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Introduction

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Special Section II / Section Spéciale II

PHILHELLENISM AND IDENTITIES

Introduction

Philhellenism has been one of the research fields of the Institute of Historical Research since its very creation. The relevant inquiries were initiated in 1960 by Loukia Droulia (1931–2019), who devoted much of her work on the issue, dedicated her thesis to it (1974) and compiled the bibliography of philhellenism, which remains the basic research tool for studies on the subject (1st ed. 1974; 2nd rev. ed. 2017). Therefore, it was due and expected that philhellenism would form part of the Institute’s academic activities during the bicentenary of the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence (1821). In October 2021 in Athens, the Institute organised an international conference on “National Movements and Philhellenism”, the proceedings of which are due to be published in Greek in 2022.

The four articles that compose the second Special Section of the 2021 issue of *The Historical Review / La Revue Historique* were first presented at this conference and their publication herein may serve as an introduction to the forthcoming volume. Written by experts from Italy, France and Poland, who are also dear friends and collaborators of the Institute, they cover some of the multifold interfaces between philhellenism, liberalism and the shaping of identities in nineteenth-century Europe. The first one, by Denys Barau, focuses on the French diplomat Abbé de Pradt and his vision of the emerging Greek national state as a rampart of Western Europe against Russian expansion. The next two, by Antonio D’Alessandri and Maria Kalinowska, explore the impact of philhellenic notions on the shaping of Italian and Polish national discourses and patriotic imaginary, while the last one, by Ewa Róża Janion, investigates the locus of the liberation of Greece as an Enlightenment utopia of national and gender emancipation in the poems of Józef Dunin Borkowski.

