Clio meets Alexander the Great: 
Reassessing the Historiography of the Macedonian Question

with

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Ever since politics in Athens and Skopje were haunted by Alexander the Great, the traditional Macedonian Question was cast aside. It was not forgotten; it was the terminology and the level of discussion that changed. The rich ancient Macedonian heritage became the hot issue; a heritage which also involves the name copy-right. However, the debate which was triggered after the independence of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was not a novelty. The negotiation of terms and identities has been the main topic of Macedonian discussions since the 19th century. In different periods all interested countries, parties, and other groups produced a vast literature to back up with convenient ethnographic, historical and linguistic arguments their national and political claims in Macedonia. Such arguments were deemed essential to support diplomacy but were never the essence of the Macedonian Question. The whole identity debate was a powerful tool used to manipulate a region left for too long without a competent central government. Therefore both the relevant literature and historiography, produced during a time span of 150 years, are an integral part of the question rather than a pool of sources to seek the truth. The study of Macedonian history stands as a prefect paradigm for the multifaceted study of the interaction between politics and ideology.

Basil C. Gounaris is Professor of Modern History at the Department of History and Archaeology at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and Dean of Humanities at the International Hellenic University. From 1990 he has been the Director of the Centre for Macedonian History & Documentation. Gounaris is the author of several books, including Steam Over Macedonia: Socio-Economic Change and the Railway Factor (1993); The Balkans of the Hellenes, from Enlightenment to World War I (2007); The Macedonian Question from the 19th to the 20th century: Historiographical Approaches (2010); ‘See how the Gods Favour Sacrilege’: English Views and Politics on Candia under Siege (1645-1669)(2012). He was honored twice by the Athens Academy award for his books.

The lecture tour of Professor Gounaris in North America takes place in the framework of the University Seminars Program of the Onassis Foundation (USA)

Wednesday, February 6, 2013
12:00 – 1:30 pm
1957 E Street NW, Room 505
Please RSVP at http://go.gwu.edu/gounaris.
This event is on the record.