mental capital of Amiens, where the nobility merely rented houses. Throughout the nineteenth century they refused fusion with the bourgeoisie: in the years 1800–85 the overwhelming majority of noble marriages connected two aristocratic families (p. 78).

Perhaps this collection of essays could have been strengthened by the addition of a couple of powerfully structured interpretative studies on the twin concepts of the noble and the urban. However, I think that the only real weakness in this work is its layout, which unfortunately is little more than standard desktop publishing. With a little more space and elegance in the pages, an index and a bibliography, a few illustrations and a dramatic colour cover, this work could have become a key reference work.

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This fascinating book on the long-forgotten tragedy at Dilessi is now once more in print. Romilly Jenkins, Professor of Modern Greek at King’s College in London, published this work in 1961, eight years before his untimely death. It is the story of the abduction and murder of three English noblemen and an Italian aristocrat by Greek brigands in 1870 in a location close to Athens, a cause célèbre of its day and an occasion of tribulation for the European philhellenic tradition that had contributed to the creation of modern Greece. The background of the story is the nineteenth-century political network of brigandage in Athens, the discord the case generated for the British government and the actual danger of an Anglo-Greek war which the murders unleashed.

Jenkins’s creative pen provided a poignant, indeed enthralling, account of the incident, the anti-Greek hysteria it released in Britain, and the vigorous Greek response, though not without a few giveaways of his own attitude towards Independent Greece. Because of the relatively wide range of the primary sources he used, including official correspondence, the reports of the trial that followed the murders, journals, articles in the press, novels and pamphlets, one might have expected a different fabric to the book, one that might have kept the balance between the Greek and the British sides in the polemic over Dilessi. Nevertheless, Jenkins chose to base his approach primarily on non-Greek documents, and because his allusions to Greek and British public opinion are not always
followed by references, the book sometimes works better almost as a historical novel than as history. This can be partially explained if one takes into consideration that the work was addressed to a readership broader than that of professional historians. However, a fuller explanation is provided by Jenkins's own academic interests, which make this book on nineteenth-century Greek history appear as something of a sideline. His work on Byzantine history and literature might be regarded as complementary to his investigation of the argumentation that the Greeks developed within the Dilessi framework. But a more careful reading of the book can convince a historian that Jenkins's encounter with Greek culture sheds welcome light on a very complex aspect of Anglo-Greek relations.

This is the case because a closer inspection generates a dilemma concerning the classification of this book in terms of secondary sources for the Dilessi incident or primary material for the study of a certain English mentalité. Jenkins's most controversial chapter, Truth and Ethnic Truth, includes projection of Victorian ideas on Greek culture. His analysis of the nineteenth-century Greek Great Idea, an aspiration based on the Byzantine legacy that urged the Greeks to seek ways of becoming the driving intellectual force of the Near East, and a political plan that aimed at the reunion of the scattered Greeks under a single state, is in several ways problematical. In common with Victorian commentators on the 1870 murders, Jenkins highlighted only the schism between the actual condition of the economically powerless Greek kingdom — a condition that ought to have dictated a peaceful policy towards the regional neighbours — and the dream of reconstruction of the Byzantine world at the expense of the Ottoman empire — which perpetuated a dangerous policy of irredentism. However, the existence of a two-levelled consciousness is always essential for the shaping of any ethnic truth. Jenkins himself hinted at the discontent that Gladstone's refusal to punish Greece for the murders created in Britain and the demands by English public opinion for the adoption by the government of the old Palmerstonian interventionist tactics. Curiously, though, Jenkins did not himself touch upon the messianic elements in the English equivalent of the Great Idea, so evident in British reactions during the Dilessi affair. Cultural evolutionism and representation of Britain as a saviour of other nations from degeneration worked as justification for the suggestion made mainly — but not exclusively — by British journalists and politicians for an occupation of Greece in the aftermath of the murders.

A culturally biased approach to the Dilessi affair is even more obvious in Jenkins's attempt to explain the Greek division of
humanity into philhellenes and mis-hellenes, or Greek-haters. This segregation was not in origin religious, as Jenkins argued it was, since we detect it in ancient Greek thought in which the civilized world consisted only of those who participated in Greek παιδεία — a concept which describes both culture and education. If under Orthodoxy the hellenocentric view became religious, it never ceased to be political at the same time. Furthermore, one should never forget that, whereas nineteenth-century Greeks evaluated philhellenism as an ideological current with transcendental value, they could appreciate it better when it was translated into material aid. But for any Briton, such as Jenkins, who was taught to believe that his nation’s romantic sentiments — if they were purely romantic — must meet with a romantic response, Greek perception of philhellenism had to be compatible with the British reception of Greece. And the latter was nothing more than images of an Athenian cradle of philosophy, democracy and freedom; the worship of a non-existing land of perfection.

Thus, one might argue that this book is an interesting example of cultural restructuring and confusion. Indeed, some of Jenkins’s readers continue the process of nationally conditioned ‘reading’ of incidents, as Sir Brooks Richards’s introduction to this second edition shows. In this preamble, which in fact functions more as a historical survey, confusion concerning Greek politics and terminology is reproduced. Richards himself discovered the Great Idea through Jenkins’s book when he assumed his duties in Athens as a British ambassador. His tenure of office began in 1974, just at the point of the civilian restoration in Greece, which in both practical and emotional terms brought the country’s post-war civil conflict to an end. Reading this book in a period when the Colonels’ regime was still painfully close to the present, it was easy for Richards to assimilate the communist guerrilla warfare of the 1940s with nineteenth-century Greek brigandage, which was an accessory to the Great Idea. Moreover, while Richards placed the Cypriot Question in the framework of the Great Idea, which has been dead since the Lausanne arrangement of 1923, he passed over in silence the decisive British involvement in the creation of this Turko-Greek conflict. It might alarm the reader to find out that Jenkins himself published his Dilessi Murders six years after the Cypriot crisis and the Turkish atrocities against the Constantinopolitan Greeks. Perhaps it is an exaggeration to argue that this book expiates British sins concerning the Cypriot Question. But it seems that this is the context in which one can understand why Greece’s past pursuit of this Idea is thought by Sir Richards to be relevant to the understanding of present problems in the region, which are implied, but not clarified.
The game of understanding Greece’s present problems includes comparison, assimilation and regression. Sir Richards is lapsing into Victorian attitudes when he draws parallels between the Dilessi episode and other stories of kidnapping in the Cambodia, Chechnya and Kashmir of today. Such ideas derive from Britain’s imperial past, and from the difficulty of some members of the English ruling elite in accepting the fact that modern Greek culture cannot fit the mould created from what they used to perceive, and in part still do, as ancient Greek. Byzantium remains for them a shadowy or obscurantist, if not barbarous, interval of Greek history, which cannot be fully understood, because it has never been interpreted in British culture so as to signify something praiseworthy. Therefore, Jenkins’s and Richards’s attempts at understanding have the value of primary material for the study of the attitudes of an influential Anglo-Saxon class of philhellenes and should be consulted in that way.

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‘Under the strongest time pressure’ (p. 10), the German publicist Jens Mecklenburg and historian Wolfgang Wippermann managed to put together a collection of German-language essays against the well-known French Black Book of Communism just a few months after its sensational appearance in spring 1998 in Germany (Piper Verlag). Finished in July 1998 and published in September 1998, Mecklenburg and Wippermann’s ‘anti-Black Book’ criticizes from various points of view the conceptual, theoretical and empirical foundations of Black Book editor Stéphane Courtois’s central thesis about the essential similarity between the ideology and ‘race-genocide’ of Nazism, and the ideology and ‘class-genocide’ of communism. Actually, communist ideas, according to Courtois’s calculation, were far more murderous than Nazism as they claimed around 100 million dead against 25 million victims of German fascism.

There is much to criticize in this line of reasoning on the sources