

Joseph de Maistre and the legacy of Enlightenment

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Although Joseph de Maistre has long been regarded as characterising the Counter-Enlightenment, his intellectual relationship to eighteenth-century philosophy remains unexplored. In this first comprehensive assessment of Joseph de Maistre's response to the Enlightenment, a team of renowned scholars uncover a writer who was both the foe and heir of the *philosophes*.

While Maistre was deeply indebted to thinkers who helped to fashion the Enlightenment – Rousseau, the Cambridge Platonists – he also agreed with philosophers such as Schopenhauer who adopted an overtly critical stance. His idea of genius, his critique of America and his historical theory all used 'enlightened' language to contradict Enlightenment principles. Most intriguingly, and completely unsuspected until now, Maistre used the writings of the early Christian theologian Origen to develop a new, late, religious form of Enlightenment that shattered the logic of *philosophie*.

The Joseph de Maistre revealed in this book calls into question any simple opposition of Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment, and offers particular lessons for our own time, when religion is at the forefront of public debate and a powerful political tool.

Carolina Armenteros *and* Richard A. Lebrun, Introduction

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Oxford Journals, French Studies

'Perceptive and scholarly essays on topics such as Maistre's views on genius [...] Hedley's article (in part a response to Bradley) provides a particularly valuable reassessment of the central place of sacrifice in Maistre's thought'.

Journal of Eighteenth Century studies

'This collection of insightful and revealing essays will appeal equally to Maistre scholars and to students or researchers, who (...) know that there is no better way to do this than by exploring its fringes'

Canadian Journal of History

'The editors contribute to the growing body of work that understands the Enlightenment as diverse, coloured in shades of grey, and cutting across assumption of "tradition" and "innovation" that a generation ago would have seemed impenetrable barriers'
