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Long ago, in 2008, Professor Knud Haakonssen and the editor of this special issue, both then of the Centre for Intellectual History at the University of Sussex, set up a project, funded by the British Academy, examining the interaction between confessional religion and what is commonly considered as Enlightenment ideas. The basic aim was to reinforce the pluralisation of the concept of Enlightenment that had emerged in scholarship such as that of John Pocock in his *Barbarism and Religion* volumes and David Sorkin in his *Religious Enlightenment*. We wanted to address the most persistent problem in this field, namely the identification of Enlightenment with various forms of “radical” religion, thereby neutralising the teleology inherent in the common understanding of the concept of ‘the Enlightenment’.

Within this general framework the goal was to isolate Calvinism in Geneva, Scotland and relevant parts of Ireland, as a coherent topic badly in need of new scholarship. We acknowledged that there was a wider Calvinist world, but in the countries mentioned the encounter between Enlightenment and Calvinist theology had often been seen to be related and connected, taking the form of episodes with close mutual references. Commonly the encounter had been seen as a coherent movement from orthodoxy to enlightenment, away from reformed scholasticism and towards liberal and secular values in politics, economics, religion and philosophy. Such studies adhered to d’Alembert’s view, in the article ‘Genève’ in the seventh volume of the *Encyclopédie* of October 1757, that the Genevan pastors were the most ‘philosophic’ in Europe, because they had abandoned Calvinism for Socinianism. Such an assumption has proved attractive to scholars for whom there is a natural link

between the revolutionary politics at Geneva, which sought to reform the constitution and the economy in the second half of the eighteenth century, and the seemingly 'philosophic' religiosity of the church and citizenry. Genevan experience has accordingly been cited as an exemplary case of the link between radical politics, economic reform and rational religion, which supposedly amounted to the Enlightenment. The problem is, however, that in the Scottish case the same religious starting points did not lead to anything that could be called a radical Enlightenment. In fact, here we have a prominent case of a moderately conservative Enlightenment. In order to get anywhere with this conundrum, we advised the abandonment of traditional binary thinking in terms of confessional religion versus Enlightenment and its "rational religion", and put forward the idea that from the perspective of the early modern mind things were not so neatly divided.

In the case of Geneva, new research continues to be required because all of the above mentioned claims are false. Most of the leading political radicals among the citizenry at Geneva always considered themselves devout followers of Calvin, and the reform politics they espoused were intended to make redundant the 'French' philosophy of Voltaire in addition to dangerous Pietist or Arminian heresies. Those Genevan pastors who were attracted by Socinianism in the second half of the eighteenth century, such as Jacob Vernes, were equally concerned to distance themselves from the 'philosophe' movement and from the anti-religious philosophies associated with Hobbes, Bayle or Spinoza. In the case of some of Vernes' protégés among the younger pastors he trained at the Genevan Academy, such as Etienne Dumont, explicit attempts were made to describe a distinctive Enlightenment, founded on fundamentally Protestant beliefs, and entailing conjoined reform projects in philosophy, politics, and political economy. When Dumont edited and translated

Jeremy Bentham's manuscripts and, in publishing them, created 'Benthamism', this utilitarianism was founded on Jacob Vernes' perspective on the relationship between religion and philosophy which he had espoused at Geneva between the 1760s and 1780s.

The image of the Genevan Enlightenment indicated here is fleshed out in the following articles by Maria-Cristina Pitassi and by Jennifer Powell McNutt; further aspects were presented as part of the project by Linda Kirk and Cyprian Blamires. The connection and comparison with Scotland then takes on new meaning, as Knud Haakonssen pointed out in the original plan of 'Calvinism and Enlightenment'. In the case of Scotland, scholarship has for a long time recognised that there was a symbiotic relationship between Enlightenment and moderate religion, in fact, the Moderate party in the Kirk has become emblematic of this Enlightenment, especially through the work of R. B. Sher since his *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh* (1985) Such judgments are, however, mostly based upon the institutional arrangements of Enlightenment culture. If we change our focus from the identity of the Enlightenment to the integrity of the various theological standpoints involved, we may see a more nuanced and complicated picture. As Colin Kidd, Stuart J. Brown and Christian Maurer have pointed out, and underline in their articles here, the Enlightenment in Scotland was never heralded by quite the sort of intensive battle about subscription experienced elsewhere in the Calvinist world, including the otherwise closely associated situation in Ulster, a point brought out by David Steers and by Andrews Holmes in their contributions to the project. Writing on the Irish Presbyterian minister Samuel Haliday, who had close links with Scotland through his education for the ministry at Glasgow, Steers explained how Haliday in his remarkable *album amicorum* detailed his extensive tour

of the continental Calvinist world. This gave his involvement in the debate over subscription that was distinctive to Irish Presbyterianism from 1719 onwards a clear European background.

In Scotland issues such as subscription were dealt with in a more quiet way by internal reform of the controlling Kirk. Arguably Scottish Moderatism proceeded just as much by meliorating Enlightenment standpoints as by “rationalising” religion. Not least, outside of the mainstream of Moderatism there was a variety of serious intellectual accommodations between Calvinist theology and Enlightenment ideas, a hitherto “invisible Enlightenment”, in Colin Kidd’s words.

This line of argument has been strongly reinforced in Thomas Ahnert’s recent book, *The Moral Culture of the Scottish Enlightenment*, the central thesis of which was presented as part of our project. Ahnert argues that the thinkers, primarily philosophers and clergymen, whom nearly all existing scholarship, as well as popular history, has considered as the backbone of the Scottish Enlightenment, in fact were fundamentally reliant on certain aspects of revealed religion and consistently sceptical of the power of reason. He shows how this view was integral to the commonly acknowledged core of the Moderates’ moral philosophy, namely, its basis in the human sentiments. Vice versa, Ahnert argues that the orthodox critics of the Moderates were the ones to invoke natural religion as a necessary prop for revelation and that they therefore emphasised the role of the understanding in religion and, hence, morals. Ahnert’s argument thus amounts to a reversal of some of the most commonly accepted features of what the Enlightenment – and not only that in Scotland – was about.

The Enlightenment is a relatively recent invention, and on the evidence of the papers contributed to the project on Scotland and Geneva, both those presented here

and those published elsewhere, it may serve us best if it is under constant scrutiny as to its identity.