

## INTRODUCTION

# Enlightened Reform in Southern Europe and its Atlantic Colonies in the Long Eighteenth Century

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Efforts to ascertain the influence of enlightenment thought on state action, particularly government reform, in the long eighteenth century have provoked stimulating, still-unresolved scholarly quarrels. Generations of historians have grappled with the often-elusive intersections of enlightenment and absolutism, of intellectual currents and government policy, of political philosophy and statecraft.<sup>1</sup> To what extent, and in what manner, did emergent political and economic concepts penetrate the consciousness of monarchs, ministers, and royal councilors and, subsequently, influence the fiscal and administrative reform programmes inaugurated by many European states

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<sup>1</sup> In this introduction, the term ‘enlightened reform’ serves to encompass the more familiar concepts of ‘enlightened absolutism’ and ‘enlightened despotism’. In this volume, these two terms are considered to be facets, components, or sub-sets of the more expansive, malleable category of enlightened reform. Derek Beales offers an illuminating discussion of the earliest usages of ‘enlightened despotism’ in his *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (London and New York, 2005); formal discussion of ‘enlightened reform’ in contemporary historiography may be dated from Michel Lhéritier, ‘Le Rôle Historique du Despotisme Éclairé, Particulièrement au XVIIIe Siècle’, *Bulletin of the International Committee of the Historical Sciences*, 1 (1928): 601–12 *passim*. and his ‘Rapport Général: le Despotisme éclairé, de Frédéric II à la Révolution Française’, *Bulletin of the International Committee of the Historical Sciences*, 9 (1937): 185–225.

in the long eighteenth century? And how were these new policies, and the ideas that underpinned them, interpreted and implemented by magistrates, intendants, and other agents of local government? The conclusions reached by historians who have researched these types of questions have been wide-ranging and hotly contested.<sup>2</sup> Some scholars even cast doubt on the claim that government policy was affected at all by enlightenment thought, no matter how this capacious category is defined. They portray the apparatuses of political power as hostile or at least impervious to, instead of permeated and shaped by, new currents of thought.<sup>3</sup> Enlightened reform, then, is hardly an ossified concept, but rather one whose features and contours continue to arouse fierce debate in contemporary scholarship.

The essays in this volume reappraise the utility of ‘enlightened reform’, a term which encompasses and subsumes the well-established sub-categories of ‘enlightened absolutism’ and ‘enlightened despotism’, as an organizing concept for the study of Southern Europe states and their Atlantic empires in the period 1750–1830. This type of analysis has rarely occurred in a systematic way. It has, perhaps, been assumed that models based on the evidence from certain regions are applicable universally. The lion’s share of the existing scholarship has considered the concept of enlightened reform in the context of developments in Northern, Central, and Eastern Europe.<sup>4</sup> Southern Europe, let alone Portuguese, Spanish, and French America, has largely been ignored or relegated to the historiographical periphery.<sup>5</sup> This tendency undoubtedly

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<sup>2</sup> For an indispensable review of the historiography of enlightened absolutism, see H.M. Scott, ‘The Problem of Enlightened Absolutism’, in Scott (ed.), *Enlightened Absolutism: Reform and Reformers in Late Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Basingstoke, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> In the case of Spain, for example, one historian adhering to this view is Francisco Sánchez Blanco, particularly his *El Absolutismo y las Luces en el Reinado de Carlos III* (Madrid, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> In addition to the essays and bibliographical references in H.M. Scott’s edited volume, see, for example, Derek Beales, *Joseph II: In the Shadow of Maria Theresa, 1741–1780* (Cambridge, 1987); and Marc Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police-State: Social and Institutional Change through Law in the Germanies and Russia* (New Haven and London, 1983).

<sup>5</sup> Though Southern Europe and its Atlantic colonies have been largely marginalized in historiography, there is no paucity of books which engage with the concept in one form or another. Among the most outstanding are: Richard Herr, *The Eighteenth Century Revolution in Spain* (Princeton, 1958); Franco Venturi, *Settecento Riformatore* (5 vols, Turin, 1969–90); D.A. Brading, *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico* (Cambridge, 1971); Kenneth Maxwell, *Conflicts and Conspiracies: Brazil and Portugal 1750–1808* (Cambridge, 1973) and Maxwell, *Pombal: Paradox of the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1995); Carlo Capra, ‘Il Settecento’, in Capra and Domenico Sella (eds), *Il Ducato di Milano*

reflects long-cherished assumptions about the enlightenment itself. As Carla Hesse has noted,

the geography of the advance of the enlightenment thus mirrored that of modernity itself, producing a cultural landscape with advanced and backward areas of Europe, with leader nations and follower nations ... the story of the triumph of light over darkness was a story of diffusion from a Western European core to the peripheries of the continent and beyond.<sup>6</sup>

The absence of studies that integrate the histories of European states and their overseas colonies, too, is glaring. In particular, few historians have sought to show how European and ultramarine reforms were fundamentally, and inextricably, linked and how the rhythm, direction, and scope of metropolitan reform was influenced, often decisively, by colonial affairs.<sup>7</sup> The unfortunate result of both the prevailing consensus concerning the enlightenment's diffusion from 'core' to 'periphery' and the Europe-centered approach to reform has been to shroud, discard, or portray as anomalous many aspects of the Southern European and extra-European past.

This volume aims to redress these imbalances and to fill these lacunae by presenting a series of case studies that bring Southern Europe and its Atlantic colonies both under the same analytical lens and fully into the historiographical mainstream. As a result, the contributors to this volume seek to broaden and

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*dal 1535 al 1796* (Turin, 1984); Giuseppe Galasso, *La Filosofia in Soccorso de' Governi: La Cultura Napoletana del Settecento* (Naples, 1989); Anthony McFarlane, *Colombia Before Independence* (Cambridge, 1993); and José Luís Cardoso (ed.), *A Economia Política e os Dilemas do Império Luso-Brasileiro (1790–1822)* (Lisbon, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Carla Hesse, 'Towards a New Topography of Enlightenment', *European Review of History*, 13:3 (2006): 500; As Richard Butterwick has pointed out, those who ignore the enlightenment on the periphery may run the risk of missing important aspects of the enlightenment as a whole: 'a flash of light can be disorienting, even blinding at its source. Projected, refracted and filtered, light can be clearer, and its effects more easily analyzed, at a distance, from the peripheries of the illuminated space'. See Butterwick, 'Peripheries of Enlightenment: an Introduction', in Butterwick, Simon Davies and Gabriel Sánchez-Espinosa (eds), *Peripheries of the Enlightenment Studies in Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2008), p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> The exceptions, of course, are notable: Jeremy Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic* (Princeton, 2006); Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford, 2001); Maxwell, *Conflicts and Conspiracies*; Stanley J. Stein and Barbara H. Stein, *Silver, Trade and War: Spain and America in the Making of Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore and London, 2000) and *Apogee of Empire: Spain and New Spain in the Age of Charles III, 1759–1789* (Baltimore and London, 2003).

reinvigorate a long-running scholarly discussion of the connections – tenuous and robust, explicit and subterranean – between enlightenment thought and government reform in the long eighteenth century. The scope and contours of enlightened reform must be adjusted in order to accommodate atypical, unfamiliar, or divergent conditions and factors, many arising from the peculiar conditions wrought by colonialism or the vast gulf separating social and economic conditions in Southern Europe from the rest of the Continent.<sup>8</sup>

The relative neglect of Southern Europe and its Atlantic colonies in histories of enlightened reform is not, however, a hackneyed, facile case of regional chauvinism, of the North's dismissive attitude toward the South. Historians of Spain, Portugal, and Italy, let alone those of Ibero-America, with notable exceptions,<sup>9</sup> have done little to engage with their Northern counterparts. They have not devised alternative conceptual frameworks that are genuinely pan-European or transoceanic in scope. The rise of 'Atlantic History', fortunately, affords an opening for historians of both the Americas and Europe to enter into a common dialogue.<sup>10</sup> The contributors to this volume have seized the opportunity to demonstrate that Europe and the Americas, far from

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<sup>8</sup> The way that Neapolitan reformers and political writers grappled with the persistence of feudalism is a good example of this divergence between Southern and Central-Northern Europe and the intellectual challenges posed by this gap. John Robertson has deftly summarized the matter: 'Even if the Neapolitans were far from "peripheral" to the enlightenment in the eighteenth century, there is, nevertheless, a sense in which they encountered in the feudal system a social and political reality at the margin, or extremity, of European experience, and found the resources of enlightenment political economy inadequate to the task of its comprehension'. See Robertson, 'Political Economy and the "Feudal System" in Enlightenment Naples: Outline of a Problem', in Butterwick et al., *Peripheries of the Enlightenment*, p. 85; Miguel Angel Centeno and Fernando López-Alves have made a complimentary point in a very different context: 'the local should help to define the supposedly universal ... the practically monopolistic position of a set of Western European and North American cases within the comparative historical canon has reduced the scope of possible comparisons. It has removed potentially critical variables from the analysis'. See the 'Introduction' to their edited volume *The Other Mirror: Grand Theory through the Lens of Latin America* (Princeton, 2001), pp. 7, 13.

<sup>9</sup> John H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New 1492–1650* (Cambridge, 1970) and *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492–1830* (New Haven and London, 2006); Kenneth Maxwell, 'The Atlantic in the Eighteenth Century: A Southern Perspective on the Need to Return to the "Big Picture"', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series, 3 (1993): 209–36.

<sup>10</sup> For an overview of the divergent trends in the historiography of the Atlantic World, see William O'Reilly, 'Genealogies of Atlantic History', *Atlantic Studies*, 1:1 (2004): 66–84. On the pitfalls and opportunities presented by Atlantic (and comparative) History, see Elliott's masterly introduction to *Empires of the Atlantic World*, esp. xvi–xviii.

being two self-contained political and cultural worlds in the long eighteenth century, can only be understood fully when their histories are fused.

Treating Southern Europe and its overseas appendages as a single unit of analysis is not a choice guided solely by geographic and linguistic convenience. It rather reflects the prevalence of shared assumptions, as well as common threads, connecting the European states and ultramarine territories to one another. A broad consensus existed in Southern Europe. As Derek Beales has argued, a 'system in which the monarch possessed the full legislative power, under whatever name, was widely regarded as the best form of government and the best hope of securing rational reforms'.<sup>11</sup> In addition to this shared conviction, there were at least three types of links that make comparative study both possible and fruitful. The first type was dynastic and diplomatic. For example, not only did the Bourbons sit on the thrones of France, Naples and Spain, but Charles III of Spain had ruled at Naples for twenty-five years before moving to Madrid in 1759.<sup>12</sup> Even after his accession to the Spanish throne, Charles brought many of his Neapolitan advisors with him to Madrid and remained in constant communication with Bernardo Tanucci, his former chief advisor in Naples.<sup>13</sup> The so-called Family Compact between Bourbon monarchs of Spain and France, concluded in 1761, was a factor in the final phase of the Seven Years War and then again during the American War of Independence (1775–1783).<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the ministers of Portugal, Spain, France, Naples, and Parma collaborated intimately in the expulsion of the Jesuits from their respective states, both American and European, in the 1750s and 1760s and cooperated as they sought the Society's suppression.<sup>15</sup> These episodes, and others, suggest an elevated level of interaction, cooperation, and mutual influence on both the spheres of international diplomacy and domestic policy making.

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<sup>11</sup> Derek Beales, 'Philosophical Kingship and Enlightened Despotism', in Mark Goldie and Robert Wokler (eds), *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 522.

<sup>12</sup> Anna Maria Rao, 'Carlos de Borbón en Nápoles', *Trienio: Ilustración y Liberalismo* [Madrid], 24 (1994): 5–41.

<sup>13</sup> On Tanucci, see the special issue 'Bernardo Tanucci. La Corte, Il Paese, 1730–1780: Atti del Convegno. Catania 10–12 Oct. 1985', *Archivio Storico per la Siciliana Orientale* [Catania], 84 (1988).

<sup>14</sup> H.M. Scott, *The Birth of the Great Power System, 1740–1815* (Harlow, 2006), esp. chs 4, 8.

<sup>15</sup> H.M. Scott, 'Religion and *Realpolitik*: The Duc de Choiseul, the Bourbon Family Compact, and the Attack on the Society of Jesus, 1758–1775', *International History Review*, 25:1 (2003): 37–62.

The second set of connections linking the kingdoms of Southern Europe in the eighteenth century were cultural and intellectual. The mutual influence of the visual arts, opera, and political economy in Spain and Naples, for example, is well documented.<sup>16</sup> Tiepolo painted frescos at royal palaces both in Caserta, near Naples, and in Madrid. Economic and agricultural societies sprang up across Europe and quickly became enthusiastic disseminators of scientific and other varieties of ‘useful’ knowledge across state borders.<sup>17</sup> Individuals, like ideas, frequently crossed state boundaries in the service of enlightenment and reform. The Padua-born Domenico Vandelli (1735–1816), for example, became director of the royal botanical garden in Lisbon and proved instrumental in the scientific expeditions sent to Portuguese America in the latter decades of the eighteenth century.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, as several of the essays in this collection make clear, emulation and the ‘patriotic cosmopolitanism’ spawned by rivalry among these states influenced many aspects of public life, from historiography to political economy.<sup>19</sup>

The third variety of connection is the common experience of overseas empire, which raised an analogous, though not identical, set of questions in the ultramarine dominions of Spain, Portugal and France. In fact, the persistence of France’s colonial ambitions in the Americas during the decades following the Seven Years War is one of chief justifications for France’s inclusion in a volume devoted to Southern Europe and its Atlantic colonies.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore,

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<sup>16</sup> Franco Venturi, ‘Spanish and Italian Economists and Reformers in the Eighteenth Century’, in Venturi, *Italy and the Enlightenment: Studies in a Cosmopolitan Century* (New York, 1972); and Niccolò Guasti, ‘Claroscuro de la Fortuna de Camponanes en la Italia de la Ilustración’, in Dolores Mateos Dorado (ed.), *Campomanes, Doscientos Años Después* (Oviedo, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> For an overview of these and other related themes, see Tim Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory: Europe 1648–1815* (London, 2007), esp. chs 4, 8, 9, 10.

<sup>18</sup> José Luís Cardoso, ‘From Natural History to Political Economy: the Enlightened Mission of Domenico Vandelli in late Eighteenth-Century Portugal’, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 34:4 (2003): 781–803.

<sup>19</sup> Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World* and his chapter ‘Eighteenth-Century Spanish Political Economy: Epistemology and Decline’, in *Nature, Empire, and Nation: Explorations of the History of Science in the Iberian World* (Stanford, 2006), pp. 96–111; and Allan Kuethe and Lowell Blaisdell, ‘French Influence and the Origins of Bourbon Colonial Reorganization’, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 71:3 (1991): 579–607.

<sup>20</sup> As Emma Rothschild has observed, the post-1763 French administration was ‘preoccupied with the colonial relationships of the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean’, considering the Kourou colony (French Guiana) as a means to ‘console the nation for the loss of Canada, and to provide a continental base for an eventual war of retribution against

the Iberian states and France often came into prolonged and extensive contact where colonial affairs and oceanic commerce were involved. Not only did French merchants exercise remarkable influence in Cádiz, Spain's chief maritime port,<sup>21</sup> but Bordelais slavers would also insinuate themselves in the littorals of Portuguese-claimed Mozambique and Angola.<sup>22</sup> More generally, France and the Iberian states were forced to meet the following challenges: colonial administration and far-flung economies built around the extraction of precious metals and export-oriented commodities; the accommodation of indigenous peoples and a rising tide of discontent; the slave trade, chattel slavery and the spectre of revolt; autonomy-seeking colonists of European descent; the regulation of oceanic commerce and emigration schemes; and clashes arising from contact between free-wheeling merchants of diverse flags in distant precincts of the earth. Policy-makers in European states without empires, with certain crucial exceptions, could avoid such subjects.<sup>23</sup>

No single historian, working alone, could write a history that did justice to the complex issues involved in studying the intersection of enlightenment ideas and policy-making in Ibero-America, Brazil, France, Italy, Portugal, and Spain in the long eighteenth century. The chronological and geographical breadth, social and economic complexity, and political heterogeneity appear to conspire to frustrate efforts at generalization across national and geographical boundaries, thus accelerating the trend toward historiographical fragmentation. Local factors and conditions, of course, exercised a powerful influence. Historians must appreciate the 'local adaptation of cosmopolitan themes' and 'regional needs and traditions'.<sup>24</sup> Notwithstanding this recognition, the contributors to this volume have sought to identify and describe patterns,

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the English'. She concludes that 'there were indeed innumerable connections between the oceanic or colonial world and the interior France', see Rothschild, 'A Horrible Tragedy in the French Atlantic', *Past & Present*, 192 (2006): 69, 71, 107.

<sup>21</sup> Stein and Stein, *Apogee of Empire*, esp. ch 10.

<sup>22</sup> Richard Drayton, 'The Globalisation of France: Provincial Cities and French Expansion, c. 1500–1800', *History of European Ideas*, 34 (2008): 429.

<sup>23</sup> Though it would be intriguing to consider to what extent policies in the Atlantic colonies of Portugal, France and Spain resembled the 'new' territories within Europe, particularly Corsica and, after 1772–3, Galicia. Furthermore, it could be fruitful to examine the similar features of population expansion schemes pursued in places like Patagonia not only with the 'Nuevas Poblaciones' of Southern Spain, but also together with the 'internal' colonization initiatives undertaken in Catherine the Great's Russia. I am grateful to Professor H.M. Scott for pushing me to think along these lines. Personal communication with the author, 12 August 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Till Wahnbaeck, *Luxury and Public Happiness: Political Economy in the Italian Enlightenment* (Oxford, 2004), p. 193.

matrices, tendencies, and dynamics which transcend regional, national, oceanic, linguistic, and chronological boundaries. This effort to move ‘above national context’<sup>25</sup> makes it exigent to organize the volume along thematic, not geographic, lines.

Before describing the structure and content of the book, however, let me first try to allay the potential methodological anxiety it may provoke. Among the most salient of the possible questions are: to what extent may a concept developed in one context (national, geographical, chronological) be applied without modification in another? Does ‘stretching’ a concept to incorporate distinctive factors dilute its explanatory potency?<sup>26</sup> Specifically, does the refurbishment of the concept of enlightened reform, compelling its integration of rather unfamiliar phenomena from Southern Europe and the New World, result in unwieldy vagueness and incoherence? Should ‘enlightened reform’ be overhauled so that data culled from such contexts becomes central – instead of ancillary, imitative, or heterodox – in relation to it?<sup>27</sup> Or should historians of Southern Europe and its Atlantic colonies embrace ‘exceptionalism’ and develop their own frameworks with little regard for the organizing concepts that structure the broader continental European historiography? As the essays amply demonstrate, the contributors are not oblivious to the perils hazarded by such approaches. There may be some institutions – for example, slavery – which are peculiar to colonial contexts and simply diverge too radically from the continental European experience to make comparison worthwhile.

The incorporation of the colonial, in addition to the metropolitan, theatre into the framework of enlightened reform raises further nettlesome questions, some of which are addressed, both indirectly and directly, by the contributors to this volume. Among the most crucial are: to what degree did enlightened reform, particularly in its Iberian and French manifestations, emerge from or reflect the colonial experience? Recent scholarship has suggested the impact of

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<sup>25</sup> In this sense, they follow the lead, whether consciously or not, of John Robertson’s trail-blazing article ‘The Enlightenment above National Context. Political Economy in Eighteenth-Century Scotland and Naples’, *The Historical Journal*, 40 (1997): 667–97.

<sup>26</sup> In considering this idea, I endorse the conclusion reached by David Cohen and James Mahon, who argue that an ‘overly strict applications of classical principles of categorization can lead to the premature abandonment of potentially useful categories ... [this can be avoided] by adopting techniques that do not depend on the assumption that members of a category share a full set of defining attributes’. See their ‘Conceptual “Stretching” Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis’, *American Political Science Review*, 87:4 (1993): 852.

<sup>27</sup> The questions enumerated in this paragraph are informed by Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra’s provocative analysis of the dominant paradigms in Atlantic History. See his *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550–1700* (Stanford, 2006), esp. pp. 231–3.

the Americas on the refashioning (and even genesis) of fundamental European concepts, including ‘citizenship’ in the case of the Spanish Atlantic World and ‘republicanism’ in the French Caribbean.<sup>28</sup> Might styles of rule, modes of governance, and the relation between political writers and the framing of policy have been shaped by similar pressures? In short, was enlightened reform something which had more than a casual connection with colonial institutions and the conditions wrought by empire? If so, should the concept of ‘enlightened reform’ be recast in light of this recognized link? One of this volume’s intended contributions to the existing scholarship, then, is to re-formulate, in a preliminary way, the concept of ‘enlightened reform’ to reflect a full engagement with overseas empire and ultramarine institutions after the end of the Seven Years War in 1763.<sup>29</sup>

Yet as much as enlightened reform must respond to the challenge posed by the incorporation of the extra-European world, so must this revamped understanding of the category respond afresh to the formidable criticism to which its earlier iterations were subjected. Leo Gershoy contended that ‘definitions of enlightened absolutism break against the profusion of its contradictory strivings and its incompatible realization’.<sup>30</sup> Both ‘enlightened absolutism’ and ‘despotism’ were dismissed by M.S. Anderson as ‘little more than a set of theories and aspirations’ which lent an ‘intellectual veneer’ to

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<sup>28</sup> Tamar Herzog, *Defining Nations: Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America* (New Haven and London, 2003); Laurent Dubois has rightly argued that ‘to understand the Atlantic as an integrated intellectual space ... is the only way to destabilize the still strong, at times seemingly unmovable, presumption that Europe and European colonists were the exclusive agents of democratic theory. Instead we might understand more about the complex and contradictory inheritances of the enlightenment if we explore the possibility that it was crafted not only in Europe but also in the Caribbean’. See Dubois, ‘An Enslaved Enlightenment: Rethinking the Intellectual History of the French Atlantic’, *Social History*, 31:1 (2006): 7.

<sup>29</sup> One of the major contributions of scholarship informed by postcolonial theory has been to reveal that metropolitan ambitions were never unilaterally imposed in colonies. As Gyan Prakash argues, ‘colonial categories were never instituted without their dislocation and transformation ... colonial power [was] a form of transaction and translation’. See Prakash, ‘After Colonialism’, in Prakash (ed.), *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements* (Princeton, 1995), p. 3; on the relevance of postcolonialism to Latin America, see Fernando Coronil, ‘Latin American Postcolonial Studies and Global Decolonization’, in Neil Lazarus (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies* (Cambridge, 2004).

<sup>30</sup> Leo Gershoy, *From Despotism to Revolution 1763–1789* (New York, 1944), p. 318.

policies which were ‘seldom genuinely new and frequently selfish’.<sup>31</sup> These appraisals undoubtedly have presented a challenge to which earlier generations of historians were compelled to respond.

H.M. Scott has argued convincingly that the Enlightenment should be interpreted as the intellectual context within which political reforms were fashioned, not the direct inspiration of specific legislative acts. Enlightened reform, in Scott’s view, is a matter of ‘mental attitudes, not of trying to plant physiocratic doctrines in foreign soils’.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, as Alexander Grab has shown, many different strands of enlightenment thought were often commingled, thus complicating the identification of particular influences in the making of policy.<sup>33</sup> These insights serve as a point of departure for the contributors to this volume. A more flexible approach to enlightened reform does not demand that the historian identify an exact, discernible trace of a particular tract of political philosophy on a discrete policy measure. Nor does it necessitate identifying the direct influence of an individual monarch in the pursuit of specific reform initiatives, though many examples of this sort could be found.<sup>34</sup> It rather encourages the reconstruction of the broad intellectual milieu in which both texts and policies were produced.

Yet even as the enlightenment’s relation to reform has been revised, historians have come to disagree about the nature of the enlightenment itself. As a monolithic ‘Enlightenment’ has been undermined and a multiplicity of enlightenments – as vital in Sweden as in France, as robust in Valencia as in Madrid – uncovered, some scholars have noted a ‘scattering effect’ which may deprive the category of enlightenment of ‘real analytical weight’.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> M.S. Anderson, *Historians and Eighteenth-Century Europe 1715–1789* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 120–22, 131; N.B. later editions of Anderson’s *Europe in the Eighteenth Century, 1713–83* reflect a more positive appraisal of the concept.

<sup>32</sup> Scott, ‘The Problem of Enlightened Absolutism’, pp. 17–18. Though, interestingly, T.J. Hochstrasser has demonstrated how physiocracy was exported as far afield as India. See his ‘Physiocracy and the Politics of *Laissez-Faire*’, in Goldie and Wokler (eds), *The Cambridge History*, pp. 438–41.

<sup>33</sup> Alexander Grab, ‘The Politics of Subsistence: The Liberalization of Grain Commerce in Austrian Lombardy under Enlightened Despotism’, *Journal of Modern History*, 57:2 (1985): 205.

<sup>34</sup> Professor Derek Beales has kindly pointed out to me that the reigns of both Joseph II and Leopold II furnish numerous examples of a ruler’s direct impact on reform policy and its implementation, particularly in Lombardy, with regard to the legal code, education, the Church, and the betterment of the peasantry. Personal communication with the author, 2 July 2008.

<sup>35</sup> On a multiplicity of enlightenments, see Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich (eds), *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge, 1981); Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment*

It has been argued recently that enlightenment is best understood as a series of communicative practices, including translation, travel, information-collecting, opinion-making, and ethno-geographic mapping.<sup>36</sup> John Robertson recently published a powerful rebuttal to those who argue for the fragmentary, heterogeneous nature of the enlightenment. He stresses the coherence of the enlightenment as a concept and emphasizes the centrality of political economy to it.<sup>37</sup> The scope of reform, too, has been widened. What was once a term that described a narrow range of government actions – for example, modifications to fiscal policy, trade regulation, and the penal code – now encompasses many additional areas, including the creation of learned academies, societies, and libraries; the revamping of universities; the quest for agricultural improvement; investment in infrastructural projects (the construction of canals, roads, and bridges, along with the modernization of existing ports); and the outfitting of scientific expeditions.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, it should be pointed out that there was considerable overlap between these different registers of reform, as government officials often moonlighted as political writers and academicians. In Spain, for instance, Count Pedro Rodríguez de Campomanes (1723–1802) combined his duties on the Council of Castile with the post of director of the Royal Academy of History, not to mention the important tracts on industry and education he penned in his spare time.<sup>39</sup> Historians, then, are increasingly sensitive to the variety of institutions that proved a fertile breeding ground for new thought as well as the diversity of actors who participated in the processes that resulted in both enlightenment and reform.

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*Against Empire* (Princeton, 2003), p. 264; the quotation is taken from Jonathan Sheehan, 'Enlightenment, Religion and the Enigma of Secularization: A Review Essay', *American Historical Review*, 108:4 (2003): 1075.

<sup>36</sup> Hesse, 'Topography of Enlightenment', p. 505.

<sup>37</sup> John Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples, 1680–1760* (Cambridge, 2005).

<sup>38</sup> Though the scope of reform has been broadened in recent years, it is perhaps lamentable that one of the chief areas studied by earlier generations of historians of enlightened reform – religious reform (both the reform of certain features of Catholicism and of the Church itself) and the recalibration of Church–State relations in an international context – has attracted less attention in recent years. While the essays by Kenneth Andrien and Víctor Peralta directly address this subject, much more work in this area needs to be done. For a fascinating and pioneering recent study, see Dale K. Van Kley, 'Religion in the Age of "Patriot" Reform', *Journal of Modern History*, 80 (2008): 252–95.

<sup>39</sup> On Campomanes, see Vicent Llobart, *Campomanes: Economista y Político de Carlos III* (Madrid, 1992) and Concepción de Castro, *Campomanes: Estado y Reformismo Ilustrado* (Madrid, 1996).

A more expansive understanding of enlightenment and reform has not meant, in the judgment of some historians, that the appellation of 'enlightened reform' should be conferred upon all projects which aimed to overhaul public administration, the economy, and social and religious institutions. Specifically, the reform projects conceived and pursued by politically conservative writers have been excluded from much of the historiography. It is difficult to determine into which category their writing and political activities fit. The full inclusion of such writers and their projects would complicate the already contentious demarcation between the 'enlightenment' and the 'counter-enlightenment'.<sup>40</sup> 'Jurists', one prominent historian of Naples recently declared,

although deeply entangled in politics, were not enlightened reformers. They were judges, lawyers, or juridical historians; they lacked the enlightenment viewpoint and its talent for radical criticism. Their ideas had neither philosophical breadth nor anthropological depth.<sup>41</sup>

In spite of the prevalence of broader understandings of both 'enlightenment' and 'reform', then, some historians prefer a more selective criterion for enlightened reform. New work on Naples, however, to take but one example, suggests that provincial administration, the military, scientific institutions and academies 'offer a picture of reform that while not triumphal did engage nonetheless with real administrative, institutional and economic problems'.<sup>42</sup> A similar conclusion may be reached concerning the port cities of the Spanish empire – particularly VeraCruz, Havana and Buenos Aires – in the final two decades of the eighteenth century. In those nodes of empire, revitalized merchant guilds

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<sup>40</sup> The term was coined by Isaiah Berlin in his essay 'The Counter-Enlightenment', in *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas* (New York, 1980). For a brilliant discussion of the shortcomings of this category and for the connection between it and 'The Enlightenment' itself, see Darrin McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment: The French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity* (Oxford, 2001), ch. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Girolama Imbruglia, 'Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Naples', in Imbruglia (ed.), *Naples in the Eighteenth Century: The Birth and Death of a Nation State* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 73; for a pioneering study, however, that demonstrates that lawyers 'succeeded in turning French courtrooms into an open forum for the discussion of religious toleration, judicial reform, and the abuse of privilege – three of the issues dearest to the *philosophes*', see David A. Bell, *Lawyers and Citizens: The Making of a Political Elite in Old Regime France* (New York and Oxford, 1994), p. 207. See also ch. 6 'The Vanguard of Reform'.

<sup>42</sup> Anna Maria Rao, 'Enlightenment and Reform: an Overview of Culture and Politics in Enlightenment Italy', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 10:2 (2005): 156.

and economic societies sought to adapt new-fangled insights into agronomy, nautical techniques, and political economy to local conditions.<sup>43</sup>

The debate concerning the initiatives deserving of the appellation ‘enlightened reform’ may be irresolvable or at least involve scrutinizing minutiae which will fail to arouse broader historiographical curiosity. But it is clear that shifting conceptions of ‘enlightenment’ and of ‘reform’ have forced historians to renew the debate about their interaction. There are at least four themes emerging from the essays contained in this volume around which a new discussion concerning enlightened reform may take as its basis. The essays are sub-divided along these thematic lines, though the themes, naturally, intersect and overlap in numerous significant ways.

The first theme emerges from the new awareness of the diffuse nature of political, intellectual, and cultural power in the late eighteenth century. A new, dynamic public culture had a major impact on government reform. Recent research also suggests the limits on centralization to which monarchs and their ministers aspired. The effective authority of reputedly paradigmatic absolutist regimes has been undermined by a new wave of scholarship. The coherence of the concept of ‘absolutism’ has been disputed. Monarchs, it now appears, relied on patronage powers to clients and other corporate bodies to control their realms. John Elliott has shown just how ‘composite’ European monarchies (and their ultramarine appendages) actually were. Authority was premised on multiple, overlapping compromises. It involved negotiation with local elites and the survival, indeed, the reinvigoration of robust corporate entities.<sup>44</sup> Undoubtedly, it must be admitted, certain monarchs, such as Joseph II in the Habsburg lands and Charles III in Spanish America, aspired to homogenize the varied lands under their dominion and create a unified state.<sup>45</sup> Yet their inability to fully realize this ambition should not prompt historians to dismiss their reigns, and enlightened reform as a whole, as failures.<sup>46</sup> Rather

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<sup>43</sup> On this theme, see Gabriel Paquette, *Enlightenment, Governance, and Reform in Spain and its Empire, 1759–1808* (Basingstoke, 2008), ch. 4 ‘Colonial Elites and Imperial Governance’, pp. 127–51.

<sup>44</sup> John H. Elliott, ‘A Europe of Composite Monarchies’, *Past & Present*, 137 (1992): 48–71.

<sup>45</sup> On Habsburg attempts to undermine the power and privileges of the nobility, clergy, urban patriciates and guilds in order to establish a unified state, see Alexander Grab, ‘Enlightened Despotism and State Building: The Case of Austrian Lombardy’, *Austrian History Yearbook*, 19–20, part 2 (1983–1984): 43–72; on Bourbon efforts along the same lines in Spanish America, see David Brading, ‘Bourbon Spain and its American Empire’, in Leslie Bethell (ed.), *Cambridge History of Latin America*, vol. 1, pp. 389–440.

<sup>46</sup> This conclusion was reached by R.R. Palmer, at least with regard to the Habsburg empire: ‘enlightened despotism in the Austrian empire was over. Aristocracy, estates rights,

it should be recognized that where central authority triumphed it often did so, paradoxically, through decentralizing administration and delegating authority and additional privileges to local mercantile and agrarian elites, the nobility and an array of councils, juntas and tribunals.<sup>47</sup> Regimes may have survived because of, not in spite of, devolution and the rejuvenation of 'composite monarchy' structures.

What impact has this shifting understanding of 'absolutism' had on the concept of enlightened reform? To a greater degree than the older emphasis on crown-led 'despotism' or 'absolutism' permitted, historians now accept the major function played by what might be classified as 'civil society' institutions, or the burgeoning 'public sphere', in the creation of a milieu in which reform initiatives could flourish.<sup>48</sup> To be sure, as Tim Blanning has demonstrated, the enlightenment was not always a subversive movement. It often 'developed within and in support of the established order, not outside and against it'. Civil society and the crown commonly enjoyed amicable and mutually supportive relations.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, the essays in this volume make clear that a broader notion of reform facilitates an enhanced appreciation of the role of institutions, such as provincial academies and economic societies, both in the making of state policy and in initiating projects to which government officials were compelled

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states rights, traditional constitutions and constituted bodies had prevailed'. See Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolutions: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760–1800. I: The Challenge* (Princeton, 1959), p. 396.

<sup>47</sup> Among the recent efforts to demonstrate the limits of absolutism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Nicolas Henshall, *The Myth of Absolutism: Change and Continuity in Early Modern European Monarchy* (London and New York, 1992); Peter Campbell, *Power and Politics in Old Regime France* (London and New York, 1996); and Ruth MacKay, *The Limits of Royal Authority: Resistance and Obedience in Seventeenth Century Castile* (Cambridge, 1999).

<sup>48</sup> Much of this recent research, of course, is indebted to some extent to Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA, 1989); in addition to the abundant literature on Southern Europe, great interest in the public sphere has been shown by historians of Latin America: see, for example, Víctor M. Uribe-Uran, 'The Birth of a Public Sphere in Latin America during the Age of Revolution', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 42:2 (2000): 425–57; Renán Silva, *Los Ilustrados de Nueva Granada, 1760–1808: Genealogía de una Comunidad de Intrepretación* (Medellín, 2002); and Kirsten Schultz, 'Royal Authority, Empire and the Critique of Colonialism: Political Discourse in Rio de Janeiro, 1808–1821', *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 37:2 (2000): 7–31.

<sup>49</sup> T.C.W. Blanning, *Reform and Revolution in Mainz, 1743–1803* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 34–7; *Joseph II* (London and New York, 1994); and *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe, 1660–1789* (Oxford and New York, 2001).

to respond.<sup>50</sup> Enlightened reform resulted, to use an anachronism, as part of a ‘public-private partnership’. It was not a ‘top-down’ imposition. On the contrary, the crown frequently rewarded private initiative, strove to follow its lead, and created new spaces for it to flourish. In this volume, as the essays by Melissa Calaresu, Jordana Dym, Víctor Peralta, John Shovlin, and Luiz Carlos Villalta suggest, reform is reconceived along very different lines than it was several decades ago. It emanated less from government unilaterally than emerged gradually, often unpredictably, from complex interactions, not always benign, between the state and various merchant, agrarian, and intellectual elites that flourished in a heterogeneous, and surprisingly robust, civil society.

The second theme, which is arguably the mirror image of the first, is government’s function as an incubator of enlightenment or, indeed, an engine of reform. If enlightened reform is no longer portrayed as the attempt, often clumsy, of government officials to appropriate and then apply the pristine political and economic ideas of the enlightenment to the rough-and-tumble arena of policy, the crown’s role as a producer and instigator, not only a mere consumer, of ideas has received considerably less attention. As the essays by Christopher Albi, Kenneth Andrien, Charles Noel, Pernille Røge, and Christopher Storrs indicate, the crown often played such a directing role, situating itself at the very centre of intellectual life. It did not merely react to the ideas and proposals generated by academies, learned societies, and independently-operating *philosophes*. Instead, in certain cases, it was the crown (often in conjunction with local government officials) that galvanized initiatives to which civil society actors responded both in Europe and in the colonies of the New World. Crucial, too, were the experiences of administration, diplomacy, and policy formulation in intellectual innovation. ‘Among the duties of a diplomat who resides at a foreign court’, the Portuguese emissary to the Savoyard court, Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho, remarked in a dispatch from Turin in 1789, ‘perhaps there is none more interesting and useful than that of recording and transmitting the current state of affairs in the country, the causes which have secured its prosperity or hastened its decline’.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> In my view, such a capacious notion of reform, embracing both crown policy and civil society/public sphere initiative, was implicit in the project inaugurated by Lhéritier in his ‘Le Rôle Historique du Despotisme Éclairé’.

<sup>51</sup> Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho, ‘Reflexões Políticas sobre os Motivos da Prosperidade da Agricultura deste País, que Servem a Fazer Praticamente as Vantajosas Consequências dos Sábios Princípios Adoptados’ (1789), in Souza Coutinho, *Textos Políticos, Económicos e Financeiros (1783–1811)* (Lisbon, 1993), vol. I, p. 141; Souza Coutinho later held the post of Secretary for the Navy and Colonial Dominions from 1796 until 1801.

Government, therefore, was not always a lumbering, blithely inert behemoth, responding belatedly and ineffectively to dynamic civil society actors. Often it played a rather entrepreneurial role in its effort to identify and nurture the best ideas which it would later harness in its pursuit of economic, political and even aesthetic goals.

Political economy is the third major theme addressed by the contributors to the volume. Of course, the pursuit of economic growth – together with the closely-related objectives of streamlining the fiscal apparatus and the implementation of food security measures to overcome the persistent threat of famine – is generally accepted as one of the pillars of enlightened reform. Tim Hochstrasser has persuasively demonstrated that the French *économistes* sought to demonstrate that mutual self-interest existed between the monarchy and the holders of property, and strove to develop a framework in which ‘economic individualism [could] flourish, while also preserving social harmony’.<sup>52</sup> But the use of political economy as a lens for comparing and contrasting enlightened reform initiatives across state lines and imperial boundaries is a less familiar phenomenon. The study of political economy enables historians to grasp how widespread and formative emulation and transnational borrowing were in the long eighteenth century. Such practices were so pervasive, in fact, that Europe and its ultramarine dominions drifted toward institutional isomorphism between 1750 and 1830, giving rise to a world of surprising resemblances.<sup>53</sup> The essays of Sophus Reinert, Florian Schui, and Koen Stapelbroek demonstrate how the study of commerce and fiscal administration played a pivotal role in the emergence and evolution of discourses about the state’s function, particularly the potential and pitfalls of government action in the generation of material prosperity. In these essays, the remarkable degree of transnational intellectual cross-pollination is established as a defining trait of enlightened reform.<sup>54</sup>

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He subsequently served as Secretary of State for War and Foreign Affairs, following the Portuguese Monarchy’s forced relocation to Rio de Janeiro from 1808 until his death in 1812.

<sup>52</sup> Hochstrasser, ‘Physiocracy’, pp. 433–4, 442.

<sup>53</sup> As Chris Bayly has pointed out in his magisterial *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914* (Oxford, 2004), in one of the most vivid of several pertinent examples, ‘land revenue arrangements from the Cape to India to Continental Europe began to resemble each other more and more. This aided the state by providing it with a stable group of notables to whom it could devolve local responsibility’. See Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World*, p. 111.

<sup>54</sup> On emulation, see Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 2005), pp. 115–21; for its application to Southern Europe and the broader Atlantic world, see W.J. Callahan,

The fourth topic addressed in this volume concerns the periodization of the epoch which historians consider the apogee of 'enlightened reform'. There was a discernible acceleration of the pace of reform initiatives during the second half of the eighteenth century, particularly following the Seven Years War. Yet this recognition should not discount the significant reform activity which occurred before 1750. There was a keen interest in reshaping government stretching at least to the seventeenth century, whether one looks to Richelieu and Colbert in France or to Olivares and the *arbitristas* in Spain.<sup>55</sup> The institutional foundations for many of the initiatives which flourished in the eighteenth century were laid in the seventeenth.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, as Nuno Monteiro argues in his essay, it was to these earlier traditions that the Marquis of Pombal appealed when he embarked on his overhaul of Portuguese institutions after 1755. The existence of formidable precursors begs the question of whether this notion of a late eighteenth-century 'age of reform' is itself enveloped in myth, a relic of the self aggrandisement and self fashioning of officials to justify policies, particularly departures from past practices, which triggered widespread resistance or dismayed entrenched, privileged groups. Manuel Lucena-Giraldo's essay, in particular, suggests that the 1740s were a heyday of enlightened reform. He thus presents a serious challenge to the widely-accepted periodization in the historiography of the Bourbon reforms in Spain and its empire which privileges the aftermath of the Seven Years War in the

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'The Crown and the Promotion of Industry in Eighteenth-Century Spain' (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1964); Richard Drayton, 'A L'école des Français: Les Sciences et le Deuxième Empire Britannique (1783–1830)', *Revue Française d'Histoire D'Outre-Mer*, 86: 322–3 (1999): 91–118 and Drayton, *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain, and the 'Improvement' of the World* (New Haven and London, 2000), chs 3–4; John Shovlin, 'Emulation in Eighteenth-Century French Economic Thought', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 36:2 (2003): 224–30; Paul Cheney, 'Finances, Philosophical History and the "Empire of Climate": Enlightenment Historiography and Political Economy', *Historical Reflections*, 31:1 (2005): 141–67; and Sophus Reinert, 'Blaming the Medici: Footnotes, Falsification and the Fate of the "English Model" in Eighteenth-Century Italy', *History of European Ideas*, 32:4 (2006): 430–55.

<sup>55</sup> Among the studies which describe and analyze seventeenth-century reform initiatives, see J.H. Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares* (Cambridge, 1984); Cayetana Alvarez de Toledo, *Politics and Reform in Spain and Viceregal Mexico: The Life and Thought of Juan de Palafox* (Oxford, 2004); and Chris Storrs, *The Resilience of the Spanish Monarchy, 1665–1700* (Oxford, 2006).

<sup>56</sup> Paula De Vos, 'Research, Development and Empire: State Support of Science in the Later Spanish Empire', *Colonial Latin American Review*, 15:1 (2006): 55–79.

mid-1760s.<sup>57</sup> The year 1750, therefore, is far from unchallengeable as the starting point of reform. It would be foolish to neglect the line of descent linking earlier generations of reformers with their late eighteenth-century successors.

If reform initiatives flourished in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, it is equally true that 'enlightened reform', in many cases, survived the demise of the *ancien régime*. It did not perish alongside it, regardless of whether the autopsy is conducted in 1789, 1799, 1808, 1822, or 1830. Especially in Southern Europe and its former ultramarine colonies, there was an unmistakable continuity in personnel and ideas.<sup>58</sup> A surprising amount of colonial legislation remained on the books in the successor states to the Spanish Empire. For example, in 1824 a British consul in Gran Colombia complained that 'her present rulers have left in existence and operation the old Spanish laws ... in all matters wherein their application and observance may not repugn against the new order of things'.<sup>59</sup> Elsewhere in independent Latin America, the colonial-era trifecta of Amerindian tribute, high customs duties and levies continued as main sources of public revenues well into the nineteenth century.<sup>60</sup>

The chronological boundaries of enlightened reform, therefore, must be expanded because the same issues and debates persisted into, and even became more important during, the tumultuous epoch which coincided with the French Revolutionary wars and the dissolution of the Iberian empires.<sup>61</sup> To be sure,

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<sup>57</sup> For an excellent recent study on the Bourbon reforms in Peru (and the reactions their implementation provoked), see Charles F. Walker, *Shaky Colonialism: the 1746 Earthquake-Tsunami in Lima, Peru, and its Long Aftermath* (Durham and London, 2008).

<sup>58</sup> For an argument to this effect concerning the Luso-Brazilian world, see Ana Rosa Clochet da Silva, *Inventando a Nação: Intelectuais Ilustrados e Estadistas Luso-Brasileiros na Crise do Antigo Regime Português 1750–1822* (São Paulo, 2006).

<sup>59</sup> Edward Watts to George Canning, 9 May 1824, quoted in R.A. Humphreys (ed.), *British Consular Reports on the Trade and Politics of Latin America 1824–26* (London, 1940), p. 265.

<sup>60</sup> Kenneth J. Andrien, *The Kingdom of Quito, 1690–1830: The State and Regional Development* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 215.

<sup>61</sup> Though this would be a controversial claim: many historians note continuities between the policy ambitions of the *Ancien Régime* and those of Napoleon's empire. As Alexander Grab observes, 'reform programs that transformed and modernized the internal structures of various countries constituted a highly significant component of Napoleon's continental impact ... [reforms included] a centralized bureaucracy, a uniform tax system, a conscripted army and an effective police force'. See Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe* (Basingstoke, 2003), p. x; Charles Esdaile has gone so far as to argue that the

many of the institutions and much of the rhetoric associated with enlightened reform was subject to cosmetic change. Yet a great many of the aims and techniques of the enlightened reformers persisted amidst the political turmoil, laying the groundwork for nineteenth-century institutions and political language.<sup>62</sup> In France, as John Shovlin has pointed out, 'a language promoting economic improvement as a form of patriotism was one of the ideological foundations of the post-revolutionary order'.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, it may be argued that a second era of enlightened reform in Spanish America and Brazil began after its ostensible demise in Europe. 'Reform-from-above' remained an irresistible model for many political leaders in post-independence Spanish America.<sup>64</sup> Some influential participants in the struggle for independence, as Matthew Brown's essay strikingly reveals, went so far as to contend that the installation of a European prince might serve as a panacea for post-colonial Spanish America's political ills.

As an alternative, I would argue, historians would benefit from shifting away from chronological periodization, which largely reflects (geo-)political turning points and dynastic changes. Instead, they might favour a stylistic periodization. Such a reorientation would enable historians to account for the persistence of certain approaches to governance, of intellectual tendencies, of fashions of government, of particular configurations of state and civil society, and of political writers and state policy. Enlightened reform was

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Napoleonic era was the 'last, and not very impressive, gasp of enlightened absolutism ... confronted with enlightened absolutism writ large, the emperor's opponents sought similar improvement in their own states'; see Esdaile, *The Wars of Napoleon* (London and New York, 1995), p. 216; in his recent work on Naples, however, John Davis has connected the enlightened reform programmes of the late eighteenth century with the goals of the 'legitimists of the Restoration' who still conceived of the state as the 'critical agent of change', but whose 'trust in an enlightened prince had now been undermined'; see Davis, *Naples and Napoleon: Southern Italy and the European Revolutions (1780–1860)* (Oxford, 2006), p. 278.

<sup>62</sup> J. Luis Maldonado Polo, for example, has shown that Spanish economic societies and botanical study groups developed infrastructure that survived the political convulsions of 1789–1815 thus permitting a relatively smooth transition to nineteenth-century scientific institutions. See Maldonado, 'Agricultura y Botánica: La Herencia de la Ilustración', *Hispania*, 65:3 (2005): 1063–98.

<sup>63</sup> John Shovlin, *The Political Economy of Virtue: Luxury, Patriotism, and the Origins of the French Revolution* (Ithaca and London, 2006), p. 213.

<sup>64</sup> See, for example, Klaus Gallo, *The Struggle for an Enlightened Republic: Buenos Aires and Rivadavia* (London, 2006).

not exclusively a feature of the Old Regime's landscape. Its forms and chief attributes often survived well into the nineteenth century.<sup>65</sup>

This volume of essays will neither 'solve' all of the problems it identifies nor answer all of the questions it provokes concerning enlightened reform. Nor is its coverage of fundamental themes comprehensive. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this book's publication will serve to renew debate about one of the most enduring concepts common to all of the branches and sub-disciplines of an increasingly fragmented European and Latin American historiography. While drawing attention to the splendour of the Southern European and Atlantic past for its own merits, it also aspires to make the subject relevant to historians of unrelated specialisms in the hope that historians of vastly different periods and approaches might once again enter into a common conversation.

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<sup>65</sup> For a fuller discussion of the advantages of aesthetic periodization in the history of art, which I believe could have considerable application to enlightened reform, see Paul L. Frank, 'Historical or Stylistic Periods?', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 13:4 (1955): 451–7; and Meyer Schapiro, 'Criteria of Periodization in the History of European Art', *New Literary History*, 1:2 (1970): 113–14. All typologies, to a degree, are arbitrary, artificial and incorrect, but they are still useful tools for historical analysis.