

# Macedonia Evidence

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•	<a href="#">Home</a>
•	<b>Obama Letter</b>
○	<a href="#">English - Original</a>
○	<a href="#">German Translation</a>
•	<b>Documentation</b>
○	<a href="#">English - Original</a>
○	<a href="#">German Translation</a>
•	<b>Articles</b>
○	<a href="#">Ancient Language</a>
○	<a href="#">Identity</a>
○	<a href="#">Modern Linguistics</a>
○	Archaeology mag.
▪	<a href="#">"Owning Alexander," Archaeology 2009</a>
▪	<a href="#">Response to "Owning Alexander"</a>
•	<b>F.A.Q.</b>
○	<a href="#">FAQ - History</a>
○	<a href="#">FAQ - Operations</a>
•	<b>Other Resources</b>
•	<b>About</b>

## Letter to President Barack Obama

[ancient-scholars@macedonia-evidence.org](mailto:ancient-scholars@macedonia-evidence.org)

**May 18, 2009**

The Honorable Barack Obama  
 President, United States of America  
 White House  
 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
 Washington, DC 20500

**Dear President Obama,**

We, the undersigned scholars of Graeco-Roman antiquity, respectfully request that you intervene to clean up some of the historical debris left in southeast Europe by the previous U.S. administration.

On November 4, 2004, two days after the re-election of President George W. Bush, his administration unilaterally recognized the "Republic of Macedonia." This action not only abrogated geographic and historic fact, but it also has unleashed a dangerous epidemic of historical revisionism, of which the most obvious symptom is the [misappropriation](#) by the government in Skopje of the most famous of Macedonians, Alexander the Great.

We believe that this silliness has gone too far, and that the U.S.A. has no business in supporting

the subversion of history. Let us review facts. (The documentation for these facts [here in **boldface**] can be found attached and at: <http://macedonia-evidence.org/documentation.html>)

The land in question, with its modern capital at Skopje, was **called Paionia in antiquity**. Mts. Barnous and Orbelos (which form today the northern limits of Greece) provide a natural barrier that separated, and separates, Macedonia from its northern neighbor. The only real connection is along the Axios/Vardar River and even this valley “**does not form a line of communication** because it is divided by gorges.”

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

Rather, Macedonia and Macedonian Greeks have been located for **at least 2,500 years** just where the modern Greek province of Macedonia is. Exactly this same relationship is true for Attica and Athenian Greeks, Argos and Argive Greeks, Corinth and Corinthian Greeks, etc.

We do not understand how the modern inhabitants of ancient Paionia, who speak Slavic – a language introduced into the Balkans **about a millennium after the death of Alexander** – can claim him as their national hero. Alexander the Great was **thoroughly and indisputably Greek**. His great-great-great grandfather, Alexander I, competed in the Olympic Games where participation was limited to Greeks.

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

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

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

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

Alexander carried with him throughout his conquests **Aristotle’s edition of Homer’s Iliad**. Alexander also spread Greek language and culture throughout his empire, **founding cities and establishing centers of learning**. Hence inscriptions concerning such typical Greek institutions as the gymnasium are found **as far away as Afghanistan**. They are all written in Greek.

The questions follow: Why was Greek the *lingua franca* all over Alexander’s empire if he was a “Macedonian”? Why was the New Testament, for example, written in Greek?

The answers are clear: Alexander the Great was Greek, not Slavic, and **Slavs and their language were nowhere near Alexander or his homeland until 1000 years later**. This brings us back to the geographic area known in antiquity as Paionia. Why would the people who live there now call

themselves Macedonians and their land Macedonia? Why would they abduct a completely Greek figure and make him their national hero?

[The ancient Paionians](#) may or may not have been Greek, but they certainly became [Greekish](#), and they were never Slavs. They were also not Macedonians. Ancient Paionia was a part of the Macedonian Empire. So were Ionia and Syria and Palestine and Egypt and Mesopotamia and Babylonia and Bactria and many more. They may thus have become “Macedonian” temporarily, but none was ever “Macedonia”. The theft of Philip and Alexander by a land that was never Macedonia cannot be justified.

The traditions of ancient Paionia could be adopted by the current residents of that geographical area with considerable justification. But the extension of the geographic term “Macedonia” to cover southern Yugoslavia cannot. Even in the late 19th century, this misuse implied unhealthy [territorial aspirations](#).

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

However one might like to [characterize such behavior](#), it is clearly not a force for historical accuracy, nor for stability in the Balkans. It is sad that the United States of America has abetted and encouraged such behavior.

We call upon you, Mr. President, to help - in whatever ways you deem appropriate - the government in Skopje to understand that it cannot build a national identity at the expense of historic truth. Our common international society cannot survive when history is ignored, much less when history is fabricated.

Sincerely,

NAME	TITLE	INSTITUTION
Harry C. Avery,	Professor of Classics,	University of Pittsburgh (USA)
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 Bonna D. Wescoat, Associate Professor, Art History and Ancient Mediterranean Studies, Emory University (USA)  
 E. Hector Williams, Professor of Classical Archaeology, University of British Columbia (Canada)  
 Roger J. A. Wilson, Professor of the Archaeology of the Roman Empire, and Director, Centre for the Study of Ancient Sicily, University of British Columbia, Vancouver (Canada)  
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200 signatures as of May 18th 2009.

For the growing list of scholars, please go to the [Addenda](#).

cc: J. Biden, Vice President, USA  
 H. Clinton, Secretary of State USA  
 P. Gordon, Asst. Secretary-designate, European and Eurasian Affairs  
 H.L Berman, Chair, House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
 I. Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
 J. Kerry, Chair, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
 R.G. Lugar, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
 R. Menendez, United States Senator from New Jersey.

## Addenda

### 12 Scholars added on May 19th 2009:

Mariana Anagnostopoulos, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, California State University, Fresno (USA)  
 John P. Anton, Distinguished Professor of Greek Philosophy and Culture University of South Florida (USA)  
 Effie F. Athanassopoulos, Associate Professor Anthropology and Classics, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (USA)



Leonidas Bargeliotes, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, University of Athens, President of the Olympic Center for Philosophy and Culture (Greece)

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Anna Marmodoro, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Oxford (UK)

Marion Meyer, Professor of Classical Archaeology, University of Vienna (Austria)

Jessica L. Nitschke, Assistant Professor of Classics, Georgetown University (USA)

David C. Young, Professor of Classics Emeritus, University of Florida (USA)

**10 Scholars added on May 20th 2009:**

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Christos Panayides, Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Nicosia (Cyprus)

Anagnostis P. Agelarakis, Professor of Anthropology, Adelphi University (USA)

Dr. Irma Wehgartner, Curator of the Martin von Wagner Museum der Universität Würzburg (Germany)

Dr. Ioannis Georganas, Researcher, Department of History and Archaeology, Foundation of the Hellenic World (Greece)

Maria Papaioannou, Assistant Professor in Classical Archaeology, University of New Brunswick (Canada)

Chryssa Maltezou, Professor emeritus, University of Athens, Director of the Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Postbyzantine Studies in Venice (Italy)

Myrto Dragona-Monachou, Professor emerita of Philosophy, University of Athens (Greece)

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Stephan Heilen, Associate Professor of Classics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (USA)

**3 Scholars added on May 21st 2009:**

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Rev. Dr. Demetrios J. Constantelos, Charles Cooper Townsend Professor of Ancient and Byzantine history, Emeritus; Distinguished Research Scholar in Residence at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey (USA)

**3 Scholars added on May 22nd 2009:**

Ioannis M. Akamatis, Professor of Classical Archaeology, University of Thessaloniki (Greece)

Lefteris Platon, Assistant Professor of Archaeology, University of Athens (Greece)

Lucia Athanassaki, Associate Professor of Classical Philology, University of Crete (Greece)

**5 Scholars added on May 23rd 2009:**

Georgios Anagnostopoulos, Professor of Philosophy, University of California-San Diego (USA)

Ioannes G. Leontiades, Assistant Professor of Byzantine History, Aristotle University of Thessalonike (Greece)

Ewen Bowie, Emeritus Fellow, Corpus Christi College, Oxford (UK)

Mika Kajava, Professor of Greek Language and Literature; Head of the Department of Classical Studies, University of Helsinki (Finland)

Christian R. Raschle, Assistant Professor of Roman History, Centre d'Études Classiques & Département d'Histoire, Université de Montréal (Canada)

**4 Scholars added on May 25th 2009:**

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Kostas Buraselis, Professor of Ancient History, University of Athens (Greece)

Michael Ferejohn, Associate Professor of Ancient Philosophy, Duke University (USA)

**5 Scholars added on May 26th 2009:**

Ioannis Xydopoulos, Assistant Professor in Ancient History, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece)

Stella Drougou, Professor of Classical Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece)

Heather L. Reid, Professor of Philosophy, Morningside College (USA)

Thomas A. Suits, Emeritus Professor of Classical Languages, University of Connecticut (USA)

Dr Thomas Johansen, Reader in Ancient Philosophy, University of Oxford (UK)

**6 Scholars added on May 27th 2009:**

Frösén Jaakko, Professor of Greek philology, University of Helsinki (Finland)

John F. Kenfield, Associate Professor, Department of Art History, Rutgers University (USA)

Dr. Aristotle Michopoulos, Professor & Chair, Greek Studies Dept., Hellenic College (Brookline, MA, USA)

Guy MacLean Rogers, Kemper Professor of Classics and History, Wellesley College (USA)

Stavros Frangoulidis, Associate Professor of Latin. Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki (Greece)

Yannis Tzifopoulos, Associate Professor of Ancient Greek and Epigraphy, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece)

## Letter to President Obama

- - On May 18th, **200 Classical Scholars from around the world**, sent a [letter to the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama](#).
- Since then, the list of cosigners has **grown to 248**, see [Addenda](#).
  - 
  - Here is the [Documentation that accompanies the letter](#).



Macedonian coin, stating in Greek: "ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ" (in English: "ALEXANDER'S")