Aleksandar DONSKI

# THE ANCIENT MACEDONIANS WERE NOT GREEKS! (IN DEFENSE OF MACEDONIA)

A REJOINDER TO A RECENT LETTER, BY AUTHORS SYMPATHETIC TO THE GREEK POSITION, ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, BARACK OBAMA

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# THE ANCIENT MACEDONIANS WERE NOT GREEKS!

## (IN DEFENCE OF MACEDONIA)

A REJOINDER TO A RECENT LETTER, BY AUTHORS SYMPATHETIC TO THE GREEK POSITION, ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, BARACK OBAMA

This material has been E-mailed or posted to:

- The President of the United States, Mr. Barack Obama
- Members of the President's Cabinet and senior U.S. government officials
- Members of the U.S. Senate
- Members of the U.S. House of Representatives
- The 300 signatories of the original letter to President Obama, all classical scholars, all of whose names are included below
- The rectors and deans of the signatories' respective institutions
- Selected students and colleagues of the 300 signatories
- Senior members of the Government of the Republic of Greece
- Leading figures of NATO, the EU and the European Parliament
- The leadership of the Greek Diaspora
- Selected international universities and their respective departments of history
- Appropriate internet addresses, web sites and blogs

Dear President Obama:

In writing this letter, I am under no illusion that your busy schedule will allow you to read it. I am confident however that appropriate officials in your government will absorb its contents and react in due course.

This letter was prompted by another sent to you on May 18, 2009 and initially signed by 220 international classical scholars. (Later, the number of signatories rose to 300, when an additional 80 added their names and support.) The undersigned demanded that the U.S. Government withdraw its recognition of the Republic of Macedonia's constitutional name, a move that would align U.S. policy with longstanding official Greek policy towards and propaganda against Macedonia and Macedonians.

The undersigned scholars are of course free to serve the policies and propaganda of Greece at the expense of Macedonia, which is a relatively poor, small and defenseless Balkan state compared to Greece, but nevertheless is a steadfast U.S. ally. The freedom to support the Greek viewpoint however, does not confer on the signatories the right to create and manipulate historical facts.

This letter disputes the errors and corrects the record contained in the letter sent to you in May of 2009 and it is dedicated to presenting an accurate account of the history of Macedonia. The letter that you received contains material that those with a background in this subject will recognize as factually incorrect, tendentious and replete with a variety of subjective assertions, and misleading or completely erroneous statements.

These flaws render the scholarly value and historical accuracy of the letter of these scholars dubious at best and, taken together; they are the most compelling reasons why it should not be regarded as objective work or serious scholarship. Rather than probing the intentions and motivations of those who wrote and signed the letter, I will highlight the errors in the signatories' approach in selecting their information and marshalling their facts, errors which effectively transformed their effort into a document presented the sole value of which is to promote the objectives of contemporary, unprovoked, anti-Macedonian propaganda. A detailed rebuttal in defense of Macedonia follows.

## Ancient Macedonia and the territory of today's Republic of Macedonia

In their tract the signatories initially wrote:

"*The land in question, with its modern capital at Skopje, was called Paionia in antiquity. Mt. Barnous and Mt. Orbelos (which today form the northern limits of Greece) provide a natural*

*barrier that separated then, and separates today, Macedonia from its southern neighbor. The only real connection is along the Axios/ Vardar River and even this valley does not form a line of communication because it is divided by gorges"*.

The import of the above passage means that ancient Macedonia was situated on the territory of today's Greece, while the territory of today's Republic of Macedonia coincided with the territory of Paionia. This premise would deny today's Macedonians the right to claim their own ancient Macedonian ethno-cultural heritage. It has the effect of restricting their historical antecedents to Paionia, alone.

Indeed, it is difficult to understand how classical scholars could ignore certain salient facts. The borders of ancient Macedonia changed constantly over different periods. At its inception ancient Macedonia spread only over a small part of what is today southwestern Macedonia. Later, the conquests of its rulers effected changes in Macedonia's borders. There was a period when a large part of ancient Macedonia was located on the territory of Macedonia that came under Greek authority for the first time in 1913. (Today, Macedonians living in this recently-acquired Greek territory historically have been denied by local authorities any right to identify with their ethnic or national traditions).

In earlier times, ancient Macedonia also spread over a large portion of today's Republic of Macedonia. Surely, the signatories are aware of the ancient Macedonian region *Lyncus*, which largely extended over the territory of today's Republic of Macedonia. The ancient Greek geographer, Strabo, (63/64 BCE – ca. CE 24), states: that the '"*Lyncus*," region was an inextricable part of ancient Macedonia." He also wrote:

*"…in fact the regions around Lyncus, Pelagonia, Orestia, and Elimeia, used to be called Upper Macedonia, though later on they also were called by some 'Free Macedonia'. But some go so far as to call the whole of the country Macedonia"* (Strabo *Geography, Book VII, Chap. 7, 6).*

In ancient Macedonia, or Lyncus, there lived a famous tribe called the Lyncestians, whose inhabitants were part of the ancient Macedonian population. Philip II's mother, Eurydice, came from the Lyncestian tribe and actually she was born on the territory of today's Republic of Macedonia.

Thucydides also wrote about the Macedonian origin of the inhabitants of Lyncus:

"*There is an upper Macedonia, which is inhabited by Lyncestians, Elimiots, and other tribes; these are the allies and the 'client states' of the lower Macedonians, but (they) have kings of their own*". (Thucydides, Book II).

The capital city of the ancient Macedonian region of Lyncus, called "Lynk," was located on the territory of today's Republic of Macedonia. This city was located in the current village of Bukri, located at the curve of the Erigon, or Black River, at today's "High Hill" (Visoko Brdo).

The ancient Macedonian city of "Heraclea," also located on the territory of Lyncus, is reported to have been personally established by Philip II of Macedon. Even today, the city's ruins are evident on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia and all are free to visit these sites.

Other sites found in today's Republic of Macedonia include the famous ancient Macedonian cities: Gordinia, Atalanta, Eidomenè and a significant part of the ancient Macedonian region of Amphakstida.

That Eidomenè is located on the territory of the present Republic of Macedonia and also was an ancient Macedonian city is further supported by Thucydides. In his description of the war between the Thracians and the Macedonians, in the middle of the fifth century BCE, Thucydides explains that the Thracian army attacked the Macedonians and took the city of Eidomenè:

"*Leaving Doberus, the Thracian army first invaded the country which formerly had been the principality of Philip, and took Eidomenè by storm*." (Thucydides, Book II).

Thucydides (II, 100) also mentions the conquest of the ancient Macedonian cities of Gordinia and Atalanta, also located on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia.

Another city located on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia is the ancient Macedonian city of Dostonei. Further evidence of the existence of an ancient Macedonian civilization is clear from the presence of numerous defensive fortresses that ancient Macedonians built to protect themselves from outside attacks. The most famous of these is located outside the city of Demir Kapiya. There are others elsewhere in the Republic of Macedonia.

Thousands of ancient Macedonian coins and other objects such as jewelry, weapons, household artifacts and tombs have been unearthed in the Republic of Macedonia and are on display both in Macedonia and in other countries. Numerous artifacts from Macedonia's ancient past testify to the fact that a vibrant, ancient and distinctively Macedonian civilization thrived on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia. Some data on this topic can be found in "Ancient Kingdom of Macedonia in the Republic of Macedonia" by Prof. Dr. Viktor Lilcik (The Journal for Archeology, History, History of Art and Ethnology, Year VIII, No. 23, Skopje, 2004, Republic of Macedonia; ISSN 1409/5742).

The territory of Paionia, which the signatories stoutly maintain is the historical territory of today's Republic of Macedonia, also changed its boundaries constantly throughout its history. A large part of Paionia was located on what is today, the part of Macedonia that is under Greek authority. Note for example that during the Troyan War, Paionia stretched along the central part of, what is today, the Aegean portion of "Greek" Macedonia. Around the sixth century BCE, Paionia occupied an even larger expanse of Greece's Aegean Macedonia and also included the area around today's Thessaloniki (Solun). Along with the ancient Macedonian cities of Aerop, Atalanta, and Lete, it stretched even as far as Amphypolis on the border with Thrace. In the fifth century BCE,

Euripides wrote that the Paionians were a people who inhabited the Pangai Mountains, east of Amphipolis and Chalkidiki, in southeastern Macedonia.

Later, as the Macedonians pushed the Paionians northwards, they extended their own boundaries. In 217 BCE King Philip V of Macedonia completely conquered Paionia and the Paionians were merged with the ancient Macedonians making the two peoples into a single nation. At that point, ancient Macedonia spread to occupy what is now the territory of the Republic of Macedonia.

**On renaming Paionia to Macedonia**

The signatories also write:

"*While it is true that the Paionians were subdued by Philip II, father of Alexander, in 358 B.C. they were not Macedonians and did not live in Macedonia. Likewise, for example, the Egyptians, who were subdued by Alexander, may have been ruled by Macedonians, including the famous Cleopatra, but they were never Macedonians themselves, and Egypt was never called Macedonia."*

Here, again, the signatories demonstrate a dubious grasp of the facts. Their claim that the territory of Paionia was never called "Macedonia", is demonstrably false.

Actually, the borders of Paionia shifted in the process of being absorbed into what was later called Macedonia. These facts support the assertion that Paionia was the name given to a large part of what is today regarded as "Greek", or Aegean Macedonia, including the territory east of the Chalkidiki peninsula. Later, this territory too was given the name of Macedonia.

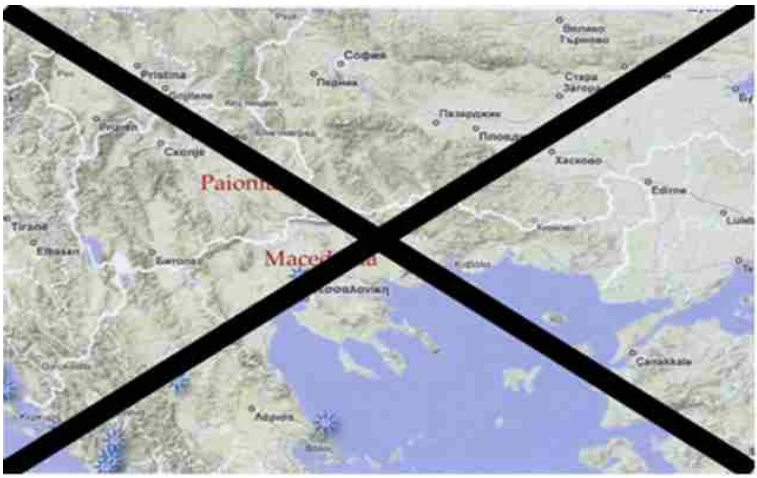
The same situation obtained in other parts of Macedonia, including areas in today's Republic of Macedonia. Some of these areas had been called Paionia, but later, especially after Philip V destroyed Paionia, it too came to be called Macedonia.

The ancient Greek geographer, Strabo, confirmed this (VII, 41), when he states that the Paionians lived in large areas of ancient Macedonia:

*"It is clear that in early times, as now, the Paionians occupied much of what is now Macedonia*..."

Once Paionia lost its independence and was conquered by Macedonia, it ceased to exist as an independent entity and its territory eternely became a part of Macedonia.

The libraries of the world are rich with historical evidence - written documentation and maps – that support the fact that the territory of the former Paionia became part of Macedonia and it is incomprehensible how the signatories do not know these facts. (Later we'll provide a brief discussion of the origins of the Paionian people).




*This map of Macedonia is included in the signatories' letter. It inaccurately marks the territory of the Republic of Macedonia as Paionia. This map erroneously identifies Macedonia only as the "Macedonia" that is now under Greek authority.*

*This map shows the territory on which the Paionian tribes lived from the time of the Trojan War (thirteenth through the twelfth century BCE), based on information from ancient sources.*

*This map shows the territory of the Paionian tribes from the sixth century BCE, according to information from ancient sources*

*This map shows the approximate area of Paionia during the first half of the third century BCE, according to information from ancient sources.*

**Why signatories create the non-existent term "Macedonian Greeks."?**

The signatories' letter to president Obama also stated:

"*Macedonia and Macedonian Greeks have been located for at least 2,500 years just where the Modern Greek province of Macedonia is"*

Unfortunately for the signatories to this letter, the historical data and terms that they cite have been either invented or manipulated. The term "Macedonian Geeks," referring to the ancient Macedonians, is a time-honored and meaningless canard. No biographer of Alexander the Great of Macedonia ever characterized the ancient Macedonians as "Macedonian Greeks," but only as Macedonians. It is difficult to understand how these expert signatories could invent a nonexistent term to support their core premise. One suspects that since no ancient biographer of Alexander ever used the term "Macedonian Greeks", these

“experts” decided that this term needed to be invented to better align their argument with the official Greek policies and propaganda that their letter supports. Objective contemporary experts agree that the writing of the ancient authors who directly observed these societies is far more valuable and valid than the expedient inventions of the signatories.

## On the origin of today’s Macedonians

In the letter, the signatories also argue:

"*We do not understand how the modern inhabitants of ancient Paionia, who speak Slavic – a language introduced into the Balkans about a millennium after the death of Alexander – can claim him as their national hero."*

Below, we have provided proof that today’s Macedonians, citizens of the Republic of Macedonia and of the remaining parts of Macedonia (including those living in the region under the control of the Greek Government) are mainly blood descendants of the ancient Macedonians.

## Why Alexander the Great was not Greek?

In their letter, the signatories incorrectly stated:

"*Alexander the Great was thoroughly and indisputably Greek"*.

Many ancient testimonies exist in which the Macedonians are treated as a separate nation, distinct from the Greeks. However, the signatories’ position that Alexander the Great was Greek is effectively discredited with his own words or, more precisely, those of his official biographer, Arrian. Arrian has recorded the speech that Alexander the Great delivered to his officers, when his army balked at continuing the fighting during the final battles in India. Arrian points out that initially, his men were reticent to tell him of

their unwillingness to continue, but that Alexander, perceiving that there was a problem, called his officers to a meeting and addressed them with the following words:

"*O Macedonians and Grecian allies... I have collected you together into the same spot, so that I may either persuade you to march forward with me, or may be persuaded by you to return.*"

In the the same speech, Alexander added:

*"But, O Macedonians and Grecian allies stand firm! But what great or glorious deed could we have performed, if, sitting at ease in Macedonia, we had thought it sufficient to preserve our own country without any labour, simply repelling the attacks of the nations on our frontiers, the Thracians, Illyrians, and Triballians, or even those Greeks who were unfriendly to our interests?* (Arrian, *Anabasis*, Chap. XXV).

Alexander's speech clearly distinguishes between the Macedonians and the Greeks as two separate nations. In these excerpts, not only does he address Macedonians and Greeks separately, ("*Macedonian and Grecian allies*"), but he also clearly explains that the Macedonians living in Macedonia could be endangered by their neighbours: Illyrians, Trichinas, Triballians and Greeks!

If we assume that Arrian took these data from history dedicated to Alexander, written by Ptolemy I (general, childhood friend and, according to some sources, Alexander's half-brother) then the authenticity of this statement is undeniable. In addition, Arrian is generally considered one of the most serious of the ancient sources on Alexander the Great's biography.

**On Alexander I and the First Olympic games**

Further to our rebuttal of the allegations in the letter sent to President Obama, we read:

"*His great-great-great grandfather, Alexander I, competed in the Olympic Games, where participation was limited to Greeks."*

Alexander I (circa. 497 - 454 BCE) was Alexander the Great's ancestor. It is true that he insisted on participation in the Greek Olympic Games and overcame strong Greek political objections to do so. Since the Greeks treated them as "barbarians" (non-Greeks), all other Macedonians continued to be forbidden to participate in the games. Some additional examples should further illuminate this point.

During the rule of Alexander I, war broke out between a united Greek forces and the Persian Empire. Macedonia was a militarily weak and economically poor country at that time and found itself caught in the middle of a fierce war that placed Alexander I in a potentially dangerous situation. Both the Persian and the Greek forces could easily conquer Macedonia, if they felt its actions opposed their interests. Accordingly, Alexander I sought to maintain Macedonia's neutrality and secretly tried to reassure both the Persians and the Greeks of Macedonia's good intentions. For example, he gave his sister in marriage to the Persian general, Bubares, and also provided the Greeks with confidential informations. However, the night before the decisive battle at Platheia (479 BC), Alexander went to the Greek camp, allied himself with the Greeks, and gave them information about the location of Persian forces. It is possible that he aligned himself with the Greeks, because he assumed that the Greeks might well win the battle and would emerge victorious in the war. It was at this point that he presented himself as "Greek" and was allowed to participate in the Greek Olympic Games, albeit over strenuous political objections from some Greeks.

This allegation that Alexander falsely presented himself as "Greek" to dissuade the Greeks from attacking Macedonia after they had prevailed over the Persians has been challenged by many modern historians. One of them is the well-known American historian, Dr. Eugene Borza. In his book: "*In the Shadow of*

*Olympus, The Emergence of Macedon"* (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, ISBN 0-691-05549-1, USA, 1990) Borza asks: "*If Alexander was really Greek would not the Greeks know that in advance? Wouldn't they know if the Macedonian dynasty is "Greek" and if it is what would be the need of proving it to them? On the contrary, they knew very well back then who their compatriots were, and who were not*," (especially during the war with the Persians). The question arises why anyone would need to stress their allegedly "Greek" origin, and why would a genuine citizen of Athens or Sparta or any other real Greek state need to prove the bona fides of his Greek origin?

Other historians are of the same opinion: Macan, How, Wells, Badian and others.

Yet another question arises. Why did the Greeks initially prevent Alexander I from participating in the Olympic Games and declare him a "barbarian"? Surely, if he was Greek, they would not first declare him a barbarian (a man who does not speak Greek); rather they would recognize their compatriot immediately.

Alexander I's decision to declare himself a "Greek", just prior to the battle of Plataea in 479 BCE is discussed by Herodotus. Borza states that Alexander I did this for political reasons, specifically to align himself with the Greek world after they emerge victorious over the Persians. Borza also notes (Eugene Borza; "*In the Shadow of Olympus, The Emergence of Macedon"*, pg. 63, *ibid*) that Herodotus contradicts himself, when describing this episode, because Herodotus (*History,* 7.130) cites that the Thessalians (Greek tribe who lived on the south from Macedonia) were "first Greeks" to come under Persian rule, and in so doing, Herodotus, for all practical purposes, confirms that the Macedonians are non-Greeks.

This means that the participation of Alexander I at the Olympic Games was difficult to achieve and he succeeded only after he insisted and with the stipulation that only Macedonian kings would be allowed to participate in the Olympic Games. The

rest of the Macedonian nation continued to be treated as a separate, that is to say “barbarian” nation.

The fact is at that time that the Greeks found the recognition of Alexander I acceptable because Macedonia was for them potentially an ally against the continuing threat posed by the powerful Persian Empire.

If this evidence is not sufficient, let us quote Herodotus himself. While on one hand he claims that Alexander I declared himself to be "Greek", on the other hand the same Herodotus (*History,* 8.142) wrote that the Spartan Greeks have characterized Alexander I as “suspicious stranger”.

An even more telling proof that Alexander I was not "Greek" is the fact that the Greeks themselves announced him as "Philhellene" (friend of the Greeks, i.e. Greek devotee), after he helped them with information that facilitated their conquest of the Persians). Those titles were given to foreigners, i.e. to non-Greeks who performed services for the Greeks.

Alexander I simply behaved in this manner to retain control of his then weak country. In this he succeeded. He preserved Macedonia, which, only a few generations later, militarily conquered the Greek city states and the whole of Persia.

**Why then did Philip II participate in the Olympic Games?**

The signatories’ letter continues by raising the issue of Philip II's (Alexander the Great’s father) participation in the games on Olympia and Delphi:

*"Alexander’s father, Philip, won several equestrian victories at Olympia and Delphi, the two most Hellenic of all the sanctuaries in ancient Greece where non-Greeks were not allowed to compete. Even more significantly, Philip was appointed to conduct the Pythian Games at Delphi in 346 B.C. In other words, Alexander the Great’s father and his ancestors were thoroughly Greek."*

This is another unsuccessful attempt to "prove" that which can not be proven. Philip II joined in the Greek games after he had conquered large tracks of Greek possesions (Amphipolis, Potidaea, Crenides and others). He was appointed to manage the Pythian Games, not because he was "Greek", but by virtue of his conquests of Greek territory. His status as "conqueror" conferred on him a freedom to do as he wished. No Greek was in position to stop him, neithr then, nor later. Below we will show further data that clearly demonstrate that the Greeks considered Philip II a “barbarian” (non-Greek, i.e. a man who does not speak Greek). We are convinced that this evidence is more compelling than the unsubstantiated assertions contained in the signatories’ letter.

In the same paragraph, the signatories posit the term “ancient Greece”. That term demands explanation and clarification. Precisely which nation state and territory constitutes “ancient Greece”? All available evidence indicates that no such country ever existed. All that ever existed on the territory of today’s Greece were smaller city-states which were constantly at war with each other. To use the artificial and contrived term “ancient Greece” in support of an argument that would deny an entire nation its identity is to place scholarship completely at the service of the propaganda agenda of the modern Greek state which seeks to convince the world that today’s Greece is a continuation of “ancient Greece.” Lost in this manufactured history is the fact that today’s Greeks are an ethnic amalgam of different nationalities and the fact that a country named “Greece”, i.e. “ancient Greece” never existed.

**On the location of Argos and the figure of Heracles**

The next salient issue that the signatories’ letter raises turns on the ancestry of the Macedonian royal line:

*"Even before Alexander I, the Macedonians traced their ancestry to Argos, and many of their kings used the head of Heracles - the quintessential Greek hero - on their coins."*

Here the signatories attempt to make the case that the Macedonian ruling dynasty originated with the city of “Argos.” What they fail to add is that can point to several cities named “Argos”. Later, they point out that Macedonian kings were "Greek" merely because some of them made coins adorned with the head of the “Greek hero” Heracles.

It is well to remind the signatories at this point that authentic evidence regarding the origin of the Macedonian dynasty does not really exist and that which has been examined to date has been contradictory in nature. Some ancient authors maintain that the Macedonian kings originated in the city of Argos in the Peloponnese. Others claim that the Macedonian dynasty originated in the city of Argos in – Macedonia! The historian Appian from Alexandria (around 95-165 CE) has explained the origin of the Macedonian dynasty this way:

*"There is an Argos in Peloponnese, another in Amphilochia, another in Orestea, whence come the Macedonian Argeadae, and the one on the Ionian sea..."* (Appian, *Syrian Wars*, 63).

Orestea was an area in Macedonia and it contained a city named Argos. Indeed, according to Appian, this was the place in which the *Argeadae* Macedonian dynasty originated, not in Peloponnesian Argos.

As we continue with this investigation into the identity of the Macedonian dynasty, consider the fact that Alexander the Great spoke only Macedonian with his guards, a language the Greeks did not understand. This, together with the fact that Philip II and Archelaus (king of Macedonia from 413 to 399 BC) were called “barbarians”, i.e. non-Greeks by the Greeks, makes it probable that the Macedonian dynasty consisted of Macedonians, whom the Greeks themselves, regarded as non-Greeks. Even if they originated in the city of Argos, then it was in all likelihood the city of

Argos in Macedonia, where the citizens spoke Macedonian, because it was their mother tongue. It is unremarkable that some may have spoken Greek as a second language, since it was the language of their neighbors. We do not find citizens living in the border areas of neighboring countries speaking each others' languages unusual today and there is no reason to find it unusual then. In the same way that Macedonians spoke Greek, we find that some Greeks from the bordering areas accepted certain features from the Macedonian language into their language. (*A*thenaos in *Deipnosophists* III and Plato in *Cratylus* mention this process).

Statements that classify the Macedonian kings as "Greeks," because some placed images of Heracles on their coins do not merit serious consideration. Heracles was a mythological figure and many Balkan nations worshiped him both then and later. The appearance of his image on Macedonian coins was more likely for religious and cultural reasons and not because of any ethnic affinity. A similar argument can be made regarding the worship today of Buddha, who was born an Indian. The worship of Buddha does not mean that all Buddhists should be considered "ethnic Indians".

Indeed, Macedonia is not alone in placing Heracles' likeness on its coins; other nations have done the same. For example, in the Roman Empire there are coins that bear Heracles' image. Some are: ASI, coined in the Ethrurian city of Populonia (third century BC); the coins of Maximinius II, from Caracala; or those of Marcelinius and other Roman emperors. By the signatories' logic, one might very well ask whether the Romans were also Greek, since they also emblazoned their coins with the image of the "Greek hero," Heracles? Similarly, coins with the head of Heracles can also be found in Thrace. Again, the question arises, were the Thracians also "Greek"? Coins with Heracles' image were also made in Syria. Even Napoleon I, in honor of the First Consulate (1799 - 1804) commissioned coins with Heracles' image. In 1970 a

10-franc coin was struck bearing the image of Heracles. One hopes that the French will not be challenged to protect their identity as Macedonians have simply because they have struck coins bearing the image of Heracles. Indeed, in 1998, 1999 and 2000 in Gibraltar two pound coins were minted with the image of Heracles. According to the signatories' logic, that single act renders Gibraltar no longer a British, but a Greek colony. There are many other examples in the world of coins symbolizing the desire of different nations to commemorate heroes of cultures other than the nation minting the coins. It would take too much space to name them all. Clearly, the image of Heracles appears on the coins of many other non-Greek nations, and not just those of Macedonia.

**About Euripides' plays**

Further, the signatories allege that Euripides' plays in Greek performed for Macedonian audiences prove that Macedonians were Greek:

"*Euripides – who died and was buried in Macedonia – wrote his play Archelaos in honor of the great-uncle of Alexander, and in Greek. While in Macedonia, Euripides also wrote the Bacchai, again in Greek. Presumably the Macedonian audience could understand what he wrote and what they heard".*

Lacking relevant data for denying that the ancient Macedonians were not Greek, the signatories resort to the use of these kinds of frivolous arguments. Euripides wrote in Greek because he was Greek and it was his mother tongue. He also probably did not know the ancient Macedonian language, even though he had lived in Macedonia for some time. Even today, it is not unusual for visitors to foreign countries to write in their native language, particularly if they lack professional competence in the host-nation language. There is no evidence to indicate how his

works were received in Macedonia, so this statement should be discounted.

## Demosthenes' testimonies about the non-Greek character of the Macedonians

Additional speculation on the use of Greek and the ethnicity of Macedonians:

*"Greek was the language used by Demosthenes and his delegation from Athens when they paid visits to Philip, also in 346 B.C."*

It is unclear whether citing Demosthenes as proof of the "Greek character" of the Macedonians is altogether serious. This is because Demosthenes is considered the fiercest pro-Greek detractor of Macedonia and Philip II. He continually stressed the non-Greek, or barbarian qualities of Macedonians. It would be truly astounding if the signatories, all authorities in classical studies, were unaware of this.

Demosthenes' famous first speech against Philip II of Macedon was delivered in 351 BC and became famous under the name of "The First Philippic". Later Philip attacked the city of Olintus, an ally of Athens. At that time, Demosthenes wrote another three speeches attacking the Macedonians and demanding that Athens help Olintus. However, Olintus was taken by the Macedonians and Demosthenes participated in the delegation that negotiated between Macedonia and Athens. Later, he wrote "The Fourth Philippic".

In 338 BC at Chaeronea, the famous battle between the Macedonians and the Greeks took place. After that, Macedonia's king Philip II occupied most of the Greek city-states. Demosthenes continued making anti-Macedonian speeches causing the Greeks to rebel against the Macedonians for their own freedom. However, later the Athens' Council, under Macedonian pressure, reached a

decision to sentence the leaders of the anti-Macedonian rebellion, together with Demosthenes, to death. Demosthenes managed to escape to an island where he committed suicide.

The ancient Greek historian Plutarch witnessed the anti-Macedonian endeavors of Demosthenes. In his work "Comparison between Demosthenes and Cicerone" (written in 75 BC) Plutarch wrote:

„*Demosthenes…walked among the cities in Greece and everywhere, as we have previously said, indulged himself in the conflicts in the service of the Greeks who wanted to chase the Macedonian representatives away… After he came back he continued to resist Antipater and the Macedonians"*

In his writings, Demosthenes attacked Macedonia and he clearly defined Macedonians and Greeks as two separate nations. Even in his "First Philippic", he described Philip as (quote): *"a man who subjugated the citizens of Athens and ruled Greece's internal affairs."*

Demosthenes also clarified the absence of any connection, either ethnic or mythological linking the ancient Macedonians to the "Greek God Heracles". In one of his many anti-Macedonian speeches, he disputed the right of Macedonians to assert a claim as the descendants of Heracles. Criticizing the Macedonian delegates, who repeated that Philip II is Heracles' descendant many times, Demosthenes argued:

"*I believe that Heracles, heard the words of the delegates, who persistently say that Philip is a descendant of this God with a revolt. Let this god get to know the scorn of all religions. Let this god see the Macedonian tyrant. This god, the hater, punisher and destroyer of tyranny…"* (Quintus Curtius Rufus: "The history of Alexander of Macedon", translated from Latin by dr. Ljubinka Basotova; Skopje, 1998, pg. 30).

Perhaps, Demosthenes provided the clearest evidence of the non-Greek origin of the Macedonians and their rulers in his "Second Philippic", where he said the following about Philip II:

***„Philip, this man not only that he is not Greek, but he has nothing in common with the Greeks, also.*** *If only he was a barbarian from a decent country – but he is not even that. He is some scabby creature from Macedonia – the country from which you cannot even bring a slave who is worth something."*

The excerpt, *"Philip, this man not only that he is not Greek, but he has nothing in common with the Greeks, also",* has been intentionally stressed to demonstrate to the signatories that their letter contradicts the writings of the greatest ancient Greek orator Demosthenes and, in so doing; it underscores their role as anti-Macedonian propagandists. The lesson here is that no less a figure than Demosthenes fervently asserted that Philip II of Macedon was not Greek, that he had nothing in common with the Greeks, and finally that the king of Macedonia was a mere "barbarian".

One may well ask what the term "barbarian" connotes when Demosthenes uses it in reference to Phillip. Many of today's scholars believe that the word "barbarian" in ancient times was used mainly to refer to people who spoke a language which could not be understood by Greeks, thus carrying the strong connotation of people who babble. Virtually, any nation that did not speak Greek was referred to as "barbarian" by the Greeks, while the Greek city-states referred to each other as "xenoi". In the words of the ancient Greek authors the term "barbarian" was defined by the Athenian playwright Aristophanes (448 - 385 BCE). In his play "Birds" (written in 414 BCE) Aristophanes wrote:

*"I have stayed for a long time with them and taught them to speak, although before that they were barbarians."*

Here, we can see clearly that, for the ancient Greeks, the term "barbarians" meant "people who did not speak Greek", or more basically, it meant those who were not Greek.

There are many instances in which ancient Greek writers use the term "barbarian" to refer to representatives from many Asian, African as well as European nations. For example, if the

representatives of a distant Asian nation were called “barbarians” because they did not speak Greek, it would be the same as if it were used to describe the Macedonians. The term “barbarians” cannot have one meaning when used to refer to Macedonians and a different meaning when applied to other non-Greek Asian, African or European nations. This point is important precisely because many Greek or pro-Greek authors have attempted to minimize Demosthenes’ reference to Macedonians as “barbarians”. They state, although unconvincingly, that he made no distinction between the Macedonian and Greek nation, but rather qualified them as “barbarians” only in an effort to “derogate their culture” for “political reasons”.

Demosthenes was not the only Greek who regarded the Macedonians as “barbarians”, i.e. a nation not of Greek origin. In the fifth century BCE, the ancient Greek writer, Thrasymachus, called the Macedonian king Archelaos a “barbarian,” as distinct from the Greek Larisians, in one of his speeches. (Clement of Alexandria, "*Stromatis*", 6).

The Macedonians were also called “barbarians” by the Greeks in the Lexicon, “Suda”. (Written by some ancient and medieval writers). When translating the word “causia” (a kind of Macedonian hat), in “Suda” an unknown ancient Greek writer wrote that it was a “kind of barbarian head cover” (Suda, Kappa, 1139). The fact that this hat was created and mostly used by the Macedonians clearly indicates that this Greek writer considered the Macedonians to be “barbarians,” or people who do not speak Greek.

The ancient Greek grammarian Hesychius from Alexandria (fifth century) also described the Macedonians as “barbarians”. In his description of the word “sarissa” (a long spear of the Macedonian phalanx), Hesychius wrote that it was used by the “barbarian Macedonians”.

In sum, Demosthenes’ anti-Macedonian statements represent one of the most significant and compelling sources attesting to the

non-Greek origin of the ancient Macedonians. Naturally, as a Greek, he spoke Greek during his stay in Macedonia. There is no evidence that these conversations were facilitated by interpreters, but it is disingenuous for the signatories to argue that, simply because leading Macedonians spoke Greek - the language of their neighbors - that those Macedonians were in fact “Greeks”.

**On the language of the ancient Macedonians**

We will now turn our attention to the signatories’ assessment of the language of the ancient Macedonians:

*"Another northern Greek, Aristotle, went off to study for nearly 20 years in the Academy of Plato. Aristotle subsequently returned to Macedonia and became the tutor of Alexander III. They used Greek in their classroom which can still be seen near Naoussa in Macedonia."*

With regard to the use of language, we also read the following:

"*Alexander carried with him throughout his conquests Aristotle’s edition of Homer’s Iliad. Alexander also spread Greek language and culture throughout his empire, founding cities and establishing centers of learning. Hence, inscriptions concerning such typical Greek institutions as the gymnasium are found as far away as Afghanistan. They are all written in Greek. The questions follow: Why was Greek the lingua franca all over Alexander’s empire if he was a 'Macedonian'? Why was the New Testament, for example, written in Greek?"*

Aristotle was born in Stagira (a Greek colony, mainly inhabited by Greeks, on the Macedonian coast, which was destroyed by Philip II during his anti-Greek campaign, when he drove all Greek colonists from Macedonia’s Aegean shores). There is no evidence on the ethnic origin of his parents. However, we do know that his father, Nicomachus, was Philip II’s personal doctor. We can assume that he was Macedonian. Generally, those closest to the

Macedonian rulers (especially Philip II) were mainly trusted Macedonians, a fact that can be easily corroborated by a review of their inner circle. Simply because Aristotle was educated in Greek and for a long time was absent from Macedonia, does not necessarily mean that he was Greek.

We do not contend that Alexander did not speak Greek. Rather, we argue that he spoke it as a second language and that his mother tongue was Macedonian, a language quite different from Greek. It is simply not credible that the signatories, all classical scholars, were totally ignorant of the ancient testimonies attesting to the clear differences in the languages of the ancient Macedonians and that of the Greeks of that time. We will undertake this task in their stead.

Proof of the difference between the ancient Macedonian and Greek languages can be found in a fragment of papyrus believed to be part of the lost "History of the Inheritors" by the above-mentioned Greek historian Arrian (Lucius Flavius Arrianus Xenophon, who lived around 92 to 175 CE). In this work (PSI XII.1284), there is an episode from Macedonian history in which the distinctiveness of the Macedonian language is clearly evident. Here we read that the secretary to Philip and Alexander of Macedon, Eumenes, "…*sent forward a man named Xenias, who spoke Macedonian* …" to negotiate with the Macedonian army of Neoptolomeus. This event took place around 321 BCE.

We have already noted that Arrian wrote a biography of Alexander the Great of Macedon, which is considered the oldest, complete biography of this Macedonian warrior. In this biography, Arrian fequently stresses the difference between the Macedonians and the Greeks. Here, we will limit our remarks to a description of the battle of Issus, in which thousands of Greeks fought on the side of Persia against the Macedonians. Arrian wrote that in this battle the most violent conflict occurred between the Macedonians and the Greeks, and that this was chiefly because of the great hatred between the two nations. Arrian put it this way:

"*There was a violent struggle. Darius' Greeks fought to thrust the Macedonian back into the water and save the day for their left wing... **The fight was further embittered by the old racial rivalry of Greek and Macedonian***". (Arrian: "The Campaigns of Alexander*",* translated by Aubrey De Selincourt, Penguin books, USA, 1987, pg. 119, the bolding is mine).

Can someone explain to me how it is possible the Macedonians and the Greeks were "one people" when in this relevant ancient testemony we can see that there was an old racial hatred between the two of them?

An outstanding account on the distinctiveness of the language of the ancient Macedonians was also given by the ancient historian Plutarch (who lived from around 45 until 120).

In his biography about Eumenes, describing the appereance of Eumenes in front of the Macedonian soldiers, Plutarch wrote:

"...*On the first sight of the general of their heart, the troops saluted him in the Macedonian language, clanked their arms, and with loud shouts challenged the enemy to advance, thinking themselves invisible while he was at their head*." ("*Eumenes"* by Plutarch 14, 10, translated by John and William Langhorne. E version on: http://www.attalus.org/old/eumenes. html. John Langhorne lived in the XVII century. He was a famous English poet, and translated the works of Plutarch together with his brother William. This translation appeared in 1770).

Plutarch mentions the Macedonian language in his biography of Marc Antony as well. It is known that after the death of Alexander the Great, his empire fell apart and its respective parts were ruled by his top military commanders. For example, his childhood friend (according to some sources, his half-brother) Ptolemy I ruled Egypt and some neighboring countries. He founded the Ptolemaic dynasty, which ruled Egypt after his death. The most famous descendant of this Macedonian dynasty is the Egyptian queen Cleopatra VII. In the biography about Marc

Antony, Plutarch wrote about Cleopatra in detail and indirectly noted that her mother tongue was Macedonian:

"*It was a pleasure merely to hear the sound of her voice, with which, like an instrument of many strings, she could pass from one language to another; so that there were few of the barbarian nations that she answered by an interpreter; to most of them she spoke herself, as to the Ethiopians, Troglodytes, Hebrews, Arabians, Syrians, Medes, Parthians, and many others, whose language she had learnt; which was all the more surprising, because most of the kings her predecessors scarcely gave themselves the trouble to acquire the Egyptian tongue, and several of them quite abandoned the Macedonian*." ("*Antony"* by Plutarch, translated into English by the playwright, John Dryden, who lived from 1631 until 1700. E-version of this translation can be found on:http://classics.mit. edu/Plutarch/antony.html).

This account by Plutarch discusses the mother tongue of the Ptolemies, i.e. the Macedonian language. Clearly, Plutarch believed that, some of the Ptolemies, perhaps for political reasons, neglected the Macedonian language in deference to speaking the local language. Since, Plutarch does not say that this was the case with Cleopatra, we may infer that she retained her mother tongue.

Plutarch provides us with other accounts about the distinctiveness of the Macedonian language. Sometime around 76 CE, Plutarch, referencing some older works, wrote a biography of Alexander the Great of Macedon in which he describes (head 53), an argument between Alexander the Great and his friend:

"*Alexander... breaking from them, he called out aloud to his guards in the Macedonian language, which was a certain sign of some great disturbance in him*." (Plutarch: "*Alexander the Great",* Macedonian translation, Skopje 1994).

This account refers to an incident when Alexander thought that his friend Cleitus, with whom he had argued while drunk, posed a danger to his life. At one point, Alexander thought that Cleitus, would attack him, so he summoned his guards (shield-

bearers) to protect him. Plutarch clearly writes that they were summoned in Macedonian.

To explain this account by Plutarch, we need to mention the fact that the official language in the Macedonian Empire and in its army, during the Macedonian dominion, was the language of "koine" (mixed language) that was used in the Macedonian Empire. In addition to words from the ancient Greek dialects (which were numerous) koine contained words from other languages as well. Alexander established this language for practical reasons, since he was aware that he would encounter resistance were he to impose the unfamiliar Macedonian language on the different nations in his empire.

Universal use of this mixed language or koine, later was strictly enforced by the Macedonian dynasties that ruled the divided parts of Alexander's empire to facilitate ease of communication among the different nations. Today scientists consider koine as a kind of Esperanto of that period.

This means that Alexander communicated in koine with his military commanders and his army (among whom the Macedonians were dominant; there were also many Greeks, Thracians, Jews and people from other nations). However, at the moment when he thought that his life was in danger, he instinctively began speaking in his mother tongue, Macedonian. This reaction accords with human psychology and most people would react similarly to perceived danger. His instinctive reaction to call out in Macedonian, when he had no time to formulate an urgent call for help to his Macedonian guards in a foreign language, establishes beyond doubt that Macedonian was his mother tongue.

Clear evidence of the distinctiveness of the ancient Macedonian language was also provided by the Latin historian Quintus Curtius Rufus (of whom the period of living is not known – some say he lived BCE others say that he lived in the first century CE).

The incident of the trial of the Macedonian, Philotas, who was accused of plotting the murder of Alexander, is well known.

The plot was revealed and Philotas was publicly interrogated by Alexander.

Quintus Curtius Rufus described this event and clearly stated that the Macedonians spoke a different language. He even quotes Alexander addressing the Macedonians in the first person plural *"the mother and our language*". Alexander addressed Philotas with the words:

*"Now you are going to be trialed by the Macedonians. I am asking you: are you going to address them in Macedonian?"*

Philotas denied, explaining that, besides Macedonians, there were other nations present there. To this, Alexander addressed the Macedonians saying:

*"Can you see? Did Philotas come to the point, when he rejected his own mother tongue?... But, let him speak as he wants, and you remember that he has equally alienated from our customs and from our language."* (Quintus Curtius Rufus, "De Rebus Gestis Alexandri Macedonis", VI, 10; translated from Latin by dr. Ljubinka Basotova, Skopje, 1998, pg 272).

But, Philotas remained indifferent to these accusations and in his speech he said:

"*I am being accused of refusing to speak in my mother language and for being disgusted with the customs of the Macedonians. Does this mean that I am a threat to the kingdom I despise in this way? But, even from before, the mother tongue was abandoned in the conversation with other nations, thus the winners and the defeated had to learn a foreign language."* (Q. C. R. quote, pg. 274).

However, in the accusation against Philotas Bolon, Alexander's commander interfered, maintained that: "…*although he was Macedonian, he was not ashamed to listen to the people who spoke in his own language with the help of an interpreter."*

This event established the existence of an independent and separate Macedonian language. Also, this description illuminates the fact that some Macedonians, whether to facilitate greater

communication with the other nations or for other reasons, used the foreign language koine. Among themselves, however they continued to communicate in their mother Macedonian tongue.

We see that during the trial, Philotas was rebuked by Alexander for his refusal to speak Macedonian to the Macedonians. Philotas accused Alexander of establishing koine, he argued that the Macedonian language had been neglected a long time ago, so that both the winners (Macedonians) and the defeated (Greeks and other nations) had to learn a new language (koine).

Bolon interfered and accused Philotas, who though Macedonian, communicated with the Macedonians through interpreters. This is an extremely important account and proof that, at that time, many Macedonians could not speak koine, so when they wanted to talk to someone, they used interpreters. Although Philotas spoke Macedonian, he did not want to communicate with the Macedonians in their own language, but rather he insisted on having their words translated into koine.

It is incomprehensible that the signatories managed to overlook these elementary facts from the biography of Alexander the Great of Macedon.

Regarding the language of the ancient Macedonians we present a map from the "Ancient Languages of Europe" published in 2008 at the University of Cambridge (Edited by Roger D. Woodard, published by Cambridge University Press, 2008) which depicts those territories in which ancient Greek was spoken. It is clear that most of Macedonia (with the exception of the sparsely inhabited peninsula Chalkidiki, where Greek colonies remained for a very long time) was not part of the Greek speaking area. We see on this map that the Macedonian language clearly is presented as a language spoken in ancient times.

*A map titled "Greek dialects in the first millennium BC and the neighboring languages" published in the book "Ancient Languages of Europe" (Edited by Roger D. Woodard), published by Cambridge University Press (Great Britain, 2008, pg. 49-50). It shows that in ancient Macedonia the spoken language was Macedonian, a neighboring language of the Greek dialects.*

To conclude, the koine language was *lingua franca* in the Macedonian Empire, not because the Macedonians were "Greeks", but to permit the different nations in the empire to communicate among themselves with the help of this ancient "Esperanto".

The signatories of this letter, perhaps unintentionally, indirectly confirmed this truth when they used the term "lingua franca". It is known that the term *lingua franca* comes from Italian which means a third language used for communication among people who speak different languages. This third language is different from the mother tongue of those communicating with each other. By using the term *lingua franca*, the signatories are saying that the Macedonians, the Greeks and the other nations in the Macedonian Empire did not understand each others' mother tongues. This then

gave rise to the need for a third language, which is the "common" language, or koine.

Similarly, even if we agree that the ancient Macedonian language did not exist in its written form and that the first written language used for communication among the Macedonians was Greek, it does not follow that writing in Greek makes them Greek. First of all, we have cited accounts that state that some of them did not speak a word of spoken Greek. Secondly, during the classical period, the written languages of the Romans and the Greeks were the only ones known in todays' Balkan area. It would be quite sad if every nation that used either Greek or Latin written languge would be considered as ethnical Greek or Latin. Even after their arrival from Asia into the Balkans, in the seventh century, the Turkish-Mongolian Bulgars, too used the Greek written language in their written communications. Did that make them Greeks too? One might well ask about the rest of the nations at that time: Illyrians, Thracians and other nations that wrote in Greek? The Romans until the second century BCE also wrote their chronicles in ancient Greek dialects. Were they Greeks until the second century BCE and then suddenly transformed themselves into Romans?

There are tens of ancient writers who clearly state that the ancient Macedonians were not Greeks. They include: Arian, Appian, Ampelius, Demosthenes, Dexipus, Dichearchus, Dionysius, Dio Crysostomus, Diodorus of Sicily, Dio Casius, Aechinus, Zosimus, Josephus Flavius, Justinus, Quintus Curtius Rufus, Cleaneus, Clauidian, Clement of Alexandria, Cornelius Nepos, Cohenus, Pausanias, Plutarch, Polybius, Pseudo Scylax, Sozomenus, Strabo, Trasymachus, Herodianus etc. In their works they all offered completely different evidence highlighting the distinctiveness of the ancient Macedonians as well as the fact that they were a different nation from the Greeks. (Additional details on these accounts can be found in the upcoming book "Ancient Greek and other ancient testimonies of the individuality of the ancient

Macedonians" by Aleksandar Donski, scheduled soon to be published in RoM, by University Goce Delcev).

**Today's Macedonians are descendants of the ancient Macedonians**

The signatories' argument now moves to their claim that the present-day Macedonians are late-comers to the Balkan Peninsula:

*"The answers are clear: Alexander the Great was Greek, not Slavic, and Slavs and their language were nowhere near Alexander or his homeland until 1000 years later. This brings us back to the geographic area known in antiquity as Paionia. Why would the people who live there now call themselves Macedonians and their land Macedonia? Why would they abduct a completely Greek figure and make him their national hero?"*

We have presented serious proofs taken from ancient sources, which clearly demonstrate that neither Alexander nor the ancient Macedonians were ever Greek. On the contrary, these two nations have fought each other and frequently have exhibited a mutual intolerance in many other areas.

Today's Macedonians in large degree are descendants of the ancient Macedonians and it is a fact that those who would deny today's Macedonia's status as a nation, are afraid that these proofs will be revealed and worse gain currency and broad public acceptance. These proofs exist, they are here to stay and they cannot be "propagandized" or prevaricated away.

Even during the time of Yugoslav communism (the period when today's Republic of Macedonia was a constituent member of the Yugoslav Federation) the history of ancient Macedonia had been the subject of willful neglect. In a number of history books published during Yugoslavia's communist era, the ancient Macedonians were never even mentioned.

A short, representative list of some of these omissions follows.

It is true that today's Macedonians speak a language that belongs to the "Slavic family of languages". Of course the spoken language does not always determine the ethnic origin of a given nation. Today's Irish speak and write in English, but they are proud of their Irish ethnicity.

Besides, in the language of ancient Macedonians (at least in the few words that were kept mainly by the ancient grammarian Hesychius), words which according to their pronunciation and meaning are similar to the present day Macedonian words and other Slavic languages can be noticed. This is a truth obvious to all those who have knowledge of Slavic languages and it is accepted by Slavic linguists dealing with these issues.

It is clear that the signatories haven't the slightest knowledge of the language or the culture of today's Macedonians, nor have they made any apparent effort to study this area. The question arises how the signatories can reach such definitive conclusions about the origin of contemporary Macedonians, when they know almost nothing about them?

Contemporary Macedonians differ anthropologically from the ancient Slavs which is a much stronger argument in support of the signatories' position about the language. The Byzantine historian Procopius described the ancient Slavs as exceptionally "tall and strong people" with exclusively blond or reddish hair (Procopius, *De Bellis*). It is more than obvious that today's Macedonians mainly of medium height, or less and some with dark complexions, have completely different anthropological features. Clearly, these modern Macedonians do not fit the description of the old Slavs and cannot be their pure descendants.

According to available Byzantine accounts, in the seventh century many Slavs were moved from Macedonia into Asia Minor by Justinian II. From the notes of Constantinople's Patriarch Nicephores (head 34) who lived in the tenth century and from the writings of the Byzantine historian Teophanus (from the eighth to

the beggining of the ninth century), we know that, in the seventh century, Justinian II moved from Balkan area (Macedonia) around 150.000 Slavs. From that number, he later chosed 30,000 strong enough to fight and who were included in military campaigns against the Arabs in 692.

In Macedonian folklore, there are many folk songs, stories, legends and myths with ancient Macedonian content registered and popularized in the sixteenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some even feature foreign travelogue writers who visited Macedonia.

In Macedonian folklore there is a number of Macedonian folk works about some of the ancient Macedonian monarchs. There are certain folklore elements (especially in the folk stories) which are undoubtedly rooted in the time of ancient Macedonia. For example, there are several motifs that are reminiscent of ancient Macedonia: the lion (which existed in ancient Macedonia and is frequently present in Macedonian folk stories, and also in heraldry); the king with the horn (dedicated to Alexander the Great); the bobcat; the philosopher; the three brothers (taken from Herodotus' story about the creation of Macedonia); the cult of water; the belief that the crow is evil and that the eagle is noble, along with many others. Macedonian folklore is a rich source of insight into contemporary Macedonia and could invite revealing comparisons with the ancient Macedonian cultural heritage.

There are many customs, ceremonies and beliefs that the ancient Macedonians bequeathed to the Macedonians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For example, Herodotus wrote that during celebrations in ancient Macedonia, men sat separately from women. This custom has been evident to the writers of Macedonian folklore from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and is even evident today. The custom of breaking bread during wedding ceremonies, mentioned by Alexander the Great's biographer, Quintus Curtius Rufus still persists. The treatment of the men's belt on the national dress as a symbol of masculinity

(written by Aristotle, also registered in the nineteenth century) can be traced directly to the ancient Macedonians. Presenting a ring to an heir (before dying) is a custom of the ancient Macedonians and the custom of cutting one's hair during a time of grief -- all are vestiges of ancient Macedonian traditions. Even the ancient Macedonian custom of electing a king (held during a mass gathering of the army and elections affirmed by acclamation) remained with the Macedonians of the nineteenth century as a custom by which village elders are selected. Ancient Macedonian elements are present in the celebration of today's Macedonian holidays: "Lazara", St. George, "Rusa Sreda" and the day of forgiveness. Ancient Macedonian elements are reflected in contemporary "Dodol" customs when calling for rain. The belief that the snake has magic power; many funeral customs etc, all are legacies passed down from the ancient Macedonians.

Many elements of ancient mythology, popularly known as "Greek mythology" -- but without the slightest justification – are apparent in Macedonian national folklore of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Research into the origin of the so called "ancient gods" would reveal that most of the deities were not of Greek origin. Herodotus himself states that most of their main gods, as well as their names, the Greeks took from Africa. In this regard, Herodotus wrote in his "History": "*Almost all the names of the gods came to Greece from Egypt."* With minimal effort, anyone can prove that most of the well known ancient and medieval authors, who dedicated their works to this mythology, either were not Greeks or their origin is unknown. It is not difficult to prove that many of the personalities referenced in this mythology were not of Greek origin. In truth, this is a mythology created and practiced by certain, mainly Balkan, nations and we hope that in future it will no longer be referred to as "Greek", but rather as "Balkan" or "Mediterranean" mythology.

There are many motifs that Macedonian folklore inherited from this mythology. If we compare the motifs of ancient mythology with

those of contemporary Macedonian folklore, we notice some surprising coincidences. Some of these are: fairies (from the ancient menadas); personalization of the sun and the stars; the story of the golden touch; the dragon; the personalization of destiny, happiness and death; a god transformed into an old man; the heroic deeds of the middle age hero King Marko (like the deeds of Heracles); the underworld; metamorphosis and many others. (More details on all of this can be found in Aleksandar Donski's book: "*The Descendants of Alexander the Great of Macedon - The Arguments and Evidence that Today's' Macedonians are Descendants of the Ancient Macedonians (Part One - Folklore Elements"*, MNLD "Grigor Prlicev", Stip/Sydney, 2004, National Library of Australia card number and ISBN 0 9581162 5 3).

Available documents show that many Macedonians from the nineteenth and the beggining of the twentieth centuries – admittedly under the influence of foreign propaganda -- declared themselves as direct descendants of the ancient Macedonians. Of course, they inherited this “self-declaration” from their ancestors, because, at that time, the Republic of Macedonia did not exist and therefore could not be "blamed" for forcing them to do so.

If the foregoing evidence is not persuasive, we will turn our attention to modern genetic research. Recently, a group of Spanish scientists conducted genetic research on contemporary Macedonians and found that they are one of the oldest nations in Europe.

Researchers from the Department of immunology and molecular biology, X. 12 de Octubre, at the University of Complutens, in Madrid, under the leadership of Dr. Arniez-Vilena from Spain, undertook this research in cooperation with the Institute for Laboratory Research of Tissues and Blood Transfusion in Skopje. In the process, they also compared the results with research conducted in other Mediterranean nations. The purpose of the

research was to measure the extent of Macedonians and Greeks in today's genetic pool among Mediterranean nations. For the first time experts studied Macedonians' HLA (antigens from human white and red blood cells) class 1 and class 2 DNA (Deoxyribonucleic acid).

The research "HLA genes on Macedonians and sub-Saharan origin of the Greeks" was published in a reputable Danish magazine "Tissue Antigens" on February 2001 (Book 57, edition 2, pps. 118-127). As a result of this research, the following conclusions were made public:

1) The Macedonians belong to the older Mediterranean basis (groupings), like the Iberians (including the Basques), northern Africans, Italians, French, Cypriots, Jews, Libyans, Turks (Anatolians), Armenians and Iranians.
2) The Macedonians have nothing in common with their neighbors, the Greeks, who, themselves, do not belong to the older Mediterranean basis.
3) The Greeks were found to have a significant similarity to sub-Saharan Ethiopia, which distinguishes and separates them from the rest of the Mediterranean groups.

The researchers reached the following conclusion:

"*This supports the theory that the Macedonians are one of the most ancient nations in the Balkans and long before the arrival of the Mycenaean Greeks, around 2000 BC*."

The research further indicates that the Greeks bear a genetic similarity with sub-Saharan ethnic groups not only in Ethiopia, but also in Sudan and in Western Africa (specifically Burkina-Faso), while the Macedonians are closer to the citizens of Cyprus.

Indeed, gods and deities fall silent before such arguments. Certain historians claim that the creators of the Mycenaean culture are the Pelasgians (an ancient nation that also lived in Macedonia). "Microsoft Encarta" discusses this possibility in an article entitled *Crete* and the *Pelasgians*.

Additional evidence that today's Macedonians are the genetic descendants of the ancient Macedonians came from a research project conducted by the respectable Swiss genetic institute "iGenea". In an interview published in the Belgrade (Serbian) magazine, "Nin," (May 27, 2009), the director Imna Pasos, says that the genetic material of the old nations was taken from tombs discovered at several archeological sites and was later compared to those of contemporary nations. On the basis of the DNA analysis conducted within the framework of this research, the experts concluded that today's Macedonians are mainly descendants of the ancient Macedonians and that they have the right to call themselves descendants of Alexander the Great.

It is difficult to imagine how the signatories might go about impeaching this genetic evidence, and following its disclosure, rationalizing their own public statements that today's Macedonians have nothing in common with the ancient Macedonians.

The strength of this and other evidence makes it clear that the signatories' knowledge of contemporary Macedonians is wholly inconsistent with the persistence of their charges that Macedonians have falsified their history. Despite such strong evidence to the contrary, the signatories and like-minded policy-makers in the Greek Government unaccountably insist on arrogating unto themselves the right to deny Macedonians their rightful historical and cultural identity.

**Today's' territory of the Republic of Macedonia is an inseparable part of the overall territory of Macedonia**

The signatories also claim:

"*The ancient Paionians may or may not have been Greek, but they certainly became Greekish, and they were never Slavs. They were also not Macedonians. Ancient Paionia was a part of the Macedonian Empire. So were Ionia and Syria and Palestine and*

*Egypt and Mesopotamia and Babylonia and Bactria and many more. They may thus have become "Macedonian" temporarily, but none was ever "Macedonia". The theft of Philip and Alexander by a land that was never Macedonia cannot be justified"*

It is true that there are different opinions about the ethnic origins of the Paionians, and we have already stated that the territory of Paionia extended not only onto the territory of today's Republic of Macedonia, but also deep into what is now the part of Macedonia that is administered by Greece. We noted that Paionia ceased to exist as a country in the third century BCE and became an integral part of Macedonia. During this period the Paionians no longer appeared as a separate nation. The reason for this can only be surmised, but it is apparent that the Paionians were ethno-culturally similar to the Macedonians, and thus a relatively quick merger resulted in the creation of one nation. There are ancient accounts that attest to the fact that the ancient Balkan Brygian nation participated in the ethno-genesis of the ancient Macedonians (the proof for this is the similarity in their speech). According to Strabo (VII, 38) there were ancient accounts that indicate that the Paionians too are descendants of the Brygians (Phrygians):

"*Some believe the Paionians may have been colonists of the Phrygians..."*

We have noted that there is a difference in the opinion about the ethnic origin of the Paionians.

The signatories of the letter compare Paionia to the territories of Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Bactria and others, and claim that these territories were temporarily "Macedonian" but none of them (including Paionia) ever became "Macedonia". This statement is unhelpful and fails to address the fact that Paionia simply was absorbed into a greater and growing Macedonian state. That process is different from conquest and the acquisition of empire, as happened in the case of Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Bactria, etc. However this part (although in the past was called Paionia) was

later renamed Macedonia. In the following period, the territory of Paionia gradually began to shrink to the benefit of Macedonia. Please note in the preceding maps how and over what time-period Paionia disappeared and its territory finally was renamed Macedonia.

Almost all of Paionia at that time, with its shifting borders, came to be known as Macedonia and it remains so today. There are thousands ancient, medieval and contemporary foreign artifacts (maps, travelogues, reports, testimonies, newspaper records, magazines and books, state and other documents, historical, geographic, ethnographic and other types of works, artistic works and many other items), in which parts of today's Republic of Macedonia (cities, villages, rivers, mountains, regions) were treated as an integral part of Macedonia and were stigmatized by the epithet "Macedonian".

Three examples follow that will illustrate that the territory of today's Republic of Macedonia, together with the parts of Macedonia under Greek, Bulgarian and Albanian authority, were a political and territorial unit called Macedonia.

*The map by the ancient author, Claudius Ptolemaeus, from the first and second centuries known as Tabula Decima et Ultima Europae. On the map today's Republic of Macedonia can be seen as an integral part of the ancient Macedonian state*

*The famous ancient map Tabula Peutingeriana (Fourth century), in which the parts of today's Republic of Macedonia are a unit and constitute the complete territory of ancient Macedonia*

*The map titled: Macedonia, Epirus and Achaia was printed in Duisburgh, 1589. On this map almost the entire territory of today's Republic of Macedonia is presented as an integral part of the complete territory of Macedonia.*

The signatories contradict their earlier arguments:

"*The traditions of ancient Paionia could be adopted by the current residents of that geographical area with considerable justification.*"

Initially, the signatories claimed that today's citizens of the Republic of Macedonia are "Slavs" who have "nothing in common" with the peoples of the ancient Balkan nations. Suddenly, they contradict themselves by writing that these people, who have nothing to do with the ancient Balkan nations, could "have used" the traditions of the ancient Paionians. Are the signatories telling

us that present day Macedonians are "allowed" to "use" the traditions of any ancient Balkan nation, except the ancient Macedonians despite the fact that they are largely their ancestors?

In the next part of their letter the signatories are showing notorious lack of knowledge. Here we read:

"*But the extension of the geographic term "Macedonia" to cover southern Yugoslavia cannot be. Even in the late 19th century, this misuse implied unhealthy territorial aspirations.*"

I invite the signatories to ask their students or even high-school pupils in their respective countries, the year that the constitution of Yugoslavia was promulgated. They might be surprised to discover that the year was 1929, although this country, under another name, had existed since 1918. It defies logic why the signatories would state in an official document that the term "Macedonia" represents the "southern part of Yugoslavia"; and even more incongruously, why the undersigned would impute to Macedonia "unhealthy territorial aspirations in the nineteenth century…" when, at that time, Yugoslavia did not even exist?

At this point in the signatories' letter, specious propaganda merges into mendacity:

"*The same motivation is to be seen in school maps that show the pseudo-greater Macedonia, stretching from Skopje to Mt. Olympus and labeled in Slavic. The same map and its claims are in calendars, bumper stickers, bank notes, etc., that have been circulating in the new state ever since it declared its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. Why would a poor land-locked new state attempt such historical nonsense? Why would it brazenly mock and provoke its neighbor?*"

We have already mentioned that there are many maps created by foreign authors long before the promulgation of the constitution of the Republic of Macedonia. On those maps, some are shown in this text, the territory of the Republic of Macedonia is

clearly marked as an inseparable part of the territory of Macedonia The signatories' claim that the map of the whole Macedonia was printed on bank notes in the Republic of Macedonia is a malicious lie and wholly devoid of academic merit! I am calling everyone of the signatories to show at least one single bank note officially printed in the Republic of Macedonia on which the map of a united Macedonia is depicted. No such bank note exists! By attaching their signatures to such a document, these "experts" have not only revealed themselves as manipulators of historical facts, but liars as well!

The signatories' attempt to "prove" that today's Republic of Macedonia and the part of Macedonia under Greek authority always were "two separate units" is spurious and is tantamount to denying an entire people the right to their own historical identity. This may not be a crime but it is an instance of serious professional irresponsibility and moral turpitude. These two parts of Macedonia, together with the parts under Bulgarian and Albanian authority, in fact have been an inseparable entity from ancient times. For the first time, this part of Macedonia came under Greek authority in 1913, during the Second Balkan War, when Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria wrested control of Macedonia from the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire and divided it among themselves. Greece occupied the largest portion of Macedonia and annexed it. As a practical matter, Greece established an artificial and arbitrary border inside Macedonian territory. It was a line -- later a border -- at which the Greek army managed to arrive before the Bulgarian and Serbian armies. These latter two armies, themselves, had conquered significant parts of Macedonia. It is therefore dumbfounding when the Greek Government, along with the signatories, discovers a "prior historical justification" for Greece's northern border, which had only been in existence since its occupation by the Greek army in 1912 and 1913. That these three

large parts of Macedonia -- which are now under Greek and Bulgarian authority, together with the current territory of the Republic of Macedonia -- were in the past one unit called Macedonia -- is very well known in Greece today. To illustrate this, we will cite part of the article "*All in a Name*" issued by the then Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dora Bakoyanis and published in "The Wall Street Journal", 01.04. 2008. In the article, the Minister refers to the complete territory of Macedonia:

"*The term `Macedonia` has always been used to delineate a wider geographical region, approximately 51% of which is part of Greece, 38% of which is in FYROM,* (Republic of Macedonia) *and 9% of which is in Bulgaria*"

Clearly, the Greek Minister has admitted that three parts of Macedonia: the Republic of Macedonia (which she calls FYROM), the part under Greek authority, and the part along the Bulgarian border were integral parts of the single region called Macedonia. Yet, the signatories unaccountably claim that the "Greek" part of Macedonia had always been a "separate unit," completely distinct from the territory on which the Republic of Macedonia is located. It would appear that the former Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dora Bakoyanis, has contradicted and impeached the very case that the signatories sought to make.

**Comment on additional information**

Let us now turn our attention to charges of the Republic of Macedonia's alleged "Territorial aspirations":

"*We would note that in 1929, in an effort to submerge unruly local identities into a unified Yugoslav nation, King Alexander of Yugoslavia named the region the Vardarska province, after the major river that runs through it. See, for example, the Yugoslav stamp of 1939 with the ancient Paionia labeled with the name Vardarska. This effort to reduce ethnic tensions was rescinded by*

*Tito, who used the 'Macedonian' identity as leverage against Yugoslavia's Greek and Bulgarian neighbors."*

We have proved that even in ancient times the territory of today's Republic of Macedonia was an integral part of the complete territory of Macedonia. Macedonia and the Macedonians had been enslaved for centuries, and, not surprisingly, each conqueror imposed its own administrative names on the parts of Macedonia under their respective authority. This is the reason king Alexander of Yugoslavia named that part of Macedonia under the control of Serbia "Vardar province". The Serbian occupiers also wanted to denationalize the Macedonians, turn them into "Serbs" and to wipe out all traces of Macedonia in the territory of Macedonia. However the Macedonians in this part of Macedonia resisted these denationalization efforts of the Serbian Government regime conducted in the name of the Yugoslav king, who was himself subsequently murdered in 1934 in Marseille by representatives of an illegal Macedonian organization. During the Second World War this part of Macedonia came under Bulgarian, German and Italian occupation. This occupation also triggered strong resistance. Armed uprisings in which there were as many as 60,000 Macedonian fighters erupted towards the end of the war

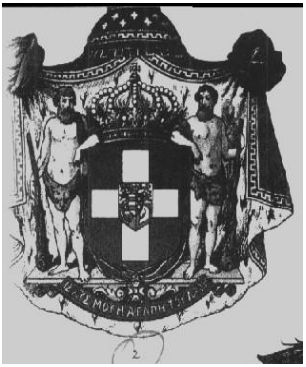
demanding freedom. These anti-fascists won the freedom of the Vardar sector of Macedonia and proclaimed the establishment of the Macedonian Republic, although within the framework of communist Yugoslavia. Following the fall of Yugoslavia in 1991, the Republic of Macedonia declared its independence.

Macedonians also fought for their national freedom in those parts under Greek and Bulgarian authority. The signatories appear not to know that in 1925 (twenty years before Tito's election) the Greek Government recognized the existence of a separate Macedonian identity on its territory and even undertook to provide education for Macedonians in Macedonian language. To carry out this undertaking, the Greek government financed the publication of an elementary text-book for the educational use of Macedonian children in that part of Macedonia that had come under Greek authority. This textbook was later withdrawn from circulation and use following considerable pressure from Greek nationalists. At the same time, Macedonians were exposed to fierce persecution, harassment, murders, false imprisonment, deportation, mass evictions and expropriation of property and concerted and organized attempts at denationalization by successive Greek Governments. There are other documents issued by the Greeks in which the existence of a separate and distinct Macedonian national identity in the framework of the Greek state and beyond.

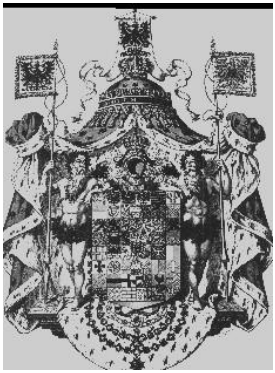
*Front cover of the "Abecedar" - a school text-book to educate Macedonian children, written in the Macedonian language and published officially by the Greek government in 1925*

The arbitrary and unilateral administrative renaming of Macedonia by the occupying power cannot retroactively be considered an “historical proof” of its identity. If we follow this logic with regard to Greece, itself, then we might argue that the territory of today’s Greece during the time under Ottoman (Turkish) Empire, was not called Greece, but “Yunanistan” and the Greeks “Yunanistans”. If we apply the same logic to Greeks as the signatories apply to Macedonians, then the very people who deny Macedonian ethnicity and ancient history are not Greeks, but “Yunanistans” who later decided to become "Greeks". The Greeks later rebelled and, aided by European forces in the 1820s, established for the

first time in history a unified Greek state. Only a minority of its citizens were imbued with a sense of national consciousness. Many of the inhabitants of the newly created Greek state declared themselves to be “Romei” (Romans) and not Greeks. This remarkable fact is a reflection of the rule of Byzantium (whose citizens had always identified themselves as "Romans"). Indeed, the first crest of the Greek state was almost identical with that of Bavaria and had nothing in common with Greece.



*The crest of the Greek State in the nineteenth century*



*The crest of Bavaria*

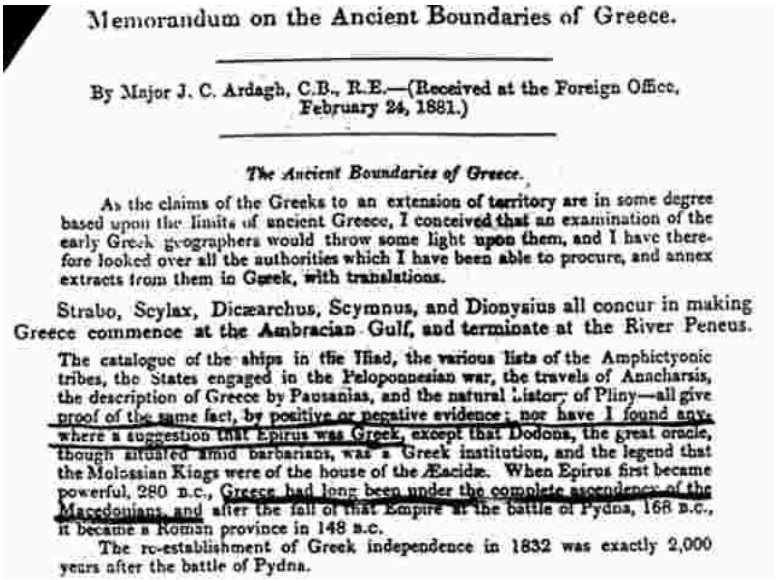
The Greek nation was not recognized by the official representatives of the European countries of that time. At the time “Filiki Eteria” (a secret organization seeking to overthrow Ottoman rule and establish an independent Greek nation) was created in 1814 in Vienna, the European rulers were gathered at the Congress of Vienna. Greek nationalists printed and addressed to the participants a demand for the liberation of their country. Two Russian countes, Yoannis Capodistria and Alexander Ypsilanti,

represented the Greeks in Vienna. But their demands were not placed on the agenda. The chairman, Prince von Clemens Wenzel Metternich, told them that "*there is no Greek nation and that in Turkey there is no other nation but the Turkish one*". (Details regarding these documents, taken from the Russian archives, can be found in academician Blaze Ristovski's "History of the Macedonian nation", Macedonian Academy of Science and Art, Skopje, 1999, ISBN 9989-649-57-X; pg. 10 -12).

Later, fortune smiled on the nascent Greek state. It began to expand at the expense of the Ottoman Empire and began conquering territories that had never before been Greek. In 1881 and after the Second Balkan War, Greece seized from the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire a large part of Epirus, a region south-east of Macedonia. However, Epirus also was never Greek in ancient times. As proof of the non-Greek character of Epirus and its inhabitants, we turn to the research of the British military historian, Major John Charles Ardagh, published as an official document by the Government of Great Britain in 1881. A few years earlier the new, Greek state announced its territorial expansion in the Balkans at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. At that time Greece aspired to occupy Epirus, claiming that it had been "Greek territory". In order to gain a clear insight into Greek claims of an historical right to Epirus, the British government retained the military historian, John Ardagh, to research the issue and give evidence on the ethnic character of Epirus in ancient times. Ardagh received the assignment in 1880 and in 1881 he delivered his report to the British government. In the memorandum Ardagh quotes from the works of all the ancient writers available to him and who had written about the ethnic character of Epirus. Some are: Strabo, Scylax, Dichearchus, Scymnos, Dionysus, the Iliad, the lists of the Amphictionic league and other sources. In the end, he clearly concluded that Epirus was never Greek territory in ancient times. This memorandum was titled "Memorandum on the Ancient Borders of Greece" and was published in the "British

Documents of Foreign Affairs" Edition, Part I, Series F, Europe, 1848 - 1914, Vol. 14 "Greece, 1847 - 1914", University Publications of America. This document was accepted by the British government on 24 February 1881. In it, major Ardagh cited the ancient sources that he used for his research and issued the following conclusion:

"...*nor have I found anywhere a suggestion that Epirusus was Greek, except that Dodona, the great oracle, though situated amid barbarians, was a Greek institution, and the legend that the Molossian Kings were of the house of the Eakidae. When Epirusus first became powerful 280 BCE, Greece had long been under the complete ascendancy of the Macedonians and after the fall of that Empire at the battle of Pydna, 168 BC it became a Roman province in 148 BC."*



Memorandum on the Ancient Boundaries of Greece.

By Major J. C. Ardagh, C.B., R.E.—(Received at the Foreign Office, February 24, 1881.)

*The Ancient Boundaries of Greece.*

As the claims of the Greeks to an extension of territory are in some degree based upon the limits of ancient Greece, I conceived that an examination of the early Greek geographers would throw some light upon them, and I have therefore looked over all the authorities which I have been able to procure, and annex extracts from them in Greek, with translations.

Strabo, Scylax, Dicæarchus, Scymnus, and Dionysius all concur in making Greece commence at the Ambracian Gulf, and terminate at the River Peneus.

The catalogue of the ships in the Iliad, the various lists of the Amphictyonic tribes, the States engaged in the Peloponnesian war, the travels of Anacharsis, the description of Greece by Pausanias, and the natural history of Pliny—all give proof of the same fact, by positive or negative evidence; nor have I found anywhere a suggestion that Epirus was Greek, except that Dodona, the great oracle, though situated amid barbarians, was a Greek institution, and the legend that the Molossian Kings were of the house of the Æacidæ. When Epirus first became powerful, 280 B.C., Greece had long been under the complete ascendency of the Macedonians, and after the fall of that Empire at the battle of Pydna, 168 B.C., it became a Roman province in 148 B.C.

The re-establishment of Greek independence in 1832 was exactly 2,000 years after the battle of Pydna.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Russian-Greek initiative for the establishment of an independent Macedonia

became evident. As far back as October 1829 a meeting of of Tsar Nicholas I's Second Committee was held on the crisis between Russia and Turkey. Russian count, Yoannis Capodistria (of Greek origin) put forward a draft-document that initially had been submitted in March of the previous year, 1828, when Capodistria was chairman of the newly founded national assembly of Greece. In 1830 Greece gained independence with the help of the Great Powers, and Capodistria not surprisingly was elected its first president. His proposal, presented by the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs noted that the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire in the Balkans was about to collapse. It argued that the following countries were to be established: 1. Dacia (Romania); 2. Serbia, including Bosnia and Bulgaria; 3. Macedonia, including the whole of Rumelia and the islands; 4. Epirus, including Upper and Lower Albania; 5. the area of the Hellenes (Greece), together with the southern border of the river Peneus in Thessaly and the whole of the archipelago. Each of these countries was to be ruled by a Duke. An important irony emerges in the story of the creation of the Greek state: Greek nationalists and their first president, Yoannis Capodistria, demonstrated and made representations to the Russian government advocating the establishment of an independent Macedonian state. The irony here is that the individuality and separate character of the Macedonian nation are principles that today's Greek politicians absolutely and categorically reject.

After Capodistria was elected as the first president of the new Greek state, he again proposed a change in the Balkan borders. He never included Macedonia, Epirus or Thrace in the framework of the new Greek state, but he suggested that Cyprus should be given to France, Crete to England and Rhodes to Russia. He maintained that the ethnic writ of the Greek state extended to the Peneus River in Thessaly and Attica Bay together with the islands on the archipelago. Then in 1831, prompted by Russia, he moved the northern border to Olympus and Pindus, but he never extended that border as far as Macedonia. (All these documents

are available in the Russian archives and can be found in academician Blaze Ristovski's "History of the Macedonian nation" that we already mentioned).

We have noted that the portion of Macedonia now under Greek authority became "Greek" in 1913. In the succeeding decades, Macedonians from this part of Macedonia were exposed to a systematic regime of state terror (prosecutions, imprisonment, murders, rapes… These are supported by international documents and testimonies containing eye witness accounts). Thousands of Macedonians were expelled and moved out of their homes in Macedonia and in the 1920s and Christians from Turkey were moved in. The descendants of these Turkish Christians (though their ancestors lived in Asia, but never in Macedonia), acting under the influence of Greek propaganda, declared themselves to be "descendants of Alexander the Great," rather than what they were: descendants of Turkish sultans.

*The signatories criticize the Macedonian government for publishing this ethnic map of Macedonia because, as they allege, it indicates that the*

*Macedonian government "invented" a "pseudo greater Macedonia". Here again, the signatories exhibit abysmal ignorance. The fact is that simmilar map was first published in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1933 when the Republic of Macedonia did not exist.*

## Afterword

Today's Macedonians are a peaceful nation, prepared for cooperation and peaceful coexistence with their neighbours. The Republic of Macedonia is a multicultural state in which every citizen is free to identify with their own national and cultural traditions and values. In every echelon of government of the Republic of Macedonia there are, besides ethnic Macedonians, ethnic Albanians, Vlachs, Serbs, Roma, Turks, Bosniaks and representatives of other nationalities.

Unlike the Republic of Macedonia, Greece officially claims that there are no ethnic minorities on its territory, a claim that is absurd on it face. One wonders if any state in the world exists which, like Greece, denies its citizens the right to ethnically declare themselves as they wish.

In today's Greece there are: Macedonians, Roma (Gypsies), Vlachs, Albanians, Turks and representatives of other nations who are denied the elementary human right to freely identify themselves ethnically and culturally. Anyone doubting this statement should visit Greece and seek out state-sponsored schools in which children study in the Macedonian, Turkish, Vlach or Albanian languages. Additionally, Greece has prevented the independent Republic of Macedonia from naming itself as it wishes, which is itself an unprecedented act of wanton political terror. Perhaps, the signatories might find it enlightening if they imagined someone

denying, or otherwise appropriating their identity and in addition, insisting that they change their personal names.

The future between the Republic of Macedonia and Greece lies in the context of good-neighborliness and close, friendly cooperation. If this is to happen, mutual respect is needed. Let's hope that future generations of Greeks manage to put aside their negative feelings and that our posterity will live in a civilized, peaceful, prosperous and mututally-supportive Balkan sub-region.

## LIST OF THE GREEK-SPONSORED SIGNATORIES OF THE LETTER SENT TO PRESIDENT OBAMA, TO WHOM THIS RESPONSE ALSO HAS BEEN SENT:

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