Peripheries of the Enlightenment

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‘Enlightenment’ is a universal concept, but its meaning is most clearly revealed by seeing how it was engaged with, reconfigured or rejected, on a local level. Peripheries of the Enlightenment seeks to rethink the ‘centre/periphery’ model, and to consider the Enlightenment as a more widely spread movement with national, regional and local varieties, focusing on activity as much as ideas.

The debate is introduced by two chapters which explore the notion of periphery from vantage points at the very heart of ‘enlightened’ Europe: Ferney and Geneva. Through thirteen ensuing chapters, the interaction between ‘Enlightenment’ and ‘periphery’ is explored in a variety of spatial and temporal contexts ranging from Mexico to Russia. Drawing on urban and provincial as well as national case studies, contributors argue that we can learn at least as much about the Enlightenment from commentators at the geographical and cultural borders of the ‘enlightened’ world as from its most radical theorists in its early epicentres.

Crossing the boundaries between histories of literature, religion, science and political and economic thought, Peripheries of the Enlightenment is not only international in its outlook but also interdisciplinary in its scope, and offers readers a new and more global vision of the Enlightenment.

Acknowledgements

List of abbreviations

Richard Butterwick, Peripheries of the Enlightenment: an introduction
Simon Davies, Whither/wither France: Voltaire’s view from Ferney

Graham Gargett, French periphery, European centre: eighteenth-century Geneva and its contribution to the Enlightenment

Michael Brown, Was there an Irish Enlightenment? The case of the Anglicans

John Robertson, Political economy and the ‘feudal system’ in Enlightenment Naples: outline of a problem

Marie-Christine Skuncke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau in Swedish eyes around 1760

Orsolya Szakály, Enlightened self-interest: the development of an entrepreneurial culture within the Hungarian elite

Martin Fitzpatrick, The view from Mount Pleasant: Enlightenment in late eighteenth-century Liverpool

Simon Burrows, Grub Street revolutionaries: marginal writers at the Enlightenment’s periphery?

Ultán Gillen, Varieties of Enlightenment: the Enlightenment and Irish political culture in the age of revolutions

Gabriel Sánchez Espinosa, An ilustrado in his province: Jovellanos in Asturias

Richard Butterwick, Between Anti-Enlightenment and enlightened Catholicism: provincial preachers in late eighteenth-century Poland-Lithuania

Simon Dixon, ‘Prosveshchenie’: Enlightenment in eighteenth-century Russia

Fiona Clark, The Gazeta de Literatura de México and the edge of reason: when is a periphery not a periphery?

Lynda Pratt, Tea and national history? Ann Yearsley, John Thelwall and the late eighteenth-century provincial English epic

Peter Hanns Reill, The Enlightenment from the German periphery: Johann Herder’s reinterpretation of the Enlightenment

Summaries

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Collaborators:
The strength of this book lies in the excellent quality of the individual studies and in the diversity of the experiences of the Enlightenment which it offers, stripping away the barriers created by linguistic, political and cultural divisions.

Slavonic and East European Review

[...] this is a rich and thought-provoking collection. Butterwick’s hope that he can ‘persuade dix-huitiémistes that study of the peripheries of the Enlightenment yields insights into the movement as a whole’ (p.16) is well founded.