

National Myths in Interdependence:

The Narratives of the Ancient Past among Macedonians and Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia after 1991

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Abstract

The scholarship on national mythology primarily focuses on the construction of historical narratives within separate “nations,” and oftentimes presents the particular nationalist elites as single authors and undisputable controllers of mythological versions of the past. However, the authorship and authority of the dominant nationalist elites in designing particular narratives of the communal history is limited. The national past, at least in non-totalitarian societies, is widely negotiated, and its interpretation is always *heteroglot*. The particular narratives that come out of the dominant elites’ “think-tanks” get into a polyphonic discursive milieu discussing the past. Thus they become addressed to alternative narratives, agree with them, deny them or reinterpret them. The existence of those “other” narratives as well as the others’ authorship constitutes a specific factor in shaping mythopoeic activities of dominant political and intellectual national elites. Then, achieving personal or “national” goals by nationalists usually means doing so at the expense or in relations to the others. If in this confrontation the rivals use historical myths, the evolution of the later will depend on mutual responses. Thus national historical myths are constructed in dialogue, contain voices of the others, and have “other” “authors” from within and from without the nation in addition to “own” dominant nationalist elite. They interact, interplay, interpenetrate, and determine to certain extent the content of one another.

Macedonian and Albanian mythmaking in the Republic of Macedonia represents one indicative example of mythopoeic dialogue, and interdependence of historical myths. Macedonian intellectuals designed the narratives of ethnic origins from Ancient Macedonians and myths of Macedonian antiquity in response to the Greek nationalist opposition to recognize the new state under its constitutional name on the grounds that the “real” Macedonians and “real” Macedonia were and are ethnically Greek. Afterwards, confronting the launched Macedonian myths of antiquity Albanian intellectuals and politicians in the republic produced their own narratives about the Ancient Macedonians, and Ancient Macedonia claiming that the two belonged to the ancient Illyrian ancestors of the Albanians. It profoundly influenced Macedonian historical mythmaking. Macedonian professional and amateur historians now adopted a new, “ancient” Macedonism as their doctrine. They claimed that the ancient forebears of the moderns (Slavic) Macedonians were a *sui generis* “ethnos” completely distinct not only from Hellenes, but also from Illyrians and any other paleo-Balkan “ethnic groups.”

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Introduction

During the negotiation process started to solve the notorious dispute between Greece and Macedonia over the name of the newly-independent Yugoslav republic the Greek team steadfastly rejected to accept any name for the country that comprised the word “Macedonia”. In its stead the negotiators proposed some alternative options, such as “Dardania,” “Paeonia,” and “Illyria” referring to the designations of the regions to the north of Ancient Macedonia used in antiquity. Other suggestions made by the Greek government included “the Central Balkan Republic,” “South Slavia,” and “South Serbia.” They identified the newborn political entity with broader geographical areas and cultural groups, namely the Balkans, Slavs, and Serbs.

Explaining the firm stance of the Macedonian team towards Greek attempts to deprive the Republic of Macedonia from its constitutional name Hugh Poulton and Loring Danforth attribute some agency to the Albanian minority within the country. In their eyes, references to the Slavic background incorporated into the state’s name could discriminate and offend Macedonian Albanians, who vigorously protested against the change¹. Contrariwise, the firm Macedonian grip on the name “Macedonia” is construed by Loring Danforth and Anastas Vangeli predominantly along the lines of the “symbolic war” concept. Name in this view appears as one of the forms of political power, including the power to bring into life that which is being named. Therefore, the name dispute represents a contest over which out of two nations deserves the right to the worldwide-known culture, deep-rooted history and the territory associated with “Macedonia.” It is precisely these background associations that are contested over².

To put it more concretely, the “symbolic contest” frame for Macedonian case implies that the country’s elites are engaged in a belated nation-building process, and obsessed with promoting the new state in the international arena. They strive to elevate the status of the nation and the state through construction of a myth of glorious antiquity, and therefore so heartedly attempt to seize power over the historical Macedonian grandeur. For the new nation needs respectful pedigree, the “symbolic capital” linked with ancient Macedonia is highly relevant.

This downright symbolist approach, therewith identifying only two sides of the dispute, however, does not shed any great deal of light on why the Macedonian elites continuously opposed such names as “Dardania” and “Peonia.” The legacy associated with them would equally provide today’s Macedonians with autochthonous Balkan ancestry, entrenched traditions of ancient statehood (alleged Paeonian and Dardanian kingdoms), past military might and valor (Paeonian attacks on Macedonia, later contribution of Paeonian forces to Alexander’s conquest, military rivalry between Macedonia and Dardania, continuous

¹ Hugh Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* (London: Hurst and Company, 1995), 178, 185; Loring Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic nationalism in a Transnational World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 154–155.

² Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 154; Anastas Vangeli, “Antiquity Musing: Reflections on the Greek-Macedonian Symbolic Contest over the Narratives of the Ancient Past”. (MA thesis, Central European University, 2009), 64–69; Anastas Vangeli, “Nation-building ancient Macedonian style: the Origins and the Effects of the so-called Antiquization in Macedonia,” *Nationalities Papers* 39:1 (2011): 22. Anthony D. Smith also maintains that the *Greek-Macedonian* conflict emerged because of the particular symbolic significance of the name and the legacy of the ancient Macedonian kingdom: Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 155. On the name dispute as predominantly Greek-Macedonian business linked with nation-building and national identity: James Pettifer, “The New Macedonian Question,” in *The New Macedonian Question*, ed. James Pettifer (London: Plalgrave, 1999), 18–19, 22–23.

Dardanian opposition to the Roman conquest lasted until 28 BC)³. Furthermore, the “ethnicity” (linguistic and cultural belonging) of ancient Paeonians and Dardanians, like that of ancient Macedonians, remains undefined till the present day. The scholars still can not answer whether those “peoples” fell under category of the Thracian, Illyrian or altogether distinct tribes. If interpreted “properly”, the unknown “ethnicity” could secure some room for reclamation of the rights to Ancient Macedonian patrimony, and great historical figures on the grounds of putative kinship connections between Dardanian/Paeonian and Macedonian “peoples.”

It seems that the analytical focus on historical glorification of the nation or ethnic group, and elite attempts to install certain “symbolic capital” into the image of a community fails to explain why the particular version of the past attains its primary significance in a given society. In my concrete case, such approach helps little to grasp consistently why Macedonian politicians refuse to relinquish their grip on the name “Macedonia” and attached symbols. Endeavors to extol the nation in themselves do not shape the visions of communal history. The later are determined in the first place by that *vis-à-vis* whom they are constructed, and in view of whose claims and counterclaims they are brought into life. This requires looking broader when assessing the contestation of the history.

The observations of some scholars reveal that the Macedonian stance is influenced by a larger variety of considerations than glorification and elevation of the nation and strengthening national solidarity in itself. Keith Brown argues that the adoption of the (Macedonian) Sun/Star of Vergina as a state symbol in early 1990s was a reasonable unifying strategy. Selecting a symbol from the ancient past, which preceded the ethnic and linguistic divisions of the present, enabled to transcend them. “The apparent political and popular consensus within the republic on the choice of the 16-pointed sun suggested that it was seen as a rare marker of solidarity across the internal boundaries of ethnic group and religion that dominated most discussions. It had resonance for various groups in the republic: Vlachs or Aroumanians, for example, have flown an 8-pointed star and claim descent from Phillip II by various dubious arguments... Albanian parties, by contrast, have claimed Alexander because he was son of Olympias, the Illyrian queen, and they claim descent from Illyrians...” Then the author points out that the enormous state of Alexander the Great was an empire of mixed languages, traditions and heritages, so with the time *macedonie* came to mean fruit salad. “The spirit of the selection star by a parliament drawn from ethnic groups seems to evoke this past diversity. Although in the Greek view the flag appears to make exclusive claims about identity, within the republic it remains one of the more inclusive symbols from the past”⁴. Keith Brown thus draws attention on inclusive understanding of the ancient Macedonian legacy.

It stays in harsh contrast with the findings of Anastas Vangeli, who remarks Macedonian exclusive interpretation and nationalization of the distant past. For him, the legacy of Ancient Macedonia, which provides the newly-independent nation with glorious history and autochthony, at the same time helps to estrange the Macedonians from Bulgarian and Serb nationhood, and to oppose Greek and Albanian autochthonist pretensions on

³ On Paeonians, Dardanians and Ancient Macedonians see: Eugene N. Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus: The emergence of Macedon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Nicolas Hammond, *The Macedonian State: Origins, Institutions, and History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), John Wilkes, *The Illyrians* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996); Eleonora Petrova, *Pajonija vo II i I milenium pred n.e. [Paeonia in the 2nd and the 1st millennia BC]* (Skopje: Makedonska civilizacija, 1999); Muzaffer Korkuti, *Parailirët–Ilirët–Arbërit. Histori e shkurtër [Proto-Illyrians–Illyrians–Arbers: A brief history]* (Tiranë: Toena, 2003).

⁴ Keith S. Brown, “In the Realm of the Double-Headed Eagle: Parapolitics in Macedonia, 1994–99,” in *The Politics of Identity and Difference*, ed. Jane K. Cowan (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 124–125. See also: Keith Brown, “Seeing Stars: Character and Identity in the Landscapes of Modern Macedonia,” *Antiquity* 68 (1994): 785–786, 790.

temporal priority in populating the republic's territory⁵. Nade Proeva even sees the obsession of the Macedonians with antiquity as a result of autochthonist claims voiced by Greek, Albanian and Bulgarian elites⁶.

Likely the both opinions are legitimate, since the symbols based on the (objectively existed) past, and the past itself are rarely exclusive or inclusive. What makes them to be so are interpretations and attached meanings, generally provided by respective national historical myths that in our case varied over time and across groups. The importance of mentioned observations, however, is that the eminence of the heritage of Ancient Macedonia in Greek-Macedonian dispute was not predicated by its prodigious symbolic significance for the nation-building *per se*, but rather by its functional content, which in turn was dependent on a variety of factors, including existence of rival versions of the country's past promoted by the perpetrators of alternative nation-building projects and identitarian policies in the Balkans. Thus, Albanian, Bulgarian, Serb, Vlach and other voices have been present in ostensibly Greek-Macedonian conflict over the country's name.

In the present thesis I will investigate the influences of Albanian versions of the ancient past on Macedonian ones and *vice versa*. Stefan Troebst like many scholars holds that when the initial "Macedonian Question" arose at the turn of the 20th century, three players influenced the nation-building in the country, namely Sofia, Athens, and Belgrade. The emergence of a "New Macedonian Question" after 1991 meant that now the fourth player, Skopje, entered the game⁷. It is important, however, to go beyond such characterizations, and to look at the inputs of others, which shaped Macedonian nationhood. Then, one needs to study how Macedonian voices influenced the others' nationhood. Here, I intend to analyze some interdependences of Macedonian, and Albanian nationalisms.

In my view the construction of communal past, being part of it, goes along the lines and resembles the construction of communal identity (i.e. the creation and dissemination of a certain image of the community)⁸. Assessing the construction of identities in geographic Macedonia Jane Cowan and Keith Brown note that, despite nation-building initiated by the state, communal identity of the persons belonging to minorities was also shaped by individual and group identitarian counteractions: "The policies of two states [Greece and Yugoslavia] over this century to cope with Macedonian multiplicity - in most respects unexceptional in relation to other concurrent national projects within Europe - and varied responses of the individuals and communities involved, resulted in a range of new subjectivities... To account for... difference only in terms of two parallel nation-building processes is to oversimplify... Although national institutions were designed to produce a homogenous national citizenry, these processes were mediated by a huge number of local particularities and contingencies, including the active responses of those national subjects themselves. What resulted were numerous, often idiosyncratic collective and individual 'accommodations' to the national standard."⁹. Thus, in the authors' eyes state-sponsored construction of national identities directed to minorities is always mediated by a variety of communal and individual responses. I would even say that it is not only mediated, but to certain extend also *shaped*, and not exclusively by individual and communal "responses", but in the first place by competing

⁵ Vangeli, *Antiquity Musing*, 59–61.

⁶ Nade Proeva, "Savremeni makedonski mit kao odgovor na nacionalne mitovi suseda: albanski panilirizam, bugarski pantrakizam i grčki panhelenizam," ["The Contemporary Macedonian Myth as a Response to National Myths of the Neighbors: Albanian Pan-Illyrianism, Bulgarian Pan-Thracianism and Greek Pan-Hellenism"] *Zgodovinski časopis* 64: 1-2 (2010): 176–219.

⁷ Stefan Troebst, "IMRO + 100 = FYROM? The politics of Macedonian historiography", in *The New Macedonian Question*, ed. James Pettifer (London: Plalgrave, 1999), 61.

⁸ Montserrat Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 25.

⁹ Jane K. Cowan and Keith S. Brown, "Macedonian Inflections," in *Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference*, ed. Jane K. Cowan (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 12–13.

nation-building processes and identitarian policies that the perpetrators of Greek and Macedonian national projects should bear in mind¹⁰. In this way majority and minority identitarian policies appear in inverse relationship, when the opposition of minorities to a certain state-created image of the nation can lead to its correction, and ensuing dissemination among majority in the changed form. Understandably, it equally applies to the construction of national history.

The elites constructing national identity by spreading a certain image of the nation resort to historical myths, which serve as boundary-maintenance mechanisms¹¹. The selective use of history provides members of a nation with a collective memory imbued with idealized and glorified events and experiences that allow people to increase their self-esteem¹². The myths of ethnic descent (ethno-genesis) and antiquity, usually tracing the origins of a nation to immemorial times, and indicating the glory of the distant “national” past, make members of a nation to feel proud of their ancient roots, turn the nation into a community of fate, and give it a superior right to certain territory over all others¹³. Anthony Smith even maintains that in the modern era of myth-making and pedigree-tracing “these activities are far more widely diffused; no aspirant ethnic group can be without its myth of descent, if it is to secure any recognition from the competitors”¹⁴.

The upsurge of mythopoeia, namely the myths of ethnic descent and antiquity, in the Republic of Macedonia after the independence seems understandable. Pal Kolstø notes consistent regularity in this respect: “the youngest nations are the ones that most fiercely and hyperbolically insist on their deep antiquity.”¹⁵ Continuous instability and insecurity in the Balkans after the fall of the Communism also contributes to the emergence of ethnic myths in the political daylight. As Anthony Smith shows communal myths appear at certain junctures: periods of profound cultural clash, and accelerated economic and social changes, a definite political or military threat from the outside to the viability of the community¹⁶.

Assessment of myths of ethnic descent in the Republic of Macedonia after the independence, in my view, has developed over past two decades along similar lines and assumed somewhat ossified form.

Firstly, the scholars, while acknowledging minorities’, namely the Albanian minority’s inputs to the political developments, the recognition and name problem¹⁷, educational matters¹⁸ and negotiation of Macedonian identity¹⁹, have drawn only minor attention, if any, to the Albanian agency in the disputes over the ancient past of Macedonia. They have devoted, as I have mentioned afore, merely some lines, showing either that the Macedonian Albanians

¹⁰ Montserrat Guibernau notes that the process of constructing a distinct national identity is “complicated whenever some ‘alternative’ national elites and masses oppose the cultural and linguistic homogenization led by the state”: Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 19.

¹¹ Pal Kolstø, “Assessing the Role of Historical Myths in Modern Society,” in *Myths and Boundaries in South-Eastern Europe*, ed. Pal Kolstø (London: Hurst & Company, 2005), 16–19.

¹² Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 20.

¹³ Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 20; Kolstø, “Assessing the Role,” 21–22; George Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power* (London: Hurst & Company, 2000), 96–97.

¹⁴ Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 60.

¹⁵ Kolstø, “Assessing the Role,” 27. Hugh Poulton argues that Macedonian “ethno genesis” occurred only after Second World War: Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* 116–121. Loring Danforth links “the construction of a Macedonian national identity” with post World War II period: Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 65–78. The Republic of Macedonia attained independence and international recognition in the timespan between 1991 and 1993.

¹⁶ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 83.

¹⁷ Brown, “In the Realm,” 129; Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* 185.

¹⁸ Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* 186; Brown, “In the Realm,” 130–131; Robert Pichler, “Historiography and the Politics of Education in the Republic of Macedonia (1991–2008),” in *“Transition” and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*, ed. Augusta Dimou (Gottingen: V&R UniPress, 2009), 219–228.

¹⁹ Brown, “In the Realm,” 127.

refer to Alexander the Great as their “own” national hero²⁰, or that Macedonian myths of antiquity are designed, partially, in order to oppose Albanian autochthonist claims²¹. Nade Proeva more extensively argues that the Albanian Pan-Illyrianism (tracing Albanian ethnic origins back to ancient Illyrians, who allegedly inhabited the whole region of the Western Balkans), previously fostered by the communist isolationist state, after 1991 is prone to seize the figure of Alexander the Great claiming its Illyrian descent. This increasing and expanding autochthonism, in her eyes, forces Macedonian elites to construct a sort of counter-myth of Macedonian ancient past. Regrettably the author uses merely some interviews with Albanian politicians as a source²².

The existing scholarship on Albanian myths of ethnic descent centered on accounts about Illyrian and Pelasgian origins merely mentions that at some point in history, namely during the Albanian National Revival, Alexander the Great was celebrated as national hero²³. Thus, reemergence of the myth of Alexander the Great as Albanian (Illyrian), and Ancient Macedonians as Albanians (a composition of Illyrian and/or Thracian tribes routinely named and categorized by ancient historiographers as Macedonians) is omitted.

Secondly, despite the scholars vividly recognize the importance of antiquity in Macedonian state- and nation-building after 1991, since the distant past has been referred to by the new state symbols, they tend to chose the whole Macedonian historical mythology (including the myths of origins, the myths of continuity, the myths of victimization etc.) as a focus of their interest²⁴. The works of Anastas Vangeli and Nade Poeva, which are centered on the myths of antiquity in Macedonia before and after the independence, make an exception²⁵. Aleksandr Kolobov cursorily addresses the myth of ancient origins of the Macedonians in his investigation of myths of antiquity in the entire Balkans after the fall the communism²⁶.

Thirdly, following the functionalist approach to the investigation of historical myths²⁷, the researchers accounted for and highlighted the functions of particular historical myths (or narratives) in Macedonia, be they external (*vis-à-vis* out-groups) or internal (in-group). They have drawn attention on the role of the myths of antiquity in the elevation of the

²⁰ Vangeli, *Antiquity Musing*, 7, 62; Brown, “In the Realm,” 124–125.

²¹ Vangeli, *Antiquity Musing*, 59.

²² Proeva, “Savremeni makedonski mit,” 182–188.

²³ Fatos Lubonja, “Between the Glory of Virtual World and the Mystery of Real Word,” in *Albanian Identities. Myth and History*, in *Albanian Identities. Myth and History*, ed. Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 92; Antonina Zelyazkova. *Albanian Identities* (Sofia: International Center for Minority Studies and International Relations, 2000), 2, accessed May 25, 2012, http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00003852/01/Albanian_Identities.pdf. See also one of the latest books on Albanian historical identity, which, however, does not pay attention to the myth of Alexander the Great: Piro Misha. *Arrtisja nga burgjet e historise. [The Break out of the Prisons of the History]* (Tirane: Toena, 2008).

²⁴ Ulf Brunnbauer, *Ancient Nationhood and the Struggle for Statehood: Historiographic myths in the Republic of Macedonia*, in *Myths and Boundaries in South-Eastern Europe*, ed. Pal Kolstø (London: Hurst & Company, 2005), 262–296; Ulf Brunnbauer, “Historiography, Myths and Nation in the Republic of Macedonia,” in *(Re)Writing History. Historiography in Southeast Europe after Socialism*, ed. Ulf Brunnbauer (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2004), 165–200; Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 30–55; Pichler. “Historiography,” 228–242; Kyril Drezov, “Macedonian Identity: an overview of the major claims,” *The New Macedonian Question*, ed. James Pettifer (London: Plalgrave, 1999), 47–59; Troebst, “IMRO + 100 = FYROM?” 60–78; Stefan Troebst, “Historical Politics and Historical “Masterpieces” in Macedonia before and after 1991,” *New Balkan Politics* 6 (2003), accessed May 25, 2012, http://www.newbalkanpolitics.org.mk/OldSite/Issue_6/troebst.historical.eng.asp. It should be noted that many authors do not use the term “myth” to designate Macedonian historical narratives.

²⁵ Vangeli, *Antiquity Musing*; Vangeli, “Nation-building ancient Macedonian style,” 13–32; Proeva, “Savremeni makedonski mit,” 176–219.

²⁶ Aleksandr Kolobov, “Novaia natsionalnaia mifologija na postjugoslavskom prostranstvie” [“New national mythologies in Yugoslavia’s successor states”], *Istoricheskii vestnik universitetov Liubliany i Permi* 1 (2007), 120–123.

²⁷ On functionalism in the assessment of myths see: Kolstø, “Assessing the Role,” 4–14.

nation, increasing self-esteem of its members in face of internal crises²⁸, forgetting historical specificities (the belatedness of Macedonian nationhood and multiethnic composition of Aegean (Greek) Macedonia in the past) for easier nation-building²⁹, grounding pretensions on national territory³⁰, opposing rival autochthonist claims of the neighbors³¹, pursuing party policies, and waging political struggle between former communists (SDSM) and nationalists (VMRO-DPNE)³². Thus, Macedonian historical myths (narratives), including those of antiquity, even when approached in comparative perspective (Greek-Macedonian, Macedonian-Greek-Albanian-Bulgarian) have been seen as mere tools and extended levers of nation-building, and identitarian politics. This observation holds true, but is only one-sided. It discards inverse relationship, when the historical myths of one community opposed by the counter-myths of another one (other ones) come back and evoke the change of the course and content of nation-building and identitarian politics.

Fourthly, it is admitted in line with existing scholarship on national and ethnic myths, that tracing the origins of collectivities deep in history, creating pantheons of communal heroes and villains and claiming historical rights over certain homeland quite frequently cause symmetrical mythological response initiated by rival nationalist ideology. Subsequently the past become contested. Thus regarding the role of historical myths in territorial disputes Anthony Smith elaborates: “[Where] territory is contested, the communal past may be used to provide prior title for one or other ethnic community or nation. Here, different but parallel communal pasts are usually invoked, as has been the case with Tamils and Sinhales, and with Israelis and Palestinians...”³³ By the same token Anastas Vangeli and Loring Danforth speak of twofold contestation of the past, conflict over the “symbolic capital” between Greeks and Macedonians³⁴.

The contestation of the past, however, should not be seen exclusively as a clash of two rival visions of the same history. Thus scholars reveal not only spatial, international or interethnic, but also intra-communal dimension of the multiplicity and contestation of myths of ethnic descent. This phenomenon has been given twofold explanation. Viktor Shnirelman shows that nationalistically prone elites usually elaborate some versions of communal past in order to resort to, depending on what aims the nationalists want to achieve and what rival myths “of the out-groups” they need to confront. For instance, in (Russian) Tatarstan the emphasis on Tatar (Mongolian) roots of contemporary Tatars enables celebrating medieval military glory, cherishing the sense of superiority over Russians and portraying the republic as a homeland for all Tatars in post-Soviet republics. Contrariwise, the myths of Volga Bulgarian origins of the nation are invoked to show its autochthony and historical rights to the republican territory, and thus to underpin territorial integrity of the republic³⁵. Anthony Smith maintains that the “*ethno-history* is always multi-stranded and contested” and this implies “a continuous process of reinterpretation of national identities”. Different visions of the past existing within national communities, in his view, mirror internal social and cultural

²⁸ Vangeli, “Nation-building ancient Macedonian style,” 22; Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 30–55, 154–155.

²⁹ Vangeli, *Antiquity Musing*, 70–91.

³⁰ Brunnbauer, “Ancient Nationhood,” 227; Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 154–155.

³¹ Vangeli, *Antiquity Musing*, 59; Proeva, “Savremeni makedonski mit,” 176–219; Troebst, “Historical Politics”.

³² Brunnbauer, “Ancient Nationhood,” 289–295; Brunnbauer, “Historiography,” 190–196; Troebst, “Historical Politics”; Vangeli, “Nation-building ancient Macedonian style,” 22–25.

³³ Anthony Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Renewal,” in *Myths and Nationhood*, ed. Geoffrey Hosking and George Schöpflin (New York: Routledge, 1997), 38. See also: Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 9, 140.

³⁴ Vangeli, *Antiquity Musing*; Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 28–55, 142–184.

³⁵ Viktor Shnirelman. “Ocharovanie sedoi drevnosti: Mify o proishozhdenii v sovremennyh shkolnyh uchebnikah” [“The Hoary Antiquity Charming: Myths of Ethnic Descent in Contemporary Schoolbooks”], *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 5 (2004): 79–87.

divisions³⁶.

Besides, internationally and interethnically conflicting historical myths are often placed in a geographically broader discussion. George Schöpflin characterizes the mythologization of the past as a vicious circle: “If one group feels that it has to rely more and more heavily on myths of collective existence, its demonized other... will generally do likewise. Thus once the Romanian state re-launched its commitment to the myth of Daco-Roman continuity in the 1970s, a section of the Hungarian minority began to use a myth of Sumerian descent as a counter. A process of this kind tends to be dynamic, polarizing and, once launched, hard to break. On both sides of the divide, mythopoeia is the order of the day and symbolic politics then permeates political discourse”³⁷. The study of Nade Proeva serves as an example of such broader picture of mythical conflict.

I fully agree with the assumption that the historical myths, namely those of ethnic origins and antiquity, bear particular functions dictated by nation-building processes and identitarian policies. This, however, in my view, does not mean the backward influence is not present. I also admit that the contestation of the past and the mythical conflict occur. I, however, disagree to see “clashing” historical myths as *two* (and not more), *solid* bodies (and not malleable substances), *material tools* and mere *levers* of the national and identitarian politics.

To illustrate, Stefan Troebst overtly names Macedonian historical writing after the World War II as a “masterpiece” created to serve particular aims, so assuming the existence of a stable, almost material Macedonian picture of national history, even though the former allows politically motivated inputs and reinterpretations³⁸. Anastas Vangeli considers the myths of glorious ancient past and eminent historical figures as symbols of Macedonian identity. He interprets the contestation of the Balkan antiquity between Greeks and Macedonians as a struggle over symbolic capital. Explaining why this harsh conflict could occur, the scholar draws upon Simon Harrison’s classification of symbolic conflict³⁹. One of the distinguished types is called *proprietary contest*. It implies that the very symbols of identity are at stake, and happens when the identities of conflicting groups become *proprietary*, e.g. as their outward symbols and markers are treated as a property, and can be disputed as a property. Such juncture had place in the case of Greece and Macedonia, when the myth of Alexander the Great stood highest in the hierarchy of Greek and Macedonian national myths (early 1990s, from 2006 onwards), and two states openly confronted in the international arena⁴⁰. So, in Vangeli’s work the myth of Alexander is seen as almost material entity embattled by two parties.

Historical myths, however, being of narrative and textual nature,⁴¹ by definition can not be considered as tangible things. Therefore, I will offer another view on mythical contest over the past. It should be seen rather not as elite sword sparring, where the myths appear as swords, but as elite initiated encounter of many water currents, which in turn are formed by a variety of not always straightforward jets.

Historical myths are not dependent solely on the vision of certain historical identity articulated by ethnic or national entrepreneurs. Apparently the contestation of the past does not occur between stable, forever defined historical narratives. It should not be seen as a process once started and routinely advanced in isolation, as presented by the scholars, who focus on myths of ethnic descent characteristic for particular nations. Historical myths are

³⁶ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 17, 86.

³⁷ Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power*, 85–86.

³⁸ Troebst, “Historical Politics”.

³⁹ Simon Harrison. “Four Types of Symbolic Conflict,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 1:2 (1995): 255–272.

⁴⁰ Vangeli, *Antiquity Musing*; 94–95.

⁴¹ Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power*, 80.

interpenetrative and appear in continuous, mutually influencing and reciprocally shaping relationship. They are dialogically constructed.

I agree with Umut Ozkırımlı that one should not obscure the nature of the communal historical myths and assume independent existence of the later. It is always particular social actors, namely elites and institutions that have the power to single out and promote one of the many narratives⁴². My contention here is that the mythmakers, even though tailoring and promoting myths for rather clearly defined “material” or personal ends, should always reckon with alternative mythopoeic initiatives. Elite-launched myths of one community through constructing similar myths can be confronted by rival national (ethnic) elites, quite frequently more than one of them. Given the myths are sets of beliefs put forth as narratives and not solid bodies, said confrontation will rather lead to some changes within the myths, since particular parts of the later will prove either useless or tenuous, or both. Ensuing revisions will alter the image of the community in question, which in its new version will be disseminated among the members of the in-group in pursuit of national-building and identitarian policies.

Thus in my assessment of Albanian and (Slavic) Macedonian myths of ethnic descent and antiquity in the Republic of Macedonia after the independence, I propose to shift the focus in investigating the myths from enlightening and functionalist perspective more to analyzing their interdependence, interplay and interpenetration caused by social interaction. I want to show how historical myths are constructed in continuous “dialogue” with one another.

Methodologically the present thesis is based on the concepts of *dialogism* and *heteroglossia* elaborated by Mikhail Bakhtin. In studying historical myths in the Republic of Macedonia I use the method of *discourse analysis*, while centering primarily on the works written by Macedonian and Albanian historians, professionals as well as amateurs.

The *objectives* of the thesis are as follows:

First of all, the thesis should set an analytical framework. The existing scholarship on *nationalist* mythmaking is quite extensive and should be critically approached. Investigating historical myths I must design a definition of the phenomenon. Then it is important to draw attention on why nationalists so frequently resort to historical argumentation, what types of historical narratives they employ, and what are the functions of those narratives. The thesis, dealing with the versions of the ancient past also should profoundly investigate those types of myths which narrate the antiquity of the nation.

Secondly, I must address the question of how the national historical myths are constructed, how they interact and why particular versions of the communal past happen to occupy the governing position in the society. The thesis will analyze the theory of dialogism and polyphony elaborated by Mikhail Bakhtin, and will determine its implications for the studies of nationalism and *nationalist* mythopoeia.

Thirdly, studying the narratives of the ancient past in the Republic of Macedonia requires illuminating the general Macedonian mythopoeic context in which the narratives of antiquity appear and develop. I need to single out which myths are present in Macedonian and Albanian historical writing in the republic, and how the narratives of the ancient past relate to them. The analytical concepts of heteroglossia and polyphony are of particular use here. Determining the factors that are conducive to the *nationalist* mythmaking in Macedonia also seems significant.

Fourthly, from the historical point of view before approaching the question how the myths of Macedonian antiquity have developed since 1991 the research should establish if they had been employed by Macedonian and Albanian nationalist in previous times.

Fifthly, I must study what myths of antiquities have been constructed by Macedonian

⁴² Umut Ozkırımlı, “The Nation as an Artichoke? A Critique of Ethnosymbolist Interpretations of Nationalism,” *Nations and Nationalism* 9:3 (2003): 339–355.

and Albanian amateur and professional historians in the Republic of Macedonia after 1991, and for what purposes it has been done.

Finally, the thesis should answer the question how Macedonian and Albanian versions of the ancient past have influenced one another, and what has been the reason for that. Here the theoretical framework elaborated out the theories of dialogism and interactionism needs to be used.

In the following chapters I aim to study the interaction, interpenetration, and interdependence between historical myths produced by various *nationalist* elites. My concrete case will be Macedonian and Albanian mythopoeia in the Republic of Macedonia after the independence.

The first chapter sets a theoretical framework for the study. The essential and temporal connections are established between history and nationalism. The national historical myth is defined here as “*a continuously changing and believed narrative, which emerges and alters in social interaction, ‘uncovers’ pristine ‘true’ self of the nation and its historical continuity as well as provides historical exemplars for emulating by the members of the community, if they are to attain national goals.*” Historical myths appear in various types. They perform important functions for nationalisms helping to construct national identity, to invest the nation with particular dignity and glorious destiny, to present it as a community of fate. Nationalists employ historical myths in order to manipulate mass emotions, control social change, and acquire political power. The chapter conventionally defines national historical myths of antiquities, which are placed at the center of the thesis, as “*certain visions of the beginnings and of the earliest period of the communal past, which are put in form of narratives and claim that the national history started in Antiquity, i.e. before the Middle Ages or prior to 5th - 6th centuries AD.*” Narratives of the ancient past also bear some particular functions. Firstly, they endow the community with specific identity and satisfy the quest for authenticity. Secondly, they invest the community with special dignity in virtue of antiquity, pedigree and past glory. Thirdly, the said narratives help to re-root and locate the community in its own historic space, i.e. to provide it with a specific territory. Fourthly, myths of antiquity establish a sense of continuity between the generations. Fifthly, these myths point to a glorious destiny, originating from the “true” nature resided and revealed in the past. Sixthly, tracing the origins of the nation back to times immemorial “reveals” a specific autonomy, which is anyway inherently characteristic to the community, despite the present oppression and humiliation. The chapter also addresses the question how national historical myths are constructed. Here the theory of *dialogism* elaborated by Mikhail Bakhtin is employed. *Nationalist* mythmaking is proposed to be seen as highly *heteroglot/polyphonic*, since the past of the nation is negotiated by various social actors within and outside the community in question. Different *mythopoeic voices* continuously influence each other. And although in general the primary role in the construction of national historical myths can be attributed to the *nationalist* elites, it is put forward that the mythmakers do not have fully manipulable “grab-bag” in their disposal. They always take into account an existing heteroglot totality of narratives. New myths are produced to oppose or correct already existing ones. The chapter also makes some points about general situation with nationalist mythopoeia in the Republic of Macedonia after 1991. Historical mythmaking is construed as not purely voluntary and/or political activity. In the Republic of Macedonia structural societal, methodological and institutional factors are conducive to production of the myths. Finally, main types of historical myths present in Macedonian and Albanian milieu in the republic are mapped out. Those are narratives of origins, myths of continuity, and myths of victimization.

The second chapter is devoted to the exploration of the beginnings of present-day historical mythopoeia about the ancient past in Macedonia. The theoretical part of the chapter

discusses the concepts of “possession of the past,” and “ownership over [historical] symbolic capital.” Instead of speaking about national symbolic capital it is proposed to analyze how the (objective) history can be nationalized, symbolized and capitalized. Although the myths of Ancient Macedonia and Alexander the Great were used by Macedonian and Albanian nationalists in the 19th and at the first half of the 20th century, by the 1991 they had faded away. Thus in the 1980s nobody “possessed” Ancient Macedonia in the republic, and the level of her nationness, symbolism and capitalness was very low. Only in response to the harsh refusal of the Greek politicians and intellectuals to recognize Macedonia under the constitutional name in the early 1990s Macedonian historians produced the myths of ideological descent from Ancient Macedonians with sound genealogical overtones (the concept of merge).

The third chapter investigates what was the response of Macedonian Albanian nationalist historians to started (Slavic) Macedonian mythopoeia about the antiquity. Addressing (Slavic) Macedonian mythopoeic voices, Albanian intellectuals strengthened their historical myths of autochthony, and (re)launched nationalist myths of Ancient Macedonia and Alexander the Great. Ancient Macedonians were presented in the narratives not simply as “non-Greeks,” but concretely as Illyrians (“Albanian ancestors”). The emergence and the content of those myths were determined by rival Macedonian versions of the ancient past.

In the forth chapter the response of Macedonian historians to Albanian nationalist myths is analyzed. The main point is that the Macedonian national historical myths of antiquity invoked in order to nationalize, symbolize and capitalize the history of Ancient Macedonia after 1991 were not designed in isolation, or only as a result of the Greek-Macedonian contest. A continuous dialog with Albanian popular and professional historiography has led the Macedonian mythmakers not only to claim national descent from the Ancient Macedonians, but also to choose “ancient” Macedonism as their core doctrine. The later presented Ancient Macedonians as a *sui generis* ethnic group, completely distinct from all: Hellenes, Illyrians, Thracians, or any other paleo-Balkan population.

The conclusion sums up the main findings of the thesis, points to its shortcomings and envisions the perspectives of the research. It is stated that national myths do not have single authors and boosters, but rather are constructed in *mythopoeic dialogue*.

Chapter I. Mythopoeia in the Field of National History and Dialogical Formation of National Historical Myths: A Theoretical Framework

Nationalism and History

Historicism as a Core of Nationalist Doctrine

Modern nationalism, as Anthony Smith underscores, owes much to the history, whereas “shared historical memories” play a vital role in it.⁴³ One, however, could disagree. Academic discussions on nationalism, its nature, and content, temporal and spatial location are ongoing. Liah Greenfield and John Breuilly remark that scholars quite frequently fail to agree on its very definition⁴⁴. The former even notices a certain tendency in scholarship to leave the phenomenon undefined⁴⁵. Nevertheless, according to Anthony Smith there are at least some patterns how the term is used. Nationalism generally designates: 1. the entire process aimed at formation and maintenance of nations and nation states, which apparently includes “nationalism as a form of politics” (Breuilly⁴⁶); 2. a specific consciousness or sense of belonging to the “nation” accompanied by sentiments and aspirations for its security and development; 3. a particular form of language and symbolism promoting the “nation;” 4. a sort of ideology, involving “*a cultural doctrine of nations and the national will*” and setting prescriptions for the realization of “national” aspiration and that will, 5. a social and political movement striving to achieve “national” goals and fulfill “national” will.⁴⁷

Pointing to particularly close connections of nationalist movements and ideologies,⁴⁸ the scholar goes further and argues that “we cannot understand nations and nationalism simply as an ideology or form of politics but must treat them as cultural phenomena as well.”⁴⁹ “The notion that every nation must have its own state is common, but not a necessary, deduction from the core doctrine of nationalism; and it tells us that nationalism is primarily a cultural doctrine or, more accurately, a political ideology with a cultural doctrine at its centre.”⁵⁰ In his eyes, “at the broadest level nationalism must be seen as a form of *historicist* culture and civic education, one that overlays or replaces the oldest modes of religious culture and familial education”.⁵¹ According to one scholarly standpoint, it is ethnic or cultural nationalism, previously often called “Eastern,” which deals with revealing and establishing historical and cultural commonalities among members of the nation. Ethnic nationalism strives to rediscover the “inner self” of a community drawing upon ethnic historicism.⁵² Preoccupations with language in both synchronic and diachronic perspectives, history, and folklore “reflect a belief

⁴³ Anthony D. Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 74. The author makes a caveat that the memory can be “taught” (P. 75).

⁴⁴ Liah Greenfield, “Etymology, Definitions, Types,” in *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, vol. 1, ed. Alexander J. Motyl (San Diego: Academic Press, 2000), 257; John Breuilly, *Nationalism and State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 1.

⁴⁵ Greenfield, “Etymology,” 257.

⁴⁶ Breuilly, *Nationalism*, 1.

⁴⁷ Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), 72. The emphasis added. John Breuilly and Henk Dekker discover similar modes, how nationalism can be understood: Breuilly, *Nationalism*, 1; Henk Dekker, *Nationalism, its Explanations, and National Socialization* (1998): 1–5, accessed May 25, 2012, <http://web.ceu.hu/nation/classics/11Dekker1.pdf>.

⁴⁸ Smith, *National Identity*, 75.

⁴⁹ Smith, *National Identity*, VII.

⁵⁰ Smith, *National Identity*, 74.

⁵¹ Smith, *National Identity*, 91. The emphasis added.

⁵² Smith, *National Identity*, 93, 12.

in deeper, 'natural,' that is, in effect, biological, forces behind them, such as race or 'blood and soil,' which form the ultimate reality underneath nationhood and national identity".⁵³

Needless to say that distinguishing certain nationalisms, and terming them as "ethnic" or "Eastern," which implies aggressive, unpalatable, and parochial, has been harshly criticized by a number of scholars.⁵⁴ Apparently no matter how disputable the portrayal of nationalism as a form of culture can seem, or how vigorously some students can oppose such account, in any case, as Anthony Smith cogently argues, the people engaged in elaboration of or affected by nationalist ideologies are prone to believe that "[t]he world is divided into nations, each with its own individuality, history and destiny."⁵⁵ For him, no national movement can emerge "without bedrock of shared meanings and ideals, which guide action and determine social change."⁵⁶ Nationalist ideology, language and symbolism relate to three main referents, that is territory, history and community.⁵⁷ Nationalists see nations as the natural and primeval divisions of humanity rooted in original and historically given kinship, ethnicity and the genetic bases. Nations allegedly have existed "from time immemorial" and have developed throughout the whole recorded history, and now represent the sole source of freedom.

The celebrated statement of Ernest Gellner reads: "It is nationalism, which engenders nations and not the other way round"⁵⁸. Benedict Anderson defines nation as "an imagined political community" in sense that life of its fellow-members flows beyond direct face-to-face relationship, whereas internal inequality and exploitation are disregarded⁵⁹.

Nationalists generally embark on the path of "national awakening" by investigating language, literature, history and folklore. Anthony Smith even claims that identification with the past events is crucial for "creating the nation," since only "remembering the past" can form a collective identity: no memory, no identity; no history, no nation."⁶⁰

Nationalism involved and still involves an enormous and spectacular engagement of historical students and writers, rapt archeologists, amateur antiquarians, enthusiastic linguists, philologists, folklorists, anthropologists, actors, and distinguished cultural figures obsessed with the communal past. It is they who construct and promote the ideology, symbolism and language of the nation and nationalism and give voice to ensuing thoughts, hopes and yearnings that they convey in respective projects, images, myths and symbols. Those "historicist intellectuals" "uncover" the historical roots of national communities and confer an alleged inner meaning on cultural distinctiveness.⁶¹ Further, nationalists, striving to elevate, celebrate or commemorate the nation, its grandeur, uniqueness, and dignity, rely upon immense possibilities of creative arts in literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, music opera, ballet and film. "Through these genres nationalist artists may, directly or evocatively, "reconstruct" the sights, sounds and images of the nation in all its concrete specificity and

⁵³ Greenfield, "Etymology," 259.

⁵⁴ Rogers Brubaker, "The Manichean Myth: Rethinking the Distinction between Civic and Ethnic Nationalism," in *Nation and National Identity. The European Experience in Perspective*, ed. Hanspeter Kriesi et al. (Zürich: Rüegger, 1999): 55–71; Benedict Anderson, "Western Nationalism and Eastern Nationalism. Is there a difference that matters?" *New Left Review* 9 (2001): 33–35; Stephen Shulman, "Challenging the Civic/Ethnic and West/East Dichotomies in The Study of Nationalism," *Comparative Political Studies* 35:5 (2002): 554–585; Xose-Manoel Nunez, "Nations and Territorial Identities in Europe: Transnational Reflections," *European History Quarterly* 4 (2010): 670–674.

⁵⁵ Smith, *National Identity*, 74.

⁵⁶ Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 58.

⁵⁷ Smith, *National Identity*, 78.

⁵⁸ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 55.

⁵⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on The Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verslo, 1991), 6–7.

⁶⁰ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*.

⁶¹ Smith, *National Identity*, 93.

with ‘archeological’ verisimilitude”.⁶² Historicist intellectuals perform the function of “*political archeologists*,” since they aim to restore a pristine ethos of antiquity, and reconstruct a modern nation by evoking the past.⁶³ To uncover nation’s authenticity and profound sameness of the co-nationals-to-be cultural elites aspire to purify and mobilize “the people,” appealing to the putative communal past with its “golden ages,” heroes and poetic spaces.⁶⁴ They endeavor to transform “the people” into “the nation,” which is imagined as a community of history and destiny⁶⁵.

Thus, the scope of “awakeners” attempts of delving deeper and deeper into the past is not limited to mere “archeology” for unveiling an identity, much less for its own sake. The scholars maintain that if the masses are to be mobilized, the return to the “roots” is necessary. By creating the nation, a sort of cultural artifact, elites strive to prevent social breakdown and channel social change and political mobilization. “Usable past” is invoked to manipulate mass emotions and legitimize unpalatable social change, engendering nostalgia for the “good old days.” It provides the “nation” with historical examples for emulation, and prior title to the “national” territory, particularly when the later is contested. Furthermore, the image of “antiquity” in eyes of the nationalists resonates with liberation and efflorescence⁶⁶.

Temporal and Essential Conections

Indeed, nationalism and history be the later understood as a story or an inquiry into the human past, are inextricably interconnected, both essentially and temporally. The emergence of academic historiography in the 19th century occurred in nationalist milieu, whereas historical studies have appreciably contributed to the formation of that milieu⁶⁷. Colin Kidd characterizes “the modern historical enterprise” as “a product of the nationalist moment of the nineteenth century.” For him, the notion of a “people” itself is permeated with descent myths, stemming from 19th century historiographies, whereas many historians tend to confine the past into ethnic and national categories, using the models of ethno-genesis or people formation⁶⁸. Patrick Geary, for his part, marks the exact point in time, when the history as a discipline was created. He argues that in the time-span between 1820s and 1870s German nationalists married inquiry into historical documents and remnants, with philology. Through painstaking realization of a giant paleographical project, the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, and publication of historical studies based upon its sources they constructed the first “scientific” and *national* version of the past, one which was ready for coping and exporting⁶⁹.

On the other hand, Anthony Smith emphasizes that in the 18th and 19th century the uncovered remote past with its alleged golden ages of communal heroes sapped the historicist vision, which underpinned the new ideology of nationalism, revealing grandeur of one or another national genius and spreading the cult of national distinctiveness all over Europe⁷⁰. Starting from that time, as the scholar shows, no aspirant ethnic group or nation could be without its myth of descent, if some want to secure its recognition from competitors: “Since

⁶² Smith, *National Identity*, 92.

⁶³ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 12.

⁶⁴ Smith, *National Identity*, 68–69.

⁶⁵ Smith, *National Identity*, 97.

⁶⁶ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 212–213, 215.

⁶⁷ Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002). Hereinafter the citations are given according to the Albanian edition: Patrick J. Geary, *Miti i kombeve. Origjina mesjetare e Evropës* (Tiranë: OMBRA GVG, 2006), 67–78.

⁶⁸ Colin Kidd, “Identity before Identities: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Historian,” in *History and Nation*, ed. Julia Rudolph (Cranbury: Associated University Press, 2006), 12–15.

⁶⁹ Geary, *Miti i kombeve*, 68.

⁷⁰ Smith, *National Identity*, 89–90.

the late eighteenth century, spokesmen for every ethnic community have made frequent appeals to their alleged ancestry and histories, in the struggle for recognition, rights, and independence. In the course of these struggles, ethnic spokesmen have drawn on, or in some cases invented, a 'myth of origins and descent' which then inspired writers and artists to recreate for their publics the events, atmosphere, and heroic examples of remote, archaic eras..."⁷¹ Up to this day, for many people, not only for nationalists, history and historicity are central in understanding the nation. In spite of the historical facts, most of nations generate a sense of immemorial belonging, and appear as historically "given."⁷² However, it has been not enough for the nation merely to have a past. The fundamentals of the nation's authenticity have had to lay in its pedigree. In order to elevate the status of the nation, its exponents should draw on the conviction of common and glorious history. Finally, history has become a charter for revolution, political rearrangements and social change.⁷³ Thus, empirically it is difficult to distinguish what influenced what, and claim "scientific" history or nationalism being an independent variable. Many historians and nationalists of the 19th century were all rolled into one.

However one frames the phenomenon, pointing to emergence of history out of nationalist movement or, possibly, speaking about historical construction of the nationalism, it has left a deep imprint on understanding and narrating the human past. The history has become connected to nationalism methodologically. Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller understand by *methodological nationalism* "the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world."⁷⁴ According to them it appears in three modes. The first is the classical social theory itself, which believes in naturalness and givenness of a world divided into societies confined to nation-states. The second involves "taking national discourses, agendas, loyalties and histories for granted, without problematizing them or making them an object of an analysis in its own right." The third implies the territorialization of enquiry and the reduction of the analytical focus to the borders of the nation-states⁷⁵. History is disposed to both taking national problems for granted and focusing on national territories. Deliberately or accidentally historical assessment has been centered on the "nation," ascribing that status to various groupings. Historians have largely illuminated the pasts of particular nation states, or of their relations to each other. Historical writing has been often used to legitimize a particular nation-building project. Otherwise, it has been affected by an assumption that the nation represents the constant unit of observation through all historical transformations, and an ultimate object of analysis.⁷⁶ Colin Kidd concludes: "Nations are the building blocks of history. Underpinning such approaches are assumptions about national continuity, that the ancient histories of the territories of England, Scotland, Ireland, France, and so on yield the origins of modern nation, even when the ancient inhabitants were divided into various different entities, whether regnal, ethnic or tribal"⁷⁷. That common feature of historiography, which project a current state of affairs back to the past, makes Peter Štih to hold that the history is rather constructed than reconstructed, and rather fictitious than real.⁷⁸

⁷¹ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 60.

⁷² Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 3.

⁷³ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 61.

⁷⁴ Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences," *Global Networks* 2:4 (2002): 302.

⁷⁵ Wimmer and Glick Schiller, "Methodological Nationalism," 303–308.

⁷⁶ Wimmer and Glick Schiller, "Methodological Nationalism," 305.

⁷⁷ Colin Kidd, "Identity before Identities: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Historian," in *History and Nation*, ed. Julia Rudolph (Cranbury: Associated University Press, 2006), 13–14.

⁷⁸ Peter Štih, "Miti in stereotipi v nacionalnem videnju starejše slovenske zgodovine" ["Myths and Stereotypes in National Vision of Ancient Slovenian History"], *Nova revija* XXV, 293–294 (2006): 245.

A Need for History

Why history often has had significant an appeal for the population during nationalist movements? And why many intellectuals have engaged in national historical enterprise? Anthony Smith explains that nationalism, together with its historical component, has emerged in period of secularism and growing devaluation of religion. Many traditional beliefs, visions and myths have been placed under challenge. Widespread mobility, alienation, uprooting and emigrations have become a part of individuals' lives. Under given conditions by resorting to a real or an alleged common past and origins both groups and individuals could make sense of social upheavals, and psychologically confront the challenge posed by the bureaucratic state: "By placing the present in the context of the past and of the community, the myth of descent interprets present social changes and collective endeavors in a manner that satisfies the drive for meaning by providing new identities that seem to be also very old, and restoring locations, social and territorial, that allegedly were the crucibles of those identities."⁷⁹

The scholar explains the popularity of history among intellectuals by their identity crisis. The later occurred, when traditional religion and society were clashed by the "scientific state" and the "revolutions." It essentially was the crisis of "dual legitimation": that made in terms of religion and tradition, and another appealing to reason, observation, various "scientific" techniques and attitudes. Intellectuals first and most acutely felt the challenge of rationalism and scientific thought. They needed to design new belief-system, mythology and symbolism to legitimate human thought and action. One of these principles was historicism. It enables to create a comprehensive picture of the world without referring to creation and God, but at the same time binds together the past, the present and the future. There are, however, other interpretations of intellectuals' participation in nationalist historical enterprise. They lay emphasis on personal and lucrative interests of cultural elites in history. "Power-seeking" intellectuals made and still make use of national "awakening" instrumentally in order to reap certain political or social rewards⁸⁰. Anthony Smith himself admits that instrumentalist motivations propel the nation's historians. Elaborating versions of a national past for him plays certain part in the process of re-stratification. Using historicist myths the intelligentsia can gain recognition: "The intellectual is the interpreter, *par excellence*, of historical memories... By tracing a distinguished pedigree for his nation, he also enhances the position of his circle and activity; he is no longer an ambiguous 'marginal' on the fringes of society, but a leader of the advancing column of reawakened nation, the leaven in the movement of national regeneration."⁸¹

National Historical Myth: Definition, Functions, and Typology

Defining National Historical Myth

Nationalism itself, according to Anthony Smith, can be regarded as a political myth⁸². Given the bewildering entanglement in scholarly debates on nationalism, to claim that, would perhaps mean to complicate the matter more. But yet, such view highlights that the ideology of nationalism and nationalist thought are permeated with various myths. The scholar explains that myths of the nation may be considered as "widely believed tales told in dramatic form, referring to past events but serving present purposes and/or future goals. In this sense, nationalism's peculiar myth of the nation may be seen as a particularly potent and appealing

⁷⁹ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 62. Benedict Anderson also emphasizes the particular significance of social alienation and estrangement for generating nationalism: Benedict Anderson, *Long-Distance Nationalism: World Capitalism and the Rise of Identity Politics* (Amsterdam: CASA, 1992).

⁸⁰ Smith, *National Identity*, 95–97.

⁸¹ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 84.

⁸² Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 33.

dramatic narrative, which links past, present and future through the character and role of the national community.”⁸³ The interpretation of national myth as a sort of narrative, which is believed in, is equally espoused by George Schöpflin. He, however, embraces rather collectivist and groupist approach to the phenomenon: “Myth is one of the ways in which collectivities – in this context especially nations – establish and determine the foundations of their own being, their own systems of morality and values. In this sense, therefore, myth is a set of beliefs, usually put forth as a narrative, held by a community about itself. Centrally, myth is about perceptions and not historically validated truths (in so far as these exist at all), about the ways in which communities regard certain propositions as normal and natural and other as perverse and alien.”⁸⁴

The notion of national myths as believed narratives generally holds true. Now however, I will elaborate on three mentioned constitutive aspects of them, namely on their collective boundedness and origins, their endurance against critical thought and their narrative form.

Defining “groupism” Rogers Brubaker writes: “I mean the tendency to take discrete, bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis. I mean the tendency to treat ethnic groups, nations, and races as substantial entities to which interests and agency can be attributed.”⁸⁵ In groupist view, thus, social categories, concourses and assemblages of individuals, or even people, who occupy particular territory or social niche, appear to be the real social groups. The later are portrayed as more or less solidary social units with their own concerns, interests, will, and inner and *natural* logics of development, i.e. rather immune to the influence of individuals. Siniša Malešević terms similar approach to assessing social reality “collectivism.” Its gist is that “instead of viewing inter- and intra-group relations as dynamic process, through which group emerge and change, collectivism often ends up ascribing individual qualities to entire groups.”⁸⁶ Collectivist approach in the studies of national myths implies that the later are shared by the whole “collectivity” and, even if manipulated, generally represent creations of the entire group. They are beliefs, and more than less naturally established ways of making sense of the world characteristic to all members of a “collectivity.” In opposition to collectivism Malešević emphasizes that collective beliefs and collective desires do not exist. It means that social analysts are able to reveal concrete actions of powerful individuals, social agents and institutions through which these beliefs and desires come into being⁸⁷. Therefore, when analyzing national myths, one should first identify and study particular social actors, which form, disseminate and make those myths collectively shared.

Moving to elaborating on the national myths’ immunity to critical thought, as one of their critical and defining characteristics, I should note that in the scholarship myths are often opposed to history⁸⁸. The later here yields three-fold understanding. History is seen as a specific mode of thinking about the past, which involves its chronological partitioning and marking. History can also mean the “scientifically” established truth about the past in question. Finally, history as opposed to myths signifies, in eyes of some students, those accounts of the past, which are created by more or less professional historiography. Professional historians, even if they fail to reveal a “scientific” truth, rely upon specific methods of analysis and writing, and make at least ostensible verification of research conclusions with the data of primary historical sources.

⁸³ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 34.

⁸⁴ George Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power* (London: Hurst & Company, 2000), 80.

⁸⁵ Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 8, 10.

⁸⁶ Siniša Malešević, *Identity as Ideology: Understanding Ethnicity and Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 131.

⁸⁷ Malešević, *Identity as Ideology*, 130–131.

⁸⁸ See: Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of The Eternal Return or, Cosmos and History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 34–48.

Somehow following the mentioned division Anthony Smith distinguishes “ethno-history,” imbued with myths, from academic historiography. The first means the long-term memories and understanding of communal past or pasts, together with ensuing aspirations, shared by the members of a nation or ethnic group. Otherwise, it can signify certain written accounts of the communal past created by amateurs and non-historians. They too, however, draw upon popular visions (epics, legends, and tales) that circulate within the community⁸⁹. In spite of the proposed analytical opposition between myths and history existing in the scholarship, many researchers, who address national myths, including Anthony Smith himself, speak about *historical* myths and include academic historiography in their studies.⁹⁰ Furthermore, Viktor Shnirelman emphasizes that in modern times when the authority of the science stands high, mythological versions of the communal past should rely on scientific information, and look scientese. In this way they can have greater appeal to a target group, and seem more persuasive⁹¹.

So, then the questions arise: Why it is possible to speak of *historical* myths, which include academic and non-academic, and professional and amateurish writing on the past? Maybe it is better to merely call such accounts “narratives”? Why do I personally keep terming them *historical myths*?

The simplest argument, why some interpretations of the national history, are worth to be termed *historical myths*, originates in the enlightening approach to national mythology. According to that perspective any narrative can be considered as myth, if it contravenes the facts and findings which the latest, presumably objective, and “scientifically” designed scholarship delivers. This approach, as Pål Kolstø shows, is upheld by many historians and political scientists.⁹²

Besides, there are apparently many similarities, commonalities and interconnections between popular (i.e. “purely” mythological) visions of the past and historical writing, be it amateurish and non-academic or professional and academic. They can be found in external and internal characteristics, content and origins.

Needless to say that oftentimes, especially in modern period, folk history is decisively influenced and overridden by institutionalized one. Anthony Smith argues that in course of nationalist movements no appreciable distinction is made between myth and history, and the former signified “a poetic form of history”⁹³. Nationalism enables that communal myths get “elaborated and flashed out” by historical, archeological, philological and linguistic scholarship⁹⁴.

Some commonalities between folk “myths” and products of historical enquiry are captured by the definition of communal myth proposed by John Armstrong, who authored a path-breaking book highlighting particular importance of shared symbols and myths for national preservation⁹⁵. He writes: “Myth’ refers to an integrated set of beliefs emphasizing

⁸⁹ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 10, 16; Smith, *National Identity*, 26.

⁹⁰ See, for instance: *Myths and Boundaries in South-Eastern Europe*, ed. Pål Kolstø (London: Hurst & Company, 2005); Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 71–82; Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁹¹ Viktor Shnirelman, “Natsionalnye simvoly, etnoistoricheskie mify i etnopolitika,” [“National Symbols, Ethno-Historical Myths, and Ethnopolitics”] in *Makedonija. Problemy istorii i kulture*, ed. R.P. Grishina (Moskva: Institut Slavianovedeniia RAN, 1999), accessed May 25, 2012, http://www.promacedonia.org/is_ran/is_ran_2.html

⁹² Pål Kolstø, “Assessing the Role of Historical Myths in Modern Society,” in *Myths and Boundaries in South-Eastern Europe*, ed. Pål Kolstø (London: Hurst & Company, 2005), 9–14.

⁹³ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 66.

⁹⁴ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 47, 75; Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 66.

⁹⁵ John Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982). One, however, should be aware of the fact that the conclusions drawn from the study have been widely debated: Kidd, “Identity before Identities,” 11–12.

the historical continuity and peculiar identity of a group. Since the myth has strong affective connotations, group members commonly resist efforts to subject it to critical analysis; none of these features implies, of course, that the myth is either true or false.”⁹⁶ From this angle in order for a narrative to be considered as myth, it, firstly, should be believed in, if not by the author⁹⁷, at least by the recipients. Then, secondly, historical myth has specific content and internal features. Namely it deals with emphasizing the temporal continuity and uniqueness of a nation or ethnic group.

Indeed, Anthony Smith argues that the myth of the nation, whoever contributes to its creation, “establishes” national pedigree and marks the nation’s particular “track” in history. But the continuity so “detected” is important not merely in itself, because of the “fact” of the permanence of the national existence throughout time. The pristine past so “uncovered” and “acquired,” in all its primeval purity, “our” past and “our golden ages” inhabited by glorious heroes and imbued with admirable deeds of the ancestors are to be emulated by the members of the nation. The national “true nature” resides in a distinctive history and endows the nation with a unique destiny. Through historical, archeological and philological inquiry the real “collective self,” and the “true character” of a community should be rediscovered and cleared up from the alien accretions of the centuries⁹⁸. Consequently golden age is to be renewed and the heroes are to return⁹⁹. The past becomes a repository of the community’s exemplars, i.e. “the ideal against which to measure the present, usually lamentable, state of the nation and spur to emulation for successive generations.”¹⁰⁰

Such ideas, which the works of nationalist historians bear or imply, strongly resonate with the central theme of traditional mythology, that of eternal return. Mircea Eliade argues that for the archaic wo/man the past, the present and the future are strongly connected. The reality means perennially. Objects and acts become real only insofar as they copy or repeat archetypes, i.e. those appeared in the time before times. The past is prefiguration of the future. It is to return. Thus the time appears to be cyclical¹⁰¹. It is overtly neither even nor homogenous. Some periods bear particular and uncorrupt meaning, the others not at all. Mikhail Steblin-Kamenskii clarifies: “The abstract time is continuous, infinite, homogenous and irreversible... Instead, the time in myths nearly always appears to be intermittent, non-infinite, non-homogenous and reversible... We can better see that time was considered as finite in the myths of the creation of the world, for the creation of the world was in effect the creation of time”¹⁰². The archaic wo/man admits no act which has not previously been done and lived by someone else. Her/his gesture acquires meaning and comes into real being only if it repeats a primordial act. So, paradoxically s/he recognizes himself/herself as real, or as “truly” himself/herself solely and precisely insofar as s/he stops to be so¹⁰³. Mircea Eliade emphasizes that the modern world also does not entirely embrace historical, i.e. chronologically distinguishing, vision of the past. Many accounts claim a metahistorical meaning of particular events¹⁰⁴. The scholar acknowledges that nationalist ideologies, which urge to uncover the “true” national collective self through scrutinizing history, and to restore

⁹⁶ John Armstrong, “Mobilized and Proletarian Diasporas,” *The American Political Science Review* 70:2 (1976): 395.

⁹⁷ Viktor Shnirelman argues that historical mythmakers can easily not believe in what they write and promote: Shnirelman, “Natsionalnye simvoly.”

⁹⁸ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 66, 139; Smith, *National Identity*, 75, 78, 92.

⁹⁹ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 34, 67.

¹⁰⁰ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 76.

¹⁰¹ Eliade, *The Myth*, 5, 89.

¹⁰² Mikhail Steblin-Kamenskii, *Myth* (Ann Arbor: Karoma, 1982). Hereinafter the quotations are given according to Russian edition: Mikhail Steblin-Kamenskii, *Mif* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1976), 36.

¹⁰³ Eliade, *The Myth*, 5, 34.

¹⁰⁴ Eliade, *The Myth*, 141–142.

communal “golden age” are in effect repercussion of the myth of the eternal return¹⁰⁵. Nationalist historiography as a rule distinguishes certain periods of particular significance for the nation, while ignoring or even concealing the others. Space as well acquires specific qualities in traditional myths. The later portray the space, which is deprived of such attributes as infiniteness, continuity and homogeneity. Steblin-Kamenskii writes: “Space is depicted inasmuch as its particular parcel becomes a scene of somebody’s action, or a place where somebody stays... The center of the world is the location of everything good... In contrast the world’s end is the location of everything dreadful and hostile to people”¹⁰⁶. Similarly nationalist historians constantly refer to the homeland inhabited by the members of the nation. That is what Antony Smith calls “ethnoscape.”¹⁰⁷

Of course, as Mircea Eliade emphasizes in popular, folk representations of the past concrete events are subsumed under poetic categories, and particular historical personages are assembled into archetypes of heroes.¹⁰⁸ But one should bear in mind that today too the readers, the popularizers, sometimes even authors of historical books themselves barely remember the whole chronology and details of the events which they refer to.

As I have mentioned before the scholars hold that national myth appears in form of a narrative. Here, however, it is important to highlight that this mythological narrative does not represent a petrified and invariable text or story. Anthony Smith argues that ethno-history is always multi-stranded and contested. It is disposed to a continuous process of reinterpretation. Communal past is constantly being reconstructed and construed anew in response to new needs, interests and perceptions¹⁰⁹. Different narratives wax and wane¹¹⁰, whereas the same narratives are altered in their contents. Thus national historical myth is ever-changing narrative. It should be seen not only as a fact, or a thing, but also as a process of social action (altering the content of the same mythical narrative). *National mythmaking* (creating and disseminating of certain myths), *myth-changing* (replacing of one myth by another) and *myth-modifying* (which deals with separate narratives) occur in social interaction. In this interaction those individuals and other social actors and agencies that have more power acquire a decisive say. Even traditional myth is shaped and developed by an “artist,” a creative personality.¹¹¹ National myths all the more have concrete authors and controllers¹¹². In this sense one can speak about national myth politics, which involves a contest of various individuals and interest group over the possibility to change national myths.

Taking into account the points that I have mentioned afore, I define national historical myth as *a continuously changing and believed narrative, which emerges and alters in social interaction, “uncovers” pristine “true” self of the nation and its historical continuity as well as provides historical exemplars for emulating by the members of the community, if they are to attain national goals.*

Of course, this definition does not imply that the said narrative appears naturally or independently of the will of social agents. Neither I mean that it corresponds or should correspond to the historical “reality”. Eric Hobsbawm shows that “deeply rooted” traditions and pedigrees can be totally “invented”: “‘Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally, governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which

¹⁰⁵ Mircea Eliade, *Aspekty mifa [The Aspects of Myth]* (Moskva: Akademicheskii prospekt, 2005), 38, 171–173.

¹⁰⁶ Mikhail Steblin-Kamenskii, *Myth* (Ann Arbor: Karoma, 1982). Hereinafter the quotations are given according to Russian edition: Mikhail Steblin-Kamenskii, *Mif* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1976), 35–47.

¹⁰⁷ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 149–157.

¹⁰⁸ Eliade, *The Myth*, 43.

¹⁰⁹ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 16–17.

¹¹⁰ Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power*, 98.

¹¹¹ Eliade, *The Myth*, 44.

¹¹² Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power*, 87.

automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past... In short they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition.... All invented traditions, so far as possible, use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion"¹¹³. Elsewhere he widens the scope of "invented tradition," calling so official public holidays, ceremonies, heroes and symbols¹¹⁴. Although traditions can be invented by both official institutions and private groups,¹¹⁵ he argues that in certain periods the state links "formal and informal, official and unofficial, political and social invention of tradition."¹¹⁶ In this view, the activity of state and elites faced by new challenges constitutes primary source of forming and disseminating new symbols and myths.

Functions of National Myths

Among the functions of national myths the scholars distinguish harmonization and ordering of the world, control of mass emotions, political mobilization, promotion of radical change or on the contrary blocking of reforms, maintenance of memory or forgetting, and finally construction and maintenance of national identity.

Anthony Smith thinks that historical myths emerge at certain junctures. They become particularly popular and potent at the periods of prolonged warfare, cultural clashes, incipient secularization, commercialization and fast economic and social change. In that milieu myths serve as antidotes to sense of estrangement, alienation and insecurity¹¹⁷. Like traditional myth, which tries to make cosmos out of chaos referring to the primordial creation¹¹⁸, national myth places an individual in the world divided into nations, attaches him to the community of history and predetermined destiny¹¹⁹. George Schöpflin argues that myth establishes coherence and creates thought-worlds that appear clear and logical. In effect, it simplifies and orders the environment "in such way as, to make sense of it for collectivities."¹²⁰

For myth creates a cognitive monopoly, providing the sole way of making the world and defining world-views, it can perfectly be used to control mass emotions. As far as through language, including that of symbols and myths, surrounding social world is constructed, those who control the standardization process acquire big power. Invoking myths they can mobilize people, exclude others, enhance the community's solidarity, or reinforce social cleavages. Myth can intensify communication within the community easing the transmission of the messages from the rulers to the ruled, and improving the trust between them. Historical myth overrides and enables to shape social memory. Myth can make certain parts of memory salient and confer new understandings on them. At the same time it can exclude some events from public discourse and block acknowledging that those events took place¹²¹. Historical myths can equally urge for revolution and radical change or for restoration and preservation¹²².

¹¹³ Eric Hobsbawm, introduction to *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1–2, 12.

¹¹⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870 - 1914," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 263.

¹¹⁵ Hobsbawm, introduction, 4.

¹¹⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing," 264.

¹¹⁷ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 83–84.

¹¹⁸ Eliade, *The Myth*, 10.

¹¹⁹ Smith, *National Identity*, 78.

¹²⁰ Schöpflin. *Nations, Identity, Power*, 84.

¹²¹ Schöpflin. *Nations, Identity, Power*, 80–83, 85–88.

¹²² Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 34.

National Myths and Identity Construction

Scholars emphasize particularly important role of history and historical myths in identity construction. Montserrat Guibernau writes: “In my view, the defining criteria of identity are continuity over time and differentiation from the others – both fundamental elements of national identity. Continuity springs from the conception of the nation as historically rooted entity that projects past into the future. Individuals perceive this continuity through a set of experiences that spread out across time and are united by a common meaning, something that only “insiders” can grasp”¹²³. In the scholar’s eyes, “collective memories” of glorious and heroic times, namely those of independence, oppression, “liberation” struggles or international leadership, strengthen a sense of common identity among the members of the nation, even if the later is stateless¹²⁴. Anthony Smith argues that individuals conceive of their nation as “stemming from” older communities of historic culture¹²⁵. For him, ethnic and national myths, like all myths, establish a single potent vision of the communal past “to create an overriding commitment and bound for the community.” They even can unite and inspire the members of a community over generations¹²⁶. What matters, as both authors emphasize, is not real, objectively established, factual and chronological common history, but its subjective understanding. In other words, co-nationals must have a sense of unique descent and national historical continuity, a feeling or sentiment of shared history¹²⁷.

How exactly the individuals’ national identity can be constructed through usage of historical myths? Here I need to make some clarifications.

Nowadays the term “*identity*” is expanded on and extensively, even misleadingly used across all humanities and social sciences. Siniša Malešević notes that “identity” coming originally from mathematics usually is deemed to designate both absolute zero difference or self-similarity, and relative non-zero difference or external other-difference¹²⁸. Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper harshly criticize the term “identity,” for the later has got overburdened by meanings. They hold that an “idiom of identity” equips scholars with a ‘blunt, flat, undifferentiated vocabulary’. “‘Identity’ ... tends to mean too much (when understood in a strong sense), too little (when understood in a weak sense) and nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity)”¹²⁹. When assessing and writing on “identity”, the sociologists offer to distinguish identification and categorization, self-understanding and social location, commonality, connectedness, and groupness¹³⁰. “Self-understanding” means “one’s sense of who one is, of one’s social location, and of how (given the first two) one is prepared to act”¹³¹. “Commonality” denotes the sharing of some common attributes, “connectedness” signifies the relation ties that link people, “groupness” refers to the sense of belonging to distinctive, bounded, solidary group¹³².

Montserrat Guibernau writes that sense of national identity can be instilled in members of an alleged nation through the construction and dissemination of a certain image of the “nation,” and through the creation of common enemies.¹³³ Contributing to portrayal of those images of the nation and its enemies national historical myths spur individuals to understand

¹²³ Montserrat Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 10.

¹²⁴ Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 11.

¹²⁵ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 68.

¹²⁶ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 57, 120.

¹²⁷ Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 12 - 13; Smith, *National Identity*, 23, 25; Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 14.

¹²⁸ Malešević, *Identity as Ideology*, 15–16.

¹²⁹ Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond ‘Identity,’” in Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 42, 28–29.

¹³⁰ Brubaker and Cooper, “Beyond ‘Identity,’” 41–48.

¹³¹ Brubaker and Cooper, “Beyond ‘Identity,’” 44.

¹³² Brubaker and Cooper, “Beyond ‘Identity,’” 47.

¹³³ Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 25.

and categorize themselves as co-nationals. They serve as effective boundary-maintenance mechanisms.¹³⁴

The particular attention, which is paid by the social sciences to the boundaries of ethnic and national communities, owes to the seminal work of Fredrik Barth. He notices that the cultural stuff itself that ethnic groups are supposed to incorporate does not generate them. Therefore, “the critical focus of investigation... becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses.”¹³⁵ The scholar understands ethnic groups as “categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves, and have the characteristic of organizing interaction between people.”¹³⁶ In his view, ethnic identity originates in self-ascription and ascription by the others. Its maintenance by an ethnic group’s members in interaction with outsiders “entails criteria for determining membership and ways of signaling membership and exclusion.”¹³⁷ Co-ethnics obviously take cultural differences into account, but not “objective” differences. What is important is those features which the actors themselves regard as significant. Ethnic dichotomies thus require cultural content of two types: “(i) overt signals or signs – the diacritical features that people look for and exhibit to show identity..., and (ii) basic value orientations, the standards of morality and excellence by which performance is judged.”¹³⁸ These criteria of membership need continuous expression and validation. Fredrik Barth highlights that political movements represent new ways of making cultural differences socially relevant. Political innovators engage in codification of idioms. They select the signals for identity and attempt to assert value for these cultural diacritics, while suppressing and denying the relevance of other differences. For those reasons ethnic entrepreneurs pay great attention to “the revival of select traditional culture traits, and to the establishment of historical traditions to justify and glorify the idioms and the identity.”¹³⁹

Following Barth approach Anthony Cohen comes up with a concept of symbolic construction of community. He argues that “relative similarity or difference between ethnic communities is not a matter for “objective” assessment: it is a matter of feeling, a matter which resides in the minds of the members themselves. Thus, although they recognize important differences among themselves, they also suppose themselves to be more like each other than like the members of other communities”¹⁴⁰. This sense originates in sharing of common symbols, even though the sharing of the entire meanings is not required: “Symbols..., more than merely stand for or represent something else. Indeed, if that was all they did, they would be redundant. They also allow those who employ them to supply *part* of their meaning... Community is just... a boundary-expressing symbol... The reality of community in people’s experience... inheres in their attachment or commitment to a common body of symbols. Much of the boundary-maintaining process... is concerned with maintaining and further developing this commonality of symbols...”¹⁴¹ The scholar notices the importance of history, particularly in its mythologically rendered form, for symbolic construction of community: “In our everyday discourse, the past, itself symbolic, is recalled to us symbolically. Simple ‘historical’ labels are made to describe complex and often ideological messages... The very imprecision of... references to the past – timelessness masquerading as

¹³⁴ Kolstø, “Assessing the Role,” 14–17; Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power*, 80–81; Smith, *National Identity*, 70; Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 14.

¹³⁵ Fredrik Barth, introduction to *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The social organization of cultural difference*, ed. Fredrik Barth (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1969), 15.

¹³⁶ Barth, introduction, 10.

¹³⁷ Barth, introduction, 15.

¹³⁸ Barth, introduction, 14.

¹³⁹ Barth, introduction, 35.

¹⁴⁰ Anthony P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London: Routledge, 1985), 22.

¹⁴¹ Cohen, *Symbolic Construction*, 4, 15, 16.

history – which makes them to apt a device for symbolism and, in particular, for expressing symbolically the continuity of past and present, and for reasserting the cultural integrity of community in the face of apparent subversion by the forces of change.”¹⁴² Thus the communal past can be subject to certain reinterpretation by, but what is important is the sharing “ethno-history” and its symbols as a whole.

In view of Barth’s and Cohen’s elaborations, historical myths appear as both markers (diacritical features, whose sharing demarcates a group boundary) and instruments of establishing identity signals, symbols and group value orientations. Thanks to national historical myths individuals categorize and understand themselves as members of the nation. Anthony Smith writes that co-nationals get attached to “their” past (“our” past). The later is capable of being tied and made usable to the present of the community. It allegedly expresses a distinctive spirit of the nation, and is created from within, not imported or imposed from without.¹⁴³ Having these qualities only “our” past, even if interpreted somewhat variably, is relevant for the community’s members: “For my nation, your past will not do. It has to be ‘my’ past, or pasts, or, more usually, some of my pasts.”¹⁴⁴ Another dimension of history is also important for constructing identity. As George Schöpflin emphasizes, one of the most potent and secure ways of making identity is to present it as natural¹⁴⁵. Historical myths that depict the identity markers, symbols and communal norms as “given,” and bind them to the “naturally established collectivities,” increase the chances for the former being accepted.

Besides, national myths control communication within the community, thus contributing to the enhancement of the sense of togetherness. George Schöpflin elaborates: “Through myth, boundaries are established within the community and also with respect to other communities. Those who do not share in the myth are by definition excluded... Myth is, then, a key element in the creation of closures and in the constitution of collectivities... The language of symbols, rituals, myths and so on are, consequently, a part of incidentally, more significant than language itself. Members of a community of shared symbols can continue to recognize one another even after they have abandoned their language (in the philological sense).”¹⁴⁶ It is important to notice that since historical myths and national identity are closely connected, change and modification of them will lead to certain altering of the later. Anthony Smith even maintains that “the malleability of the past... may engender successive revisions and contestations, which have an *unsettling* effect on ‘national identity.’”¹⁴⁷ With reservations, what seems obvious is that any revision and replacement of historical myths brings novelties to individuals’ national self-understanding, for the image of the nation changes. The shift of national self-categorization, in contrast, requires perhaps more profound transformations of national historical mythology.

Types of National Historical Myths

Typologies of historical myths have been designed by Anthony Smith, George Schöpflin, Pål Kolstø and Viktor Shnirelman. Anthony Smith distinguishes a myth of temporal origins, a myth of location and migration, a myth of ancestry, a myth of heroic (or golden) age, a myth of decline and that of regeneration. Through the first nationalist historians date the community’s origins, locating it in time and in relation to other communities. The point of birth established here can vary between classes and epochs. The second myth deals with a community’s spatial origins. It is important in struggle for autonomy and

¹⁴² Cohen, *Symbolic Construction*, 102, 104.

¹⁴³ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 237.

¹⁴⁴ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 67.

¹⁴⁵ George Schöpflin, “The Construction of Identity,” *Österreichischer Wissenschaftstag* (2001): 1–2.

¹⁴⁶ Schöpflin. *Nations, Identity, Power*, 80–81.

¹⁴⁷ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 213. The emphasis added.

independence, and enables to counter the “homelessness” of modern life. Envisioned “homeland” helps to define the nation by demarcating its boundaries and providing its “home”. Unlike that of temporal origins, myth of ancestry, points to concrete personalized ancestors of the nation, including its historical, quasi-historical or purely mythical founding fathers. This myth downplays and screens out temporal or spatial discontinuities, and facts of immigration and intermarriage. A sense of common ancestry evokes sentiments of prestige and dignity predicated by an “ethnic fraternity.” When interpreted biologically or genetically myth of ancestry transforms the community into the “race.” Myth of the heroic age identifies the pristine “golden ages” of the community, when men were heroes. It provides historical examples for emulation by members of the community, and models for the fulfillment of the national will. Myth of decline explains how glorious times passed away. It generally tells recipients “how the community lost its anchor, in a living tradition, how the old values became ossified and meaningless, and how, as a result, common sentiments and beliefs faded to give way to rampant individualism and the triumph of partisan interests over collective ideals and communal solidarity”. The background idea, which nationalist mythmakers have creating myth of decline, is that their co-nationals are strangers to themselves. Those inner exile and homelessness mirror external oppression and lack of self-rule. Therefore, in order to overcome current handicaps and restore the national “golden age” members of the nation must uncover their real, historic self, the collective identity molded many generations ago. Myth of regeneration represents an offspring of prescriptive ideology. It determines the actions required to restore golden age. At the first place the myth tells about “rebirth,” “reawakening” and “self-purification.”¹⁴⁸ Anthony Smith is also known by his painstaking work on communal myths of election or chosenness¹⁴⁹.

George Schöpflin distinguishes myths of territory, myths of suffering and redemption and closely related myths of unjust treatment, myths of election and civilizing mission, myths of military valor, of resistance and aristocracy, myths of rebirth and renewal, myths of foundation, myths of ethno-genesis and antiquity as well as those of kinship and shared descent. The first group of myths deals with “a particular territory where the nation first discovered itself, assumed the form it aspires to or expressed its finest self. Often, this was a land where national purity was safeguarded and where its virtues were best preserved before contact with aliens.” In effect, myths of national territory tell the story of an ancestral homeland. They also refer to specific symbols such as flags, maps and anniversaries which enable to reinforce the myth and mark the ownership over the land. Myths of redemption and suffering claim that the nation, because of its tragic history, is expiating or has expiated its sins, but will be redeemed or may itself redeem the world. According to Schöpflin, those myths are particularly spread in Central and Eastern Europe and oftentimes are connected to Christian *antemurale* myths. At the first glance they look like myths of powerlessness and compensation for that powerlessness. But they also claim a specific superiority of the nation for having suffered, and demand recognition of certain rights and entitlements in the present. Unlike myths of suffering and redemption, myths of unjust treatment do not imply that suffering at hands of enemies was somehow needful for national self-purification, and do not encourage celebrating it. Malign history has singled out the community for negative treatment and vested it with a lamentable destiny. However unpleasant, that destiny remains to be “our” nonetheless. Implicit in these myths, like in those of redemption, is that the wider world owes who have suffered a special debt, and should recognize the community’s specific moral worth together with other, more worldly and material claims. Myths of elections tell that the nation has been entrusted by God or by History to perform some special mission or some particular function which can be difficult to understand by outsiders. That is because the community is

¹⁴⁸ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 62–68.

¹⁴⁹ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 125–147; Smith, *Chosen Peoples*.

endowed with unique virtues. These myths justify an assumption of the nation's moral and cultural superiority over all competitors and rivals. The later therefore have simply to recognize that superiority, alongside with other claims. Myths of military valor, of resistance and aristocracy convey that a collectivity holds itself by performing deeds of military valor. The later can be attributed to both the aristocracy and the people. Sometimes myths of military valor are intimately connected to the idea of "national" liberation through insurrection or revolution. The nation finds the truest expression of self by rising against unjust and intolerable tyranny. National myths of rebirth and renewal encapsulate the idea that the present is tainted and corrupt, and therefore must be cleansed. Through the purgation a better world can come into being. George Schöpflin interprets these myths differently from how Anthony Smith construes myths of regeneration. Myths of renewal in Schöpflin's typology are those, which urge to transcend certain aspects of the communal past and draw lessons from it: "They look both forwards and backwards, in that the past is unacceptable and, therefore, the group must distance itself from it, but at the same time, there is hope for a better world". As a rule this is recent past, i.e. the time when the nation suffered subjugation, and occupied an inferior position. Myths of foundation are understood by George Schöpflin as those which tell the story about the establishment of current order. They do not deal with temporal origins of the nation as a human collectivity in general, but refer to pivotal moments in its history which have brought progressive changes. It can be revolutions, general elections, adoptions of the constitutions and particularly important laws. In contrast myths of ethno-genesis and antiquity in Schöpflin's typology better correspond to "Smithian" myths of communal temporal origins. These myths answer the question where "we" originate from. Myths of kinship and shared descent present the nation as a big family and work to exclude ethnic aliens. Implicit in these myths is that the co-nationals are genetically connected to one another and to the past generations. Biologically understood membership in the nation automatically excludes outsiders. Differences with them have natural origins. Interestingly enough, biological affinity as a rule is established by the fact of speaking the same mother tongue. Myth of kinship can operate in two opposite directions. Some nations which launch a strategy of assimilation require from assimilands accepting "the cultural codes of the group into which they are assimilated, but kinship will be loosely defined". Contrariwise, "where a group feels itself at risk with respect to its future, possibly because it feels 'swamped' by aliens, it may emphasize or reemphasize its ethnic purity by referring to racial and genetic uniqueness."¹⁵⁰

Pål Kolstø offers a simpler typology. He divides national historical myths into three categories: myths of being *sui generis*, myths of being *antemurale* (with a subcategory constituted by myths of *martyrium*), and myths of *antiquitas*. The first group of myths is invoked when cultural continuum cuts across ethnic boundaries and commonalities in traditional lifestyles, ethical code and folklore shared by neighboring communities pose a problem for nation-builders and ethnic entrepreneurs, since they blur group boundaries and complicate the instillation of distinct identities to the people. Therefore the community's spokesmen attempt to devaluate, de-emphasize or altogether deny cultural characteristics shared with other groups. One way to ascertain this is to claim separate ethnic roots of the groups in question. The denial of commonalities may be symmetrical and asymmetrical: "either both parties agree that they have little or nothing in common, or one party may ignore the similarities while the other tends to highlight them." As a rule the less the cultural differences between two communities (or categories), which are to be differentiated, the more thoughtfully and strenuously mythmakers strive to underline putative differences. Then the spokesmen of a politically and numerically stronger community are inclined to emphasize similarities or even consider the weaker group non-existent, while those of weaker

¹⁵⁰ Schöpflin. *Nations, Identity, Power*, 89–98.

community tend to blow the differences out of all proportion. The *antemurale* myth is also called “bulwark,” “last outpost,” “defenders of the gates,” “the bearers of true civilization” etc. Pål Kolstø argues that “this myth is very different from the myth of being *sui generis*. Rather than insisting on the uniqueness of the group, the group is now included in some larger and allegedly superior cultural entity that enhances its status *vis-à-vis* other groups who do not belong”. It also functions differently, when marking the boundary. Instead of emphasizing distinctiveness in relation to all rival communities, myths of being *antemurale* valorize the differences with one neighbor, but downplay the boundaries with other communities. They also may be symmetrical and asymmetrical. Sometimes the spokesmen of both communities involved agree that a civilizational wall separates the two, even though they have opposite views as to who represents the forces of cosmos or chaos. Other times the members of one of the rival communities do not see themselves as being *antemurale* at all. The *martyrium* myth focuses on the nation’s defeats, downfalls and victimizations. Its pulling feature is that “it invests the identity boundary with a moral significance: those who are downtrodden are morally superior to their oppressors”. Pål Kolstø explains the rationale behind creating and using myths of *martyrium*: “If once upon a time it was true that ‘might is right,’ this is no longer the case. In today’s world it is much more often asserted that *weakness* is right.” The myth of *antiquitas* in Kolstø’s typology basically refers to territorial origins of the nation and its priority in occupying ancestral homeland. They are designed to give credence to claims for certain territories¹⁵¹.

The typologies described afore are designed by classifying national historical myths by the themes, subjects and plot-lines they address and include. Viktor Shnirelman also outlines central themes and plots of communal historical myths. The later:

- a) Tell about admirable antiquity or outright primordially of “our” “ethnic” culture and language, and claim their rootedness in currently occupied territories (myth of autochthony);
- b) Project today’s ethno-political borders as deeply as possible into the past, and tend to widen the area of “our” ethnic group’s initial settlement (myth of ancestral homeland);
- c) Unconditionally identify the ethnic group with particular language, which was supposedly inherent in it “from time immemorial” (myth of linguistic continuity). In general myths concede the fact of a linguistic shift. But that shift could have been made by other ethnic groups, not by “ours.” Thinking otherwise could “lower the status” of the ethnic collectivity;
- d) Convey that not only “our” ethnic group but also other kin and filial communities have been formed on the territory currently inhabited by us, even though later they have moved out (myth of ethnic family). In view of this “fact” “our” ethnic group should rightfully play the role of a “big brother” and enjoy certain privileges;
- e) Tend to identify “our” ancestors with some glorious people that appear in ancient written sources or folklore (myth of glorious ancestors);
- f) Claim the historical priority of the communal ancestors in some cultural (invention of script) or political (state-formation) achievements compared with the ancestors of neighboring peoples (myth of being *Kulturträger*). All nationalists are prone to emphasize that “their” ancestors were founders of the most ancient states, since ownership of an ancient state allegedly legitimizes the claim to build the state at present;
- g) Exaggerate the level of ethnic consolidation in antiquity and deliberately underestimate the role of tribal divisions and genetic complexity of the community (myth of ethnic homogeneity);
- h) Frequently construct the image of an alien enemy, the struggle with whom cements the ethnic group and leads to a high level of intra-communal consolidation (myth of archenemy);

¹⁵¹ Kolstø, “Assessing the Role,” 16–22.

i) Sometimes reckon the members of other ethnic groups among the co-ethnics for the sake of unity and territorial integrity of the state or in order to enhance the community's demographic power (the myth of ethnic unity)¹⁵².

If Viktor Shnirelman considers the mentioned themes central to historical myths, Dušan Kecmanović holds that nearly the same ideas are inherently characteristic to the whole “mass psychology” of nationalism¹⁵³.

National Myths of Antiquity

In the present thesis I will analyze those ever-changing and believed narratives that I call national myths of antiquity. Unlike Anthony Smith, George Schöpflin, Pål Kolstø and Viktor Shnirelman I single out this category of myths not merely on the basis of the themes they address and the plots they encompass. For me “national myths of antiquity” signify *certain visions of the beginnings and of the earliest period of the communal past, which are put in form of narratives and claim that the national history started in Antiquity, i.e. before the Middle Ages or prior to 5th - 6th centuries AD*. Thus they represent one (however multi-stranded) way of answering the question “When is the nation?”¹⁵⁴ In concrete case I deal with the myths, which see the origins of (Slavic) Macedonian and Albanian communal history in (Ancient) Macedonian, Illyrian and Paeonian past. They narrate the story about provenance, life and deeds of the ancient Balkan “peoples” considering them as ancestors of today's national communities. Two caveats should be made here. Firstly, placing alleged Macedonian and Albanian antiquities in the center of my study I do not hold that Macedonians and Albanians can not view the origins of their communities elsewhere¹⁵⁵. Those visions, however, are beyond the scope of the present thesis. Secondly, my definition of national myths of antiquity is working and does not imply that those narratives, which fall under the said category, could not be classified otherwise or assembled under items of the typologies mentioned afore. Neither I claim that these myths have another nature, qualities and functions compared with, say, myths of temporal origins, myths of homeland or myths of antiquity in Smith's, Shnirelman's and Schöpflin's typologies respectively. But for I study academic and quasi-academic historical writings in which the past is divided into some periods I see it technically easier to focus on the whole antiquity of Macedonian and Albanian nations as it is presented. Moreover, the analysis of central plots of historical myths done by the aforementioned authors is indispensable for studying national myths of antiquity (as I define them).

The later basically can include all the plots described. Thus national myths of antiquity assume the form of myths of temporal origins (of *antiquitas*) or those of location and migration (of territory or homeland). They appear as myths of ancestry (of ethno-genesis) or those of Golden age (with its military valor). They play as myths of decline or those of redemption and suffering (*martyrium*). They transform into myths of unjust treatment etc.

¹⁵² Shnirelman, “Natsionalnye simvoly”; Viktor Shnirelman, “Tsennost' proshlogo: etnotsentricheskie i istoricheskie mify, identichnost' i etnologiya” [“The Value of the Past: Ethnocentric and Historical Myths, Identity, and Ethnology”], in *Realnost' etnicheskikh mifov*, ed. Marta Brill Olcott and Alexei Malashenko (Moskva: Gendal'f, 2000), 22–23.

¹⁵³ Dušan Kecmanović, *The Mass Psychology of Ethnonationalism* (New York: Plenum Press, 1996). The references are given according to the Serbian edition: Dušan Kecmanović, *Masovna psihologija nacionalizma* (Beograd: Vreme Knjige, 1995), 86–91.

¹⁵⁴ Anthony Smith was one of the first, who attributed particular importance to investigation of possible answering the question “When is the nation?”: Smith, *National Identity*, 19.

¹⁵⁵ Ramzik Ponossian shows that even Armenians, “one of the most ancient nations,” locate the origins of their nation in different periods of time: Ramzik Ponossian, “The Past as Nation: Three Dimensions of Armenian Identity,” *Geopolitics* 7:2 (2002): 121–146.

National myths of antiquity can also “uncover” the nation’s quality of being *sui generis*, or on the contrary “establish” kinship by interpreting the nation’s roots and ethno-genesis. Election of the nations, including that for performing *antemurale* functions, also tends to happen in times immemorial. Chronological antiquity in general magnetizes mythmakers. First, it is prestigious to trace national history from the oldest time. Secondly, “distant past, which due to the specificity of the sources available to us (archeological and linguistic) is primarily perceived in cultural, and not social terms, – Viktor Shnirelman writes – makes much more room for imagination, for the construction of large-scale cultural communities that are then treated as ethnic.”¹⁵⁶

Despite the variety of the themes characteristic to the national myths of antiquity, the later in the first place tell about ethnic origins and descent as well as celebrate an ancient “Golden age.”

Anthony Smith proposes to discriminate between the myths of ideological descent and genealogical ancestry, i.e. between communal myths that “trace descent through cultural and ideological affinity with presumed ancestors and epochs, and those that draw on more strictly genealogical pedigree and links of alleged kinship.”¹⁵⁷ In former case a mythmaker traces genealogical lineages and raises claims for higher status and power based on an alleged biological affinity with heroes, founders or even deities. The “unveiled” biological links, turning the community into a network of interrelated kin groups, are supposed to ensure a high degree of communal solidarity. Invoking the myth of ideological descent nationalists attempt to reveal the persistence of certain “virtues” or other cultural qualities. They aim, therefore, to recreate the heroic spirit, which animated communal ancestors¹⁵⁸. The scholar thinks that the employment of myths of genealogical ancestry “is more common in case of *ethnic* nationalism, that is, whose criterion of national membership is genealogical rather than territorial.”¹⁵⁹ The evidence from the Balkans, however, contradicts Smith’s statement. Even when the membership in a community is defined through filiation, the mythmakers can use myth of ideological descent, though backing them up by a modification of genealogical myth. They claim that the group in question, if not originates in, at least is fused with another, usually older, community¹⁶⁰. The myths of golden ages also are divided by Anthony Smith into three categories. They can refer to an era of economic prosperity, flourishing cities and great wealth and fertility. Other times the myths tell about religious golden age or times of holiness and purity. The periods of intellect and beauty when philological, literary and artistic creativity was consecrated, are also often praised. Naturally members of the community can simultaneously bear in mind many golden ages of various types and interpret them somewhat differently.¹⁶¹

Myths of both categories, in view of Anthony Smith, perform particular functions. Firstly, they endow the community with specific identity and satisfy the quest for authenticity. Its origins as well as golden ages are unique. “Authentic identity” has two meanings. “The first is that of origin: ‘who we are is determined by ‘whence we came,’ a myth of origins and descent... The second is that of difference: ‘who we are’ is determined by our relations with the ‘outsider,’ the other who is marked off from ‘us’ by not sharing in our distinctive character, our individuality. Memories of one or more golden ages play an important part here, for they hold up values and heroes that we admire and revere – which others cannot and do not, because they have different values and heroes.”¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ Shnirelman, “Natsionalnye simvoly.”

¹⁵⁷ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 71.

¹⁵⁸ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 58.

¹⁵⁹ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 15.

¹⁶⁰ Kolstø, “Assessing the Role,” 26.

¹⁶¹ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 216.

¹⁶² Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 221.

Secondly, the myths of ethnic origins and golden age invest the community with special dignity in virtue of antiquity, pedigree and past glory. They either confirm the status of dominant community or reverse it for the suppressed: though at present “we” are oppressed, soon we shall return to our former glory. Here the myths of golden age are linked to those of election¹⁶³. Anthony Smith specifically highlights that “[t]he greater, the more glorious, that antiquity appears, the easier it becomes to mobilize people...”¹⁶⁴

Thirdly, the said myths help to re-root and locate the community in its own historic space, i.e. provide it with a specific territory. If the later is contested they secure the “evidence” for territorial “title deeds.” The logic of “primary acquisition” works here,¹⁶⁵ and the question arises “Who got here first?” The argument is that for one community was prior to everybody, “it has a superior right to that territory over all others, meaning that, say, the rights of citizenship must take second place to those of ethnicity and that those who have primacy also have the right to define (and maybe circumscribe) the rights of citizenship.”¹⁶⁶ The temporal priority in turn can be “established” either culturally and archeologically or politically. “Our” people or “our” state could have been pioneer. “In the first case, what is asserted is that pottery and other relicts found in the ground belong to the forebears of this particular group and no other. In the second case, what is asserted is that an old state that once upon a time controlled a territory in question was a national state of *our* group.”¹⁶⁷ Another way to claim ownership over the contested territory is the “territorialization of memory”¹⁶⁸. Here temporal priority matters less. Turning the territory into “historic land” and ethnoscape, that is where “our” sages, saints, heroes and great men lived, worked, prayed and fought¹⁶⁹, in itself can secure the required title.

Fourthly, the myths of ethnic origins and golden age establish a sense of continuity between the generations. “The return to a golden age suggests that, despite all ravages of time and the vicissitudes of social change, we are descendants of the heroes and sages of the great age... By establishing genealogical descent as well as cultural affinity with heroic age(s), later generations realize their own genuine heroic individuality.”

Fifthly, these myths point to a glorious destiny, originating from the “true” nature resided and revealed in the past. “In nationalist metaphor, its noble past prepares a community for its ordained destiny, and provides it with a hidden direction and goal beneath the obscuring present.”¹⁷⁰

Sixthly, the myths of ethnic origins and golden age claim a specific autonomy, which is anyway inherently characteristic to the community, despite the present oppression and humiliation. A collective liberty in which self’s laws are those of the nation-to-be is revealed in and by the communal heroic age¹⁷¹

Constructing National Historical Myths: From Nationalist Heteroglossia and Polyphony to Dialogic Nationalism and Mythopoeia

In existing scholarship the construction of national historical myths is predominantly seen as an enterprise of separate national elites. However, it is important to bear in mind that

¹⁶³ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 69; Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 223.

¹⁶⁴ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 213.

¹⁶⁵ Geary, *Miti i kombeve*, 40.

¹⁶⁶ Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power*, 96.

¹⁶⁷ Kolstø, “Assessing the Role,” 22.

¹⁶⁸ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 75.

¹⁶⁹ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 150–153; Smith, *National Identity*, 9.

¹⁷⁰ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 223.

¹⁷¹ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 70.

the mythmakers always produce the narratives *vis-à-vis* others, be they alternative nationalist groups within the nation, or spokesmen of other “nations.” In addition, historical myths tell the story about the “nation” in relation to other alleged or real “nations.” Therefore, mythopoeia involves at least two (groups of) players, the mythmaker/s and the other/s. National historical myths are constructed dialogically.

Mikhail Bakhtin's Concepts of Heteroglossia and Dialogism

Russian philosopher and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin was one of the pioneers, who thought that we fail to grasp human personality and identity as well as the nature of certain social phenomena and artifacts, unless we recognize the importance of dialogue in their construction and constitution. In his work on Dostoyevsky's poetics Bakhtin draws light on the issue of the construction of self, and writes: “A character's self-consciousness in Dostoevsky is thoroughly dialogized: in its every aspect it is turned outward, intensely addressing itself, another, a third person. Outside this living addressivity toward itself and toward the other it does not exist, even for itself. In this sense it could be said that the person in Dostoevsky is the *subject of an address*. One cannot talk about him; one can only address oneself to him... It is impossible to master the inner man, to see and understand him by making him into an object of indifferent neutral analysis; it is also impossible to master him by merging with him, by empathizing with him. No, one can approach him and reveal him—or more precisely, force him to reveal himself—only by addressing him dialogically.”¹⁷²

Then Bakhtin introduces the concepts of *heteroglossia* (*raznorechie*) and *polyphony* (*polifoniia*) through which dialogism can be better understood. He elaborates on heteroglossia of language in general, and the language and discourse (*slovo*) in novel in particular. Language for him is not mere linguistic code: “What we have in mind here is not an abstract linguistic minimum of a common language, in the sense of a system of elementary forms (linguistic symbols) guaranteeing a *minimum* level of comprehension in practical communication. We are taking language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather language conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a world view, even as a concrete opinion, insuring a *maximum* of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life.”¹⁷³ Elsewhere the scholar defines this sort of language as discourse (Russian: *slovo*) that is, “language in its concrete living totality, and not language as the specific object of linguistics, something arrived at through a completely legitimate and necessary abstraction from various aspects of the concrete life of the word.”¹⁷⁴ And in reality of interhuman communication and interaction *the* language, a unitary language, according to Bakhtin, barely exists: “A unitary language is not something given [dan] but is always in essence posited [zadan] and at every moment of its linguistic life it is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia.”¹⁷⁵

The later notably finds expression in novel, where the prerequisite is the internal stratification of language and the variety of individual voices.¹⁷⁶ The scholar specifically describes novelistic heteroglossia: “The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized. The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various

¹⁷² Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, edited and translated by Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 252.

¹⁷³ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 271–272.

¹⁷⁴ Bakhtin, *Problems*, 181.

¹⁷⁵ Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 271.

¹⁷⁶ Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 264.

circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day, even of the hour (each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, its own emphases)—this internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre. The novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of the social diversity of speech types [*raznorečie*] and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions. Authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia [*raznorečie*] can enter the novel; each of them permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships (always more or less dialogized).¹⁷⁷ Elsewhere Bakhtin refers to Dostoevsky's *polyphonic* novel with its variety of voices: "Any acquaintance with the voluminous literature on Dostoevsky leaves the impression that one is dealing not with a *single* author artist who wrote novels and stories, but with a number of philosophical statements by *several* author-thinkers—Raskolnikov, Myshkin, Stavrogin, Ivan Karamazov, the Grand Inquisitor, and others. For the purposes of critical thought, Dostoevsky's work has been broken down into a series of disparate, contradictory philosophical stances, each defended by one or another character. Among these also figure, but in far from first place, the philosophical views of the author himself... Characters are polemized with, learned from; attempts are made to develop their views into finished systems."¹⁷⁸ The scholar also remarks the variety of voices, which forms the consciousness of Dostoevsky's characters, when one can reveal the "man in man."¹⁷⁹

However, the numerous languages, discourses, "words" and voices Bakhtin writes about are neither formed nor transformed in isolation. They appear in dialogue. They are *addressed* and related to each other, and, in this sense, they are dependent on and constructed by each other: "[T]here does exist a common plane that methodologically justifies our juxtaposing them: all languages of heteroglossia, whatever the principle underlying them and making each unique, are specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values. As such they all may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically."¹⁸⁰

The philosopher implies not only literally understood dialogue (i.e. that of plot, dramatic, performed as a conversation between the characters), but also the fact of general addressivity: "The authentic environment of an utterance, the environment in which it lives and takes shape, is dialogized heteroglossia, anonymous and social as language, but simultaneously concrete, filled with specific content and accented as an individual utterance."¹⁸¹

Firstly, for Bakhtin, the relationship of discourse to its object is mediated by other discourses and voices. Thus discourses are interconnected indirectly through their objects: "[N]o living word relates to its object in a *singular* way: between the word and its object, between the word and the speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of other, alien words about the same object, the same theme, and this is an environment that it is often difficult to penetrate. It is precisely in the process of living interaction with this specific environment that the word may be individualized and given stylistic shape... The word directed toward its object, enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgments and accents, weaves in out of a complex interrelationships,

¹⁷⁷ Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 262–263.

¹⁷⁸ Bakhtin, *Problems*, 5.

¹⁷⁹ Bakhtin, *Problems*, 262.

¹⁸⁰ Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 291–292.

¹⁸¹ Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 272.

merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group: and all this may crucially shape discourse, may leave a trace on all its semantic layers, may complicate its expression and influence its entire stylistic profile. The living utterance having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, can not fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around given object of utterance; it can not fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. After all, the utterance arises out of this dialogue as a continuation of it and as a rejoinder to it – it does not approach the object from the sidelines.”¹⁸²

Secondly, every discourse and every voice, according to Bakhtin, is addressed to another. This addressivity is inherent in all living conversation, rhetorical forms and other kind of discourses: “[E]very word is directed toward an answer and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates. The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word: it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction. Forming itself in an atmosphere of the already spoken, the word is at the same time determined by that which has not yet been said but which is needed and in fact anticipated by the answering word... The listener and his response are regularly taken into account when it comes to everyday dialogue and rhetoric, but every other sort of discourse as well is oriented toward an understanding that is “responsive” - although this orientation is not particularized in an independent act and is not compositionally marked. Responsive understanding is a fundamental force, one that participates in the formulation of discourse, and it is moreover an *active* understanding, one that discourse senses as resistance or support enriching the discourse... In the actual life of speech, every concrete act of understanding is active: it assimilates the word to be understood into its own conceptual system filled with specific objects and emotional expressions, and is indissolubly merged with the response, with a motivated agreement or disagreement... The speaker strives to get a reading on his own word, and on his own conceptual system that determines this word, within the alien conceptual system of the understanding receiver; he enters into dialogical relationships with certain aspects of this system. The speaker breaks through the alien conceptual horizon of the listener, constructs his own utterance on alien territory, against his, the listener's, apperceptive background.”¹⁸³ The philosopher concludes: “Only the mythical Adam, who approached a virginal and as yet verbally unqualified world with the first word, could really have escaped from start to finish this dialogic inter-orientation with the alien words that occurs in the object.”¹⁸⁴

Charles Taylor drawing, among others, on Bakhtin emphasize the importance of dialogue in constructing one's identity. For him, monological ideal underestimates the role of the dialogical in human life, because individuals define their identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things others want to see in them. He graphically illustrates the dialogism characteristic to people by invoking the images of the hermit and solitary artist: “In the case of the hermit, the interlocutor is God. In the case of solitary artist, the work itself is addressed to a future audience, perhaps still to be created by the work. The very form of a work of art shows its character as *addressed*... Thus my discovering my own identity doesn't mean that I work it out in isolation.”¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 276–277.

¹⁸³ Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 280–282.

¹⁸⁴ Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 271.

¹⁸⁵ Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and “The Politics of Recognition”* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 34. In this view, however, Taylor's emphasis on “recognition” seems controversial, for the “recognition” he writes about is rather one-time and one-end action that can solidify individual and group (?) identity. In this sense, the “recognition” goes harshly against the grain of supporting and encouraging the *dialogically* constructed and *negotiated* self. Anupam Chander even maintains that “societal recognition can take the form of a stereotyping essentialism rather than a true dialogism”: Anupam Chander, “Diaspora Bonds,” *New York*

In general, as Mikhail Bakhtin argues, heteroglossia and dialogic relationship reveal themselves in various discourses and do it in various ways. In addition, they naturally appear beyond the language in philological sense: “Dialogic relationships are possible not only among whole (relatively whole) utterances; a dialogic approach is possible toward any signifying part of an utterance, even toward an individual word, if that word is perceived not as the impersonal word of language but as a sign of someone else's semantic position, as the representative of another person's utterance; that is, if we hear in it someone else's voice. Thus dialogic relationships can permeate inside the utterance, even inside the individual word, as long as two voices collide within it dialogically... On the other hand, dialogic relationships are also possible between language styles, social dialects, and so forth, insofar as they are perceived as semantic positions, as language worldviews of a sort, that is, as something no longer strictly within the realm of linguistic investigation. Finally, dialogic relationships are also possible toward one's own utterance as a whole, toward its separate parts and toward an individual word within it, if we somehow detach ourselves from them, speak with an inner reservation, if we observe a certain distance from them, as if limiting our own authorship or dividing it in two. In conclusion, we remind the reader that dialogic relationships in the broad sense are also possible among different intelligent phenomena, provided that these phenomena are expressed in some *semiotic* material. Dialogic relationships are possible, for example, among images belonging to different art forms.”¹⁸⁶

Indeed, social action can also be seen as dialogical (in Bakhtinian sense). The theory of symbolic interactionism underscores the primary importance of social interaction in motivating and shaping individuals' actions. Herbert Blumer summarizes the essential points in the analysis of symbolic interactionism provided by the founding-father of the theory George Herbert Mead: “They presuppose the following: that human society is made up of individuals who have selves (that is, make indications to themselves); that individual action is a construction and not a release, being built up by the individual through noting and interpreting features of the situations in which he acts; that group or collective action consist of individual actions, brought about by the individual's interpreting or taking into account each other's actions.”¹⁸⁷ Blumer himself distinguishes following basic premises in symbolic interactionist approach, which holds that the nature of individuals' actions lays in a triangle of meaning, socially constructed language and individual's (relatively) independent thought: “The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meaning that the things have for them... The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows... The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters.”¹⁸⁸ In such a view, individuals undertake actions not totally in virtue of their own decisions. Decision-making process is to certain extent influenced directly or indirectly by others. On the one hand, as Blumer argues, the use of meanings by a person in her/his action involves an interpretation, i.e. “a formative process in which meanings are used and revised as instruments for the guidance and formation of action.” But on the other, meanings represent social products, social creations that are formed in and through “defining activities of people as they interact.”¹⁸⁹ Therefore, it can be said that social activity is continuously and dialogically influenced and formed by other's actions in three senses: first, which is more obvious, by anticipating other's response, and making

University Law Review 76 (2001): 1051.

¹⁸⁶ Bakhtin, *Problems*, 184–185.

¹⁸⁷ Herbert Blumer, “Society as Symbolic Interaction,” in *Human Behavior and Social Process: An Interactionist Approach*, ed. Arnold M. Rose (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), 183.

¹⁸⁸ Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 2.

¹⁸⁹ Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 5.

indications; second, due to its inherent addressivity and need for recognition, and third, because of emergence of meanings, which guide the action, out of social interaction.

Some Implications of Bakhtinian Theory for the Studies of Nationalism

My contention is that nationalism (or rather nationalisms) in general as well as its certain forms in particular should be approached scholarly by paying closer attention to their *heteroglossia*, *polyphony* and *dialogism*. By nationalism here I mean the politics, movement and ideology, but will more specifically address the issue of nationalist mythopoeia, namely Macedonian and Albanian mythmaking in the Republic of Macedonia after 1991. What are the grounds to think this way?

Firstly, to see nationalism exclusively as *monoglot* and *monologic* means, indeed, to get very close to the pitfall of methodological nationalism, and to reinforce nationalist agenda. The scholarship oftentimes conceives of nationalism as the politics, the ideology, or the movement of a particular (nation-) state or nation, be it real or putative. Otherwise, it analyzes nationalism as an activity of self-declared national spokesmen. And, what seems more important, it implies that within the state and national confines *the general picture of a "national" nationalism* can be reconstructed, *its key features* can be discovered, and its "nature," its "specificity" can be established and understood. Furthermore a "national" nationalism is presented as a one-faced, unified and coherent whole. Thus, in line with methodological nationalism existence, "naturalness and givenness" (to use Wimmer's and Schiller's words) of "*national" nationalisms* is presupposed. *National* discourses and agendas, which means both bounded to a nation and relevant to *all* co-nationals, are circumstantially and indirectly acknowledged. Oftentimes the inquiry gets territorialized and centered on the nation-states.¹⁹⁰

All the said strongly resonates with Herderian nationalist idea that it is possible to discover the *one* and unique self, true and *independent* nature of a culture-bearing people.¹⁹¹ Naturally, today the notion of given, unified and monoglot nation is generally dismissed by the scholars of nationalism. But they frequently keep portraying the pictures of relatively coherent, unified and independent *nationalisms*. It seems, what we encounter here is insufficient discrimination or outright indiscrimination between categories of *practice* and those of *analysis*.¹⁹² Indeed, if certain social actors presented and still present themselves as defenders of *the Ukrainian* cause, spokesmen of the whole Ukrainian nation and *Ukrainian* awakeners, should we construe their activities *merely* through the analytical framework of *unified Ukrainian nationalism* and by categorizing the later as so?¹⁹³

I admit that the mentioned activities can be conventionally *termed* as Ukrainian nationalism on the basis of the object, which they are directed at. Their performers predominantly consider themselves as Ukrainians and are obsessed with construction and elevation of the Ukrainian nation. However, the *content* of "Ukrainian nationalism" so understood is highly differentiated. It is motivated and constituted both from within and from without. Benedict Anderson, for instance, argues that "nationality... nation-ness as well as nationalism, are cultural artifacts of a particular kind. Once created "nation" became modular

¹⁹⁰ Even Karl Deutsch, who centered his analysis on the role of social communication in forming nation and engendering nationalism, speaks primarily of intra-nation informational connections, and elaborates on how communicative integration produces social closure: Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: an inquiry into the foundations of nationality* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969).

¹⁹¹ Taylor, *Multiculturalism*, 30–31.

¹⁹² Brubaker and Cooper, "Beyond "Identity," 31–32.

¹⁹³ On *Ukrainian* nationalism see: John A. Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism* (Englewood: Ukrainian Academic Press, 1990); Paul Robert Magosci, *The Roots of Ukrainian Nationalism. Galicia as Ukraine's Piedmont* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

and capable of being transplanted and injected into different societies¹⁹⁴. His study clearly points to the diffusion of nationalist ideas across countries. But beyond this diffusionism there are continuous interdependencies and exchanges between nationalisms. Every single nationalism (conventionally understood as “national”) exists in ever-altering environment of various nation-states’ and other nationalisms’ agendas. In addition, it encompasses a variety of “voices” (“nationalisms in nationalism”). Recently, growing number of scholars attempt to break out of the confines of state and demos writing on “translational nationalism.” Even though their studies focus primarily on the issue how nationalism functions and cuts across the state borders, they touch upon some problems of dynamics within and between various nationalisms¹⁹⁵.

Secondly, heteroglot and dialogic reality of nationalism finds expression in the fact that “national activists” are often divided. Various groups have different visions of the nation, and different views on the national cause. In this respect, Montserrat Guibernau writes about “alternative’ national elites and masses.”¹⁹⁶ Arguably neither “nations” nor nationalists speak with a single voice¹⁹⁷. Thus within one nationalism the “nation” is contested. Besides, the “nation” and the “national cause” are acknowledged or denied by other nationalist projects, or by particular figures and groups engaged in them.

Thirdly, the identity of the nationalists’ main target (of the nation¹⁹⁸), is constituted by self-ascription and ascription by others¹⁹⁹. Thomas Eriksen argues that in absence of other groups no ethnicity can appear: “When we talk of ethnicity, we indicate that groups and identities have developed in mutual contact rather than in isolation... For ethnicity to come about, the groups must have a minimum of contact with each other, and they must entertain ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves. If these conditions are not fulfilled, there is no ethnicity, for ethnicity is essentially an aspect of a relationship, not a property of a group.”²⁰⁰ Equally there is no nation (in modern sense) without another one, be the later “real” or alleged²⁰¹. Therefore in their dealings with “own” nation nationalist are destined to enter in direct or indirect relationship with other ones.

Fourthly, nationalists think of the world as inherently divided into nations. Thus nationalist ideologies and movements are always *addressed*. From the outset nationalisms have appealed to both nations of their concern and rival ones. The nationalists of the 18th and the 19th centuries strived to “awaken” “own” nations. At the same time the “awakeners” assumed that other nations had already developed their respective “nationalisms.” The rival groups had been aware, and had occupied privileged positions. They had perused oppressive

¹⁹⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on The Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verslo, 1991), 4.

¹⁹⁵ See, for instance: Loring M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: ethnic nationalism in a transnational world* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Khachig Tölölyan, “Elites and Institution in the Armenian Transnation,” *Diaspora* 9:1 (2000): 107–136.

¹⁹⁶ Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 19.

¹⁹⁷ Maria Kovács, for example, emphasizes that different groups within Hungarian minorities in Hungary’s neighbor-states had different attitudes towards the introduction of dual non-resident citizenship by the kin-state: Maria Kovacs, “The Politics of Non-Resident Dual Citizenship in Hungary,” *Regio* 8 (2005): 69. Gerard Libardian shows how differently the leaders of Armenian Diaspora reacted to the independence of Armenia, namely to her proclaimed status of the regained national homeland: Gerard J. Libardian, *The Challenge of Statehood: Armenian political thinking since independence* (Watertown: Blue Crane Books, 1999).

¹⁹⁸ Here by “identity of nation” I mean national self-categorization and self-understanding of the individuals, who are supposed to belong to the nation. Nationalists generally do not share this interpretation.

¹⁹⁹ Friderik Barth sees two factors critical for ethnic identity: Barth, introduction, 13.

²⁰⁰ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 12.

²⁰¹ The importance of “the other” in construction of national identity is underscored in the study of Anna Triandafyllidou. She notices that the issue, however obvious, has been understudied: Anna Triandafyllidou, “National identity and the ‘other’,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21:4 (1998): 593–612.

policies and had confronted the interests of the nationalists' "beloved" nations²⁰².

Fifthly, the actions of nationalists often are interconnected. Nationalist politicians and ideologists are prone to response to and to mirror the deeds of one another. This tendency shows up in nationalist imaginary, citizenship and minority policies, internationalist conflicts, warfare etc.²⁰³

Polyphony and Dialogue in Mythmaking

Polyphony and dialogue appear with a vengeance in national mythology and nationalist mythopoeia. Different individuals and groups, who speak on behalf of the nation continuously "rediscover" and reinterpret national past. Anthony Smith points out that the variety of communal myths invoked increases in non-dictatorial societies: "Given the multiplicity of needs and outlooks of members of any community, the likelihood of a single, unified version of the communal past emerging in any relatively free society must be minimal. In fact, the past is as much a zone of conflict as the present, and we can therefore expect to find, at any given point in time, two or more versions of the ethnic past, often in competition or conflict."²⁰⁴ He then argues that the presence of different nationalist visions of descent oftentimes mirrors social cleavages within the community: "[E]ach nationalism usually contains more than one myth of descent. This split in their images of past and future tells us much about the divisions in the social and cultural life of a community experiencing rapid change, and the difficulties it faces in trying to achieve social integration." As a rule conservatively-oriented groups are inclined to put emphasis on the continuity of generations and the patterns of family lineage, while "radical aspirant strata" claim their ideological affinity and spiritual descent from antique nobility.²⁰⁵ Furthermore, the same social actors, be they individuals, elites or institutions, can use different myths for different purposes. John Armstrong terms such alternative narratives of communal past *myths* and *countermyths*. He gives an example. Thus on the one hand, Hungarian upper-classes and nationalists of the 19th century employed the myth of Attila and Hunnish roots of the Hungarians, which celebrated the legacy of the bellicose, rapacious and awesome nomadic people. On the other hand, they appealed to the figure of meek and devout St Stefan as an epitome of the nation. The invocation of these myths depended on circumstances. Through the Attila myth the "noble nomads" accrued a "right" to subjugate other, allegedly sedentary and peasant peoples. The myth of St Stefan assigned to Magyars a mission of civilizing the subordinated, and transformed them into *antemurale* Catholics, who were entitled and even encouraged to confront the demands of the Orthodox population and major challenges from the East²⁰⁶. In addition, national past is oftentimes contested "from without." The mythmakers, who speak on behalf of "other" nations, tend to disagree with the visions of history venerated within given community, and propose alternative view on it. Therefore, it can be that national mythology and nationalist mythopoeia are always polyphonic. National history is "malleable" and subject to interpretation. Elites use it "selectively"²⁰⁷. National historical myths thus are placed and negotiated in socially and spatially expanded and continuously changing milieu

²⁰² See: Geary, *Miti i kombeve*, 57–67.

²⁰³ See: Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 167; Szabolcs Pogonyi, "Dual Citizenship and Sovereignty," *Nationalities Papers* 39:5 (2011): 697; Ieda Osamu, "Post-Communist Nation-Building and the Status law Syndrome," in: *The Hungarian Status Law: nation-building and/or minority protection*, ed. Zoltan Kantor et al. (Sapporo: Hokkaido University, 2004), 31–34, 41–48. Indicatively John A. Armstrong, for instance, writes about "a dual imitative-defensive reaction" of the 19th century Ukrainian nationalism to "foreign nationalisms," and argues that it has been profoundly affected by German nationalism: Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism*, 8.

²⁰⁴ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 16.

²⁰⁵ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 86.

²⁰⁶ Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism*, 47–51.

²⁰⁷ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 3, 212; Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 20.

composed of various versions of communal past. But in what relationship are they with each other? How do they interact?

Apparently, mythopoeic heteroglossia does not mean that all voices are equal as in many novels of Dostoevsky. Different myths wax and wane. Some of them acquire particular popularity. They are widely believed and often elevated to the official level (“governing mythology”)²⁰⁸. Others happen to be altogether dismissed or do not retain relevance outside narrow social circuits. This fact has provoked a hotly debate between the scholars.

Montserrat Guibernau holds that only those elite interpretations of communal history, which allow “some bottom-up contributions,” prove successful. In their attempts to construct national past the mythmakers have to rely on symbols, traditions and history shared by the people.²⁰⁹ George Schöpflin argues that there are “limitations” to nationalist imagination, and any myth can not be constructed “purely out of false material.” In order to sustain it has to have “some relationship with the *memory of the collectivity that has fashioned it*.”²¹⁰ Anthony Smith also believes in existence of “certain limits” to nationalist mythopoeia²¹¹. Even though the past is always being reinterpreted “by various social groups in response to internal differences and external stimuli,” what undergoes the revisions is, in effect, a “fund” of myths, symbols, and shared memories, or in other words the “ethno-historical heritage,” of the relevant *ethnie*.²¹² Therefore, the scholar concludes that “this is not just a question of competition for power between elites with different visions; rather the relationship of these elites to ‘the people’ whom nationalism vests with power and authority,” determines which of historical myths will be chosen as “a guide to national destiny.”²¹³

An opposite scholarly standpoint suggests that the national past can be invented and constructed almost out of nothing²¹⁴. Powerful social actors are able to control mythopoeia, pick up various historical myths and alter their content as they want, depending on what goals are to be achieved (primarily within the society, but also in the international arena). Umut Ozkırımlı maintains that it is the nationalist elites and institutions that single out and promote one of the many narratives²¹⁵. John Coakley argues that history is rather a “grab-bag” from which nationalists freely select past themes that suit their present purposes²¹⁶.

Ethnosymbolist stance upheld by Anthony Smith, Montserrat Guibernau and, to some extent, by George Schöpflin seems problematic, for the “fund” of ethnic culture, traditions, myths and memories itself appears to be very elusive.²¹⁷ As Pal Kolstø graphically illustrates, “one will often find that in given region maps of food traditions or clothing styles look very different from maps of architectural styles, not to mention linguistic or religious maps.”²¹⁸ However, the scholarly view, which regards historical myths as *mere* inventions, *easily*

²⁰⁸ The term is coined by Duncan S. A. Bell. Occasionally he also speaks about “the governing myth of the nation.” It is difficult and analytically constraining, however, to think of all-encompassing national “meta-narrative.” Various types and versions of national historical myths function quite independently, in sense that they do not represent inseparable parts of “the myth of the nation.” That is why I regard the terms “governing mythology” or “governing myths” as more appropriate. Furthermore, governing position of a myth can change, and Bell acknowledges that. See: Duncan A.S. Bell, “Mythscape: Memory, Mythology and National Identity,” *British Journal of Sociology* 54:1 (2003): 65–66.

²⁰⁹ Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 18.

²¹⁰ Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power*, 87. The emphasis added.

²¹¹ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 17.

²¹² Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 17; Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 46, 78.

²¹³ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 229.

²¹⁴ Hobsbawm, introduction, 1–14, 12; Hobsbawm, “Mass-Producing Traditions,” 263–307.

²¹⁵ Umut Ozkırımlı, “The Nation as an Artichoke? A Critique of Ethnosymbolist Interpretations of Nationalism,” *Nations and Nationalism* 9: 3 (2003): 339–355.

²¹⁶ John Coakley, “Mobilizing the Past: Nationalist Images of History,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 10 (2004): 541–542.

²¹⁷ Barth, “Introduction,” 10–13; Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*.

²¹⁸ Kolstø, “Assessing the Role,” 3.

shapeable and *controllable* narratives with a *single author*, renders mythopoeia too voluntary a process. My contention is that nationalist mythmakers do not have fully manipulable “grab-bag” in their disposal. They always take into account an existing heteroglot totality of narratives²¹⁹. New myths are produced to oppose or correct already existing ones. The goals to be achieved by nationalist mythmakers can be achieved only at the expense or in relation to other communal spokesmen.

No doubt, the level of the myth-makers’ sensitivity to alternative visions varies, as does the degree of their understanding of the fact that elaborated mythological versions of the national past are addressed and related to those of others. Nevertheless, any ‘myth-bearing voice’ is given in response to or influenced by some other voices. Furthermore, the historical myth acquires its meaning for a recipient only in the context of other historical myths and accounts. Thus it appears to be constructed dialogically, and to have some authors.

In regard to language Mikhail Bakhtin writes: “Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated-overpopulated-with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process.”²²⁰ He emphasizes that various voices can be recognized beneath the surface of unitary language: “As a result of the work done by... stratifying forces in language, there are no ‘neutral’ words and forms-words and forms that can belong to ‘no one’; language has been completely taken over, shot through with intentions and accents... All words have the ‘taste’ of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour.”²²¹ In my view, nationalist historical narratives also should not be seen as mere *neutral media* representing the views and transmitting the intentions of particular nationalist elites. They are influenced by other “authors” and continually informed by existing mythological visions of the past.

Of course, I do not deny that those, who are vested with power in a society, have the final say in constructing and filling up historical myths²²². I think, however, that the investigation of “external authors” of and others’ influences in national historical myths constitutes a separate scholarly problem. In other words, the students should pay closer attention to *polyphonic dimensions* and *dialogical background* of nationalist mythopoeia. Because of addressivity of their actions the nationalists produce historical myths in direct or indirect/mediated dialogue with their ‘competitors.’ Oftentimes ‘alternative’ and ‘rival’ groups of mythmakers have an appreciable impact on constructed historical narratives. As a consequence, they influence the “image” of the community, which is being distributed by the most powerful national figures and institutions. Afterwards the later impose that national understanding more or less modified “from without” on their less powerful fellows. It is also important to emphasize that the said interdependences and interconnections should not be seen as one-time happenings. They frequently occur in polyphonic and dialogical milieu of national myths, which are being systematically negotiated.

²¹⁹ Duncan S. Bell goes further, and introduces the concept of “national mythscape.” He understood the later as “the discursive realm, constituted by and through temporal and spatial dimensions, in which the myths of the nation are forged, transmitted, reconstructed and negotiated constantly.” It is an environment, where all national myths and their variations (elite representations) interact with each other, and with narratives shared in organic collective memory /remembrance. See: Bell, “Mythscape,” 76. I would add that the “national mythscapes” are also negotiated and influenced “from without.” In the present thesis, however, I focus not on the whole “mythscape” but on that mythopoeic field, where national historical *myths* of the same type interplay.

²²⁰ Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 294.

²²¹ Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 293.

²²² Thus, Mikhail Bakhtin points to the primary importance of sociopolitical centralization for making a language “unitary”: Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 301.

Making Myths of National History in Macedonia after 1991: Some Introductory Notes

Individual and Structural Societal Contributions to the Mythmaking

The Republic of Macedonia declared independence on 25 September 1991 and was admitted into the United Nations on 8 April 1993, which marked the country's transition from communism to democracy and from commanded to market economy. The political transformations brought more freedom to the society, whereas the cease of censorship secured more space for the discussions on the history. "Blank spots" and previously unknown tenets of the past of various national communities living in Macedonia now attracted big interest in academia and public sphere. "Forgotten" events and figures came out. New interpretations of the history emerged.²²³ One can assume, therefore, that after the changes professional and amateur historians in the republic became totally free, and were able to choose if they wanted to produce national myths or enthusiastically deconstruct them. If the myths appeared in historical writing, then it is only due to nationalists' efforts to achieve personal goals. Apparently, the concept of "power-seeking" politicians, intellectuals and artists generally holds true and personal responsibility is identifiable. Nevertheless, certain kinds of political and social environment are particularly conducive to nationalist mythmaking which is also informed by structural societal, methodological and institutional factors.

Ulf Brunnbauer maintains that for being intimately connected to nationalism, historiography takes a political angle, which is "not necessarily the result of direct political-ideological interference and censorship, but reflects the assumption of historians themselves that their task is to affirm, develop and defend the nation by means of their discipline."²²⁴ Basing on interviews Ulf Brunnbauer and Robert Pichler argue that many Macedonian and Albanian historians in the Republic of Macedonia consider it as their mission to serve the "nation," and concede that the past can be adapted according to the "national needs."²²⁵ The historical writing tends to make sense of the past, which would be relevant to the nation, and to uncover "national identity" in order to transmit it to the present generation. Such "academic" stance can be explained by the fact that almost all the historians in former Yugoslavia represent *organic* intellectuals.

As Antonio Gramsci maintained, all intellectuals could be analytically divided into "traditional" and "organic" ones. The former are constituted historically, "in connection with all social groups, but especially in connection with the more important." They feel their continuity and special qualification. In effect, even though tied to the ruling class, traditional intellectuals "put themselves forward as autonomous and independent of the dominant social group." In contrast, organic intellectuals are openly linked to the particular social group or class that is striving towards dominance. They have a function to direct the ideas and aspirations of that class²²⁶. Drawing on Gramsci's typology Siniša Malešević writes that intelligentsia in Tito's Yugoslavia has been created by the government practically out of nothing. From the inception intellectuals were regarded as serving the interests of the working class, socialist state and society. After the Communism fell, the previous values eroded and the notion of the world divided into antagonist classes get debunked, Yugoslavian

²²³ Ulf Brunnbauer, "Historiography, Myths and Nation in the Republic of Macedonia," in *(Re)Writing History. Historiography in Southeast Europe after Socialism*, ed. Ulf Brunnbauer (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2004), 190–196; Stefan Troebst, "IMRO + 100 = FYROM? The politics of Macedonian historiography", in *The New Macedonian Question*, ed. James Pettifer (London: Plagrave, 1999), 62.

²²⁴ Brunnbauer, "Historiography," 166.

²²⁵ Brunnbauer, "Historiography," 176; Robert Pichler, "Historiography and the Politics of Education in the Republic of Macedonia (1991–2008)," in *"Transition" and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*, ed. Augusta Dimou (Gottingen: V&R UniPress, 2009), 232.

²²⁶ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, New York, 1971), 139, 142–143.

intellectuals stuck to awakening “their nation” instead of “their class.”²²⁷ Malešević’s remarks seem to be particularly relevant to Macedonian intelligentsia, since even under the communist rule the ideology of Macedonism in the republic was more expressed than that of Yugoslavism (“brotherhood and unity”), and sometimes superseded class doctrine²²⁸.

As to historical methodology Ulf Brunnbauer remarks that in Macedonia history is seen as a science, which should be based on “hard facts,” and as a profession that can be learnt. Its main task is to establish the facts through finding and analyzing relevant documents. Many historians maintain that the “scientific facts” have not yet been revealed enough. Therefore Macedonian historiography, – they believe – should still primarily deal with documentation, and can not afford to raise broad theoretical questions or to engage in revisionism. What seems even worse to them is that the collecting of the facts is complicated and hindered by distorted historical accounts of the neighboring historiographies. In consequence, Macedonian historians consider it as one of their main duties to clear up the facts from the accretions of hostile interpretations and to exhibit them in the “true light.” Ulf Brunnbauer shows that the obsession with documentation and focus on national liberation has led to the dominance of political history and chronological approaches in Macedonian historical writing. Most of articles in main academic journals deal with political history and embrace the chronological and factographic paradigm. Around 70 percent of the scholarly projects led by the main historical research institution in 1997–2002 were focused on the political history of Macedonia. Tellingly, “[e]ven studies on cultural history mainly consist of chronologically organized ‘facts’ designed to prove the existence of the Macedonian nation.”²²⁹ Thus the main focus of Macedonian historiography is the national history. But here too, some specific “methodological” positions are present. As Robert Pichler argues, both Macedonian and Albanian historians in the republic believe that the serious studies of the history of a national community should best be done by its members. The “outsiders” often do not feel the “mentality” of a particular ethnic group, and, as a consequence, fail to “understand” the communal history.²³⁰

Another factor that fosters national historical mythmaking in the Republic of Macedonia is institutional one. As Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Shiller notice, the naturalization of nation-states and concentration of social sciences on various “national” fields is encouraged by the state institutions “organizing and channeling social science thinking in universities, research institutions and government think-tanks.” The funding is primarily given to support studies which contribute to the solution of national problems. “In most states, universities are linked to national ministries of education that favor research and teaching on issues of ‘national relevance.’ Academies are... usually ‘national ones’ and sometimes play important role in maintaining the cultural treasures of the nation.” Finally, almost all aggregated and systematic information is produced by the government departments of nation states.²³¹

The main institutions that direct historical research in the Republic of Macedonia are the Institute of National History, the history department of the University of Skopje, the Institute for Old-Slavonic culture in Prilep and Skopje, and the Archive of Macedonia. All these institutions have been engaged in nation-building.²³² The case of the first institution that

²²⁷ Malešević, *Identity as Ideology*, 196–203.

²²⁸ Stefan Troebst, “Historical Politics and Historical ‘Masterpieces’ in Macedonia before and after 1991,” *New Balkan Politics* 6 (2003), accessed May 25, 2012, http://www.newbalkanpolitics.org.mk/OldSite/Issue_6/troebst.historical.eng.asp; Brunnbauer, “Historiography,” 174.

²²⁹ Brunnbauer, “Historiography,” 197.

²³⁰ Pichler, “Historiography,” 222–223.

²³¹ Wimmer and Glick Schiller, “Methodological Nationalism,” 306.

²³² See: Brunnbauer, “Historiography,” 173–176; Hugh Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* (London: Hurst and Company, 1995), 116–117. (Poulton elaborates on the role of institutions in Macedonian “ethno-genesis”).

dominates academic discourse till the present day is indicative. It was established in 1948 by special governmental decree under the name “National Institute for History of the Macedonian people.” The decree stipulated that the main goal of the new institution would be to study “national and cultural history of the Macedonian people.” Later on in 1956 the institution was renamed as “Institute of National History,” which meant eliminating that part of its name, which overtly referred to the (Slavic) Macedonian past. Now the law reformulated the original institution’s objective. Alongside with investigation of the “national” history of Macedonians, an attention should be paid to the past of the “minorities and ethnic groups living in Macedonia.”²³³ The later task, however, as Ulf Brunnbauer argues, has never been taken seriously. The structure of the Institute reflects the emphasis on a limited range of research themes linked with the periods of “awakening” and “national liberation.” Only one of six departments focuses on comparative (Balkan) studies, but it is understaffed. In the beginning of the 2000s the department of the studies of the Ottoman-Turkish period, which was supposed to cover Albanian history, had the least number of scholars, including all Albanians employed (2 out of 35 researches)²³⁴. After 2004 the Albanian employees moved away and found job elsewhere²³⁵. In March 1996 the “Law on Scientific Research Activities” was enacted and replaced the previous one from the communist times. Among the central areas of academic research with interest for the state it defined “historical and cultural identity of Macedonian people and nationalities living in Macedonia” which was indicatively ranked at the first place. Non-governmental activities in this field were prohibited.²³⁶

Since the beginning of the 1990s Albanian academics vigorously protested against their co-ethnics being underrepresented. They established their “own,” clandestine university in Tetovo (Alb. *Tetovë*) in December 1994. Since that time some “illegal” (in view of the state law) historical studies have been conducted there at the Faculty of Arts. Under pressure of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Macedonian government agreed to allow establishing a new private university. With the help of international donors the Southeast European University opened its doors in 2001 in Tetovo. However small, it started to play the role of the second institutional center for Albanian historical science in Macedonia.²³⁷ Through various communities, such as the Union of Albanian intellectuals and “Alb-Shkenca” (a forum of Albanian scientists), as well as through personal contacts Albanian historians maintained connections with academic institutions in Albania (the Academy of Sciences, the Institute of History and Linguistics, the Institute of Archeology, the University of Tirana etc.), and Kosovo (the Albanian parts of the Academy of Sciences and Arts and the University of Priština, the Institute of Albanian Studies), where Albanian education and academia till the end of 1999 functioned clandestinely²³⁸. Although restricted by the law, the said communities and professional links to some extent “institutionalized” Albanian historical writing in Macedonia. Besides, they facilitated the transmission of certain ethics and principles, which guided the activities of scholars in Albania and Kosovo, to the historians in the republic, where no official institution dealing with the culture of Albanians had ever existed.

After the conclusion of the Ohrid Framework Agreement the situation in field of

²³³ Katerina Kolozova, Mitko B. Panov and Ilija Milcevski, “Ancient Macedonia between Academic Knowledge, State Policy and public discourse (1991–2009): Revision or Continuity of the Concept of the Macedonian Nation,” in *The Nation-State and the Institutions of Academic Knowledge: Production and Legitimizing of Dominant Discourses of/on Knowledge About Society* (Skopje: Euro-Balkan Institute, 2010), 39.

²³⁴ Brunnbauer, “Historiography,” 170, 172.

²³⁵ Pichler, “Historiography,” 226.

²³⁶ Kolozova, Panov and Milcevski, “Ancient Macedonia,” 42–43.

²³⁷ Pichler, “Historiography,” 222–225.

²³⁸ On “parallel” education system in Kosovo during the 1990s see: Denisa Kostovicova, *Kosovo: the Politics of Identity and Space* (London: Routledge, 2005).

university education and research has changed. The document itself stipulated that state funding should be provided for university level education “in languages spoken by at least 20 percent” of the republic’s population (Article 6.2), which virtually meant in Macedonian and Albanian²³⁹. It paved the way to foundation of the State University of Tetovo in 2004. The later took over the old structures and cadres of the “clandestine” university. The issue of Albanian research institutions, however, remained. Albanian intellectuals insisted on widening the scope of scholarly activities in Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and scientific institutes, which would include the investigation of Albanian culture. They also demanded the government-sponsored academic institutions to admit and to employ more scholars of Albanian “nationality.” These attempts had basically failed. Therefore Albanian politicians and academics proposed another option that was to found public research institutions dealing exclusively with Albanian culture, and, as a consequence, having almost exclusively Albanian cadre, since other scholars in the republic generally do not speak Albanian²⁴⁰. The government reluctantly was moving forward. In 2002 the “Law on Scientific Research Activities” was amended, and now allowed some room for reform, stating that the “public scientific institutions can merge, split or integrate by the decision of the Government.”²⁴¹ The authorities did not put much pressure on the private and state universities in Tetovo that became “the highest [Albanian] institutional bodies of scientific research in Macedonia.” The change of the government after the parliamentary elections in 2006 brought about an alteration in the attitude towards the public academic institutions. In November 2007 the authorities permitted registering the “Alb-Shkenca” in Macedonia as an international institute, whose goal was to foster academic exchanges between Tirana, Priština and Tetovo.²⁴² Simultaneously an official state-funded Institute for Cultural and Spiritual Heritage of the Albanians in Macedonia was founded in Skopje²⁴³. It focused its research on history, anthropology and archeology. During 2000s Albanian intellectuals in Macedonia established many influential societies, such as the Union of Albanian intelligentsia, the Union of Albanian Historians in Macedonia etc. Despite all appreciable changes and novelties in institutional organization of Albanian historians in Macedonia in the last decade, new academic centers and assemblies unsurprisingly were staffed predominantly with the scholars coming from or educated in respective institutions of former Yugoslavia.

Ulf Brunnbauer emphasizes the importance of the institutional factor for historical mythmaking in the Republic of Macedonia. As he elaborates, the institutions’ work is based on strict formal regulations, and their members should follow these regulations. But the internal life of an institution always diverges from the normative rules, modifies and manipulates them. While not prescribing or predicting the outcome of a historical study, both formal and informal rules, and codes nevertheless profoundly influence the approaches employed by the scholars. The analyst concludes: “To work in a particular historical institute, usually means to be forced to accept the *esprit-de-corps* of that institution, and to adapt to its specific paradigms and power structures. Historiography therefore cannot be understood as the outcome of the free will of historians but must be placed in the context of the institutions that are encouraged to investigate the past.”²⁴⁴

Thus, it can be said that the impact of structural societal, methodological and

²³⁹ *Framework Agreement*. August 13, 2001, accessed May 25, 2012, <http://www.ucd.ie/ibis/filestore/Ohrid%20Framework%20Agreement.pdf>.

²⁴⁰ Pichler, “Historiography,” 223–227.

²⁴¹ Kolozova, Panov and Milcevski, “Ancient Macedonia,” 43–44.

²⁴² Urim Hasipi, “Instituti ALB-Shkenca u prezantua në UEJL” [“Alb-Shkenca Institute was presented at the SEEU”], *Televizioni Koha*, November 30, 2007, accessed May 25, 2012, <http://www.tvkoha.tv/203/instituti-alb-shkenca-u-prezantua-ne-uejl-.html>.

²⁴³ Kolozova, Panov and Ilija Milcevski, “Ancient Macedonia,” 45.

²⁴⁴ Brunnbauer, “Historiography,” 170.

institutional factors on national historical mythopoeia constitutes a separate scholarly problem. It seems obvious that the presence of organic intelligentsia, methodological nationalism and institutions, which create an environment conducive to mythmaking, fosters and reinforces producing of historical myths. On the other hand, not stopping the creation and dissemination of national narratives gives specific significance to the particular category of intellectuals and institutions, and, in effect, perpetuates them. Furthermore, here too dialogic nationalism reveals itself perfectly. For instance, the institutions of different nations and “alternative” national organizations tend to “copy” or at least to react to the activities of one another. Thus, Albanian intellectuals in Macedonia have opted to establish their “own” “scientific institute” following existed “Macedonian” model inherited from the socialist times. In April 2012 the director of the Institute for Cultural and Spiritual Heritage announced the one of the objectives of the institution was to create and develop fully the departments of ethnology, art history and archeology, which meant to parallel somehow the existing state institutes in Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo. He also called up to defend Albanian history, culture and heritage against distortions, constructions, falsifications made “under the patronage of the state itself.”²⁴⁵ Nevertheless, one should bear in mind that those who have power in a society decide either to break the said “vicious circle” or to perpetuate it.

The Variety of Macedonian and Albanian Historical Myths

The field of (Slavic) Macedonian mythopoeia is mapped out by Ulf Brunnbauer. He distinguishes three categories of historical myths of Macedonian nation. Those are myths of origins, myths of continuity and myths of victimization.

Myths of origins, according to Brunnbauer, repudiate the fact that Macedonian nation is the result of ambivalent and contingent social processes, whereas Macedonian nationhood is still being constructed and negotiated (as any nationhood basically). Instead, they portray Macedonians as the inheritors of a long and admirable pedigree, and intend to estrange them from Bulgarian (at the first place), Serbian and Greek nations. The first generation of Macedonian scholars traced the beginning of the Macedonian nation back to the 19th century, when the national self-consciousness was first “awakened” by the “Internal Macedonia Revolutionary Organization” (VMRO) and then indicatively expressed itself during the Ilinden Rising against Ottoman rule on 2 August 1903. The political liberation came later, when the first session of the Antifascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) took place exactly on 2 August 1944 and established the Macedonian Republic. After the Tito-Stalin split (1948) and ensuing deterioration of relations between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia important shift occurred in the content of the Macedonian myth of origins. Now the pedigree of Macedonian nation extended back to the Middle Ages. The medieval empire of Tsar Samuil and his successors (969–1018) was reevaluated as a Macedonian one. Later on, Macedonian historians stressed that their co-nationals derived from distinct Slavic tribes, which arrived to the Balkans in the 6th century and were harshly different from Bulgarian tribes. With the fall of the communism the new myth of origin appeared. Macedonian scholars started to highlight the participation of the Ancient Macedonians in the ethno-genesis of the Macedonian people (in today’s sense).

The myths of continuity link the past of the Macedonian people with the present, and emphasize the nation’s unceasing existence and affirmation throughout the centuries. First of all, Macedonian historians strive to establish the presence of the name “Macedonia” at all points of history from antiquity up to present days. The name is rendered as a designator for

²⁴⁵ “ITKSh ngre shqetësime për falsifikimin e trashëgimisë shpirtërore të shqiptarëve,” [“ICHA Raises Concerns over Falsifications of Spiritual Heritage of the Albanians”], *Ylli Press*, April 4, 2012, accessed May 25, 2012, <http://www.yllpress.com/46869/itksh-ngre-shqetesime-per-falsifikimin-e-trashegimise-shpirterore-te-shqiptareve.html>.

the area of the Republic of Macedonia and adjacent lands clearly opposed to “Greece.” The fact that the term virtually ceased to exist in the Ottoman Empire, and even in the 19th century represented “a kind of ideological-geographical construct” is ignored. The second element of continuity is statehood and statecraft. In course of history Macedonians continuously revolted against the Roman, Byzantine, Serbian, Ottoman and Greek rule yearning to establish their “own” state. That is why the later systematically reappeared: Macedonian empire of Alexander the Great, the Kingdom of Macedonia under Antigonid dynasty, medieval Macedonian empire, the Republic of Kruševo declared during the Ilinden Rising, and the Yugoslavian Republic. Thirdly, Macedonian historians attempt to reveal “true” Macedonian character of certain personalities and groups in the past. It is claimed that the “Christians,” “Bulgarians,” “Greek Orthodox,” “Serbs” mentioned in historical sources were “actually” Macedonians. Equally writers, poets, journalists and artists from geographic Macedonia, as it is understood today, are rendered as distinguished “Macedonian” intellectuals.

The myth of victimization portrays the Macedonian people as historical sufferers at hands of numerous malicious enemies: Turks, Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Albanians etc. “This myth, on the one hand, aspires to instill into present generation a feeling of indebtedness to its ancestors, who had to endure enormous suffering while preserving Macedonian national identity. On the other hand, this story reveals who the main ‘others’ are.” One of the central themes here is that of partition of the “historical Macedonia” by Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars (1912–13). Another focus is the suffering of Macedonians during the Greek Civil War, and the ensuing “policy of genocide” and alteration of the ethnic makeup of Aegean Macedonia pursued by the Greek authorities. After 1991 Macedonian authors passionately raise the question of “unprecedented influx” of the ethnic Albanians in Western Macedonia. Through illegal immigration, “demographic expansion” and “ethnic cleansing” the later allegedly advance their cause, i.e. act towards establishing a Greater Albania or/and taking over the whole Macedonian state.

Finally, Ulf Brunnbauer notices some “ruptures” in the national myths. One version of the communal past presents the Socialist Republic of Macedonia as not fully national. The Yugoslav communism in its view was oppressive to Macedonian nation. The promoters of this view heartedly elevate the nationalists, who were persecuted after the Second World War, to the rank of the national heroes. They also criticize Serbian and Yugoslav influence on Macedonian nation-building, and claim that historically the relationship between Bulgarians and Macedonians were more amicable. Contrariwise, another version of the Macedonian past tells that socialist Macedonia virtually embodied the century-long dream of all Macedonians constituting the first Macedonian nation-state. The upholders of such interpretation emphasize destructive influences of Bulgaria on Macedonian nationhood, and blow out of all proportions the fact that Bulgarians till today deny existence of the separate Macedonian nation. In their view the relations with Serbia have proved much more productive and favorable for Macedonians. Needless to say that the first vision of the communal past brings water to the mill of the political right associated with VMRO-DPNE (from Macedonian: Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Union). The second vision, in contrast, strengthens the arguments of the political left. It is frequently invoked by the followers of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), which is successor of the League of Communists²⁴⁶.

The myths distinguished by Ulf Brunnbauer are also inherent to Albanian nationalistic discourse in both Albania and Kosovo as well as in Macedonia. Mythmakers generally present Albanian people as descendants of the ancient Balkan populations, namely semi-

²⁴⁶ Brunnbauer, “Historiography,” 176–196; Ulf Brunnbauer, “Ancient Nationhood and the Struggle for Statehood: Historiographic myths in the Republic of Macedonia,” in *Myths and Boundaries in South-Eastern Europe*, ed. Pal Kolstø (London: Hurst & Company, 2005), 271–295.

mythic Pelasgians and Illyrians. In the second half of the 20th century the myth of Illyrian origins almost fully superseded that of Pelasgian descent. Albanians like their Illyrian heirs courageously rebelled against their oppressors striving to re-achieve independence and to restore “own” statehood. In this respect the point of reference always is the person of “Gjon Kastrioti” Scanderbeg, who managed to assemble under his banner all Albanians, and to defend their independence for around thirty years. He successfully defeated numerous hordes of “Turkish” invaders, including the army of Mehmet II the Conqueror. Albanian statehood, which owes to the spirit of freedom-loving Albanian people, and thus is immanently present at any point of history, manifested itself in various Illyrian kingdoms, in the late Roman and early Byzantine empires (as long as many of their rulers had “ethnic” Illyrian roots), in semi-independent “Albanian” pashaliks of the 18th and 19th centuries etc. Historical enemies of the Albanian people, particularly the neighbors (“wolves”)²⁴⁷, continuously confronted Albanian cause. They edgily waited for a first opportunity to eliminate Albanians, or at least to limit maximally the territory of the Albanian nation-state²⁴⁸.

At the end of this section, I need to emphasize that the mythopoeia, which deal with the ancient past of Macedonia and Macedonians is illustratively polyphonic. Firstly, in (Slavic) Macedonian environment, some historians, be they professionals or amateurs, regard their co-nationals as direct (blood) descendants of the distinctive Slavic tribes. Others put emphasis on ancient ancestry of Macedonians. Furthermore, within the later category of the mythmakers, professional historians mainly speak of modern Macedonians as the inheritors of heroic and noble character of their ancient forebears, or portray them as the bearers of Ancient Macedonia’s geographical spirit (the myth of ideological descent). Otherwise, they concede that the “Macedonian Slavs” have merged in the early Middle Ages with the indigenous population, which constituted an ethnic substratum. Publicists and other non-professional historians can go as far as to claim that the Ancient Macedonians were actually Slavs. Another standpoint is to say that the linguistic shift happened to Macedonians under pressure of the powerful neighbors, and nowadays the former use a superstratum, i.e. socially more prestigious or powerful language, as their vernacular²⁴⁹ (the myth of genealogical descent).

The Macedonian nationhood, including its historical roots, is also contested “from without”. Kyril Drezov laconically describes the logics of neighboring nationalisms in relation to Macedonian descent: “[I]f ancient Macedonians were Greek, then no one other than contemporary Greeks has the right to use the Macedonian name – now or in the future. If Macedonian Slavs considered themselves Bulgarian at the turn of the twentieth century, this surely must have been erroneous: they must have been Serb, or at least halfway between Serbs and Bulgarians. If Macedonian Slavs once considered themselves Bulgarians, then they are Bulgarians nowadays as well.”²⁵⁰ Besides, Bulgarian nationalists claim Thracian “ethnicity” of both ancestors of modern Bulgarians and ancient inhabitants of today’s Macedonia. Thus, they voice pretensions on the territory the Republic of Macedonia, together

²⁴⁷ The signifier “wolves” with respect to neighboring countries and peoples is indicatively employed by the publicist Veip Alikaj: Veip Alikaj, *Fqinjë apo ujqër?: të gjithë për një Shqipëri të çliruar, të bashkuar, të pavarur* [Neighbors or Wolves? Everything for Liberated, Unified and Independent Albania] (Tiranë, 2006).

²⁴⁸ For some information see: Fatos Lubonja, “Between the Glory of Virtual World and the Mystery of Real Word,” in *Albanian Identities. Myth and History*, ed. Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 91–103; Noel Malcolm, “Myths of Albanian National Identity: Some Key Elements, as Expressed in the Works of Albanian Writers in America in the Early Twentieth Century,” in *Albanian Identities. Myth and History*, ed. Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 71–87; Matvei Lomonosov, “Vozrozhdeniia Dardania: istoria novoprovzglashennogo gosudarstva v ekspozitsii Muzeia Kosovo” [“Dardania Reborn: The History of the Newly Declared State at the Exhibition of the Kosovo Museum”], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 4 (2010): 59–68.

²⁴⁹ Brunnbauer, “Historiography,” 176–181; Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 45–46.

²⁵⁰ Kyril Drezov, “Macedonian Identity: an overview of the major claims,” in *The New Macedonian Question*, ed. James Pettifer (London: Plalgrave, 1999), 55–56.

with her dwellers.²⁵¹ Albanian nationalist mythmakers repudiate the descent of contemporary Macedonians from the Ancient Macedonians. They propagate that Ancient Macedonia was largely inhabited by Illyrian tribes, and even Alexander the Great himself was at least half-Albanian being the son of “Illyrian queen” Olympias.²⁵²

Naturally, all the “voices” in the nationalist mythopoeia concerting the ancient Macedonian past are interconnected and constantly interact with each other. In the following chapters I will assess how Albanian and Macedonian myths of antiquity have interpenetrated and dialogically interplayed in the Republic of Macedonia after 1991.

²⁵¹ Nade Proeva, “Savremeni makedonski mit kao odgovor na nacionalne mitovi suseda: albanski panilirizam, bugarski pantrakizam i grčki panhelenizam” [“The Contemporary Macedonian Myth as a Response to National Myths of the Neighbors: Albanian Pan-Illyrianism, Bulgarian Pan-Thracianism and Greek Pan-Hellenism”], *Zgodovinski časopis* 64 (141), 1-2 (2010): 188.

²⁵² Proeva, “Savremeni makedonski mit,” 176–219.

Chapter II. “Glorious Past” Comes Out. Who in the Republic of Macedonia “Possessed” Ancient Macedonian Heritage prior to the Independence?

Ownership of the National Past As a Process

The name dispute between Greece and Macedonia, which started at the beginning of the 1990s, is oftentimes construed by the students as a symbolic contest or a struggle over the national “symbolic capital”. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu elaborations Loring Danforth argues that intellectuals and scholars from humanities create “the symbolic capital.” “This symbolic capital constitutes a national culture, which serves to legitimate a nation’s existence as well as its claims to a specific identity, history and territory.”²⁵³ In his eyes, therefore, the Greek-Macedonian conflict “is part of ‘global cultural war’... in which these two nations and the states that represent them are fighting for control over the symbols, such as names, flags, and famous ancestors.”²⁵⁴ Anastas Vangeli holds that such symbolic capital as “the meta-narrative of Alexander the Great and the Ancient Kingdom of Macedon can provide Greek or Macedonian nations with the myths of homeland, foundation, descent and national character. By having the exclusive right to claim direct link to ‘the legacy of Alexander the Great,’ one instantly gets the possibility to manipulate with highly forceful arsenal of political myths.” That is why two parties are involved in a “symbolic contest” Employing the typology proposed by John Harrison, Anastas Vangeli classifies the name feud as proprietary conflict,²⁵⁵ that is, when “the monopoly or control of some important collective symbol or symbols” are struggled for²⁵⁶.

The said theoretic elaborations generally suggest that:

Firstly, national or at least nationally relevant symbols and symbolic capital independently exist as objective or objectified units.

Secondly, the nations or national spokesmen can establish an ownership over them. Even though Loring Danforth and Anastas Vangeli do not clearly formulate that, they describe how in course of “symbolic conflict” Greek and Macedonian nationalists use historical myths in order to possess, repossess or forfeit national symbols and nationally useful symbolic capital, i.e. name “Macedonia,” ancient Macedonia heritage and the figure of Alexander the Great²⁵⁷.

Anthony Smith goes even further. Assuming an objective existence of the history of a nation-to-be, he concludes: “In this respect, some communities are more fortunate than others. Their ethnic ties have been preserved into modern era, along with their sense of common ancestry.”²⁵⁸ “[S]tates and populations that lack their own epochs of former glory may well annex the golden ages of other related communities or of lands with which they have historical connections.”²⁵⁹ In sum, national symbols, national symbolic capital, and national

²⁵³ Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 18–19.

²⁵⁴ Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 143.

²⁵⁵ Anastas Vangeli, “Antiquity Musing: Reflections on the Greek-Macedonian Symbolic Contest over the Narratives of the Ancient Past.” (MA thesis, Central European University, 2009), 10, 26, 54.

²⁵⁶ Simon Harrison, “Four Types of Symbolic Conflict,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 1:2 (1995): 258.

²⁵⁷ Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 28–55; 163–173; Vangeli, *Antiquity Musing*, 51–92.

²⁵⁸ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 62.

²⁵⁹ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 225.

past, be it understood as constructed or real, are seen by the authors as independent variables and independently existing objects. And, in my opinion, there are certain flaws in such analytical approach.

First of all, admitting that objective or objectified national symbols, symbolic capital or past virtually exist, researchers can bring water to the mill of nationalism. Of course, nationalists and members of the nation (affected by banal nationalism) generally feel proud of their ancient roots and construe them “as a sign of resilience, strength and even superiority when compared with other nation unable to display a rich past.”²⁶⁰ But it does not mean that the scholars should turn nationalist claims into analytical concepts.

That is because, secondly, *national or nationally relevant* symbolic capital and *national* symbols based on the past do not exist separately from continuous and detectable political and social actions undertaken by national elites.

Basing on anthropological observations on kinship groups Pierre Bourdieu defines symbolic capital as “this denied capital, recognized as legitimate, that is, misrecognized as capital, which is possible form of accumulation when economic capital is not recognized.”²⁶¹ It is the capital of reputation, honor, prestige and social relations, which in good-faith economy is undifferentiated from the material components of family wealth and in itself can bring in material profits²⁶². Symbolic capital points to the competence, authority and credibility of a family or a kinship group implying the right to certain conduct. Bourdieu also pays attention to transmission of symbolic capital over generations. He argues that appropriation of “indices of genealogical position (so-and-so, son of so-and-so, son of so-and-so etc.) which are also *emblems*, symbolizing the whole symbolic capital accumulated by a lineage” allows claimants “to take possession of a *title* giving special rights over the group’s patrimony.”²⁶³

Understandably, there are many differences between kinship groups and nations. First of all, the *national* past, which means both belonging to a nation and significant for a nation, is given neither in genealogical connections nor in collective memory. It is constructed and continuously reinterpreted by nationalists. The glory of past epochs is imagined, often exaggerated and adjusted to serve present goals. Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin clarify that national and ethnic “tradition” is not “a bounded entity made up of bounded constituent parts, but a process of interpretation, attributing meaning in the present though making reference to the past”.²⁶⁴ In other words, prestige, honor and reputation of a nation *associated* with previous deeds do not reside in the past objectively. Neither national elites nor “the people” “see” and immediately recognize “symbolic capital” there. A nation’s reputation is “produced” in heads of national spokesmen and then “found” in the past. In contrast to familial, clannish or tribal authority acquired through previous conduct, a nation’s historical honor generally tends not to be recognized in itself, based on traceable past deeds. It is struggled for in present. Nationalists act to instill the idea of admirable communal pedigree into their fellows, as well as into “outsiders.”

Then, the *symbolism* of past happenings and historical figures, i.e. their function to stand for a communal identity and property to be “ours,” is also produced through elite political and social activities. Furthermore, it is continuously being defined and negotiated. As Simon Harrison clarifies, communal symbols can be created and destroyed, in sense that they start and cease representing a group’s identity²⁶⁵. In contradistinction to familial, clannish and

²⁶⁰ Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*.

²⁶¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, transl. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 118.

²⁶² Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 119–120.

²⁶³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 36.

²⁶⁴ Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin, “Tradition, Genuine or Spurious,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 97:385 (1984): 287.

²⁶⁵ Of course, as Simon Harrison explains, images, themes and signs usually continue to exist in cultural

tribal symbols, which are more than less formed and maintained naturally in course of face-to-face interaction,²⁶⁶ the symbols of an imagined community require continuous affirmation that involves engagement of the communal elites.

Additionally, by definition symbolic capital implies recognition of its value. In “traditional” societies and good-faith economy recognition of a reputation’s capitalness represents a routine. It is ingrained in belief-system of kinship groups. In the “world divided into nations,” however, the judgement that the national symbols can serve as a capital, and to provide title is not totally given. Even though history generally works to legitimate nationalist claims, its relevance varies. If the parties involved recognize the significance of the past, capitalness of the later will be bigger, and *vice versa*. Therefore, capitalization of national historical symbols implies another struggle for recognition led by the national elites.

Thus *national* symbols, *national* and *nationally relevant* symbolic capital appear as inseparable from the processes aimed at constructing the past glory and valor, attaching specific national meaning to past events, and turning them into capital. Anastas Vangeli implicitly and somewhat obliquely acknowledges these contingencies. As he writes, the battled symbolic capital, which is, in effect, the narrative/ *myth* of Alexander the Great, is contested by Macedonian and Greek elites using historical *myths*, because it can provide two nations with a forceful arsenal of *myths*²⁶⁷. In this view, “symbolic capital” being myth itself is hardly separable and distinguishable from mythopoeic activities to seize power on, and draw power from it. Analytically such elaborations seem uncomfortable. Instead, I think, one can talk and theorize about *nationalization*, *symbolization* and *capitalization* of certain (more than less objectively given) historical happenings and figures through making myths of national history²⁶⁸. And, consequently, the level of nationalization, symbolization and capitalization of history varies over times, and circumstances. Therefore, national or nationally relevant “symbolic capital” is not an independent variable. Still less it represents an object of struggle, or an apple of discord. “Symbolic” conflicts can lead to higher level of nationalization, symbolization, and capitalization of the past. Anthony Smith argues that warfare in various forms has constituted one of the most powerful factors in the creation of nations and ethnic communities, and not only has it been caused by ethnicity and nationhood²⁶⁹. Keith Brown writes that “escalating tensions between groups drive *deployment*” of the of the *symbols*²⁷⁰. In my view, however, it is *nationness*, *symbolism* and *capitalness* of historical events and personages that tend to be appreciably altered in contest. National myths, which nationalize, symbolize and capitalize the past, usually depend on “rival” myths as well as on reactions of counteracting mythmakers.

Who “possessed” Ancient Macedonia in the Republic before 1991?

Reflecting on predicaments of (Slavic) Macedonian nation-building Robert Pichler writes: “[E]thnic Macedonians are in difficult position of designing a national history out of a material that was already ‘possessed’ by others.” The fact of this “possession,” however, is neither objective nor totally objectified. What we encounter are *claims* to the ownership over

repertoire, but they do not signify something anymore: Harrison, “Four Types,” 263.

²⁶⁶ Simon Harrison shows that the struggles of kinship groups over symbols (what they actually mean) occur systematically: Harrison, “Four Types,” 255–272. But they are incomparable with production of *national* symbols, which is continuous top-down and top-top insistence on recognition.

²⁶⁷ Vangeli, *Antiquity Musing*, 9–10, 51–92, 95.

²⁶⁸ I admit that historical “facts” hardly exist as such, independently on interpretations. But at least, firstly, “something” happened in the past; and, secondly, practical inseparability of a scholar’s standpoint and an “event” represents a problem of another level.

²⁶⁹ Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, 154–155.

²⁷⁰ Brown, “Seeing Stars,” 784.

the past as well as *pretensions* on its single and suitable interpretation. Therefore, the scholar adds: “As a latecomer in the process of nation-building, Macedonians have to appropriate elements of the historical claims of their neighbors”²⁷¹. Understandably, the claims in question buttressed by respective historical myths appeared and disappeared in course of the time and in dependence on settings. It is also clear that the pretensions on ancient Macedonian history were barely voiced by all Macedonians, and their “neighbors,” namely Greeks and Albanians. At the age of nationalism it was nationalists speaking *on behalf* of all “Macedonians,” “Albanians” etc., who attempted to seize grip over ancient heritage. Previously, the images of Alexander the Great and his realm were invoked and disseminated by rulers, clergy and epic tellers. Yet, they were not used to construct ethnic or national pedigrees. So, who “possessed,” i.e. who claimed possession of, ancient Macedonian heritage on the territory, which today constitutes the Republic of Macedonia?

Answering this question I will concentrate my attention only on “Macedonians” and “Albanians,” i.e. on their spokesmen, and, at pre-national period, on speakers of dialects and idioms, who later formed Macedonian and Albanian languages²⁷².

The image of Alexander of Macedon as a distinguished commander, courageous and fearless conqueror, and a talented ruler of an unbelievably huge empire attracted great interest from the period of the Antiquity onwards. Two his potential heirs, Ptolemy and Perdiccas, attempted to hijack his corpse from one another. Later on many famous emperors, kings and princes, including Caesar and Octavian August, found in the figure of Alexander a source of inspiration and strived to emulate him²⁷³. Many narratives telling the story of Alexander’s glorious deeds had been written. Numerous tribes and peoples, who dwelled on the territory stretching from the Balkans to the Himalayas, maintained the memory of Alexander composing popular legends. In the 3rd century AD a romance called by the scholars “Alexandria” and written in Greek absorbed various epic and literary variants of the Alexander’s story. By 13th and 14th centuries different versions of Alexandria had been translated, supplemented and reinterpreted by the South Slavs. Through ecclesiastic connections they penetrated to Slavic lands, including Serbia and Russia²⁷⁴. Anonymous authors of Alexandria primarily appealed to medieval ruling class, i.e. to warriors, who were supposed to emulate “military valor and moral virtues of the “tsar and sovereign of the whole universe”²⁷⁵. Thus, in a way they claimed certain ideological descent of worthy and dignified medieval nobles from Alexander the Great. Besides, one can speculate that some notions of the ancient Macedonian greatness were occasionally transmitted to the Slavic or/and Orthodox population at large, including Macedonian dwellers. These speculations, however, are not proved by reliable data. Equally it is hard to believe that, as Luan Malltezi argues, “Albanians” of the 15th century (Arbërs) considered themselves as heirs of ancient Epirotes,

²⁷¹ Pichler, “Historiography,” 246.

²⁷² By so doing I do not imply that all the speakers of dialects and idioms, which in the 19th and 20th centuries constituted standard Macedonian and Albanian languages, were actual ancestors of modern Macedonian and Albanian nations. But, firstly, available material is structured along national lines. To break totally out of imposed classification would require conducting a separate profound research on territorial spread of images of Alexander the Great. Secondly, contemporary nationalists claim that their fellows always remembered glorious national forebears. And there is a need to problematize this viewpoint.

²⁷³ Vangeli, *Antiquity Musing*, 3–6.

²⁷⁴ Oleg Tvorogov, “Aleksandriia Hronogoficheskaia” [“The Chronographic Alexandria”], in *Slovar’ knizhnikov i knizhnosti Drevnei Rusi*. Vypusk 2 (vtoraia polovina XIV–XVI v.). Cast’ 1: A–K, ed. Dmitrii Likhachev (Leningrad: Nauka, 1988), 85–88; Elena Vaneeva, “Aleksandriia Serbskaia,” [“Serbian Alexandria”], in *Slovar’ knizhnikov i knizhnosti Drevnei Rusi*. Vypusk 2 (vtoraia polovina XIV–XVI v.). Cast’ 1: A–K, ed. Dmitrii Likhachev (Leningrad: Nauka, 1988).

²⁷⁵ Elena Vaneeva, trans., “Aleksandria” [“Alexandriia”], in *Biblioteka literatury Drevnei Rusi*. Tom 8: XIV – pervaiia polovina XVI veka (Sankt-Peterburg: Nauka, 2003), accessed May 25, 2012, <http://www.pushkinskijdom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=5126>.

and regarded Alexander the Great, whose mother originated from Epirus, and Pyrrhus as their ancestors²⁷⁶.

The images of the great ruler and Ancient Macedonia, however, appear in Albanian humanist literature. Such authors as Marin Barleti (1450–1513) and Frang Bardhi (1606–1643), who authored three books in Latin on Scanderbeg's deeds, constantly interchange geographical notions of Macedonia, Epirus, and Arbëria. The Albanian ruler according to them was an offspring of a noble family coming geographical region of Ematia (Mati), which stretched in Epirus/Macedonia. He also governed Arbëria/Epirus/Macedonia. The authors offer different versions of the origins of their Epirote-Arbër-Macedonian contemporaries. Sometimes they write that the later descended from an ancient Italian tribe, but at the same time claim them being inheritors of the ancient local population. Anyhow Scanderbeg himself is portrayed as a true heir of the courageous ancient commanders, since with his victories Albanian hero restored Macedonia's glory and returned the times of Alexander the Great and Pyrrhus. Pjetër Bogdani (1630–1689), even though does not mix geographical signifiers, holds that Pyrrhus and Alexander originated from Arbëria²⁷⁷. Generally, the Albanian humanists, understandably, imply both genealogical and ideological (spiritual and territorial) descent. But the Macedonian pedigree is attributed to Scanderbeg, and his warriors (the brave Arbërs), which means primarily to nobility.

With the advent of nationalism, in the mid 19th century the Slavic nationalists from Macedonia, who at the point saw themselves rather as Bulgarians, admiringly discovered that the figure of Alexander the Great was one of the most frequent in local folklore. The collection *Bulgarian Folk Songs*, gathered by Miladinov brothers in geographic Macedonia and published in Zagreb in 1861, started with the folk tale about the prominent ancient ruler²⁷⁸. Russian professor Viktor Grigorovich, who in 1844 traveled through Macedonia, notes regarding the local folklore: "In all lands that I saw I did not hear other names, except at two ones, which are Alexander the G[reat] and Marko Kraljević."²⁷⁹ Both of them live in the memory of the people...²⁸⁰ He, however, emphasizes: "The memory about Alexander seems as if instilled from outside into the people, as those who mentioned his name often could not describe him without further reference the dascals (teachers) and their books on the subject"²⁸¹. Drawing, in particular, on Grigorovich's account, Kyril Drezov speaks about "Greek contributions" to Macedonian nation-building. In his eyes, the images of the ancient realm and its heroic ruler were popularized in lands, which today constitute geographic Macedonia, through Greek school system. He notices that for thousand years the name "Macedonia" had different meanings for Westerners and the Balkan Christians. For the first it signified the territories of Ancient Macedonia, whereas for the second denoted the areas of former Byzantine *thema* "Macedonia," i.e. classical and present-day Thrace. Only in the second half of the 19th century with Greek efforts the central and northern parts of present-day "geographic Macedonia," which before were called "Bulgaria" or "Lower Moesia," became known under today's name locally and world-widely. Aiming at annexation of Macedonian

²⁷⁶ Luan Malltezi, "Rrëth origjinës së flamurit të Skënderbeut" ["On the Origins of Scanderbeg's Banner"], *Studime historike* 3 (1987): 179–190.

²⁷⁷ Petrika Thëngjilli, *Shqiptarët midis Lindjes dhe Perëndimit. Fusha Politike I [The Albanians between the East and the West. Political Issues I]* (Tiranë: EXTRA, 2008), 11–19.

²⁷⁸ Blazhe Ristovski, "Zemlia Aleksandra. Paradoxsy makedonskoi istorii," ["The Land of Alexander. Paradoxes of Macedonian History"], *Rodina* 1–2 (2001): 188.

²⁷⁹ Marko Kraljević (Prince/King) is the central personage in the whole South Slavic oral tradition, modeled after medieval Serbian and Macedonian ruler Marko Mrnjavčević (c. 1335–1395).

²⁸⁰ Viktor Grigorovich, *Ocherk Puteshestviia po Evropeiskoi Turtsii [Outline of a Journey Through European Turkey]* (Moskva: Tipografiia M.N. Lavrova i K, 1877), accessed May 25, 2012, <http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/Dokumenty/Bulgarien/XIX/1840-1860/Grigorovic/text4.phtml?id=2235>.

²⁸¹ Grigorovich, *Ocherk Puteshestviia*. Indicatively, the traveler uses slavized Greek word (dascal) for teacher.

lands the Greek government actively disseminated through school-system the idea that (Slavic) Macedonians were in fact the direct descendants of ancient Greek Macedonians, who just happened to be “Slavophones.”²⁸² However the narratives of Alexander the Great and Ancient Macedonia penetrated on the Macedonian soil, it is known that Macedonian/Bulgarian nationalist ideologists (Dimitar Miladiev, Dimitar Makedonski, Gjorgjie Pulevski, Krste Misirkov, Isaja Moškovski, Marko Cepenkov, Dmitrija Čupkovski, Goce Mitevski etc.) frequently employed them from the mid 19th century up until 1940s for “affirmation” of Macedonian/Bulgarian nation²⁸³.

Prominent figures of Albanian nationalism of the 19th century also invoked the image of Alexander the Great. They departed from the assumption that their co-nationals (to-be) descended from the indigenous Balkan population known in antiquity under the names “Epirotes,” “Illyrians,” and “Macedonians.” All those peoples were kin and distinct from Greeks, since they commonly originated from more ancient Pelasgians. Thus in different writings Alexander the Great was rendered as an Albanian hero. Even though the nationalists regarded him as an Albanian by virtue of being ancient Macedonian, oftentimes they additionally emphasized that Alexander’s mother had Epirote provenance, which meant indisputably Albanian. In sum, the historical myths, which portrayed Albanian nature of both ancient Macedonia and Epirus as well as pointed to Albanian origins of Macedonian rulers, at that point served the main goals of Albanian nationalism. They implied “awakening” all Albanians, acquiring autonomy or independence of all “historical” Albanian lands (Albania proper, Epirus, Macedonia, Kosovo etc.), and restoring past greatness. Understandably, in their writings the Albanian intellectuals not only claimed “ownership” over ancient Macedonia, together with her famous personages, but also praised and glorified it, thus contributing to capitalization of the past.

One of the first Albanian nationalists, who referred to ancient Macedonia and Alexander the Great, was Vincenzo Dorsa (Alb. *Vinçenc Dorsa*, 1823–1885), an Arbrësh teacher from Calabria. In 1847 he published the book “On Albanians”. There he claims that Albanians are one of the oldest European races alongside with Greeks and Celts, for their forebears were ancient Pelasgians, who later became known as Macedonians and Epirotes. Alexander the Great and his father Philip descended from the Epirotes and Illyrians, not from Greeks²⁸⁴. Needless to say that possession of a great realm in the past meant the readiness of Albanians to form the state and nation at present.

Dora d’Istria (Alb. *Elena Gjika*, 1828–1888), the Russian duchess, originated in Romanian Ghica family of Albanian descent used “attested” Pelasgian provenance of the Albanians in order to highlight their distinct identity, opposing Slavic pretensions on Albanian lands and setting the Albanians apart from the Pan-Slavic movement. She called up Albanians to be proud of their glorious past and to stand under the banner of Alexander the Great, Pyrrhus and Scanderbeg²⁸⁵.

The leading political figure of Albanian nationalism Vassa Efendi (Alb. *Pashko Vasa*, 1825–1892) invoked images of Ancient Macedonia in order to ground his views on the “Albanian question.” The native of Shkodër and offspring of a Catholic family, from 1847 he lived abroad and managed to make an illustrious career in the Ottoman administration. In the late 1877 Pashko Vasa became a founding member of the Central Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the Albanian People in Istanbul. Thanks to his contacts there, he actively participated in the establishment of the Albanian League in 1878, authoring the Memorandum

²⁸² Drezov, “Macedonian Identity,” 50–51.

²⁸³ Blaže Ristovski, *Makedonija i makedonskata nacija [Macedonia and Macedonia Nation]* (Skopje: Detska radost, 1995), 130–138.

²⁸⁴ Thëngjilli, *Shqiptarët midis Lindjes dhe Perëndimit*, 47–48.

²⁸⁵ Thëngjilli, *Shqiptarët midis Lindjes dhe Perëndimit*, 20, 52–53.

on Albanian Autonomy submitted to the British Embassy in the Ottoman capital. In his pivotal work *The truth on Albania and the Albanians* published in French in 1879 Pashko Vasa highlights distinct Albanian identity, which he traces back in history. In his view, indigeneity of Albanians in the Balkans justifies the claims for autonomy and independent development of Albanian nation. In contradiction to Dorsa, Pashko Vasa emphasizes the temporal priority of Albanians over Greeks, and argues that the Albanian forebears, i.e. Pelasgians, inhabited the Balkans 4 millennia before. The Greeks, on their part, came later, and only in the 11th century AD forcibly occupied the Peloponnese expelling its autochthonous dwellers. For him, ancient Illyrians, Macedonians, Epirotes and the modern Albanians are kindred and all related to the Pelasgians. The soldiers and officers of Phillip and Alexander of Macedon definitely spoke Pelasgian, i.e. that language, which was currently in use in Albania²⁸⁶. Pashko Vaso devotes two chapters to describe the deeds of Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great, thus “revealing” deep-rooted traditions of Albanian statehood²⁸⁷. In order to increase self-esteem of the members of the nation, delineate its boundaries and convince the readers in Albanian grand destiny the awakener adds: “[A]s we can grasp from our letters [?], all of which are true and originate in true histories, Macedonians, Epirotes and Illyrians were Albanians, all of them. As well as we, who speak Albanian language, are. It is completely evident thus that our root and our seed are the oldest of all. And the name, as well as the voice and respectful braveness of the Albanians have been recorded and told throughout the history... Today, however, Albania declined, got devastated... left without knowledge and literature”²⁸⁸.

In nationalist manifesto *Albania – what was it, what is it and what will become of it* the ancient Albanian grandeur appears even more outspokenly. Sami Frashëri (1850–1904) also “establishes” Pelasgian origins of the Albanians. But he goes further. Claiming that practically all of ancient Balkan tribes – the Illyrians, Macedonians, Epirotes, and even Thracians – were both descendants of Pelasgians and ancestors of the Albanians, Sami Frashëri expands the ancient Albanian “ethnoscape” onto the whole Balkan Peninsula up to Croatia and Hungary, as well as onto Western Anatolia. He seizes grip over all possible forms of ancient “Albanian” statehood, ranging from the Ancient Macedonia and Empire of Alexander the Great to the Kingdom of Pyrrhus of Epirus and Illyrian realms of Gentius and Teuta²⁸⁹.

After Albanian independence, the ideas of Albanian admirable antiquity were internalized by the government officials. First Albanian prime-minister Ismail Kemal bey Vlora (Alb. *Ismail Qemal*, 1844–1919) writes in his memoirs: “Such is the country where for centuries have lived “Shkupetars” [*shqiptar* – Albanian self-name]... Dwelling in a sort of isolation, they were variously grouped under the generic name of Macedonians or Illyrians, according to caprice of the conquerors. But they themselves, profoundly indifferent to these arbitrary arrangements, which did not interfere with their race, their language or their national character, seemed hardly to be aware of the fall of Empires or the changes of the frontiers... Since those days, whenever an attack has been made upon their liberties, they have been found as intrepid as in the far-off times when they followed Alexander the Great or Pyrrhus; and to-day they display the singular interesting spectacle of a nationality preserved pure and undefiled through the centuries...”²⁹⁰. In 1925 the *lekë* was introduced as Albanian currency

²⁸⁶ Pashko Vasa, *E vërteta për Shqipërinë dhe shqipëtarët [The Truth on Albania and the Albanians]* (Tiranë: Naim Frashëri, 2008), 9–26, 30–32.

²⁸⁷ Vasa, *E vërteta*, 30–40.

²⁸⁸ Vasa, *E vërteta*, 84.

²⁸⁹ Sami Frashëri, *Shqipëria ç'ka qenë, ç'është e ç'do të bëhet?: Mendime për shpëtimt të Mëmëdheut nga reziket që e kanë rethuarë [Albania - what was it, what is it, and what will become of it: Some thoughts on the salvation of the Homeland of the perils, it is beset by]* (Tiranë: Naim Frashëri, 1962), 9–13.

²⁹⁰ *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Vlora and his Work for the Independence of Albania*, ed. Renzo Falaschi

by the government. It referred to the Albanized name of Alexander the Great – *Leka i Madh*. However, it is hard to say that discourse of ancient Macedonia to some extent sponsored by governmental bodies in Albania, affected Macedonian Albanians. In the interwar period relations between Albania and Yugoslavia were generally tense, and Yugoslav authorities harshly banned Albanian schools in the country, not to mention any other educational centers²⁹¹.

With the establishment of the communist rule in both Yugoslavia and Albania the discourses of Macedonian and Albanian ancient past changed, as changed the situation in field of education and research. In this respect, more or less intense contacts between two countries existed in the time-span between 1945 and 1948 as well as after the foundation of the University of Priština in 1970. The schools with Albanian as language of instruction were opened throughout Yugoslavia, particularly in Kosovo and Macedonia. In 1951 there were 200 Albanian schools in socialist Macedonia employing around 600 teachers and educating more than 26, 000 pupils. By 1981 the number of Albanian elementary schools in the republic increased up to 287. Now 3,000 teachers were employed and 74, 000 pupils attendant. At the same time 8, 200 pupils went to “national” secondary schools²⁹². These figures are important, since any Albanian research institution in Macedonia was absent, and the state censorship effectively excluded appearance of any amateurish Albanian “historiography”. Thus the Albanian-language schools with their specific syllabi represented a single transmitter of “national” accounts of the communal history which came from Kosovo and later also from Tirana *via* Priština²⁹³.

In socialist Albania the connections of ancient Macedonians and, to lesser extent, of Epirotes with modern Albanians were disclaimed. Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha personally emphasized that Alexander the Great was not Albanian, but his mother originated from Epirus, which was inhabited by “barbarian” tribes, i.e. neither Greek nor Albanian. The problem of “ethnic” belonging of Macedonian ancient dwellers remained untouched²⁹⁴. Instead, basing on more scientific “facts,” which meant on nationalistically rendered archeological, anthropological and linguistic data, Albanian scholars fully embraced Illyrian version of “ethno-genesis”. Albanian historiography in Kosovo developed in the same way, although with its own specificities, for here the imagination of scholars for many years was limited by Yugoslav control.

The first textbook of Albanian history wrote by Kosovar historian Ali Hadri, which appeared in Serbo-Croatian in 1966 and later was translated in Albanian, points to Illyrian ancestors of the Albanians, Illyrian state of the Ardiei and “relatively advanced culture and way of life”²⁹⁵. The attention of readership, however, is also drawn on academic discussions over the provenance of Albanians and Illyrians themselves as well as on important influences of Greek and Celtic cultures. Ali Hadri completely omits the theme of Ancient Macedonia, but says that according to one theory the medieval Albanian people were formed in 8th out of Illyrian population of Northern Albania, Kosovo and (contemporary) Western Macedonia. The author dismisses that theory, although it would imply that the Albanian ancestors (Illyrians) dwelled in Macedonia from the ancient times²⁹⁶. In another popular book titled *The Overview of Albanian National History* the historian tells about equally relevant Illyrian,

(Tirana: Toena, 1997), 356–357.

²⁹¹ Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A history of Kosovo* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 152.

²⁹² Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* 125–126.

²⁹³ Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* 127.

²⁹⁴ Thëngjilli, *Shqiptarët midis Lindjes dhe Perëndimit*, 25–26.

²⁹⁵ Ali Hadri, *Pregled istorije Albanaca. Za VI, VII i VII razred osnovne škole [The outline of the history of Albanians]* (Priština: Zavod za udžbenike, 1966), 3–9.

²⁹⁶ Hadri, *Pregled*, 10–16.

Thracian and Albanian (implying Transcaucasian) versions of the Albanian ethnic descent²⁹⁷.

The views of Ali Hadri regarding Albanian relations to ancient Macedonia are exemplary for the whole period of communism in Yugoslavia. Albanian historians from Priština generally denied (ancient) Macedonian-Albanian connections. They, however, tended to claim autochthony of Albanian ancestors, i.e. Illyrians, on the territories of Kosovo and adjacent lands. Sometimes the later implied that Albanians lived in the areas of SR Macedonia from times immemorial. But, even when claiming the deep-rooted presence of Albanians in the republic, Kosovar historians did not immediately imply that the population of Ancient Macedonia included “Albanians.” Understandably, the shape and borders of the socialist republic and the ancient kingdom did not corresponded to each other, and Kosovar intellectuals generally did not theorized much. What was important was to prove the indogeneity of the Albanians in the contemporary Macedonian republic.

The academic and quasi-academic disputes over the autochthony of Albanians in Kosovo particularly intensified after the adoption of the new federal constitution in 1974, when the province became *de facto* seventh federal unit and, as a consequence, acquired almost full autonomy in the field of education. Now Albanian pupils in Yugoslavia could read in the schoolbooks published in Albanian that “the Illyrian ancestors of the Albanians were one of the oldest peoples in the Balkans”²⁹⁸. Compiling the textbook of general history, Ali Hadri and Zhivko Avramovski (a Serbian historian) reserved merely 11 pages for Ancient Greece and Rome, while extending their depiction of Illyrian past to 8 pages. They write about powerful Illyrian kingdom of the Ardiei, which waged severe, but glorious wars against the Rome. The readership should accept that “the Illyrians advanced almost all realms of the culture of that time: arts, building, language, way of life and religious beliefs”²⁹⁹. On the attached map of the settlement of Illyrians the authors indicate the tribes of Dardanians dwelling exclusively in Kosovo, and those of the Lyncestae and Paeonians living in the South-West of the SR Macedonia³⁰⁰. Direct references to ancient Macedonia, however, are again absent.

A similar picture of Macedonian history was presented in multivolume *History of Albania* published in Tirana in 1967, which now became widely available in Kosovo. Indicatively, in 1968 the provincial authorities re-published the book under the title *History of the Albanian People*. Its authors similarly write that the Dardanian tribes populated Kosovo, whereas the Paeonians occupied the valley of the Vardar River, and the Lyncestae dwelled in the Ohrid region. Even though they assume that Illyrians and Macedonians were culturally close, in general Illyrian-Macedonian relations are presented as hostile. Continuous attacks of Macedonian “foemen” represented a serious danger for independent existence of the Illyrians. And as a result of the war between Bardylis and Phillip II Illyrian kingdom lost the control over some Illyrian tribes, namely the Lyncestae. Thus, Macedonian kingdom and its sovereigns appear in major Albanian historical text rather as enemies of Albanian ancestors. Although the Epirotes are characterized as Illyrians, the book tells nothing about Alexander’s mother Olympias³⁰¹. In contrast to the canonic book of Albanian historiography one of the main Kosovar experts on Dardania Zef Mirdita held that the Dardanians populated northern

²⁹⁷ Ali Hadri and Milan Prekaj, *Pasqyrë e historis nacionale shqiptare [Outline of Albanian national history]* (Prishtinë: Rilindja, 1960), 20.

²⁹⁸ Ali Hadri and Zhivko Avramovski, *Historia. Për klasën I të fazes së parë të edukimit dhe të arsimit të mesëm të orientuar [History]* (Prishtinë: Enti i teksteve mesimore, 1980), 53.

²⁹⁹ Hadri and Avramovski, *Historia*, 57.

³⁰⁰ Hadri and Avramovski, *Historia*, 54.

³⁰¹ *Historia i Shqipërisë [The History of Albania]*, ed. Stefanaq Pollodhi and Aleks Buda. Vëllimi I (Tiranë: Instituti i historisë dhe i gjuhësisë, 1967), 51–53, 81–82. The Kosovan edition: *Historia e popullit shqiptar [History of the Albanian People]* (Prishtinë: Enti i botimeve shkollë e Republikës Socialiste të Serbisë, 1968).

Macedonian (in modern sense) areas³⁰².

After the mass demonstrations in Kosovo and mirroring small-scale nationalist manifestations in Macedonia occurred in 1981 the Macedonian Pedagogical Council in Skopje diagnosed “the penetration of Albanian nationalistic, irredentist and counterrevolutionary tendencies through printed textbooks and other literature.” It took a decision to revise syllabuses and to strengthen the control over programs, textbooks and reference works used by “Albanian nationality” in Macedonia³⁰³. The Serbian authorities started a campaign to dismiss “scientific” arguments for Albanian indigeneity in Yugoslavia, which were produced in Priština. In line with the party’s policy the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts organized an academic conference “Illyrians and Albanians” in 1987. Here the majority of presenters repudiated the theory of Illyrian origins of Albanians. Additionally, they argued that ancient Dardanians dwelling on the territories of present-day Kosovo and Macedonia belonged to Thracian tribal group, and not to Illyrian one. Kosovar historians steadfastly opposed such revisions³⁰⁴. This debate, however, did not influence Albanian-language schools in Macedonia, for new textbooks in Albanian were neither compiled nor published.

The attitude of Macedonian nationalist historiography towards ancient Macedonia was generally cool during the period of the Communism. Katerina Kolozova, Mitko Panov and Ilija Milcevski conclude: “The analysis of the academic historical production in the period before 1991 shows that there is no single academic publication fully dedicated to the history of Ancient Macedonians.”³⁰⁵ This fact is particularly important, since unlike in the 1990s–2000s under the communist rule non-academic nationalist historical writings could not come out.

The period of Macedonian antiquity prior to the country’s independence was in the first place touched upon by archeologists and linguists. The former altogether neglected the issue of ethnicity of the Ancient Macedonians or their distinctiveness from Greeks. The later, even if regarded ancient Macedonian as a separate language, did not claim specific identity of its speakers.

Nevertheless, certain telling changes could be noticed after liberalization of the policies of the federal authorities and the rise to power in Macedonia of nation-minded “decentralizers” under the party leader Krste Crvenkovski (1964–1974). At that time the Macedonian Orthodox Church unilaterally declared autocephaly (1967). Some tendencies to identitarian separation of Macedonians also became apparent in the field of historiography. In 1969 the Institute of National History published three-volume *History of Macedonian People*. Effectively, it was one of the first historical publications to deal with the past of Ancient Macedonia. The later, however, acquired minor attention. Only 46 pages were devoted to antiquity, while the medieval period covered 167. Including the ancient past into the first volume, the authors primarily aim to present it as part of cultural heritage of modern Macedonia. The ethno-genesis of the Macedonian people is linked to the arrival of the Slavs in the Balkans, though the notion of the “mixture” with the indigenous ancient population is also present. Interestingly, the Macedonian historians argue that the ancient Macedonians represented a conglomerate of various tribes such as Brygians, Edonians, Paeonians and

³⁰² Zef Mirdita, *Studime dardane [Dardanian Studies]* (Prishtinë: 8 Nëntori, 1979), 7–46.

³⁰³ Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* 127.

³⁰⁴ See: Aleksandr Kolobov, “Illirizm kak faktor politicheskoi istorii balkanskogo regiona v XIX–XX vv.” [“Illyrianism as a Factor of Political History in the Balkan Region in the 19th and 20th centuries”], *Vesnik Permskogo Universiteta. Seriya “Istoriia.”* 5 (2004): 67–72; Matvei Lomonosov, “Natsionalnii mifologiya v borbe za Kosovo: formirovanie kulturnykh granic i etnicheskoe razmezhevanie” [“National Mythology in the Struggle for Kosovo (1981–1991): Formation of Cultural Boundaries and Ethnic Segregation”], in *Problemy slavianovedeniia*, ed. S. Mikhalchenko. Vypusk 11. (Briansk, 2009), 201–207.

³⁰⁵ Kolozova, Panov and Milcevski, “Ancient Macedonia,” 5.

Pelagonians, but not the Hellens. It stood in contradiction to the explanation given in the first *History of the Yugoslav People* published in 1958 which identified Ancient Macedonians as a population of Illyrian origin that was largely Hellenized later.

In 1967 the special department of ancient and medieval history was established within the Institute of National History. A Croatian professor Stjepan Anatoljak moved to Skopje and headed the recently created research unit³⁰⁶. He became a promoter of a new version of Macedonian ethnic origins, which presupposed a merge between the Balkan Slavs and ancient population (genealogical connections), and also had the overtones of myth of ideological descent.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s Blaže Ristovski, Branko Panov and Stjepan Anatoljak penned a number of articles dealing with Macedonian ethno-genesis. Basically, the central point in the theory remained intact. The Slavs, who arrived to the Balkans in the 6th century, were seen as the “basic ethnos” or the ethnic “nucleus” out of which the Macedonian people developed in the time-span between 7th and 10th century. Anatoljak specially emphasized the role of “Macedonian” Empire of Tsar Samuel (997–1014) in the formation of Macedonians. The historians also admitted that due to different circumstances the “national consciousness” was not fully developed until the 19th century. Nevertheless, one could notice many significant alterations.

Blaže Ristovski in his article *The Contribution to the Studies of the Emergence and the Development of the Macedonian People* published in 1968 argues that at the first stage of the formation of the Macedonian people the Slavs mixed with the indigenous people of the Byzantine Empire, namely with the Macedonians, Illyrians, Greeks, Thracians etc. To strengthen his argument the historian points to the fact that genetically modern Macedonians can not be pure, since in course of the centuries they also absorbed Romans, and ancestors of today’s Albanians and Vlachs. Even though in Ristovski’s understanding the area, where the Slavs arrived in the early Middle Ages appeared as a conglomerate of peoples and tribes, the historian attributed the primary importance to the ancient Macedonians, who gave to his co-nationals “territory, name and blood.” He also called up the modern Macedonians to “respect the past and glory of their country.”³⁰⁷ In the same year the text of Ristovski’s article was mostly reproduced in a large-circulation book *The Macedonian People and Macedonian national Consciousness*³⁰⁸.

Branko Panov in his article *On the Ethno-genesis of the Macedonian people* published in 1972 concludes that an immense heritage of ancient Macedonian state continued to influence the local population, including the Slavic arrivals. In effect, the later embraced the name of the indigenous dwellers and “adopted many Macedonian cultural and other traditions.”³⁰⁹ For Stjepan Anatoljak also the modern Macedonians inherited their names directly from Ancient Macedonians³¹⁰. A representative book *Macedonia and Macedonians in the Past* published by the Institute of National History in 1970 contains a chronological outline of the history of Macedonia, which traces it back to antiquity. What is important about all these publications is that they do not directly address the question of the Ancient

³⁰⁶ On Stjepan Anatoljak see: Kosta Adžievski, “Anatoljak Stjepan,” in: *Makedonska enciklopedija [Macedonian Encyclopedia]*. Tom I. A–Lj (Skopje: MANU, 2009), 71.

³⁰⁷ Blaže Ristovski, “Prilog kon proučuvanjeto na pojavata i razvitokot na makedonskiot narod” [“The Contribution to the Studies of the Emergence and the Development of the Macedonian people”], *Pogledi V*: 1–2 (1968): 145–152.

³⁰⁸ Blaže Ristovski, *Makedonskiot narod i makedonskata national svest [The Macedonian People and Macedonian National Consciousness]* (Skopje: Goce Delčev, 1968), 7, 15.

³⁰⁹ Branko Panov, “Za etnogenezata na makedonskiot narod” [“On the Ethno-genesis of the Macedonian People”], *Glasnik na Institut za Nacionalna Istorija XVI*: 3 (1972): 77–78.

³¹⁰ Stjepan Anatoljak, “Makedonija i Makedoncite vo sredniot vek” [“Macedonian and Macedonians in the Middle Ages”], *Glasnik na Institut za Nacionalna Istorija XVI*, 1 (1972): 111–114, 122.

Macedonians' ethnicity. Apparently Ristovski, Panov and Anatoljak see them as somewhat distinct people, but do not elaborate much. In addition, the historians acknowledge that the territory of SR Macedonia in pre-Slavic times was inhabited by various peoples.

In 1974 Krste Crvenkovski was removed from the office and replaced with rigorous pro-Belgrade successors. As a consequence of the new policies of centralization no article devoted specifically to the history of Ancient Macedonia appeared in the following decades. In the time-span between 1974 and 1991 the theme was totally exempted from the representative capital publications of major academic institutions such as the Institute of National History, the University of Skopje and the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts. At the 30th anniversary of the Institute the President of the Presidency of SR Macedonia Vidoe Smilevski delivered a speech, which was published in 1981 as an introductory article to the French-language summarizing book *Macedonia (articles d'histoire)*. The politician tells that the "consciousness" of Macedonian identity and individuality was formed in struggles against the Ottoman Empire and foreign denials of Macedonian rights to freedom. Only the People Liberation Struggle during the Second World War brought about the full expression of the national consciousness. In the speech the antiquity is not mentioned at all. Equally, out of 33 contributions to the volume no single one deals with the history of ancient Macedonia. The full absence of references to the Macedonian ancient past is characteristic to such important publications as the Documents on the Struggle of the *Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State* published in 1981 and the short *History of Macedonian People* appeared in 1986. The later even clearly tell that during the penetration in Macedonia the Slavs clashed with the *Romanized* natives and other ethnic elements that were forced to *retreat* to Thessalonica or to *move* into the mountainous regions³¹¹.

Thus, in sum, by the beginning of the 1990s neither (Slavic) Macedonian nor Albanian ethnic community, together with their spokesmen, in the republic "possessed" the "heritage" of ancient Macedonia. Historically certain claims to the past happenings and famous figure associated with (what we know today as) Ancient Macedonia as well as to the heritage of the present-day Macedonian territory in the Antiquity were voiced by Macedonian and Albanian intellectuals. Macedonian nationalists strived to nationalize, symbolize and capitalize the distant past at the turn of the 20th century in order to prove the distinctiveness, dignity and equal rights of their community *vis-à-vis* others, especially more successful neighbors. In socialist Yugoslavia at the end of the 1960s and in the beginning of 1970s they used references to Ancient Macedonia in order to affirm specific identity of Macedonians, and to claim their unsubordinated status and self-sufficient existence within the federation. Albanian nationalist used the figures of Alexander the Great and Phillip of Macedon during the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century, when they insisted on autonomy or independent statehood for their co-nationals (to-be) and attempted to seize all national "historical" territories. In the communist period the arguments of Albanian autochthony in Yugoslavia buttressed the claims for the elevation of the status of the Albanians from "nationality" to "nation." All these efforts (with some exception for the last one), however, ceased in the SR Macedonia during the 1980s. The "parties" were indifferent to Ancient Macedonian history. Albanian leaders from Yugoslavia, who upheld the idea of indigeneity, simply did not have personnel, institutional and organizational facilities for the mythmaking in the republic.

³¹¹ Kolozova, Panov and Milcevski, "Ancient Macedonia," 5–15.

Macedonian Nationalist Mythopoeia as a Response to Greek Nationalization, Symbolization, and Capitalization of Ancient History

As I have argued afore, the level of nationalization, symbolization and capitalization of the (relatively objective) history can vary. Nationness, symbolism and capitalness of historical events and personages tend to be appreciably alerted in contest. National myths, which nationalize, symbolize and capitalize the past, usually depend on “rival” myths as well as on reactions of counteracting mythmakers. Macedonian case from the beginning of the 1990 represents an indicative example of such interdependence and dialogue.

After the referendum held on 8 September the Macedonian parliament adopted the declaration of independence on 25 September 1991. Almost two months later, on 17 November 1991, the new constitution was promulgated. Here the country was officially denoted as “the Republic of Macedonia” and “the Macedonian state.” The preamble of the document referred to “the historic decisions of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the People's Liberation of Macedonia,” which, indeed, in 1944 articulated one of its goals as “the unification of the entire Macedonian nation.” In the text, however, it is not mentioned. The constitution also stipulates that the border of the republic can be changed “in accordance with the constitution and on the principle of the free will, as well as in accordance with generally accepted international norms” (Article 3). The new state is supposed to care “for the status and rights of those persons belonging to the Macedonian people in neighboring countries, as well as Macedonian expatriates, assists their cultural development and promotes links with them” (Article 3). The public discourse in the republic at that period was somehow affected by the idea of a “unified Macedonia.” In October 1989 the slogans “Salonika is ours,” and “We fight for a united Macedonia” started to be chanted by the fans of *Vardar*, the Skopje football club. Some days after the similar slogans appeared on the walls of the country's capital city. In June 1990 a radical nationalist party with the telling name “the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization–Democratic Party of Macedonian National Unity (VMRO–DPMNE)” emerged. Led by Ljupčo Georgijevski it pledged to work for “the ideal of all free Macedonians united” in a single state³¹².

But adoption of the name “Macedonia” in itself did not *mean* expansionism. The constitution clearly stated that the Republic of Macedonia had “no territorial pretensions towards any neighboring state” (Article 3) and would not “interfere in the sovereign rights of other states or in their internal affairs” in her exercise of the concern with co-nationals living abroad (Article 49). In the parliament the power laid at hands of the successor of the League of Communist, the Party for Democratic Reform (later renamed as the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia), and in October 1991 Ljubčo Georgijevski announced that he had joined opposition, since his party had been excluded from the decision-making process. The appeals for the “national unification” at all costs were rather characteristic to limited intellectual circuits and football hooligans.

In August 1992 the democratically elected parliament of Macedonia accepted the 16-pointed star/sun of Vergina, previously discovered by the archeologists in Northern Greece and associated with the Macedonian royal family, as the device for the new state flag. On 20 August it was hung outside the parliament building in Skopje. The star, however, was supposed to serve as a state symbol, not the national one, and VMRO–DPNE vigorously supported a gold lion on a red shield to be placed on the flag³¹³. The debates over the new state symbol as well as over possible adoption of “Stater” as the currency led to the

³¹² Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* 173.

³¹³ Keith Brown argues that the sun has been chosen, since it could serve as unifying for all ethnic groups. Thus, the ruling coalition sought to preserve a multi-cultural state: Keith Brown, “Seeing Stars: Character and Identity in the Landscapes of Modern Macedonia,” *Antiquity* 68 (1994): 785–786, 790.

intensification of the discussions over the links between Ancient and Modern Macedonia and Macedonians in popular social discourse. At that point, however, the theses of the national continuity from the ancient times were widely embattled even in media. The Macedonian academics abstained from those talks or took moderate and not completely clear position stating the issue had been extremely “politicized.” During the 1991 and in the early 1992 they generally repeated the established thesis that modern Macedonians are the Slavs. Only one popular monograph devoted to Ancient Macedonia appeared in 1991, and none followed in 1992³¹⁴. Thus, in the Republic of Macedonia just before and right after the declaration of independence the name “Macedonia,” the new state symbol, and ancient history of Macedonia was not that nationalized and capitalized. The ethnic origins and the ancient past of the nation were widely disputed. The star of Vergina was invoked to symbolize the multi-cultural state. Bearing Macedonian name and using some attributes of the ancient realm did not mean claiming direct connections with the antiquity. Finally, being Macedonian and owning the symbols of the past were not recognized in itself as facts that would provide title to the territory.

It was the Greek part that intensively started capitalization of the name “Macedonia” and ancient Macedonian heritage. It also bolstered the nationalization of the later by Macedonian scholars.

The Greek government steadfastly opposed the recognition of the new state under its constitutional name. It argued that adoption of both the name “Macedonia” and the sun of Vergina proved that the republic harbored irredentist claims on the Greek territory, and pointed to the preamble as well as to the Articles 3 and 49 of the Macedonian constitution. The Greek authorities laid numerous efforts to secure the full ownership over the signifier “Macedonia,” which was not officially used before in the country. One of the first steps to reclaim the term “Macedonia” was the renaming of the Ministry of Northern Greece in Thessaloniki into “the Ministry of Macedonia-Thrace” in August 1988. After the declaration of Macedonia’s independence the Greek government started to hire special agents in order to patent the name for commercial usage all over the world. This policy was followed by Greek diasporic organizations preventing Macedonian ones from the usage of the name “Macedonia.” The international airport in Thessaloniki became “the Macedonia Airport,” and a new press agency that was established there received the name “the Macedonian Press Agency.” A new airbus purchased by Olympic Airways was named “Macedonia” as was the Greek ship in a transatlantic sailboat race. At the same time the Greek National Tourist Organization opened a full-scale advertising campaign and launched the slogan “Come to Greece and Visit Macedonia.” In sum, logics that were followed by the Greek side implied that who owns the name “Macedonia” actually is entitled to claim rights over the territory. The term was valorized in its capitalness³¹⁵.

In addition, Greek nationalists, including the government, found other grounds as to why the Republic of Macedonia was not allowed to use her constitutional name and the new state symbol. In their view, since Ancient Macedonia represented a Greek state and the Ancient Macedonians were Greeks, other nations and states, namely “Slavic” ones, could not use *any* reference to the ancient realm as symbols of their identity and distinctiveness. Of course, the myths of Ancient Macedonia, and especially narratives of Alexander the Great were extensively and passionately employed by the Greek nationalists before, starting from onset of Hellenic nationalism. And the 1980s were marked, for instance, with the issue in the office of a lavish coffee-table format book *Macedonia: 4000 Years of Greek History and Civilization*³¹⁶. But in the early 1990s the nationalization of Ancient Macedonia by the Greek

³¹⁴ Kolozova, Panov and Milcevski, “Ancient Macedonia,” 15–17, 59–61, 68.

³¹⁵ Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 148–149, 155–156.

³¹⁶ Vangeli, *Antiquity Musing*, 34–37; Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 32.

nationalists got much stronger. In February and March of 1992 in the cities throughout Europe, North America, and Australia thousands of Greeks mounted demonstrations to protest against the recognition of the new state by the Europeans. The main slogans were “Macedonian History is Greek History!” “No Recognition of the Skopian Republic under the Hellenic Name ‘Macedonia!’” etc. Loring Danforth explains important changes that occurred at that time: “Before the early 1990s a common Greek position was that ‘Macedonia’ was purely a geographic term that referred to the inhabitants of a particular region in the Balkans regardless of their ethnic or national identity... [H]owever, when the ‘Republic of Skopje’ began to seek recognition as an independent country under the name ‘Republic of Macedonia,’ the issue has become more sensitive, and the Greek position has changed. Many Greeks began to argue that the northern border of the ‘historical’ Macedonia – the ‘real’ Macedonia – lies approximately where the present border between Greece and former Yugoslavia now lies.”³¹⁷ Greek historians and especially publicists during the name dispute widely supported that idea, and “discovered” the “reality” of Macedonia³¹⁸. The “Star of Vergina” became quickly much more widespread in northern Greece³¹⁹. In course of internationally brokered negotiations the Greek government consistently refused to accept the inclusion of the word “Macedonia” in any possible form whatsoever in the name of the Republic of Macedonia³²⁰. Thus, the Ancient Macedonian past was highly nationalized by the Greek nationalists. The name “Macedonia” was also claimed to be a property of those who are the right owners of the ancient heritage. In such circumstances, one of the main options left to the Macedonian side was to bolster the nationalization of “Macedonia,” together with its ancient pedigree. In other words, nationalist Macedonian (professional and amateur) historians now needed to prove that their co-nationals have the right to both present-day and ‘real’ Macedonia, or at least that they are equal to the Greeks in this respect. And the response followed.

In 1992 Lidija Slaveska authored a book called *The Ethno-genesis of the Macedonian people: Continuity and Tradition*. There she highlights the necessity to establish “the process of the genetic continuity” adding that the scholars must include in the long ethno-genetic process “the interaction between the Ancient Macedonians and Slavs.” Her conclusion is that this “multi-stratum process” of symbiosis resulted in “transmutation” of the different ethnic groups and their “transformation into a new population.” Even though the historian does not trace the emergence of modern Macedonian people back to antiquity, she claims significant genetic and ideological (traditions) contributions made by the Ancient Macedonians to the formation of the modern nation³²¹.

The ideological myth is particularly expressed in the book of the Macedonian politician and respected international law professor Vasil Tupurkovski. His *History of Macedonia: from the most ancient times to the death of Alexander of Macedon* published in 1993 portrays Alexander as an uncompromising follower of a policy of national and religious tolerance. The author argues that from the inception Macedonia had been a geographically separate unit with its own “geographic spirit.”³²² Figuratively, that means that the Republic of Macedonia, in contrast to Greece, preserves the multi-cultural character, and an atmosphere of tolerance and peaceful interethnic coexistence, which should be developed further in the future.

³¹⁷ Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 32.

³¹⁸ Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 31–36, 163–174.

³¹⁹ Brown, “Seeing Stars,” 787.

³²⁰ Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 154; James Pettifer, “The New Macedonian Question,” in *The New Macedonian Question*, ed. James Pettifer (London: Plalgrave, 1999), 22–23.

³²¹ Lidija Slaveska, *Etnogenezata na makedonskiot narod: kontinuitet i tradicija [The Ethno-genesis of Macedonian People: Continuity and Tradition]* (Skopje: Matica makedonska, 1992), 19–31, 128–129.

³²² Vasil Tupurkovski, *Istorija na Makedonija: Od drevnina do smrtta na Aleksandar Makedonski [History of Macedonia: From the most ancient times to the death of Alexander of Macedon]* (Skopje: Titan, 1993), 7–11.

In 1993 the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts produced an English-language propaganda publication *Macedonia and its Relations with Greece*. Among other things, it aims to cast “an objective light” on the connections between ancient Greeks and Macedonians, which means to prove that two “peoples” were harshly distinct in ethnic and linguistic sense. The differences are “established” in language, religion, statehood traditions and identification. The contributors also repudiate the view of the Greek scholarship rendering Byzantine Macedonia as a “bastion of Hellenism” or buffer between Greek and Slavic worlds. They point to the Slavic migrations to the region leading to the mix of ethnic groups.

The Archeological Map of the Republic of Macedonia published in 1994 presents Ancient Macedonia (as the kingdom, not only as a territory where the today’s republic is situated) as an inseparable part of cultural and historical heritage of the modern state.

One year later MASA launched a macro-project called *History of the Culture of Macedonia*. It aimed to “extract the basic characteristics of the Macedonian culture in the Balkans, and further afield in the European and world contexts.” In a collection of contributions *Contextual and Methodological Questions on the Research of the History and Culture of Macedonia* Georgi Stardelov emphasizes that this culture represents “a historic rout and journey of the Macedonian people to its ‘self’ and ‘personality.’” At the same time he argues that the collaborators attempt to present the “objective history of the culture of Macedonia... a history which does not tear apart and oppose the cultures of the Balkans one against the other, but brings them together each other and harmonize the relations between them.” For Georgi Stardelov, “history of Macedonian culture must show the entire development of cultural values in all the spiritual spheres, covering all epochs and periods of its long-term history.” Unsurprisingly, the scholar includes the culture of Ancient Macedonians opposed to the Greeks into the whole picture of Macedonian culture. Blaže Ristovski writes that the project is intended to cover “the entire history of Macedonia and Macedonian people.” Throughout the centuries the culture as “unique complete continuity and a relevant historic factor in the shaping, maintenance and affirmation of the Macedonian entity on the windswept Balkan territory” served as “one of the bases of national awareness.” The culture of modern Macedonians for the historian is organically connected to the ancient heritage: “[T]he Macedonians as well as Macedonian culture has been created through a prolonged and on-going process and certainly not only by the fairly late comers to the Balkans, the Slavs. It is simply a process of an on-going interaction of cultural elements through centuries.” Thus, the archeological and cultural projects portrayed the contemporary Macedonians as true cultural (ideological) descendants of the inhabitants of the glorious ancient kingdom.

In 1995 Blaže Ristovski was even more explicit in his views on the continuity between ancient and Slavic continuity. In the book *Macedonia and Macedonian Nation* he repeats the views from his works of 1968. The academician argues that the “ancient Macedonians have given to this people the territory, name and blood,” stating that there is no reason why “Macedonians should not respect the past and glory of their country, their name and their blood.”³²³ In a paper *The National Component in Our Historiography and Educational System* published one year later Blaže Ristovski claims that his co-nationals were created “through the many, varied and diverse symbiotic and assimilatory processes, with components of *different* ethno-cultures.” Such a view could be seen as very progressive by some, but, tellingly, the scholar stresses Ancient Macedonian contributions to the formation of the Macedonian people and culture, and not, let say, Albanian one.

The similar concept of the Macedonian ethno-genesis through a merge is installed into

³²³ Blaže Ristovski, *Makedonija i makedonskata nacija [Macedonia and Macedonia Nation]* (Skopje: Detska radost, 1995), 15–16, 22.

the representative book *Ethnology of Macedonians* published in 1996. The editorial entry tells that in the regions of the former Ancient Macedonia the Slavic arrivals “entered a process of mutual permeation with the native ancient Balkan people, assimilating part of them and their culture into their own ethnic structure.” The immense heritage of the indigenous dwellers led to adoption of the name “Macedonians” by the Slavs, and constantly influenced Macedonian culture³²⁴.

Thus in response to the efforts of Greek politicians, scholars and publicists, who strived to nationalize completely the history of Ancient Macedonia, in the early 1990s Macedonian historians produced the myths of ideological descent from Ancient Macedonians with sound genealogical overtones (the concept of merge). Additionally, they were attempting to deny any ethnic, cultural or linguistic connections between Ancient Hellenes and Macedonians, and to deprive the modern Greeks from the right to “possess” Ancient (“real”) Macedonia. In so doing, Macedonian intellectuals were nationalizing the Ancient Macedonian past. They also claimed that non-Greek character of Ancient Macedonia should persuade Greek politicians to pursue more “objective” policy *vis-a-vis* the new independent state. And this can be seen as an example of capitalization of the ancient history. (Indeed, why should the non-x composition of a past kingdom mean something?). The name dispute was softened in September 1995, when under international pressure two parties agreed to sign an interim accord. Macedonia removed the 16-pointed star of Vergina from the state flag, and placed there 8-pointed sun. Greece, on her part, recognized the country under the name “former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.” It, however, is only one part of the story, since Albanian intellectuals in the Republic of Macedonia prepared their own response to Macedonian national historical myths.

³²⁴ Kolozova, Panov and Milcevski, “Ancient Macedonia,” 16–26, Brunnbauer, “Ancient Nationhood,” 275–276.

Chapter III. Discovering “Albanian” Antiquity in the Republic of Macedonia

At the turn of the 1990s views of local Albanian elites on the future of Macedonian lands populated by their co-nationals varied. One of the proposals was to opt out of the newly independent republic on the basis of the right for self-determination, and to join Albania. In 1990 20, 000 Albanians marched through the western town of Tetovo and demanded independence and unity with the homeland. Next year, in September 1991 Albanians boycotted the referendum on Macedonia’s independence. Instead, they held their “own” referendum for autonomy and establishment of the Republic of Ilirida (Alb. *Republika e Iliridës*) in January 1992. It was declared that more than 90 percent voted, and the vote in favor exceeded 99 percent. For some, the proclaimed Republic of Ilirida represented an already formed political unit, which now could be incorporated into Albania. Others chose the second option, which implied the preservation of Macedonia within the existing borders. The Republic of Ilirida could become one of two entities in a federal Macedonia that would also comprise a Slavic Macedonia, i.e. Macedonia proper. Some argued that if the autonomy of Ilirida was not approved by the government, at least Albanians in Macedonia should be regarded not as national minority, but as “state-forming” nation. The radicals in this camp pushed for independent Macedonia as an altogether Albanian state³²⁵.

Correspondingly, various versions of the history of the Albanians living on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia were designed and circulated. Until the present day the argumentation of Albanian professional and amateur historians follows certain lines. First of all, they lay efforts to prove the autochthony of Albanians from time immemorial. The myth of ethnic origins of the Macedonian Albanians tells that they are direct descendants of local ancient tribes of Dardanians, Paeonians and Lyncestae that lived in western and north-western areas of today’s Macedonia and whom Albanian nationalists regard as Illyrians. Secondly, Albanian mythmakers propose their own understanding of ethnicity of the Ancient Macedonians.

The problem is that, as Keith Brown remarks, the meaning of Macedonia exists in “different time zones.”³²⁶ The boundaries of Ancient Macedonia are still hotly debated. The kingdom of Argeads (about 700–310 BC) certainly covered the territories of the today’s Greek region. But how far to the north Ancient Macedonia (even under Phillip II) stretched remains unclear. Furthermore, historiography discusses whether the kingdom represented a territorial or an “ethnic” state, and questions what happened to the tribes conquered by the Argeads. They could participate in Macedonian ethno-genesis or preserve their distinctiveness³²⁷. From the beginning of the 19th century in European political imaginary Macedonia as a name refers to a geographic area, which encompasses the today’s Republic of Macedonia (Vardar Macedonia), parts of northern Greece (with the city of Thessaloniki as its center, so-called Aegean Macedonia), south-western Bulgaria (Pirin Macedonia) and eastern Albania. The ethnicity of Slavic-speaking population in those regions was and still is an apple of discord. In 1944 the southernmost republic of Yugoslavia was called Macedonia, and its Slavic inhabitants were acknowledged as a nation in their own right.

Given all that, the mythmakers strive to give their own visions of to what extent the

³²⁵ Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* 134–136, 182–186; James Pettifer “The Albanians in western Macedonia after FYROM independence,” in *The New Macedonian Question*, ed. James Pettifer (London: Palgrave, 1999), 138.

³²⁶ Brown, “Seeing Stars,” 785.

³²⁷ Nicolas Hammond, *The Macedonian State: Origins, Institutions, and History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 12–14, 39–40, 49–53.

contemporary republic and the ancient state are connected territorially and ethnically. As Ulf Brunnbauer puts it: “The notion of continuity of Macedonia as a name and geographical political unit... produces ambiguity and tension that is present in many works of Macedonian historiography.”³²⁸ Albanian historians in Macedonia choose a number of options. Sometimes they claim that territorially Ancient Macedonia has nothing to do with the contemporary state, as do Ancient Macedonians with modern Macedonians. The single autochthonous population in the Republic of Macedonia is Albanians, who originate from ancient Illyrian tribes of Dardanians (in northern and north-western Macedonia), Paeonians (in central, eastern and southern Macedonia), Lyncestae, Dassareti and Enchelei (in south-western Macedonia). The later, even if were under Macedonian domination for a certain period, completely preserved their ethnic distinctiveness and remained intact by the ancient kingdom, which represented a Greek or no matter what state. Unsurprisingly, the nationalists claim that on the grounds of autochthony in Western Macedonia Albanians have the rights to join their homeland, or at least establish autonomy. The temporal priority in dwelling Macedonia as a whole means for them that Albanians should acquire the “state-building” status in the republic. According to another vision of the ancient Macedonian past, the kingdom of Argeads covered more than half of the contemporary republic, and ethnically was an Illyrian state. The ancestors of Macedonian Albanians, i.e. Paeonians, Lyncestae, Dassareti and Enchelei constituted the nucleus of ancient Macedonian realm, whose rulers, including Philip II and Alexander the Great, were Illyrians. Thus, the whole Macedonia originally was an Albanian state, and, therefore, must become so in the future. At least, again, Albanians should be recognized by the republican authorities as the “state-forming nation.”

The first representative gathering of both Albanian historians and politicians in the Republic of Macedonia after the independence was a conference *The Albanians in Macedonia* held in Skopje in December 1991. It was organized with the support of the Association of the Educators of Albanian language and literature, Islamic Community of Macedonia, and Skopian Madrasah “Isa Beu.” Because of absence of academic cadres in the republic local Albanian politicians, religious leaders, and educators invited the scholars from Albania and Kosovo. The proceedings of the conference were published only in 1994.

In the foreword the organizers explain that the contributions, which represent “genuine and grounded scientific works,” do not pretend to portray a complete picture of the Albanian past in Macedonia aiming “to draw the light on the most significant aspects of ethnic, political and cultural history of Albanian population on its *native* lands... from antiquity to the present day.” They claim that the archeological findings, historical and linguistic data on Illyrian culture from the areas of Ohrid, ancient Pelagonia, Skopje and other lands provide an undeniable evidence of autochthony of the Albanian population of *today’s* Macedonia as the descendants of Illyrians. The myth of ancestral homeland and ethnic descent is complemented by those of continuity, resistance and victimization. The organizers argue that the presenters attest the medieval period “constitutes a bridge, and reveals an ethno-cultural and historical continuity between Illyrian and Albanian population.” All the contributions allegedly prove the originality of the language and culture of Albanians on Macedonian territory, which developed in continuous contact with Albanian language and culture in Albania and Kosovo. They also “defend” the thesis of Albanian indigeneity in Macedonia and illuminate the centuries-long resistance of Albanians against “the assimilative pressure of alien subjugators.” The foreword sums up: “Numerous historical and cultural data clearly tell about a compact and autochthonous Albanian population living on its own lands from ancient times, which has historical, linguistic and cultural continuity expressed in maintaining basic national characteristics. Neither insulating political borders nor influencing force of language and

³²⁸ Brunnbauer, “Historiography,” 182.

culture of foreign dominators could separate it from all-national ethno-cultural space.”³²⁹ The notion of a *compact* Albanian population in Macedonia means that the scholars employ the first version of Albanian ethno-history in Macedonia, i.e. do not claim the Ancient Macedonian kingdom being an Albanian (Illyrian) state. Interestingly, the spokesmen of the Albanians in Macedonia overtly strive not only to nationalize ancient population, which dwelled on the republic’s territory, but also to present the past as able to provide a needful underpinning for political claims. The foreword reads that the investigation of Albanian history in Macedonia represents “not only a scientific issue, but also a political problem of position of the Albanian population as the second by number in this republic. The various authors basing on historical, ethnic and legal arguments gave opinions regarding the way of solution of Albanian issue in Macedonia.”³³⁰

A respected archeologist from Tirana Muzafer Korkuti presented a paper devoted to prehistoric population of Macedonia, which he characterizes as Illyrian. According to his view, the Illyrians, who dwelled in Macedonia, were formed in course of all-Illyrian ethno-genesis during the Bronze Age. The emergence of a distinct Illyrian culture occurred as a result of a millennium-long process of merge between prehistoric inhabitants of the South-Western and Central Balkans, and Indo-European migrants, who came in the beginning of the second millennium BC and brought to the region the culture of tumuli. The later waves of migrations to the Balkans, namely the Aegean one (ca. 1200 BC) associated with the so-called Dorian (Greek) invasions, led to “partial changes,” but did not altered the Illyrian ethnic character of (today’s) western Macedonia. Furthermore, Muzafer Korkuti argues that the burials of the ancient inhabitants of Pelagonia and Ohrid region are similar to the Illyrian burials found in South-Eastern Albania, whereas those of northern Macedonia completely resembled the tumuli from Kosovo’s region of Suhareka, and thus can be connected with Illyrian tribe of Dardanians. He concludes that even though a “peripheral Illyrian area” between Black Drim and Vardar understandably bore important elements of neighboring cultures, during the entire history it did not loose its “autochthonous character.”³³¹

Engjëll Sellaj points to the fact that under the Romans (the province) Macedonia incorporated the territories of Epirus, Thessaly, and parts of Illyria, Paeonia and Thrace. In his eyes, the administrative reorganization was made, because the Roman authorities paid attention to the ethnic map of the Balkans. The scholar from Albania particularly emphasizes that one of the biggest and the most important cities, an unofficial capital of the province was Albanopolis founded by Illyrian tribe of Albanoi, who in the Middle Ages gave their name to the whole Albanian population³³².

Albanian archeologist Skënder Anamali presented a paper on Arbër burials in Macedonia aiming to highlight the continuity between ancient Illyrians and medieval Arbërs (“Albanians”) in general, and to elucidate an uninterrupted development of Illyrian-Albanian culture on the territory of Macedonia in particular. He argues that the funeral inventory from the Arbër graves of the Ohrid region in both Albania and Macedonia bears many similarities, and resembles the archeological findings from Illyrian burials. For him, “[t]he presence of the Arbër culture in the zone around the Lake of Ohrid is generally understandable and explicable. In antiquity it belonged to the Illyrian tribe of Dassareti and thus was included into the land inhabited by Illyrians, whose descendants were Arbërs. The later were the bearers of

³²⁹ *Shqiptarët e Maqedonisë [The Albanians of Macedonia]* (Shkup: Meshihat e Bashkisë Islame në Republikën e Maqedonisë, 1994), 1–2. The emphasis added.

³³⁰ *Shqiptarët e Maqedonisë*, 1.

³³¹ Muzafer Korkuti, “Ilirët dhe Maqedonia në periudhën pre e protohistorike” [“The Illyrians and Macedonia in Prehistoric and Proto-historic Period”], in *Shqiptarët e Maqedonisë* (Shkup: Meshihat e Bashkisë Islame në Republikën e Maqedonisë, 1994), 19–22.

³³² Engjëll Sellaj, “Albanët antike dhe Albanopoli” [“The Ancient Albanoi and Albanopolis”], in *Shqiptarët e Maqedonisë* (Shkup: Meshihat e Bashkisë Islame në Republikën e Maqedonisë, 1994), 25–33.

material culture discovered in Orovnik, Sveti Erazmo, Radolište and many other sites that for the moment remain unknown.” The archeological findings, such as earrings, vessels etc. “certainly do not belong... to the Slavic tribe of Brsjacs, as one Yugoslavian scholar has claimed, but to the autochthonous population of Arbërs, i.e. today’s Albanians, the descendants of Illyrians.”³³³

A historian from Priština Rexhep Doçi vigorously criticizes the attempts to establish connections between ancient and modern Macedonia. In his paper, he argues that “real” ancient Macedonia laid far to the south of today’s city of Veles, whereas the bulk of the territories of the Republic of Macedonia in antiquity belonged to Dardania, “i.e. to Kosovo,” and was inhabited by Dardanian ancestors of Kosovar Albanians. Drawing particular attention on the toponyms, Doçi claims that “the place-names of ancient Illyrian-Albanian origin... are present and similar in all the lands populated by Albanians,” and “prove convincingly the Illyrian-Albanian continuity everywhere where the Albanians live.” The decoding of ancient and medieval names with the help of Albanian words by the Kosovar scholar seems overtly amateurish. Thus, for instance, he links “Dassareti” to Albanian word *dash*, *-i* (goat), and Mališevo to *mal*, *-i* (mountain). He also maintains that the beginnings of Christianity on the territory of contemporary Macedonia owe to its Illyrian-Albanian population³³⁴.

Another scholar from Kosovo, Muhamet Pirraku, who in the 1960s became a dissident promoting the idea of Albanian national unification, and, in effect, spent one year in Yugoslavian prisons (1981–1982), presented a paper in which he attempted to prove historical “Albanianness” of Skopje. The Albanian nationalist argued that the capital of Macedonia always was situated in ethnic Albanian lands of Dardania and Paeonia. The name Skopje itself, which is spelled in Albanian as *Shkup*, *-i*, derives from the Albanian signifier for native language *shqipe*, and Albanian ethnic name *shqiptar* that allegedly were used on the territories of Dardania-Paeonia “from times immemorial.” According to Pirraku Skopian Albanians descended directly from local Illyrians³³⁵.

Thus the Albanian historians, who participated in the conference of December 1991, preferred to dissociate modern and ancient Macedonia. In contrast, a famous Albanian dissident from Macedonia Reshat Nexhipi embraced another viewpoint considering the ancient kingdom as an Albanian (Illyrian) state. He earned his doctoral degree from the University of Priština and served as a professor at the University of Bitola until being removed in 1981. Since that time Nexhipi was under continuous observance of Yugoslavian and then Macedonian intelligence services. After the fall of the communism he became an eminent publicist and amateur (although trained) historian engaging into politics from time to time. In mid 1990s he was one of the strongest supporters of establishment of the University of Tetovo, and became a recognized and independent authority in the field of Albanian education. In 1991 Reshat Nexhipi penned an article titled *Leka e Madh* purposefully using “traditional” Albanian naming of Alexander the Great, i.e. Leka instead of Aleksandër. There he claims that ancient Illyrians, Epirotes, and Macedonians descended from the Pelasgians, who dwelled in the Balkans at least from 10, 000 BC. All of them were, thus, closely related and in spite of different names can be considered as Illyrian tribes. Nexhipi portrays Alexander the Great as ethnic Illyrian, since his father Phillip came from Macedonian Illyrian

³³³ Skëndër Anamali, “Varreza Arberore pranë Liqenit të Ohrit” [“The Arbër graves from the vicinity of the Lake of Ohrid”], in *Shqiptarët e Maqedonisë* (Shkup: Meshihat e Bashkisë Islame në Republikën e Maqedonisë, 1994), 38.

³³⁴ Rexhep Doçi, “Onomastikë iliro-shqiptare në Maqedoninë e sotme” [“The Illyrian-Albanian Names on the Territory of Contemporary Macedonia”], in *Shqiptarët e Maqedonisë* (Shkup: Meshihat e Bashkisë Islame në Republikën e Maqedonisë, 1994), 51, 63.

³³⁵ Muhamet Pirraku, “Shqiptarësia e Shkupit sipas argumenteve historike” [“The Albanianness of Skopje in Light of Historical Arguments”], in *Shqiptarët e Maqedonisë* (Shkup: Meshihat e Bashkisë Islame në Republikën e Maqedonisë, 1994), 97, 104.

tribe of the Lyncestae and his mother Olympias was the daughter of Molossian king Neoptolemus, who ruled over Illyrian Epirotes³³⁶. In the 1990s the publicist from Bitola published some articles in Macedonian “proving” Albanian (Illyrian) ethnicity of Alexander the Great and Ancient Macedonians³³⁷. The respectful pedigree of Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia, for Nexhipi, means that his co-nationals should occupy more decisive position in Macedonian politics. The republic should be renamed to *Slavic-Illyrian Macedonia*. Otherwise, it should be divided into two autonomous entities, first of which would be called *Slavic Macedonia*, whereas the second would adopt the original Illyrian name of Macedon, *Emadhia*³³⁸.

A new wave of nationalization, symbolization and capitalization of antiquity came after the conclusion of the Ohrid Framework Agreement in 2001, and the inauguration of the State University of Tetovo in 2004. The Albanian intellectuals in Macedonia were given more voice, and educational and publishing facilities improved appreciably.

In 2004 a professor of Tetovo University Ilmi Veliu published a book devoted to ancient history, and Illyrians. The author speaks of particularly significant role Albanian ancestors, Illyrians, who occupied the whole Western Balkans, Macedonia, and Kosovo. Macedonian Albanians are direct descendants of local Illyrian tribes, primarily Dardanians, Paeonians, and Lyncestae. Ilmi Veliu repeats the thesis that ancient Macedonians had Illyrian ethnicity and descended from Pelasgians. Thus Philip II and Alexander the Great were genuine Illyrian sovereigns. The father of *Leka i Madh* came from Illyrian tribe of Paeonians, whereas his mother originated from that of Molossians³³⁹.

In 2005 the scholar from Tirana Kasëm Biçoku published in Albanian academic journal *Historical Studies* an article about the maintenance of the memory of Alexander the Great among the Albanians, which was cordially received by Albanian intellectuals in Macedonia. The respected director of the National Historical Museum asserts that the Balkan Peninsula, which he calls Illyrian Peninsula, in antiquity, was widely populated by Illyrians. Naturally, the zone inhabited by Illyrians included the lands of Macedonia. Alexander the Great was always commemorated with particular adoration by Illyrian descendants, Albanians. Albanian national hero George (Gjergj) Scanderbeg certainly knew about Albanian origins of Alexander the Great, and continuously tried to emulate him. He purposefully chose the second name Iskander (Skënder in Albanian), i.e. Alexander in Turkish rendering. Then Biçoku claims that Scanderbeg copied the famous helmet with the horns of goat from the helmet of Alexander the Great, which is depicted on some ancient coins. Furthermore, the Albanian traditional customary, so-called *Kanun of Leka*, in Kasëm Biçoku's eyes, owes its name not to medieval ruler Leka Dukagjini, but to *Leka i Madh*. Thus, the Albanian historian not only presents the “real” Albanian history of Ancient Macedonia and “uncovers” Albanian ethnicity of the prominent ancient emperor, but also points to the “fact” that Ancient Macedonia was always present in Albanian collective memory³⁴⁰.

The Albanian mythmaking in Macedonia again intensified in 2008–2009, when the

³³⁶ Reshat Nexhipi, “Leka i Madh” [“Alexander the Great”], *Jehona* 3–4 (1991): 12–21.

³³⁷ Rešat Nedžipi, “Aleksandar Makedonski im pripagja na Albancite” [“Alexander of Macedon belongs to Albanians”], *Focus* 38 (March 3, 1996); Rešat Nedžipi, “Bez poznavanje na albanskiot jazik i pismo ne može da se razbere Stara Makedonija” [“Without knowing Albanian Language and Script Ancient Macedonia Can Not Be Understood”], *Fokus* 41 (March 24, 1996).

³³⁸ Although the oldest name of the ancient kingdom is usually spelled “Emathia,” Reshat Nexhipi insists on his own version claiming that the name can be decoded with the help of Albanian language. *E madhe* in Albanian means big/great (feminine).

³³⁹ Ilmi Veliu, *Historia e kohës së vjetër dhe ilitët: burimet antike dhe moderne [The History of Antiquity and Illyrians: Ancient and Modern Sources]* (Kërçovë, 2004), 5–17.

³⁴⁰ Kasëm Biçoku, “Aleksandri i Madh në kujtesën historike të Skënderbeut e të shqiptarëve” [“Alexander the Great in the Historical Memory of Scanderbeg and of the Albanians”], *Studime Historike* 1–2 (2005): 7–29.

republican government launched so-called “antiquization” campaign, and the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts published a *Macedonian Encyclopedia*. The Macedonian scholars repudiated Illyrian origins of Albanians, and their autochthony on the republican territory, whereas the government, which planned to rebuild the center of Skopje and to erect many monuments, aimed to celebrate the ancient Macedonian past and to instill into the citizens a sense of proud for their glorious (genealogical/ideological?) ancestors³⁴¹.

In 2008 an amateur Albanian antiquarian Hafezat Osmani published an Albanian-English bilingual catalogue of his private collection of coins from Southern Illyria and Epirus found in Macedonia. In fact, all the coins came from Hellenized and Romanized towns, but the publishers aimed to highlight the connections between Illyrian territories in antiquity³⁴².

A professor of the State University of Tetovo Nebi Dervishi offered his view on Ancient Macedonian heritage and the person of Alexander the Great. In an article published in Skopian cultural magazine *Jehona e Re* (The New Echo) he writes that the early history of Macedonia is little known. Nevertheless, despite many distortions at interest of Greece and Macedonia that are eager to privatize historical heritage of Ancient Macedonia, available sources allow to investigate the past objectively. By authoring the article, Nebi Dervishi aims to tell both sides (Greek and Slavic-Macedonian), which pursue their narrow interests, about ancient happenings linked to the remote antiquity of Macedonia drawing on undeniable scientific facts and arguments. For him, Ancient Macedonia was great and sacred, therefore all her heirs as well as neighbors should feel themselves great and respected. The scholar says that he can understand the possible disappointment of Macedonians and Greeks, since, scientifically approaching the issue, ancient Macedonians and Epirotes were very close to Illyrians, spoke Illyrian language and had the similar material and spiritual culture as *Illyri proprie dicti* (the Illyrians in strong sense). He harshly criticizes (Slavic) Macedonian historians and publicists, who claim that their co-ethnics have more historical rights to Macedonia, and argue that the Albanians settled in Macedonia only during the Ottoman period. Special critics go to the archeologist Pasko Kuzman as the main encourager of the antiquization campaign. All those self-proclaimed historians, in Dervishi’s opinion, have nothing to do with genuine historical assessment of the past of Ancient Macedonia. The Slavs came to the Balkans in the 6th century, whereas world science and historiography has attested that the Albanians as direct descendants of Illyrians dwelled in the territories of geographic Macedonia “already in the most ancient historical periods with the ensuing uninterrupted continuity of their living and civilization till the present day.”³⁴³ Then Nebi Dervishi turns to the question of Alexander’s ethnicity claiming that “by world historiography Macedonians are construed as Indo-European people formed out of Illyrians, Thracians and, to lesser extent, Hellenes, who in the 7th century BC emerged as ethnos and founded their state... And the language of Alexander, who conquered the world, was Albanian/read: Illyrian.”³⁴⁴ The grandmother of Alexander was a Lyncestian princess, whereas his Illyrian Epirote mother Olympias played a primary role in forming the strong Alexander’s personality.

After “establishing” Albanian autochthony and the Albanian ethnic belonging of Alexander the Great, the scholar resorts to humanist rhetoric. According to him, Alexander the Great wanted to unite the world and to make all the people in his empire equal. The prominent commander was a humanist respecting individuality, religion, and traditions of the

³⁴¹ On *Macedonian Encyclopedia* also see the next chapter. On the “Antiquisation” campaign see: Anastas Vangeli, “Nation-building ancient Macedonian style: the Origins and the Effects of the so-called Antiquization in Macedonia,” *Nationalities Papers* 39:1 (2011): 13–32.

³⁴² Osmani Hafezat, *Katalogu i monedhave iliro-epirote të gjetura në Maqedoni: (koleksion privat) / The Catalogue of Illyrian-Epirote Coins Found in Macedonia: (private collection)* (Shkupi: Datapons, 2008).

³⁴³ Nebi Dervishi, “Leka i Madh (356–323 p.e.s.): figurë e madhe e antikitetit” [“Alexander the Great (356–323 BC): a Great Figure of the Antiquity”], *Jehona e Re* 1–2 (2009): 112.

³⁴⁴ Dervishi, “Leka i Madh,” 115.

conquered peoples, whom he acknowledged *the internal autonomy*. Alexander the Great, thus, in a sense, belongs to all those, who share universal values. And, as Nebi Dervishi stresses, the attitude of Slavic Macedonians, who claim a pedigree from Ancient Macedonians, is certainly in breach with percepts and principles of Alexander the Great. The government should recognize Macedonia as multi-ethnic state with two state-forming nations, and to allow the autonomy for the Albanians³⁴⁵.

A similar ostensibly humanist rhetoric was adopted by Reshat Nexhipi in his article published in May 2009 in Macedonian-language newspaper *Utrinski vesnik* (Morning Newspaper). He argues that the figures of Philip II and Alexander the Great could serve as symbols of peaceful coexistence in Bitola and beyond. Unsurprisingly, in the first place, the historian points out that the territory of ancient Bitola (Heraclea Lyncestis) was populated by Illyrian tribe of Lyncestae. Both Philip II and his son Alexander ethnically were Albanians. The mother of the first came from the Lyncestae. Phillip II was attached to the mother's homeland and founded Bitola. Alexander the Great, apart from being Illyrian from the paternal side, had "pure Albanian" mother Olympias from Epirus. Therefore, Illyrian descendants, Albanians and Vlachs, can be proud of being co-nationals of the famous rulers. But it is nothing wrong, if the Greeks are proud of Alexander, since the later declared himself Greek, and disseminated Greek culture and name throughout the world (while being fully aware of his non-Greek ethnicity). Macedonians can also celebrate Alexander the Great, for he is their compatriot. Thus, in the article from 2009 Reshat Nexhipi writes that the history should lead to rapprochement, and not to the dissociation of Greeks, Macedonians, Albanians, and Vlachs³⁴⁶.

More offensive rhetoric was adopted by Albanian scholars and publicists, who in response to *Macedonian Encyclopedia* published in Tetovo the first volume of an encyclopedia *Albanian Macedonia*. The appearance of the book in the fall 2009 was enabled by Albanian private donors. A prominent publicist from Tetovo Nijazi Muhameti became the editor, and the trained historians Reshat Nexhipi and Nebi Dervishi were consulted. The book tells about Albanian indegity on the territory of geographic Macedonia. It also highlights ethnic rights of Albanians to consider Alexander the Great as their ancestor, and to own historical and cultural heritage of Ancient Macedonia, which again is depicted as an Illyrian kingdom. Special attention is drawn on ancient Macedonian language as closely related to Illyrian, and consequently to modern Albanian. Indicatively, the 16-pointed star of Vergina adores the cover of the book, as does the Albanian national flag³⁴⁷. On the promotion ceremony in Skopje Nijazi Muhameti stressed that the authors did not pursue political, but strictly "scientific goals." And from mere scientific point of view, he said, the dispute over Alexander the Great should be held exclusive between Albania and Greece, whereas Macedonia had nothing to say, since the Slavs are latecomers into the Balkans³⁴⁸.

The next year was marked with publication in Skopje of two Albanian-language books on Alexander the Great, and Ancient Macedonia. An amateur historian from Albania, a professor of the Agricultural University of Tirana Resmi Osmani inspired by the Albanian "blood connections with Illyrians" has spent some years writing *Alexander the Great*. In the book, he praises the creator of the World Empire and integrator of the peoples living on the territories from the Himalayas to the Balkans, and stresses that according to all-Albanian

³⁴⁵ Dervishi, "Leka i Madh," 118–120.

³⁴⁶ Rešat Nedžipi, "Filip Vtori vo gradot na konzulite" ["Phillip the Second in the city of consuls"], *Utrinski Vesnik*, May 6, 2009, accessed May 25, 2012, <http://www.utrinski.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=BD0B04B09366AF4286381268CFD3C964>.

³⁴⁷ *Maqedonia Shqiptare [Albanian Macedonia]*. Vëllimi I. (Tetovë: Tringa, 2009).

³⁴⁸ Riad Murati, "Prezantohet 'Enciklopedia Maqedonase'" ["'Macedonian Encyclopedia' is promoted"], *Top Channel (Tirana)*, November 17, 2009, accessed May 25, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2YbB6ryIDU>.

tradition Alexander the Great is called *Leka i Madh*. The author aims to tell the story of Alexander as a king, a general and a historical figure of a non-Greek state. He goes through the history of Ancient Macedonia before 336 BC. Osmani does not characterize Ancient Macedonians as Illyrians proper. According to him, the inhabitants of Ancient Macedonia were Illyrian neighbors. Blood, language, common traditions, history and customs, however, closely connected two “peoples.” Illyrian detachments served in the army of Alexander the Great, which conquered the world. And, consequently, the part of its glory belongs to Illyrians³⁴⁹.

Initially Macedonia bordered Greek lands in the south, and Illyrian lands of the Paeonians, the Lyncestae, and the Dassareti in the north. Quite early Macedonian aristocracy embraced Greek culture, and language. But the bulk of population always maintained the culture close to Illyrian. Resmi Osmani points out that various scholars have considered the language of Ancient Macedonians as altogether separate, Greek or Illyrian. He argues that the later position is the most grounded. The original name of Macedonia, Emathia, can be decoded as Albanian *E madhe* – big/great (feminine), whereas one of the lands conquered by Macedonian kings, Bottiaea, actually means “world” (Alb. *botë*, -a)³⁵⁰.

Under Phillip II Ancient Macedonia grew from small and weak state situated in North-Eastern Greece into a strong political and military actor. During Phillip’s reign the amicable relations were established with Epirote Illyrians. “Now historical science completely proved that the Epirotes were Southern Illyrians... They were connected to other [Illyrian] tribes by ethnicity, language, marriages, material and spiritual culture, and mutual relation in the field of trade and exchange.” Therefore, intermarrying Macedonian and Epirote dynasties aimed to establish a strong alliance, and to create a federal kingdom, which would include Molossians, Thesprotians, Chaonians and many other southern Illyrian tribes. Alexander’s mother came from Epirus, and educated the son always to feel himself Illyrian. Up to the age of 13 Alexander did not speak Greek and had only Illyrian teachers from Epirus. Until his death Alexander loved native Illyrian language.

Even the name “Alexander,” according to Resmi Osmani, has never been popular among Greeks, and in fact is an Albanian name. Alexander the Great wore a helmet decorated with the horns of roe deer or goat, which again reveals a historical continuity in Macedonian-Illyrian-Albanian tradition from Pyrrhus to Scanderbeg, and beyond. Although in strict sense, “Alexander the Great was neither Greek nor Illyrian..., $\frac{3}{4}$ of his blood were Illyrian..., [and] he was linked with Illyrians by the blood affinity,... customs, closely related language, common origins,... and territorial proximity.”³⁵¹

Even though Resmi Osmani portrays Alexander the Great as virtual Albanian, he recognizes that the glorious conqueror promoted Greek culture, science and language. Alexander was a disseminator of the Western culture and knowledge, and follower of the ideas of integration of peoples, of a merge between cultures and religions. In effect, he opened the first epoch of globalization³⁵².

Resmi Osmani also questions what has happened to ancient Macedonians. He explains that up to Roman conquest they preserved their distinctiveness, and then were largely romanized. Their direct descendants certainly are the Balkan Vlachs. The possibility of assimilation of the Romanized Macedonians by the Slavs, for Osmani, can not be excluded. He, however, emphasizes that the Illyrian neighbors and relatives of ancient Macedonians, the Epirotes, Paeonians and Lyncestae, fully preserved the language, and Illyrian-Arbër

³⁴⁹ Resmi Osmani, *Aleksandri i Madh: miti dhe njeriu [Alexander the Great: Myth and Person]* (Tetovë: LUMA Grafik, 2010), 3.

³⁵⁰ Osmani, *Aleksandri i Madh*, 4–10.

³⁵¹ Osmani, *Aleksandri i Madh*, 13.

³⁵² Osmani, *Aleksandri i Madh*, 13, 149–152.

ethnicity³⁵³.

Another book on Alexander the Great was published in 2010 by a native of Skopje and Priština graduate in law Shefki Ollomani. In the 1980s he migrated to Sweden and engaged in nationalist activities becoming the prominent nationalist publicist and poet in the late 1990s. In 2005 he distinguished by publishing a book of poems ...*On Albania, on Freedom*. There he promotes the idea of national unification, and encourages his co-nationals to struggle for the advancement of the national cause. The poems *On Your Lands, Ilirida! (Mbi trojet tua - Iliridë!)* and *My Ilirida (Ilirida ime)* are devoted to the author's homeland. The first is rather nostalgic, whereas the second presents Albanian Macedonia as the land of national suffering, and as non-unified and non-liberated Albania³⁵⁴. The book of Shefki Ollomani published in 2010 was titled *Leka i Madh (Alexander of Macedon: the real origins)*³⁵⁵. Addressing the question of ethnicity of Ancient Macedonians, the author claims that the later were Pelasgians, i.e. the oldest Balkan population, which had common origin, ethnicity, culture and language, although its various tribes, Illyrians, Epirotes, Etruscans, Thracians etc., bore different names with merely territorial meaning. All Pelasgian tribes were certainly distinct from the Greeks. The Macedonians, who initially lived in today's north-eastern Greece, spoke a Doric dialect (sic!) of Illyrian language. The main cult of Macedonians was that of the sun characteristic to all Pelasgians. The excavations in Vergina have attested the significance of the sun in Macedonian religion. Phillip II successfully managed to unite kindred tribes in one state, and thus enabled Macedonian, Thracians, and Illyrians to become a nucleus of the victorious army of Alexander the Great. The later definitely belongs to Albanians, since he spoke Albanian and both his father (Lyncestian) and mother (Epirote) were Pelasgians-Illyrians. His name derived from Pelasgian expression *Leka është andra/burrë* (Alexander is man). Similarly, Ollomani decodes the original name of Macedonia as "big/great" claiming that the later signifier also can be understood only with the help of Albanian. Macedonia/Makedhonia derives from Illyrian/Albanian *Ma ke dhonë* (You gave me), which is understandable, since Ancient Macedonians regarded their land as promised. The book, in general, is deeply amateurish and nationalist. The author goes so far as to claim Albanian ethnicity of Aristotle, and even of Cyril and Methodius. In the concluding chapters he argues that the "so-called Macedonian nation," as well as the Macedonian state are purely artificial creations emerged at the pleasure of Tito, who simply wanted to "make a test, an experiment." Modern Macedonians, in Shefket Ollomani's interpretation, have not been formed as a result of a merge, but are pure Slavs that came to the Illyrian Peninsula late, and usurped the lands of the indigenous Illyrians. The diasporic publicist, however, gives "the last strategic chance" proposing a conversion of "Slavo-Macedonians." If the later believe that they are Slavicized descendants of Ancient Pelasgians-Illyrians, i.e. assimilated Albanians, they must publicly and legally declare themselves so. The Macedonians must build institutions enabling them to reacquire their original ethnicity. The "policy of Slavicization" must be abandoned, whereas Albanian language must be declared constitutionally as the native tongue of all Macedonians, and the official language of the Macedonian state. Then the parliament and the government in Skopje must provide for Albanian to be taught as the first language in all educational institutions in the republic. Only by so doing, modern Macedonians can acquire right to regard themselves as heirs of Ancient Macedonia, and Alexander the Great. Interestingly, while promoting pan-Pelasgian/Albanian version of ancient Balkan history, Shefki Ollomani additionally emphasizes that the territory of Ancient Macedonia does not coincide with that of

³⁵³ Osmani, *Aleksandri i Madhe*, 14.

³⁵⁴ Shefki Ollomani, ...*Për lirinë, për Shqipërinë: poezi të zgjedhura, 1995–2000* [...*On Freedom, on Albania: selected poems, 1995–2000*] (Shkup: Shkupi, 2005).

³⁵⁵ Shefki Ollomani, *Leka i Madh (Alexandri i Maqedonisë: Rrënjet e vërteta)* [*Alexander the Great (Alexander of Macedon: the real origins)*] (Shkup: Shkupi, 2009).

today's Macedonia. He highlights that the central, western and northern areas of the Republic of Macedonia in antiquity were populated by the Dardanians, Lyncestae, Dassareti, Paeonians etc.³⁵⁶

In 2011 and 2012 Ilmi Veliu and Reshat Nexhipi authored a number of articles in the Internet further nationalizing the ancient past. The first claims that the father of Alexander the Great was Illyrian Peonian, and repeats the early nationalist idea about Olympias's Albanianess. Unsurprisingly, he considers all Ancient Macedonians as Illyrians of Pelasgian descent, and draws attention on the similar helmets borne by Pyrrhus, Alexander and Scanderbeg. The introduction of *lekë* as Albanian currency in the 1920s allegedly verifies that the collective memory of the great Illyrian king has been maintained by the Albanians throughout the centuries. The historian from Tetovo also argues that Macedonian Albanians should not oppose the erection of the monuments of Alexander the Great, since they represent Albanian, and not Slavic culture³⁵⁷. Reshat Nexhipi in his article of 2012 writes about Albanian contribution into the world history and culture. He goes as far as to claim that Paris, Moscow, Athens, Africa, Adriatic, Argentina, Atlantis etc. are original Illyrian place-names, whereas many Roman emperors, Aristotle, Cleopatra, Napoleon and Garibaldi were Albanians. Among other things, Reshat Nexhipi highlights Illyrian ethnicity of Alexander the Great, and argues that many place-names in Macedonia, including Skopje, Ohrid, Prilep and Struga are of Illyrian origin³⁵⁸.

Thus the national historical myths of antiquity produced and disseminated by Albanian intellectuals in the Republic of Macedonia after 1991 further nationalize the Balkan past presenting ancient Illyria, Epirus, Paeonia, Dardania, Macedonia and other political and geographic entities as early Albanian territories, and states. They praise the distant history, and boost the symbolism of the past events, and historical figures (Philip II, Alexander the Great, Olympias, Pyrrhus, Aristotle etc.) making the later to stay for Albanian identity³⁵⁹. Albanian mythmakers insistently argue that the admirable Albanian history of the territories of geographic Macedonia reveals an urgent necessity in essential elevation of political and social status of their co-nationals in the republic.

Addressing (Slavic) Macedonian mythopoeic voices, Albanian intellectuals claim ethnic descent from local Illyrians (the Dardanians, Paeonians, Lyncestae), and portray the Macedonians as Slavic latecomers that have nothing in common with ancient Balkan populations. As I have attempted to show, even though these two "points" had always been present in one or another form in Albanian national mythology, since 1991 they have

³⁵⁶ That is because the Illyrian belonging of these tribes is recognized by much bigger number of scholars.

³⁵⁷ Ilmi Veliu, *Leka i Madh (Alexandri i Maqedonisë) ishte me origjinë ilire [Alexander the Great (Alexander of Macedon) was of Illyrian origin]*, accessed May 25, 2012, http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=276889825683346; Ilmi Veliu, *Alexandri Shqiptar [Alexander Albanian]*, *Zemra Shqiptare*, May 3, 2012, accessed May 25, 2012, http://www.zemrashqiptare.net/news/id-27441/cid-7/Ilmi_Veliu:_Aleksandri_shqiptar.html.

³⁵⁸ Reshat Nexhipi, *Prania dhe kontributi iliro-shqiptar në vende të ndryshme të botës [Illyrian-Albanian Presence and Contribution in Various Countries]*, *Zemra Shqiptare*, May 19, 2012, accessed May 25, 2012, http://www.zemrashqiptare.net/news/id-27655/Reshat_Nexhipi:_Prania_dhe_kontributi_iliro_shqiptar.html.

³⁵⁹ Interestingly, humoristic narratives about Alexander the Great were also present in Macedonian Albanian milieu during the 2000s. For instance, a sketch of Mark Brunga *How Alexander the Great was sold in Apolonia* published in Macedonian magazine *Jehona e Re* (The New Echo) tells a story about smugglers of antiquities in Southern Albania, who attempt to sell a fake marble head of Alexander the Great to Italian buyers. The sellers set very high price of the artifact arguing that the head "belongs" to the emperor of the world, and not to an ordinary person. In effect, the foreigners agree to make a deal. The author concludes: "It seems that Alexander the Great keeps topping the list of the most popular falsified artifacts." See: Mark Brunga, "Si u shhit Aleksandri i Madh në Apoloni" ["How Alexander the Great was sold in Apolonia"], *Jehona e Re* 3 (2004): 150–157.

strengthened appreciably. Besides, during the 1990s the launch of Macedonian claims for ownership of Ancient Macedonia, and temporal priority in dwelling on the disputed land has made Albanian intellectuals to design additional “points,” which were absent in the national mythmaking before 1991. The dialogue with Macedonian side has led to a situation, when some nationalist historians and publicists speaking on behalf of the Macedonian Albanians argue that Ancient Macedonia laid more to the south, while the republican territory was inhabited by the Illyrian forebears of Albanians. Others claim that ancient kingdom covered the most of the area of the contemporary state, and local Illyrian tribes formed a nucleus of ancient Macedonian ethnos. Many Albanian intellectuals maintain that even “original” Macedonians from Emathia were Illyrians/Albanians. Unsurprisingly, the voices of Albanian mythmakers in the Republic of Macedonia have influenced (Slavic) Macedonian national myths, and have provoked a Macedonian response.

Chapter IV. A Macedonist Response: Academic Historians and Amateurs on Distinctiveness of Ancient Macedonian people

Albanian mythmaking in Macedonia after 1991 provokes strong responses from the part of (Slavic) Macedonian intellectuals. To sum up, the argumentation of the later is threefold: Albanians are presented as latecomers to Macedonia, who arrived from Albania during the Ottoman period inspired by Muslim authorities. Taking into account that the Albanians claim their descent from Illyrians, and, in the case of Macedonia, from Illyrian tribes of Paeonians, Dardanians, Lyncestae and Enchelei, Macedonian scholars repudiate both Illyrian origins of Albanians, and Illyrian ethnicity of the tribes in question. Estranging Western and Central Macedonian tribes from ancient Illyrians is also of primary importance, because Macedonian historians promote their own vision of the territorial range, and ethnic composition of the ancient kingdom. They insist that Ancient Macedonia covered more than half of today's Macedonia, whereas old Macedonian ethnos was formed out of various tribes including those from the present-day Macedonian territory. The ethnicity of all ancient Macedonian tribes was harshly distinct from both Greek, and Illyrian. As a result a new form of "Macedonism" comes to being. Original Macedonism is a doctrine, which holds that "Macedonian Slavs represent a distinctive national group, separate from the neighboring Bulgarians and Serbs."³⁶⁰ Now it is ethnicity of the Ancient Macedonians that is claimed as distinct from all bordering peoples, and tribes. New Macedonism helps Macedonian intellectuals and politicians to oppose Greek pretensions on Ancient Macedonia grounded on ethnic (Macedonians as ethnic Greeks) and territorial (the area of Ancient Macedonia as part of today's Greece) arguments. It also enables them to confront Albanian claims for the ancient kingdom based on putative Illyrian ethnicity of the Ancient Macedonians.

One of the first scholars, who addressed both question of Macedonian ethno-genesis and the history of Macedonian Albanians, was Lidija Slaveska. In his book titled *The Ethno-genesis of Macedonian people* she stresses that ethno-genetic processes of all South Slavic peoples, including the Macedonians, should be seen in their continuity. In the author's opinion, it is pertinent in the book on the Macedonian ethno-genesis not to discuss the whole history of Ancient Macedonia, but to focus only on the period of Philip II, "for the legends about this epoch of old Macedonian state live in the collective memory." In Slaveska's eyes, it was the time of determination and formation of a centralized state, and the period of consolidation of the Macedonian people. Ancient Macedonians spoke a clearly distinct language, and constituted "proud and independent nation." The progressive development of ancient Macedonians was stopped by the Roman conquest, when the (ethnic) state was divided between new four administrative units. "That act meant for Macedonia and Macedonians the beginning of a millennium-long Golgotha, the tragedy that continues till the present day: to be divided into four parts." Under the Roman domination Macedonians had never succeed to restore their state, but had survived as a people. While the borders of Macedonia were being changed, its geographical and ethnic entirety had not been broken. During the early Byzantine period the ethnic Macedonians still constituted the majority of the

³⁶⁰ Denko Maleski, "Macedonism," in *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Macedonia*, ed. Dimitar Belchev (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 139. It is important to note that some scholars consider the Macedonian myths of descent from Ancient Macedonians as new Macedonism. See: Vangeli, "Nation-building ancient Macedonian style," 16. One should, however, bear in mind that the idea of estranging *modern* Macedonian people from other peoples stands in very core of the Macedonist doctrine. The situation, when it is done by nationalizing the ancient past, also is not a new phenomenon, since Macedonian nationalists of the 19th and early 20th centuries invoked the myths of descent from Ancient Macedonians.

population on the Macedonian territory. After the Slavic migrations to the Balkans in the late 6th and the 7th century began an extensive and multifaceted process of “integration” between Balkan *substratum* and the Slavs. In direct contacts of those different civilizational layers occurred a mixing and inclusion of old Balkan cultural, historical and mythological heritage into Slavic culture. Thus cultural paleo-Balkan heritage had integrated with Slavic one in continuity and symbiosis between indigenous dwellers and the Slavs.” Of course, the Slavs brought new economic, social and political conditions. That is why when raising the question of the relationship between the Slavs and Ancient Macedonians one should be cautious and patient in seeking a solution of this problem, since many centuries passed away from the last mentioning of Ancient Macedonians and the affirmation of the Macedonian people.” Concluding, the historian openly claims that the Ancient Macedonians were not the Slavs, but adds that they also were not Greeks, and in general do not belong to any contemporary nation. Macedonian Slavs in Early Middle Ages, however, based their material and spiritual culture on the heritage of the ancient inhabitants of Macedonia. That is why Macedonian national and historical consciousness contains not only Slavic, but also ancient tradition. Throughout the centuries (Slavic) Macedonians maintained the memory of Ancient Macedonia in legends, folksongs, manuscripts, and later in printed books³⁶¹. Basing on the popular memory and oral tradition the national ideologists of the 19th and early 20th century invoked the images of Alexander the Great, and Macedonian antiquity for affirmation of the nation³⁶². Thus, in the book of Lidija Slaveska not only the myth of ideological descent of (Slavic) Macedonians from Ancient Macedonians is elaborated, but also the borders of Ancient Macedonia are equated with the frontiers of geographic Macedonia, and its ancient dwellers are rendered as a separate and wholly distinct “ethnos.”

The author draws particular attention on the history of “Albanian minority,” and tackles the issue of its “putative autochthony” in Macedonia in order to oppose “current pretensions on Macedonian ethnic area in Western Macedonia.” She considers the Albanians as migrants, who settled in Western Macedonia under the Ottoman rule in relatively small numbers, and then expanded. The Albanians appear in the Byzantine sources only the 11th and the 12th century. By that time the Illyrians had totally disappeared from the historical scene. The Slavs inhabited the whole Balkan Peninsula, including the Albanian hinterland. Therefore, the thesis about Albanians as the descendants of non-Romanized Illyrians, in Slaveska’s opinion, is highly disputable. The homeland of medieval Albanians laid within the borders of contemporary Albania, concretely in its northern part, which was completely isolated from neighboring regions and inhabited by stock-breeders. Finally, the Macedonian historian explains that the contested region of Tetovo even in ancient time belonged to the ethnic Macedonia, whereas (Illyrian?) Dardania laid more to the north³⁶³.

Amateur historian Vasil Tupurkovski in his book on Ancient Macedonia published in 1993 aims to write a history of all Macedonians throughout the centuries. By “all Macedonians” he, however, implies rather Ancient Macedonians, and contemporary Slavic dwellers of geographic Macedonia. He harshly criticizes a “dangerous voluntarism” that was present in the past, and set artificial “barriers” and “fixed rules” dictating Macedonians how they should feel themselves. Overcoming the present handicap is a fundamental condition for building up a democratic Macedonia. Macedonians must struggle to display their distinctiveness, and freedom. The claimed distinctiveness is found by Tupurkovski already in the ancient times. He argues that Macedonia as a geography should be understood as a central Balkan area, which covers the valleys of Vardar and Haliacmon. The bulk of Macedonian

³⁶¹ Lidija Slaveska, *Etnogenezata na makedonskiot narod: kontinuitet i tradicija* [“The Ethno-genesis of Macedonian People: Continuity and Tradition”] (Skopje: Matica makedonska, 1992), 11, 19, 22–31, 39.

³⁶² Slaveska, *Etnogenezata*, 31–38.

³⁶³ Slaveska, *Etnogenezata*, 20–22.

territory lies far from the sea. The author points to natural differences between Macedonia, Greece (proper), Epirus, Albania and Bulgaria. “Macedonia obviously has its geographic peculiarity, its geographic spirit, which separates it from neighboring territories.” Thus, in Tupurkovski’s eyes, Macedonia through history has always meant the same geography, i.e. that which was actually imagined only in the 19th century³⁶⁴. Geographic peculiarity of Macedonia is complemented by an ethnic distinctiveness of Macedonians that represented the core ethnos of Ancient Macedonia. In the Late Neolithic period different tribes migrated from the region of Danube as well as from Anatolia and settled in Macedonia. In the early Bronze Age new migrants populated Macedonia and altered the local culture. Later migrations of Indo-Europeans during the second millennium BC, which involved various groups of Greek-speakers, circumvented Macedonia. In the late Bronze Age Macedonians were “stabilized” as culturally and ethnically distinctive group, whereas in the first half of I millennium BC they developed the ethnic consciousness. The achieved level of social cohesion among Macedonians did not allowed Illyrians and Thracian to penetrate into the central areas of Macedonia, even though Illyrians occupied the western parts of the Macedonian plain. Greeks established some colonies in Macedonia, but did not cause serious ethnic or cultural changes. From the 7th century onwards Macedonians began to expand afield as did “their” state, Macedonia³⁶⁵. Vasil Tupurkovski draws special attention on the deeds of Philip II, who allegedly was aware of geographic particularity of Macedonia, and laid continuous efforts to defend its “natural borders” against aggressive actions of Illyrian king Bardylis. At the end he managed to restore the territorial integrity of Upper Macedonia³⁶⁶. By 356 Phillip II had become a king of a new powerful state in the Balkans, which merely for three years succeed to overpass the situation of a complete vulnerability, and to transform into a powerful political actor projecting its influence beyond the borders³⁶⁷. The policy of Philip II towards Greece deserves a special attention of the historian. Macedonian-Greek communication had always been hindered, and marked with mutual isolation and intolerance. Macedonia and Greek world had been developed as completely different geographical areas and separate entities. The merit of Phillip II was that he “countered anti-Macedonian aspirations that emerged in the neighboring lands, particularly in Greek world, with all-encompassing positive strategy.” Implementing the later the famous king “employed all capacities of Macedonia, and anticipated current and future development of Macedonia.” Phillip II also understood that the differences between Greek and Macedonian world disable their mutual incorporation³⁶⁸.

In the same year a native of Bitola living in Toronto Sime Pandovski authored another amateurish historical book titled *Macedonia: The Origins of the First Nation in Europe*. He claims that the Macedonians are one of the oldest nations in Europe. They descended from Arian Indo-Europeans and populated the Balkans in “the earliest periods of the human history.” Ancient Macedonians created one of the first civilizations in the 7th century BC. Phillip II established the first “national army” and successfully waged numerous wars with the neighbors. Ancient Macedonians spoke a distinctive language, which was unintelligible to all the neighbors, including Greeks. Sime Pandovski chooses very simple option to confront Greek and other national claims writing that Ancient Macedonians were Slavs. Apart from all ancient Macedonian kings, Aristotle, Constantine, Elena, Justinian and other famous figures of the Antiquity and the Middle Ages belonged to Macedonian (Slavic) ethnicity. The glorious Macedonians contributed much to the dissemination of humanist Christian doctrine,

³⁶⁴ Vasil Tupurkovski, *Istorija na Makedonija: Od drevnina do smrtta na Aleksandar Makedonski [History of Macedonia: From the most ancient times to the death of Alexander of Macedon]* (Skopje: Titan, 1993), 7–11.

³⁶⁵ Tupurkovski, *Istorija na Makedonija*, 27–31.

³⁶⁶ Tupurkovski, *Istorija na Makedonija*, 84–91.

³⁶⁷ Tupurkovski, *Istorija na Makedonija*, 95–96.

³⁶⁸ Tupurkovski, *Istorija na Makedonija*, 243–244, 248.

and Byzantine Empire was, in fact, a Macedonian one³⁶⁹. The amateur historian also develops a myth of national suffering that started when the Romans divided Macedonia between four provinces aiming to disjoint Macedonian “national and political compactness.” The subjugators gave their own names to the provinces such as Illyria, Dacia etc. “From that time these names have been used in different version created in the later periods by the historians aiming to destroy Macedonian national character and to use them for political manipulations...”³⁷⁰ Claiming Slavic ethnicity of Ancient Macedonians Sime Pandovski, unsurprisingly, embraces a viewpoint that thorough centuries Macedonians have been largely assimilated by neighboring peoples. According to him, “to contemporary Macedonian people belong all Macedonians, whose grandparents and grand-grandparents were born, lived and died in Macedonia, even though their grandsons today speak Macedonian, Vlach, Bulgarian, Serbian, Albanian, Greek, Arabic, Romani or any other language.”³⁷¹

The authors of the book *The Kings of Ancient Macedonia and their Coins in the Republic of Macedonia* Nikola Neldarov and Viktor Lilikj write about a multi-layer process of ancient Macedonian ethno-genesis. At the first stage the Illyrian Epirote tribes of Molossians, Thesprotians, Chaonians and the Dassareti were conquered by Dorian (but non-Greek) arrivals in 13th and 12th centuries BC, and mixed with them. Otherwise, the tribes conquered by the Dorians were of Pelasgian, Thracian-Paeonian origin. Indicatively, in a special footnote the authors remark that old scholars mechanically and unjustifiably used the name “Illyrian” to signify numerous autochthonous tribes in the Western Balkans. Thus, Neldarov and Lilikj point out that all Illyrians were not co-ethnics. Further they explain that at the second stage of Macedonian ethno-genesis, in the time-span between 8th and 5th centuries BC many other tribes, including the Paeonians and the Lyncestae, came under the domination of Macedonian kings. In effect, a distinct people emerged and consolidated on the Macedonian territory³⁷².

In his book *Macedonia and Macedonian nation* published in 1995 academician Blaže Ristovski explains that the history today posits to a Macedonian a “fateful imperative” of self-knowledge, since the neighbors do not recognize Macedonian name, nation, and church. And only history can help Macedonians to discover their true self. Then he writes about the “fascinating role” that was played by memory of Alexander the Great in the formation of the historical consciousness of Macedonian people in the Modern Times. Furthermore, the historian argues that the Slavs, who arrived in Macedonia in the 6th and 7th century, absorbed the parts of indigenous population: “Ancient Macedonians, Illyrians, Thracians, Greeks, Romans, the ancestors of contemporary Albanians and Vlachs etc.” Tellingly, Blaže Ristovski discriminates between Ancient Macedonians, Illyrians, and modern Albanians. He apparently supports neither the thesis about Illyrian inputs to the ethno-genesis of Ancient Macedonians, nor the theory of Illyrian-Albanian continuity. In his opinion, “[a]fter the disintegration of ancient Macedonia and the division of the Roman Empire, approximately in the beginning of the 7th century the Slavs already populated in Macedonia, and penetrated deeply into today’s Greece and Albania. By so doing they merged with the indigenous inhabitants of this part of the Byzantine Empire, and gradually... started to constitute a distinctive people speaking Slavic language and having Macedonian Slavic-Byzantine culture.” Thus, the Albanians certainly can not claim the continuity in dwelling on the Macedonian lands, since the whole

³⁶⁹ Sime Pandovski, *Makedonija: začetoci na prvata nacija vo Evropa [Macedonia: The Origins of the First Nation in Europe]* (Skopje: Nova Makedonija, 1993), 6, 12–33, 113–143.

³⁷⁰ Pandovski, *Makedonija*, 95.

³⁷¹ Pandovski, *Makedonija*, 6.

³⁷² Nikola Neldarov and Viktor Lilikj, *Krlevite na Antička Makedonija i nivni moneti vo Republika Makedonija [The Kings of Ancient Macedonia and their Coins in the Republic of Macedonia]* (Skopje: Makedonska civilizacija, 1994), 20–22.

indigenous population had been assimilated by the Slavs³⁷³.

In 1997 a historian from the Institute of National History Nade Proeva authored a fundamental monograph on the history of Ancient Macedonia titled *The Studies of Ancient Macedonians*. The author portrays Ancient Macedonia as an ethnic and linguistic entity. Its borders were formed by the Aegean Sea and the Pindus Mountains in the South and South-West, the Šar Mountains in the West and North-West, the peak Jakupica (between today's cities of Skopje and Veles) in the North, and by the Rila and Pirin mountains in the East. In other words, according to the respected Macedonian scholar, ethnic Ancient Macedonia almost fully coincides with the present day's geographic and ethnic Macedonia of nationalist imagination. The geographic unit was further divided into Lower (costal) Macedonia, and Upper (hinterland) Macedonia. The latter covered around 2/3 of the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, and included the regions of Pelagonia, Paeonia, Lyncestida, Dassaretia etc.³⁷⁴ Addressing the issue of ethnicity and ethnic origins of the Ancient Macedonians, Nade Proeva strongly criticizes the theories portraying them as Hellens, Thracians, or Illyrians, and writes about their ethnic descent from early Indo-European population of Bryges, who dwelled in both the Balkans and Asia Minor. The historian emphasizes that in the Antiquity people defined ethnic belonging basing on language or religion, and claims that Ancient Macedonian was absolutely distinct and unintelligible for the Greeks. If some affinity between Macedonian and Greek names existed, it was the result of continuous but small-scale colonization, migration, and coming of political refugees, the sequel of the Dorian migrations that slightly affected Macedonian territory in the end of the second millennium. The religion of Ancient Macedonians also reveals dissimilarities with Greeks and all other neighbors. The ethno-genesis of the Ancient Macedonians finished in the 8th century, and right after that the process of (national?) unification of kindred Macedonian tribes under the rule of Argead dynasty started. The state of Argeads then expanded into the Balkans, and all the tribes under Macedonian domination were effectively homogenized. That is why "the Romans, who usually made allowance for ethnic principle, left in the province of Macedonia both the Paonians and the Dassareti, and thus confirmed ethnic and historical borders of Macedonia"³⁷⁵. Nade Proeva pays a specific attention to the issue of ethnic belonging of the Dassareti, Ehchelei, Paeonians and Lyncestae, and decisively repudiates the thesis about "putative Illyrian origins of the Macedonians."³⁷⁶ Drawing on narrative sources, archeology and linguistics, the scholar attempts to prove that the four "Illyrian" groups differed from the Illyrians by language, religion, funeral rituals, dresses, jewelry, political and military organization. They bore Brygian names and, in reality, belonged to Macedonian people³⁷⁷. Moreover, Nade Proeva "shows" that the relations between Macedonians and Illyrians in Antiquity were mostly hostile. Then, she comes down on Albanian historiography, for it promotes the theory of Balkan "Pan-Illyrianism" and declares "putative continuity and identity of Illyrians and Albanians." "Pan-Illyrianism" doctrine implies that the whole Western and Central Balkans were inhabited by Illyrians, and thus "there is no room for [distinct Ancient] Macedonians." In Proeva's eyes, ethnic Illyrians were called by the Romans *Illyri proprie dicti* and dwelled near to the Lake Skadar in today's Albania expanding later to the north up to the river Neretva (in today's Bosnia), but not to the East. Otherwise, the name "Illyrians" was used by ancient authors mechanically. Indicatively, it is not enough for the Macedonian historian to "prove" that the Illyrians did not inhabit the territory of the Republic

³⁷³ Blaže Ristovski, *Makedonija i makedonskata nacija [Macedonia and Macedonia Nation]* (Skopje: Detska radost, 1995), 5, 7, 13–15.

³⁷⁴ Nade Proeva, *Studii za antički makedonci [The Studies of Ancient Macedonians]* (Skopje: Macedonia Prima, 1997), 33.

³⁷⁵ Proeva, *Studii*, 39, 47, 89–99.

³⁷⁶ Proeva, *Studii*, 110.

³⁷⁷ Proeva, *Studii*, 100 - 133.

of Macedonia. She also emphasize that the Illyrians were mostly Romanized, or moved to the mountains, while the Slavs occupied Albanian lowlands³⁷⁸.

In 1998 with financial support of the republican ministry of culture in Skopje was published a purely pseudo-historical book of Platon Jozo (Jon) Boškovski *Uncovering of the History: Real Atlantis, and Macedonia*. Similarly to Sime Pandovski, and other Macedonian quasi-historians, Boškovski solves the dispute over Ancient Macedonia, which occurs between Greek, Macedonians, and Albanians, very easily claiming that Ancient Macedonians were Slavs. White people called Pelasgians or Belasgi (from Macedonian *beli lugje* – white people), who spoke Slavonic language, dwelled on the territory of Macedonia from the earliest times. These European proto-people also absorbed some “marginal tribes,” and started to expand from the Central Balkans in the direction of the Aegean Sea and ended up occupying some Peloponnesian territories. In the 7th century BC Ancient Macedonians established their territorial state, whose organizational structure was copied from Atlantis. It was a very cohesive society, while the Greek world was disunited and afflicted by internal cleavages, and by the struggle for domination. The language of the European Whites Belasgi was widely spoken in the Mediterranean and in the Balkans long before the arrival of the Hellenes in the 16th and 15th centuries BC. Given the population of Macedonia had always been Slavic, the Slavs that came to the Balkans in the 6th and 7th century did not have any linguistic or ethnic differences with Ancient Macedonians, easily merged with them, and increased the number of Macedonian population. Further, Boškovski claims that the Iliad was initially written in Slavonic, the Christianity as an ecclesiastic organization came from Macedonia etc.³⁷⁹

In 1999 Blaže Ristovski published *History of Macedonia nation*, which should serve as a response to the “international pressure” aiming to change the country’s name, and should oppose “Bulgarian National Doctrine” and “The Platform for the Solution of Albanian National Question” drafted by the Academy of Sciences of Albania. The academician claims that Macedonians possess an identity forged in course of millennia. In the section *Who in essence the Macedonians are?* he emphasizes that “today Macedonians are treated as Slavic people speaking a Slavic language, although... in their ethno-genesis were incorporated more ethno-cultural components, various ethnic groups and tribes, which came or passed through these areas. No doubt, our ethno-genesis involved also Ancient Macedonians, but surely the largest number of the population descends from the Slavs.”³⁸⁰

The year 1999 was also marked by the appearance of a fundamental monograph *Paenonia in the 2nd and 1st millennia BC* authored by Eleonora Petrova. She explains that the central position that the Paeonians held among the Illyrians, Thracians and Hellenes resulted in numerous influences intertwining in the Paeonian region and led Paeonian tribes to gravitate towards Illyrian, Thracian and/or Greek ethno-cultural models. Due to such circumstances most of ancient authors point to the Illyrian belonging of the Paeonians, the others assume their Thracian or Greek character. Various scholars mistakably support the data of ancient narrative sources. However, as the scholar stresses, the newest studies have uncovered Phrygian/Brygian identity of the Paeonians³⁸¹. Paeonians and other Macedonian tribes represented separate ethnic communities had the links with Bryges/Phrygians, who were one of the oldest ethnic elements in the Balkans. The Dardanians, Enchelei and Dassareti also certainly were not Illyrians “in sense of their ethnicity,” even though they were

³⁷⁸ Proeva, *Studii*, 223–225, 240–241.

³⁷⁹ Platon Jozo T. Boškovski, *Otkopuvanje na istorijata: Atlantida vistinskata i Makedonija [Uncovering of the History: Real Atlantis, and Macedonia]* (Skopje: Nov Svet, 1998), 10–19, 112, 137.

³⁸⁰ Blaže Ristovski, *Istorija na Makedonskata nacija [History of Macedonian nation]* (Skopje: MANU, 1999), 13.

³⁸¹ Eleonora Petrova, *Pajonija vo II i I milenium pred n.e. [Paeonia in the 2nd and the 1st millennia BC]* (Skopje: Makedonska civilizacija, 1999), 145–148.

to different extent Illyrianised. The students have failed to explain the names Dardania, Paeonia and Macedonia with the help of Illyrian or Thracian onomastics, because they are of Phrygian origin³⁸². In the second millennium BC Paeonians were already formed as an ethnic group, and therefore the migrations and cultural contacts with Greek-speaking groups could not alter the identity of Paeonians. The later connections with Illyrians and Thracians also “are not of primary significance for already formed Paeonians.”³⁸³ Paeonians as a distinct ethnic group survived till the end of the 1st millennium BC. Eleonora Petrova pays attention on the links between Dardanians and Paeonians and Dardanians drawing on archeological and linguistic material. She argues that both Paeonians and Dardanians had cultural connections with Asia Minor and spoke the dialects of Paeonian-Dardanian linguistic group. Finally, the Macedonian historian claims that “characteristically, Bryges constituted an integral part of later ethnic communities of Paeonians, Ancient Macedonians...” Thus, “Brygian connections with the Paeonians, and Ancient Macedonia makes Paeonians and Ancient Macedonians ethnically and linguistically related.” In Petrova’s view, besides Illyrians did not live in Macedonia, the Brygian ancestors of ancient Macedonian tribes initially occupied central, southern and south-eastern regions of today’s Albania³⁸⁴. It is important to remark, that although the book of Eleonora Petrova essentially undermines the Albanian pretensions on Paeonians, Dardanians, Enchelei and Dassareti as well as “establishes” ethnic affinity between Paeonians and Ancient Macedonians, the scholar portrays two groups as somewhat distinct. She stresses that Paeonians preserved the sense of identity under Macedonian and Roman rule up until the division of the Roman Empire³⁸⁵.

In 2000 the Institute of National History published *Macedonian historical dictionary*. Its authors characterize the Dassareti, Enchelei, Lyncestae and Paeonians simply as paleo-Balkan tribes of Upper Macedonia. It is said that Paeonians were of Brygian origin and “played an important role in ethno-genesis of the Ancient Macedonia.” Paeonian cavalry took part and distinguished in the campaign of Alexander the Great. The connections of Lyncestida with Macedonian dynasty are emphasized by saying that the single city in the region was founded by Phillip II³⁸⁶. In the items on Alexander the Great and Olympias the ethnicity of the Epirote princess is not discussed³⁸⁷. Tellingly, the dictionary does not contain any item on Illyrians, Dardanians, Molossians or Albanians.

In 2001 the central Macedonian research institution in the field of history published a multi-volume *History of Macedonian People*, which appeared more than 30 years after the similar edition of 1968 and was the first monumental book on national history in independent Macedonia. The authors reserved 241 pages for the history of Ancient Macedonia, while in the edition of 1968 it was described only on 41 pages. In the foreword to the first volume the scholars write that the stress is intentionally put on the origins of the Ancient Macedonians, and on the development of Ancient Macedonian state. “It is the period when, as a result of unification of ancient Macedonian tribes and states in one consolidated and centralized Macedonian state, the territory of Macedonia was delimited, and the Macedonian people, who had their own language, customs and religion, were forged. Even though, Macedonians [later] had lost their kingdom, they kept existing as a people throughout the whole period of the Roman domination... and in the first centuries of Byzantine rule”³⁸⁸. Ancient Macedonia

³⁸² Petrova, *Pajonija*, 153–154.

³⁸³ Petrova, *Pajonija*, 155–156.

³⁸⁴ Petrova, *Pajonija*, 160–165.

³⁸⁵ Petrova, *Pajonija*, 169–170.

³⁸⁶ *Makedonski istoriski rečnik [Macedonian Historical Dictionary]* (Skopje: Institut za Nacionalna Istorija, 2000), 142, 176, 271, 356.

³⁸⁷ *Makedonski istoriski rečnik*, 20, 346.

³⁸⁸ *Istorija na makedonskiot narod [History of the Macedonia People]*. Tom I, ed. Branko Panov (Skopje: Institut za national istorija, 2001), 12.

occupied the central place in the Balkans, and “in such a way the geographic-ethnic territory of the Ancient Macedonians was delimited.”³⁸⁹ The country was divided in Lower (littoral) and Upper Macedonia, and according to the authors almost fully corresponded as a territory to today’s geographic Macedonia. Originally Macedonians were formed as a people in Lower Macedonia, where they were autochthonous. Indo-European Macedonians lived together with kindred proto-Indo-European Brygian population, and neighbored with Pelagonians, Paeonians, and Edonians etc. Before the establishment of the Macedonian state, “some Macedonian regions were affected by continuous movements and migrations of neighboring Thracians, Epirote, and other tribes. As a result Macedonians, Bryges, Paeonians, and Pelagonians mixed with new Indo-European comers [?].”³⁹⁰ Afterwards the Ancient Macedonians maintained close and continuous contacts with Illyrians, Thracians, Epirotes and Hellenes, and thus were exposed to various linguistic, religious and economic influences. This fact led “some ancient authors to create a misconception about the language and origins of the Ancient Macedonians.” Despite many foreign influences, the later spoke their completely distinct language based on the dialects of different Macedonian tribes. Macedonian was unintelligible for Greeks, Illyrians and Thracians as well as the languages of these ethnic groups could not be understood by the Macedonians. In the 6th century Macedonian acquired the status of official state language in the kingdom of Argeads. The dwellers of Ancient Macedonia also had their own religion based on local cults, and their own customs. Thus, for instance Illyrian women sat, when eating, whereas Macedonian ones laid³⁹¹. A definite unification of Macedonian tribal states as well as emergence and consolidation of Macedonian people out of various Macedonian tribes occurred under the rule of Argeads. The Macedonian state succeeded to affirm “geographic and ethnic borders” of Ancient Macedonia³⁹².

The authors of the *History* describe the early years of Alexander the Great in an openly hilarious manner. The “ethnicity” of Olympias, naturally, is not clarified. But it is said that both father and mother intended to educate Alexander according to Macedonian traditions, and initially sent him to Macedonian teachers. In effect, when Alexander came to Aristotle, he had been already well-educated, whereas Aristotle had not become yet any prominent philosopher³⁹³.

Writing on the arrival of the Slavs to the Balkans, the historians argue that at the first half of the 6th century Macedonia was wholly populated by the newcomers, and transformed into a “Slavic land.” Ancient Macedonians at the same time constituted an overwhelming majority of the indigenous population of Byzantine Macedonia. The Slavs destroyed many settlements, and Christian churches. They expelled or enslaved a part of the autochthonous population. Nevertheless, after the transformation of Macedonia into a Slavic land the symbiosis started between more numerous Slavic comers and less numerous autochthonous populations. Mutual influences occurred between Slavic dwellers of Macedonia and indigenous inhabitants (the most numerous Macedonians, and other ethnic groups: Greeks, Illyrians, and Thracians etc.). “Gradually the indigenous population started to melt into the immense Slavic mass, while playing important part in the development of Slavic Macedonian culture.” In effect, Macedonian Slavs were influenced by cultural, religious (Christianity), and economic (building of dwellings, fishing etc.) traditions, and inherited the ethnic name Macedonians together with the country’s name Macedonia.³⁹⁴

In the book *The History of Argeads* published by Nade Proeva in 2004 the scholar

³⁸⁹ *Istorija na makedonskiot narod* (Skopje, 2001), 17–18.

³⁹⁰ *Istorija na makedonskiot narod* (Skopje, 2001), 20, 33–35.

³⁹¹ *Istorija na makedonskiot narod* (Skopje, 2001), 38–43.

³⁹² *Istorija na makedonskiot narod* (Skopje, 2001), 70–73.

³⁹³ *Istorija na makedonskiot narod* (Skopje, 2001), 94.

³⁹⁴ *Istorija na makedonskiot narod* (Skopje, 2001), 286–291.

repeats her points about “geographical and ethnic borders” of Ancient Macedonia, its internal division, “ethnic” state of Argeads, distinctiveness of ethnicity, language, religion, customs and even calendar of the Ancient Macedonians. She portrays the later as the descendants of Bryges, and specifically emphasizes that it is “erroneous” to see the Bryges as Illyrians. Then, Proeva draws particular attention on the ethnic affiliation of the “disputed Macedonian tribes.” Drawing on linguistic and archeological arguments she “reclaims” the Pelagonians, Enchelei and Dassareti asserting their unique, non-Illyrian identity³⁹⁵.

In 2008 the Institute of National History published a short *History of the Macedonian People*. Here the authors portray Ancient Macedonia as a separate geographical entity in the North-Eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula, which possessed an immense amount of natural resources. They enabled Macedonia to achieve an economic independence³⁹⁶. Geographic and ethnic frontiers of Ancient Macedonia, in the authors’ eyes, almost fully coincide with the borders of modern “ethnic” Macedonia leaving aside only a part of today’s republican territory to the north of Veles. Upper Macedonia in the Antiquity, among other lands, included “disputed” Dassaretia, Lyncestida and Paonia. Ancient Macedonians formed in the 8th century BC on the basis of Indo-European populations, which settled on the Central Balkans in the 3rd millennium BC. The ancestors of all Ancient Macedonians were Bryges. Later the kindred Macedonian tribes of the Bryges, Paeonians, Pelagonians, Lyncestae, Enchelei, and “other small ethnic groups” participated in Macedonian ethno-genesis. From the 8th century the process of assembling all Macedonian tribes within one united state started. Unsurprisingly, in opinion of the scholars from the Institute of National History, Ancient Macedonians were different from Hellenes, Thracians, Illyrians, and Mysians. Their distinctiveness was expressed in specific language, political and military organization, law, customs, religion, and cults. Greek language was used on the Macedonian court, but only “for pragmatic reasons.” The distinctiveness of traditional Macedonian religion is somehow obscured in the ancient texts, only because ancient authors often employed Greek names for designating Macedonian gods. Macedonian state in contrast to Greek political entities was centralized, although Macedonians enjoyed the status of the citizens of the state, not subjects of the king³⁹⁷. After the fall of the Macedonian state under the Roman domination Macedonians preserved their ethnic distinctiveness. In Macedonia they constituted a majority, and transmitted ancient traditions of Philip II and Alexander the Great (sic!) from generation to generation. Even in Thessaloniki Macedonians formed the majority of the citizens, and spoke Macedonian language. In contradistinction to the *History of the Macedonian People* published in 2001 the new one tells that the migrations of the Slavs into Macedonia did not represented a large-scale colonization. The Slavs failed to change drastically the “ethnic constellation” in Macedonia, even though the Slavic impact was very strong. Furthermore, the Slavs suffered a demographic crisis in the 7th century. Thus, in the early Middle Ages a gradual process of “integration, coexistence, and symbiosis between the Ancient Macedonians and the settled Slavs developed in Macedonia.” Ancient Macedonians deeply influenced the self-identification, and identity of the Macedonian Slavs. Nevertheless, with time coexistence of the Slavs and Macedonians resulted in “imposing the domination” of the Slavic language, “since, perhaps, it served as lingua franca in a wider European area.”³⁹⁸

In 2009 the views of the Macedonian historiography on the past of Ancient Macedonia were summarized in the two-volume *Macedonian Encyclopedia* published and promoted by the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts. In the item *Macedonia* Aleksandar Stojmilov

³⁹⁵ Nade Proeva, *Istorija na Argeadite [History of Argeads]* (Skopje: Grafotisok, 2004), 81–94.

³⁹⁶ *Istorija na makedonskiot narod [History of the Macedonia People]*, ed. Todor Čepreganov (Skopje: Institut za Nacionalna Istorija, 2008), 11.

³⁹⁷ *Istorija na makedonskiot narod* (Skopje, 2008), 12–15, 24.

³⁹⁸ *Istorija na makedonskiot narod* (Skopje, 2008), 88–90.

writes that today's Macedonia inherited its name from the ancient state of Phillip II and Alexander the Great. The ancient kingdom changed its frontiers at the end assuming the borders of contemporary geographical Macedonia³⁹⁹. The author of *Ancient Macedonia* and *Ancient Macedonians* Aneta Šukarova similarly delineates Ancient Macedonian territory. In her opinion, Ancient Macedonians represented a paleo-Balkan population of Indo-European origin, which had dwelled in the Central Balkans since the 3rd millennium. Many ethnic groups living on the territory of Ancient Macedonia such as the Bryges, Paeonians, Lyncestae, Dassareti and Edonians participated in the ethno-genesis of the Ancient Macedonians. In the 7th century the Macedonian state started to expand and to assemble all Ancient Macedonian tribes in one political entity. Ancient Macedonians spoke a distinct language, professed a specific religion, kept own customs, followed unique political, legal and military traditions, and were self-sufficient economically. During the Roman period Ancient Macedonians underwent the process of Romanization, but mostly preserved their distinct identity. In the 6th and 7th centuries “the Slavic ethnos as a dominant one enters in the Macedonian ethno-genesis and imposes Slavic language and culture, whereas the Christian faith, which proliferated from the early 4th century onwards, becomes a distinctive feature of Macedonians”⁴⁰⁰.

The myth of ideological and genealogical descent of the modern (Slavic) Macedonians from the Ancient Macedonians is further developed in the items Macedonia in the Middle Ages, Macedonian Nation, and Macedonians. As always, the authors Kosta Adžievski, Blaže Ristovski, and Aneta Svetieva tell about an ethnic mixing, and transmission of “ancient traditions,” spiritual and material culture from Ancient Macedonians to the Slavs⁴⁰¹.

Albanian history is scarcely represented in the encyclopedia. The “disputed” ancient groups of Paeonians, Dassareti, and Lyncestae are characterized by the authors as paleo-Balkan tribes from Upper Macedonia⁴⁰², while Illyrians and Dardanians are not put in the items at all. Moreover, the Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia are portrayed as migrants, who have moved to Macedonia from the 16th century onwards having been already Islamized⁴⁰³.

In 2010 and 2011 the theses of the origins of the contemporary Macedonian nation from the Ancient Macedonians were promoted by the director of the Institute of National History Todor Čepreganov and academician Blaže Ristovski. The former presenting a paper on the conference *Macedonian identity throughout the history* emphasized a particularly important role that the “memory” of Ancient Macedonia, Phillip II and Alexander the Great has played in the formation of the Macedonian national consciousness, and argued that the popular narratives, which had been transmitted from generation to generation, could not be easily erased⁴⁰⁴. The later republished his book *History of Macedonian Nation*, where again

³⁹⁹ Aleksandar Stojmilov, “Makedonija” [“Macedonia”], in *Makedonska enciklopedija [Macedonian Encyclopedia]*. Tom II. M–Š (Skopje: MANU, 2009), 820.

⁴⁰⁰ Aneta Šukarova, “Antička Makedonija” [“Ancient Macedonia”], in *Makedonska enciklopedija [Macedonian Encyclopedia]*. Tom II. M–Š (Skopje: MANU, 2009), 821–822; Aneta Šukarova, “Antički Makedonci” [“Ancient Macedonians”], in *Makedonska enciklopedija [Macedonian Encyclopedia]*. Tom I. A–Lj (Skopje: MANU, 2009), 70. The emphasis added.

⁴⁰¹ Kosta Adžievski, “Makedonija vo sredniot vek” [“Macedonia in the Middle Ages”], in *Makedonska enciklopedija [Macedonian Encyclopedia]*. Tom II. M–Š (Skopje: MANU, 2009), 823; Blaže Ristovski, “Makedonskata nacija” [“Macedonian Nation”], in *Makedonska enciklopedija [Macedonian Encyclopedia]*. Tom II. M–Š (Skopje: MANU, 2009), 859; Aneta Svetieva, “Makedonci” [“Macedonians”], in *Makedonska enciklopedija [Macedonian Encyclopedia]*. Tom II. M–Š (Skopje: MANU, 2009), 896.

⁴⁰² *Makedonska enciklopedija [Macedonian Encyclopedia]*. Tom I. A–Lj (Skopje: MANU, 2009), 431, 800; *Makedonska enciklopedija [Macedonian Encyclopedia]*. Tom II. M–Š (Skopje: MANU, 2009), 1108.

⁴⁰³ Stojan Kiselinovski and Gjorgji Malkovski, “Albanci vo Makedonija” [“Albanians in Macedonia”], in *Makedonska enciklopedija [Macedonian Encyclopedia]*. Tom I. A–Lj (Skopje: MANU, 2009), 32–33.

⁴⁰⁴ Todor Čepreganov, “Kolektivna memorija vo makedonski identitet” [“Collective Memory in Macedonian

“uncovered” the millennia-long pedigree of the Macedonians that linked them genetically and spiritually with the ancient Balkan “ethnos.”⁴⁰⁵

The present chapter shows that the Macedonian national historical myths of antiquity invoked in order to nationalize, symbolize and capitalize the history of Ancient Macedonia after 1991 were not designed in isolation, or only as a result of the Greek-Macedonian contest. A continuous dialog with Albanian popular and professional historiography has led the Macedonian mythmakers not only to claim national descent from the Ancient Macedonians, but also to choose a new, “ancient” Macedonism as their core doctrine. Albanian nationalist historians in the Republic of Macedonia claim that the local Albanians are autochthonous inhabitants and descendants of the Illyrians, who participated in Ancient Macedonian ethno-genesis. In response, Macedonian intellectuals repudiate the autochthony of Albanians, and stress that Ancient Macedonians occupied almost entire territory of the republic. They were completely original in their language and culture, and different not only from Greeks, but also from Illyrians. The ancient tribes from Upper Macedonia, who were placed under the domination of Macedonian dynasty by Phillip II, and now are seen by Albanian nationalists as Illyrians, according to Macedonian historiography, were Macedonians not only in territorial, but also in ethnic sense. Responding to Greek and Albanian claims, Macedonian historians find a relief in portraying Ancient Macedonians as the descendants of the Bryges, who represent a relatively new “player” in nationalist historiography, and have not been yet “privatized” by any “nation.” In sum, if Greek historical claims make Macedonian mythmakers trace national descent to Ancient Macedonians, Albanian pretensions lead them to imagine the later as ethnically united and *sui generis* paleo-Balkan people, alien to Illyrians, and Thracians.

Identity”], in *Makedonskiot identitet niz istorijata [Macedonian Identity throughout History]* (Skopje: Institut za Nacionalna Istorija, 2010), 15–23.

⁴⁰⁵ Blaže Ristovski, *Istorija na Makedonskata nacija [History of Macedonian Nation]* (Skopje: Matica makedonska, 2011), 5, 11–12.

Conclusion

The scholarship on national historical mythology generally adopts enlightening or functionalist approaches. According to the first one, communal myths are false deleterious narratives which should be opposed to the scientifically established truth, cleaned up and eradicated from a given society. The followers of the second paradigm attempt to investigate what functions for a society do myths perform. Although two “research lenses” imply employing quite different methods, and choosing different focuses of analysis, interestingly enough, both the enlighteners and the functionalists center their attention predominantly on the “society” in which national myths evolve and for which they are invoked, that is the “nation.” The scholars attempt to find the answers to the questions *What are national myths? Why do national mythologies emerge? Why do they assume certain forms? How do they develop?* within the confines of respective nations, or nation-states.

Another division between students of national historical myths set apart followers of ethno-symbolist, and instrumentalist approaches. To put it a bit crudely, for the former the society, the nation, has a significant say in determining which myths become governing. The latter maintain that it is *nationalist* elites vested with political and other power that easily tailor myths and invent traditions to achieve personal goals. Influential social actors are free in their mythopoeic imagination, and able to impose the appropriate versions of the national past on the population. Thus the ethno-symbolists say that which national historical myths will occupy the governing position in a society, and what will be their precise content depends to a large extent on what versions of the national past are present in the collective memory. The functionalists argue that it predominantly depends on the will of national elites.

Ethno-symbolist paradigm is highly disputable, for the national collective memory independent on educational, cultural and other state policies in today’s world appears to be very elusive. Instrumentalist approach, however, also seems rather too voluntarist. Yes, the elites, namely *nationalist* politicians and intellectuals, have a decisive role in production, and dissemination of particular narratives of the national past. They possess all facilities and coercive mechanisms for mythmaking. However, their authorship and authority in designing particular versions of the communal history is limited. National past, at least in non-totalitarian societies, is widely negotiated, and its interpretation is always *heteroglot*. The particular narratives that come out of the dominant elites’ “think-tanks” get into a polyphonic discursive milieu discussing the past. Thus they, become addressed to alternative narratives, agree with them, deny them or reinterpret them. The existence of those “other” narratives as well as the others’ authorship constitutes a specific factor in shaping mythopoeic activities of dominant political and intellectual national elite. Then, achieving personal or “national” goals by nationalists usually means doing so at the expense or in relations to the others. If in this confrontation the rivals use historical myths, the evolution of the later will depend on mutual responses. Two alternative myths or mythologies now are being created and developed in interaction, whereas particular contributions of the authors become obscured.

The mentioned polyphonic milieu of discourses of the national past, and the mythological contest entailing construction of the national myths in interaction, the whole this *mythopoeic dialogue*, naturally, cuts across state, national and ethnic borders. The history of a nation is negotiated not only within the nation and the (nation-)state. It is discussed by diaspora, expatriates, and, of course, by “aliens.” The mythological contest occurs not so much between various intra-national groups of mythmakers as between “ours” and “theirs.”

All the said does not mean that enlightening or functionalist approach do not work. Critical analysis and deconstruction of national historical myths is important as is investigation of the political, social, and cultural functions of certain historical narratives in a society. The functionalist approach provides particularly many analytical insights when

coupled with instrumentalist one. However, in order to understand consistently why national myths emerge and change, how particular versions of the national past are produced, and why they become governing it is not enough to focus merely on a nation, a nation-state, or a dominant nationalist elite. Given the national historical myths are constructed dialogically, their various “authors,” initiators and boosters are dispersed and somewhat diluted among alternative elites from within and rival ones from without of the nation.

The case of development of national historical myths of antiquity in the Republic of Macedonia after the independence represents one indicative illustration of how the mythopoeic dialogue works.

Of course, seen from functionalist perspective the myths of descent of contemporary (Slavic) Macedonians from the dwellers of the ancient kingdom of Argeads provide the nation with admirable long pedigree. To be “true” ancestors of Ancient Macedonians in both genealogical and ideological sense means to have a right to their patrimony, including right to call themselves “Macedonians” and “own” state “Macedonia.” The idea of continuity between ancient and modern Macedonia helps to invest Macedonian nation with special dignity and great destiny, to affirm its rights to the republican and geographical Macedonian territory and to prove that Macedonians are *sui generis*, i.e. the autonomous and self-sufficient people. (Ethnic) Macedonian elites use the myth of antiquity to reaffirm the republic as Macedonian nation-state, where Turkish, Albanian, Serbian and other “latecomers” should play only a secondary role. Political parties, particularly VMRO after 2006, employ the narratives of Ancient Macedonia, Phillip II and Alexander the Great in the struggle for power.

In contrast, Albanian intellectuals and politicians use the myth of autochthony and ethnic connections with Ancient Macedonians in order to prove that their co-nationals are equal or even superior *vis-à-vis* (Slavic) Macedonians. If the Albanians have always dwelled on the republican territory and have descended from Ancient Macedonians, they have the full right for self-determination. At least Albanians in Macedonia should be recognized as the “state-forming nation,” and should be granted full internal autonomy. They are entitled to consider Macedonia their “own” state and to call themselves “Macedonians,” and, in an extreme case, they even can freely dismember their “own” Macedonian state, and to join Albania or/and Kosovo. Other political functions of Albanian myths of Ancient Macedonia are to underpin the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and to highlight that the republic as a successor of the ancient Illyrian kingdom should maintain amicable relations with “Illyrian” states of Albania, and Kosovo.

Appearance of all these ideas, however, as well as emergence of the very myths of antiquity in the Republic of Macedonia after 1991 was not a consequence of single voluntary decisions of the spokesmen of one or another “nation”. National myths of antiquity in their concrete form came to being as a result of inter-elite dialogue and interaction.

Even though the narratives of Ancient Macedonia and Alexander the Great were part of Macedonian and Albanian nationalist ideologies in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, by the end of 1990s, in the Republic of Macedonia they had faded away. Their symbolism, capitalness and relevance for the respective “national causes” had been discarded.

The independence of the Yugoslavian republic in 1991 as the “Republic of Macedonia” encountered a harsh opposition from the part of Greece who denied the right of the new state to bear the name “Macedonia” on the grounds that “real” Macedonia was and is a political entity formed by the Greeks and belonging to the Greeks. Furthermore, Greek nationalist argued that to refer to “Macedonia” and “Macedonians” meant to harbour claims for the whole geographic region, including its Aegean part. Thus, they fostered nationalization, symbolization, and capitalization of Ancient Macedonia, i.e. highlighted its relevance for modern nationhood and current politics.

As a response, Macedonian nationalists started to prove the rights of Macedonian nation

to Ancient Macedonian patrimony, including the name “Macedonia” and Macedonian territory. They argued that the ancient kingdom and its population were not Greek. Slavic Macedonians and not Greeks became presented in the nationalist rhetoric as true spiritual, genealogical, and territorial ancestors of the Ancient Macedonians. Thus Macedonian myths of antiquity came to being as a response to Greek national myths. Furthermore, Greek mythopoeia shaped the content of Macedonian narratives of antiquity. If Greeks nationalist argued that Ancient Macedonia was rather compact and occupied primarily the areas of today’s northern Greece, Macedonian mythmakers in order to highlight territorial connection between the ancient and the modern states insisted that the ancient kingdom was an “ethnic and geographic entity” covering almost the entire territory of the contemporary republic.

Seeing that Macedonian intellectuals and politicians began to trace the origins of their nation deeper and deeper in the past as well as to nationalize, symbolize and capitalize the ancient Macedonian past, Albanian elites in the Republic of Macedonia strengthened the myths of Albanian autochthony on Macedonian territory, and re-invoked old nationalist ideas about Albanian ethnicity of Ancient Macedonians, including Phillip II and Alexander the Great. Confronting (Slavic) Macedonian mythmaking, Albanian intellectuals claimed ethnic descent from the local Illyrians (the Dardanians, Paeonians, Lyncestae, Enchelei), and portrayed the Macedonians as Slavic latecomers that had nothing in common with ancient Balkan populations. The dialogue with Macedonian side had led to a situation, when some nationalist historians and publicists speaking on behalf of the Macedonian Albanians argued that Ancient Macedonia had laid more to the south, while the republican territory had been inhabited by the Illyrian forebears of Albanians. Others claimed that the ancient kingdom had covered the most of the area of the contemporary state, and local Illyrian tribes had formed a nucleus of Ancient Macedonian ethnos. Many Albanian intellectuals maintained that even “original” Macedonians from Emathia had been Illyrians/Albanians. Thus the “remembering” of ancient Macedonian descent of the Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia, and the recalling of the ethnicity of Phillip II and Alexander the Great were a result of opposing Macedonian versions of the distant past.

Albanian mythopoeic voices raised in response to Macedonian ones afterwards deeply influenced (Slavic) Macedonian myths of antiquity. Macedonian intellectuals opted for “ancient” Macedonism which assumed ethnic homogeneity of Ancient Macedonia, and ethnic purity of the Ancient Macedonians as a *sui generis* “ethnos.” They repudiated the autochthony of Albanians, and stressed that Ancient Macedonians occupied almost entire territory of the Republic of Macedonia. The inhabitants of the ancient kingdom allegedly were completely original in their language and culture, and different not only from Greeks, but also from Illyrians. The ancient tribes from Upper Macedonia placed under the domination of Macedonian dynasty by Phillip II (the Paeonians, Lyncestae, Enchelei) that were seen by Albanian nationalists as Illyrians, according to Macedonian historiography, were Macedonians not only in territorial, but also in ethnic sense. Responding to Greek and Albanian claims, Macedonian historians found a relief in portraying Ancient Macedonians as the descendants of the Bryges.

In sum, Greek and Albanian mythopoeia profoundly influenced (Slavic) Macedonian mythmaking after 1991. The nationalization of Ancient Macedonia together with her name by Greek nationalists led to emergence of Macedonian myths of descent from Ancient Macedonians, who were presented as old dwellers of the whole so-called geographic Macedonia. Albanian Illyrianism made Macedonian intellectuals to claim that the ancient ancestors of the contemporary Macedonians were completely distinct from the other paleo-Balkan populations.

When the name dispute between Greece and Macedonia came, for the Macedonian side the already chosen name actually represented the best option. The Macedonian grip over the

heritage of the ancient kingdom was caused not so much by its presumed symbolism and capitalness as by the fact that the adoption of any other proposed name, “Slavo-Macedonia,” “Dardania,” “Paeonia” would set Macedonia elites on the path of the conflict with the Albanian nationalists. Choosing “Macedonia” engendered harsh reaction of one foreign state, while opting for “Dardania” or “Paeonia” would provoke endless historical and political disputes with Albania, Kosovo (the clandestinely established republic), and domestic Albanian population.

The phenomenon of mythopoeic dialogue is important not only in itself, since the national historical myths are used not so much in inter-elite discussions as in identitarian policies. In the Republic of Macedonia, for instance, the narratives of antiquity and Alexander the Great were employed by the government, state institutions, and political parties during the whole period of the 1990s, and the tendency particularly strengthened after 2006⁴⁰⁶. Historical myths, including the narratives of antiquity, are part of the “image of the nation” disseminated by elites to form an identity. And, as I have shown, the myths and their precise content are not produced by the particular nation’s elites in isolation. They are shaped in interaction, and depend on alternative myths employed. Thus identitarian policies determine national myths, and national myths determine identitarian policies, in sense that the governing narratives of the past are designed by the dominant *nationalist* mythmakers in dialogue with the other in-group and out group elites, and are influenced by the versions of the past produced by alternative and rival identitarians. The national identity (primarily self-understanding), namely its historical component, is constructed not only within the nation. It mirrors the versions of the past produced “outside.”

The investigation how dialogically constructed national historical myths are used in identitarian policies in Macedonia and beyond constitutes one of the perspectives of the present research. The shortcoming of the later also is that it centers only on Macedonian and Albanian narratives of the ancient past. In the future, it would be interesting to see how other national mythologies in the Republic of Macedonia, let say Romani, Serbian, or Turkish, were influenced and how they affected Macedonian and Albanian mythopoeia. The thesis also sets a framework for studying nationalism as a heteroglot and dialogically formed ideology, politics, and social movement. Interestingly enough, the scholarship which aims to investigate the nature and the logics of development of nationalism as well as to approach critically the concept of nation and the phenomenon of nationhood, is oftentimes itself informed by the nationalist frame. Many studies are confined to the nation-state or national borders, and centered on the *nationalist* elites that claim to represent particular “nations.” Going beyond investigation of nationalism as an, in effect, *national* phenomenon may provide significant analytical insights.

Those are the perspectives that the present thesis sets. For now, however, I can say that nationalist mythmaking evolves somewhat differently than it is assumed in most of the studies. Vemond Arbajk and Anastasia Karakasidou write in the conclusion of an article devoted to Greek and Macedonian historical mythopoeia after 1991: “Unfortunately, as it usually the case with nationalist discourse, we are confronted with two proud parallel *monologues* of heroic past and glorious figures. These monologues still continue their *separate* journeys chasing the end of their own rainbow.”⁴⁰⁷ The present thesis shows, however, that the “monologues” the scholars are talking about, in fact, interact, interpenetrate and are dialogically constructed.

⁴⁰⁶ Anastas Vangeli, “Nation-building ancient Macedonian style: the Origins and the Effects of the so-called Antiquization in Macedonia,” *Nationalities Papers* 39:1 (2011): 13–32.

⁴⁰⁷ Vemond Arbajk and Anastasia Karakasidou. “Alexander the Great and the Yugo Zastava: Macedonian Identities and Descent Narratives,” in *Makedonskiot identitet niz istorijata [Macedonian Identity throughout History]* (Skopje: Institut za Nacionalna Istorija, 2010), 34.

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