macedonian crisis in the early 1990s taught at five universities, in four cases in conjunction with archaeology. Stephanos Pesmazoglou, “Government, Ideology and the University Curriculum in Greece”, European Journal of Education, 29 (3), 1994, p. 298.
turn-of-the-century works on the Macedonian question, with new introductions by contemporary ‘neo-Macedonian fighters’.  

More important for historical research in the 1980s was the financial support from national banks, such as the National Bank of Greece and the Commercial Bank of Greece, as well as by research programmes maintained by the Greek government, notably the National Foundation of Research, known by its Greek initials as EIE; this funding was crucial for the newly introduced fields of study in economic and social history, which otherwise lacked support from, or research programmes in, the universities and the old academic establishment.

The expansion of history as a profession and discipline was intertwined with the emergence of what has been called “new history”. This was chiefly represented by former political exiles, like Marxist historian Nikolaos Svoronos, who now found their way into the history departments. No clear definition existed of what “new history” specifically meant or what it included; rather it was defined in contrast to the ‘traditional history’ of the old establishment. Generally speaking, the research considered as belonging to “new history” was characterised by a turn away from the history of the nation toward the history of society. For this reason, its adherents – in most cases the contributors of the newly founded historical journals Ta Istorika and Mnimon – claimed affinity to the social sciences rather than the humanities. In contrast to ‘traditional’ historiography, the themes of “new history” centred upon the modernisation process of Greece, or rather the perceived failure of this process, which also determined the theoretical approaches. The political radicalisation of public debate and scholarly environments in the early years of democratisation meant that Marxist theories became much in fashion, as elsewhere in Europe and America, where many of the ‘new’ historians had spent their formative years. Even though the Marxist theories gradually subsided in influence or were abandoned during the 1980s, they left a considerable imprint on economic and social history, whose introduction into modern Greek historical studies was closely linked to the influence of Svoronos. In short, as Antonis Liakos has put it, for many young historians who came to maturity in the 1970s, “new history” meant “the Annales school plus Marxism”.

It is important to note, as another chronicler of post-1974 Greek historiography, Alexander Kitroeff, would put it in 1989, that the influx of new people and new ideas into the universities and research environments occurred without any public tension or controversy. The climate of public reconciliation


595 Kitroeff 1990, p. 147; Liakos 2004, p. 357. The funding policies of EIE and the universities are no doubt an intriguing and important aspect of the Macedonian conflict, yet difficult to thoroughly research, due to lack of transparency.

596 While many have tended to regard “new history” in Greece as the Greek equivalent of the Annales School, Liakos is of the opinion that the influence of the latter upon the former has been exaggerated and points to key differences; for example, the concept of the “history of consciousness”, which preoccupied intellectual historian Konstantinos Dimaras – considered one of “new history’s” spiritual fathers – and his students, was not related to the history of mentalités. Furthermore, while the Annales School initiated a break with Marxism, “new history” incorporated it.

597 Kitroeff 1990, p. 147.
and co-existence, ushered in by the legalisation of all political parties, including the communists, was reflected in scholarly environments as well. A reason for the seemingly peaceful relations within the historians’ community was that the ‘old guard’ was in no imminent danger of being replaced by the ‘new’ historians of the 1970s. The old and new research institutions co-existed through a division of labour, which, as mentioned in chapter 3, left the regional institutions in Thessaloniki, EMS and IMXA, largely unaffected by the new trends. This was also the case with the Academy of Athens and its Centre for Research, widely regarded as the stronghold of the old academic establishment, whose orientation was reflected, among other things, in its policy of awards. It was the Academy that had awarded Martis’ work on the ‘falsification’ of Macedonian history in 1983, thus attributing it with a kind of semi-scholarly status. Also professional historians like Ioannis Koliopoulos and Vasilis Gounaris, associated with the Aristotle University and research institutes in Thessaloniki who published chiefly on Macedonian topics, were granted this award in the 1990s. Not surprisingly, the Academy of Athens emerged as a strong advocate of the uncompromising approach to the Macedonian name issue and has remained so ever since.

The most telling example of the scholarly co-existence was manifested in the landmark publication project of the 1970s, the fifteen volume *Istoría tou Elliníkoú Êthnous [History of the Greek Nation]*, whose contributors were both ‘traditional’ and ‘new’. The mark of consensus was particularly evident in the last volume, issued in 1977, which symbolically ended with the year 1940, thereby carefully avoiding the turmoil of the Civil War, upon which no common interpretation could yet be agreed. The adherents of different ideological camps within the scholarly community, as well as outside it, remained entrenched in their positions with regard to these issues, though largely avoiding public confrontation. Other examples of the co-existence among scholars are found in the volume *Macedonia – 4000 years of Greek history and civilization*, to which Svoronos and Konstantinos Dimaras – hailed by their students as the founding fathers of “new history” – were invited to contribute with essays on the fairly neutral topics of social, economic and administrative developments, and the intellectual life of Macedonia in early Ottoman times.

An additional reason for the reluctance to address the controversial issues of the second half of the 1940s was to be found in the politics of the Left(s) during the early post-junta years. At the time when the followers of the Left were

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integrating into the political and academic system, they sought to incorporate the history of the leftwing resistance against Axis occupation within the framework of official national history. In the state narrative, the subsequent Civil War was considered an undesirable anomaly.\(^6\) This status quo was, however, about to erode within a few years. The electoral victory of PASOK in 1981 opened the public sphere for the historical narratives of the vanquished Left to a previously unseen extent, since the ruling party laid claim to the ideological heritage and prestige of the leftwing resistance. Even if PASOK maintained the convenient separation of the occupation and the “good” national resistance heroes of EAM from the more problematic Civil War period and the communist-dominated DSE, it was inevitable that the categories sooner or later would become blurred, thereby setting the stage for a more open ideological confrontation over the interpretation of the nation’s recent history.

The ideological battles of the Left and the “ideological use of history”

Although “new history” cannot be reduced into being the mere scholarly manifestation of the attempts to rehabilitate and incorporate a leftwing narrative of identity into national historiography, the emergence of this particular current within the historians’ community cannot be separated from the involvement with politics of several of its leading figures. Scholars like Giorgos Dertilis, Vassilis Kremmydas and especially Filippos Iliou, who together with Spyros Asdrachas wrote the theoretical texts considered to encapsulate the spirit of “new history”, were regular contributors to the press of the Left, often referring to themselves as historians-cum-citizens.

In order to put these historians’ relation to Marxism and political activism into perspective, it is necessary to briefly address the entangled history of the Greek Left, or rather Lefts, especially since this particular history also sheds light upon choices made during the Macedonian crisis. This story takes as its point of departure the year 1968 and the ruptures within the European communist parties outside the Eastern bloc that took place following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. A growing rift had appeared in the Greek Communist Party – at that time still outlawed and persecuted in Greece, with large parts of the party elite in exile – which not only manifested itself as malcontent with the leadership set up in the Soviet Union after the Civil War defeat, whom the dissenters accused of having become out of touch with the political reality and needs of Greek society, but also as opposition to Soviet Marxism itself. When the transition to parliamentary rule came in the 1970s, two major parties (save for a number of

\(^6\) The first scholarly conferences on Greece in the 1940s were symptomatically organised abroad; two, in London and Washington D.C. respectively, in 1978 dealt with the occupation and resistance, while a third, held in Copenhagen in 1987, was dedicated to the Greek Civil War. The first similar conference to be organised in Athens in 1984, with the aim of incorporating the period into official Greek historiography, demonstratively avoided the second half of the 1940s and thereby the sensitive issue of what had caused the Civil War; according to the organisers, the time and conditions for debate were still premature. It was not until the second half of the 1990s, at the time of the 50th anniversary, that these events became incorporated into mainstream historical research in Greece, often resulting in heated public and scholarly controversies and allegations of revisionism. Liakos 2004, pp. 369-373. Cf. Mazower 1995, pp. 499-506.
smaller groups) had emerged on the far left end of the Greek political stage, which both laid claim to the name Communist Party of Greece: the KKE of the old, Moscow-loyal camp and the so-called KKE Interior of the dissenters, which came to be oriented toward euro-communism. To chronicle the many twists and turns in the broader communist camp, splits and name alterations that occurred in the following decade would go well beyond the scope of this study, but some general points of reference are well in place. Attempts to reconcile the main rivaling factions of the Greek communist parties were made in the late 1980s, in part reflecting the climate of reform in the Soviet Union during the reign of Gorbachev, in part the wish to secure political influence and break PASOK’s suffocating hegemony over leftwing politics. This resulted in the merging of KKE and the reform communists of the Greek Left party (EAR) into the Coalition of the Left and of Progress, more commonly referred to as Synaspismós (“Coalition”, abbreviated SYN). After the inconclusive elections following the collapse of PASOK rule in 1989, SYN joined the conservative Nea Dimokratia in government, and a few months later entered the all-party ‘ecumenical’ caretaker government.

This was the Greek radical Left’s first (and as of yet last) taste of government power, but the experience was ultimately brief. The collapse of the Soviet bloc, at a time when Nea Dimokratia was able to form a government of its own, forcing the former leftwing allies into opposition along with PASOK, sent Synaspismos into a state of disarray. The rift between ‘reformers’ (or ‘revisionists’ as they were branded by their more orthodox adversaries) and the Moscow loyalists, who in lack of Soviet guidance envisioned a return to the ideological roots, reappeared and led to the dissolution of the Coalition in 1991. The hardliners gained the upper hand in the power struggles within the old KKE and purged the Central Committee of reformers, who together with the remainders of EAR organised themselves in a new party, which inherited the name Coalition of the Left and of Progress (SYN). Such was the political landscape when the next crisis, involving the crumbling Left, erupted in the next few months: the Macedonian conflict.

The ‘new historians’ were with few exceptions people who had come of age during the 1960s and 1970s, and had been deeply influenced by the ideological battles following the break with Soviet Marxism. Several of “new history’s” leading exponents – Nikolaos Svoronos, Spyros Asdracas and Filippis Iliou – were constituent members of the Historical Committee set up by KKE Interior. “Statistically and empirically”, Filippis Iliou stated in 1995, “I have discovered that the majority of the credible historians are members, followers or voters of the Left, and chiefly of the part that is today Synaspismos.”602 Although this camp was not exempt from Iliou’s criticism, its main target was most often the “old calendarists” of KKE said to believe that “the restoration of the Socialist Left will come about behind the portraits of Stalin, […] with improved versions of outdated dreams and whitewashed memories”.603 In his writings and public statements, Iliou, whose

603 Quotes from Filippis Iliou, “Με τον Συνασπισμό” [“With the Coalition”], Avgi 10/10 1993, reproduced in Iliou 2007. The same article was also printed at the same date in Epochi with the title “Για την προοπτική της Αριστεράς”
main research interests lay within intellectual history and the history of Marxism and the Left in Greece, in which he himself had taken active part, often reflected upon the relation between politics – that of the Left as well as in general – and history, as represented by science and its practitioners, the historians. This relation, he concluded, had most often been to the disadvantage of the latter.

The history of the Greek communist movement was the context in which one of “new history’s” key theoretical concepts developed: “the ideological use of history”. It was coined by Iliou in an article, published in 1976, on the repercussions of the shifting policies of KKE in Marxist interpretation of Greek history. Departing from a theory of historical practice developed by Asdrachas, which emphasised history’s double nature as both the object of historical studies and the manifestation of the historicising subject, the user, Iliou identified a particular utilisation of history. The “ideological use”, he claimed, aimed at the distortion of objective past realities in service of contemporary political and social interests, through the selective use of sources. This use, or rather abuse, of history had according to him characterised not only the Greek national historiography of the past 150 years, but more importantly the Communist Party of Greece, which for decades had demanded the subservience to party directives from the historians of the movement. For Iliou and his peers in the journal *Ta Istorika*, the critical study of how the past had been used for ideological purposes, which for them meant the uncovering of objective reality through the scientifically based exposure of historical distortions and myths, offered Marxist historians a possibility to liberate themselves and historical science from the straitjacket of the Party. As they put it, truth was inherently revolutionary. From this followed that the uncovering of historical truth was a greater service to science and the Left than the blind loyalty to any communist party and its well kept secrets.

The project which preoccupied Filippos Iliou from the late 1970s and onwards, the setting up of a combined archive and research centre, which was to include the archives of the National Resistance (EAM) and as much as possible of those belonging to KKE from 1918 up until the split in 1968, was directly linked to the quest for historical studies, free from restrictions imposed by the Central Committee. The archive of the Greek Left – located in the headquarters of Synaspismos and inaugurated in January 1992 as the Contemporary Social History Archives (ASKI) – was according to Iliou to be a scholarly society made up of professional historians and marked by an atmosphere of openness. Its ‘scientific’ activities were in Iliou’s speeches and writings repeatedly contrasted to the traditional secretiveness of the Moscow loyalists in these matters, whose archives

["On the prospect of the Left"], in view of the upcoming elections in 1993 that would oust the party from Parliament.

Iliou 1976, reproduced in Iliou 2004, pp. 197-207. This ideological use of history, attributed to many communist parties, was not something that Iliou was willing to see as inherent in Marx’ thinking or Marxist ideology per se; on the contrary, he pointed out, Marx had in all his work seen through and opposed any attempt at mythologisation of the past, by stressing the study of the objective social conditions at hand.

Iliou 2007, pp. 396-401.
remained surrounded by an aura of mystique and taboo, “hermetically closed” to all but a few high-ranking party members.\footnote{\textit{Iliou} 2007, pp. 383–395.}

An important aspect of the historians’ mission, the task of historiography as Iliou and his likeminded peers understood it, was thus to rid history from myths and ideologically motivated distortions. For them, this task was linked to social liberation, but also to national self-understanding, or as Iliou put it “national self-knowledge” (\textit{ethnikí autognosía}). Among the civil rights of the citizen was also the right to knowledge of “one’s [own] history”. For Iliou and his likeminded peers, the critical study of ideological use of history thus not only had a political dimension, but also an existential one, which at times bordered upon traditionally positivist notions of history linked to the concept of patriotism. This would imply that the quest for a history devoid of ideological myths was not always as critical with regard to the national interpretative framework of historical culture, as the reading of their statements may suggest.

\textit{The Left and the Macedonian question}

The topics in national history that primarily concerned the Marxist historians in Greece was, unsurprisingly, issues related to the 1940s wartime experience, the “national resistance” against the occupation and the Civil War that were so central to the Leftists’ understanding of recent history and their own identity. When they called for the opening of communist archives, it was primarily material from this particular decade they had in mind.

One aspect that did not receive a similar amount of attention in this process was the history of the Macedonian question, in spite of its links to the history of KKE in the interwar period and later to that of the communist-run Democratic Army of Greece (DSE). For a Left which prided itself for its role in the national liberation struggle against foreign invaders, the entanglement of KKE with Slav Macedonian nationalism and the demand for an autonomous Macedonia was a somewhat embarrassing anomaly, just as undesirable as the Civil War in the era of reconciliation. As a consequence of either this or simply of other research priorities, the leftwing historiography on the Macedonian question was considerably smaller than the body of macedonology produced chiefly by the research institutes in Thessaloniki.\footnote{The most notable of these dissenters was Marxist historian Giannis Kordatos. His clash with the Party leadership over the support of Macedonian autonomy was the ultimate cause behind the Central Committee’s rejection of his support.} Nevertheless, it was an aspect that was almost impossible not to address for chroniclers of the communist movement’s past, since differences over the Macedonian policy imposed by the Central Committee of KKE, following the directives of the Communist International and its Balkan section, accounted for much of the internal strife and dissent that had plagued the Party in the interwar years, leading to the expulsion of several prominent critics.\footnote{\textit{Iliou} 2007, pp. 383–395.}

\footnote{The issue of the national minorities – among them the Slav-speakers of Greek Macedonia – in interwar Greece was addressed by historian Giorgos Mavrogordatos in his work \textit{Stillborn Republic: Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922-1936}, Berkeley: University of California Press 1983. Apart from this, scholarly attention to the minorities was scarce in Greek historiography prior to the 1990s.}
The main work of a leftwing scholar on this topic was written by Alekos (Theodoros) Papapanagiotou, a Greek communist living in Skopje, where large parts of KKE’s archives had ended up. He had been in charge of the Historical Section of KKE since 1958 and was himself one of the founding members of ASKI, whom Iliou credited for having initiated the process of bringing the closed communist archives into the light of day and of science in the 1970s. His 1979 contribution to what in lack of a better term might be called the macedonology of the Left – reissued in early 1992, when the Macedonian crisis dominated the headlines – was a study of the Macedonian question’s impact upon the Balkan communist movement prior to the Second World War.609

The study was essentially a vindication of KKE’s interwar Macedonian policy, which Papapanagiotou held to be compatible with Greek patriotism, especially after 1935, when the Party reversed from its slogan of the “united and autonomous Macedonia” to a policy which emphasised the “(Slav) ‘Macedonian’ minority’s” entitlement to equal civil rights within the framework of the Greek nation-state. He deliberately used quotation marks in order to stress that the Slav-speakers in the Greek part of Macedonia did not constitute a nation and thus could not aspire to the right to national self-determination, as understood by Marxism-Leninism. According to Papapanagiotou, the leadership of the Greek communists had called the bluff instigated by elements who wished to exploit the unsolved “national question” in Macedonia, acknowledged the Hellenic character of the new Greek province and convinced the Communist International to adopt this position as part of the popular front strategy in the ‘antifascist struggle’. “KKE, after having proclaimed Soviet Russia its first fatherland for so many years”, the author wrote, “found its own, the Greek fatherland, and began to take a direct interest in and fight for the defence of Greece.” In this national struggle the Greek communists had not only fought against the Axis’ occupying forces in the war, but also against the “Titoist designs against Greek Macedonia”.

In other words, the narrative discernible in historical publications on the Macedonian question, written by scholars associated with the Communist Party, did not in any fundamental way differ from the conventional wisdom of ‘traditional’ historiography. The issue of the Slav Macedonians was a natural point of reference, with emphasis put on minority rights, but the interpretative framework was essentially that of Greek nationalism. MAKIVE’s moral use of history thus not only represented a break with the state narrative, but also with the traditional narrative of the Greek Left, as represented by Papapanagiotou.

Save for that of the Slav Macedonian minority activists, the leftwing counternarratives on Macedonian history which did exist were to be found among marginal splinter groups, like the Maoist OAKKE (Organisation for the Reconstruction of the Communist Party of Greece) or the Trotskyite OSE historiography, which in its turn constituted the topic of the article in which Filippos Iliou had introduced the concept of “the ideological use of history”.


(Organisation of Socialist Revolution), in whose press a more explicit moral use of history proliferated in favour of the Slav Macedonians toward the end of the 1980s. According to the editors of Ergatiki Allilengyi ("Worker Solidarity"), the mouthpiece of OSE, the Slav Macedonians were indeed a nation, not an ideological construct of Tito. They were to be understood as people who had fought bravely against their oppressors, first in the Ilinden uprising of 1903 and then again in the 1940s alongside the Greek communists, thereby proving their revolutionary credentials. This critical narrative also had an edge against the archaeologist approach of the ‘new’ macedonology: “As to what degree the Slav Macedonians are related to Alexander the Great, we are stonily indifferent”, the author of one article stated. “The degree of their relation with the history of the left is more important. This is the history of the Slav Macedonians we have to look further into.” Another contributor expressed dismay of the way in which leftwing intellectuals had unwittingly swallowed the “findings” and ancestor cult of Manolis Andronikos.

The lack of an established counternarrative embraced by the broader Left as well as the unwillingness of ‘new’ historians and researchers to engage with macedonology no doubt contributed, as implied earlier, to the relatively unchallenged hegemony in historical interpretations it enjoyed in the initial phase of the Macedonian crisis. Those concerned with macedonology and their followers among the ‘traditional’ historians and in the press could namely argue that since the Macedonian question of the 20th century was closely linked to the interwar politics of the Greek communists and the Civil War, it had for political reasons been buried along with these issues. The public taboo surrounding the one topic had thus, allegedly, contributed to the silence surrounding the other. Moreover, this meant that the connection to the Macedonian question and the Greek communists’ role in the emergence of the threat against Macedonian Hellenism was the weak spot, upon which a more general assault on the Left could be launched. This is, perhaps needless to say, an additional explanatory factor in the interest of many rightwing politicians for Macedonian matters in the 1980s.

A welcome occasion for this purpose came in January 1992, when Aleka Papariga, Secretary General of KKE in a public speech denounced the nationalism displayed in Greek debate on the unfolding diplomatic crisis. In the speech, she also criticised the government’s policy on the national minorities, among which she made explicit reference to the Slav Macedonians in northern Greece, a group which at that time, as pointed out earlier, had become the great ‘unmentionables’ of publicly acceptable discourse. Thus the genie was out of the bottle. The bare mentioning of them was in the mainstream media described as being tantamount to national betrayal. In this, and the old Moscow loyalists’ subsequent refusal to

participate in the mass rally in Thessaloniki, several political editors saw proof of the old truth, namely that KKE had never really abandoned the goal of national dissolution, through the ceding of Macedonia to the enemies of Greece. Especially during the first months of 1992, before and after the grand rally when the Macedonian crisis dominated the headlines and news flashes, the mainstream press was filled with accounts of KKE’s ‘untold’ history. In these not only the Party’s obedience to Komintern guidelines in Macedonian matters was highlighted, but also the Greek communists’ active opposition against the Greek Asia Minor campaign 1919-1922, i.e. in what was portrayed as the fatherland’s hour of need.614

Most often, these writings came in the form of a moral use of history, aimed at what was perceived as the leftwing hegemony of public debate after 1974, which had resulted in the ‘silence’ surrounding the “original sin of Greek communism”, in the name of national reconciliation. However, this moral use did not so much reflect a critical narrative of the nation as much as the revival of traditional themes of the 1950s ‘nationally minded’ historiography, in which strong anticommunist sentiments had merged with late 19th century perceptions of the Slavs as eternal enemies.615

The tide of hostile public attention quickly forced KKE on the defensive. In the Central Committee’s press organ Rizospastis as well as in more mainstream newspapers, which opened its columns for high ranking KKE representatives,616 history was mobilised in defence of the Party’s patriotic credentials. Mostly – and expectably – this was done through exemplary narratives of the Greek communists’ heroism and leadership of the wartime resistance. Occasionally – or more accurately, in articles written in defence of Papariga’s statement on the minority issue – references were made to the state repression of Slav-speakers throughout

614 G. A. Leontaritis,”Μακεδονία – ιστορική επισκόπηση”[“Macedonia – historical survey”], Kathimerini 19/1 1992, special issue, pp. 11-12, 15, 27-30;“Υγιής εθνικισµός”[“Sound nationalism”], Makedonia 2/2 1992, p. 2; Ioannis Xirotypis, “Δεν καταφέρνουµε ποτό να διδαχθούµε από τους αιώνιους διχασµούς µας”[“We never manage to learn from our eternal schisms”], Makedonia 2/2 1992, p. 4; G. A. Leontaritis,”Όταν τα λάθη επαναλαµβάνονται”[“When the mistakes are repeated”], Kathimerini 22/2 1992, p. 8; Giannis Marinos, “Το Μακεδονικό δηµιουργήθηκε και μας απειλεί και µε την αδίστακτη συνοιδοπορία του ΚΚΕ”[“The Macedonian question was created by KKE whose unscrupulous fellow-travelling also threatens us”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 13/2 1992, pp. 70-71; Vasilis Thassitis, “Πώς το ΚΚΕ συνέβαλε στη δηµιουργία του Μακεδονικού”[“How KKE contributed to the creation of the Macedonian question”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 13/2 1992, pp. 70-78; Giannis Marinos, “Μακεδονικό: Ας προετοιµασθούµε από τώρα για την επόµενη µέρα”[“Macedonian question: Let us prepare from now on for the upcoming day”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 26/3 1992, 3, 6-7, 96; Giannis Marinos, “Τα τραγικά ελληνικά λάθη που εξέφρασαν το Μακεδονικό”[“The tragic Greek mistakes that brought about the Macedonian question”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 29/10 1992, pp.3, 6-7, 97; Giannis Marinos, “Ο εχθρός εντός των τείχων”[“The enemy intra muros”], Vima 17/1 1993, p. A12; Marinos, Giannis, “Το Σκόπιο και το ΚΚΕ”[“Skopje and KKE”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 28/1 1993, pp. 3-4, 6-7; Giannis Marinos, “Η διαφθορά του ΚΚΕ στο Μακεδονικό”[“The only truth about the role of KKE in the Macedonian question”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 4/2 1993, pp. 4-5, 89-93; Vasilis Thassitis, “Πώς η Ειρήνη οργάνωσε το ναύλων”[“How the ‘peace’ organized the waterfowls”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 18/3 1993, pp. 68-69; Giannis Marinos, “Σκόπιες, ναρκωτικά και παιδοµάζωµα”[“Skopje, narcotics and child levy”], Vima 4/4 1993, p. A12.

615 The bibliographical notes of those editors and journalists who supplied their articles with lists of references reveal a heavy reliance upon EMS publications from the early post-Civil War years. See for example Vasilis Thassitis, “Πώς το ΚΚΕ συνέβαλε στη δηµιουργία του Μακεδονικού”[“How KKE contributed to the creation of the Macedonian question”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 13/2 1992, pp. 70-78.

616 See, for example, Istoriko tmima tou KKE (Historical section of KKE), “Τη διαφθορά την έκταν η Ιντελιτζένσ Σέρβις”[“The Intelligence Service did the job”], Vima 10/1 1993, p. A14.
the century, but these were rarely included in the narrative of national heroism, and never in any account of the Civil War. In a controversy with Giannis Marinos, the editor of Oikonomikos Tachydromos and a leading exponent of the anticommunist media campaign, Rizospastis contributor Takis Mamatsis concurred that KKE’s leadership twice, in 1924 and 1949, “during difficult and extraordinary circumstances” had assumed the “wrong position regarding the autonomy of Macedonia”, but stated that KKE had “corrected” the mistake since. The martyrdom of the thousands of Greek communists that were killed during the occupation or perished in the government’s labour camps after the Civil War was evidence enough of KKE’s patriotism, Mamatsis wrote, something which no “distortion of history” by the “vampires of anticommunism” could ever alter.

This use of history, which avoided the topic of the communists’ wartime alliance with the Slav Macedonians commonly referred to as Tito’s protégées besides a few references to isolated ‘mistakes’ in the past, was quite typical of the writers in Rizospastis dealing with the Macedonian crisis, who sought to explain it in the prism of a dividing line between the ‘good’ patriotism, solely represented by KKE, and the ‘evil’ nationalism/chauvinism of the forces hostile to the Party, a nationalism which had led to the two world wars as well as to the Greek Asia Minor disaster. This political-pedagogical use was occasionally supplemented by attempts to shroud the past and present policy choices of the Party in a more theoretical understanding of history, putatively rooted in Marxist-Leninist analysis of the laws governing human and social progress. The most striking example of this is to be found in Central Committee member Eleni Bellou’s definitions of the concepts ‘fatherland’, ‘patriotism’, ‘nation state’ and ‘national self-determination’, which she argued had been abused by bourgeois nationalism. However, these declarations could not really hide the fact that the Party’s stand on nationalism, and thereby on the campaign on “national and historic rights” of its bourgeois adversaries, was of a very ambivalent nature. Since the elements of patriotism – according to Bellou the “common racial descent […] the deep emotions of love and attachment toward the fatherland, the desire to serve its interests with concrete action” – had been “moulded since the era of antiquity” to become synonymous with class consciousness, there was nothing really that suggested the dividing line between KKE and the other parties with regard to the Macedonian issue to be unbridgeable. The same editor of Rizospastis who on the 11th of December 1992,

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618 I have only found one example of this in a letter to the editor, in which the author inscribes the Slav-speakers in a traditional narrative by stating that “all are baptized Christians, […] people who fought as heroes in the Greek nation’s struggles for national independence and freedom”. Giorgos Politis, “Μια βόλτα στη Βόρεια Ελλάδα θα τους πείσει” [“A stroll in Northern Greece would convince them”], Rizospastis 13/2 1992, p. 20.

619 Takis Mamatis, “Ναι, το ΚΚΕ είναι υπερήφανο για τον πατριωτισµό του” [Yes, KKE is proud of its patriotism"], part 1-2, Rizospastis 21/2, p. 13 and 22/2 1992, pp. 6-7.


the day after the second mass rally for Macedonia in Athens, denounced the “sterile slogans” of a dead-end nationalism, which in no way was a defence for historical truth or the ancient heritage, also stated that one of the basic conditions the “Skopje Republic” would have to fulfil in exchange for recognition must be the acceptance of “the historical and ethnological truth that there does not exist any Macedonian Nationality, nor of course any corresponding minorities in its neighbouring countries”.

In many respects, the public views expressed by KKE regarding the Republic of Macedonia reflected the same fears as those of mainstream political discourse; the breakaway state in the north was not a viable creation, worthy of nationhood, and if it was not hatched as part of a Western conspiracy already, it at least run the serious risk of being used as means by imperialist powers (Italy, Germany, the United States and/or Turkey), bent on the territorial partition of Greece. The same editors and contributors of Rizospastis who condemned the belligerent rhetoric and the nationalist “mass psychosis” displayed at the million man rallies could therefore, simultaneously, call for national unity and the defence of “the ancestral soil”. This ambiguity along with a standing which, after the split with Synaspismos, valued ideological orthodoxy and internal party cohesion over cooperation with other political parties, meant that the “pan-popular front against nationalism” that Papariga had envisioned in one of her speeches had little room for attracting support from anyone else than the loyal rank and file of her own party.

As for the other large faction of the Greek radical Left, Synaspismos (SYN), the image of views held on the Macedonian question and of positions assumed during the crisis is even less clear-cut. Contrary to what was the case in KKE, the remains of the Coalition lacked the rigid discipline of old style communist parties and therefore the press associated with this camp allowed for a wider variety of opinions. Stelios Nestor, a lawyer and local politician influential among the SYN cadres in Thessaloniki, was for example also one of the leading spokesmen of the Macedonian Committee, which spearheaded the organisation of the mass rallies. Although Nestor’s significance at a national level ought not to be exaggerated, he at least on the initial stage of the Macedonians crisis exercised considerable influence upon the policy choices of the newly constituted party. More importantly, his line also gained the initial support of Leonidas Kyrkos, a fellow Greek Macedonian deputy and former leader of EAR, the reformist party which together with KKE had made up the bulk of the Coalition. In spite of his recent retirement from the party leadership, Kyrkos still carried moral weight among the cadres of SYN and had the ears of the media. In the press, he affiliated himself with the commonly

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622 "Η άλλη λογική" ["The other logic"], editorial in Rizospastis 11/12 1992, p. 1, 3.
624 "Ανοιχτό µέτωπο στο µεγαλοϊδεατισµό" ["Open front against the megalomania of irredentism"], Rizospastis 13/2 1992, p. 5.
held view which condemned the “anti-Hellenic and irredentist propaganda of Skopje which in a barbarous manner falsifies History” and called for “draconic guarantees” that the “Skopje republic”, besides abstaining from attempts at border revision, would “declare as mendacious and anti-scientific any claims whatsoever on the historic heritage of ancient Macedonia, which constitutes a part of Greek history”.\(^{625}\) Albeit not without certain reservations, among which the former EAR leader warned of the international isolation Greece might risk if pushing her agenda too far, Synaspismos, under its new leader Maria Damanaki, opted to support the government’s policy regarding the name issue in the name of national unity.

Not all debaters who came forth in the leftwing, pro-Coalition press shared the precautions of Kyrkos. In January 1992, a contributor to \textit{Avgi}, Chrysanthos Lazaridis, called for a more aggressive policy against the Republic of Macedonia, in the form of military intervention and partition of its territory along with Serbia and Bulgaria before the neighbour state was recognised by the international community. Following Lazaridis, it would be more dangerous for Greece to allow the ‘Skopje state’ to remain independent and thus constitute a power vacuum in the Balkans, into which Turkey could advance its interests, than joining the other neighbour states ready to crush the ethnically heterogeneous ‘anomaly’, thereby once and for all solving the national question in the Balkans and creating regional stability. This, he ensured, would also be in the interest of the European Community. In a concluding remark, the author sought to clarify what he considered to be the choice that the Greek Left was facing.

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\text{For those [...] who ask the question how it is possible to advocate such a position within the camp of the Left today, I have to remark that the Left has a fundamental obligation to advocate the interests of the people and of the Republic [of Greece]! It has no obligation to show forbearance toward those who bring about the mutilation of national territory and the destabilisation of the greater region, while they vehemently tyrannise their own minorities and don’t hesitate to become the instruments of foreign expansionism.}
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\text{[...] As a Leftist I harbour limitless respect for History and the struggles of all peoples and I believe in the principles of peaceful coexistence and cooperation. But whomever who wantonly wishes to dismember my country, I’ll dismember myself! And this is exactly what we as a Left [movement] must state to the world! We must promulgate the liberating visions of Social Justice to the people! Not to ask them to renounce… common sense!}
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\text{Damn it, we are Leftists, but… we are \textit{not} masochists! Or are we?}\(^{626}\)
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Lazaridis’ article incurred both fierce criticism and ridiculing comments from several editors of the leftwing press.\(^{627}\) However, the implications of the article

\(^{625}\) Interview with Leonidas Kyrkos in Lefteris Gyras, Athina Karali & Vangelis Zorbas, “Οι Μακεδόνες παίρνουν τον λόγο” [“The Macedonians speak up”], \textit{Kathimerini} 22/4 1992, p. 8. It was in this context that Kyrkos praised the work of the Society for Macedonian Studies, which according to him had represented a “systematic scientific response to the incredibly nonsensical claims of Skopje” on Macedonian history for many years, while Greek politicians and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had neglected the threat.

\(^{626}\) Chrysanthos Lazaridis, “Βαλκάνια: ποιο είναι το πιο επικίνδυνο σενάριο;” [“Balkans: Which is the most dangerous scenario?”], \textit{Avgi} 26/1 1992, p. 13.
were symptomatic for the issues that the Left was grappling with at the time, a crisis which was not only political, but a crisis of identity. This crisis of identity was of course not something limited to the context of leftwing politics in Greece at the time; the collapse of ‘real socialism’ in the aftermath of 1989 shook the ideological convictions of leftwing forces across Europe, not only the ones traditionally associated with Soviet communism. The ‘death of ideologies’, more specifically the death of the various ideological incarnations of Marxism, was a prospect that socialist movements were facing across the Western world, forcing them to find new ways of legitimating their continuous presence.\(^{628}\)

In order to grasp the crisis’ impact upon Greek leftwing circles and the causes of their marginalisation in domestic politics and public debate, one needs not only to take the dramatic international developments into account, but also to examine the hopes once tied to the ideals of socialism in Greece. As in so many other cases, this particular story can be traced back to 1974 and more particularly to the landslide victory of PASOK in the 1981 elections on the promise of ‘change’. Part of PASOK’s success story was the way in which it had appropriated concepts, slogans (the People, people’s rule, social justice etc.) and – as already implied earlier in this study – historical narratives of identity that previously had been associated with the communist Left, and which struck a chord among the electorate. A substantial part of PASOK’s voters consisted of ex-communists and veterans from the leftwing wartime resistance and the communist guerrilla, once headed by Markos Vafiadis (himself eventually an honorary deputy of PASOK).\(^{629}\) The Pan-Hellenic Socialist movement of Andreas Papandreou – with emphasis on the word ‘movement’, reflecting its claim to represent ‘the people’ rather than being a traditional political party – envisioned a ‘third road to socialism’. Greece was to rid itself of the dependency of foreign powers like the United States, NATO and the EC, as well as old political and social ‘injustices’ associated with the long rule of the Right. A number of reforms were introduced in family law, higher education, public health and the social security system, but these changes came at a heavy price. The expanding state consumption, in lack of economic growth, was financed by extensive external borrowing which within ten years increased public indebtedness nearly fourfold, pushing the Greek economy from second to last to being the last in the European Community.\(^{630}\) PASOK allowed the public sector to swell by putting loyal party cadres on public payroll, thereby merging party and state, in the attempt to secure and reproduce its electoral base. Before the end of the decade, PASOK had left the economy and the public finance sector in a state of collapse. By then, allegations of abuse of power and involvement in embezzlement and fraud had already paved the way for the ‘movement’s’ electoral

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\(^{627}\) See Thanasis Georgakopoulos, “Άφηστε το ‘Stratego’ στα παιδιά” [“Leave the ‘Stratego’ to the kids”], Avgi 29/1 1992, p. 4; Aris Apostolopoulos, “Ιστορία και Υστερία” [“History and Hysteria”], Avgi 2/2 1992, p. 4.

\(^{628}\) Cf. Antonis Liakos, “Πρέπει να επαναπροσδιορίσουµε την έννοια της Αριστεράς;” [“Do we have to redefine the notion of the Left?”], Politis No. 115, October 1991, pp. 36-45.


\(^{630}\) Kapetanyannis 1993, p. 80.
defeat in June 1989. The public as well as the political analysts of the day were left with the impression that it was not only the so-called ‘third road to socialism’ that had been lost, but that an historic opportunity to mend the ills of Greek society and bring about its longed for modernisation had been wasted.

The authoritarian ways of Papandreou’s party, its populism and outright practice of patronage during its years in office enhanced pre-existent public perceptions of politics as nothing more than an arena for the promotion of selfish ambition, whether emanating from personal or group interests. This general disenchantment with politics was directly linked to the rapidly diminishing appeal of socialism. In the minds of many, the very idea of socialist transformation of society had been synonymous with PASOK’s performance in power, which now served to discredit it. As for the left-wing parties in the original Coalition of the Left and of Progress, which had already lost their main symbols and concepts to PASOK, their attempt to govern along with Nea Dimokratia in 1989 only further undermined the image and credibility of socialist politics among their followers.631

It is against this background that the calls for national, patriotic values as a substitute for old ideological truths also in leftwing press perhaps are best understood. Despite the failed attempt at governing with the old, political adversaries on the right and later on through an all-party consensus rule, the lack of ideological goals and a sense of direction contributed to the general veer toward values associated with traditional nationalism, thought to be unpolluted by the ‘dirty business’ of party politics. National unity, across class boundaries and petty-minded political grievances, seemed to be the way out of the political and moral crisis which haunted Greece and the Left. It was this point that tended to be stressed the most in all the mainstream media’s coverage of the mass rally for Macedonia in February 1992, and, together with the principal stand of Synaspismos on foreign policy matters, opened the columns of Avgi and other leftwing press organs for the arguments of macedonology.632

Of course nationalism was per se inherent in a populist discourse which made the ‘people’ synonymous with the nation. Internationalist, anti-imperialist discourse had within the broader Left long since coexisted with a form of nationalist rhetoric, which highlighted the small Greek people’s struggles against exploitation at the hands of foreign great powers and their domestic minions. As some analysts pointed out, the Left had since 1974 nearly monopolised the concept of patriotism, with its anti-US, anti-NATO, anti-EC and anti-Turkish rhetoric.633 This was especially evident in the attitudes of the faction within PASOK, which was named after its leading tabloid mouthpiece, Avriani (“Tomorrow’s paper”). Described by contemporary media analyst Stephanos Pesmazoglou as “a neo-fascist

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phenomenon drawing from all the elements of a society in crisis”, Avrianism and the ideological current he meant it represented, Avrianismos, was a mixture of traditional nationalistic sentiments and Leftist slogans. With its xenophobia and anti-intellectualism, Avrianism and similar publications no doubt contributed to the shaping of a climate of debate, which discouraged openly expressed dissent.

This climate to some extent helps in explaining the reluctance to participate in public debate during the early months of the Macedonian crisis displayed by large parts of the scholarly community. However, as already implied in this study, the crisis also presented scholarly historians with the opportunity to promote their own fields of research and knowledge. In the following, the object of scrutiny will be the politics of public science and textbook controversies.

**The nationally desirable knowledge: Public science, information and research**

In 1983, Nikolaos Martis had argued that “Greece is [...] the history, cultural inheritance and varied richness of our people” and that “every Greek no matter where he stands has a duty to defend it”. In his attempt to sound the alarm regarding the perceived threat from nation building in Yugoslav Macedonia, he appealed to the scholarly community in Greece.

The time has come for the mobilization first of all of our intellectuals, in universities and scientific institutes, by means of research and pen [...] with the use of scientific weapons such as the irrefutable testimony of the ‘speaking stones of Macedonia’, as well as with the use of innumerable other scientific records that certify its Greekness. The scientists, the press and the state-owned means of publicity must contribute to this effort of ascertaining the truth about Macedonia. This must be done without exaggerations or half-words but in a firm and consistent way. This is a task especially for our educators.

The central precondition was that the “scientific institutes which occupy themselves with Macedonian subjects should be assisted both morally and materially in order to continue their work” while “universities should be encouraged to pursue studies around these subjects”, thereby preparing a new generation of scholars to continue the work of older historians and archaeologists.

Macedonology was, in other words, to be given top priority within the academic establishment. Furthermore, he argued, Macedonian culture and history was to be promoted systematically abroad, through education of scholars at foreign universities – to be undertaken by diaspora Greeks who held academic positions abroad – while the role of the Greek state ought to be to distribute books and documentaries through the Greek embassies and press agencies.

This view was shared by several representatives of the academic community, chiefly among those of the ‘traditional’ historians. One such stronghold of support

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was the Academy of Athens (\textit{Akadimía Athinón}) which had awarded Martis’ work in 1983. Several of its associates were also involved in the prestigious publication project on the history of the borderlands of Hellenism launched in the same period, most notably historian Michail B. Sakellariou, editor of \textit{Macedonia – 4000 years of Greek history and civilization}.\footnote{Sakellariou’s own contribution to the volume, apart from the introduction, was a section on the inhabitants of Macedonia during the Bronze Age and antiquity: a list of “categorical evidence” suggesting the Greek “nationality of the Macedonians” in ancient times. Sakellariou (ed.) 1983 (1982), pp. 44-63. An emeritus professor from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and director of the Institute for Ancient Greek and Roman Studies, maintained by EIE, Sakellariou (born 1912) was a leading exponent on what in this study has been dubbed the ‘archaeologist approach’ to the Macedonian question. As such, he came forward in public debate as a strong defender of the continuity of Hellenism, arguing that the neighbouring republic ought to be named Dardania, since present day Skopje was located within this ancient land, which he stressed had never been part of the Macedonian kingdom. Michail Sakellariou, \textit{"Η ψευδώνυµη Μακεδονία}” [“The mock Macedonia”], \textit{Vima} 9/2 1992, p. A24, A26. See also Sakellariou (ed.) 1983 (1982), pp. 10-11.}

Early in January 1992, Sakellariou assumed the presidency over the Academy. His inauguration speech, reproduced in the Sunday paper \textit{Vima}, concerned the present stage of historical research in Greece. According to Sakellariou, Greek research lagged behind most countries of similar size in Western Europe and the Balkans, as far as funding and the number of employed researchers were concerned. Limitations imposed by the state and the abolition of the Commercial Bank’s foundation for historical research had led the research institutes of the Academy and the centres of the National Foundation of Research (EIE) to stagnate. “State and society must realise that historical research is not useless”, the Academy’s president wrote. “It is an aspect of contemporary culture and has consequences for the education of society, for the self-knowledge of the national community, but also for its security.”\footnote{Michail Sakellariou, \textit{“Επειγόντως οξυγόνο για την ιστορική έρευνα}” [“Urgent need of oxygen for historical research”], \textit{Vima} 12/1 1992, p. B4.}

Extra-scientific factors – mainly the nationalism of the neighbours and their politically motivated quest for ancestral roots among the civilisations in the Balkans and Asia Minor during Greek antiquity – constituted a growing threat toward Greek national security. Besides the ‘usurpation’ of the ancient Macedonians by ‘Skopje’, Sakellariou made reference to the Bulgarian claim on the Thracians and the corresponding Turkish claim on the Hittites and the achievements of the Ionian Greeks. In this last example, his views were congruent with IMXA scholar Speros Vryonis Jr., who in 1991 had set out to refute Turkish president Turgut Özal’s attempt to incorporate ancient Greek and Byzantine history into a nationalist version of the past, which stressed Turkey’s image as a European country.\footnote{Speros Vryonis, Jr., \textit{The Turkish State and History: Clio Meets the Grey Wolf}, Thessaloniki & New Rochelle, NY: Institute for Balkan Studies and Aristide D. Caratzas 1993 (Greek original: 1991). Apart from the almost half book length refutation of Özal’s historiography, Vryonis Jr. showed a particular interest in Turkish government efforts to impose its views on history upon policy-makers and academia in the United States in the 1980s primarily with regard to the Armenian genocide issue, but also Turkish support for Slav Macedonian nationalism was noted.}

These ‘provocations’, “besides distorting historical reality”, fostered sentiments hostile to Greece among the neighbouring populations and also had damaging repercussions in the international historiography on the region. For these and for “scientific reasons”, priority ought to be given to certain specific research topics. Greek historians ought to be ahead of their international peers in all
research relating to the northern borderlands of Hellenism during antiquity. Also, the political history of Greece in the modern age and the history of the Greek communities in the Ottoman Empire were too important to be assigned to foreign scholars or to be left as a void in the international bibliography. According to Sakellariou, the ultimate goal of research ought to be the achievement of broader syntheses on Greek history, which could serve to educate the public. While the “more educated part” of the public could be satisfied with specialist literature, the less educated were in need of “shorter and more simplified outlines”. Whatever the level of the scholarly output, the Academy president argued, the syntheses served the vital purpose of educating the common man on national history and thereby cultivating “national self-knowledge”. However, the public and the political establishment also needed to understand that such syntheses were not accomplished ad hoc every time a foreign provocation emerged. Rather they required time and funding for basic research or, as Sakellariou put it, the need of ‘oxygen’ was urgent.  

Statements like these were a common feature in the public debate. Not surprisingly, the Macedonian crisis and its nature as a conflict over an historical and cultural heritage provided scholars (and non-scholars) concerned with history with an opportunity to stress the significance of their fields of expertise. In a retrospective text written in 2010, historian Vasilis Gounaris – himself in charge of a research institute of Macedonian history in Thessaloniki – remarked that the general interest in Macedonian matters in the early 1990s helped to promote scholarly, political and personal ambitions that in most cases were interwoven; in short, “everyone felt the need to write something about Macedonia”. Although Gounaris is careful not to lump the entire output of Greek macedonology of that time into one category, he admits that militancy was one of its most dominant features. “The ‘Macedonian fighters’ – we – were ready for war.” As the publishers of a two-volume work on Macedonia, published in Greek as well as in English, had it in their foreword: “A nation’s historical memory should be ever vigilant, especially now that the Macedonian issue has again come to the fore in such a painful fashion.” Framed in belligerent metaphors and an existential use of history – “the very nature of human existence is the struggle of memory against oblivion” – it was argued that the “best armour” in the long future struggle for Macedonia “is a knowledge of history. Declarations and high oratory are of little service to the truth if there is no collective consciousness of the historical truth.”

It is difficult to ascertain the exact impact of the Macedonian crisis upon the historical research choices and funding strategies in Greece, but it is evident that topics which could be presented as being of national importance in the name conflict stood a good chance to be financially rewarded. This was a powerful

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incentive to publish. Thus, a research programme, funded by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, was presented in May 1992 as part of an ambition to promote “scientific research and information on the topic of Macedonia, from historical, archaeological, cultural and sociological perspective”. Simultaneously, the above mentioned bilingual publication on modern and contemporary Macedonia was presented to the public, the result of an editorial effort which, according to the publishers, had been initiated already in 1986, as a supplementing counterweight to the already vast coverage of the region’s ancient past. It involved a number of historians and other scholars from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, who according to the publishers contributed with “texts full of overpowering detail which deflect any attempt at perversion of the historic truth”. In the same vein, EMS and IMXA took the initiative of reissuing earlier publications on the Macedonian question.

These efforts, however, must not solely, or even primarily, be interpreted as a funding strategy. They might just as well be understood as attempts at protecting professional prestige, by not letting outsiders appear as the sole experts. The public attention to Macedonian matters could be a two-edged sword for scholarly societies claiming longstanding expertise in the field. Martis and other ‘new Macedonian fighters’ outside the traditional research and learning environments had conveyed a popular image of an internationally successful pseudo-scientific propaganda machinery in Skopje, which for decades had been unrivalled by Greek institutions. This perception – which the mass media were quick to adopt and reproduce on an almost daily basis – fed on an unfavourable impression of the Greek scholarly community’s performance, which sometimes emerged explicitly in public debate. In an interview in Kathimerini, the professor of Slavonic studies Faidon Malingoudis, who had come forward in the debate as a vociferous defender of Greek ‘national rights’ in Macedonia, seized the opportunity to question the efforts and competence of the institutes concerned with macedonology in Thessaloniki. These he meant had done a poor job countering the “anti-Greek propaganda” of ‘Skopje’ and Bulgaria. According to Malingoudis, the existing institutions and research institutes, “due to their nature [of specialisation] and with the introversion that

643 "Πανεπιστηµιακή έρευνα για Μακεδονία" ["University research on Macedonia"], ELEFTHEROTYPIA 9/5 1992, p. 5.
644 Papazissis & Papassarantopoulos in Koliopoulos et al. (eds.) 1992, p. 8. Greek original: Ioannis Koliopoulos, Ioannis Chasiotis & Giannis Stefanidis, (eds.), Η νεότερη και σύγχρονη Μακεδονία, vol. 1-2, Thessaloniki: Papazisi 1992. Even if the scholarly contributors tended to avoid the sort of dramatic, belligerent discourse used in the publishers’ foreword, the interpretative framework that seeks to legitimate the nation-state is present in introductory remarks as well as contributions. See especially Koliopoulos’ concluding remark in his text on modern Macedonia, p. 3: “Greek Macedonia, the prize of long struggles and sacrifices, now constitutes [an] inseparable part of the Greek national state. The various linguistic and cultural survivals in the area constitute precious, worth preserving elements of a rich heritage and evidence the age-long historical march of Hellenism, one of the most ancient cultural communities in the Balkans.”
646 See “Μύθος οι Σλάβοι στη Β. Ελλάδα” [“The Slavs in Northern Greece a myth”], Kathimerini 18/3 1992, p. 3.
characterises them, are unable to confront the propaganda, because they are not
inguinal institutions [...] , they do not appoint scholars”. The remedy lay in the
establishment of a new Institute for Slavonic Studies within the Department of
History and Archaeology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, “which would
have precisely this purpose, i.e. the promotion of objective research and [whose]
 scholarly output would constitute an irrefutable response to the writings, ignorant
of history, which our [Slav] neighbours hammer out”. As one could expect, the
interview drew angry responses from representatives of institutions who felt them
being the targets of mudslinging. In a written response to the newspaper, IMXA
member of the board Antonios-Aimilios Tachiaos accused Malingoudis of
defamation and deliberate distortion of reality.

Mr. Malingoudis asserts that the institutions in Thessaloniki are by their nature and
their “introversion” inept to combat the foreign propaganda. In Thessaloniki there exist
at the moment at least three institutes which deal with issues relating to the distortion
of scientific truth by Slav scholars and these are, in order of their establishment, the
Society for Macedonian Studies (1939), the Institute of Balkan Studies (IMXA 1953)
and the Greek Society of Slavonic Studies (1975). All three have to their credit
hundreds of publications [...], in which these inaccuracies many times have been
 rebutted both by Greek and by foreign scholars. It seems that Mr. Malingoudis has
forgotten that all three institutions have published articles by him in their periodicals;
the last of them has even published one of his books, it has promoted him in a
subcommittee of the International Committee of Slavists and has included him in an
exchange programme with the Serbian Academy of Sciences. Where, thus, is the
introversion of these institutes? If Mr. Malingoudis wanted to respond himself to the
authors of the Bulgarian books that he cites in his interview, as other colleagues of
his have done repeatedly with regard to similar publications in the pages of these
institutes’ periodicals, he is well aware that these pages were readily at his disposal.
But he did not do it then and now he indirectly blames others for the ostensible lack
of response.\footnote{Antonios-Aimilios Tachiaos, “Κραυγαλέες ανακρίβειες” [“Blatant inaccuracies”], \textit{Kathimerini} 20/9 1992, p. 13.}

Tachiaos also sought to refute the view expressed by Malingoudis that EMS and
IMXA were non-educational institutions aloof from the world, whence from no
scholars ever graduated. In fact, a number of young scholars had learnt the Slavic
languages spoken in the Balkans through the language school of IMXA, which also
had assisted them in their specialisation. IMXA, described as “one of the oldest and
most serious research institutes in the country”, was in itself a school, whence from
many young scholars had received scholarships for university studies abroad.
Furthermore, former co-workers of IMXA – among which Tachiaos, apart from
himself, mentioned EMS president Konstantinos Vavouskos and historian
Konstantinos Vakalopoulos – had after their training at the Institute went on to
pursue careers as university teachers or, in the case of Evangelos Kofos, at the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “We who have worked at IMXA know whether it
produces scholars or not”, the member of the board concluded and dared
Malingoudis or any graduate of a Slavist institute to try to square up to these experts.  

As implied earlier in this study, the Macedonian conflict within the Greek scholarly community was, at least initially, not a clash of perspectives. A general agreement existed among the parts concerned with macedonology that the history-writing emanating from the neighbours in the north, particularly the Institute for National History in Skopje, represented a violation of science, which Greek scholars needed to confront. In lack of a domestic revisionist adversary, the apple of discord was rather which scholars and/or which institutions were most fit to do the job, bearing in mind that the available funding resources were not limitless and that the competition was fierce. Jealous guarding of scholarly preserves was perhaps an inevitable side-effect of the crisis, as a number of people claiming special expertise appeared and were given attention in the media.

Exchanges in public debate, such as the one between Malingoudis and Tachiaos, also point to another important circumstance. The conflict was not always about what kind of research that ought to be done in order to confront what was perceived as distorted historical knowledge in service of enemy propaganda, but rather what knowledge, i.e. which facts, ought to be emphasised in communication with the public and the outside world. In Malingoudis’ line of arguments, as well as other arguments echoing through public discourse, a rhetorical opposition was constructed between research, understood as introvert science and specialist knowledge for the few, and information, historical knowledge accessible to the common man and thus useful in education and the ‘protection’ of the nation’s history and identity. To debaters such as Sakellariou, the president of the Academy of Athens, this was a false dichotomy, but even he concurred that the ultimate goal of Greek historical research must be the cultivation of the public’s “national self-knowledge”. An important aspect of the ‘new’ struggle for Macedonia, as the name conflict sometimes was referred to as, was thus to set the agenda of educational debate, by attempting to exert influence on the contents and overall orientation of the history curriculum, in its capacity as a repository for the national values and knowledge of the national past perceived to be in peril.

**Educational politics and the Macedonian crisis**

Greece has in the recent decades experienced a number of history textbook controversies – the most recent and widely publicised in 2006-2007 – which in

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649 Ibid. The clash of claims to expertise was in all likelihood also due to the fact that both Tachiaos and Malingoudis have published on the topic of Byzantine-Slavonic relations in the Middle Ages. See Antonios-Aimilios Tachiaos, **Κυρίλλος και Μεθόδιος οι εκ Θεσσαλονίκης: Η βυζαντινή ϖαιδεία στους Σλάβους [Kyrillos and Methodios of Thessaloniki: The Byzantine education among the Slavs]**, Thessaloniki: Rekos 1989; Anthony-Emil Tachiaos, **Greeks and Slavs: Cultural, Ecclesiastical and Literary Relations**, Thessaloniki: Kyriakidis 1997; Antonios-Aimilios Tachiaos, **Βυζάντιο, Σλάβοι, Άγιον Όρος: Αναδρομή σε αμοιβαίες σχέσεις και επιδράσεις [Byzantium, Slavs, Mount Athos: Retrospection into mutual relations and influences]**, Thessaloniki: University Studio Press 2006; Faidon Malingoudis, **Σλάβοι στη µεσαιωνική Ελλάδα [Slavs in medieval Greece]**, Thessaloniki: Vivliotikhi slavikon meleton, Vanias 1991 (1988); ibid., **Η Θεσσαλονίη και ο κόσµος των Σλάβων: Εισαγωγικά δοκίµια [Thessaloniki and the world of the Slavs: Introductory essays]**, Thessaloniki: Vivliotikhi slavikon meleton, Vanias 1992; ibid., **Ελληνισµός και σλαβικός κόσµος [Hellenism and the Slavic world]**, Thessaloniki: Vanias 2006.

several cases have resulted in textbooks, whose contents have been considered as undermining national identity, being withdrawn from circulation by the authorities, following pressure from various interest groups. Although several researchers have made reference to these non-state actors involved in educational debate and the process of textbook revision, Greek textbook research has tended to be centred on content analysis of the textbooks themselves. The elements in focus are usually the national ideology reproduced in the books, the cultivation of stereotypes, the structure and underlying norms of the official narrative and the space assigned to certain events or perspectives. A main conclusion of this research is that the history teaching in Greece is traditionally dominated by an ethnocentric approach, aimed at imbuing and developing a national consciousness in the minds of the pupils, and that the textbooks that have caused controversy and been withdrawn, were taken out of circulation because they deviated from the national norm – for example by introducing non-ethnocentric perspectives to the teaching of history – or presented controversial historical issues associated with the national past in a “heretic” way.

In order to understand the responses to the Macedonian crisis and the calls for promotion of values perceived to be national, one would also have to set them into the context of educational politics and the general conditions for history textbook production in Greece. As historian Susanne Popp has noted, different schoolbook admission procedures play an important role in the making of the history textbook controversies known as history wars, and partly explains why these controversies are a recurring phenomenon in some national contexts but not in others. Using an illustrative comparison between Japan and Germany – both countries with troublesome national histories and thus potential for controversy – she observes that while the highly centralised character of Japanese schoolbook production and distribution promote public focus and scrutiny on the authorisation of new textbooks every fourth year and thereby create “favorable conditions for angry public debate, in part orchestrated by the mass media”, the German system, where textbooks are authorised on the local level of federal states in very heterogeneous educational environments, “does not help to attract public attention”. The result of the complexity of these uncoordinated procedures is that textbook controversies (on a national level) are less likely to occur in the German context than in the centralised Japanese.

The conditions in Greece support the validity of this observation. History textbook production and distribution were brought under the auspices of the state—

655 See especially Kokkinos & Gatsotis 2008.
656 Popp 2009, pp. 113-114.
run publishing organ OESV (later renamed OEDV) in 1937, in a period of authoritarian rule (the Metaxas dictatorship), and have remained so up until today.\textsuperscript{657} The guidelines and instructions regarding contents are provided by another state organ, since 1985 known as the Pedagogical Institute, which appoints the authors employed in the writing of textbooks.\textsuperscript{658} The Pedagogical Institute answers in its turn to the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, which reserves itself the right to scrutinise and, if it is deemed necessary, to make changes in the textbooks produced. The contents of history textbooks have consequently and ultimately depended on the political camp in office at the time of their conception. This helps explain why controversies over history education, textbook contents and public memory have been increasingly common in Greek public debate since the 1980s.

As already implied, the transition to parliamentary democracy and the political rehabilitation of the Left had brought about the need for textbook revision. When PASOK came into power in 1981, a series of changes were introduced in the field of education. Since one of PASOK’s aims was to rehabilitate the wartime ‘national resistance’ (EAM), to which the ruling party claimed ideological affinity, and include it into the state narrative,\textsuperscript{659} new history textbooks were launched in order to replace the ones in use during the preceding decades of rightwing political hegemony.\textsuperscript{660}

However, not all textbooks were written in service of this political ambition to revise the image of the recent national past, since there also was a more general spirit of change, reflecting international intellectual and methodological trends in the teaching of history. In 1984 a new history textbook written by the renowned Greek-Canadian historian Lefteris Stavrianos, a leading champion of the teaching of global history,\textsuperscript{661} was introduced in the history class of upper secondary school. It was an attempt at a non-etnocentric approach to the teaching of history, by emphasising global developments (such as the agrarian, industrial and technological revolutions), instead of the political history of the Greek nation that traditionally had been in focus.\textsuperscript{662} Stavrianos’ employment as textbook author was perhaps more


\textsuperscript{659} This public rehabilitation was, according to several scholars, only partial, since the national resistance from the period of Axis occupation was separated from its communist-led offspring from the subsequent civil war in the second half of the 1940s, a period that was barely touched upon in attempts at textbook revision as well as in the public discourse on history within PASOK in the 1980s. See Liakos 2004, p. 370; Rori 2008, pp. 293-309; Boníta, Maria “Η εξέλιξη της αφήγησης του ελληνικού εµφυλίου στα σχολικά βιβλία: καλλιέργεια ή χειραγώγηση της συλλογικής µνήµης?” [“The evolution of the narrative on the Greek civil war in school books: cultivation or guidance of collective memory?”] in van Boesioen \textit{et al.} 2008, pp. 331-347.

\textsuperscript{660} See the rather detailed prescriptions of the Pedagogical Institute for Vassilis Kremmydas’ history textbook for the third year of lower secondary school regarding the interpretations that ought to be emphasised, namely the revolutionary sentiments of the European peoples, and especially the Greek people; the “bourgeois class” betrayal of the struggle for social liberation at the end of the occupation, and finally the victory of the major social strata in the present. An excerpt of the text is reproduced in Boníta 2008, p. 346.


\textsuperscript{662} Lefteris Stavrianos, \emph{Ιστορία του ανθρώπινου γένους: Α’ Λυκείου} [History of mankind: For the 1\textsuperscript{st} class of upper secondary school], Athens: Organismos Ekdoseos Didaktikon Vivlion 1984.
due to his personal friendship with Andreas Papandreou, from the latter’s years of study in the U.S., rather than consistent political ambitions to introduce international perspectives into history education. Nevertheless, it was widely perceived as representative of new ideas in education. Stavrianos’ textbook became the target of fierce attacks in public debate from Christian organisations, which accused it of atheism, due to its Darwinian evolutionary biology and Marxist approaches, as well as from other conservative groups and a number of parliament deputies. The core of the criticism launched against it was that it was an attempt at undermining “the foundations of Greek civilization”.

Nevertheless, the book remained in use for five years, before the Pedagogical Institute decided to have it withdrawn and replaced by an older textbook in the academic year 1989-1990. Stavrianos’ book was however not the only one to be withdrawn from schools at the time. In 1990, the Pedagogical Institute decided to remove another history textbook, written in 1984 by the ‘new’ historian Vassilis Kremmydas for the final year of lower secondary school, from the following year’s curriculum, on the grounds that it was marred by inaccuracies and ideological bias, and that it placed too little emphasis on Greek history. A book on historical methodology from 1983, intended for the last year of upper secondary school, shared the same fate in 1991.

Within a short span of time, 1989-1991, i.e. the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the Macedonian crisis, three textbooks – all the result of textbook revision in the early 1980s – had been withdrawn from use in public schools, on the grounds that their contents were either incomprehensible, unpatriotic or even damaging to the pupils’ national sentiment. This development should be seen within the context of the domestic political situation toward the end of the 1980s. One of the first actions taken by the Right and radical Left coalition government was the mass destruction of the security police files on suspected Leftists that had been on record since the Civil War, despite the vociferous protests of historians like Filippou Sliou. This gesture of conciliation and overcoming of past grievances (through the erasure of their tangible traces), which seemed to stress the importance of national unity, can also be interpreted as a clear indication for educators as to what type of history that ought to be emphasised in history teaching.

After 1990, when ND had secured a narrow parliamentary majority which enabled it to form a government of its own, the demands for the promotion of

663 Mavroskoufis 1997, p. 103; translated and quoted in Hamilakis 2003, p. 43. Still in 1992, Stavrianos’ textbook was listed by the educational debater N. Bougatsos as one of the main obstacles for the implementation and development of national and Christian Orthodox consciousness in the minds of the pupils, an educational goal inscribed in the 1975 constitution and in a law that was passed in 1985. Bougatsos’ strategy was to question the scientific validity of the “Neodarwinism” in the textbook – “[evolution] gives you the impression of scientific truth, without having proved anything that is indisputably scientific” – and to argue that it is unconstitutional to teach anything that questions religion. Freedom of expression should be limited to university teaching, he argued, while teachers in secondary school ought to be prevented from teaching opinions that risk undermining the religious sentiment of the pupils. N. Bougatsos, “Τις µας καλύτερη παιδεία” [“For a better education”], Nea Paideia, issue 63, July-September 1992, pp. 57-63.


national values in history education emerged with increasing frequency in public debate. This trend is manifest in mainstream media as well as in educational journals. The events of the preceding three years, debater Kyriakos Plisis wrote in 1992, had shown that neither “laboratory ideologies” nor common economic interests proved to be as cohesive forces as the nation and the values it represented. Plisis expressed his regrets that the reaction against the dictatorship in the 1970s had led to a marginalisation of these values, as embodied by knowledge of the nation and its past. The process of European unification in the wake of the Maastricht treaty made the reintroduction of this knowledge even more appropriate, he argued, since “[w]ithout national identity, no country can correctly play its role in this multinational union”; therefore, “in order to become proper Europeans, we must first become proper Greeks”. The way to accomplish this was to safeguard and protect the traditions and the history that constituted national identity from foreign influence.

The coming of the Macedonian crisis added a dimension of urgency and threat to the debate on the contents of history education. International initiatives aimed at the recognition of the Republic of Macedonia was, by some debaters, seen as directly linked to and caused by the educational reforms of the 1980s, with their perceived damaging effects to the historical and national consciousness of the pupils and the preparedness to cope with the external ‘threat’. The authorities’ short-term response to these calls was the announcement of new textbooks and teaching materials that were to be issued, as a part of the government’s effort to inform teachers, pupils and their parents about the Macedonian question. One textbook, exclusively dedicated to Macedonia, was to be distributed for immediate use in public schools, while another textbook, covering the Macedonian question as well as a number of other ‘national issues’ and intended for use in upper secondary school, was to be prepared the following year.

Early in 1992, the Minister of Education Giorgos Souflias (ND) announced the publication of a special textbook aimed at informing pupils on the historic roots of the present crisis, in a “valid, objective and scientific” manner. The textbook, entitled Makedonia: Istoria kai politiki [Macedonia: History and politics] was the work of scholars employed at the Society for Macedonian Studies and had earlier been distributed abroad by the society’s diaspora branch, the Centre for Macedonians Abroad (KAM). It presented the history of Greek Macedonia in a

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667 Ibid., p. 12.
668 See especially Ioannis Toulomakos, “Εγχειρίδια ιστορίας που σπιλώνουν τη ∆ηµοκρατία, καταργούν τους 'Ελληνες και υµνούν τις καταλήψεις” [“History textbooks which tarnish the Democracy, suppress the Greeks and celebrate the occupations”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 2/1 1992, pp. 36-37, 77; Dimitris Stergiou, “Συναγερµός για επιστροφή στις ελληνικές ρίζες και αξίες” [“Rally for the return to Greek roots and values”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 6/2 1992, pp. 3-7, 84. See also various articles by Sarantos Kargakos and Giannis Marinos in the same magazine.
linear narrative, from antiquity to the present, with emphasis on evidence proving Hellenic presence through the ages, and was received by mainstream media in a generally positive manner, as a commendable but long overdue initiative. Exceptions are found in leftwing press, which described the initiative as highly politicized and reminiscent of similar initiatives made by the junta, and pointed to inconsistencies in the views presented regarding the naming of the Slavs in the Macedonian region. However, critique was also voiced from a point of view traditionally associated with rightwing nationalism.

In an article in the conservative *Estia*, the textbook came under a fierce attack by Dimitris Michalopoulos, an assistant professor of history, who accused it of reproducing Bulgarian propaganda with the approval of the party in office, rather than serving the national interest and “historical truth”. Michalopoulos pointed to contradictions in the logic of the textbook’s narrative and choice of historical ‘facts’, which according to him had the result that pupils were given the impression that the Bulgarians – in his view the real instigators behind the Macedonian conflict – had had legitimate territorial claims to Macedonia in the early 20th century and that the region is Greek only due to ethnic cleansing and persecution of Bulgarian populations. The inconsistencies of the textbook – the very same that had been pointed out by leftwing journalists, but interpreted in a diametrically opposed manner – were presented by Michalopoulos as a deliberate violation of truth, the first time that enemy propaganda was voiced in a Greek schoolbook. In an attempt to identify the anonymous author or instigator of the textbook (apparently not one of its named editors), Michalopoulos pointed to similarities with a “vulgarised, simplified sort of study” written in English by historian Evangelos Kofos, the established authority on the Macedonian question in Greek postwar historiography. Kofos was accused of undermining Greek national claims to the Macedonian historical heritage, thus paving the way for national enemies who questioned the Greekness of Macedonia. In a postscript Michalopoulos expressed his dismay at the Ministry of Education, whose officials had met his remarks on the textbook with “frosty – if not hostile – indifference”.

Michalopoulos continued to launch his attacks against the textbook on Macedonia in letters to the editors and in newspapers to which he was a regular contributor. A response to the accusation was published by Giorgos Babiniotis, professor of linguistics and the president of the Pedagogical Institute (himself a known advocate of the confrontational official policy in the Macedonian name

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Babiniotis did not so much address the issue of editorial choices behind which historical facts and circumstances or perspectives that should be emphasized, which had been the core in Michalopoulos’ argumentation. Rather he expressed his regrets and concerns that an attempt “of national significance” at informing both pupils and teachers on the Macedonian question had been met by reactions that were “extremist” and “dangerous” from a colleague like Michalopoulos. Babiniotis asked why the Pedagogical Institute, “which has thrown itself into a difficult struggle for the substantial assistance of education” with new textbooks and programmes of further training for educators, should have to preoccupy itself with “fantasies”. Therefore, he stated that he saw no reason to engage in a discussion that had no meaning, and urged all who wished to introduce better teaching materials in the schools to consider the goals that “we have put forward as Pedagogical Institute: to inform the pupils seriously and sensitize them nationally. Not to fanaticise them.”

Babiniotis’ rhetorical strategy, in which serious and nationally desirable knowledge is juxtaposed against extremist and fanatic misrepresentation of knowledge, can be analysed as a form of boundary-work. His intervention into the debate thus reads as an example of both expulsion and protection of (in this case the Pedagogical Institute’s) autonomy. The need for such boundary-work was obviously present in the debate, since it attracted a number of individuals with claims to expertise on nationally desirable knowledge. Michalopoulos’ articles were not isolated examples of criticism against the textbooks and attempts at setting the agenda for education. Some of these attempts were direct attacks against and calls for the dismantling of the Pedagogical Institute. Thus another debater, Ioannis Toulomakos, professor of classical philology and ancient history at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, used what he portrayed as the “failure” to teach national – especially ancient Macedonian – history properly as an argument in favour of his own demand for the creation of a new national council for education, made up of scientifically and pedagogically competent and internationally recognised scholars, who would be in charge of quality control and approval of history textbooks. In addition to the “Higher National Council for National Education”, Toulomakos argued that a new educational institution for future educators ought to be founded, graduation from which could be the main criterion for eligibility to the national educational council. The location of this institution, “for purely objective reasons”, would be Thessaloniki.

The ongoing diplomatic crisis, to which Toulomakos explicitly referred in his article, thus created favourable conditions for expansion, in Gieryn’s sense. This was something which in its turn, arguably, brought about the need for vigilance and defense against domestic ‘intruders’ in the institutions concerned with history education, in much the same manner as national history had to be ‘protected’ from

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676 Giorgos Babiniotis, “Ευαισθητοποίηση, όχι φανατισµός” [“Sensitisation, not fanaticism”], Vima 5/7 1992, p. 16.
677 Ibid.
678 Ioannis Toulomakos, “Εγχειρίδια ιστορίας που σπιλώνουν τη ∆ηµοκρατία, καταργούν τους 'Ελληνες και υµνούν τις καταλήψεις” [“History textbooks which tarnish the Democracy, suppress the Greeks and celebrate the occupations”], Oikonomikai Tachydromoi 2/1 1992, pp. 36-37, 77.
the alleged forgers of history and extremists in the new neighbour state across the Greek-Yugoslav border. Concerns regarding the boundaries between an education which emphasised national values, understood as something positive and desirable, and that of evil nationalism sometimes emerged in the educational journals of the period. The earlier mentioned educational debater Kyriakos Plisis thus made a distinction between ethnocentric “nationalistic education” that had been predominant until quite recently and “national education” that ought to be given from now on. He clarified that he did not make a plea for nationalism of the sort that “blind[s] the citizens and lead[s] them to fanaticism and intolerance”, which Greece had known in the past and unfortunately knew yet in the present, but rather a humble sort of love for the fatherland, its past and its traditions.679

One should of course keep in mind that the most vociferous participants of the public debate not necessarily were influential people in the eyes of the scholarly community or policy-makers. On the contrary, debaters such as Michalopoulos and Faidon Malingoudis tended to operate outside the more powerful institutions and channels of influence; hence, they were less likely to be considered in the competition for funding. Their principal hope lay in appealing to the public opinion and to political authorities by calling for the establishment of new institutions of research and learning, rather than the reinforcement of the old. Under less dramatic political times and circumstances, they might have been ignored by the establishment. However, the climate of imminent threat caused by the Macedonian conflict, reflected in public allegations in the press against the scholarly community for not doing enough, urged caution among its representatives in leading positions. The literature about Macedonia being distributed abroad through state-sponsored means was the work of Martis, not so much the more scholarly output on the same topic. The atmosphere of crisis seemed to favour any initiative claiming to be patriotic. The attention to such initiatives and the political connections of some of the individuals involved in these, might very well have been an incentive for scholars to guard the boundaries of ‘science’ and ‘reason’. This dimension will be further explored in the section “‘Things fall apart’: Demarcating the boundaries against popular macedonology”.

History war and student politics

The common denominator for most scholars participating in the debate on the Macedonian conflict in early 1992 was their affiliation to research institutes or institutions which largely operated outside the university community. Save for professors at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, like historian Konstantinos Vakalopoulos, the interested parties were not university teachers. This meant that they by and large never had to deal with a factor of power in the universities whose influence had grown dramatically in the 1980s: the student movement. Although this influence ought not to be overemphasised in an analysis of the power struggles reflected in the Macedonian history war among Greek academics, the tradition of radical politics made the student associations the most likely centre of opposition

679 Plisis 1992, pp. 11-12.
to government initiatives on ‘national’ information. This would also turn out to be the case in 1992. It is therefore relevant to briefly account for the background of student politics in Greece.

The history of the student movement’s rise to power in Greek universities is, as so many other social and political phenomena, connected to the process of transition in the 1970s. It was among student groups that protests against the junta had erupted in 1973, culminating in the bloody suppression of the so-called Polytechnic School uprising. When Konstantinos Karamanlis formed the first democratically elected government the following year, concessions had to be granted to the student associations, who called for the purging of the universities from professors and officials deemed to be associated with the junta. Further concessions were granted by the PASOK government in 1982, who wished to exploit the prestige attributed to the students’ resistance against the dictatorship while simultaneously striking a blow to the communist parties which since the student elections of 1976 held sway in the largest student organisation. These far-reaching concessions included, among other things, unprecedented voting rights for student associations in the election of university officials. It meant that the student movement – and by way of it, the youth section of PASOK – was in a position where it could wield influence over the appointment of university professors and rectors. However, the attachment to the policies of PASOK also had an impact on the student movement’s overall proneness toward political radicalism. In a retrospective article written in view of the upcoming student elections in April 1992, an analyst of the leftwing *Anti* magazine lamented the fact that the once mighty student movement had become part of the establishment. This, he meant, had led to a growing apathy among the students for political and ideological issues, while at the same time rightwing student groups had become better organised and ready to recover lost ground.

This was the state of affairs in student circles when the Macedonian conflict hit the headlines in early 1992. Its presence was soon to be felt at the universities; at the University of Ioannina, communiqués signed by anonymous students were put in circulation, which accused certain history professors for not contributing enough to the defense of Macedonia’s Greekness. At the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, a group of students called *Protovoulía Prostasías tis Ellinikís Istorías* (“Initiative for the Protection of Greek History”, abbreviated PPEI) was formed at the Faculty of Humanities. Its stated purpose was the promotion of national issues on campus in view of the upcoming student election. To this end PPEI succeeded in winning the support of the student associations affiliated with the major political parties, who agreed to set aside their differences, and issue a common statement condemning the “Skopje Republic’s” ‘violation’ of Macedonian history at a faculty meeting early in March. Similar initiatives were reported from

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683 Iós tis Kyriakís (Kostopoulos, Trimis, Psarras), “Οι εθνοσωτήρες σώζουν πάλι το έθνος” ["The nation-saviours are saving the nation again"], *Eleftherotypia* 19/4 1992, section Ε, pp. 53-58.
Thessaloniki, where the Student Union of the Aristotle University engaged in an “information campaign” for the ‘national issues’, in cooperation with the rector’s office. In the mainstream press, editors and columnists expressed amazement and even delight over how quickly the students had exchanged their red and black banners for the blue and white flag of Greece.

There were, however, student initiatives which opposed the trend too. One week after the mass rally in Thessaloniki, a panel discussion was organised by KARFI, a leftwing student group at the History and Archaeology department of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. The invited discussants were journalists of the left-leaning press, some with a degree in history, and the topic was “Greek nationalism, the Macedonian question and the ideological use of history”. As mentioned in chapter 3, the panel discussion – and the booklet that resulted from it – was an attempt to shatter “ideological myths”, by introducing a counternarrative on recent Macedonian history and the issue of the Slav-speakers in Greece. The Macedonian question, *Ilo* editor Tasos Kostopoulos stated in his opening address entitled “The other view of the Macedonian Struggle”, had traditionally been the peak of Greek bourgeois nationalist ideology, but at the same time also its Achilles’ heel. This alone merited the Macedonian question to become the object of deeper scrutiny, which would reveal that “reality is perhaps not at all as it is being presented”. All three dwelled upon the nature of nationalism and various ‘hidden’ aspects of Macedonian history: atrocities committed by the Greek ‘Macedonian fighters’ against the local population during the Struggle; the unstable, ‘fluid’ character of national loyalties and identities in the Macedonian region around the turn of the century; and the ways in which the scholarly community in Greece had contributed to the ‘cover-up’ and distortion of facts. Scholars like the Slavist Faidon Malingoudis, Michail B. Sakellariou and other members of the Academy of Athens, who in public media had identified the neighbours in the north as descendants of the Dardanian tribe at war with the ancient Macedonians, were singled out as corruptors of historical knowledge in the service of the contemporary policy on Macedonia.

The key concept in the discussion, as implied already in the title, was the “ideological use of history”, by which was understood the way Greek history-writing traditionally had functioned as the handmaiden of state nationalism. Especially Dimitris Lithoxou, who opened his speech with a quotation from the work of Spyros Asdrachas, one of the most influential ‘new’ historians, had few flattering things to say about the history discipline and its practitioners. While

684 Babis Giannakidis, “Εκστρατεία φοιτητών για τα εθνικά” [“Student campaign for the national issues”], *Eleftherotypia* 18/4, p. 3.
685 Ibid.; Giannis Marinos, “Τέσσερα συµβάντα που ανανεώνουν κάποιες ελπίδες για το µέλλον” [“Four events that inspire some hope for the future”], *Oikonomikos Tachydromos* 20/2 1992, p. 6.
686 The discussants were especially keen to cite passages from official historiography which seemed to point to inconsistencies in the official, traditional narrative on the continuity of Hellenism. For example, Evangelos Kofos was cited as having pointed to the fact that national identity in turn of the century-Macedonia essentially had been a matter of political choice rather than an inherited national consciousness. Kostopoulos, Embeirikos & Lithoxou 1992, p. 14.
687 Ibid., p. 48.
Asdrachas, in spite of his statement that the use of history in Greece was principally ideological, had expressed hopes that his peers would one day, within the state system, be able to “make History and not Ideology [, t]o speak of the facts and not to construct myths”, Lithoxou dismisses him as a romantic. “From the moment you’ll do that, you’ll cease to be an employed scholar”, he said. “You’ll find yourself without a job.” Since he himself was not an historian by profession, he claimed that he was in a better position to expose the historiographical myths.688 Nevertheless, the published version of the panel discussion included a strongly worded statement to the scholarly community.

We know that many will tell us that “objectively the views which are presented here will help the enemies of the fatherland.” Their own [views] certainly (it is presumed) serve the precise opposite purpose: For them, even in the case of professional historians, university scholars, or [individuals] of intellectual prestige, “the end justifies the means”.

But if the “means” in the present case is the use of “History” at will, what is then the “end”? Let the Messrs. Professors take good time to consider this. It is not simply a matter of scholarly sensitivity or personal integrity. When the “end” is gained, when they too, that is (for even their “prestige” is needed), will have contributed to convincing the Greek people about “its historic rights” and the “threats” that lie in wait, to be so deeply convinced that it will have let them lead it to self-destroying actions, then they too will have a large part of the responsibility, perhaps even larger than that of the politicians.689

As already implied elsewhere, the counternarrative of Kostopoulos, Embeirikos and Lithoxou, with its strong moral implications, contained a potential for political radicalism. As such, it provided followers of the Left with a common cause to rally against, the threat of rightwing chauvinism. “Nationalism is by its nature aggressive and means war”, the authors of a written declaration, signed in the name of KARFI in view of the student referendum, stated. 690 The diplomatic conflict over Macedonia was set into a larger context, in which the belligerent nationalism and the discrimination against minorities were portrayed as part of a reactionary strategy bent on the destruction of civil society and the struggle for social justice at home. The concluding paragraph echoed the statements made at the panel discussion. “Against the myth-history of nationalistic hatred, we defend the history of the social struggles, internationalism, [and] history as means of social knowledge, doubt and liberation and not as an instrument for the subjugation of peoples.”691

The leftwing students rallying against the tide of the national campaign on Macedonia did not succeed in winning the March referendum held at the Faculty of Humanities on the issuing of an official statement on the Macedonian conflict, since the major student organisations made common cause with PPEI.

688 Ibid., p. 37.
689 Ibid., p. 2.
690 “Si vis pacem, para pacem (σι νοθείεις ειρήνη, αντιστάσου στον πόλεμο!)” [“If you want peace, make a stand against war!”], unpublished leaflet by Kinisi Aristeron Filosofikis (K.A.R.FI), Athens, March 1992.
691 Ibid.
Nevertheless, the seeds of opposition had been sown, which soon were to grow outside the confines of student politics.

**History in the courtroom**

On the 4th of April 1992, two patrolling police officers caught four students in the process of handing out leaflets to passers-by at the busy Omonia [Concord] Square in downtown Athens. Since the asylum laws which protect Greek students from arrest did not apply outside campus, the four were taken into custody for disturbing public order. The four students, Stratis Bournazos, Christina Tsamoura, Vangelio Sotiropoulou and Maria Kalogeropoulou, all in their early twenties, were members of a group called the “Anti-War Anti-Nationalistic Rally”, and had ties to the above mentioned student organisation KARFI. The nature of their proclamation, entitled “The neighbour peoples are not our enemies. No to nationalism and war”, was considered grave enough to motivate legal prosecution. The four were to stand trial, scheduled for the following month, accused of “disturbance of the Greek state’s friendly relations with foreign countries, distribution of false information, [attempt at] inciting the citizens to mutual discord”.

The trial against the four was not the first to be held on such allegations since the coming of the Macedonian crisis. Earlier in January 1992, a group of activists belonging to the Maoist fringe organisation OAKKE had been caught in the act of putting up posters in public places, calling for the recognition of what they called “Slav Macedonia”, and faced trial (on the grounds of illegal posting) in an atmosphere of patriotic excitement and accusations of national treason. Another trial followed suit against members of the earlier mentioned Trotskyite group OSE, on similar allegations. Other cases involved the prosecution of Slav Macedonian activists and/or members of similarly marginal leftwing associations who had addressed the sensitive issue of minorities in Greece. The precedent case within this context had been the trial in 1990 against the Muslim MP of Eastern Thrace, Ahmet Sadik, who had stated in public that the population he represented was a Turkish minority, as opposed to the official denomination ‘Greeks of the Muslim faith’.

The trials attracted the attention of various fringe groups on the far right end of the political spectrum, whose members chanted intimidating slogans outside the court, since such occasions provided them with the opportunity to render their views with some legitimacy. At one occasion, in the trial against OSE, the courtroom offered an arena for the lay historian Kostas Plevris, who appeared as an expert witness of the prosecutor's side.

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692 The counts of the indictment are reproduced in Iós tis Kyriakís (Kostopoulos, Trimis, Psarras), "Το δίκαιο του Βουκεφάλα" ["The law of Bucephalus"], *Eleftherotypia* 7/5 1992, p. 15


694 Michalis Kondos, “Καλά ο Σαδίκ, εµείς όµως;” ["Sadik is fine, but wιat about us?"], *Anti* 9/2 1990, pp. 18-19.

These legal proceedings were followed by the leftwing press (and its rightwing counterparts) but remained largely absent from public debate in mainstream media during the spring of 1992.\textsuperscript{696} In all probability, this was due to an overall impression that the trials concerned nobody else than the involved parties, generally considered to be extremists of either end of the spectrum. Concerns were expressed that the repressive legal measures against activists of minority populations in the end could entail the curtailment of the Greek majority population’s democratic rights,\textsuperscript{697} but this was a debate which the academic community did not engage in.

The trial against the four on the 4\textsuperscript{th} of May 1992 would, however, be the catalyst that the panel discussants at the February meeting had expressed hopes for. At least one of the defendants, Stratis Bournazos, was a student of history at the National and Kapodistrian University and among the witnesses summoned by the defence was a university historian. The text of the proclamation was not per se a statement on history, but it contained passages which pointed to an alternative reading of the nation’s past. By and large, the proclamation of the four reproduced the analysis made in the leaflet of KARFI on the present Macedonian crisis, though written in a sharper and more accusatory tone. “We are being lied to!” the authors of it stated. According to them, the government of Greece, “well paid journalists”, generals and members of the high clergy had deliberately created an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, in cooperation with “imperialist great powers”, cultivating “nationalistic hysteria” and an “ancestor cult” as a diversion from domestic problems and a sinister agenda of territorial expansion. The authors called for the abandonment of the aggressive policy against Yugoslav Macedonia, stressing its right to choose a denomination of its own, and above all the recognition of minority rights.

\textit{We wish to live in peace with all the peoples of the Balkans! And we are threatened by imperialist interventions, nationalistic governments and Nazi declarations on racial purity and the extermination of the minorities!}

It is not a shame for a society to within itself harbour different cultures and national groups living together in harmony. It is to its credit. It is a shame to in the name of the unity and purity of the nation suppress and crush the minorities.

\textit{In Greece, Turks, Pomaks, Slav Macedonians and Gypsies also live! For these minorities which live in our country we feel precisely the way we do about the rest of the Greek citizens!}\textsuperscript{698}

The reference to the minorities came to be at the centre of the heated exchange between on the one side the defendants and their witnesses, and on the other the prosecutor and the judges of the court. At several times the question on who had

\textsuperscript{696} See, for example, “\textit{Αναίσχυντη προπαγάνδα στο κέντρο της Αθήνας!” [“Shameless propaganda in the centre of Athens!”], \textit{Eleftherios Týpou} 11/1 1992, p. 9; Diamantis Basantis, “\textit{Κραυγαλέες αποσιωπήσεις και κυνήγι μαγισσών}” [“Blatant suppressions and witch-hunt”], \textit{Avgi} 28/1 1992, p. 4; “\textit{Επανεµφάνηση υπερεθνικιστικών τραµπούκων στη δίκη της ΟΑΚΚΕ}” [“Reappearance of ultranationalist thugs at the OAKKE trial”], \textit{Avgi} 28/1 1992, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{697} Kostopoulos, Embeirikos & Litioyoo 1992, p. 50.

\textsuperscript{698} “\textit{Οι γειτονικοί λαοί δεν είναι εχθροί μας. Οι στον αθωισμό και τον πόλεμο}” [“The neighbour peoples are not our enemies. No to nationalism and war”], unpublished proclamation signed Αντιπολεµική Αντιεθνικιστική Συσπείρωση [Anti-War Anti-Nationalistic Rally], dated 30/3 1992. The text is also reproduced, without abbreviations, in \textit{Eleftherotypia} 21/5, p. 14.
the right to interpret history emerged as a bone of contention. “It is a disgrace that you are a university employee”, the presiding judge remarked to the historian, who in his testimony had stated that part of the Muslim population in Thrace were Greek citizens of Turkish descent. When another witness of the defence stated that the students had a right to interpret historical facts, the prosecutor responded, “What are you saying? History is one [and impartial], it is not possible for anyone to interpret it as he pleases.”

Given the atmosphere of the trial, the outcome of the proceedings was predictable. The four were on the following day, besides being fined, sentenced to 19 months of imprisonment. Also in this case, press reactions were initially limited to the Iós editors and a few columnists. In the Sunday paper Vima, liberal columnist Richardsos Someritis condemned the verdict as a violation of free speech, unprecedented in contemporary Western democracies. Giorgos Votsis of Eleftherotypia – together with Someritis one of the few consistent critics of the official Macedonian policy in Greek mainstream print media – went even further, warning that in the current atmosphere of a nationalism reminiscent of the one that previously in the history of the modern Greek state had spelled disaster, the courts would not stop at the persecution of marginal leftwing groups. In order to stress the grave nature of the issue at stake, Votsis turned to historical examples drawn from both modern Greek and from international history, in a distinctly political-pedagogical use. The exemplary narrative which concluded his article was that of Jean Jaurès, the French socialist leader and pacifist who was assassinated on the eve of the Great War in 1914, in a similar atmosphere of blind fanaticism in the name of the nation. Votsis stated that it was the patriotism of Jaurès, hailed as “the herald of democracy, of freedom and of socialism”, which had become vindicated by history, but at the price of the “rivers of blood” which he had foreseen and fought to avert. “History has lessons to give – when, of course, it is taught and read.”

The scholarly community and the war of petitions
The conclusion of the trial against the four student activists happened to coincide with a scholarly convention at the Panteio University in Athens, organised on the 6th of May by the editors of the journal Politis. The topic of the convention was the recent outburst of nationalism in the Balkans and the list of speakers included several scholars associated with “new history” and the history of the Greek Left, such as Spyros Asdracas, Filippos Iliou, Angelos Elefantis and Antonis Liakos. The trial that had ended the day before had rendered the event an ever more urgent topicality and made it a natural point of reference in conversations. Present at the convention that day was also Stratis Bournazos, one of the four convicted activists. In a text, written in 2007 in commemoration of Filippos Iliou, Bournazos tells the

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story of how he approached the historian during a break between sessions and asked him to sign a declaration of solidarity. Iliou had a look at the declaration – “a rather lukewarm text”, as Bournazos would later describe it, referring to the need to come up with something neutral in order to gather as many signatures as possible. The historian then responded that the heavy verdict called for more drastic action than just signing a declaration; instead, he offered to sign the original proclamation of the four. Together with some fellow historians, Iliou then proceeded to collect signatures.702

Two weeks later, the proclamation appeared in print in *Eleftherotypia*, unabbreviated and co-signed by 169 intellectuals. Save for a number of journalists, artists and writers of poetry and fiction, the great bulk of the co-signers were members of the scholarly and university community, chiefly that of Athens. Among the disciplines represented, history and political science dominated, while archaeology only accounted for three individuals. The text was accompanied by a short written statement, in which the co-signers called upon “any public prosecutor” to “take the measures which the equal treatment of the citizens before the law prescribes”.703 The statement represented the first collective intervention of parts of the scholarly community into the debate on the Macedonian conflict as well as a break with the trend of support for or quiet consent to the official policy, despite the fact that the co-signers claimed that their action was done not in agreement with the views expressed by the four convicted activists, but in defence of the constitutional rights of free speech and exchange of ideas. Knowing well that the authorities and public prosecution could hardly indict the 169 – many of which, unlike the convicted students and leftwing activists, had prominent social positions704 – en masse, without running the serious risk of losing their face, the organisers behind the signatures were able to push the issue of dissent into the centre of public debate. The mass media, which with a few exceptions, had shown reluctance to engage with the issue, were forced to address the questions raised by the trials, concerning the terms of debate on the Macedonian conflict. By extension, the action also served the intention of urging the scholarly community in Greece to participate in public debate and to raise doubts concerning the epistemological foundations of the arguments and claims that shaped Greek foreign policy and public opinion.

In one respect, the initiative of the 169 was successful. The controversial text of the four students had made it to the headlines of the major mass media. It was being read nationwide and referred to in television debates and in the newspapers’ letters to the editor sections.705 However, it was not so much the content of the

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703 "169 προσωπικότητες υπερασπίζονται την ισόνοµη µεταχείρηση των πολιτών" ["169 personalities defend the equal treatment of the citizens before the law"], *Eleftherotypia* 21/5, p. 14.

704 See Filippos Iliou, "Μια συµβολική δίκη" ["A symbolic trial"], *Avgi* 19/9 1993.

705 For representative samples, see Petsivas 2008, pp. 92-97.
proclamation that was being discussed as much as the fact that so many renowned scholars and intellectuals had chosen to sign it. Responses ranged from sympathy to cries of public outrage from circles which had come out as devoted supporters of the uncompromising maximalist policy on Macedonia. Stelios Papatheofilis, one of the most vociferous advocates of this policy, thus spoke of the 169 as being either “naïve, imbecile or traitors”, while the Pan-Macedonian Union of Greece, the motherland branch of the homonymous diaspora organisation, called for the indictment of the co-signers and the revocation of their Greek citizenships.

As far as the university community was concerned, a dividing line having to do with the regional dimension very soon made its presence felt. While the scholarly environment of Athens was well represented among the co-signers, only a few of the 169 had professional ties to the universities of Thessaloniki and northern Greece. A response came in the shape of a counter-petition, signed by 641 employees of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, supplemented by an almost identical petition signed by 236 of their peers at the University of Macedonia. The initiative to the petitions was taken by the rectors of the respective universities, Antonis Trakatellis and Giannis Tsekouras – both members of the Macedonian Committee – who in the attempt to exceed the 169 by sheer numbers seem to have enlisted the signatures of virtually any university employee of theirs, down to the administrators. The Iós editors, who wrote of the responses to the initiative of the 169, openly accused the Salonican rector’s offices of using intimidation in order to coerce people into signing.706

The common text of the petitions stated that the signers had read the text signed by the 169 with astonishment. “The University Community with sensitivity for the national issues and in the spirit of panhuman cooperation between all peoples, sees behind the ‘text’ [of the four activists] an ingenious distortion of truth, of constitutionality and of legality. These principles the 169 seem to honour in their own fashion, avoiding checking up on reality and without considering the national injury that ensues from this position of theirs.” According to the authors of the counter-petition, the 169 had failed to take notice of the fact that “Hellenism, all over the world, has rallied in defence of the ancestral heritage” which was under continuous attack from “usurpers” and nationalistic forces in the neighbouring countries. Besides undermining this national effort, they were accused of glossing over oppression of Greek minorities in the ‘Skopje state’ and Albania, thus implying that the ‘silence’ on oppression in former communist states was motivated by the leftwing orientation of most of the 169. The Thessaloniki petition concluded by stating that “Since the ‘text’ is co-signed by both renowned people and university employees, which from their positions express themselves as spiritual leaders and academic teachers, one could expect a greater sense of responsibility and moderation with regard to the way this issue is being dealt with, when national questions which have to do with the survival of the fatherland are at stake.”707

706 Iós tis Kyriakis (Kostopoulos, Trimis, Psarras), “Υπογραφές διανοούµενων. Έχετε τίποτα να δηλώσετε;” [Signatures of intellectuals. Do you have anything to declare?], Eleftherotypia 21/6 1992, section E, p. 47.
The rhetorical strategy employed by the university petitioners in the north was thus to portray the 169 as a minority of irresponsible apologists for political extremism and the nationalism of the ‘enemies of Hellenism’. A profound sense of isolation in the academic community, paired with even more hostile reactions in the mass media, led some of the 169 to withdraw their signatures, stating that they were in disagreement with the opinions expressed in the proclamation they had originally co-signed.\footnote{Karakasidou 1994, p. 51.}

The atmosphere of intimidation and fear of public ostracism had the effect of bringing other experiences from the past to the forefront than the glorious exploits of Hellenism. These manifested themselves chiefly in the political-pedagogical use of history, i.e. the search for historical analogies that could shed light upon the present political reality. In an article on the reactions against the 169, the editors of \textit{Iōs} compared the pressure against academics to show loyalty toward the nation and its current political course with the McCarthyism of the 1950s, the Soviet defamation campaign against Nobel laureate Boris Pasternak as well as the repressive ways of the Metaxas dictatorship in the 1930s – together with the references to the Civil War period and the junta an exemplary narrative perhaps more familiar to the Greek public. The petitions circulating at the universities in northern Greece were likened to the ‘declaration of repentance’ (\textit{dilos} \textit{metánoias}), introduced by Metaxas’ minister of public order, Konstantinos Maniadakis, through which convicted or suspected Leftists had been forced to publicly condemn their past views and comrades. “It is not enough not to be a traitor. You are obliged to accuse someone else of being a traitor in order to prove your own indisputable national-mindedness [\textit{ethnikofragýn}].”\footnote{Iōs tis Kyriakís (Kostopoulos, Trimis, Psarras), “Υπογραφές διανοούµενων. Έχετε τίποτα να δηλώσετε;” [Signatures of intellectuals. Do you have anything to declare?], \textit{Eleftherotypia} 21/6 1992, section \textit{E}, p. 47. For an informative study on the phenomenon of the declarations of repentance during the Greek Civil War, see Polymeris Voglis, “Between Negation and Self-Negation: Political Prisoners in Greece, 1945-1950” in Mark Mazower (ed.), \textit{After the War Was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943-1960}, Princeton: Princeton University Press 2000, pp. 73-90.}

Historian Filippos Iliou, who as a leading representative of the 169 had been asked to contribute, drew analogies to events further back in time. “Some […] are of the opinion that they hold the monopoly on truth and the right to stipulate what others are entitled to think”, he wrote in a commentary. “The phenomenon is not new. On the contrary, and unfortunately, it represents one of the regularities of our history.” The present climate of intolerance was, in his view, resembling the intellectual climate of the years around 1900, when the battle raged between the modernising demoticists, proponents of the vernacular as the official language of the state, and their adversaries in the \textit{katharévousa} camp, i.e. proponents of the archaising purist form of Greek. Though no one today doubted the patriotism of the, in the end, prevailing demoticists, few seemed to remember that they too had been accused of national betrayal and of being the paid agents of the nation’s Slav enemies. The reactions against the dissenters thus formed part of a historic pattern,
dictated by an ‘anachronistic’ mentality, and only for the reason of standing up to this mentality, “the text of the ‘169’ had to have existed”, Iliou concluded.\footnote{Filippos Iliou, “Ενα στερεότυπο κυνήγι μαγισσών” [“A stereotypical witch hunt”], \textit{Eleftherotypia} 21/6 1992, section \textit{E}, pp. 48-49.}

![Image](image_url)

The political-pedagogical use of history, manifested in a political cartoon by Giannis Kallai'tzis, commenting on the debate climate of the Macedonian crisis, through alluding to the repressive practices of the past. The setting is Makronisos, an infamous labor camp for political prisoners during the Metaxas regime and the Civil War. Officer to the inmates: “Make up your mind, anti-Hellenes, here you’ll all make a declaration [of repentance]!” The text on the mountainside reads “Do you love Greece? Sign [!]”. Source: \textit{Eleftherotypia} 22/2 1993, p. 8.

Writing about the initiative of the 169 in the midst of the Macedonian crisis, at a time when she herself had become the target of virulent attacks in Greek media and scholarly journals (more of which below), social anthropologist Anastasia Karakasidou concluded that what she referred to as Greece’s ‘sacred scholars’ had “effectively de-voiced […] those who dared offer critical alternatives to mainstream notions of patriotism, de-legitimizing their views and silencing them in the arena of public debate”.\footnote{Karakasidou 1994 (a), p. 52.} Stratis Bournazos, with the benefit of time and hindsight, would on the contrary describe their initiative as a “first rate political success”.\footnote{Bournazos 2008, p. 27. In September 1993, at a time when public opinion was becoming more diverse with regard to the name policy, a higher court of appeal decided to overrule the verdict against the four and dropped the case. See Filippos Iliou, “Μια συμβολική δίκη” [“A symbolic trial”], \textit{Argi} 19/9 1993.} While the response of the scholarly community might not have been what the 169 had hoped for, a sort of turning point had been accomplished in the public debate. The image of national unity behind the government policy on Macedonia, save for the reservations of KKE, had suffered a blow. It would be followed by similar flare-ups as the Greek diplomatic setbacks began to multiply and some political figures, associated with the major parties, raised doubts – sometimes in public – on the
wisdom of the Macedonian policy. These flare-ups and political moves ought to be seen in the context of factional infighting within Nea Dimokratia, due to Mitsotakis’ increasingly insecure position versus challengers like Antonis Samaras, and within PASOK, in view of the power void that was expected to arise due to Papandreou’s health problems. This was a process which extended beyond the issue of the scholarly community’s involvement in the Macedonian history war; however, there were occasions when the intra-party struggles were fought with historical arguments and at least once the political-pedagogical use of history provoked such a public controversy that the political and scholarly contexts became entangled.

**Liberalism betrayed: Takis Michas and the “slaughterer of peoples”**

Already during the debate stirred by the 169 in May and early June 1992, the journalist and liberal debater Takis Michas had lashed out at the governing Nea Dimokratia, accusing Mitsotakis for having betrayed liberal values and allowing the party’s ideology to be monopolised by “residues of the junta and Le Pen-ish scum”. Michas, a former councillor to the ND minister for commerce and himself one of the co-signers of the four students’ proclamation defended the right of historians to dissent. “On the basis of which liberal ethic is it imposed that historical research must ‘serve the national interests’? Is it thus not the quintessence of liberal problematic from [Rudolf] Carnap to [Karl] Popper the opinion that non-scientific criteria, whichever they are, must be excluded from scientific research?” Michas made the analogy between the “Greek version of liberalism”, which called for restrictions on the freedom of speech, and Stalinism, suggesting that the allegation of ‘anti-Hellenism’ was analogous to the accusation of ‘anti-Sovietism’ in the 1930s Moscow show trials, thereby turning the Right’s traditional argument against its political opponents against itself.

However, it was another article, published in *Onikron*, the press organ of Nea Dimokratia’s youth section ONNED in early 1993, that caused a major public outcry as well as a minor crisis within the governing party. The article was yet another damning accusation against the party, which according to Michas had allowed itself to slide into authoritarianism by organising “Nuremberg style rallies” with children chanting nationalist slogans about Macedonia and by applauding the ongoing annihilation of Muslims in Bosnia because the culprits happened to be Orthodox like the Greeks. What caught the attention of the public was however not these allegations – grave as they were – as much as the single sentence in the text where Michas rhetorically asked how a party claiming to be liberal completely would ignore the 200th anniversary of the death of Adam Smith, while simultaneously it would “organise the one fiesta after the other for such wretched slaughterers of peoples as Alexander the Macedonian?” In one clause the author had – quite unintentionally, according to an interview with him in the following

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days—managed to hit the very heart of the campaign for Macedonia’s Greekness, the idealisation of the ancient world conqueror. The publication of the article went off like a “bomb” in Nea Dimokratia, as one reporter put it, forcing Mitsotakis and leading representatives to publicly condemn Michas, in order to placate those forces – chiefly the Thessaloniki section – who demanded “the heads of those responsible on a plate”. The angry reactions were not limited to the governing party. Metropolitan Panteleimon of Thessaloniki condemned Michas as a traitor of “historical truth and of Christianity”, as Alexander the Great had been the means of “divine providence” when spreading Hellenic civilisation in the East. Historian Konstantinos Vakalopoulos of the Aristotle University labelled the journalist “a paid assassin [of Greek history]” in the service of foreign powers and “a great enemy” of Hellenism.

While many condemned the ‘assault’ on the national hero, others rushed to Michas’ defense. The point of departure for the Iōs editors was, again, the political-pedagogical use of history, but this time as a reversed ideological utilisation of ancient sources, in a way which mocked the discourse of the dominant macedonology. Ironically labelling their article “declaration of repentance”, the editors attempted to undermine the traditional, heroic narrative, by pointing to alternative conceptions of the ancient past, which implicitly suggested the validity of the epithet ‘slaughterer’ in references to Alexander. Passages were cited from the histories of Plutarch, Diodorus of Sicily and Arrian, commonly venerated as credible sources on the life and deeds of Alexander, which referred to the massacre of the inhabitants of Thebes, as well as similar events which took place after the Macedonian king’s capture of Tyros and Gaza. The ancient authors, which in the ‘archaeologist approach’ to the Macedonian question usually were cited as having testified to the Greek character of ancient Macedonia, were in the Iōs editors “declaration” named as “distributors of false information”, slanderers of the Greek nation and agents of Skopje – in other words, the sort of language by which dissenters were being met in public debate. The same went for the anonymous author of Ellínikí nomarchía [Hellenic Nomarchy], a pamphlet issued in 1806 and considered a vital piece of work in the literary output of the so-called Greek Enlightenment, which prepared the intellectual ground for the liberation from Ottoman rule. The pamphlet was cited for its portrayal of Philip II and his son Alexander as tyrants who had quelled the liberty of the ancient Greek city states. Essentially, this was the view of the Macedonian and Hellenistic era, as the beginning of Greece’s dark centuries of subservience to foreign masters, which had been the predominant one among the Greek intellectuals of the 19th century, before Paparrigopoulos’ reevaluation of Greek history. The implicit point made by the Iōs editors, through the many ironic remarks, was that national history was selective.

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715 Eleni Delvinioti, "'Ήταν µια ρητορική υπερβολή'..." ["'It was a rhetorical exaggeration'..."], interview with Takis Michas, Eleftherotypia 18/2 1993, p. 6.
716 Katerina Koletsi, "Ομαδικό ανάθεµα στο άρθρο" ["Massive condemnation of the article"], Eleftherotypia 18/2 1993, p. 7.
717 "Σκληρά λόγια από τη Θεσσαλονίκη" ["Harsh words from Thessaloniki"], Eleftherotypia 18/2 1993, p. 7.
718 Iōs tis Kyriakís (Kostopoulos, Trimis, Psarras), "Σφάχτης" ["Slaughterer"], Eleftherotypia 20/2 1993, p. 55.
and that publicly accepted perceptions concerning the pantheon of national heroes changed over time. This was the reason why chroniclers of the past and of national, historical truths, attributed with impeccable patriotic credentials, in the present could appear as dissenters who blackened the name of a commonly revered ancestor.


Filippos Iliou and the ethics of the historians

The journalists of Ios were not the only ones to address the issue of how history was being used to bolster ‘national truths’. A similar point was made by historian Filippos Iliou, who nevertheless chose to frame his statement in a different manner, devoid of any ironic references to the ancient past. Asked by the Ios team about which margins the present conditions offered for sober judgment of historical persons like Alexander the Great, Iliou replied that even the way the question was phrased was a sign of “how close to us the rash and selfish use of historical knowledge, in order to serve ends that have no relation at all with the work of the historian, has come”. Departing from an observation once made by then recently departed philologist Konstantinos Dimaras, one of “new history’s” spiritual fathers, who had stated that the Greeks always found some national cause or excuse for not leaving the historians alone to do their job, Iliou urged the historians’ community

to defend the ethics of their discipline against the demands of nationalistic public opinion for historiography in its service.

The historians have ascertained that situations of this kind led to the ideological use of history, that is to the corruption of historical knowledge in order to come to the wished for conclusions. These phenomena they study with caution, as they study everything else. And precisely because they know about them, they avoid being entangled into processes that serve and reproduce the ideological use of the historical material.

Certainly, in periods of real or fabricated crises, the social pressure and the quest for self-interested historical knowledge are great. And there have always been also professional historians (of academies, of universities and others) who believed that they had the right to turn their science into the humble maidservant of expediencies, which at the time, as well as in our days, were considered national or leading to the salvation of the nation. I do not think that they won the esteem of the informed public or their peers. And, anyhow, they brought no good services to the science which they supposedly minister to. They simply trivialised it.

It was no mere coincidence that Iliou came forward in the public debate as a defender of the historians’ professional autonomy and the one to which leftwing journalists turned to for comments on the role of history and perceptions of the past in the current crisis. Besides coordinating the co-signing of the four convicted students’ text and writing the accompanying statement, he had, just a few days before the Michas affair hit the headlines, made another petition public, which condemned the foreign policy on Macedonia and called for compromise in the name issue. As Stratis Bournazos would point out years later, Iliou’s preoccupation with the Macedonian question was not spur of the moment, dictated solely by his solidarity with the condemned student activists or because of any particular interest in foreign policy, but reflected deeper concerns about the values and the character of Greek society, as well as his research interests. It was he who in the political and intellectual climate of the 1970s had coined the concept of the “ideological use of history”, which even before his intervention into the debate on the Macedonian crisis had emerged as a point of reference among dissenters. In interviews granted to the press in the wake of the Michas affair, as well as on other occasions, Iliou referred to this concept, which he described in terms of a dividing and defining line between the serious, ‘sober’ scholars who defy the demands of a

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720 Ibid.
721 “Να ξεπεράσουμε τη διεθνή απομόνωση και την εθνικιστική αμετροέπεια. Παρέμβαση 358 πολιτών που ζητούν την απαγκίστρωση της Ελλάδας απο αναχρονιστικά δόγµατα” [“Let us surmount the international isolation and nationalistic impertinence. Intervention of 358 citizens who call for Greece’s disengagement from anachronistic dogmas”], Avgi 11/2 1993. The text was also published under the title “Να µιλήσουµε τώρα. Μόνο η ελληνική Μακεδονία είναι ελληνική” [“Let us talk now. Only Greek Macedonia is Greek”], Epoxi 14/2 1992; “Υπάρχει και Μακεδονία µη ελληνική” [“There is also a non-Greek Macedonia”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 4/3 1993, p. 62. For responses to the petition, see Filippos Iliou, “Μακεδονικά αµφιλεγόµενα” [“Macedonian controversial matters”], Vima 26/8; Chrysanthos Lazaridis, “Απάντηση στους 348 για τη Μακεδονία” [“Response to the 348 regarding Macedonia”] [sic], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 25/4 1993, pp. 29-32.
society excited by nationalism for biased scholarship and the ones who abuse science in the service of these external interests.\textsuperscript{724}

As we have seen in the quotation above, Iliou also implied that the awareness of this dividing line made the historians immune toward the ideological use of history. “What one could expect, with the high level into which the human sciences and especially historiography have been brought, is that there would not exist Greek historians who, with such ease, would violate the ethics of their science in order to provide such bad arguments [...]”, as in the case of the so-called Macedonian question”, he stated to a reporter. Nevertheless, his assessment of the historians’ community in Greece differed markedly from that of Dimitris Lithoxoou or Giorgos Margaritis, who had dismissed the scholars as public servants that were too afraid of repercussions to speak their mind.\textsuperscript{725} “In this bad experience of the last two years, most historians kept their sobriety”, Iliou said, adding that they had not lent themselves to ends that were outside the confines of their science. “Of course there were those who wanted to prove the Greekness of contemporary Macedonia through Alexander the Great and others who did not hesitate to rig the sources, in order to prove the nationally desired. I do not think that anyone took them seriously. Strictly speaking, in the circus they may have been applauded, but they did not win the esteem of their peers.”\textsuperscript{726}

Iliou especially stressed the ‘sober’ attitude of younger historians toward nationalism. Even if “the propagandistic fuss has created the impression that modern Greek historiography, with macedonology as the point of departure, is moving again toward the constellation of nationalism and ethnocentrism”, the historical output of the scholarly community proved the opposite. Historiography, he clarified, had always moved between opposing tendencies, and which one of them that gained the upper hand had much to do with the demands of the market at a certain point in time. It was thus not unnatural that the outbreak of nationalism in Greece had come to favour those tendencies that have “the ideological use of history as their main feature and which, for this reason, have been pushed to the margins of modern and modernised historiography”.\textsuperscript{727} Asked by one reporter whether not all historians to some extent intervened and shaped the historical raw material according to their own questions, Iliou agreed that the questions posed by the historians always bear the mark of the problems and interests of their own society, but that this was the general “ideological function of all the social sciences, not only history”. The difference between this and the ideological use lay in the attempt at objectivity, as far as it was possible, not in order to prove anything in

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\textsuperscript{724} “Ο εθνικισµός είναι πιο επικίνδυνος από τους εξωτερικούς ‘κινδύνους’” [“Nationalism is more dangerous than the external ‘dangers’”], interview with Filippos Iliou by Nikos Filis, \textit{Epocha} 21/2 1993; “Η ευθύνη των ιστορικών” [“The responsibility of the historians”], interview with Filippos Iliou by Michalis Mitsos, \textit{Nea} 20/5 1994.

\textsuperscript{725} See Kostopoulos, Embeirikos & Litioou 1992, p. 37; Giorgos Margaritis, “Τι λοιπόν χρησιμεύει η ιστορία;” [“How then is history of service?”], \textit{Politia} No. 120, October-December 1992, pp. 6-8.

\textsuperscript{726} “Ο εθνικισµός είναι πιο επικίνδυνος από τους εξωτερικούς ‘κινδύνους’” [“Nationalism is more dangerous than the external ‘dangers’”], interview with Filippos Iliou by Nikos Filis, \textit{Epocha} 21/2 1993.

\textsuperscript{727} “Η ευθύνη των ιστορικών” [“The responsibility of the historians”], interview with Filippos Iliou by Michalis Mitsos, \textit{Nea} 20/5 1994.
\end{footnotesize}
particular, but to understand “the ways and mechanisms by which societies shape and live their histories”.

For Iliou, the dividing line between ‘sober’, ‘scientific’ historiography and its counterpart, which fed on and reinforced “nationalistic excitement” and “antiquated perceptions”, between ‘new’ history and ‘old’, was analogous to the great antagonism of what he considered to be the ongoing drama of Greek society for the past two centuries, the struggle between modernity and the obscurantism of the past. In his research he had, among other things, studied the Orthodox Church’s reactions toward Enlightenment ideas which had begun to spread in the Greek-speaking world from the end of the 18th century. The resistance of the traditional or even ‘archaising’ elements of society against the new was a recurring pattern in modern Greek history, according to Iliou, a view which was reflected in his political-pedagogical use of the past, i.e. in the parallels, or exemplary narratives, referred to in his public statements. Again and again, this perception manifests itself in these and other writings, in the opposition between archaism /anachronism/fanaticism on the one hand and on the other hand modernity/modernisation/reason. This rhetorical opposition reflected in its turn the wider political debate concerning the perceived failure of modernisation in Greece, which was a central theme of “new history’s” research activities, a failure which the Macedonian conflict and the revival of nationalism was seen as yet another example of. “[A]ll these sonorous discussions and alleged agonies, which have come into fashion again, over ‘our’ tradition, ‘our’ orthodoxy, ‘our’ identity, ‘our’ Macedonia, ‘our’ eternal values, [are] discussions that occur in the absence of history – in a measure that completely ignores the historical conditions in which all these concepts emerged and were moulded in the course of (modern) Greek history.”

As a motto for the historians and the ‘sober’ citizens who wished to make a stand against reaction and the “language of arms” ushered in by the Macedonian conflict, Iliou quoted the advice of Dimaras, the intellectual historian whom those aligned with “new history” looked up to as a source of inspiration.

“We must always be on our guard against ignorance, imbecility and deviousness, and the synthesis of them, fanaticism, which is not in the position to tell the difference between science and politics and between truth and expediency. And the only way to defeat these opponents is to keep telling the basic truths of our history at a regular basis”.

“Acts of resistance”: History and political commitment
There was however a political dimension that could not be entirely separated from the epistemological. In fact, as implied earlier, the perception of science and the political agenda which called for change and modernisation of values, cherished by Iliou, were intertwined in the writings of the self-proclaimed ‘historian-cum-

728 “Ο εθνικισµός είναι πιο επικίνδυνος από τους εξωτερικούς 'κινδύνους'” [“Nationalism is more dangerous than the external ‘dangers’”], interview with Filippos Iliou by Nikos Filis, Epochi 21/2 1993.
729 “Η ευθύνη των ιστορικών” [“The responsibility of the historians”], interview with Filippos Iliou by Michalis Mitsos, Nea 20/5 1994.
730 Ibid.
citizen’. It is in this context that his statement that the majority of the “credible historians” were aligned with the ‘progressive’ Left ought to be seen. Asked in an interview about the role of the Left in the Macedonian question, Iliou admitted that the Greek communists had “at some point accepted slogans and policies of the Communist International” regarding Macedonia, but tried to downplay and make sense of this entanglement by stating that they had soon seen through the rhetoric and realised it to be state expansionism in disguise. In this regard, Iliou seems to have adopted the view outlined in Papapanagiotou’s study of the Macedonian question and the interwar Balkan communist movement. During the Axis occupation, KKE quietly at first, “but also in action, whenever needed”, firmly opposed any attempt from Bulgarian or Yugoslav communists to stir up territorial problems, while ELAS, the guerrilla units of EAM, had threatened with armed resistance against their Slav partisan allies. These aspects, Iliou argued, were being systematically overlooked in the current climate of politically charged allegations. Nevertheless, he continued, it remained a fact that the Macedonian interwar policy of KKE had done damage to the Left, so that it in the present hesitated to express opinions that were not in alignment with the official views regarding national issues and the treatment of minorities. Had the entire Greek Left – it is a bit unclear whether Iliou spoke of KKE, SYN and PASOK, or only of SYN – taken a firm stand for its views in these matters, the dead-end national strategy on Macedonia would perhaps not have taken shape so easily. Instead, it had allowed itself to be trapped in the same logic as the two large parties. Of these, especially PASOK posed a problem to the progressive camp due to its entanglement with nationalistic populism, which ought to stand in opposition to the ideals of the Left and thus in the way for a cooperation, which Iliou deemed to be desirable.731

These views were not confined to Filippos Iliou, but reflected a discourse of growing concern among scholars who considered themselves progressive that had started to take shape at the Panteio symposium on the outburst of nationalism in the Balkans, in May 1992. The main channel of this discourse was the columns of Politis, the journal that had organised the symposium and whose editor-in-chief Angelos Elefantis played a significant role. Like Iliou, Elefantis was an historian – his doctoral thesis was on the topic of KKE and the wartime resistance – with no formal ties to the university, which meant that he in professional terms had little to lose from his choice to dissent. In a long article, which appeared in his journal in December 1992 and as an essay in the simultaneously published booklet O Iános tou etnikismou kai i ellinikí valkanikí politikí [The Janus of nationalism and the Greek Balkan policy], labelled as an “act of resistance”, Elefantis developed his own views of the newly arisen Macedonian question.732 While Iliou tended to focus his argument on the epistemological aspect, the editor of Politis put more emphasis on the

731 “Ο εθνικισµός είναι πιο επικίνδυνος από τους εξωτερικούς ‘κινδύνους’” [“Nationalism is more dangerous than the external ‘dangers’”], interview with Filippos Iliou by Nikos Filis, Epochi 21/2 1993.
732 Angelos Elefantis, “Μακεδονικό – Απ’ την εθνικιστική έξαρση στο περιθώριο” [“Macedonian question – From the nationalistic exaltation to the margins”], Politis, No. 120, October-December issue 1992, pp. 28-36; see also ibid. in Antonis Liakos, Angelos Elefantis, Antonis Manatikis & Damianos Papadimitropoulos, O Ιανός του εθνικισµού και η ελληνική βαλκανική πολιτική [The Janus of nationalism and the Greek Balkan policy], Athens: O Politis, 1993 (1992), pp. 31-62.
contemporary political dimension of the Macedonian conflict and its implications for the Left. His verdict on this political camp was especially damning, since it in his opinion had failed to take a responsible position in the current tide of nationalism in Greece.

Even those whose function is interwoven with the critical mind kept their silence. The parties of the Left kept their silence, with KKE as the sole exception, which in spite of its, to begin with, sound political position on the “Macedonian” [question], tied it up to the incurable political obsessions like the one on barren opposition to the EC, thus discrediting it of any persuasiveness and dynamic. The progressive intellectuals kept their silence, while not few [of them] rallied to the anti-Skopjan bigotry, the Leftists in general kept their silence, that is, those forces which are justified as Leftist and progressive only when they resist the charge of reaction and of hatred, did not put up a fight. Was it, so to speak, lack of vision, elasticity of consciousness or perhaps, as I believe, [that] the souls and the spirits of the Leftists are stung by the complexes of guilt, by incriminations of parents’ sins but also of the dominant pseudo-nation-unifying ideologies that have overpowered the critical thought to the extent that even we allow ourselves to be carried off on the wave with an almost fatalistic feeling about the futility of worldly matters?733

Elefantis thus explicitly put the lack of a consistent and coherent counter-discourse to nationalism in the context of the Left’s crisis of identity after 1989. The few and sporadic objections that had been voiced had according to the editor often been marked by the Leftists’ attempts to boost their self-image and to vindicate their self-complacency. In a footnote, he further made this clear by referring to the willingness by which SYN had supported the government’s interpretation of national interest. Save for a few noble exceptions, among which were a handful of journalists, activists and the 169, the “anti-nationalist” camp had yet to form.

The argument developed in Elefantis’ essay was that the Greek policy toward its new neighbour, or rather the ideology from which this policy derived, was nationalistic, despite of what was being said officially. Even if nobody said or wrote it in public, it was in the editor’s view clear that the resistance against the new republic’s choice of name was actually a resistance against or denial of the other one’s existence as a national group and by implication its right to statehood. The public usage of certain terms, such as “Skopjans” and derogatory descriptions of the nature of the neighbour republic (“kratídio”, “[dwarf] state’ instead of “krátos”, ‘state”) was according to Elefantis analogous with the way “the conquerors, the imperialists” use terms like ‘brigands’ and ‘bandits’, when describing the fighters of the national liberation movements and revolutionaries; for if they used the proper labels they would render legitimacy to their opponents. The ‘denationalised’ people of former Yugoslav Macedonia must therefore be given other roots or identities, racial, linguistic or religious. To this end the scientific institutions had politicised their disciplines, especially history, archeology and linguistics, attempting to prove

733 Angelos Elefantis, “Μακεδονικό – Απ’ την εθνικιστική έξαρση στο περιθώριο” [“Macedonian question – From the nationalist exaltation to the margins”], Politis, No. 120, October-December issue 1992, p. 29.
that there has never existed neither a Slav Macedonian nation nor a Slav Macedonian language.

Elefantis stressed that this “Greek scientific nationalism” had succeeded in persuading public opinion because it had not been met with any counterarguments. What he in the following presented was a sort of critical, alternative narrative on the Macedonian question, which as its point of departure took the analysis of the involved countries’ nationalism in a comparative perspective, with emphasis on their common characteristics. Nationalism was characterised as essentially constructed around myths of prehistoric origins, in order to legitimate territorial claims. Elefantis’ Macedonian narrative therefore started in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when the wider geographical region of Macedonia was partitioned between the three competing nation-states, all with their own conceptions of Macedonia. He stressed the role of the population transfers in making the Greek part of Macedonia Greek, dismissing the “ideological construct of the unbroken continuity of Greek Macedonians [ellinomakedonikótita]”.

The key issue in the dispute regarding the name Macedonia was whether the Slav Macedonians possessed a national consciousness or not, something which Elefantis meant that both recent history and the present state of affairs had proven that they did. The interethnic strife in interwar Yugoslavia, the Serbian policy of forced assimilation in Yugoslav Macedonia and the similar policies of “Fascist Bulgaria” were listed as factors contributing to the evolvement of Slav Macedonian national consciousness, but also “the entire spirit of anti-Fascist struggle for national liberation during the years of the Occupation”. At this point Elefantis fell back on traditional rhetorical devices in patriotic leftwing narratives on the Second World War as the peoples’ struggle against Fascism. “The Slav Macedonians fought with passion against the Italian-German Fascism and especially against the Bulgarian occupation, their struggle was one of national liberation, just as those of the Greeks, the Serbs and the Albanians […]”. Elefantis’ use of history was here essentially that of the Trotskyite OSE, rather than the leftwing narrative compatible with Greek nationalism outlined by Papapanagiotou. It was as if this struggle for liberation, and the blood that was shed by the Slav Macedonians for this cause, were the factors that legitimised their quest for statehood and national self-determination (within the framework of Yugoslav federalism), a view which largely reflected what can be labelled the ‘partisan charter myth’ of postwar Yugoslav historiography. Elefantis’ evaluation of the outcome of this struggle, the Yugoslav federation created by Tito in 1944, was as much a call for an anti-nationalist mobilisation in the present as a vindication of the much scorned Macedonian policy of the Greek communists in the interwar period.

The idea of the Yugoslav Federation and generally the Socialist Balkan Federation was not Tito’s, it was not only Tito’s: it was an idea that came from all the currents within the 2nd Socialist International, with this idea the Balkan socialist and

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734 Ibid., p. 33.
communist movements evolved and in this all non-nationalistic forces of the Balkans were mobilised – including those of Greece. Now when the end of the century brings back in triumph nationalism, racism and war to Europe and the Balkans, now when all, even the Leftists, talk of the collapse of the socialist ideas, we can make an account on this point: the idea of the socialist Balkan federation was a great idea [megáli idéa], it was the other answer to the intricate problem of the mixed and antagonistic nationalities in the Balkans, it was the other answer, the non-nationalistic, to the problem of state formation of the Balkan peoples when three empires, at the end of the First World War, collapsed: the Ottoman, the Czarist and the Austro-Hungarian. We know the answer of nationalism and we can assess it: two world wars, protracted Balkan wars, massacres and persecutions, population transfers in the name of “national purity”, [...] destruction of indigenous cultures, destruction of age-old forms of coexistence and cultural forms of syncretism, destruction of Balkan cities, non-communication, marginalisation of the Balkans and finally re-ignition of nationalism that brought the war to Yugoslavia and threatens the Balkans with conflagration between nations.\textsuperscript{736}

Elefantis then proceeded to sum up his arguments for the recognition of what he described as a fait accompli. The Macedonian question did not exist anymore, due to the new demographic conditions that the wars, population transfers and the preceding decades of peace had produced, along with borders disputed by no one. A new Macedonian question could however arise, not in the shape of a threat against Greece’s territorial integrity, but rather against the one of former Yugoslav Macedonia, especially if this country were to be drawn into the conflict in Kosovo and as a result dissolved. The only way to prevent the mayhem that might come from such a scenario, Elefantis argued, would be to support this state by recognising its self chosen denomination. The European response to the name issue must be understood within this context and not as a conspiracy against Greece. Unfortunately, he added, there were those in Greece who advocated the partition of the neighbour’s territory, in defense of Greek ‘historic rights’ and a Greek minority that had been invented by, among others, the historian Konstantinos Vakalopoulos and various Greek politicians, in order to pave the way for a ‘just’ war of conquest, disguised as a ‘humanitarian intervention’. Greece had missed out on an historic opportunity to reintegrate with its Balkan hinterland after the end of the Cold War. Instead of acting as a bridge between the neighbour states and the EC, the Greeks had got stuck on the name and now risked pushing former Yugoslav Macedonia into the arms of Turkey, thus paving the way for what Elefantis considered to be the real threat from the East.

Elefantis ended his article by conjuring up the image of a country that suffocates under progonoplixia, (“ancestoritis”), xenophobia, populism and irrationalism, which immobilise and slowly kill “everything that is alive and living in this country”. The governing class, the political parties, the dominating social forces and ideologies were said to be leading the people into an uncertain future with ideas that were both ‘decayed’ and ‘rusty’. “When, however, the ideas are decayed

\textsuperscript{736} Angelos Elefantis, “Μακεδονικό – Απ’ την εθνικιστική έξαρση στο περιθώριο” [”Macedonian question – From the nationalist exaltation to the margins"], Politi, No. 120, October-December issue 1992, p. 33.
and rusty, the human beings rot, [they] are pushed further and further into humiliation and react with reflexes of fear. We are by our own accord choosing a place in the margin.”

Like Iliou, Elefantis constructed his argument around the opposition between the dead past, attributed to nationalism, and the living present, as represented by progressive forces. A similar axis of rhetorical figures was to be found in the text that accompanied Elefantis’ essay in the booklet, written by the historian Antonis Liakos. He had himself a background as a student activist during the dictatorship and had after the transition pursued doctoral studies in history, specialising in the Greek and Italian national movements, and later on in the politics of social reform. Unlike Elefantis and Iliou, however, Liakos was a university scholar, employed as a teaching professor at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. His essay was an expanded version of his speech at the symposium on nationalism and the current Balkan crisis at Panteio University in early May 1992. Parts of it had appeared as an article in the mainstream Eleftherotypia in June 1992, in the wake of the reactions against the 169.

The argument Liakos made in this article was that the Macedonian question was being used by “the forces of anachronism in Greek society” to seek legitimacy for their views. “Thus, in conjunction with the national issues a counterattack is being waged against everything that Greek society managed to accomplish in the course of a difficult and contradictory process of rationalisation from the end of the dictatorship and onwards.” The arguments with which this ‘attack’ was being fought and with which Greek foreign policy was being presented to the international community “belong to mythological and mythmaking history”. These arguments had not only led to a lack of understanding for the Greek position, but also to a crisis in the image of the country and the level of ideas on which policy was shaped, something that was being intensely felt by those “who get in contact with foreign, scholarly environments”.

In his longer essay, Liakos developed his reasoning further, attempting to make sense of the Macedonian crisis in a sort of macro-perspective analysis, which emphasised both local contexts and recent global developments. The reasons for the sudden revival of Greek nationalism were sought in the collapse of the so-called existing socialism in Eastern Europe as well as in a narrative of Greek political and social progress after 1974. Liakos discerned four major tendencies or parameters in the contemporary global world, which he held to be applicable to the Balkan context as well. The first was the nationalism that swept across Eastern Europe after 1989, when all other cohesive collective identities seemed to have eroded. The second was the distribution of wealth in the world and the reallocation of economic activities to Southeast Asia. The depletion of manufacturing industry in the West and the mass unemployment in its wake combined with the ever increasing flow of immigrants from the Second and Third World created a climate

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737 Ibid., p. 36.  
of fierce competition, in which xenophobia thrived. The discourse of national distinctiveness was further boosted by the process of European unification, the third parameter, in which national and cultural groups who perceived themselves as having been wronged called for political rights. The fourth tendency was found in a crisis of social politics and social rights, i.e. of the welfare state which was being under attack from neoliberal and neoconservative doctrines. Old concepts of societal cohesion, founded in social identity, were mouldering away, leaving behind a void that required some new formula of cohesion. This was to be found in nationalism. “If the Left as ideology – in its ideal-typical dimension – for the first time in history accomplished to blend Reason with the masses”, Liakos wrote, “the collapse [of real socialism] means the divorce of Reason and the masses, [...] the return of the masses to ideologies [...] and to collective consciousnesses, in which the cohesive element is no longer social position, but nationality and religion.”

Turning to the Balkan context, Liakos stressed that nationalism was a rather recent phenomenon, of the 19th and 20th centuries. Referring to Benedict Anderson’s concept of imagined communities, he dismissed the relevance of archaeology for determining the historic existence of nations. The official Greek view, he claimed, had failed to take notice of the changes in international perception of the nation-state’s legitimacy that had occurred in the past decades. It was not anti-Greek propaganda that had caused the failure in communication between Greece and the West, but the difference between a “modern conceptual framework” and an argumentation that remained stuck in the “national rhetoric of the 19th century”. Having stated this, Liakos proceeded to interpret what the collapse of ‘existing socialism’ and the simultaneous return of the Greek Right in government had meant for Greece. The opening of new markets in Eastern Europe, he argued, had the consequence that the foundations of the thitherto Greek economic advantage versus the neighbours in the north were being undermined. Paired with the global industrial reallocations, this meant that Greece had to lower the costs of its workforce in order to stay ahead in this economic competition. “A decrease of work costs however means the decrease of living standards and above all the tipping [over] of the social balances which were achieved during the last decade, and perhaps during the entire period since the transition [to democracy].” In order to justify measures of such magnitude, “grand policies and ideological shifts” would be required. The revival of the Macedonian question was thus to be understood as the means of the rightwing government and its allies to bring about the desired ‘shift’ of values needed to disguise the new policies of economic cutbacks.

Neoliberalism had too weak a base to achieve the political equivalent of an ideological shift in Greek society. The nationalism of 1992 thus appeared to provide the suitable framework, spacious enough, and above all a way of narrative easily understood by the wider masses. The Macedonian [issue] served as an opportunity to regroup, to legitimate their discourse and to mount their ideological prejudices, [for] on the one hand Greek society’s forces of anachronism – which had seemed to have been pushed into the margins during the last twenty years – and on the other hand
forces which attempt to overturn the ideological and social balances which would allow for the new economic adjustments.740

In the service of these ends, a discourse on ‘national decay’ had been revived and scapegoats were being pointed out among the intellectuals, which were accused of having been indifferent to the national issues, due to cosmopolitan values or Marxist orientation. These allegations also incriminated the historians, which were being blamed for not having sufficiently informed the international scholarly community about the Greek concerns for Macedonia, as well as having devalued national history in education. “But if anything is evident in Greek historiography, it is its Hellenocentrism and a tendency of ignorance, besides a few exceptions, of European and global history and historiography”, Liakos wrote, adding that one had but to count the number of teaching positions for European and international history at Greek universities, or to the extent non-Greek history was being presented in Greek schoolbooks. Even if this Hellenocentrism was not being framed in the rhetorical devices of the 19th century, it was evident that the overall interpretation of Greek history as a continuity of three thousand years had remained largely unchallenged.

The lack of a perception of national history which was founded in “modern theoretical analyses” in its turn paved the way for the forces who envisioned a return to the allegedly timeless nature of Hellenism. Among these advocates for a ‘reconnection’ with the national past were listed ‘currents’ that had been noticed sporadically over the recent years, such as resistance toward linguistic reform,741 the ‘neo-Orthodoxy’ associated with the politicisation of the Church and the equally anti-Western, or ‘anti-modern’ ideas which rejected the legacy of the Enlightenment, societal currents which now joined forces. “The common goal of all these currents is the change in the way we think”, Liakos warned, stating that “in this case it is not the ideas that constitute ideology, but the use of them”. This use of the past, “as a stockpile out of which the nation draws elements” considered to be a precondition for national distinctiveness and survival, constituted a threat to the work of the historians. “As far as history is concerned, it is not considered an open field of research, nor [is it] useful in order to habituate us with the research that sheds doubt and subjects to critical evaluation the things we are already familiar with. ‘History is one’ (it was stated in the trial of the ‘four’), it is there, immobile and we [are expected to] defend it from forgeries [of national enemies]

740 Ibid., p. 22.
741 The resistance against linguistic reform, of which Liakos writes, had its roots in reactions toward developments in the Modern Greek language which had taken place after 1974. In the constitution of 1976, the ‘demotic’ vernacular (dimotikí) replaced the archaising purist idiom (katharevousa) as the language of the state. However, angry reactions were due more to the orthographic reform in 1986, when the old ‘polytonic’ system – which, among other things, reflected whether a vowel had been aspirated or not in ancient Greek – was officially abandoned in favour of the ‘monotonic’ system, which only accentuates the stressed syllables of Modern Greek pronunciation. Conservative debaters, such as Sarantos Kargakos, criticised the reform on the grounds that it severed the continuity of the Greek language and led to its depletion. It should, however, be stressed that resistance to the new orthography did not necessarily reflect political convictions, but just as well editorial choices and personal preferences. The texts by Liakos, Elefantis and Iliou cited here, as well as all texts appearing in the journal Politi, were all in the old polytonic system.
and to transmit it to the coming generations.” This was the reason why education was considered to be a ‘national issue’, to the degree that “monophony needs to be secured” while, for example, health reform and social insurance policy were not thought of as ‘national’ priorities.

The ‘counterattack’ of ‘anachronism’, Liakos further argued, had been favoured by a widespread sentiment of failed modernisation toward the end of the 1980s. This sentiment was not unfounded, for in a sense Greek society had failed to modernise and bridge the gulf with regard to other European countries. However, the historian argued, this was partly because modernisation had been perceived only as an economical and technocratic concept, not as a necessary transformation of values as well. As it was now, the social disaffections were being transformed into psychological substitutions, and the discourse on failed society was replaced by the discourse on the three millennia old nation. The consequences for civil society were damaging, as “the right of criticism on matters that concern everything that is defined as national issues constitute[s] the first casualty”. Here, the spectre of a past reality was presented as a threatening future scenario. “The syndromes of national-mindedness [ethnikofrόgyn] which for years plagued the country and mortgaged the possibilities of modernisation are revived. [O]ur political life retrogresses with great and rapid strides.” Liakos ended his essay by envisaging two opposing concepts of what national identity is, or could be, and thus of the crossroads that he considered Greek society to be facing.

Shall we return to ideological patterns of national isolationism, to the ideological solace of the continuity with the glorious past, to the religious and national intolerance and to the security of authoritarianism?

Or, on the contrary, shall we make ourselves conscious of us as a modern nation, which is obliged to incorporate the values but also the anxieties of a contemporary society, to organise its cohesion around the progress in education, the liberties and the prosperity of its citizens – especially of the economically weak –, to be ready to integrate without assimilating the old and new ethnocultural groups that live in its bosom, to accept the different and to experiment with the new?

National identity is formed around a nation’s overall way of life, around its living culture, the confidence that is engrafted into its citizens in the present. With this as the point of departure, it singles out, incorporates and pieces together its past and its history. If it, on the contrary, undertakes to create a national identity on the basis of historical figures of the past, which are inevitably selective, then the variety of a modern society dwindles and becomes mutilated. The result is not national identity but national rhetoric devoid of any substance. The use but also the ideological inadequacy of the dogmas that the regimes of the 4th of August [Metaxas’ dictatorship] and of the 21st of April [the junta] imposed ought to have taught us something.

The most conspicuous feature in the writings of the three historians cited here is the way in which the perception of time was being used as a rhetorical device. As
we have seen, a dichotomy emerges between the dead past of reaction, attributed to the ‘forces of anachronism’, and the living present of contemporary, rational society and of progress. The interpretation of the Macedonian crisis as a confrontation between modernity itself and its centuries old opponents thus bore the mark of the discursive device that Maria Todorova identifies as *allochronism*, a trope constructed around the notion that the Other somehow lives in a time different to that of the Self, which is common in Western perceptions of the Balkans.\footnote{Todorova, Maria, *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997.} This allochronism was perhaps not so much a product of their response to the Macedonian crisis, as it was a reflection of a Marxist perception of history as an ongoing process of human liberation from the past.\footnote{Cf. Georg. G. Iggers, *Moderne historievidenskab. Socialhistorie efter 1945: Forudsætninger, hovedlinier, perspektiver*, translated by Jens Rahbek Rasmussen, Copenhagen: Suenson 1980, p. 36. (English original: 1975)} This perception also holds a key to their understanding of history as science, which not only interprets social and political reality but also changes it, and thus of their own role as historians.

Writing in the journal *Politis*, historian Giorgos Margaritis had called for scholarship that actively engaged with contemporary social issues, using historical knowledge to educate the citizens and make them free.\footnote{Giorgos Margaritis, “Τι λοιπόν χρησιμεύει η ιστορία;” [“How then is history of service?”], *Politis* No. 120, October-December 1992, pp. 6-8.} This was contrasted to what was perceived of as the introvert nature of historical studies, which, the implication went, was of little use to society and the common man. The same dichotomy between historical research, as specialist knowledge for the few, and historical knowledge accessible and useful to the public, although framed with different arguments, also emerged from the camp associated with ‘traditional’ history. The ultimate goal that historical knowledge was supposed to lead to was most often identified as ‘self-knowledge’ (*autognosía*). Scholars like Sakellariou referred to it as ‘national self-knowledge’, while ‘new’ historians like Iliou used the words ‘social’ and ‘national’ interchangeably in connection with this concept. The crucial question was what kind of contents or knowledge this concept was to be attributed with. Both Iliou and Liakos pointed to the ‘Hellenocentric’ perception of history and of international politics as one of the key features of the Macedonian conflict. As Iliou put it, if more emphasis had been put on explaining the historicity of especially national phenomena, “then the citizens of this country would have the possibility to easier understand how common the ethnocentric tendencies are to all peoples”.\footnote{“Ο εθνικισμός είναι πιο επικίνδυνος από τους εξωτερικούς ‘κινδύνους’” [“Nationalism is more dangerous than the external ‘dangers’"], interview with Filippos Iliou by Nikos Filis, *Epochi* 21/2 1993.} For Elefantis, this meant that the dominant national narrative needed to be replaced by a critical narrative of nations and nationalism. His essay can be read as an attempt to write such an ‘anti-nationalistic’ narrative of the Macedonian question. However, this was not an ambition that was readily accepted by his peers. Asked in the interviews cited above whether the present circumstances called for the writing of a “non-nationalistic history”, Iliou responded that it was not in the
interest of contemporary historiography to put labels on what was studied. This, he implied, might also result in the ideological use of history.

The ideological use was by Iliou and likeminded peers described in terms of a threat against history and the profession of the historians. However, while reference often was made to the nature of science and historical knowledge, the issue of what was meant by ‘ideology’ or ‘ideological’ was not really addressed in their writings. For Liakos, it was not the ideas that emerged in the national argumentation on Macedonia that constituted ideology, “but the use of them”, the selective use of the past. In his writings and in the political-pedagogical use of history discernible in them and in other articles written in response to the Macedonian crisis, ideology tended to be associated with the policies and practices of the state, chiefly during the authoritarian regimes of Ioannis Metaxas and, later, of the Colonels. This was a past that to most of the critics involved in the debate was within living memory, although none of them used nor referred to their personal experience during that period in the political arguments they were making. Undoubtedly, this background influenced the ways in which they understood history and their choice to engage in a political debate as “acts of resistance”.

The difference between ideological and political commitment was however unclear, as was the related issue on whether their own use of history was designed to serve the inner cohesion and “the programmatic pursuit” of a political community. The pressure for such a use of history no doubt existed within the radical student circles rallying against the official policy. What does emerge in public statements, particularly the ones made by Iliou, is the wish not to be associated with anything perceived as sectarian. If the argument they wished to make was to have a wider impact, it is reasonable to assume that their use of history must not alienate the public they wished to address. This is a line of reasoning that will be further addressed in the following.

The turn of the tide: Kyrkos’ critique against ‘dead-end’ nationalism and the political consequence of dissent

As stated earlier, the initiative of the 169 and the activism of the historians mentioned above had brought the issue of dissent to public attention, revealing that the scholarly community was far from united behind the government’s Macedonian policy. However, perhaps more important than the objections raised by a few scholars little known to the public, was the intervention of well respected political figures in favour of an alternative to the dominant line.

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748 In a partly autobiographical article, Antonis Liakos has explained the reasons why he has chosen never to make public reference to his experience as a political activist, which led to his imprisonment during the military regime, as a way of constructing academic detachment; although he admits that what has been the result has often been the opposite. “The more we try to separate our sympathies and antipathies, the more we try to distance ourselves from our experience, the more this comes out from us in the writing of history.” Antonis Liakos, “History Writing as the Return of the Repressed”, *Historein*, 3 2001, p. 47.

One such figure was Leonidas Kyrkos, the former leader of EAR, who in November 1992 came forward in the press as a harsh critic of the Macedonian policy. This was all the more startling, since he had previously and publically supported this policy, condemning the neighbour state’s claim to the historic heritage of Macedonia as “mendacious and anti-scientific” and calling for “draconic guarantees” and conditions to be imposed on the “Skopje republic” if its independence were to be recognised.\textsuperscript{750} In an interview with Takis Michas, Kyrkos now launched the idea of a compromise in the poisoned name issue, while simultaneously dissociating himself from the foreign policy of Nea Dimokratia and PASOK, which he claimed was “leading us toward international isolation and a disaster analogous with that of 1922”, when “we were alone and had to receive 1.5 million refugees”.\textsuperscript{751} The day would come, he furthermore asserted, when the Greek people would ask itself how it, with its very long democratic tradition and respect for the rights of others, could have applauded the views expressed by unrestrained ‘chauvinists’.

Kyrkos’ assessment thus offered a damning verdict of the thitherto dominant confrontational policy on Macedonia. Although Kyrkos was no longer an active politician, after having declined the leadership of SYN, his opinion still carried weight, even extending beyond the confines of leftwing politics. This meant that the dissenters now were backed by political capital, which, however diminutive would prove instrumental in the turning of the tide.

In a book issued in February 1993, Kyrkos developed his views on the Macedonian crisis and what Greece ought to do to find its way out of the entanglement unscathed. Entitled \textit{To adiéxodo víma tou ethnikismoú} [The dead-end approach of nationalism], its stated purpose was to inform “our People” about what was said to be “the other truth” about the Macedonian question, as opposed to the official version.\textsuperscript{752} The central argument of the book was that Greece’s foreign policy was locked in a fruitless obsession with the name issue, which had lead to international isolation and the neglect of the ‘real’ danger in the East, as embodied by Turkey’s ‘neo-Ottoman’ expansionist policies and the ‘Islamic arc’.\textsuperscript{753} Kyrkos’ assessment was much in line with that made by Elefantis, and his political argument should also be seen in relation with the intellectual environment around the journal \textit{Politis}. The former EAR leader and several of the ‘new’ historians, like Iliou, knew each other personally from their joint work in the party and in ASKI. Traces of their reasoning are discernible in the former’s book, most notably in the second edition (1994) which explicitly referred to Antonis Liakos’ “most interesting text” about the current crisis.\textsuperscript{754} It is possible that these scholars’ dissent may have had some influence over Kyrkos’ shift of opinion, but this ought not to be

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{750} Interview with Leonidas Kyrkos in Lefteris Gyras, Athina Karali & Vangelis Zorbas, “Ο Μακεδόνες παίρνουν τον λόγο” [“The Macedonians speak up”], \textit{Kathimerini} 22/4 1992, p. 8.
\item \textsuperscript{751} Interview with Leonidas Kyrkos in Takis Michas, "Ο Λεωνίδας Κύρκος για το Μακεδονικό" [“Leonidas Kyrkos on the Macedonian question”], \textit{Oikonomikos Tachydromos} 12/11 1992, p. 18.
\item \textsuperscript{752} Kyrkos 1994 (1993), p. 22.
\item \textsuperscript{753} Ibid., pp. 35-39.
\item \textsuperscript{754} Ibid., p. 99.
\end{itemize}
overemphasised in an interpretation of it. The ex-politician was, arguably, less concerned about the threat against historical knowledge perceived to emanate from the ideological use of it. The purpose of his contribution to the debate was political and the target audience, apart from followers of SYN, was public opinion at large, which meant that his argument and conclusions did not reflect the ‘new’ historians’ critical discourse on nationalism. Framed in the language of traditional and leftwing patriotism, a distinction was made between the notion of Greek Macedonia as Greek and the thitherto dominant slogans “Macedonia is Greek” and “The name is our soul”.755 “Greece is the heir of ancient Greek history, of [the history of] ancient Macedonia, of ancient Greek civilisation”, Kyrkos stated. “However, History is one thing and Geography another.”756 The point of departure for his proposed compromise in the name issue was the assumption that Macedonia’s ancient heritage belonged exclusively to Greece, but with full recognition of the fact that the wider region of Macedonia was shared by three countries, and that the right to the name could not be exclusively Greek. In the foreword of the second edition he stated, “The name has its significance and [emotional] loading; however it was never our soul. […] Our soul is our history and the beauty of our People, our national hearth, our democratic and humanistic omnipresence, our contribution to peace and cooperation.”757

History made up a significant part of Kyrkos’ argument, even if this was constructed as a critique (though not outright rejection) of the emphasis on Greek ‘historic rights’, in favour of a reorientation of foreign policy toward contemporary conflict resolution. This manifested itself chiefly in the political-pedagogical use of history, i.e. through consistent employment of historical analogies and exemplary narratives. Kyrkos’ stated aim was to avert a political disaster in the eventuality of war, by convincing public opinion and decision-makers to break the threatening international isolation of Greece. As noted in the interview with him cited above, the evocation of the 1922 national disaster served to underline the graveness of this future prospect, since it was an iconic event of modern Greek history, which made its presence felt in manifold ways. Also in his book, this analogy was repeated along with the reference to the war of 1897, when an agitated public had forced Greece into prematurely launching an attack on Ottoman Turkey, which ended in a disastrous defeat. According to Kyrkos, there were parallels to be seen between these situations in the past, where unrestrained nationalism and demagoguery had prevailed over sound political judgement, and the current crisis over Macedonia.758

Then as now, Greece had engaged in foreign political adventures, without securing any foreign allies, which left it alone in the face of calamity. In this context, Kyrkos was particularly critical of how Europe tended to be demonised in current debate, through historical analogies to the time of the crusades and the struggle between

755 See “Τις μας η ψυχή μας είναι το óνομά μας” [“For us our soul is our name”], open letter on Macedonia to the European Community, reproduced in Kathimerini 28/3 1992. The letter was signed by academics and celeber intellectuals, such as Nobel laureate Odysseas Elytis, Melina Merkouri and Eleni Glykatzi-Ahrweiler.


758 Ibid., pp. 75-76
Western and Eastern Christendom, which only served to further alienate Greece from her allies.\footnote{Ibid., p. 16.}

If 1897 and 1922 served as deterrent examples of political conduct – what might be labelled the narrative strategy of the negative historical example – a positive role model was to be found in Eleftherios Venizelos, the leader of the Liberal party, architect behind the policy of territorial aggrandisement and the dominating political figure in Greece for much of the first half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. The success of this statesman, Kyrkos didactically explained, lay in his ability to build foreign alliances, without which Thessaloniki and Macedonia would not have been Greek in the first place.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 41-42.} Those who today evoked Venizelos along with other heroes of the national pantheon, he stated, ought to learn from the political and patriotic example of this “great Greek”, namely the virtues of pragmatism and restraint.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 75-76.}

Kyrkos’ perception of history can be described as predominantly traditional, with its emphasis on the example set by great men, but it might also be interpreted as a deliberate strategy to reach common ground with the public. By referring to historical events, whose negative outcome for the nation could not be disputed, and to political leaders no longer considered to be controversial, the former EAR leader could arguably hope to strike a chord outside the camp of the Left. History was thus used as means to achieve a change of policy, i.e. critically in accordance with Rüsen’s reasoning, but in a way that emphasised national consensus, or at least did not challenge the traditional narrative of the nation’s past.

As a short term strategy, Kyrkos’ proposal might not have fallen on fertile ground. His intervention proved instrumental in SYN’s decision to withdraw its support from the official Macedonian policy in early 1993, but the elections which later that year brought about the downfall of Mitsotakis’ government also ousted the Coalition of the Left and of Progress from parliament. However, since the diplomatic deadlock in the name conflict remained with Papandreou in office, the critique offered by Kyrkos kept its topicality. As such, it offered a line of retreat out of the impasse, without having to renounce claims to Macedonia’s historic heritage and beliefs associated with traditional patriotism. Kyrkos’ work was not anti-nationalistic, despite its many references to the brighter, supranational world that lay ahead, epitomised through European unification and globalised economy; rather, “national renaissance” was stated as one of the ultimate goals Greece needed to set.\footnote{Ibid., p. 43.} Like many other debaters, the former EAR leader sought to save the concept of patriotism, with its positive loading, by disconnecting it from the flipside of the coin,\footnote{Ibid., p. 100.} destructive, or to use the term of Michael Billig, banal nationalism.\footnote{Michael Billig, \textit{Banal Nationalism}, London: Sage 1995.} This meant that his critique had a potentially wider appeal in a society, which cherished patriotic values, than what a critical narrative, bent on
rejecting or deconstructing national ‘truths’ and dominant perceptions of the past, might have had. In due time, proposals similar to those of Kyrkos were to be voiced by other political figures, especially with the ‘modernisers’ within the ruling PASOK, which, while Papandreou remained ‘unyielding’ in public statements, sought to pursue a more pragmatic approach to the name issue.

In the following, we will turn our attention to developments within the scholarly community, which posed a more direct challenge to macedonology.

**Epistemic authority under contest: the Karakasidou controversy**

The intervention of dissenting scholars into public debate meant that the previous hegemony of the Macedonian Committee’s crisis interpretation was beginning to erode. This dissent, however, primarily concerned the policies emanating from these interpretations and the climate of intellectual exchange they had ushered in, understood as a threat toward freedom of speech. The epistemological foundations that the dominant representation of Macedonian history rested upon remained relatively unchallenged in public debate as well as by other scholars in Greece. For example, Kyrkos, although not a scholar himself, was careful to exempt the Society for Macedonian Studies from his criticism, when he in late 1992 emerged as a leading political and moral adversary of the official Greek policy on Macedonia. The Society along with other scholarly centres of Thessaloniki were commended for their efforts to inform public opinion and corresponding scholarly associations about the Macedonian question, while the blame for the escalation of the conflict and the “dead-end approach of nationalism” was put solely on politicians.765

Nevertheless, it was arguably inevitable that a debate which touched upon the legitimacy of certain scholarly views and claims to historical expertise would also spill into the cognitive domain at the heart of the controversy, turning it into a contested field. As pointed out earlier, research and historiography on Macedonia was in Greece by and large the domain of the regional scholarly associations of Thessaloniki; chiefly EMS and IMXA. The challenge toward the views established by them emanated not so much from rivalling scholars in the Greek historians’ community as from scholarly environments outside of Greece. Apart from the historiographic output from corresponding institutions in Yugoslav Macedonia and Bulgaria, written in support of these states’ respective national claims, the challenge was to be found in the alternative views fostered by anthropologists working at universities in the United States and Western Europe.

During the 1980s the Macedonian lands emerged as an important site where anthropologists with an interest in interethnic relations conducted their fieldwork; especially the Greek part of the region, which at the time was more accessible to foreign researchers than its counterparts across the borders. The time on the field for several of these researchers, in villages across Northern Greece, thus coincided with the emergence of MAKIVE’s human rights activism and the corresponding ascendancy of the ‘new Macedonian fighters’. This meant that the very existence of this anthropological research by many came to be seen within the politically

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charged context of the approaching name conflict, regardless of the motives for the choice of topics stated by the researchers in question. A reason for this sometimes unwanted attention was to be found in the theoretical perspectives employed by these anthropologists and their findings, which seemed to offer alternative interpretations of Greek Macedonian history to commonly held views. Under different circumstances, this body of research might have gone largely unnoticed by historians in Greece and been of no concern to the public. As things were now, advocates of the Greek diaspora community in North America, engaged in the campaign for the Greek cause in the Macedonian conflict, began to take a keen interest in what they perceived as an assault on Greek national interests.

The primary target of Greek Macedonian diaspora activists’ ire became Greek American anthropologist Anastasia Karakasidou. Born in Thessaloniki into a family of Pontian Greek refugee origins, Karakasidou had pursued doctoral studies at Columbia University, where she presented her Ph.D. dissertation in 1992. It was a study on nation building and identity formation at local level in the town of Assiros in central (Greek) Macedonia, in which these processes, resulting in the emergence of Greek national identity, were described as having been imposed by the Greek state upon the local population. Apart from the dissertation, she had presented a few papers on related topics at various conferences and written two articles, before embarking on a postdoctoral fellowship in the Hellenic Studies programme at Princeton University. One of these articles, which addressed the thorny issue of Greek policy toward her Slav-speaking minority, published in the Journal of Modern Greek Studies in May 1993, would become the object of fierce controversy among Greek scholars concerned with macedonology. However, already before the publication of this article, diaspora activists had caught notice of the anthropologist. What was to become known as the Karakasidou affair was thus a controversy, which for different reasons engaged debaters both inside and outside the scholarly community.

Karakasidou recalls being approached by a Greek man at a reception at Princeton University in late 1992, who introduced himself as a physical scientist at a nearby university. The man, who remains anonymous in Karakasidou’s account of the episode, revealed, much to her surprise, an intimate familiarity with her at the time unpublished doctoral research on the process of nation building in Greek Macedonia. He stated that she was “somewhat of a celebrity” in the Greek American community, among which her work was being widely circulated. The intention of the man was however not to commend Karakasidou’s work, as she realised during an increasingly hostile exchange. Rather he rebuked her for harming the national cause in a time of crisis, when the allegiance of academics and intellectuals in his view first and foremost belonged to the nation. “Here was a technical specialist in chemical engineering, a man with little expertise or first-hand

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knowledge of the issues I have been addressing, instructing me on what constitutes legitimate scholarship”, Karakasidou wrote of this “first of many close encounters with a cultural warrior of the Greek Macedonian cause”. According to her, it was “an evocative glimpse of the plight that knowledge and truth suffer at the hands of their modern executioner: nationalist historiography.”

Within short, Karakasidou’s name appeared in libellous articles in Greek American press. In February 1993, the New York-based Ethnikos Kiryx (“National Herald”) accused her and other Greek scholars in the United States for smearing Greece, by acknowledging the existence of the Slav Macedonians and other allegedly repressed minorities. Especially Karakasidou was singled out as a modern Ephialtes – the traitor that had shown the Persians the secret pathway at Thermopylae, which had enabled them to attack Leonidas’ Spartans from the rear – who abused her academic position to serve the ends of ‘Skopje’s’ propaganda. “KARAKATSIDOU! [sic], a contributor scornfully wrote. “The Greek woman who wanted to become a scientist and instead of finding a doctoral topic of the sort that would have been to her credit, and also would have served scientific truth, she ended up concerning herself with accusations against Greece, against her fatherland and apparently against her own origins.”

The dispute within parts of the Greek American community was transferred into public debate in Greece, when Sarantos Kargakos addressed the issue in his column in the weekly Oikonomikos Tachydromos in the summer of 1993. With the mounting dissent following the initiative of the 169 in fresh memory and with the above cited writings in Ethnikos Kiryx as his point of departure, Kargakos deduced that what he, using a disease metaphor, described as the “microbe” poisoning the intellectual climate in Greece, had spread overseas, turning members of the Greek diaspora against the fatherland. Although he made no secret of the fact that he only knew Karakasidou’s work by hearsay, he set out to refute her views on the “bilingual populations” of northern Greece. Unlike other critics of Karakasidou in the diaspora, who mistook her for a historian, Kargakos stressed Karakasidou’s professional identity as an anthropologist, but only to shed doubts over her qualifications for discussing the past of Greek Macedonia. “Now when she enters into matters of history, it is an entirely different story”. Listing his own work on the Macedonian question as credentials for expertise, Kargakos, though not an historian by profession, came forward as a defender of Greek history against the intrusion of an alien discipline, in a way that amounted to the form of boundary-work Gieryn identifies as expulsion. Greece, he stated, “does not simply possess a history” like other nations; the anthropologist ought to know that Greek

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768 Karakasidou 1994 (a), pp. 35-36.
770 Sarantos Kargakos, “Ελληνισμός και κανιβαλισμός” [“Hellenism and cannibalism”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 1/7 1993, pp. 44-45.
771 See for example Rigas Kappatos, “Νέα αντίκρουση των θεωριών της κ. Καρακασίδου” [“New rebuttal of Mrs Karakasidou’s theories”], Prouni 22/7 1993, reproduced in Oikonomikos Tachydromos 7/4 1994, pp. 56-57.
772 Sarantos Kargakos, “Ελληνισμός και κανιβαλισμός” [“Hellenism and cannibalism”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 1/7 1993, p. 44.
history was “qualitative history”, and thus unsurpassable. The town of Assiros, where Karakasidou had conducted her fieldwork, had been Greek since the Bronze Age, according to Kargakos, who also evoked memories of suffering in more recent time as evidence of Macedonia’s Greekness by asking if Karakasidou in her research had ever considered the number of Greeks who fell victim to the Bulgarian occupation of the 1940s. What Kargakos stressed as being of greater concern than Karakasidou’s alleged ignorance of history was however her academic position and what it revealed about ‘enemy’ infiltration of the scholarly community, abroad as well as in Greece. In Karakasidou, he saw a minion of renowned Harvard anthropologist Michael Herzfeld, whom he incriminated with the preparation of a new “Fallmerayerian” theory; i.e. with the idea that the present Greeks had no relation with the ancient Hellenes. Kargakos’ article ended with a demanding appeal to Greek authorities and the scholarly community to supervise the foreign scholars visiting Greece, who guised as “philhellenes” but in reality were propagandists of ‘Skopje’, as well as to get hold of Karakasidou’s dissertation and prepare a definitive “scientific response” to her views.773

Thus began a protracted and heated exchange in the columns of *Oikonomikos Tachydromos*. In August of 1993, a written response from the Hellenic studies programme’s board at Princeton to the magazine and to *Ethnikos Kiryx* appeared, as well as a lengthy reply from Professor Michael Herzfeld on account of Kargakos allegations.774 Herzfeld admitted to initially having thought of ignoring the assertions made in the article altogether, but due to the influence attributed to the magazine, he had decided upon the opposite. In his response, he raised the issue of Fallmerayer’s theory, which he described as a phenomenon of the 19th century which in a racist manner confused biological origins with cultural heritage. This theory had no place in the contemporary cultural sciences, Herzfeld wrote, and least of all in his own research and thinking. How the rebuttal of Fallmerayer’s ideas had translated into contempt and denial of the various cultural influences which had shaped present Hellenism was a different story. What Karakasidou had done, he argued, was to resist a “spiritual tradition that has only brought harm to the Greeks”, by recognising the difference between origins and identity, between “biology and culture”, in full respect of her town informants’ wishes to identify themselves as Greeks, regardless of whichever origins they might have. Herzfeld

773 In his article, Kargakos stressed the fact that the former pupils of his – he had taught at Greek evening schools – who initially had brought his attention to the writings in the diaspora press in New York, had been unable to access the doctoral thesis in question from Columbia University. At the time, Karakasidou’s dissertation was put under restricted circulation, upon the request of the author. Due to the high political tensions caused by the name conflict when she filed her dissertation in the spring of 1992, Karakasidou asked the University Microfilms service at Columbia not to release it for a period of two years. As she explains in the preface of the published version, “I had been motivated out of concern for the people of Assiros, fearing that during such a period of political high anxieties and virulent emotional patriotism my findings might be appropriated and used by some to advance their own agendas, with little or no regard for the confidentiality, sensitivities and well being of the Assiriotes.” Karakasidou 1997, p. xviii. The subsequent development proved this assumption right, but ironically it seems as if it were partly the very measures of precaution surrounding the doctoral thesis which Kargakos used to raise suspicion against its author.

774 Michael Herzfeld, “Ερευνητικό καθήκον και µυστικοπάθεια” [“Investigative duty and mysticism”], *Oikonomikos Tachydromos* 12/8 1993, pp. 42-43.
then listed his own academic credentials and two decades of close contacts with Greek scholarly environments, as well as his research on the emergence of folklore studies in 19th century Greece as a reaction against Fallmerayer’s views. There, he wrote, anyone could form an independent and well-founded opinion of Herzfeld’s own views with regard to these matters, as well as a response to Kargakos’ claim that the study of the past was the exclusive right of historians, not anthropologists.

The bulk of criticism was however not of cognitive nature; rather it concerned the layman Kargakos’ aggressive way of making his argument, on the basis of hearsay. Here the “investigative duty” of “serious and professional” researchers and journalists was contrasted against an ill-informed “mysticism” of a sort which jumped into conclusions and, by conflating cultural identity with racial descent, contributed to reviving the more dangerous aspects of Fallmerayer’s thinking. Herzfeld furthermore warned that the aggressive assaults on Karakasidou did far more damage to the reputation of Greece in international scholarly environments than her research would ever do. Similar points were made in the responses of the Princeton scholars to Kargakos, and to the editors of *Ethnikos Kiryx*. They stressed the centuries long standing of classical Greek philology at Princeton University, as well as in more recent time that of classical archaeology, Byzantine and Modern Greek studies, adding that democratic rights and the principle of academic freedom had their roots in this ancient heritage. With those rights came the responsibility to found arguments in factual evidence and in an atmosphere of soberness and mutual respect; something which Kargakos and the anonymous authors in the diaspora magazine in New York, in their opinion, had failed to do.

Kargakos’ subsequent responses to his critics, published by the end of September and again in December 1993, took the form of an open clash between national history and international scholarship, as represented by anthropology. The underlying conflict was of course not as much the diverging perspectives of rivaling disciplines – a dimension which was more profound in the criticism of Karakasidou's work launched in scholarly journals, discussed further below – as it was a manifest confrontation between academic scholarship and lay knowledge. Nevertheless, Kargakos framed his argument in the sort of boundary-speech, which, according to Shapin and Gieryn, is so common in controversies where scholarly credibility is contested. This boundary-speech was also a political-pedagogical use of history, aimed at shedding doubt upon anthropology as a discipline, portrayed by the journalist as motivated by political aims rather than the quest for scientific truth. “Also Nazism was founded upon anthropological studies in order to put the theory of ‘master race’ and ‘slave races’ into practice”, Kargakos wrote, “something which led us to the Harmageddon of the Second World War, the crematoria and the turning [of humans] into soap.”

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776 Edmund Keeley et al., "Υπερασπίζομαστε την ακαδημαϊκή ελευθερία" ["We defend the academic freedom"], *Oikonomikos Tachydromos* 12/8 1993, pp. 43-45.
777 Sarantos Kargakos, "Τι σηµαίνει η υπέρ Καρακασίδου συνηγορία;" ["What does the advocacy on behalf of Karakasidou mean?"], *Oikonomikos Tachydromos* 30/9 1993, p. 34.
Also the editor of *Oikonomikos Tachydromos*, Giannis Marinos, who in a subsequent issue rallied to the defence of Kargakos, adopted this line of argument. Not only did he reproduce the accusations of his columnist, which incriminated anthropologists with serving Hitler and being responsible for the Holocaust, but his article amounted to an overall assault on ‘scientists’. “Scientists construct the most satanic weapons for the annihilation of human beings. […] Scientists elaborated the totalitarianism of scientific socialism on the grounds of a number of self-evident lies.”778 The abuse of science in the service of the 20th century’s great totalitarian ideologies was, in Marinos’ opinion, the proper historical context within which Karakasidou’s research and her scholarly peers’ defence of it ought to be judged, since it was in this context that the notion of a Macedonian nationality had been forged.

Scientific was [also] the socialism that the scientist Marx founded and thousands of scientists across the world, with the label of [being] progressive of course and with the enthusiasm that their dogmatic commitment dictated, complied with the commands of the Third Communist International, which pursued all but scientific ends, and among which was also the creation of the independent People’s Republic of Macedonia (naturally aimed at the territorial integrity of Greece) within the framework of Stalin’s imperialistic policies. And, I daresay, it would not be easy for Mrs. Karakasidou and her scholarly supporters to prove that the greatest and most callous murderer of all times Stalin out of scientific zeal attempted to convince his sympathiser the top Bulgarian communist leader Georgi Dimitrov into co-operating in the creation of the Macedonian Nation out of nothing but the irrefutable “scientific” argument “Also the Belarusians did not exist but I brought about their existence”! […] It is after all well-known that scientists contributed not only in Yugoslavia but all over the world, and especially in the New World, to promote and with their scholarly prestige impose the schemes of Tito regarding the creation […] of the Macedonian Nation. Also foreigners, but evidently sympathisers of theirs (of scientific socialism) supported this attempt with the same zeal as scientists collaborated with Hitler in order to prove the supremacy of the Aryan race and the need to preserve its purity, even if a couple of millions of fellow human beings had to be killed off.”779

In Marinos’ argumentation and use of history, clearly coloured by his ideological animosity toward Greek leftwing intellectuals, the ‘invention’ of a Macedonian nation attributed to Karakasidou and the parts of the scholarly community that had rallied to her defence was thus put on par with the great crimes against humanity in the name of ‘science’. Through a distinctly political-pedagogical use of history, visibly enhanced through key phrases put in emphasis, the editor conjured up the horrors of genocide and suffering in order to shed doubt on the legitimacy of scholars, chiefly those of the “professors in Greece”, who protected Karakasidou’s academic freedom, while simultaneously denying her critics access to the pages of the scholarly journal that had published her article. Evidently, the main target of Marinos was not the anthropologist in question – his article lacked specific

778 Giannis Marinos & Sarantos Kargakos, “Πρωτοφανής διεθνής (και όχι µόνο) κινητοποίηση υπέρ της ανθρωπολόγου κ. Αναστασίας Καρακασίδου!” [“Unprecedented international (and not only that) rally for the anthropologist Mrs. Anastasia Karakasidou!”], *Oikonomikos Tachydromos,* 16/12 1993, p. 36.
779 Ibid. The emphases are those of the original.
references to her work, although her article on the denial of Slav Macedonian ethnic identity in western Greek Macedonia (if not her dissertation) had been made public. Rather he implied that Karakasidou herself might be a victim that was being used by people who were not interested in the “triumph of science”, even if they happened to be scholars themselves. “We simply wish to remind of the unquestionable truth that the invocation of scientific status and scientific interest does not always suffice to prove by necessity that the intentions of scientists and researchers are above suspicion.”

Kargakos, on the other hand, was more concerned with the threat against Greece and her history posed by the international scholarly community. In his polemic with Herzfeld, he claimed that he had never attributed the Greeks with racial characteristics or suggested that contemporary scholars were using the exact arguments of Fallmerayer. However, parallels were to be seen in how a sort of scholarly ‘imperialism’ of the mighty West imposed itself upon small peoples through what he called the “spiritual janissarism”. By this term, he referred to how young people from a small country were being recruited and trained at the scholarly institutions of a big country, so that they in the future might be used in intellectual warfare against their homeland.

Of course the myth that science is above nations and borders is being cultivated at these centres. That science, that is, has no fatherland. The scientists however have. May Mrs. Karakasidou, once and for all, tell us which her fatherland is? For it is pitiable that she appears as a Greek woman and turns herself against Greece.

Kargakos’ allusion to the recruitment of janissaries through child levies among the Christian subject populations of the Empire in early Ottoman times was not coincidental. It was also the term traditionally used by the ‘nationally-minded’ Right with reference to the children that had been brought from DSE-controlled territory in northern Greece toward the end of the Civil War, to be raised in Yugoslavia and other communist states. This was a politically and emotionally charged issue in postwar (and post-dictatorship) Greece, to which both Marinos and Kargakos had referred in other writings on the present Macedonian controversy. Since parts of the ruling elites in Skopje were believed by them to be the very ‘lost’ children that in adulthood now had turned against their country of birth, it was not difficult for these journalists to see a historical connection. Michael Herzfeld must understand that “chiefly because of the Skopje formation we endured a five years long ‘civil’ war”, Kargakos wrote and urged the Harvard professor to read his own book on the Macedonian question and the ‘Skopje imbroglio’. “We are a pained people, betrayed (chiefly by friends) and steeped in blood”.

The adoption of Komintern and VMRO policies

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780 Ibid., p. 37.
781 Sarantos Kargakos, “Τι σηµαίνει η υπέρ Καρακασίδου συνηγορία;” [“What does the advocacy on behalf of Karakasidou mean?”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 30/9 1993, p. 34.
783 Sarantos Kargakos, “Τι σηµαίνει η υπέρ Καρακασίδου συνηγορία;” [“What does the advocacy on behalf of Karakasidou mean?”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 30/9 1993, p. 34.
discernible in Karakasidou’s research and among American scholars, Kargakos argued, might well lead to a new round of bloodshed in the Macedonian region. The responses of the scholarly community, in Greece as well as abroad, however revealed “why we lost the battle in the Skopje Question”.784 This battle, Kargakos asserted, had first been lost on the scholarly arena, then on the political, and the blame for this was put on the Greek scholars, who had refused to commit to the cause. Contrary to what had been the case in the era of Fallmerayer, when “scientific rocks” like Paparrigopoulos and contemporary German scholars had given the proper “scientific response”, the standards had degenerated to the point where the classical Greek heritage was being devalued within the American university community.785

The cognitive dimension of the issue, lost in the tug-of-war concerning scholarly legitimacy, was addressed by another member of the staff at Oikonomikos Tachydromos, Periklis Vasilopoulos, who attempted to engage with Karakasidou’s views on the identity of the Slav-speakers in Greek Macedonia. Vasilopoulos used the unpublished seminar paper of another anthropologist, Jane Cowan of the University of Sussex, which concerned articulations of cultural and linguistic difference in another Greek Macedonian town, to prove Karakasidou’s alleged conclusions about the existence of a Slav Macedonian minority wrong.786 Cowan had conducted her field research in a part of the region where the sense of ethnic Slav Macedonian identity, such as the one Karakasidou had encountered on her field trips to western Macedonia, was absent, or at least articulated differently; a difference she ascribed to the specific histories of each locality. This Vasilopoulos saw as evidence of a scholarly refutation of Karakasidou’s work. When Cowan in a letter to the magazine rebuked the journalist for having misinterpreted and misrepresented her views, Vasilopoulos replied by quoting passages from her paper which he considered as vindicating his conclusions. The bone of contention, or confusion, was the interpretation of the label “ethnic”, which emerge clearly from the quotations from the English original and the journalist’s Greek translations. What Cowan had stressed as a declaration of an ethnic identity as Slav Macedonians among Karakasidou’s informants as opposed to a national identity as Greeks, which they also possessed, Vasilopoulos had translated this statement as the informants having declared that they were “’ethnically or nationally’ [ethnotiká i ethniká] Slav Macedonians but also as Greek citizens”,787 thus altering the statement into an implication of an alien national loyalty in the contested region. Vasilopoulos claimed to be aware of foreign anthropologists’ criticism on this point, but dismissed it as

784 Ibid.
785 Ibid. Among the examples listed as evidence of this academic degeneration, resulting in scholarship viewed as hostile to Greece, Kargakos made specific reference to the much disputed and criticized work of Martin Bernal, Black Athena, in which Bernal had sought to prove the African and Near East origins of ancient Greek civilization.
insignificant, claiming that he had cited Cowan’s paper faithful to its general spirit. Whether the population group in question was to be regarded as “multilingual Greeks” – i.e. Slav-speakers – or “Slav-Macedonians” was in this journalist’s view not as important as the implications of Cowan’s findings for the assessment of Greek government policy on the minority issue over the last years.

If this analysis [that Cowan makes] applies to the majority of the Slav-speaking bilingual Greeks – and chances are it does – then the Greek state made a most grave error over the last decades. Through a short-sighted suppression of the problem [by keeping the statistics on the numbers and categories of bilingual citizens secret] and the non-recognition of the distinct cultural singularity it essentially PUNISHED the great majority of these amazing Greeks with distinct cultural traditions (all of us have had such traditions) for the sake of confronting a small number of “secessionist” elements which even they have a right of expression within the framework of a modern state governed by Law, provided they do not in action violate the laws of the state (and by that we do not of course mean the Metaxist legislation concerning distribution of false information).

Even after 1974 when the right extremist “Helleno-Christianity” of the junta was overturned along with the most authoritarian version of introvert “Greekness [“] the state trapped itself into a flat general distrust which believed each and every utterance of cultural difference to be an “act against the nation”.  

Vasilopoulos was especially interested in a cautious assessment of the Greek authorities’ minority policy and its consequences made in Cowan’s preliminary analysis. Cowan had in her paper argued that the Greek policies might have been based on a misunderstanding of local linguistic and cultural practices among people who otherwise considered themselves Greeks or Greek-Macedonians – this was furthermore stressed by Vasilopoulos – and that this might result in unintended consequences. If the state imbued local practices – whether of ethnic nature or something completely different – with a national meaning, it might produce grievances among the local population and a sense of shared experience of repression that ultimately might create a sense amongst the locals that they in fact belonged to an ethnic minority whose rights required recognition. “Perhaps in the end the basic problem”, Vasilopoulos wrote, was not the existence of MAKIVE’s few activists, “but the short-sighted official policy of general distrust which in the future might endow them with followers?”

Cowan made a valid point here, according to the journalist who stressed his own view that Greek national identity changed over time and that the national loyalty of people with diverse backgrounds had often been unjustly questioned out of a misguided notion of national purity, but nevertheless added that it was only a few members of the bilingual borderland populations that had failed to assimilate into the Greek national community. It was thus possible for Vasilopoulos to reconcile the views of foreign anthropologists – albeit selectively represented – with the particular critical

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788 Ibid., p. 37. The emphases are those of the original.
789 See also Cowan 1997, pp. 166-167. A similar point had also been made in Karakasidou 1993, pp. 20-21.
narrative of state repression against (bilingual) Greek Macedonians, “these amazing Greeks”, found in the writings of Mertzos and Vavouskos; narratives which I have earlier analysed as a form of moral use of history.

However, the cognitive aspect of the controversy was effectively overshadowed by the issue of the terms of debate. Cowan had in her letter to the magazine rebuked Vasilopoulos for violating the rules of academic exchange by citing an unpublished paper, to which he responded by questioning why the debate had to be conducted on conditions set by the scholars, and by stressing that they had an obligation to engage in open dialogue with the society they were researching. Save for a short statement of protest, neither Karakasidou nor Cowan responded to their critics in the magazine, despite repeated (and increasingly hostile) exhortations to do so from its editors.

This breakdown in communication between scholars and laymen, which Vasilopoulos described as regrettable and due to the “hermetically closed” seminar culture of the universities, had as much to do with the atmosphere of fear and threat surrounding the Karakasidou controversy. Kargakos had set the tone in his articles by portraying Karakasidou as a foreign agent, roaming the borderlands in western Greek Macedonia, urging or even “terrorising” the locals to renounce their Greek identity by stating themselves to be (Slav) Macedonians. He also urged Greek authorities to investigate into the matter as well as the people of Assiros, the site of her fieldwork, to make their position known publically on the alleged characterisation of their community as non-Greek. Shortly after the publication of the article the township council of Assiros, accustomed to think of their community as a traditional stronghold of Greek patriotism, received a request from the Ministry for Macedonia and Thrace for a letter of clarification. Alarmed by the prospect of having their town residents made the target of allegations of them constituting an alien element, the council decided to take action. A collective letter was written not only to the authorities but also to Oikonomikos Tachydromos, where it appeared in print in December, in which the signatories – the township president, the local priest and representatives of school authorities – stated that there had never existed bilingual residents in their town, only pure Greeks “in both language and national consciousness”. They wrote that they had assisted Karakasidou in her research on the history of Assiros, believing it to be a “National Deed”, and declared that her ‘allegations’, if they were found to be true, constituted an insult to them and their national sentiment. They further asserted that Karakasidou – a Greek woman of Asia Minor origins they stressed – was

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791 The letter of Jane Cowan is reproduced in Oikonomikos Tachydromos 23/6 1994, p. 37.
793 Sarantos Kargakos, “Τι σηµαίνει η υπέρ Καρακασίδου συνηγορία;” [“What does the advocacy on behalf of Karakasidou mean?"], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 30/9 1993, pp. 33-34.
795 “Οι προύχοντες της Ασσήρου ζητούν εξηγήσεις από την κ. Καρακασίδου” [“The notables of Assiros demand explanations from Mrs. Karakasidou”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 16/12 1993, p. 36.
796 The effort to point out Karakasidou’s origins in Asia Minor might be interpreted as a way of implicitly questioning her national credentials as a Greek. In a perhaps similar vein, Kargakos had seen it fit to point out in a
rumoured to be married ("without religious ceremony") to a Yugoslav; an assertion that the editor Giannis Marinos used to shed doubts on her integrity as a scholar. By that time, the controversy had spilled into other media and Karakasidou had already begun to receive anonymous death threats, which added further venom to the whole affair.

As the controversy developed in the magazine it became evident that the cognitive dimension was not the issue at stake. In a response to critics at the University of Padua, Kargakos made clear that the "Karakasidou-Herzfeld issue" had run its course, as far as he was concerned. His issue was with the scholars in Greece and their position in the affair. "Here lies the essence." The journalist and lay historian insisted upon his right to address matters concerning national interest and science on equal terms with the scholarly community, as well as his right to sound the alert in view of the war over Macedonia he predicted would break out in the near future. In his case, it is therefore reasonable to conclude that Karakasidou had been targeted simply as the means to accomplish this end.

However, Kargakos was by no means the only one to draw negative attention to Karakasidou’s work. Criticism was voiced by scholars, which to a greater extent touched upon the epistemological veracity and methodological foundations of claims made by her. Although this criticism shared the assumption made by Kargakos and Marinos that Karakasidou in her research had been motivated by political ends rather than a quest for objectivity, it was framed differently, as an academic contest over a cognitive domain fought in a scholarly forum and without the explicit allegations of national treason common in popular media. For this reason, this criticism will be studied separately in the following.

"A mystifying veil of ignorance": The scholarly aspect of the Karakasidou controversy

Few of the scholars and laymen who participated in the heated debate over Karakasidou’s research and academic credentials had admittedly read her doctoral dissertation. Filed with restricted access at Columbia University for the next few years, it remained on the outside of the controversy. Rather, the focal point of public and academic dispute was an article by Karakasidou, published in the May 1993 issue of *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, with the title "Politicizing Culture: Negating Ethnic Identity in Greek Macedonia". In the article, she more explicitly

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footnote that the etymology of her family name was Turkish. Sarantos Kargakos, "Ελληνισμός και κανιβαλισμός" ["Hellenism and cannibalism"], *Oikonomikos Tachydromos* 1/7 1993, p. 45.

797 Giannis Marinos & Sarantos Kargakos, "Πρωτοφανής διεθνής (και όχι μόνο) κινητοποίηση υπέρ της ανθρωπολόγου κ. Αναστασίας Καρακασίδου!" ["Unprecedented international (and not only that) rally for the anthropologist Mrs. Anastasia Karakasidou!"], *Oikonomikos Tachydromos* 16/12 1993, p. 36.

798 Kargakos’ response to a letter from Massimo Peri et al.; reproduced as "Παρέμβαση από Ιταλικό Πανεπιστήμιο" ["Intervention from Italian University"], *Oikonomikos Tachydromos* 16/12 1993, p. 37.

799 Ibid., p. 38; Kargakos, Sarantos, "Τι σημαίνει η υπέρ Καρακασίδου συνηγορία;" ["What does the advocacy on behalf of Karakasidou mean?"] *Oikonomikos Tachydromos* 30/9 1993, p. 34.
than in her dissertation addressed the issue of a Slav Macedonian minority in Greece, within the context of the contemporary name conflict.\textsuperscript{800}

The argument she made in this article was that the nation-building process in Greece, which turned the \textit{peoples} of a particular region (understood as ethnic groups) into the \textit{people} of the nation, in the case of Greek Macedonia had led to a “politicization of culture”, which had “directly contributed to the denial of ethnic identity among the Slavic speaking inhabitants there”. This process of nationalisation though in national historiography commonly portrayed as glorious and liberating, was by Karakasidou described as “in reality […] destructive, oppressive and harsh”.\textsuperscript{801} According to her analysis, the Greek state had during the course of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century wrested control of enculturation from the private sphere (the family) and placed it under the control of the public domain through the state’s localised institutions (schools, churches and the conscript army). As a result, the various ethnic identities of the populations of Greek Macedonia had become negated, transformed into a broader, more inclusive Greek national identity, while the remaining tangible traces of pre-existing cultural differences were being eradicated. For the Slav Macedonians of north western Greece, this meant that they no longer were permitted to speak their native language; doing so had, especially during the Metaxas regime, entailed the risk of being fined or forced to drink castor oil at the local police.

Karakasidou’s analysis can to a large extent be read as a critical narrative, in Rüsen’s sense, of Macedonia’s modern and contemporary history; a narrative which also carried a resemblance with the moral use of history employed by MAKIVE. This was also how critics of the article came to interpret it. Despite assurances made in the article by the author that she wished not to participate in the current debate over the name conflict between Greece and former Yugoslav Macedonia by advocating any particular position, it was nevertheless this context that provided many of the examples referred to in her discussion. Using a metaphor drawn from court proceedings, Karakasidou presented the case of the “plaintiffs” in the Macedonian conflict, identified as the Slav Macedonian minority activists and their quest for cultural and linguistic autonomy, the right of return for political refugees and the right of equal opportunity within Greek society. Simultaneously, the case of the Greek “defendants” was illustrated through samples mainly drawn from contemporary Greek press.

The critical narrative discernible in Karakasidou’s article took the form of attempts at shattering the myths of Greek national historiography. According to the author, the role of Greek scholars had been that of an accomplice, rendering

\textsuperscript{800} Karakasidou 1993, pp. 1-28. There were significant differences between the dissertation and the article, which had come into being as a result of a postdoctoral project. In the former, Karakasidou’s fieldwork had concentrated on nation building since the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century in the town of Assiros, situated to the north of Thessaloniki in Central Macedonia, a part of the region that was largely unaffected by notions of a Slav Macedonian consciousness and minority activism. In Assiros, Slavic dialects spoken in the past and in the present were usually referred to as ‘Bulgarian’, not ‘Macedonian’, which sometimes was the case further to the west. The article was the result of field research in Western Greek Macedonia, where a sense of (Slav) Macedonian ethnic distinctiveness was more pronounced, according to Karakasidou.

\textsuperscript{801} Ibid., p. 4.
academic legitimacy to the state policy of cultural negation. Citing statements made over the years by scholars and nationalist intellectuals, from folklorist and EMS scholar Stilpon Kyriakidis in the early postwar years to Nikolaos Martis, Stelios Paphathemelis and historian Konstantinos Vakalopoulos in the present, Karakasidou described Greek scholarship on Macedonia as being stuck in the 19th century perception of Hellenic civilisation and national identity as perennial and inherently superior to the other cultures in the Balkans. This often amounted to “academic racism”, which in the sense of Edward Said’s Orientalism created a stereotypical perception of Slavs as people with neither culture nor history, thereby contributing to the denial of Slav Macedonians as a separate cultural entity and ethnic group, in the past as well as in the present. Arguing from “historical premises that are fundamentally misinformed”, Greek scholars had in her view “erred in defining Slavo-Macedonians as cultural or ethnic Greeks”, because of their focus on “overt cultural features of ethnicity, such as written language and [Greek Orthodox] religion” as tokens of national Greek consciousness. Since Greek was historically regarded as the ‘high’ language of the cultural elite, as opposed to the ‘low’ vernacular of the rural Slav populations, Greek scholars had dismissed their tongue as unimportant, while Greek authorities had dealt with local culture as “a competing influence, a voice of cultural and thus political dissent.”

In her critique, Karakasidou contrasted the constructivist approach to identity and ethnic group membership of Roland Barth, used by anthropologists in their studies on ethnicity, to that of “most Greek scholars [who] do not regard ethnicity (or even nationality for that matter) as a historical construct, and many fail to recognize the fundamental truth that reality – just like our cultural representations of ‘self’ and ‘other’ – is constructed.”

Although Karakasidou in her article never explicitly referred to which specific scholars and scholarly institutions she had in mind, save for Kyriakidis and some of the ‘new Macedonian fighters’, it was more or less inevitable that the ones who felt themselves being targeted in a sweeping assault against their field of expertise were scholars with ties to the research institutes in Thessaloniki. Since the editors of Journal of Modern Greek Studies, with some exception, rejected to publish the harsh responses submitted to them, critics turned to the pages of Balkan Studies, the English-language journal issued by IMXA. There three Greek scholars presented their cases against the anthropologist’s article: political scientist Nikolaos Zahariadis and historians Constantine G. Hatzidimitriou and Vasilis Gounaris, the latter of which was also director of the research centre of the Museum of the Macedonian Struggle. Of the three, two were diaspora scholars who, like Karakasidou, had earned their doctoral degrees at American universities. The forum chosen for

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802 Ibid., pp. 17, 18.
803 Ibid., p. 19.
804 Ibid., p. 18.
806 Nikolaos Zahariadis received his doctorate in political science from the University of Georgia in 1992, while Constantine Hatzidimitriou received his in Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek history from the Columbia
criticism, as well as the language – English instead of Greek – indicate that the authors had a larger audience in mind than that of the scholarly community in Greece, or the public and politicians concerned with issues relating to national history; namely the important Modern Greek Scholars Association (MGSA), which also was the official sponsor of *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*. Nevertheless, these three commentaries raised several important issues concerning the state and status of Greek scholarship on Macedonian history and therefore merit closer scrutiny.

While the three were in agreement with each other on a number of points, departing from the opinion that Karakasidou’s study was biased in favour of a Slav, or rather Yugoslav, Macedonian political agenda, there was certain variation in the arguments emphasised and the way in which these were presented. This variation was manifest chiefly in the degree to which the authors were receptive to the theoretical approach chosen by the anthropologist. Historian Constantine G. Hatzidimitriou’s commentary, carrying the telltale title “Distorting History”, amounted to a full-length article refuting what he perceived as Karakasidou’s charges against Greek scholars with deliberate falsification of Macedonian history. \[^{807}\] “If she is correct”, he wrote, the Greek government would be guilty of violating human rights and the Greek academics dealing with Macedonian matters guilty of violating basic principles of historical method and analysis. “However, if it can be demonstrated that Dr. Karakasidou’s assertions are based upon a serious misrepresentation of the evidence, then one must conclude […] that she is assuming a political position in the guise of anthropological research.” \[^{808}\] Hatzidimitriou’s attempt to prove this to be the case took the form of a defence of the established tradition of Greek scholarship on Macedonia, as embodied chiefly by the works of Evangelos Kofos, \[^{809}\] as well as the bibliography on the continuity of Hellenism, which Karakasidou was accused of having deliberately ignored.

On a conceptual level, Hatzidimitriou’s text reveals a tendency to conflate ethnicity with nationality, which was also indicative of the author’s position regarding constructivist theories on nationalism. The work of Benedict Anderson, cited by Karakasidou, was thus deemed as inapplicable to the study of Greek nation building and modern state formation, since neither she nor Anderson had specifically addressed the body of evidence that supported the thesis of Hellenic continuity, understood as Greek consciousness, despite variation over time of its cultural contents. As for the factual evidence in the case of the Slav-speakers in Greek Macedonia, Hatzidimitriou admitted that there might have been instances of

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\[^{807}\] Constantine G. Hatzidimitriou,”Distorting History: concerning a recent article on ethnic identity in Greek Macedonia”, *Balkan Studies*, 32 (2) 1993, pp. 315-351.

\[^{808}\] Hatzidimitriou 1993, p. 316.

\[^{809}\] Reference was also made to works by non-Greek scholars, chiefly the works of Douglas Dakin and Elizabeth Barker.
Greek state repression against these people, who “rightly or wrongly” bore the stigma of national treason during the 1940s, but asserted that their tendencies toward separatism justified the concerns and thus the policies of the state. Whichever was the case, he furthermore asserted, the possible link between the oral testimony of local informants in a region known as “a hotbed for separatists” less than fifty years earlier and the agenda of Yugoslav Macedonian irredentism disqualified them as credible witnesses of state abuse. If these allegations indeed were to have any ground, he furthermore argued, the handling and study of contemporary matters ought to be left to political science or legal expertise, not to history or anthropology. The perspective of Hatzidimitriou can be summarised as that of the traditional narrative described by Rüsen, which in this instance manifested itself as a defence of past and present government policies as well as of the authority of traditional, national historiography on the subject, supposedly devoid of bias. Put in his own words, what “Karakasidou has done is to confuse scholarship with politics in order to misrepresent the historical positions carefully documented by Greek historians”.

Zahariadis on the other hand, repeating the criticism in a commentary he had submitted to the American journal that had published Karakasidou’s article, sought to demonstrate the anthropologist’s shortcomings, allegedly rooted in “faulty methodology” and “unconvincing theory”. Since she, in his view, had failed to spell out the research design, the method of data collection as well as to address potential bias in analytical variables, it was impossible to verify the findings or knowing whether the informants she had met were representative of the entire Slav-speaking population of the region. His conclusion was therefore that the study “lacks analytical rigor and scientific objectivity”. Especially the court metaphor, by which Karakasidou had presented the case of the Slav Macedonian minority activists, was subjected to harsh criticism. Zahariadis was of the opinion that she had accepted the activists’ assertions about mistreatment at face value, while omitting to make account of the Greek state’s legitimate concerns about separatism, in a way that was “unacceptable in academia” where “proving the defendants wrong does not make the plaintiffs rigιt”. This was also the core of his objection to Karakasidou’s use of contemporary constructivist theory on national identity and her attempt to deconstruct key assumptions of Greek national history. Framed as a critique of theory, a question on whose history and ‘memories’ really counted as scientifically valid was raised.

I agree that history is a construct. But the proposition must include two qualifications. First, it is not only Greek history that is constructed […]. If Greek historical memories of descent from Alexander the Great are considered to be far-fetched – despite the plethora of archaeological evidence to support this thesis – why shouldn’t the Slav claim that the Greeks arrived in the area after 1913 […] also be considered equally far-fetched? […] Why are Greek claims carefully scrutinized and criticized as lacking in insight or historical validity whereas claims made by Slav villagers are glorified as absolute truths? Is there something to Slav memory that is

inherently superior to Greek memory? Scholarly objectivity necessitates careful
scrutiny of what both sides claim.811

Also Gounaris raised similar objections, although framed, at least initially, in a less
confrontational manner. Unlike his colleagues, who had dismissed Karakasidou’s
constructivist approach as irrelevant and unconvincing, Gounaris praised the
anthropologist’s “solid theoretical grounds” 812 Also in contrast to Hatzidimitriou,
who had questioned whether the impact of national culture upon local society was
by necessity destructive, 813 Gounaris recognised nation-building to be a process
responsible of much sorrow and pain, “by creating, affecting or even violently
transforming ethnic identities”. 814 However, he continued, none of this, and
especially not what he perceived as Karakasidou’s “sentimental attachment to the
Slavo-Macedonian activists she met in western Greek Macedonia”, could
compensate for what he labelled “her particularly weak points”. To these points
belonged “the deliberate omission of a solid historical background”, which in his
view would have revealed that the Metaxist repression against the Slav-speakers in
the 1930s had been aimed at wiping out communists and pro-Bulgarian elements
from the population, rather than being aimed against any Macedonian ethnicity per
se. Another ‘weak point’ was identified in the anthropologist’s reliance upon oral
testimony from what might be just “a marginal group of people who have recently
named all their unsolved social and financial problems as ‘ethnic Macedonian’
because they expected to hit the headlines under the present political and
diplomatic circumstances”. 815 In this context, Gounaris disputed the top-down
perspective on national enculturation permeating Karakasidou’s analysis, by
questioning the idea of the Greek state as being sufficiently omnipotent as to
impose a ban on the use of native language and censorship on “grand-mother fairy
tales”. The core of his argument was his criticism concerning the implications of
constructivist theory on the study of identity, which essentially mirrored the
statement made by Zahariadis.

[Still] one question remains: since she has adopted a modernist constructivist theory
on the issue of Greek nation building […], why does she maintain such
premordialistic [sic] views when referring to Slavo-Macedonian nationalism and
ethnic identity? Why, for example, is it selectively justifiable for ‘ethnic Macedonians’
who consider the interwar sufferings of the pro-Bulgarian element as part of their
own history, and not for the Greeks when they boast about Alexander and
Byzantium? How long is actually the history of ‘Macedonian ethnic’ – not national –
‘demands’ and what is the precise timing of its appearance and development?

811 Nikolaos Zahariadis, “Politics, Culture and Social Science: A commentary on Dr. Karakasidou’s ‘Politicizing
Culture: Negating ethnic identity in Greek Macedonia’”, Balkan Studies, 32 (2) 1993, p. 304. The author’s extensive
footnote 3, with bibliographical references to support his own assertions, as well as his references to specific pages in
Karakasidou 1993 – pages 18 and 10 – have been omitted from the quotation. In her reply to Zahariadis,
Karakasidou claimed these references to be outright fabrications. Karakasidou, Anastasia, ”National Ideologies,
Histories and Popular Consciousness: A response to three critics”, Balkan Studies, 35 (1) 1994 (b), pp. 120-121.
813 Hatzidimitriou 1993, p. 320.
815 Ibid., p. 313, 312.
Moreover, what solid historical proof does she have – if any – that ethnic Macedonians actually existed before nationalists in Skopje searched in their turn for the ethnic core of their brand new nation-state? ‘Negation’ presupposes existence after all, at least to certain extent; unless she refers to the rights of people to develop at any time a different new ethnic identity with state support, indeed a liberal demand which has never become a realistic political option in Europe [1].

In Gounaris’ view, there was not a single argument in Karakasidou’s article that suggested the claims made by her Slav-speaking informants, concerning a distinct ethnic Macedonian identity, to be any different from Yugoslav Macedonian nationalism, as it had been constructed during the recent decades. His conclusion was therefore that she by reproducing these claims, wittingly or unwittingly, had made herself an apologist of the neighbour state’s irredentism, in a way that made “propagandists in Skopje, sound more realistic than sentimental social anthropologists”.

As implied, criticism which questions theoretical assumptions, methodology and the representativeness of samples is common in academic disputes, especially when established (or even hegemonic) views are being contested by what is perceived as revisionist interpretations. To this observation should also be added Karakasidou’s professional affiliation with anthropology; a discipline with its own set of theoretical issues and methodologies that seemed alien to the historians, trained to value written evidence from state archives over oral testimony. Narrowed down to this respect, Karakasidou’s “provocative analysis”, to quote Hatzidimitriou, can be said to have constituted an expansion into the domain of Greek macedonology, previously and chiefly monopolised by historians. Statements concerning the role of Greek scholars as servants of national state ideology, arguing from outdated and “fundamentally misinformed” historical premises, and their alleged failure to recognise “the fundamental truth” about reality and cultural representation as constructed, can be interpreted as boundary-work with the intention of subverting established truths and questioning the legitimacy of the scholars which produce and reproduce them. In the same way, the response of the Thessaloniki scholars can be said to correspond with the form of boundary-work that Gieryn identifies as expulsion. Besides allegations of political bias and “sentimental attachment” to informants, aimed at discrediting Karakasidou’s scholarly integrity, this expressed itself mainly in the critique of her supposedly insufficient historical background. In at least two of the three commentaries, she was portrayed as an anthropologist who, failing to do her homework, had engaged with historical issues of complex nature, thereby misrepresenting the real and putatively legitimate objectives of Greek policies with regard to the Slav-speakers.

Also the subsequent responses by Karakasidou to these and to other commentaries point to such an interpretation. In an essay submitted to and

816 Ibid., pp. 313-314. The authors references to page 20 and note 11 in Karakasidou 1993, as well as his own footnote 8, referring to anthropologist Loring Danforth’s portrayal of Macedonian national identity as constructed, have been omitted from the quotation.

817 Ibid., p. 314.
published in *Balkan Studies*, she lamented the three critics’ lack of appreciation of anthropological methods and theories as “unfortunate, for no productive interdisciplinary exchange can take place on empirical issues without a prior mutual understanding of how cognate disciplines address interests of common concern.”

Social anthropology, she explained, is a discipline that is concerned with how society is thought about and organised, as well as how it changes over time. Her own research was thus to be understood as both contemporary and historical, drawing on both written documents and data obtained during extended local level fieldwork. “A great deal of misunderstanding still derives from the different details that anthropologists and historians are trained to observe, emphasize and document”, Karakasidou stressed in a reply to another critical reviewer of her work. “Rather than diligently guarding the borders between our cognate disciplines, I would suggest that there is more to be gained by crossing such boundaries.”

As for her own qualifications, she rebuked especially historian Gounaris for using subtle rhetorical devices to cast doubt over her command of history, in her capacity as anthropologist, and rejected the allegations of having deliberately omitted the historical background. “Gounaris is a personal acquaintance of mine”, she added, suggesting that he was “fully aware” of both the diversity of her sample and her familiarity with the history and bibliography of the Macedonian question.

Critical commentaries concerning theory and method, however, cannot only be attributed to the rhetoric of boundary-speech, which is perhaps per se inherent in academic disputes, or to misunderstanding between disciplines. The scepticism voiced against the validity of oral testimony or the representativeness of the informants, was just as much a rejection of self-identified Slav Macedonians’ claim to be represented or to be recognised as having any sort of historical authority. This is particularly evident in the above quoted passage from Zahariadis’ commentary, in which the anthropologist was accused of glorifying the claims of “Slav villagers” as “absolute truths”, as if “Slav memory” were “inherently superior to Greek memory”. This interpretation is also applicable to Gounaris’ assertion that if the assumptions of Greek historiography concerning nation-building were to be scrutinised, the claims of the corresponding Slav, or rather Yugoslav, Macedonian narrative of national or ethnic distinctiveness would also have to be deconstructed, in order for the analysis to be scholarly objective and fair. His remarks concerning the implications of the use of “modernist constructivist theory” for the study of Macedonia can partly be understood on the basis of his own theoretical perspective on the issue of nation-building in the region during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, discernible in his later writings.

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inhabiting the area at the time were groups with only vague notions of – chiefly religious – identity, not anything that could be classified as ethnic consciousness – by Gounaris understood along the lines of Anthony D. Smith’s definition of *ethnie*, i.e. a basically pre-modern identity woven around shared memories or myths of origins, and cultural traditions, which would have set the mainly Orthodox Greek-, Vlach- and Slav-speakers apart from each other. The search for ethnic identities among the chiefly rural communities of Macedonia would thus be fruitless, since the subsequent choice of national identity was dictated by personal (usually economic) interests or external pressure, rather than emanating from a sense of ethnic distinctiveness. Also the ‘fluidity’ of identities in the region during periods of turmoil – during the Struggle 1904-1908 as well as during the 1940s – when mainly Slav-speakers shifted allegiance from one nation-state or guerrilla to another as fortunes changed, was cited by Gounaris and likeminded scholars as evidence of the absence of ethnic groups. This line of reasoning has in Gounaris’ writings often expressed itself as an outright dismissal of the very concept of ethnicity, described as a theoretical construct imported from the social sciences without any relevance for the study of Macedonian history.\(^{822}\) Ethnicity, used with reference to historically multilingual, yet presumably fairly homogenous population cohorts, in terms of religious affiliation and cultural traditions, would thus be misleading and anachronistic, since it projects the existence of what essentially is a modern national identity back into pre-national times.

But Gounaris’ theoretical assumptions, as well as his insistence that Greek nationalism concerning Macedonia could not be scrutinised without paying an equal amount of attention to its counterpart across the border – a sort of relativism in the name of objectivity –, also entailed a possibility to boost the credentials of Greek macedonology. The approach suggested by the Thessaloniki historian would serve to push the main focus of the debate initiated by Karakasidou toward the issue of the recent and ‘artificial’ character of Yugoslav Macedonian national identity. This issue was essentially the core theme in Greek historiography on postwar and contemporary Macedonia, as embodied in what Evangelos Kofos had labelled the “politics of mutation”.\(^{823}\) It was the term by which Kofos and other scholars referred to the process of nation-building in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia after 1944, when what was portrayed as thitherto pro-Bulgarian popular sentiments had been transformed – ‘mutated’ – into a brand new Macedonian identity under a federal Yugoslav umbrella, forged to serve the political ends of Tito. By posing the issue of a Slav Macedonian minority in Greece as in fact a matter of the historically verifiable existence or non-existence of a Macedonian nation prior to 1944, scholars concerned with macedonology could hope to direct attention toward their own expertise in these matters, without having to challenge

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\(^{822}\) Ibid.; Gounaris 2010, pp. 23, 104-115.

publically held convictions about the historical Greek presence in the region. As Zahariadis, though not an historian, had expressed it, a “plethora of archaeological evidence to support this thesis” already existed.

In her response to the three commentaries in *Balkan Studies*, Karakasidou explicitly referred to this particular aspect, by stating that the validity of oral testimony as opposed to written sources was not merely an academic issue. Oral accounts should always be subject to critical scrutiny, but that went for written sources as well, she wrote, and she had used both the testimonies of informants and official documents kept at the Historical Archives of Macedonia for her description and analysis of Greek state repression. To *a priori* accept historiographic tradition and written material as ‘established truths’, while simultaneously dismissing any alternative sources, was a naivety that in her opinion could breed ignorance and bigotry. The court hearing metaphor so detested by her critics, she wrote, was not to be understood as her taking sides with the “plaintiffs”. Rather, she had sought to “offer a forum in which the ‘plaintiffs’ could express their views, unadulterated by the views of those in the Greek media, government or academia who would otherwise disparage them”.  

This concern was directly linked to her own perception of history and scholarly ethics.

> History has many faces, each of us one of them. The more faces we can see of History, the better we may hope to comprehend it. That understanding, I believe, will inevitably lead to the realization that there is not simply one “correct” or “objective” History, but rather a multitude of histories. Our respective analytical perspectives may lead us to emphasize certain histories more than others, or to accord greater significance (and different interpretations) to particular historical events. But without a concern for and attention to the muted or “subaltern” voices of history, our knowledge and understanding will be only partial and we risk continuing to labor indefinitely in a mystifying veil of ignorance. This is not a “sentimentalism” [sic!], as Gounaris would have it. Rather it is a concern with the multiple voices and the multifaceted character of history.

Nevertheless, despite the postmodernist notions of history’s muted voices and the assertion that “National truths’ are not necessarily ‘ultimate truths’” the historical narrative which Karakasidou presented was not essentially different from that (or those) of her critics. In a footnote referring to Hatzidimitriou’s own historical overview of 20th century Northern Greece, in which the historian had stressed the plight of Slav-speakers during the turmoil of the 1940s, she herself remarked that his summary was “surprisingly consistent, if not similar to, mine.”  

Neither was the argument she had made in her article, reduced to its most basic contents, in fundamental disagreement with what well respected Greek scholars like Konstantinos Tsoukalas had stated, when he wrote that the “Hellenic national body” had been “formed by a sum of minorities”.  

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825 Ibid., p. 116.
826 Ibid., p. 120.
827 Ibid., p. 142, footnote 37.
‘ethnic’ suggests that his understanding of the issue was not as diametrically opposed to that of the anthropologist, as his criticism of the concept would imply. It was not so much the epistemological aspect as much as the political, which seems to have concerned him regarding the use of the term ‘ethnicity’ in a Macedonian context; a concern which was even explicitly stated by fellow historian Hatzidimitriou.829 Following this line of reasoning, the formal recognition of certain groups as ‘ethnic’ and thus as ‘national minorities’ within a given state, would entail the vindication of neighbouring states’ right of intervention on behalf of these minorities; something which in Gounaris view “has never become a realistic political option in Europe”.830

The issue at stake was thus not so much epistemological and cognitive claims, as much as the credibility of those involved in making these claims. Karakasidou had in her article challenged the authority of historiographic tradition in Greek scholarship on Macedonia among international peers, and the reaction from scholars with ties to that tradition was to, in a similar vein, dispute her credibility as an academic. A no doubt contributing factor in this response was the fact that she, unlike senior academics with similar views, was a junior scholar with no social standing in Greece. In her Bourdieu-inspired analysis of the Greek academic community’s role in moulding public discourse and ‘national consciousness’ on the contemporary name conflict, published in the same year as her reply in Balkan Studies, she had written of how “sacred scholars” and guardians of national ‘truth’ had applied their powerful social capital to attack and delegitimise junior academics who challenged the national consensus of knowledge and historical understanding surrounding the Macedonian controversy.831 Now, it would seem, Karakasidou herself had become the target of such excluding mechanisms. However, it ought to be stressed that contrary to what such an analysis might imply, the critics who appeared in Balkan Studies were relatively junior themselves at the time. Zahariadis had received his doctorate the same year as Karakasidou, while Gounaris and Hatzidimitriou had received theirs a few years before, in 1988. It is therefore possible that their criticism, at least partly, can be understood as deriving not so much from the will to protect already accumulated social capital, as much as the desire to acquire it.

With Karakasidou’s reply to her critics, the editor of Balkan Studies considered the issue closed. The controversy seemed to have run its course, but it would soon become evident that it had created impressions that were to have unexpected repercussions abroad. Early in 1996, Cambridge University Press announced its

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829 Cf. Hatzidimitriou’s commentary on the alleged negation of Greek Slav-speakers’ Macedonian ethnic identity. “It is ridiculous to claim that the Greek government is keeping their Slavic ethnicity a secret. Greece has many citizens whose languages and customs give them an ethnic identity in addition to their Greek nationality. […] If Greece refuses to formally recognize a foreign Macedonian national consciousness within Greece, it is only because such an ethnic consciousness is an artificial construct created by a hostile neighbour with territorial aspirations. There is no such thing as a Macedonian identity, national or otherwise prior to Bulgarian and Communist Yugoslav abstractions [and aggression in the 20th century]. This is why the Greek government refers to them as Slavophone Greeks.” Hatzidimitriou 1993, pp. 339-340.
831 Karakasidou 1994 (a).
decision not to publish a revised version of Karakasidou’s dissertation. Allegedly acting upon the advice of British diplomats posted in Athens, who had informed the Press about the tensions surrounding the Macedonian question and the death threats against the anthropologist, CUP stated the risk that a publication might jeopardise the safety of its employees in Greece as the reason for its rejection. The decision, which went against the endorsement of the panel of experts to which her manuscript had been submitted, caused uproar among scholars around the world. Among the editorial advisers of CUP was Michael Herzfeld, who together with fellow anthropologist Stephen Gudeman announced their resignation and called for a boycott against the Press, which they accused of having protected its commercial interests in Greece, rather than acting out of concern for its local employees.832 Presented as a case of academic censorship, the message spread rapidly across university campuses and cyberspace, as the Society for the Anthropology of Europe and the American Sociological Association mobilised their networks in support.833 Also in Greece, protests against CUP’s decision were voiced in the media and by government officials, especially since the reasons stated for it fostered a very negative image of the country as a nation of would-be assassins.834 Another effect of the publicity, as one observer remarked, was to draw unexpected – perhaps even undreamt for – attention to the work of Karakasidou at an early point of her postdoctoral career.835 Several publishers expressed their interest and eventually the University of Chicago Press offered her a contract, publishing her book in 1997. This meant, among other things, that Karakasidou’s work emerged as one of the internationally best known and often cited publications on Macedonia, along with anthropologist Loring Danforth’s study of the Macedonian conflict, published in 1995.836

In Greece, scholars concerned with macedonology were now engaged with contemporary academic debates on the study of identity. In this respect, both the larger name conflict and the Karakasidou controversy brought about somewhat of a paradigmatic shift. Within a few years after the interim accord that put the diplomatic conflict on hold, volumes started to appear, in which the identities of Macedonian populations was the primary topic of investigation.837 In his prologue to one of these volumes, historian Thanos Veremis stressed the need to study

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833 The official statement issued by Cambridge University Press, Michael Herzfeld’s and Stephen Gudeman’s letters of resignation as well as e-mail petitions and correspondence samples can be accessed at http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~sae/threads/CUP/dubisch.html, accessed 14/6 2010.
836 Both the works of Karakasidou and Danforth have been translated into Greek; Karakasidou’s book was renamed with the in Greek even more evocative title Μακεδονικές ιστορίες και σύγκλητα [Macedonian histories and sufferings]. Loring Danforth, Η Μακεδονική διαμάχη: Ο εθνικισµός σε έναν υπερεθνικό κόσµο, translated by Spyros Marketos, Athens: Alexandria, 1999 (1995); Anastasia Karakasidou, Μακεδονικές ιστορίες και σύγκλητα: 1870-1990, translated by Eleni Asteriou, Athens: Odysseas, 2000 (1997).
Macedonian history and the minorities from a contemporary perspective, in an age of Europeanisation and attention to human rights. This would be a way to stress the European dimension of Greek national identity and to re-connect with the more tolerant and inclusive tradition found in Paparrigopoulos’ 19th century historiography.838 “What [both Greek and Yugoslav Macedonian] historiography needs is a radical change of approach, to unhitch itself completely from the wagon of nationalism”, historian Iakovos Michailidis wrote a few years later.839 Despite Gounaris’ occasionally declared aversion against the “interdisciplinarity, which is considered mandatory in the approach to every question”,840 these scholarly enterprises included historians as well as anthropologists, representing both the environment around IMXA and scholarly circles from abroad. Although reluctant to accept the validity of Karakasidou’s views on ethnicity, and the usefulness of this concept in a Macedonian context, the research environments of IMXA and the Museum of the Macedonian Struggle incorporated the discourse and ideas of international scholarship on nationalism in their output and also invited peers in Bulgaria to contribute in their publications. However, there were arguably other, domestic concerns that contributed to this development in the scholarly field, which will be addressed in the following.

“Things fall apart”: Demarcating the boundaries against popular macedonology

The criticism launched by the Thessaloniki scholars against Karakasidou must not solely be understood as boundary-work against an alien academic discipline. An important aspect was the issue of epistemic authority raised by the samples of Greek historiography and press writings cited in her article. Especially Gounaris, but also Hatzidimitriou, expressed objections about the way Nikolaos Martis and his likes were portrayed as representing scholarly positions, unanimously accepted within the Greek academic community.841 Karakasidou’s examples of intellectuals supposedly moulding scholarly and public opinion about the Macedonian question were, according to Gounaris, “not really representing anyone, sometimes not even the views of the newspapers where their articles were published”. To reduce the conflicting views of “a large scale dispute” among academics, journalists and the political parties of Greece into versions of “the same ‘nationalist’ scenario”, as he implied she had done, was in his view “a serious error, at best indicating problematic channels of information, at worst bias”.842 Martis and Paphiæmelis, it was repeatedly stressed, were politicians, not professional historians or in any

839 Michailidis 2000, p. 79. The article, in which the statement is made, is a scholarly attempt to reconcile the counternarrative of the defeated Slav Macedonians with the Greek state narrative. It is presented as “a step towards reconciliation with those many Slavophones whose memories have never been acknowledged in Greek historiography”; and as a response “to those who have discerned a general ‘nationalistic paranoia’ in Greece and who have accused Greek historians […] of indulging in ‘nationalistic ravings’”, suggesting “a more critical approach to the nationalism of all sides”. Ibid., p. 72.
842 Ibid., p. 313.
respect established scholars and should thus not be cited as such; nor should the views expressed at scholarly conferences on Macedonia, such as the 1988 International Congress in Melbourne, be taken as reflecting an overall Greek academic consensus. This demarcation against the claims of laymen was also aimed at the exclusion of certain university scholars cited by Karakasidou; most notably historian Konstantinos Vakalopoulos, whom Gounaris described as backward in terms of theoretical insight and too dependant of the scholarship of EMS in the 1950s. “[EMS scholar Stilpon] Kyriakidis’ views on ethnos [nation] were perhaps representative of his post-war generation, but his influence on one ‘modern’ historian does not really prove anything but the latter’s ignorance of post 1945 texts on such theoretical issues. Bibliography on Greek nationalism […] is by no means represented by late Professor Kyriakidis or by K. Vakalopoulos.”

Conspicuously, the people referred to as “not really representing anyone” were, except for Kyriakidis, persons associated with the ‘new’ macedonology of the 1980s, who had come forward in the media, claiming scientifically founded expertise on Macedonian matters. Gounaris’ dismissal of these ‘popular experts’ – which by implication also incriminated the Society for Macedonian Studies with a legacy of politicised scholarship – is indicative of a growing tendency among scholars concerned with macedonology to dissociate themselves from the advocates of a policy that was increasingly being regarded as flawed. As early as in September 1991, even prior to Yugoslav Macedonian independence, concerns had been voiced in mainstream press as to the effect and impression of Martis’ historical arguments in international public opinion. It was not the validity or the justness of his cause that was being criticised, but rather the way in which he was making his argument, allegedly written in a style entrenched in early Cold War rhetoric, which only served to discredit it. In a similar vein, during the unfolding Karakasidou controversy, Byzantinologist Pavlos Tzermias expressed his concerns about the effects that overzealous Greek patriotism might have in the international community’s perceptions of the Macedonian conflict. Tzermias, who had advocated the official Greek position regarding its historic rights abroad, remained convinced that history provided “strong arguments” for the Greek case in the naming issue, and that the “world is thirsting for good information”. Such information, “sober and well documented”, existed in the form of Evangelos Kofos’ English language publications, but unfortunately these small circulation scholarly works seldom reached the public, which remained under the influence the simplifying ‘logic’ of mass media. The result of this was that the international public

843 Ibid., p. 310. The author also stressed that Tito’s plans for annexing Greek Macedonia, which also featured on contemporary Yugoslav Macedonian irredentists’ agenda, was “a very real threat, sufficiently documented by modern historians (not by K. Vakalopoulos)”. ibid., p. 312
844 In later publications, Gounaris has been more explicit in his criticism of the Society’s role in the scholarly output of the 1940s, in the service of the national claims activism, which he describes as an “alienation from historical science”. Gounaris 2010, pp. 66-70.
846 Pavlos Tzermias, "Η Μακεδονία και η διεθνής κοινή γνώμη" ["Macedonia and international public opinion"], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 9/9 1993, p. 73.
had been left with the impression that the present Greek concerns for Macedonia was only a copyright struggle for a name, a single word. Worse still was, in the author’s view, the way history had been employed in the process, by overemphasising the glories of ancient Macedonia and by appealing to narrow Greek chauvinism.

The desirable was not and is not for us to be misguided into a nationalistic or even racist fever pitch, to appalling simplifications and mythmaking, [...] to idealisation of the ancient Macedonians’ military-political leadership and to similar – I say it gently – inordinate conclusions. [...] The desirable was and is the response and refutation of Skopje’s nationalism with sober reasoning from the viewpoint of transnational ideals. [...] Not the entanglement with meaningless discussions about racial descent and the purity of blood.

According to Tzermias, Greece’s course of responding to the nationalism of the neighbour with a nationalism of her own had only the effect of alienating the foreign public.

Also prominent scholars of the academic community in Thessaloniki came forward as critics of what they described as the excesses of the Greek Macedonian policy. In an interview published in Kathimerini, historians Ioannis Koliopoulos, Ioannis Chasiotis and IMXA member of the board Antonios-Aemilios Tachiaos, made their concerns public. Without overtly dissociating themselves from the official position in the name conflict or to commonly held views of Macedonian history, the historians – two of which, Koliopoulos and Chasiotis, were professors of Modern history at the Aristotle University – were cautiously criticising the overemphasis on the name and the ancient historic symbols in Greek argumentation. Their answers to the reporter’s questions – especially those of Tachiaos – revealed a traditional narrative of history, familiar to the broad readership, where Thessaloniki was portrayed as the civilising bulwark of Hellenism against the Slavs and Macedonia as a region historically oriented toward Greece even prior to its incorporation in 1912. Yet there were elements of criticism in their assessment of present conditions and policies. While asserting that they as academics had rebutted the claims of their Yugoslav counterparts to the Macedonian name and heritage already in the 1960s, the Greek politicians were rebuked for failing to realise that a (Slav) Macedonian national consciousness was now effectively in place and that little could be done to alter this. Especially Ioannis Koliopoulos, who at the time of the interview was completing a major work on the impact of the Macedonian question on the civil strife in Greece during the 1940s.
stressed the need of moving beyond the name issue, while simultaneously condemning the negative role played by the mass media.

Of course we are bothered by this [i.e. the neighbours’ use of the name Macedonia] because of the historical heritage and their manifest irredentism, but they will not abandon it for they wish to be neither Serbs, Bulgarians, Greeks nor Albanians, for historical as well as other reasons.

It remains for the political leadership of Greece to confront the matter with farsightedness and temper in order for the necessary rapprochement of views to be accomplished. Furthermore, so that a reconciliation with our own recent past can be achieved. The Greek politicians and above all the journalists must show more self-control and fashion a contemporary approach to the [Macedonian] question. It is, in other words, necessary for Greece to, along with her political and social modernisation, also modernise her national ideology, even to reassess her national interest with reference chiefly to her position in the United Europe and not to the so-called historic rights.  

Even if Koliopoulos did not openly challenge the conventional wisdom, his assessment thus seemed to echo that of Kyrkos and other critics of the official Macedonian policy. This similarity was not only manifest in the critique of the populist policy pursued in the name issue. Koliopoulos seemed to share the critical views expressed by his peers among the ‘new’ historians, who had identified what was perceived as a lack of, or belated modernisation of values – here understood as national ideology – as one of the key elements fuelling the Macedonian crisis. However, there were still differences between the perspectives of ‘old’ and ‘new’ historians. For historians like Chasiotis, the spectre of European unification, the opening up of borders and the re-definition of the concept of national identity also entailed the possibility of the Greek cause in Macedonia finally being vindicated. For if Hellenism would be put to a test in the era of globalisation, so would the “Macedonianism” of the neighbours, which was less likely to emerge unscathed. “With the opening of the borders, […] it will become proven that ‘Macedonianism’ was a historical hoax.”

Similar criticism regarding the Greek handling of the name conflict also permeated the assessment eventually made public by Evangelos Kofos. He was the one historian who more than anyone else was associated with Macedonian matters

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851 Koliopoulos had developed his view on national ideology and a modernised historiography in a speech held at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in 1992. Speaking in terms of reconciliation with Greece’s unmastered historical past, he argued that such a process “will give us a better understanding of ourselves, and also help us to adapt to a new world that is taking shape. We must adapt cautiously, but without angst; gradually freeing ourselves from the oppressive allure of the historiography of ‘lost homelands’… forging our national identity, which will henceforth be founded on the modern perception of what constitutes a nation, namely a cultural community of all the peoples and groups that have settled in, or passed through, this blessed land over the centuries, […] helping to compose one of the richest cultural heritages and testifying to both the acquisitional capacity and the incomparable vigour of this nation of ours.” Ioannis Koliopoulos, Η Μακεδονία και η διαμόρφωση της εθνικής ιδεολογίας και πολιτικής της νεότερας Ελλάδος [Macedonia and the Shaping of National Ideology and Policy of Modern Greece], Thessaloniki: Aristotle University 1992, pp. 17-18; translated and quoted in Michailidis 2000, pp. 80-81, footnote 11.

852 Chasiotis in Anna Panagiotarea, “Οι Ιστορικοί υποβαθμίζουν την ονομασία” [“The Historians downgrade the naming”], Kathimerini 7/2 1993, p. 8.
and who, in his capacity as an expert employed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had inside knowledge of how the Greek foreign policy in this regard had been shaped. Kofos had kept a low profile in public debate when the Macedonian crisis erupted choosing to keep his distance from the Macedonian Committee, save from his initial contact with its initiator Giagiozis. Being the historian who had nearly monopolised the study of the Macedonian question in Greece for the larger part of the post-war period, Kofos was a given contributor to anthologies which sought to explain the troubled history of the region and Greek concerns about Yugoslav Macedonian statehood and irredentist ‘designs’. In these publications as well as in other public statements, he reiterated views developed in the late 1980s concerning the post-war ‘mutation’ of Slav Macedonian national identity and historiography. Apart from that, Kofos engaged in research on the new history textbooks issued for use in the Republic of Macedonia’s schools; the results of which were presented in the Lambrakis press (Vima and Oikonomikos Tachydromos) as revealing evidence of an official expansionist agenda. Thus, the views expressed by him to the Greek public were in alignment with the general perception of the neighbour state as a potential threat to Greek national security; views which reflected the policy adopted by the Ministry.

However, Kofos’ commitment to the national cause was not without reservation. His review of the Greek official policy in scholarly publications written during the crisis can be described as a delicate balance between a defence of state and public concerns perceived to be legitimate and attempts at distancing himself from the ‘emotional’ outbursts provoked by the conflict. These reactions, he asserted, stemmed from widespread ignorance of the Macedonian question for the larger part of the postwar period, with the result that even academics lacked “an accurate knowledge of developments in neighbouring countries over the past 40 years”. This state of affairs was not only due to lack of communication with the neighbours, but also due to “constant misinformation of the Greek public by official announcements and government-inspired publications” in the mid-1980s. The result of this was “spasmodic reactions” and “cries of panic about a ‘Slav conspiracy against [Greek] Macedonia’”, which had a negative impact on the debate on the Macedonian question.

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854 Vima 19/12 1993; Evangelos Kofos, "Νέα πρόκληση µε τους σχολικούς χάρτες" ["New provocation with the school maps"], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 7/4 1994, pp. 24-28. Kofos’ study, as presented to the public, was a detailed review of textbook contents, listing numerous examples of how the history of Macedonia was being stripped of any connotations with Greece and the Greeks. He was especially preoccupied with the psychological effects that this type of history-writing, accompanied by maps of ‘Greater Macedonia’, might have on the pupils who read these books, in whose minds the idea of a geographically larger, unredeemed and repeatedly humiliated fatherland was being instilled. This, he warned, could only foster bitter resentment toward neighbouring countries, especially Greece. Cf. Evangelos Kofos, The Vision of ‘Greater Macedonia’: Remarks on FYROM’s New School Textbooks, Thessaloniki: Museum of the Macedonian Struggle 1994.
856 Ibid., p. 290.
It is difficult not to see this critical assessment of both misleading government-inspired information and the alarmism of ‘misinformed’ debaters, as an implicit condemnation of the influence on public opinion exercised by the ‘new Macedonian fighters’. As noted earlier, the latter’s assault on the “policy of silence” on Macedonia – a term also used by Kofos – adopted by most postwar Greek governments, indirectly challenged Kofos’ standing as an expert, since he had been involved in the shaping of Greek foreign policy for decades. Bearing this in mind, as well as the fact that he had already become the target of libellous accusations by certain debaters (however marginal in terms of influence), Kofos’ critical remarks can be interpreted as a way of defending his reputation as a leading scholarly expert, in a time when calls were made for more audacious policies on Macedonia. His loyalty to the Ministry in which he was employed prevented him from engaging too overtly in public debate. However, his retirement from government service in the summer of 1995 and subsequent leave as visiting scholar at Oxford offered him an opportunity to speak his mind about a policy which was increasingly regarded as a failure, and about the forces that in his view had contributed to this.

In a speech, held at the ceremony in honour of his retirement, excerpts of which were later published in the press along with an article on the role of experts in the shaping of foreign policy, Kofos developed his view. After having summarised his three decades long service at the Ministry, dwelling on his double role as scholarly historian and political adviser, and on his preoccupation with recent Macedonian history, which in the early 1960s had been “virgin territory from a scholarly point of view”, he proceeded to assess the current handling of the Macedonian question. This assessment took the form of a damning verdict of the maximalist policy on the name issue adopted during Antonis Samaras’ period in office and later by the PASOK government. “Not on few occasions, the professional approach was ostracised in favour of dilettantism”, he stated. “Opportunism replaced farsighted planning, while fanaticism replaced constructive dialogue”.

This maximalist agenda, which ruled out any compromise in the naming issue and which Kofos later would describe as being “ignorant of history”, was portrayed as stemming from the misinformed and misguided advice of forces outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Our inventiveness to avoid having to gaze with sincerity at the real dimensions of the issue was in fact impressive. Thus, we [re-]baptised the traditional Macedonian question as [the] “Skopjan” [question], apparently in order to exercise demons and to

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857 Kofos did not mention anyone by name in the above cited text, but his footnotes referred mainly to the work of Nikolaos Martis.
protect the Greek property of the term. [...] We entrenched ourselves on walls in order to save “derivatives”. [...] We thus balked in critical moments at taking the bold decisions because we did not believe that there exist nationally acceptable and scholarly solutions apart from the untenable stereotypes which were imposed on the unsuspecting public opinion but which are leading nowhere. [...] Perhaps for the first time over the past two decades, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs lost its traditional role as the top qualified adviser of the political leadership on this crucial national issue. It is most evident that the policy choices are made on the basis of unofficial recommendations of unknown provenance and dubious topicality.\footnote{Evangelos Kofos, “Ένας πρέσβυς αποχωρεί και επισημαίνει” [“An ambassador retires and pinpoints”], \textit{Oikonomikos Tachydromos} 24/8 1995, p. 69.}

In a subsequent publication, written in English with the hindsight of a few years and aimed at international scholars, Kofos would elaborate further on the provenance of these “unofficial recommendations” that had succeeded in “bypassing the counsels of professionals and seasoned publicists”.\footnote{Kofos 1999, pp. 361-394.} In his view, a “new brand of Greek ‘Macedonologues’” had sought to monopolise public debate by “distorting historical facts in their endeavor to recast Macedonian history to suit political needs”. The result of their lobbying activities had been the coining of the inaccurate slogan “Macedonia is Greek”, an argument which according to Kofos’ post facto assessment had found resonance with an ill-informed public in Greece and the diaspora, leading to the elevation of the maximalist claim as government policy – i.e. no recognition of a state carrying the word ‘Macedonia’ or any of its derivatives in the official denomination. As for the involvement of the scholarly community, Kofos noted that while many academics had contributed to a ‘sober’ analysis of the Macedonian issue, others had chosen to “join the bandwagon of nationalist fundamentalism”. These academics were attributed with the responsibility for the flawed maximalist approach, due to the predominance of (classical) historians and archaeologists among those intellectuals who drew up the theoretical framework for the policy to be pursued.

Understandably, their perception of the issue at hand focused on the Macedonian kingdom of antiquity [...] rather than on the Socialist Republic of Macedonia [...]. The “archaeologization” of Greece’s foreign policy, then became unavoidable; more so when amateur historians and publicists entered the debate promoting a series of historical theories in retrospect [such as that the Macedonian region had been historically and exclusively Greek]. When the general public endorsed these “findings”, political leaders of all factions joined the bandwagon.\footnote{Ibid., p. 387.}

This was by far the most overt condemnation of the ‘new’ macedonology made by a traditional historian in the environment around IMXA. However, it should be kept in mind that this assessment was published several years after the diplomatic crisis, when the discredited maximalist policy was long ago abandoned by most Greek politicians and when what remained to be done was to save the reputation
of academic macedonology, as represented by Kofos himself. The senior consultant’s criticism of those who had, in his view, corrupted historical knowledge on Macedonia in the service of political ambition, was not a criticism of the traditional narrative that underpinned their perceptions of Macedonian history. In statements intended for the Greek public, Kofos underlined the “need to protect the basic collective human right of our people – and especially our [Greek] Macedonians – to its [national] identity and historic and cultural heritage.”

Stressing his own identity as a Greek Macedonian, he asserted in a commentary on the New York Interim Accord, which in September 1995 terminated the stalemate between the two countries, that a permanent solution to the naming issue must entail recognition of the exclusively Greek character and identity of the ancient Macedonian civilisation. The Macedonian controversy was a conflict over identity, not territory, Kofos concluded. The only way of resolving it lay in the establishment of a compound name or denomination that emphasised the Slavic character of the neighbour state’s Macedonian identity, thus driving a wedge between it and the historic past deemed to be a constitutive element of Greek national identity. This view has since become the standing recommendation expressed by Kofos whenever reference is made to the unresolved name dispute in Greek public debate.

The public attention surrounding the Macedonian question had thus come as a mixed blessing for those concerned with Macedonian history in a professional capacity. At least initially, the crisis had given a boost to their expertise, but commitment to or association with the official Greek policy also meant that their credit was vulnerable, due to the waning fortunes of that policy. The expansion of “amateur historians” as well as that of alien disciplines into their field of research and expertise was not the only challenge to emerge. In due time after 1995, when the Macedonian conflict ceased to dominate the headlines, a critical discourse was being cultivated in scholarly historical journals like Istorika as well as in the Iós press, which aimed at exposing the dubious ethics of traditional scholarship on Greek Macedonian history. The target of criticism was the Society for Macedonian studies, which undoubtedly, even in the eyes of scholars like Vasilis Gounaris, was marred with a legacy of politicised historiography, in the service of ends outside of historical science. This legacy and the unclear boundary between professional scholarship, perceived as ideally devoid of any attachment to political agendas, and the “ideological use of history” was something that put the historians employed at

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865 Evangelos Kofos, “Ένας πρέσβυς αποχωρεί και επισηµαίνει” [“An ambassador retires and pinpoints”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 24/8 1995, p. 70.
867 Ibid.; see also the interview with Evangelos Kofos by Tasos Tsakiroglou, “SOS για την ταυτότητα” [“SOS about the identity”], Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia 20/4 2008.
research centres in Thessaloniki in an awkward position, as the legitimacy of their intellectual tradition was called into question.

As mentioned earlier, the years following the Interim Accord witnessed the publication of a number of collective volumes, in which the issues of identity brought to the fore by the recent Macedonian crisis were being addressed by these scholars, from the viewpoint of a more contemporary approach to the study of nationalism. These volumes were the fruit of chiefly the research centre of the Museum of the Macedonian Struggle. However, the occasional flare-ups in public attention to the still unresolved name dispute – provoked by the U.S. recognition of the Republic of Macedonia under its self-chosen denomination in 2004, and this state’s bid for NATO membership in 2008, blocked by Greece’s veto – entailed new opportunities for the “Macedonian fighters” of the 1990s to reassert their expertise. Also EMS continued to spearhead research initiatives – from 2006 under the presidency of Nikolaos Mertzos – which as late as in 2007 resulted in the publication of a volume on the “imperialism of Skopje 1944-2006”. It was presented as a token of the modernisation of the Society’s scientific work, but was nevertheless met with criticism and allegations of reproducing the ‘misinformation’ and alarmist discourse concerning the ‘Skopje threat’ of previous decades. These reactions illustrate well the precariousness of the professional historians concerned with Macedonian matters, as macedonology has turned into an increasingly contested field, at the intersection of political, economic and scholarly interests.

Concluding analysis
Due to the nature of the Macedonian controversy as an entanglement of history with politics or in Rüsen’s terms the political and cognitive dimensions of historical culture, it was natural that the scholarly community would in some respect be involved in public debate as questions were raised concerning its responsibilities in a time of crisis. I have in this chapter discussed aspects of these problematics against the backdrop of both political and historiographic developments; in some cases dating back to 1974 and the transition to democracy. The central question has been how scholars engaging in public debate – chiefly historians – used history to make sense of the Macedonian crisis. Connected to this larger question is a set of interrelated issues concerning how they understood the notion of the use of

history, the purpose of historical knowledge and of their own role as legitimate interpreters and disseminators of this knowledge.

Writing in the journal *Politis* in the midst of the Macedonian crisis, historian Giorgos Margaritis had called for scholarship that actively engaged with contemporary social and political issues that mattered as opposed to the mere study of insignificant historical detail. The purpose of historical knowledge, according to Margaritis, lay in its utility to the citizens of modern society. In other words, the task of historiography as that of the historians was to educate the citizens and free them from myths and misconceptions. Yet it was the use of history in the service of politics and the market that was the topic of concern in his article. It stemmed from a sense of deep disappointment that so few historians had spoken out against the fanaticism unleashed in public debate and that those who had seemed to have so little impact. Margaritis connected this perceived failure of professional historians to make an impact with the perceived failure of Greek society to modernise.

Margaritis’ article echoed many of the themes of the debate and particularly the growing counter-discourse against popular macedonology. The first of these themes concerns the relation in which reactions and public performance of scholars were shaped by external expectations upon the academic community. It was such public expectations of scholars as guardians of national history that in many respects provided the fuel that fed the controversy as manifest in Nikolaos Martis’ appeal to the historians’ community and members of other disciplines to do their patriotic duty by ascertaining the ‘truth’ about Macedonia. These external demands offered an opportunity to some scholars, concerned with topics that could be construed as being of national importance, to assert themselves in the quest for funding. The Macedonian conflict erupted at a point in time when the repercussions of the larger economic crisis of the late 1980s began to also be felt in the field of historical studies, which stood in contrast to the discipline’s expansion in the previous decade. Thus the external expectations to a certain extent corresponded with, or could be portrayed as corresponding with, funding demands from within the academic community. National history was useful to society, scholars like Athens Academy president Sakellariou argued. According to him and likeminded peers, the goal of all historical research was to make knowledge accessible to the public, by means of broad and, if necessary, simplified syntheses. The rhetorical strategy employed in service of these demands was to tie them to a discourse on national security and existential needs. The Macedonian crisis was by some debaters seen as having its roots in a neglect of the nation’s history in research and education. From this followed that a reinforcement of this type of knowledge would mend some of the problems that society faced in an era of political uncertainty and existential insecurity, shaped by the forces of the outside world.

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874 Giorgos Margaritis, “Τι λοιπόν χρησιμοποιεί η ιστορία;” [“How then is history of service?”], *Politis* No. 120, October-December 1992, pp. 6-8.
However, popular macedonology, as represented by Martis, also incriminated the academic establishment for not having done enough in the service of national interest. Occasionally, this incrimination became manifest in explicit allegations of inefficiency due to ‘introvert science’. I have analysed these allegations as rooted in the rivalry and boundary-work between scholars concerned with macedonology. This history war within the Greek academic community was, at least initially, not a clash of perspectives but more a scramble for attention (and possibly funding) between scholars, framed around the notion of research (history as introvert science for scholarly consumption) standing in opposition to information (history as extrovert science for the benefit of society and the common citizen). In this respect, there was a point of agreement between those concerned with macedonology and critics of them such as Margaritis. History must not be introvert science, cut off from the reality and needs of contemporary society.

An opposing source of external expectations upon the academic community was to be found in leftwing and student politics, i.e. in circles which favoured radical political perspectives and a critical discourse on history and the state. As noted in this and in previous chapters, the Macedonian question – by Iós editor Tasos Kostopoulos described as both the peak and the Achilles’ heel of Greek ‘bourgeois’ nationalism – contained a potential for radicalism, a welcome occasion to expose the ideological myths of the nation-state. This discourse of dissent also incriminated the academic community – notably the historians – for having failed to actively engage in the protection of truth. Critics, such as Dimitris Lithoxooou, went as far as to question the professional historians’ ability to free themselves of the restraints imposed upon them by the state that paid their salaries. Inherent in this criticism was an allegation that historians as a community shared a larger responsibility for the abuse of history in nationalist propaganda than politicians. From this followed the claim that laymen like Lithoxooou were in a better position to combat the “ideological use of history”, despite the ‘new’ historians’ stated ambition to do so.

There were in other words several competing, and opposing, external pressures for scholars to either participate in public debate by committing to the national cause or by coming forward as critics of state policies. From this does not follow that those scholars who did participate are representative for the reactions of the academic community, or of the communities of their respective disciplines. The climate of heated exchange and accusations against academics may well be interpreted as providing a powerful incentive for abstaining from any participation. As Skoulariki has noted, this option – to keep a healthy distance from anything perceived to be politically controversial – was one of the common strategies adopted within the academic community during the crisis. Those who did come forward were notably scholars who in their professional capacity were concerned with the study of Macedonian history, as well as scholars associated with ‘new’ history with a past and/or present commitment to leftwing politics.

The trial against four student activists – which coincided with the scholarly symposium on nationalism in the Balkans – provided the catalyst for scholars with
critical views on state policy to engage more actively in the debate. The right to interpret history freely, openly disputed by the court in a statement often cited, emerged as an incentive for public dissent in defence of history as a matter of free speech. The intervention of the 169 scholars and intellectuals in May 1992 heralded the end of the silence and relative consensus within the academic community. By doing so, a code of scholarly behaviour had been violated, according to the counter-petitioners which rallied the university community of Thessaloniki against the dissenters. This code was in part the result of a tendency to avoid open confrontation over politically controversial topics in the academic community after 1974, which had been further reinforced by the initial political consensus concerning the national position in the Macedonian name conflict.

However, the choice to dissent also reflected ideas and concerns regarding the relation between historical knowledge and political forces bent on its exploitation that had been present well before the 1990s, in the context of reformed Left. The concept of the “ideological use of history”, coined by historian Filippos Iliou, was a point of reference among critics of the Macedonian policy, even before Iliou himself entered the fray. Among the ‘new’ historians, it was he who assumed a leading role, as organiser of petitions as well as being a moral authority. According to Iliou, citing intellectual ‘fathers’ of ‘new’ history like Dimaras, historians were bound by the ethics of their discipline and by science to resist the political pressure of their time and society. This ideal of historical science as pure was expressed in dichotomous terms between ‘sober’ scholarship and its biased counterpart, which served non-scientific interests. It was with reference to such interests that Iliou had coined the concept of the “ideological use of history”; understood by him as a particular practice aimed at distorting objective reality in the service of social and political interests through the selective use of sources.

This use was by him and likeminded peers described as a threat against history and the professional integrity of the historians. Their activism can thus be described in terms of boundary-work as protection of autonomy. This rhetorical defence mechanism also entailed the expulsion of unspecified peers who had used history ideologically in connection with the Macedonian crisis. According to Iliou, these scholars constituted a minority within the Greek historians’ community, applauded in “the circus” but ostracised by the majority of ‘sober’ scholars whose awareness of the ideological use of history made them immune toward it. Iliou’s assessment of his peers’ conduct with regard to nationalism and the Macedonian crisis differed sharply from the critics who had incriminated the historians’ community in Greece with cowardice and expediency. As such, it can be interpreted as a conscious attempt to find common ground with other historians, by offering them the possibility to dissociate from the official policy on Macedonia, thus restoring the relative consensus of their community. In due time, traditional historians would, as we have seen, emerge as critics of this increasingly discredited policy, although this did not necessarily entail rejecting the underpinning narrative of state nationalism.
The dichotomy by which the divide between sober science and ideological distortion of historical knowledge was constructed in Iliou’s statements mirrored a more general understanding of history as driven by a dialectic of binary oppositions. This understanding was reflected in the political-pedagogical use of history employed by Iliou to make sense of the contemporary crisis as rooted in the endemic failure of Greek society to modernise in the past two centuries.

However, Iliou’s epistemological ideal of history as a pure science, from which followed that the task of the historian was to save history from ideology and myths, was just like his perception of truth as inherently revolutionary rooted in ideological views. In a sense, Iliou’s and his likeminded peers’ own use of history could arguably be analysed as “ideological”, since it tended to reproduce notions of the past inherent in Marxism. These notions tended to emerge in narratives of Greek post-1974 society as a story of political and social progress, now threatened by sinister neoliberal and neoconservative “forces of anachronism”. In general, Iliou tended to avoid the rhetoric common in leftwing historical narratives and what he deemed to be the self-complacency of the Left. The most common use employed by him and other likeminded colleagues is best described as political-pedagogical. Nevertheless, the tendency toward ideological use of history, I argue, was inherent in the type of dichotomous thinking fostered by them in the general atmosphere of the history war. This becomes especially evident in the ‘anti-nationalist’ history of Macedonia and the Balkans outlined by Angelos Elefantis. His view of the historian’s task as an “act of resistance” favoured an understanding of history that was more political than epistemological, and thus more susceptible to what I call the lure of the ideological use – deliberately using his own terminology. Resistance against the nationalism ushered in by the Macedonian conflict emerged as a common cause for which leftwing forces could rally, recovering some of its lost cohesion and ideological orientation after the collapse of ‘real socialism’. The function of history was thus political, the consequence of which was that the use some of the ‘new’ historians made of history came close to what Iliou himself once had termed as ideological, serving the “inner cohesion and programmatic pursuit of certain […] social groups.”

It ought however to be stressed that this use of history was accompanied by a critical discourse on how the divided Left had handled the Macedonian crisis. Iliou was not unaware of the implications that an anti-nationalistic historiography, advocated by some critics, might have for the history discipline. This is evident in the scepticism expressed toward putting labels, implying that this type of historiography also risked resulting in the ideological use of history. His insistency

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upon professional ethics was not uncontroversial in the ‘anti-nationalist camp’, as Stratis Bournazos, one of the four condemned student activists writes in a commemorative text; “at the time [it] alienated many of us who had been brought up with […] the denial of the neutrality of science”. Yet, Bournazos continues, Iliou’s positivistic standpoint proved both radical and conclusive as a strategy for combating the historical arguments of the nationalist adversaries. The united front against the official policy in the name issue, for which Iliou worked, was open to anyone, regardless of political affiliation, who agreed on the minimum requirement, that nationalism was a menace to democratic society. From this followed the view that there was no need for labels like ‘leftwing’, ‘revolutionary’ or ‘antinationalist’, as the words ‘history’ and ‘science’ carried sufficient clout per se.

This was also the strategy implicit in leftwing ex-politician Leonidas Kyrkos’ political-pedagogical use of history, which largely refrained from rhetoric and narratives associated with leftwing political and historical culture. Nevertheless, the boundary between new historians’ political and ideological commitment and their own use of history was arguably unclear. This might have something to do with an unclear conception of what was meant by ideology; something which tended more broadly to be identified with the policies and practices of authoritarian states and nationalist doctrine rather than political movements.

An aspect of Iliou’s preoccupation with the ideological use of history was that its positivist conception of the subject hindered the reception of historiographic currents associated with postmodernism. This scepticism was something that ‘traditional’ and ‘new’ historians seemed to share. The result was that the community of scholarly historians in Greece was largely cut off from or unfamiliar with international trends at the beginning of the 1990s. These perspectives entered scholarly and public debate on history largely through the research of another discipline, anthropology, and through researchers who had received their training in foreign academic environments. This body of research, often the result of fieldwork in Greek Macedonia, offered interpretations of the region’s recent history that went against the grain of traditional Greek historiography on the topic. Since the findings and the theoretical framework of this research seemed to vindicate, or was interpreted as vindicating, the identity politics of the Slav Macedonian minority activists, it engendered fierce reactions among scholars and non-scholars alike. In the controversy surrounding the work of anthropologist Anastasia Karakasidou, various debaters rallied in defence of national history.

The controversy revolved around the issue of legitimacy: Who had the right, or authority, to speak about Macedonian history? Here the practice of boundary-work emerged as a dominant feature of the debate, as Karakasidou’s disciplinary affiliation was highlighted in attempts to shed doubts over her scholarly qualifications for dealing with the past. This practice of expulsion, as Gieryn has termed the particular form of boundary-work that aims at ostracising members of

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876 Bournazos 2008, pp. 31-32.
877 Ibid., pp. 30-33.
rivalling disciplines from a contested field of expertise, was performed by laymen and scholars alike. In the case of the former, as represented by Kargakos and his editor, this took the form of a clash between national history and international scholarship. Through a markedly anti-intellectual political-pedagogical use of history, they sought to delegitimise anthropology as a pseudo-science, responsible for Nazi and Stalinist crimes against truth and humanity, with an emphasis on evoking national Greek suffering.

The scholars who joined the fray of attacks against Karakasidou framed their criticism differently, focusing primarily on disciplinary issues such as methodology and the validity of sample data. Underlying this scholarly critique was nevertheless the same allegation against her research as motivated by a political agenda, as well as repudiation of her scholarly qualifications for addressing issues of history. Karakasidou’s article on negation of Slav Macedonian ethnic identity, the part of her research that stood at the centre of the controversy, was in part presented as a critical narrative of Greek state policy in the recent past. Specifically, it aimed at shattering the myths of traditional Greek historiography, which the anthropologist accused of ‘academic racism’ in the service of state national ideology. The Greek scholars who engaged in debate with Karakasidou invoked objectivist notions of history in defence of their research tradition. According to her critics in the journal Balkan Studies, she had deliberately misrepresented the facts at hand and the positions of Greek scholarship on Macedonia, supposedly devoid of any bias, save for a few exceptions with little or no academic credentials.

The argument of the critics was as much with MAKIVE, the Slav Macedonian minority rights movement, as it was with the anthropologist. Karakasidou had presented her article as a way of offering the ‘silenced’ party of the Macedonian conflict, the Slav Macedonians of Greece, a forum where they could express their views “unadulterated” by those of the Greek political, academic and media establishment. This was done with reference to postmodernist notions of history as multifaceted, from which followed that the researcher’s duty was to pay attention to “the muted or ‘subaltern’ voices” rather than insisting upon an objectivist conception of history. These notions seem to have been largely alien to her Greek academic critics, who in her text saw an apologetic account for Slav separatism, which prompted them to explain and defend the past and present concerns of the Greek nation-state with regard to its Slav-speaking population. In some instances, this took the form of an outright denial of Slav Macedonian oral accounts as valid testimony entitled to any sort of historical authority, as opposed to archaeological evidence and historical documents that supposedly validated Greek claims. Understood in Karlsson’s terms, the criticism expressed by the three Greek academics amounted to an ideological use of history, aimed at rationalising and rendering legitimacy to state policy, though presented in a scholarly-scientific fashion.

It would however be simplistic to interpret this use as only reflecting a desire to serve the state. The scholarly critique against Karakasidou, and by extension MAKIVE, reflected (and appealed to) concerns shared by a larger academic
community in a time when old certainties were being challenged by (post-) modern identity politics, demonstrated in the rise of the ‘subaltern’ perspectives on history referred to by the anthropologist. The crisis of historical studies in Greece, mentioned by Sakellariou, coincided in a global context with traditional history’s crisis of legitimacy perceived to be caused by (or a symptom of) the “postmodern challenge”. Several remarks made by the Greek scholars referred to in this section echoed views expressed elsewhere in the world (and indeed in the discourse of Iliou and the ‘new’ historians on the ideological use of history) that history must be protected from ‘heritage’, the sort of use of the past which passed on exclusive myths of origins, “endowing a select group with power and prestige”.879

Thus historian Gounaris’ critical review of the way Karakasidou applied constructivist theory on nationalism and ethnicity within a Balkan context turned into a rebuttal of the right of ‘self-appointed’ ethnic groups to state support for their claims to identity and historical authority. Political scientist Zahariadis pointed to another circumstance related to historical claims in the service of identity politics, when he accused the anthropologist (and the hidden partner in the exchange, the Slav Macedonian minority activists) of using perceived repression as the only evidence of Slav ethnicity, validated by history. “If they are repressed, so the logic goes, they must be different”.880 In doing so, Zahariadis pinpointed the perhaps most salient feature of contemporary identity politics, manifested in opposition against the state in which victimhood is invoked as grounds for recognition and compensation. As sociologist Jeffrey K. Olick puts it, the use of the past is a hallmark of multiculturalism (though not the only one). In contemporary Western societies, the state is but one contestant in the public sphere, in which it has to compete with other groups’ alternative memories and histories. One strategy for states to preserve its societal cohesion is to integrate as many alternatives as possible into a unifying narrative.881 While Greece of the 1990s arguably was not the multicultural society Olick primarily has in mind, an example of this attitude can be found in the Greek state’s recognition of Pontian claims to distinctiveness, based on past suffering.

Zahariadis did not draw any such parallels or place his observation within a larger context. Rather, he saw it as a clash of separate group memories, where the issue at stake was to determine whether “Slav memory” was as historically and scientifically valid as or even superior to “Greek memory”. In this he echoed views with some currency among both laymen and scholars concerned with macedonology. These held the Slav-speakers of northern Greece to be the victims of dire circumstances during periods of war and authoritarian rule, but refused to acknowledge their experience as distinguishing them from the national collective as a whole. “In the sphere of oppression, all the Greeks were equal”, as Kofos put it when writing on the development of the Macedonian question during the junta.882

881 Olick 2007, pp. 188-192.
There was in the view of mainstream traditional scholarship no place for Slav suffering or distinctiveness outside the unifying narrative of the Greek nation.

The identity politics that provoked such strong reactions in the scholarly community nevertheless made a lasting imprint on subsequent research. One outcome of the Macedonian crisis was the attention to sensitive issues such as the national minorities. Apart from the Slav Macedonians, scholarly interest in the 1990s was directed to previously neglected groups such as the Muslims of Thrace. Also the field of Jewish studies blossomed. This upsurge of academic interest was of course not only the result of domestic developments in Greece but reflected larger international tendencies engendered by the new wave of nationalism and ethnic conflict in Eastern Europe after 1989, which reinforced the study of ethnicity and brought attention to the historical experience of ethnic and religious minority groups. An important contributive factor in this context was the cluster of anniversaries commemorating different aspects of the Second World War and the Holocaust, which per se fostered a retrospective discourse on suffering and the need for justice. Even if the historical narrative presented in state approved history textbooks has been slow to adapt to these new narratives or include the histories of the minorities, the public attention to these matters arguably play into the hands of other groups concerned with identity and memory politics. The attention to the plight of the Jews and other neglected minorities in Greece could arguably also put the spotlight on the cause of the Asia Minor and Pontian Greeks in their quest for “the return to history, politics and geography”. Critical scholarship bent on shattering the myths of traditional ‘nationalist’ historiography could be selectively appropriated and incorporated into the narrative they were meant to quash; especially in cases where a nationalist agenda came under the cloak of the moral use of history. In a more scholarly context, the constructivist approach to the study of national and ethnic identities, employed by Karakasidou and other critical scholars, did not necessarily alter long held views among Greek scholars traditionally concerned with macedonology. Rather its set of theories has been incorporated into the body of research on identities in the Macedonian region, but without radically challenging earlier scholarship.

As Sam Wineburg has remarked in a comment on the bitterly divisive “history wars” in American debate in the 1990s, the rancour of these controversies was rich soil for dichotomous thinking. This is manifest throughout the debate studied here, which tended to be constructed around dividing lines between objective history and ideologically motivated distortion, between “sacred” and “profane” scholars, “chauvinists” and “traitors”. A no doubt contributive factor in shaping the discourse of scholars participating in the debate was the public forum in which the exchange took place. The media arguably made their views seem more diametrically opposed than what might have been the case in a purely academic

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884 Charalambidis & Fotiadi 2003, p. 15.
environment, with a different code of exchange. But as mentioned above, the Macedonian conflict coincided and was indeed interwoven with the postmodern challenge and the crisis of legitimacy for objectivist history, which presented both critical ‘new’ historians and their ‘traditional’ counterparts with difficulties related to issues of credibility. The professionalisation of history and its elevation into science was inextricably connected to the emergence of the nation-state. Even historians and other scholars critical of state nationalism and the “ideological use” of history in its service could not escape the fact that the professional status invoked by them derived from the prestige attributed to them by the nation-state as guardians of knowledge and truth.

This arguably contributed to polarise perceptions, since no one could be expected to willingly acknowledge any personal bias or imply uncertainty, which inevitably would compromise whichever claim one was making. Despite a postmodernist rejection of versions of history which claim totality for themselves as true, even Karakasidou invoked objectivist notions when she wrote of the “plight that knowledge and truth suffer at the hands of their modern executioner: nationalist historiography”. In a sense her research on identity formation in local society can be read as a critical narrative, based on the assumption that national consciousness is by nature false, from which follows that a deeper, more accurate truth is buried beneath the surface, waiting to be uncovered. Anthropologist Keith S. Brown has made a similar point in a critique of Karakasidou’s and fellow anthropologist Loring Danforth’s works on the Macedonian region, which he argues are written within interpretative frameworks that in their own way are as over-determined as the nationalist vision they seek to challenge. “Both are humanists in the sense that they are horrified by the consequences for humanity of the totalitarian effects of blinkered history. Both, in taking on the narratives of nationalism, have sought to write their own ‘definitive’ version to replace them”. The result of these efforts, Brown continues, is a “paradox whereby the inquirer comes to resemble the state”; something he considers to be “endemic to the mission of social science”.

Brown’s critique, written in full recognition of Karakasidou’s personal and professional courage, also holds relevance for the critical narrative identified by Rüsen. Described as “the identity of obstinacy”, formed by denying the given cultural patterns of self-understanding, the critical narrative suffers from an inherent deficiency. This has to do with the ambition to challenge one master narrative with what appears as another one, which for itself claims – or may be perceived as claiming – similar totality as the one it aims to replace. From this follows an uphill struggle to persuade in environments where a traditional master narrative is still salient. While Karakasidou’s narration was chiefly genetical, in the sense that she in her research charted a process of ongoing transformation of local

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886 Karakasidou 1994 (a), pp. 35-36.
patterns of self-understanding, and she herself stressed the nature of history as multi-faceted, there were, as we have seen, instances where objectivist notions functioned as a safe haven. Even for scholars influenced by postmodern ideas which challenged the privileged position of academic history, the logic of binary oppositions proved difficult to overcome in a climate of exchange where various forms of boundary-work were salient, shaping perceptions and uses of history.
6. Battlefields of memory: Epilogue and concluding discussion

It was not a sudden change of perceptions in Greek politics or historical culture that brought about the end of the Macedonian crisis, but more so developments in the former Yugoslavia. In September 1995, NATO’s airstrikes against the Serbian entrenchments around besieged Sarajevo forced the warring parties of the Bosnian conflict to the negotiating table. This changed the preconditions of Greek diplomacy as to the Macedonian controversy. Until then, a silent presupposition of government policy toward the new neighbour state had been that Yugoslav Macedonian independence was only temporary, that it could still be undone through the break-away republic’s re-entry into the Yugoslav federation.\footnote{Cf. Nikos Marakis, “Δύο στρατηγικές για τη Γιουγκοσλαβία έχει η Αθήνα” [“Athens has two strategies for Yugoslavia”], *Vima* 19/1 1992, pp. A12-13.} After the end of the Bosnian war along with the prospect of a strong Serbia under Milošević, such a return seemed ever less likely to occur.

This confirmed what many commentators in Greek public debate had predicted for months, the collapse of the maximalist policy, which so decisively had ruled out compromise in the name issue. In the shadow of the negotiations at Dayton, Ohio, an agreement was reached in November 1995 – the so-called New York Interim Accord – by which the parties of the Macedonian conflict temporarily settled their differences. The Republic of Macedonia agreed to drop the contested Star of Vergina as its official emblem, while the Greek government recognised the neighbour state as FYROM, the previously rejected UN denomination. Both countries set up diplomatic liaison offices (not embassies) in each other’s national capitals, pending a permanent solution to the naming dispute and normalised relations. This allowed the parties involved to save face and move forward in other issues. Within a few years, the ‘language of arms’ gave way to a climate of cooperation. The conflicts that burst into violence in Kosovo and within the Republic of Macedonia itself did not alter this. Greek investors looked with interest at the possibilities offered by the Yugoslav Macedonian market, virtually virgin territory for foreign business.\footnote{Cf. Iós tis Kyriakís (Kostopoulos, Trimis, Psarras), "Το ελληνικό οικονομικό θαύμα στην ΠΓΔΜ: Η αθέατη πλευρά του Μακεδονικού" [“The Greek economic miracle in FYROM: The unseen side of the Macedonian question”], *Eleftherotypia* 11/11 2007.} As for the thorny topic of the Slav Macedonian minority, the Greek government adapted to a line more consistent with international standards. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to whose jurisdiction issues relating to the national minorities had historically been assigned, spearheaded this development. It organised the first conference on minorities and identities in Greek Macedonia, in which scholars from the research institutes of Thessaloniki addressed this previously neglected topic.\footnote{The results of the conference, which took place in 1995, are presented in Gounaris et al. 1997.} Furthermore, while not formally recognising the existence of any Slav Macedonian minority, the men in charge of the Ministry at the time, Theodoros Pangalos and future Premier Giorgos...
Papandreou, raised no objection to cultural mobilisation among Greek citizens with an ‘alien consciousness’. 892

A factor which contributed to the more relaxed approach to Macedonian matters was, as noted earlier, the internal power struggles within PASOK. As the towering figure of Andreas Papandreou vanished from politics, the reformist wing around Costas Simitis gained the upper hand. Its agenda focused on European integration, not on the pursuit of policies that might isolate the country. The end of the 1990s saw the expulsion of Stelios Papatheomelis, “the ‘Macedonologist’ of PASOK”, from the Party. His attempts to create a new political platform for himself by making the Macedonian name his core issue have failed to gain substantial following. Yet his presence in the local politics of northern Greece remains an influence to be taken into account, which might explain PASOK’s decision to let an archaeologist run for European parliament in the 2009 euro-elections on the promise of “bring[ing] the facts on ancient Macedonia to the EU and beyond”. 893

The improvement of Athens-Skopje relations did thus not mean that the name question, with its complex web of related issues, disappeared entirely. The US recognition in 2004 of Greece’s northern neighbour by its self-chosen denomination, the Republic of Macedonia, ignited the controversy anew. Although the matter never received anything similar to the media coverage and political pertinence granted to it in the early 1990s, the reactions showed that the name conflict was far from buried. Too much national, political and, in many cases, personal prestige had already been vested in it, to allow it to go away. 894 The sensibilities of the northern Greek constituency and in the diaspora, where commitment to the Greek Macedonian cause still finds resonance, are powerful obstacles to overcome for any political leader who might wish to settle the naming controversy once and for all.

Although never admitted in public by successive Greek governments, which continued to name a nationally acceptable solution to the naming controversy one of its main foreign policy goals, the Greek resistance toward the neighbour state’s claims had become a source of embarrassment.

The Macedonian conflict and the uses of history
This study has been concerned with tracing the contexts in which the Macedonian history war of the 1990s evolved and was placed within by contemporary observers. It has also highlighted some of the interests involved. An overall concern throughout the study has been to analyse how history was used and how references to the past shaped perceptions of the present crisis. Referring to past realities was not an uncommon practice per se in public debate. The rhetorical use of history needs therefore not to only be seen in response to the Macedonian

894 Thus, while Papatheomelis was kept at arm’s length from PASOK, ND embraced the once apostate Antonis Samaras, first as Minister of Culture and then, after the electoral defeat in 2009, as the party’s leader in opposition.

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conflict, but can be analysed as a well established part or form of political communication. The most conspicuous use discernible in press material and public statements is thus the political-pedagogical, defined by Karlsson as a deliberate comparative use, which aims at a simple transfer effect between ‘then’ and ‘now’. However, the Macedonian crisis brought about a sense of topicality to certain aspects of national history. Political uses by rightwing commentators brought attention to past sins of the Left and the supposedly ideologically motivated silence surrounding the Macedonian question. Their counterparts in the leftwing media focussed on the evil of ‘bourgeois’ chauvinism, responsible for the two world wars and the Greek catastrophe in Asia Minor in 1922. The lesson conveyed was that nationalism spelled national disaster. The purpose of this political-pedagogical use of history was not only to make sense of the present through the lens of the past, but also to add drama to the present.

The use of history, or the various uses manifest in public debate, cannot be discussed without attention to the agents and interests involved in the process. In this context, the most salient agents were a group of individuals, representing overlapping local political, economic and institutional interests. This group, initially very visible and influential in public debate through the work of the organising Macedonian Committee, was primarily concerned with the promotion of what it perceived as (regional) Macedonian interests at home and abroad.

The means to do this was the employment of a certain traditional narrative of identity, here labelled macedonology, which aimed at demonstrating the significance of the Macedonian region, past and present, for the Greek nation. Macedonology – a partly polemic label here used for analytical purposes – was traditionally a type of scholarship which emphasised the region’s historic attachment to Greece and things Greek. As such, it represented a subsection of the traditional state narrative of national and cultural continuity, although sometimes framed in opposition to the national centre. This echoed the process in which history had been professionalised in conjunction with nation building in 19th and early 20th century Greece, often in conflict with strong, local interests.

The history of the region, which following major archaeological excavation finds expressed itself as a traditional narrative of ancestral roots, was in the 1980s increasingly evoked as a way of marketing Macedonia. The use of history was thus, superficially viewed, strongly intertwined with commercial interests. Regional museums and tourist agencies stood to benefit from public attention to the Macedonian past, as did the book market. This commercial use of history was also manifest in the acts of performative patriotism engendered by the Macedonian crisis, expressed in advertisement run in the press by companies which emphasised the millennia of Hellenic continuity in Macedonia.

The name dispute also played into the process of European integration, which after 1981 paved way for accessing the European Community’s structural funds for regional development. Ancient history could thus be marshalled as an argument for

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the Macedonian region’s economical importance in the new, ‘borderless’ Europe. Greek Macedonia in this context not only emerged as a site of national historical and cultural significance, but indeed as the cradle of European and Western civilisation. This was an image believed to resonate with a Western audience, supposedly grateful toward the descendants of the West’s spiritual forebears, and therefore sympathetic toward Greek interests. History was thus viewed as an important symbolic asset – economically, morally and politically.

The Macedonian name conflict can in part be viewed as an example of modern nation branding, or in this case the ‘branding’ of a place (Vergina), city (Thessaloniki) and region (Greek Macedonia). Branding, according to PR guru Simon Anholt who has coined this catch-phrase concept, is to be understood as a way of marketing places and entire countries in an era of global competition, through the creation of strong ‘brand identities’, similar to corporate brands. This in turn reflected the fashion in which the Greek nation-state traditionally has presented itself to the world, as the heir of an ancient and venerable civilisation.

However, the Macedonian controversy was far more than a copyright struggle, as suggested throughout the public debate by participants who expressed concern at international opinion’s inability to understand Greek viewpoints. Undoubtedly, the near obsession with history, characteristic of this particular conflict, resonated with deeper and, perhaps, more profound needs than the desire to protect a national or regional brand from a neighbour usurper. The name issue is no ordinary example of image building. The public discourse on Macedonia was interwoven with, and played on, sentiments of fear and existential insecurity, which sets it apart from other regional development projects or the purely commercial interest in the past. The calls for attention to Macedonian matters in Greece thrived in an atmosphere of present and future uncertainty. A number of publicists, concerned with macedonology, contributed to this general atmosphere by conjuring up various alarmist scenarios if (Greek) Macedonian interests and the ‘threat of Skopje’ were to be ignored.

It is not easy to pinpoint the causes behind the massive response to this sense of near existential threat, which took many contemporary observers by surprise. Evidently, the often alarmistic arguments presented by publicists concerned with Macedonian history – long thought of as marginal in terms of significance – appealed to wider held convictions. Sociologist Victor Roudometof has analysed the official Greek response as a defence of the established national narrative. International recognition of the neighbour state’s right to the name Macedonia, its heritage and, by extension, minority rights for Macedonians in Greece, would delegitimise the Greek national narrative. The result of this, Roudometof argues, is that the historical canvas upon which modern national identity has been constructed is called into question. Together with bad memories of war, expulsion

and occupation this makes Greek Macedonians particularly sensitive to perceived national threats.

The reading of the Macedonian conflict as a defence of a national narrative – here understood as a master or state narrative – has some justification, if we take the concerns expressed in public at face value. The neighbour state’s use of the Vergina Star as national symbol and other allusions to the ancient Macedonian kingdom as the origin of a modern Macedonian nation tended to be portrayed in Greek media as a theft and distortion of national history. The traditional narrative of Hellenic continuity in the region seemed to be at stake. This conception of the past needed to be protected not only from ‘Skopje’ – generally portrayed as an insignificant, history-less state formation – but more so from the far more potent ‘danger from the East’. As pointed out by Greek traditional historians (Vryonis Jr. and Sakellariou), official Turkey was in the 1980s involved in a process of ‘appropriating’ the cultural achievements of the ancient Ionian Greeks as well as the Byzantines, as a way of strengthening its European credentials in view of future admission into the EC. Since these achievements were traditionally thought of as belonging to national Greek history, the national narrative and indeed identity could easily be perceived as endangered. This ‘theft’ of ancient heritage, viewed as an important symbolic asset for Greece, could be constructed as the prelude to far more sinister developments, which foreshadowed a military alliance between Turkey and the ‘Skopje Republic’. The consequences of international recognition of the neighbour’s claims as having any historical validity would, following this thread of thought, be dire, since they would pave the way for other claims against Greece.

The prospect of military confrontation in the wider region, present through the 1980s and further enhanced by the Yugoslav imbroglio, played into concerns raised in public debate at the time. The hypothetical threat posed by Yugoslav Macedonia thus coincided and to some extent blended with existential fears of diminishment and extinction. In conservative newspapers, publicists lamented the drop of birth rates, which was portrayed as a potential threat against the nation’s biological survival (‘In 50 years the Greeks will be extinct’). The narrative of the Pontian genocide – which will be discussed further below – brought attention to the physical annihilation of Hellenism in Asia Minor and the loss of ancient ‘homelands’. Memories of ‘uprooting’ (a common metaphor in descriptions of the Asia Minor refugee community) provided a framework of reference and short-hand associations for large parts of the Greek public, contributing to an image of a geographically diminishing Greek world. In scenarios and rhetoric explored in this dissertation, Greek Macedonia was portrayed as on the verge of becoming such a ‘lost homeland’.

In addition to this was a fear of another sort of ‘uprooting’, through cultural amnesia. An image was being cultivated in public debate that Greece as a nation was in the process of losing her memory. This corresponds to what Pierre Nora has argued about modern societies’ preoccupation with remembrance as stemming

from a sense of loss, a fear of being disconnected from the organic, living past. This sentiment was sometimes expressed in the *existential* use of history, which emphasised a quest for roots and attachment in time and space; “the very nature of human existence is the struggle of memory against oblivion”. The ‘right to memory’, to identity and heritage, was framed as a basic human right. More often, this translated into a *political* use of history, through which chiefly conservative debaters called for the restoration of national values in the educational system, especially in history teaching. These were values and cherished ‘memories’ presented as threatened by educational reform in the 1980s and by the prospect of further European integration. The challenge toward Macedonia and her historical heritage posed by the neighbours was in this context viewed as an opportunity to restore a unifying national narrative.

Seen in isolation, none of these various concerns seem potent enough to explain Greek society’s response – or various responses – to the Macedonian controversy. Taken together, they provide a clearer context of the fears that the name conflict played into. However, Roudometof’s analysis of the national narrative perceived to be threatened offers no clue as to why the Macedonian controversy became a dominant national issue in the 1990s and not at some other point in time. After all, the external challenge to the Greek national narrative had existed for decades, without causing headlines or deep existential fears in Greece.

In the search for causal explanations or additional explanatory factors, one can point to the timing of Yugoslav Macedonian independence with other developments in Greek domestic politics as well as the end of the Cold War. The coming of the name controversy played into an already ongoing political and economic crisis in Greece, after a decade of populist socialist rule. The result of recurrent corruption scandals can, and was often, described as a crisis of beliefs, a disillusionment with politics and ideological (read Marxist) visions of the future. Old ideological certainties were replaced by a new uncertainty, which favoured an overall orientation toward the past as refuge, a repository of national values, supposedly untainted by present politics and ideology. “History is not the arena of some tricky politician or party-leader. History is a sacred thing, as worthy of reverence as God.”

As David Lowenthal has put in a recent essay, “[t]he future, once embraced as a friend, becomes a fearsome foe”, while the past has become a source of solace. Contemporary observers, among them ‘new’ historians with leftwing leanings, tended to interpret the Macedonian crisis in similar terms. For them, the return to outmoded nationalism ushered in by the name conflict was a sign of Greek society’s failure to modernise, something they put in relation to the recent collapse of socialist ideas. The conflict with the neighbour state was interpreted as part of a sinister neo-conservative plot to regain lost ideological ground and pave the way for neoliberal economic policies, when the Left was too

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898 Giorgos Sideris, “Ιστορία: Αν απαντάς σωστά μηδενίζεσαι” [“History: If you answer correctly you are given no marks at all”], *Oikonomikos Tachydromos* 12/5 1994, pp. 78-79.

shaken by loss of faith and cohesion to offer an alternative. This was an ideological reading of the present, which in some cases sought to counter what was labelled the “ideological use of history” in the service of dark forces, with alternative, critical narratives of the past.

The domestic political situation in Greece, in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the diplomatic conflict, undoubtedly offer valuable clues for understanding underlying causes behind both official and various public responses. The challenge toward the Greek national narrative (understood as a singular state narrative) was thus not only external, but reflected internal divisions within Greek society. In previous research, Athena Skoulariki has paid particular attention to the domestic political context and the impact of the ‘death of ideologies’, at times to the point of adopting the ideological interpretations encountered in the press material as her own. Yet neither she nor Roudometof relate their observations concerning the questioned national narratives and the similar erosion of ideological master narratives to a larger transnational context. Danforth notes in his 1995 study the impact of universal human rights discourses on the Macedonian conflict, manifest in (Slav) Macedonian minority activism, besides stressing the transnational character of contemporary Greek and Macedonian ethnic nationalism in their respective diasporas. Still, none of the researchers reviewed here discuss the case in relation to historiographic trends and how national and transnational historical cultures intersect.

**The transition of historical culture: politics of regret and the moral use of history**

The Macedonian name conflict studied here, I argue, is an illuminating example of an historical culture in transition. It is precisely in periods of transition – crisis – that tensions within historical cultures become visible. The roots of this transition, or the crisis of national historical culture, can be traced to the 1960s and 1970s. Both domestic and external factors have to be taken into account when charting this process. In this particular case, the transition of national historical culture coincides with and overlaps the political transition to parliamentary democracy and a more pluralistic society. The new political system was to be more inclusive and tolerant than the one crushed by the Colonels in 1967. This entailed the political rehabilitation of the previously persecuted revolutionary Left and, by extension, its critical narrative of Greek society. The democratisation process of political life and of state universities also brought about change in the conditions for history production, as radical Marxist academics were able to embark on career paths previously closed to them. The late 1970s and early 1980s’ expansion of history as an academic discipline, new research priorities and the rise of academic Marxism in Greece resonated with the work of contemporary hegemony theorists in the West. Following the re-discovery of such theorists as Antonio Gramsci, these promoted class-based analyses of how official histories and national memories served the goals of social elites seeking to achieve or maintain political power. While the study of nationalism was not yet the flavour of the day, a school of thought among the
so-called ‘new’ historians in Greece questioned the old state narrative, which was described in terms of “mythmaking” and the “ideological use of history”. This group of leftwing intellectuals and the concepts it used would later on, during the Macedonian controversy emerge as an important platform for counternarratives which challenged dominant perceptions of the crisis.

Before 1974, national historical culture can be said to have been dominated by two competing master narratives, two dominant readings of the national past. It is admittedly a somewhat simplistic and dichotomising reading of the complex forces that shape historical culture, but it has both analytical and pedagogical value. The first, and for long most visible in public life, was the state narrative, taught at school and celebrated in public. This was the traditional narrative of ancient glories, which celebrated heroism and the continuity of Hellenism, along with the anti-communism associated with the victors in the Civil War. The other was a counter-narrative which emphasised popular resistance and social struggle, cultivated on the other side of the ideological divide.

After 1974, this relation changed, as ‘national-mindedness’ (ethnikofrosyni), once the hallmark of loyalty to the established order, became a byword for outmoded, excessive nationalism and the narrow mindset of rightwing reaction. Especially after PASOK’s coming to power in 1981, the state narrative presented to the public was rewritten to include selected aspects of its leftwing counterpart. At the same time, further reconciliation with the past was initiated through which political refugees’ right to compensation and return was recognised by the state. This gesture of atonement can be seen in the context of a generalised movement in Western countries to recognise and apologise to those wronged by the state. In what has been called “the age of apologies”, governments strive to atone for past injustices through what Jeffrey K. Olick terms ‘the politics of regret’. This tendency reflects the rise of identity politics among sub-state actors, noticeable around the Western world from the 1960s and onwards in the upsurge of counter-culture narratives. These emphasised the vibrancy of marginalised groups, long submerged by dominant readings of national history and culture. In multiethnic societies, the narratives and quest for identity of such groups expressed themselves in a new sense of ethnic pride, as opposed to national. David B. MacDonald notes, with regard to the North American context, the role played by “memory of past oppression or genocide” in binding individuals together in the communities of American Jews as well as Black and native (Indian) Americans. In many cases, groups desired to “maintain and perpetuate ‘difference’ by ensuring the continued survival and flourishing of the distinct values and ways of life of particular groups”. Marginalised groups asserted themselves through questioning dominant readings of the past and calls for reparation. In some countries, where the need to confront the recent past was particularly urgent, left-liberal intellectuals rallied to


901 MacDonald 2008, p. 19.

this cause, as the shattering of hegemonic national ‘myths’ in their minds was linked to the survival of democracy. In Argentine, the same army that a century before had expelled and exterminated native Indians from the Pampas was viewed as responsible for the murder and disappearance of numerous Argentine civilians in the 1970s. “When the truth about [General Julio] Roca and the likes of him is said straight out in the children’s school books [only] then democracy in Argentine has come to stay!”

A vital factor in this process is the fact that states were willing to listen. According to Olick, the ‘politics of regret’ have become a new principle of political legitimacy, a way of enhancing political prestige in a time when old national narratives and identities have lost their salience. This new spirit of atonement and political susceptibility seemed to favour critical narratives, associated with what has been termed “the culture of complaint”. The official recognition and vindication of some groups’ claims to suffering spurred the claims of others, who hoped to achieve similar moral, perhaps even material benefits.

Here the moral use of history emerges as a salient feature, as it is also the means of change in historical culture. The Macedonian conflict that would erupt in the fall of 1991 was inextricably linked with the identity politics of several different groups, with sometimes overlapping but also clashing agendas. These were groups with strong emotional ties to the Macedonian region, but not always in terms of attachment to the Greek state.

One of them was the group of activists which eventually would become known as MAKIVE, the “Macedonian movement for Balkan prosperity”. Disappointed by the ruling socialists’ unwillingness to grant Macedonian Slav-speakers the same courtesy as former partisans “of Greek descent”, they turned from leftwing ideology to ethnicity. Inspired by the identity politics of other ‘stateless nations’ (Palestinians and Kurds) and the discourse on human and indigenous rights, a new narrative of regional and national history emerged in Greece. This was the historical narrative of the indigenous Slav Macedonians, which for years had been surrounded by official taboos and inhibitions. It was in part a traditional narrative of ancient origins and of golden ages, which merged with a more contemporary critical narrative of state persecution and human rights abuse. To a certain extent, it resembled the Greek leftwing counternarrative against the state, as well as the traditional narrative of popular resistance and national liberation struggles. The difference was that this one, albeit reassurances that Greeks and (Slav) Macedonians were kindred peoples, had substituted the old national framework of interpretation with one that celebrated cultural, linguistic and historic distinctiveness. This was a use of history, framed in existential terms, with strong moral implications, a history of the downtrodden and a call for justice. As such, it also appealed to radical elements within the Left, who saw its alternative
narrative of how Macedonia had become Greek as a way of changing social reality and national historical culture, by exposing the state’s denial of inconvenient truths.

Also, descendants of Asia Minor refugees moved from an all-encompassing leftwing ideology toward the politics of ethnic identity and group rights. Advocates of a particular Pontian Greek identity claimed their community to have been unjustly marginalised in Greek society. This was not only due to the long reign of the ‘nationally-minded’ (ethnikó Zron) Right, but also because the Left had treated the refugee community’s hardships as solely class-based. None of the old master narratives seemed adequate enough to render meaning to the Pontian experience. For the activists of KEPOME, “the Centre for Pontian studies”, Pontian identity – or, as they put it, ‘consciousness’ – was an issue of the “right to memory”. During the later half of the 1980s, a narrative of the so-called Pontian genocide emerged and was lobbied within the Pontian community. It was a moral use of history which primarily targeted Turkey with demands for transitional justice, but a significant part of the narrative was a critique of the Greek state for its past policies.

The difference of attitudes adopted by the Greek state vis-à-vis the Slav Macedonian and Pontian identity narratives respectively is striking. While the latter was embraced by Greek political leaders at Pontian congresses and recognised by Parliament, the former met with formidable obstacles. The Slav Macedonians’ insignificance as an electoral force, as opposed to the wider Pontian constituency, only accounts for a partial explanation of the differential treatment. There was indeed a legacy of inhibitions and historical experiences which worked against the acceptance of the Slav Macedonian minority activists’ narrative of identity by the Greek state and society. Every reference to ‘autonomy’, even cultural, in a Macedonian context tended to be viewed with suspicion by debaters who saw little difference between this narrative and the nationalist historiography in ‘Skopje’. The discourse on a particular Macedonian history and identity, outside the traditional framework of Greek nationalism, was routinely interpreted through the lens of the past, as reflecting the schemes of VMRO, Bulgarian irredentist designs and international communism, which had called for Macedonian autonomy, indeed secession. A narrative can only be incorporated into an historical culture in which it makes sense. An additional factor which may have played a role in the differential response to the respective groups’ claims is that while Pontian demands for reparation would be addressed to Turkey, the recognition of past injustice done to the Slav Macedonians of Greece would face the Greek state with the awkward issue of property restitution.

**History wars and the ‘unmastered past’**

There is also a global dimension that plays into this context. As I have suggested, the Macedonian controversy can be seen in the context of the so-called history wars, or culture wars, which raged in countries around the world in the early 1990s. Especially in New World societies with a colonial past, countries which have emerged through a process in which European settlers have superseded indigenous populations, the relation between repressed history (usually the minority’s) and the
majority’s national identity carries existential connotations. The new politics of regret and the in the late 20th century increasingly influential discourse on minority and indigenous rights threaten to erode traditional images of the collective self. In some cases, this challenge triggers anger and mechanisms of defence. While the politics of regret in Olick’s view urge contemporary states to adopt a ‘German’ identity and atone for past crimes, this requires a level of national guilt that most countries do not have or accept.905 This is the case with the Australian history wars of the 1990s which largely revolved around the issue on whether the Aborigines had been subject to extermination – genocide – during the 19th and early 20th century process of colonisation and nation building. If so, they would be entitled to symbolic and even material reimbursement. However, this was disputed in public debate by Tory politicians like John Howard (later Prime Minister) and debaters such as historian Keith Windschuttle, who claimed the ‘genocidal past’ to be a fabrication of modern Leftist historians intent upon denying the legitimacy of the British settlement and denigrating Australia’s good name.906 For these critics, the goal was to reverse the direction of a national historical culture that had come to revolve around issues of shame and guilt.

This ‘backlash’ against the politics of regret and the perceived dominance of (equally perceived) progressive historiography and education has parallels in other countries and parts of the world. In the United States, controversies, magnified by media attention, raged over the role ‘subaltern’ perspectives should play in history curricula and national standards. In Israel, similar reactions were provoked by the scholarship of ‘post-Zionist new historians’ like Benny Morris, who suggested that Israel had been brought to existence through a colonialist project, bent on conquest and expulsion of indigenous Palestinians, rather than through a return to an ancestral, virtually empty homeland, the version cherished by official Israel.907 Here, more than anywhere else, tangible issues related to national survival as a Jewish state were at stake, as recognition of past injustice was feared to entail the right of return and/or restitution of the 1948 Naqba's victims.

Also, the West German Historikerstreit of the 1980s can be viewed in this context, as it arose from an attempt to overcome the Third Reich and the Holocaust, in order to restore a sense of national pride in German history and cultural achievements. Andrew Bonnell and Martin Crotty have discussed the role of genocide in collective memory in Australia and West Germany as a comparative case. Both see Australia’s ‘history wars’ and the Historikerstreit as part of a larger ‘culture war’ over issues of political correctness between (neo-) conservatives and “a supposedly hegemonic left-liberal academic and media establishment”. They do, however, stress a difference in the fact that even the West German rightwing historians, who sought to ease the burden of the past and ‘normalise’ national

905 MacDonald 2008, p. 16.
pride, never disputed the facts of the Holocaust or Nazi evil. In Australia which never had to confront its past, most of national history seemed open to debate. As Colin Tatz argued, Australians of European descent are generally unable to view their ancestors as perpetrators of genocide, since they do not fit into conventional images associated with the Holocaust or the carnage in Rwanda. The annihilation or suppression of indigenous peoples and cultures is by this logic something that takes place in other countries, not in one’s own society. Similarly, in a North American context, the writings of scholars and activists such as David Stannard and Ward Churchill were fostered by resentment over the way the United States officially honoured the victims of a European tragedy, the Holocaust, for which it had no responsibility, while at the same time refusing to acknowledge guilt for past crimes done to the American indigenous.

This larger transnational context, I argue, also informs us of the Greek case. It is true that the setting is different, as Greece is part of the Old World. For example, the link between land and people, the bond between the national community of the Greeks and the national territory it inhabits, is generally seen as primordial. Yet, there were points in common with the history wars of the New World, countries which also are homes to the large Greek diaspora. The moral use of history of MAKIVE and its allies among Greek leftwing intellectuals presented an alternative reading of how Macedonia became Hellenised. The critique crystallised itself in the shape of a narrative of Greece as a modern, conquering nation-state which oppressed and in some cases even expelled an indigenous Slav Macedonian population. In an interview in a Greek left-intellectual magazine, Pierre Vidal-Naquet even made an explicit comparison between Israeli policy of conquest in Palestine and the Greek army’s putative liberation of Thessaloniki and Macedonia in 1912. This particular use of history could also come in the form of traditional heroic stories of the struggle for national liberation against imperialism and Fascism, familiar to a leftwing audience. Understood in Rüsen’s terms, it was a critical narrative which aimed to shatter the traditional narrative’s myth of eternal Hellenism in Macedonia.

Tatz’s observation about White Australians’ inability to view their forebears as perpetrators of crimes against mankind may hold true for most countries where an historical culture of national heroism or suffering stand in the way for perceptions of guilt. Greece offers no exception, with her narrative legacy of a small people, often at the mercy of the great powers of the world. The two main national holidays of the year commemorate the struggle for independence from a foreign oppressor (in 1821) and the resistance against a mighty invader (in 1940). This is also one of the reasons why parts of the leftwing counternarrative of the nation

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910 MacDonald 2008, pp. 72-74.

911 Interview with Pierre Vidal-Naquet by Teta Papadopoulou, "Να δεχτεί η Ελλάδα ότι και οι άλλοι υπάρχουν" ["Greece must accept that also the others exist"], *Anti* 1/5 1992, pp. 34-38.
resonated with the broader Greek public and, indeed, the traditional state narrative. As pointed out by many researchers, such images of the collective self abound in the Balkans and often stand in the way for mutual understanding between national communities.

In the case of the competing readings of Macedonia’s past, the allegations of colonialist policies against native (Slav) Macedonians fit well into already established patterns of historiography. Apart from its traditional component, Greek macedonology could also be a critical narrative, as represented by the writings of EMS president Konstantinos Vavouskos and his later successor, journalist Nikolaos Mertzos. As such it incorporated notions of past government maltreatment of linguistic minority groups in Greek Macedonia, chiefly Vlachs and Slav-speakers. These groups, usually referred to as ‘bilingual Greeks’, could be represented as victims of internal colonialism and even apartheid-style racism, using concepts associated with contemporary ‘subaltern’ discourse on state oppression of marginalised peoples. This moral use of history arguably also had an existential dimension, since both Vavouskos and Mertzos descended from Hellenised Vlachs, a group supposedly wronged by the state, in spite of its historical contributions to Hellenism. These Greek debaters could also play the game of complaint essential to the politics of regret, by claiming to represent, in part, the same victim group as MAKIVE. Paradoxically, Greek macedonology could in a seemingly fashion reaffirm the new Slav Macedonian narrative of identity and vice versa. This to some extent contradicts, or at least adds nuance to Roudometof’s interpretation of a Greek national narrative (which essentially is Nikolaos Martis’ narrative) as only serving the state policy of nationalising Macedonia’s past and safeguarding it against external intruders.

There was, however, a vital difference between MAKIVE’s moral use of history and its Greek counterpart. The critique which surfaced in the latter’s readings of the past and present was not a call for minority rights. Rather it aimed at the centralised character of the Greek state, which hindered the Macedonian region from fulfilling its ‘dynamic potential’. The moral use of history employed by Greek ‘neo-Macedonian fighters’ thus had more in common with contemporary European regionalism and the tradition of nationalist critics of Greek society, such as Ion Dragoumis (1878-1920), than with the modern identity politics of marginalised groups. While the identity politics of MAKIVE celebrated (Slav) Macedonian particularism, official historiography as well as ‘new’ macedonology admitted no place for any Macedonian experience of suffering and injustice outside the framework of traditional Greek nationalism. The Slav-speakers of northern Greece were at best portrayed as silent members of the Nation, suffering the same plight as the rest of the national community, at worst, traitors or simply non-existent. To this should be added that the almost overwhelming emphasis on the Macedonia of antiquity advocated by Martis in the 1980s, i.e. the traditional narrative of Hellenic continuity, tended to make Slav-speakers even more invisible in narratives presented to the public. A conclusion here is that history-producers aiming to make an impact on society, to influence the public’s perceptions of
historical culture, must in part mould their narratives as critical, in Rüsen’s understanding, as obstinacy and protest. This is done in the form of the moral use of history, in order to grab attention, even if the aim of the narrative is to preserve traditional values of an old social and political order.

**Genocide and the intersection of historical cultures**

A far more important observation made in this study concerns the politics of regret surrounding another community’s identity and historical experience, the Pontian Greeks. As noted above, the Slav Macedonian identity politics which questioned the state narrative’s dominance in the interpretation of the past coincided with the movement for the ‘right to memory’ of Pontian activists. These were the descendants of the refugees who had settled, ‘colonised’, the New Lands, traditionally viewed as the human raw material that had strengthened Macedonia’s Greek character and bred a new type of Macedonian Greeks. Their moral use of history was a tale which arraigned the Turkish state with mass murder and the Greek state with culpability for erasing the crime from public memory, for geopolitical purposes. As such, it fit well into traditional perceptions of perennial Greek-Turkish enmity. However, it should not be viewed as a mere expression of local victim traditions within national historical culture. The Pontian narrative of genocide was innovative in the sense that it also was attached to a much larger transnational framework of interpretation, that of the Holocaust and crimes against humanity. This also attached a new sense of moral and political prestige to the notion of victimhood, so salient in the identity politics of sub-state actors and to the politics of regret worldwide.

Here, I argue, is a point where regional, national and transnational historical cultures intersect. One can debate whether there is such a thing as a transnational, global historical culture, a common set of references that transcend the narrow confines of the national experience. Many scholars argue that there is, or at least historical narratives or ‘memories’ that bind countries and cultures in the Western world together.912 The example universally referred to is the Holocaust and the transformations that the notion of it has underwent in recent decades, from a particular Jewish tragedy to a matter of concern to mankind. The ‘Americanisation’ of the Holocaust from the 1970s to the 1990s, noted by Peter Novick, and the corresponding ‘Europeanisation’, heralded by the Stockholm Forum on the Holocaust in 2000, bear witness to this process. Sociologists Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider argue that “in an age of uncertainty and the absence of ideological master narratives [the Holocaust] has become a moral certainty that now stretches across national borders and unites Europe and other parts of the world”.913 Their point, stressed in their critique of Anthony D. Smith and Pierre Nora, is not that this new “cosmopolitan memory” necessarily replaces its old national, ethnic and/or local counterparts. Rather than being erased, national and ethnic ‘memories’ – we might even say historical cultures – are transformed under the impact of the  

Holocaust’s moral lessons and the universal values they convey. Strong identification with, in this case, the Jewish victims, Levy and Sznaider argue, is only produced when distant events have a local resonance, i.e. resonate with a national cultural framework of interpretation. “But paradoxically, this ethnocentric focus on events is precisely the process that causes a belief in, and then willingness to act on, universal values”.\(^9\)

Undoubtedly, the conscious evocation of other, internationally recognised tragedies employed by Pontian lobbyists in support of their claim – here analysed as the rhetoric of shared martyrdom – raises questions of what the relation between Greek historical culture and the new, universal ‘memory’ looks like. These questions have not been fully explored in this study. However, some attention has been given to the Jewish experience in Greece, as it apart from its connection to the Holocaust also was linked to the history of Greek Macedonia. Here, the interplay of local, national and transnational ‘memory’ hinted by Levy and Sznaider, can be studied.

The presence of Jews in Greece occupied only a marginal space in popular traditional narratives of Hellenic continuity. The group’s insignificance in numbers and the nationalising tendency in historiography relating to Macedonia seem to work against an incorporation of any Jewish experience into the state narrative. This did not mean that the Jewish community of the country lacked means to stake a place in the dominant national (and regional) narrative on Greek Macedonia, promoted at home and abroad during the Macedonian conflict. On the contrary, leading members of said community took part in the international campaign to inform the world about Macedonia’s Greekness, invoking ‘historical’ tokens of Jewish-Hellenic friendship. Whether this was primarily done under social pressure to display loyalty toward the nation in a time of perceived need (cf. the performative patriotism of politicians, business companies and intellectuals at the time) or due to the wish of an ethno-religious minority to make its experience more salient in popular consciousness and Greek historical culture (through a strategic moral use of history), is a matter of speculation. The coincidence in time between the Macedonian crisis and the cluster of anniversaries associated with the Second World War (and the expulsion of Hispanic Jewry) was in itself a guarantee that Jewish history would not go entirely unnoticed in public commemorations. The Jewish Holocaust victims in German-occupied Greece could in some cases be used to bolster the Greek Macedonian cause, such as in the address of Nikolaos Martis to an international audience. Jewish suffering could thus reinforce Greek and find a place in the national pantheon of martyrs. Like in the former Yugoslavia, where the warring parties at an early stage understood the moral status enjoyed by the Holocaust victims in the West and tailored their propaganda strategies to this fact,\(^9\) the fate of Greek Jewry was, by this logic, seen as something that could further vindicate the Greek claim to the Macedonian name and heritage in the eyes

\(^9\) Ibid., p. 92.
of the world. This has been analysed as an example of situational appropriation of
the past, in which certain aspects are celebrated as of universal value, while in other
contexts (and for other audiences) the national is emphasised. The situational
appropriation has to do with how the past of Thessaloniki and Macedonia was
portrayed as a national and cosmopolitan heritage, simultaneously. Also the
‘memory’ of genocide could be marshalled with this end in view; to win the
sympathy of a broader international public. This is also a main function of the
rhetoric of shared martyrdom; to render meaning to one’s own collective
experience (‘national pain’) through the lens of a broader, transnational
framework.

The increasing willingness of Greek governments to recognise Jewish
contributions to national history and to observe the European Holocaust
Remembrance Day in the early 21st century testifies to Greek responsiveness
toward trends in transnational historical culture, as well as the impact of the politics
of regret. Jewish (and Pontian) particularism and memory-political claims work in
this context because the Greek state is not required to atone for past crimes of its
own. It just needs to recognise the horrors inflicted upon these communities by
other states (Nazi Germany and Turkey). This is, as I have implied earlier, the
difference that sets the attitudes of the Greek state toward the identity politics of
some groups apart from for example the Slav Macedonian minority activists, whose
claims involve the risk of property restitution or other forms of economic
reparation.

However, attention has also been given to the tensions, which threatened to
surface in inter-communal relations as well as in historical narratives. These have
been analysed as rooted in a legacy of anti-Semitism in Greece, conflict between
the Jewish and the refugee communities in Thessaloniki and the climate of
conspiracy theories and anti-Western resentment fostered by the Macedonian
conflict. Due to this combination of factors, different narratives or ‘group
memories’ were at risk of being pitted against each other. This was also an
underlying theme in critical narratives, which highlighted the history of Greek-
Jewish enmity. The dependency of some Pontian lobbyists of interwar bibliography
in their writings meant that anti-Semitic perceptions of that period were, perhaps
unwittingly, reproduced. Here, the Holocaust’s potential as a challenge toward
Greek national (and Pontian ethnic) conceptualisation of victimhood plays into the
overall picture of relations between historical cultures. Historian Johan Dietsch has
in his study made a similar observation of how emphasis on the Holocaust, both as
Jewish experience and as an event of supranational significance, can be viewed as
undermining the image, cherished in Ukrainian historical culture, of the
Holodomor as a unique national experience of suffering.916 Also David B.
MacDonald’s study of how the Holocaust’s dominance has been viewed as an
obstacle to be overcome by groups with identity-political agendas based on
narratives of suffering, come into mind here.917

916 Dietsch 2006.
917 MacDonald 2008.
An important event in this context is the Greek government’s decision in 1995 to boycott the international ceremony commemorating the anniversary of Auschwitz’s liberation (the date of which, the 27th of January, was made the European Holocaust Remembrance day in 2002), due to its conflict with the Republic of Macedonia. The message being sent to the world was that official Greece deemed her ancient symbols and national pride more important than honouring the Holocaust’s victims. The incident is significant as it demonstrates a symbolic clash between historical cultures, the national, represented by the traditional narrative of the Greek state, and the new transnational, brought about by the ‘Americanisation’ of Holocaust memory. In an age of apologies and politics of regret, few if any governments in the Western world can afford not to pay their respects to the survivors and dead of this particular tragedy. The insensitivity of official Greece toward the priorities of transnational historical culture easily translated into another international PR setback to her Macedonian cause.

A new historical culture?
The emergence of the Pontian genocide narrative and its relation to a broader, transnational framework also sheds light on the transition of historical culture in Greece and the diaspora. The Auschwitz incident noted above was a demonstrative reminder of the discrepancy between national and transnational historical culture. It was not the sole reminder. Far from being isolated, it resonates with a number of observations and opinions that had already surfaced in Greek debate on the Macedonian crisis.

As the diplomatic controversy over the name dragged on, it became increasingly clear that the historical arguments used in service of Greek foreign policy failed to make an impression outside the country. This insight was expressed in criticism of the traditional narrative’s predominance and the emphasis on “historic rights”, based on the classical heritage. Antonis Liakos, an historian critical of Greece’s Macedonian policy, pointed to a breakdown in communication with the international community, rooted in diverging perceptions of history and the legitimacy of the nation-state. In his view, official Greece had failed to realise that the interpretation of contemporary events it had opted for stood in opposition to “a modern conceptual framework” which questioned the supremacy of traditional state narratives. The type of historical arguments presented in support of Greek foreign policy, rooted in 19th century national rhetoric and “mythological and mytőlogical history”, led to an image problem in the country’s relations with the outside world, a problem especially felt by scholars in contact with foreign academic environments. The need for a fresh approach to national history and national identity was linked to the need for a general modernisation of social values, advocated by the ‘new’ historians. The questions posed by Liakos in view of the choice Greek society had to face was thus as much a call for a new historical culture. “Shall we return to […] national isolationism, to the ideological salace of the continuity with the glorious past, [or] shall we make ourselves conscious of us
as a modern nation, which is obliged to incorporate the values [...] of a contemporary society [?].

Also, commentators who, unlike Liakos, were convinced that the Greek claim was valid and the defence of national symbols a just cause, made similar remarks about the inadequacy of ancient history. Conservative scholars lamented the emphasis on the name and ‘historic rights’, while stressing the need to modernise national ideology. The nationalism of the neighbours ought to be confronted “from the viewpoint of transnational ideals”, not with arguments drawn from chauvinistic ‘mythmaking’ and the glorification of the ancient Macedonians. Even debaters more overtly committed to a nationalist agenda expressed their dismay with the overemphasis on what I have called ‘the archaeologist approach’. It was not a rejection of the traditional state narrative of Hellenic continuity, established by 19th century historiography, as much as it was a questioning of its relevance to the contemporary reality. Activists in the Greek diaspora who had committed themselves to promote Greek ‘national’ interests in the Macedonian conflict, similarly complained that the salience of classical history in state history education and official argumentation in fact blocked the understanding of the national community’s present concerns. In an age of European unification, converging national history educations and, indeed, globalisation, they argued, the Greek nation could ill afford to remain stuck in an antiquated perception of its past. The official policy and dominant arguments presented by the likes of Martis had been premised on the belief that the West at large still identified itself with the legacy of classical Greece (and in the more recent past, the anti-communism of the early Cold War). Therefore, it was assumed, the West would be naturally inclined to see the interests of contemporary Greece as its own. When this foregone conclusion failed to translate into more tangible international support for Greek policy goals, scapegoats had to be found. One way of doing this was to blame ‘progressive’ intellectuals for having tarnished the reputation of Greece abroad, as demonstrated in the Karakasidou controversy. Another was to search for the causes in the discrepancy between Greek and foreign perceptions of history. Perhaps the wrong facts had been emphasised in the arguments presented to the world, the wrong contexts, the wrong chronological perspectives, the wrong past?

This was arguably an issue of larger pertinence than the name controversy or regional Greek Macedonian interests, since it became obvious that the country’s traditional image as a cradle of civilisation, its ‘brand identity’, had lost its perceived appeal as a cultural and political asset. What in the age of 19th century Romantic philhellenism had been the trump card of the young nation-state, its claim of belonging to a wider, cosmopolitan community, was now in danger of being viewed as an obsolete remnant, signifying nothing more than an irrelevant infatuation with ancient roots and racial descent. The traditional narrative becomes questioned and loses its salience when the past it celebrates is no longer perceived as meaningful to

918 Liakos 1993, pp. 29-30.
919 Tzermias, Pavlos, “Η Μακεδονία και η διεθνής κοινή γνώμη” [“Macedonia and international public opinion”], Oikonomikos Tachydromos 9/9 1993, p. 73.
the present. There was, in other words, a need for change in national historical culture, also from the viewpoint of nationalist agendas.

It is here that the genocide narrative fits into the picture, as it can be interpreted as responding to a demand for a new master narrative, an ‘Americanisation’ of Greek historical culture, to bring it up to date with transnational trends. The reorientation of national discourse on history toward the 20th century, advocated by diaspora activists, would shift the focus toward the traumatic experiences endured by Greeks in the recent past. Although not overtly stated, such a shift of focus might empower them with the moral status attributed to modern victimhood, in the wake of the Holocaust’s ‘Americanisation’. Perhaps this status could also translate into political capital, if international opinion could be convinced that Greece is beset on all sides by hostile neighbours who seek her destruction. The research centres set up by the American Hellenic Institute toward the end of the 1990s are premised on this belief. Aimed to “complement the work carried out” by NGOs such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the AHIF Center for the Study of Human Rights and Hellenism was presented as undertaking research on “genocides against Greek and other peoples, crimes against humanity and human rights abuse in the region”. It, the press release states, “will promote the study of the Greek people’s struggle to survive”, with special attention paid to the “twentieth century destruction and ethnic cleansing of Anatolian Hellenism”.920 The narrative once presented by a few Pontian intellectuals thus seems on its way of becoming both nationalised and ‘Americanised’ toward the beginning of the 21st century, having already been elevated to the status of “national pain” by the political establishment of Greece. In this respect, my analysis is consistent with Eleftheria Deltsou’s interpretation of Pontian memory politics as a new form of Greek nationalism.921

However, there are also obstacles to this process. These are related to the tensions within the Pontian genocide narrative – ideological as well as personal vendettas – as well as to rivalry with other groups with similar agendas. One reason which appears to work against its incorporation into a broader national framework of interpretation is, paradoxically, the Greek state’s recognition of the genocide as exclusively aimed at Pontian Hellenism. The original purpose of Pontian identity politics and the ‘right to memory’ back in the 1980s was to safeguard a sense of Pontian ethnic distinctiveness, or ‘consciousness’ as it was referred to then. If it is, as Olick suggests, that modern states preserve their societal cohesion through

920 “Professor Constantine Hatzidimitrou named Director of the AHIF Center for the Study of Human Rights and Hellenism”. Press release of the American Hellenic Institute No. 01/99, issued 13/1 1999: http://www.ahiworld.com/011399.html, accessed 10/5 2011. See also the stated objectives of the (apparently short-lived) Center for the Study of Turkish Genocides and Crimes against Humanity, whose activities would “parallel those of other institutions interested in issues of genocide and the Holocaust such as the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles”. “The Center for the Study of Turkish Genocides and Crimes against Humanity”. Press release of the American Hellenic Institute, No. 03/98, issued 23/1 1998: http://www.ahiworld.com/012298.html, accessed 10/5 2011. See also the American Hellenic Institute’s document on policy statements for the year 2010, which apart from a solution of the Macedonian name controversy that is favourable to Greek interests also names the recognition of the Pontian genocide a priority. “AHI 2010 Policy Statements on Greek American Issues”, 12/5 2010, p. 16.

integrating as many alternative memories as possible into a unifying narrative, then problems are bound to arise if two of these ‘memories’ or claims clash with each other. In 1998, after demands for similar recognition from other Asia Minor refugee descendants, the Greek parliament also acknowledged the sufferings of the Greek population of Ionia as genocide, with its own day of commemoration. Despite hopes that the two parallel genocide narratives would strengthen each other’s cause, they have to some extent become locked in competition. The existence of one genocide ‘memory’ implicitly diminishes the significance of the other. Especially at an international level, it makes little sense to insist upon a separation of Greek tragedies. Leading Pontian lobbyists have been accused of cultivating a myopic perspective on victimhood which allegedly comes at the expense of an understanding of what Ottoman Greeks in general endured.\(^{922}\) Pontian particularism is thus viewed as standing in the way for the nationalisation of genocide ‘memory’ into an all-encompassing Greek genocide, which might even rival its Armenian counterpart for international attention and recognition.

The battlefields of memory are not confined to the national arena or the quarrels within the Asia Minor Greek community in the diaspora. The above observation also points to a troubled relationship with groups outside the national community, indeed, with transnational historical culture. The most natural point of reference for advocates of a Greek genocide, whether Pontian or Ionian, is the internationally much better known Armenian tragedy. This has to do with the fact that the same state and individuals were singled out as perpetrators, butchers of Greeks and Armenians (as well as other Ottoman Christians) alike. However, the relative fame that the Armenian genocide narrative has come to enjoy is a circumstance which threatens to overshadow the notion of Greek victimhood. This has spurred allegations (from the same quarters which criticise Pontian lobbyists for myopic particularism) that the Armenians deliberately portray themselves as the only victims of genocide in Ottoman Turkey, insistent upon defending their place in the “hierarchy of victims”.\(^ {923}\) As MacDonald has argued, citing John Mowitt’s work on ‘trauma envy’, identity politics has always involved competition for recognition, more so since trauma is perceived to generate ‘moral capital’ for groups, in whose case suffering can be adequately demonstrated.\(^ {924}\) The rationale of using Holocaust imagery and comparisons is to invoke a similar response of moral outrage in international public opinion, which would force Western governments to take action. This has turned out to be an incentive for competition between groups which struggle worldwide for attention, as many “seem to believe that there is only a limited amount of moral capital available, which each needs to carefully guard against ‘theft’”.\(^ {925}\) The economic competition in Ottoman times between


\(^{925}\) MacDonald 2008, p. 33.
Greeks and Armenians, once noted by Chasiotis in his explanation of why the two groups never united against their common victimiser, is thus in exile transformed into memory-political rivalry.

Also, Pontian lobbyists like Michalis Charalambidis recognised the multitude of separate group narratives, ‘memories’, as a growing problem in the beginning of the new millennium. The trend in transnational historical culture toward a more universal morality and the newly established European Holocaust Remembrance Day challenged the various victim groups of Kemalist violence to “pass over the national into supranational, regional circles”. In other words, Armenians, Assyrians, Kurds, Pontian and Ionian Greeks needed to unite behind a common narrative of shared martyrdom. A universal appeal was to be achieved by framing their genocide histories and demands for recognition as part of mankind’s struggle against racism. This strategy has had some success internationally, as the 2007 IAGS resolution demonstrates, which symbolically toppled the perceived supremacy of Armenian victims by recognising the “qualitatively similar genocides against other Christian minorities” of Ottoman Turkey.

With this development in mind, one is bound to ask if the genocide narrative can be analysed as a way of nation branding. Such an interpretation may be viewed as cynical (and, potentially, as playing into the hands of those who, similarly out of expediency, deny the reality of genocide also in well-researched cases). Nevertheless, as MacDonald stresses, critics of the label ‘genocide’ are not necessarily David Irving-style denialists. Nor is a reading of genocide as nation branding in this and other cases entirely misleading, considering the role of reparations in the politics of regret and the way the perceived success of Holocaust survivors may create the impression that tangible benefits are at stake in the process. Undoubtedly, the morality of the Greek genocide narrative (whether Pontian or other) seems more accessible to a broader international audience, sympathetic to the new transnational historical culture, than the one conveyed in the narrative of ancient glories and a modern conspiracy to part Macedonia from Greece. The impact of the Macedonian name controversy urged Greek diaspora associations to erect busts and plaques in honour of Alexander the Great, in Toronto and elsewhere in the early 1990s. Ten years later, the victims of the Pontian genocide had emerged as a subject of similar commemorative plaques in the same city, as well as in Thessaloniki and other parts of the world. This is consistent with observations made in research on other diaspora communities, such as the Assyrian/Syriac of Sweden, among which educational historian Kenneth Nordgren notes a similar shift from a traditional narrative, focussed on ancient

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926 Charalambidis in Charalambidis & Fotiadis 2003, p. 142.
927 MacDonald 2008, p. 199.
929 For a comprehensive list of such memorials, tendentiously presented as dedicated to victims of the “Greek genocide”, see http://www.greekgenocide.org/memorials.html, accessed 17/6 2011. See also Bruneau & Papoulidis 2003.
roots and the kings of old, to a more critical one, with emphasis on the moral use of history and the victims of the 1915 Seyfo.\footnote{Nordgren 2006, p. 130. Also, Nordgren points in his analysis to this shift’s relation to transnational trends and the impact of the Holocaust as a universal symbol of suffering. In the case of the Assyrian/Syriac groups, this has translated into a desire to form part of a wider ‘genocide community’.}

However, it is doubtful whether the critical narrative emanating from Pontian and other Asia Minor Greeks’ identity politics is powerful enough to replace or rival the supremacy of the traditional narrative in Greece. Genocide generates no tourism (at least not to Greece) and the memory of the events leading up to the Asia Minor Disaster is but one out of several traumas in modern Greek history which call for attention.\footnote{Among these traumas the Civil War occupies a prominent position. From the mid-1990s and onwards, this ‘unmastered past’ has emerged in full as the subject of both academic and public controversies. As such, it reflects transnational trends in the ‘revisionist’ historiography of the ‘memory boom’ related to the cluster of Second World War anniversaries at the time.} It is also vulnerable to academic attempts in the spirit of transnational cooperation to initiate mutual understanding between the Greek and Turkish scholarly communities (and by extension societies), and to rid textbooks of perceived obstacles to this process of reconciliation. Also, in popular imagination, the fairly anonymous victims of modern era persecutions arguably have a difficult time in replacing the old national heroes as the centre of attention. An indication of this was to be seen in the Greek Skai channel’s major TV production Megaloi Ellines (“Great Greeks”) of spring 2009, which out of ten historical candidates aimed to select the “greatest Greek of all times”. The show was presented as holding a key to the understanding of “who we, as a people, really are”. Five ancient Greeks were pitted against an equal amount of modern Greek personalities, before Alexander the Great was chosen winner by popular vote.

This is, of course, only anecdotal evidence. How great and lasting an impact the notion of a Pontian or in any other sense Greek genocide has really had upon national historical culture in Greece remains to be determined by future research. The same goes for its reception history outside the country. As I have remarked in this study, the Pontian genocide claim never received any attention similar to the massive political and media coverage of the Macedonian controversy in the 1990s. It is likely that the genocide narrative is more a concern for Pontian circles in Greece as well as in New World countries, where diaspora communities live in direct contact with groups with similar identity-political agendas, rather than an issue which preoccupies the Greek public at large. What the future may hold in store for it is uncertain. In my opinion, the activists who have concerned themselves with it tend to overrate the success granted to the Armenians’ lobbying efforts. The recognition of political assemblies in some countries has, as of yet, not translated into major benefits. The main reason for this is that neither Armenians nor Greeks, in the context of American social life, play the same role as the Jews. The argument has been made by MacDonald in his assessment of Armenian memory politics,\footnote{MacDonald 2008, p. 128.} but it might as well be extended to cover the Greek case, since the lobbying activities of the former were the explicit role model for Pontian
activists. While the Armenian genocide may be recognised and commemorated in America (and in Europe), it is unlikely that it will ever have the same social resonance, nor make the same contribution to American and European historical cultures as the Holocaust. Nor is it likely that their countries in geopolitical terms, despite the hopes and efforts of the Greek American lobby, will ever achieve anything similar to Israel’s ‘special relationship’ with Washington DC.

To this might be added that the communal ‘brand identity’ conveyed by the genocide narrative tends to present the group as nothing more than victims of an atrocity. In a transnational context the Pontian Greeks are but one of many groups with a similar agenda, struggling to stake a place in public consciousness. The function and purpose of ‘Americanising’ a particular memory or narrative, as this term has been used by scholars in the context of Holocaust remembrance, is to make it appeal to a wider audience outside the particular national or ethnic community. This means that the story must be made instrumental in teaching the values of American society (or any given democratic society) – democracy, pluralism, respect for differences, freedom from prejudice and the vices of racism. Stressing both the unique and universal lessons of a group’s historical experience at the same time is a difficult balancing act. The Pontian identity which Charalambidis, among others, sought to instil in his community seems to have become trapped in the logic of shared martyrdom. It is thus vulnerable to attempts either to nationalise the genocide narrative (by turning it into the “Greek genocide”) or to downplay ethnicity (by making it part of a larger genocide against Christians in Ottoman Turkey). It is also possible that the present economic crisis in Greece may result in a backlash to its cause, paired with a fatigue with commemorations, the diminished appeal of identity politics and the waning fortunes of academic postmodernism, noticed in recent years by intellectual trend-spotters. However, this is something that only future research can yield insights into.

**Scholars at war**

A dimension of the various moral uses of history discussed above which begs further attention is how they relate to scholarship and academic practice, or what Karlsson labels the scholarly-scientific use of history. Here the boundaries between the different uses become blurred. Scholars did debate the current crisis and used history to make sense of it. However, it was a debate that most often took place in media outside of the conventional academic arena, with arguments developed for public, not exclusively scholarly, consumption. External expectations upon the academic community to offer guidance to society, or scientific clout to various claims, played a major role in this context. There was no (and seldom is a) clear dividing line between the political and cognitive dimensions of historical culture.

The analysis has pointed to interests and possible motives which account for scholarly involvement in the matter. One has to do with funding possibilities. In

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the case of the Pontian identity politics discussed above, activism for genocide recognition can also be understood in terms of academic career enhancement. For the historian Konstantinos Fotiadis, a newly minted Ph.D. by the time the “right to memory” manifesto was written, the acceptance of the claim also entailed the recognition of himself as a scholar and government funding of his research. His moral use of history can thus, in academic terms, be viewed as expansion, through the establishment of Pontian genocide studies as a new epistemic domain, over which he and likeminded peers can exercise control as unrivalled experts. In the larger transnational context, this corresponds to the emerging scholarly interest in genocide as a new field of research, epitomised through the creation of IAGS and journals dedicated to studies of it as a contemporary and historical phenomenon. The expansion of this historiography, with its moral-political implications, into the academia in Greece and abroad has, however, yet to be explored.

Also, scholars concerned with more traditional topics, in line with the suddenly fashionable macedonology, could hope to benefit in professional terms from the Macedonian crisis. National history was useful to society in an era of uncertainty, it was argued. From this followed that historical research ought to be funded and ‘traditional’ knowledge be made accessible to the public, in order to combat foreign abuse of history and science. The conflict with the neighbour republic offered a possibility to restore the credentials of ‘traditional’ history along with the prestige of those concerned with it. Not everyone in this category was, however, likely to gain in the distribution of resources. Allegations and counter-allegations which at times emerged in public debate testify to rivalry between scholars, especially between those operating outside the conventional channels of influence in the academia and established peers, whom they incriminated with a feeble response to ‘Skopjan pseudo-science’.

The Macedonian conflict was in this respect not just a clash of different identity narratives (or national narratives, as Roudometof has it). It was also a clash of claims to expertise within the academic community as well as between scholars and laymen. In the case of the former, the claims to expertise of different disciplines could also clash. When anthropologist Anastasia Karakasidou applied theoretical perspectives associated with social constructivism to the study of Macedonian identities, in the process accusing traditional Greek historiography of “academic racism” (and by implication ‘methodological nationalism’), scholars loyal to this tradition responded harshly. As an anthropologist working with oral sources, they argued, she lacked the scholarly qualifications to deal properly with history, or at least the regional Macedonian past. Here, to some extent, the animosity toward an individual researcher also spilled over to the alien discipline she was affiliated with.

This is where the sociological concept of boundary-work comes to the forefront in the analysis of historical culture. Boundary-work, coined by Thomas F. Gieryn, emerges as a feature of public controversies where academic credentials as well as symbolical and material benefits are at stake. The theory, which has been described elsewhere, informs us also of controversies that involve claims to
historical expertise, such as the case discussed in this dissertation. Matters of credibility and prestige no doubt played a role in the Macedonian history war among Greek academics and also shaped the ways in which history was used and perceived. Boundary-work emerged as rhetorical strategies, manifest in the expulsion of rivaling scholars from a contested field or the protection of (scholarly) autonomy perceived to be in peril. Remarkably, it is an underexplored dimension in studies relating to historical culture and the uses of history. It is therefore my hope that this theoretical perspective can contribute to the study of said phenomena.

If the political and cognitive dimensions of historical culture blurred, attempts were also made to set up a dividing line between science and politics. These attempts echoed the critical discourse on a particular “ideological use of history”, which had emerged in the 1970s, during a time when both the old state narrative in Greece and the dogmas of Soviet Marxism were questioned by critical leftwing historians. According to Filippos Iliou, who once coined the concept, this use aimed at the distortion of objective reality in the service of political expediency. As such it was understood as a threat toward the professional integrity of scholarly historians and against history itself. Unlike some of the scholars referred to above, he did not see the Macedonian crisis as holding any benefits in store for the history discipline. On the contrary, he emerged as a leading moral authority among those, historians and others, critical of Greece’s Macedonian policy and the entanglement with nationalism. If the conflict with the Republic of Macedonia in the eyes of many was a defence of national history (or the “national narrative”), Iliou’s concern was with the defence of history as science, untainted by politics. This was done through the construction of a binary opposition between those who used history ideologically, through pressure or the desire to profit, and ‘sober’ scholars, whose awareness of the ideological use made them resist it. This boundary-making strategy of protecting the autonomy of the discipline (and expelling ‘charlatans’) also resonated with ‘traditional’ historians, who eventually dissociated themselves from the increasingly discredited state policy and popular macedonology. The activism of Iliou and other ‘new’ historians during the crisis can be analysed as rooted in ideological convictions, expressed in a critical narrative of the nation. This is also how some activists (mostly laymen) understood the concept of the “ideological use of history”, namely as providing them with a tool to expose and shatter the historiographical ‘myths’ of the nation-state. However, Iliou’s goal was not to write ‘anti-nationalistic’ history. Rather, his writings and statements can be analysed as a conscious attempt to restore a sense of consensus among Greek historians (and other intellectuals) around the ethics of their discipline. In this sense, he was a traditional positivist rather than a radical intellectual bent on ‘deconstructing’ the truth claims of history.

There is a larger perspective to this, which has to do with the impact of global academic currents and the coming of identity politics. The sense of crisis looming over historical studies in Greece, after the expansion in the 1970s and 1980s, coincided with ‘objectivist’ history’s crisis of legitimacy. The causes of the latter
were rooted in the same predicament that the nation-state was perceived to suffer from in the Western world. Traditionally, the social standing of history and the historians derived from the supportive role vested in them by the state. When states “no longer enjoy the same hegemonic power over the means of collective commemoration”, the prestige of traditional historiography – and by extension the historical profession as such – simultaneously erodes. The weakening of state narratives and the critique of their underlying ‘truths’ spilled into historical studies, as postmodern thought challenged the very notion of objective history, making even historians sceptical about the truth claims of their discipline. The critique was not entirely novel, as demonstrated by Peter Novick with regard to the North American context, however, it received a new salience through the rise of ‘subaltern’ perspectives and the identity politics of hitherto marginalised groups. As noted earlier, the critical narratives of these groups had a decisive thrust against traditional, state-supportive historiography, with its perceived monopoly of interpretation.

This challenge could easily be perceived as a threat against the historical profession itself. Vavouskos, the President of the Society for Macedonian studies (itself increasingly criticised for its commitment to state nationalism), who reproduced the written statement of MAKIVE, did so as to present a deterrent example of “how some people write history”. Also, the scholars who sought to counter the arguments of Karakasidou to a certain extent framed their critique as a defence of history as an objective science against the onslaught of (post-) modern identity politics. In her work, they saw an academic vindication of a most controversial Slav Macedonian identity-political agenda. As I have argued, their hostile reviews must not only be interpreted as reflecting a desire to serve the state, by legitimising its past and present minority policies, i.e. ideological use of history, according to Karlsson’s definition. Their concern about the traditional state narrative can also be viewed as a way of safeguarding the historical profession against the claims of ‘self-appointed’ ethnic groups toward historical authority. Why should states (or scholarly historians) lend themselves to support people “to develop at any time a new ethnic identity” on grounds of perceived repression, their argument implied. In this, they mirrored concerns that have been expressed elsewhere in the world during the 1990s. Ian Buruma highlights the focus on identity through victimisation in contemporary society, alarmed by “the extent to which so many minorities have come to define themselves above all as historical victims”. In his view, basing a communal identity “almost entirely on the sentimental solidarity of remembered victimhood” cannot result in mutual understanding among people. “For that way lie historical myopia and, in extreme circumstances, even vendetta.”

A similar concern for the political consequences of identity politics also permeates historian Gounaris’ critique of ethnicity as a

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theoretical concept. In the Balkans, with its history of rivalling national movements and inter-communal strife, the recognition of certain groups as ‘ethnic’ within a given state, would vindicate neighbouring states’ right to intervene on behalf of these minorities, even the right of groups to secede. To him and his co-critics, the Slav Macedonians of Greece were a “marginal group of people” who tried to solve their social and financial problems by evoking ethnic distinctiveness and perceived historical victimisation as political and moral capital. This was one of the reasons why ‘ethnicity’ had no place in historical research, at least not in a Macedonian context. It entailed the risk of making history politicised and thus no longer a ‘pure’ science.

The irony, unspotted by the scholars referred to above, was that while the identity politics of one group was being condemned by Greek state and society, the similar agenda of another was being endorsed, without much debate. The political reception of Slav Macedonian and Pontian identity narratives in Greece make an interesting comparative case, which illustrates what Barkan has argued in *The Guilt of Nations*: “For a ‘new’ history to become more than a partisan ‘extremist’ story, the narrative must persuade not only the members of the group that will ‘benefit’ from the new interpretation but also their ‘others’, those whose own history will presumably be ‘diminished’ or ‘tainted’ by the new stories.”

Regardless of the scepticism (and defence mechanisms) of some scholars, the impact of identity politics and the academic critique against objectivist history is discernible in the scholarly output of later years. The identities and historical experiences of marginal groups, neglected in previous research, emerged as fully legitimate study objects. Other researchers highlighted the ethnocentric character of history education or turned toward the study of how the nation had been constructed and represented. In this, the scholarly environments of Greece were no different from their counterparts elsewhere in the world. As we have seen, there are no sharp boundaries between the cognitive and political realms of historical culture. Nor are the narratives embraced by states and historians, or other scholarly professions, static, unsusceptible to new impulses. Critical narratives, originating in social contexts outside academic communities, may or may not be incorporated into scholarly and mainstream historical discourse, changing research priorities and even turning into new paradigms. According to Rüsen’s typology, which is also to be understood as a linear model of historiographical development, the critical narrative eventually transforms into a genetical account of the past. This is the type of narrative which projects history as a natural, and necessary, process of change. Although Rüsen is not very specific on this point, the genetical narrative can be interpreted in Hegelian terms as a final synthesis of opposing tendencies in historiography, between the traditional and the critical. This can be done through the selective incorporation of the latter with the former, ridding the critical component of radical overtones. The insight resonates with Olick’s notion of how societal cohesion can be preserved through the integration of alternative histories.

939 Barkan 2000, x.
and ‘counter-memories’ into a new, unifying narrative. There is little to suggest that academic communities work differently.

This insight is not a novel one. Yet, the salience of dichotomous rhetoric in public controversies suggested polarised views. In the case of the Macedonian history war, as well as in other controversies relating to history and its interpretations, this circumstance was all the incentive needed for a majority of scholars to keep their distance from a public quarrel which risked politicising science and tearing the academic community apart. Objectivism provided a safe haven from the unease deriving from history’s entanglement with contemporary politics. Even critics of traditional objectivist history could appeal to notions of ‘fundamental truth’, just as historians like Gounaris had to recognise a troublesome legacy of biased scholarship in the service of state nationalism, inherent in the tradition he sought to defend.

This study has shed light upon how history was perceived and used in connection with the Macedonian crisis. It has, however, not engaged with the more ethical question of how history ought to be used. This has not been an aim of my study, but nevertheless it is an issue that arises from it. What is then a proper use of history? How does an historian deal with the potentially damaging effects of a certain use of history or study it without engaging in self-congratulatory boundary-work or reproducing the use under scrutiny? These are pertinent questions to which there are no easy answers. This is also why objectivism is a tempting resort even for scholars who otherwise shun away from its implications, in times of political and social pressure. Historian Peter Mandler, who grapples with similar questions, rejects the idea of the citizen-cum-historian acting as society’s moral compass, someone whose professional skills entail transcendent moral authority. This resonates with a statement by the physicist David N. Mermin, quoted by Gieryn, seeking to position himself in the ‘science wars’ running parallel to the history wars of the 1990s. “Scientists who set themselves up as sorcerers are a menace to the public and to science.”

However, the issue of how historians themselves use or ought to use history when addressing the public remains unsolved. Karlsson, who reflects on whether there really is a scholarly-scientific use separate from the other categories in his scheme, attempts to arrive at a middle ground between normativism and relativism. “The use to which history is put cannot be determined solely on scholarly grounds, but involves social and moral judgments from which professional historians should not be isolated.” In his view, it is “important that the historian’s approach remains open-ended, analytical and critical, not avoiding complexity, and wary of unfounded generalisations”. This is essentially the answer given by Filippous Iliou when asked in interviews if not all historians tailor their material according to their

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940 The analogy between national and scholarly communities is also made in Novick 1988, p. 590.
942 David N. Mermin, quoted in Gieryn 1999, p. 361.
943 Karlsson 2007, p. 43.
own questions, and thus their understanding of the past with regard to the needs of
the present. History can be used to prove anything, he argued, but this does not
preclude the attempt at an unbiased analysis, as far as it is possible. The irony of
being an historian using the analytical tools of other historians to study historians’
views on and uses of history is not lost on the author of this dissertation. I make no
claim to have solved the ethical questions that arise from these uses or the study of
them. Perhaps the best an historian can do with regard to these matters is striving –
to paraphrase Iliou – to comprehend the complex ways of how societies shape, live,
understand and use their histories.
Summary

This study takes its point of departure in the challenges to Greek society and the nation-state brought about by the end of the Cold War. The focal point is the diplomatic controversy between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia, regarding naming, minority rights and the use of historical symbols, which ensued from Yugoslavia’s dissolution. This Macedonian conflict came to dominate the Greek foreign and domestic policy agenda in the early 1990s, setting the country on a collision course with her Western European and American partners.

The aim of this thesis has been to trace the contexts in which this controversy evolved. My argument is that the Macedonian conflict is to be understood not only as a crisis in the domestic politics of Greece, or in her relations with other countries, but as a crisis in Greek historical culture. In Greek public debate, the conflict blended with concerns about the nation’s past, present and future. The diplomatic quarrel with the new neighbour state to the north caught the attention of a wide public and was accompanied by a discourse on national history and heritage as endangered. The study of this discourse, or rather discourses, on history is an important objective of this study, since it reveals a great deal about the perceptions of the past and the anxieties about the present and future course of the nation, views and concerns that ultimately shaped the political crisis.

The theoretical perspective takes its point of departure in the concept of historical culture. Defined as the totality of discourses through which a society makes sense of itself, the present and the future through the interpretation of the past, historical culture is to be understood as both structure and process. This means that historical culture is both the framework of knowledge, attitudes and values providing the individual with meaning and society with cohesion, and the act of creating and communicating the above. As a way of studying historical culture, the notions of narratives and uses of history have been employed. Since the study also pays particular attention to the role of scholarly historians – important agents in the production and dissemination of the knowledge and attitudes that constitute historical culture – it involves a perspective from the viewpoint of the sociology of science. Public controversies over the past involve contests over the credibility of certain interpretations and those who present them. Departing from the idea that science is to be studied in the social context in which it is imbued with meaning and authority, the notion of boundary-work is used as a supplementing analytical tool.

Historical culture is studied through the artifacts it produces. In this case, the material of the study is primarily drawn from mainstream print press, but also included is historiography (both academic and non-academic), scholarly journals and other relevant publications, where history is debated, narrated, contextualised and used. This material does not capture Greek historical culture in its entirety, but it provides a representative map of relevant fora where the general public as well as specialists encountered the discourses and debates on the past.
The study has mapped the ways in which history was used, with attention to the interests discernible in them. The very perception of crisis expressed itself in an existential use of history, tied to a quest for roots and continuity and nourished by fear of war, uprooting and cultural amnesia. The perceived external threat to Greece was often described as a challenge toward national identity and the nation’s survival, but also as an opportunity to restore a unifying national narrative. Simultaneously, history was used with both commercial and political ends in view, since the national past tended to be viewed as a moral, political and economic asset. A salient feature of public debate was a political use of history, which served to challenge a perceived leftwing hegemony presented as standing in the way of national unity and the promotion of Greek foreign policy goals abroad. However, history could also be used politically to demonstrate the vices of nationalism.

Particular attention has been paid to the moral use of history. This is a use which challenges perceptions perceived to be dominant and is therefore a means of change in historical culture. History-producers across the political spectrum tended to mould their narratives critically and morally, in order to create the impression that the state establishment had suppressed truth, even if the aim sometimes was to preserve a traditional understanding of national history and identity. However, it is narratives that challenge the traditional framework of interpretation that have received particular scrutiny. The moral use is linked to how the Macedonian question was used to advance memory-political demands. Here, the Slav Macedonian minority activism which celebrated ethnic distinctiveness and accused the Greek state of discrimination has been highlighted. Its use of history fuelled perceptions of imminent threat toward the nation-state and as such also appealed to elements within the Greek Left, which in the Slav Macedonian critical narrative saw a way of changing social reality and national historical culture, by exposing the state’s “ideological use of history”.

A group which used history morally and to some extent also linked their memory-political agenda to the Macedonian question was the Pontian Greeks. The study has highlighted how a Pontian identity linked to a narrative of genocide in Turkey and a history of discrimination in Greece had emerged in the late 1980s, to be recognised by the state in 1994. While the previous chapter 3 explores the local history-cultural setting in Greek Macedonia, chapter 4 also highlights the links Pontian activists sought to establish with historical narratives outside the framework of national Greek history, chiefly the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust.

The relation between politics and history, between the critical narratives that challenged dominant perceptions of national concerns and those defending the legitimacy of state policy and official historiography, is at the centre of chapter 5. The conflict entailed a clash of claims to expertise within the academic community – between disciplines and individual researchers – as well as between scholars and laymen, manifest in the rhetorical expulsion of rivalling scholars from contested grounds. For some, the overall public emphasis on national history promised funding and enhanced prestige to those concerned with it. Others saw the
Macedonian crisis and historiography in the service of national policy as a direct threat against academic freedom and Greece’s survival as a democratic society. The academic autonomy perceived to be in peril was protected through insisting on a dividing line between history as science and its “ideological use” for political expediency. This attempt at restoring consensus within the academic community through the appeal to disciplinary ethics also resonated with historians who eventually sought to dissociate themselves from a state policy perceived as flawed and nationalistic.

The analysis has pointed to the contexts in which the Macedonian crisis evolved and to how the concerns for and uses of history can be understood. The first is the domestic political context, i.e. Greek society’s transition to democracy after 1974. In the new climate of pluralism, parts of the political Left’s critical narrative of recent history were incorporated into the state narrative. The transition of society and national historical culture also paved way for the identity politics of disenchanted groups (Slav Macedonians, Pontian and other Anatolian Greeks), whose moral uses of history chipped away at the old master narratives. By 1989, a widespread disenchantment with political ideologies, chiefly socialism, had brought about a backlash in favour of traditional nationalism.

The second important context is that of European integration. This entailed not only the struggle and hopes for economic gains, but also the need to cope with loss of national self-determination and traditional forms of self-understanding. Greece was faced with the task of finding her place in the new Europe, while simultaneously finding a way to handle the new reality of war in the Balkans. This was a process which especially historians stressed entailed the need to Europeanise the nation’s values and perceptions of history, a task complicated by the Greek Macedonian cause and the protection of ‘historic rights’. Also activists, mostly in the Greek diaspora, concerned with the promotion of this cause pointed to the need to modernise in the age of European unity and converging history educations.

The above is closely linked to the third context, which is also of transnational nature. National historical culture is not isolated from the outside world; perceptions of the past move from one national context to another. At a global level, the Macedonian conflict resonated with the history wars raging at the same time around the world. These in turn reflect the erosion of national and ideological master narratives in Western societies, the identity- and memory-political demands of substate actors, the human rights paradigm and the politics of regret, which embraced national guilt as a new principle of political legitimacy. The trend in transnational historical culture toward a more universal morality, symbolised by the lessons of the ‘Americanised’ (and ‘Europeanised’) Holocaust, was an additional challenge to its national counterparts. The Pontian genocide narrative (and its nationalised extension) is analysed as responding to a demand for the ‘Americanisation’ of Greek historical culture. Here the role of the Greek diaspora is noted, not only as instrumental in shaping Greece’s foreign policy agenda but also in transmitting history-cultural concerns and the need to adjust in a transnational setting. Implications of this ‘Americanised’ genocide narrative are discussed.
A fourth and final context, with both a national and transnational dimension, is the academic, in which scholars debate and mould the representations of history. The coming of identity politics and the Macedonian controversy played into ‘objectivist’ history’s crisis of legitimacy and the postmodern challenge. The erosion of state narratives was to some extent paralleled by a weakening of faith in the credibility and authority of traditional historiography, thus possible to interpret as a threat against the historical profession itself. Another way of coping with this challenge was viewing it, along with the Macedonian crisis, as calling for a change of perspectives in research and the writing of history. The interplay between politics and history, between the understanding of past realities, present concerns and future expectations, thus shaped the political crisis and paved the way for the transformation of Greek historical culture.
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Sammanfattning på svenska

Denna studie har sin utgångspunkt i de utmaningar som det grekiska samhället och nationalstaten stod inför vid kalla krigets slut. I fokus står den diplomatiska konflikten mellan Grekland och republiken Makedonien, gällande den senare partens namn och bruk av historiskt laddade symboler samt minoritetsrättigheter. Denna makedonska konflikten som seglade upp i samband med Jugoslaviens sammanbrott kom att dominera den in- och utrikespolitiska dagordningen i Grekland under det tidiga 1990-talet, och förde tidvis in landet på kollisionskurs med dess västeuropeiska och amerikanska partners.

Avhandlingens syfte har bestått i att spåra de sammanhang som denna konflikt växte fram i. Jag hävdar att den makedonska konflikten inte endast skall förstås som en kris i grekisk inrikespolitik, eller i landets relationer med omvärlden, utan fastmer som en kris i den grekiska historiekulturen. I det offentliga samtalen i Grekland smälte konflikten samman med en oro gällande nationens förflutna, nutid och framtid. Den diplomatiska fejden med den nya grannstaten i norr uppmärksamades av en bred allmänhet och åtföljdes av en diskurs som utmålade den egna nationens historia och arv som hotade. Studiet av denna diskurs, eller rättare sagt diskurser, om historia är ett viktigt mål i denna avhandling, eftersom det belyser uppfattningar om det förflutna jämte farhågor rörande nuet och nationens framtid, uppfattningar och farhågor som ytterst präglade den politiska krisen.


Historiekultur studeras genom dess lämningar. I föreliggande avhandling utgörs källmaterialet främst av artiklar i grekisk dagspress, men även historieskrivning (akademisk såväl som icke-akademisk) i bokform, vetenskapliga tidskrifter och andra relevanta trycksaker där historia debatteras, berättas, sätts in i sammanhang och brukas, har studerats. Materialet täcker ingalunda grekisk historiekultur i hela dess vidd men utgör likvälv ett representativt urval av de arenor där såväl allmänhet som specialister mötte diskurser och debatter om det förflutna.


En grupp som brukade historien moraliskt och som i viss utsträckning även länkade sin minnespolitiska dagordning till den makedonska frågan återfanns bland de pontiska grekerna. Studien har belyst hur en pontisk identitet knuten till en berättelse om folkmord i Turkiet och en historia av diskriminering i Grekland växte fram i senare delen av 1980-talet och erkändes av staten 1994. Medan kapitel 3 utforskar det lokala historiekulturella landskapet i det grekiska Makedonien, belyser kapitel 4 även de förbindelser som pontiska aktivister sökte upprätta med historiska berättelser utanför den nationella historiens ramverk, huvudsakligen det armeniska folkmordet och förintelsen.

Förhållandet mellan politik och historia, mellan kritiska berättelser som utmanade förhärskande uppfattningar i nationella frågor och dem som försvarade den förda politikens legitimitet och den officiella historieskrivningen, står i fokus för kapitel 5. Den makedonska konflikten medförde kolliderande anspråk på expertis inom vetenskapssamhället – mellan ämnesdiscipliner och enskilda forskare – såväl som mellan fackmän och lekmän, vilket tog sig uttryck i retoriska

Analysen har visat på de sammanhang i vilka den makedonska krisen växte fram och hur farhågorna för och bruket av historia kan förstås. Det första av dessa kontexter är den inrikespolitiska, närmare bestämt det grekiska samhällets demokratisering efter 1974. I det nya pluralistiska klimatet införlivades delar av den tidigare förföljda vänsterns kritiska berättelse om det nära förflutna i statens historieskrivning. Övergången från ett auktoritär samhälle och historiekultur till en ökad öppenhet banade även väg för missnöjda gruppers identitetspolitik (slaviska makedoner, pontiska och andra anatoliska greker), grupper vars historiebruk naggade de gamla nationella och ideologiska stora berättelserna i kanten. Vid tiden för kalla krigets slut 1989 hade en allmänt spridd besvikelse gentemot de politiska ideologierna, i synnerhet socialismen, medfört en motreaktion till förmån för en mer traditionell nationalism.

Det andra betydelsefulla sammanhangen återfinns i den europeiska integrationen som följde på Greklands EG-inträde 1981. Denna medförde inte endast hopp om ekonomisk vinning utan även behovet att bearbeta förlusten av nationellt självbestämmande och traditionella former av självförståelse. Grekland stod inför uppgiften att finna sin plats i det nya Europa, samtidigt som landet måste hantera den nya verklighet som 1990-talets krig på Balkan medförde. Särskilt historiker betonade att denna process gjorde det nödvändigt att europeisera nationens värderingar och uppfattningar kring historia, en uppgift som försvarades av Greklands hållning i den makedonska frågan och det sätt på vilket man slog vakt om ”historiska rättigheter”. Även aktivister som, huvudsakligen i den grekiska diasporan, var sysselsatta med att marknadsföra denna fråga pekade på behovet av att modernisera aspekter av den nationella historiekulturen i en tid av europeiskt enande och konvergerande historieutbildningar.

Det som ovan beskrivits har ett nära samband med det tredje stora sammanhanget, som även det är av transnationell art. Den nationella historiekulturen är inte avskild från omvärlden; föreställningar om det förflytta rör sig över nationella gränser. På global nivå sammanföll den makedonska konflikten med de s.k. history wars, historiekrig som rasade vid samma tid runtom i världen. Dessa återspeglar i sin tur urholkadet av de stora nationella och ideologiska berättelserna i västerländska samhällen, de identitetts- och minnespolitiska kraven hos under- och ickestatliga aktörer, de mänskliga rättigheternas paradigm och
beklagandets politik (*the politics of regret*), som anammar nationell skuld som ny princip för politisk legitimitet. Trenden inom transnationell historiekultur mot en mer universell moral, symboliserad av den ”amerikaniserade” (och ”europeiserade”) förintelsens moral innebär en ytterligare utmaning mot de nationella historiekulturerna. Den pontiska folkmordsberättelsen (och dess nationaliserade förlängning) analyseras som svarande till kravet på en ”amerikanisering” av grekisk historiekultur. I detta sammanhang lyfts den grekiska diasporans roll fram, inte endast som instrumentell i utformningen av Greklands utrikespolitiska dagordning, men även i egenskap av förmedlare av historiekulturella angelägenheter och behovet av anpassning till transnationell omgivning. Konsekvenser av denna ”amerikaniserade” folkmordsberättelse diskuteras.


