



Enlightened Reform in Southern Europe and its Atlantic Colonies, c. 1750-1830

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Empires and the Making of the Modern World, 1650-2000



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Efforts to ascertain the influence of enlightenment thought on state action, especially government reform, in the long eighteenth century have long provoked stimulating scholarly quarrels. Generations of historians have grappled with the elusive intersections of enlightenment and absolutism, of political ideas and government policy. In order to complement, expand and rejuvenate the debate which has so far concentrated largely on Northern, Central and Eastern Europe, this volume brings together historians of Southern Europe (broadly defined) and its ultramarine empires. Each chapter has been explicitly commissioned to engage with a common set of historiographical issues in order to reappraise specific aspects of 'enlightened absolutism' and 'enlightened reform' as paradigms for the study of Southern Europe and its Atlantic empires.

In so doing it engages creatively with pressing issues in the current historical literature and suggests new directions for future research. No single historian, working alone, could write a history that did justice to the complex issues involved in studying the connection between enlightenment ideas and policy-making in Spanish America, Brazil, France, Italy, Portugal and Spain. For this reason, this well-conceived, balanced volume, drawing on the expertise of a small, carefully-chosen cohort, offers an exciting investigation of this historical debate.

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About the Editor

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