The Catholic Enlightenment: some reflections on recent research

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The phrase 'Catholic Enlightenment' can still sound like an oxymoron. Until relatively recently, many historians denied that such a phenomenon existed, and it was hard to find a useful account other than Owen Chadwick's chapter in his history of the Papacy in the age of revolutions.[1] Anyone who identified the Enlightenment principally with the Paris *philosophes* and took materialism and atheism to be its central tenets, or agreed with Peter Gay's account of 'the rise of modern paganism', could hardly fit such a phenomenon into their picture of the Enlightenment. There could surely be no compromise between Enlightenment and Christianity.

Now, however, it is widely agreed that the Enlightenment was centrally about religion, as Derek Beales has stated: 'To enlarge religious toleration, to reduce the influence of the clergy and Churches generally, to exclude it altogether from a growing range of affairs now conceived to be purely secular, to control the study of theology, to attack what was seen as "superstition" and "fanaticism" — these were always and everywhere aspects of Enlightened statesmanship.'[2] It may be less widely agreed that the Enlightenment took place no only against but also within the major Churches. There is ample evidence for the late Roy Porter's claim that 'Enlightenment in Britain took place within, rather than against, Protestantism'.[3] In Scotland, one of the key figures of the Enlightenment, the historian William Robertson, was the leader of the Moderate party in the Church of Scotland.[4] The rigid orthodoxy of German Lutheranism was tempered by the emergence of neology which tried to make religion more acceptable to reason.[5] The Catholic Church saw one enlightened Pope, Benedict XIV (reigned 1740-58), who accepted the findings of modern science, explained many supposed supernatural phenomena from natural causes, campaigned against superstition, and had two gifted female scientists appointed to university chairs – though he

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[1] Owen Chadwick, *The Popes and European Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), ch. 6. Narrower in focus, but invaluable even today, is T.C.W. Blanning, 'The Enlightenment in Catholic Germany', in Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich (eds.), *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 118-26 (notes at 241-4). For South Germany there is also Harm Klueting (ed.), *Katholische Aufklärung – Aufklärung im katholischen Deutschland* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1993).

[2] Derek Beales, *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (London: Tauris, 2005), p. 11.

[3] Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2000), p. 99.

[4] See Stewart J. Brown, 'William Robertson (1721-1793) and the Scottish Enlightenment', in Brown (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 7-35.

[5] See K.F. Hilliard, *Freethinkers, Libertines and 'Schwärmer': Heterodoxy in German Literature, 1750-1800* (London: Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies, 2011), pp. 22-3.

also canonized some dubious Counter-Reformation figures such as Giuseppe di Copertino, who according to many reputable witnesses used to fly round church spires.[6] Hence several important recent publications have challenged readers with their oxymoronic titles. Helena Rosenblatt has written about the 'Christian Enlightenment'; David Sorkin has gone further by telling us about the 'religious Enlightenment'; and Ulrich L. Lehner has informed us about 'enlightened monks'.[7] Above all, the Catholic Enlightenment has been put firmly on the intellectual map by the publication of a *Companion*, which, despite certain shortcomings, is welcome as a useful guide to many areas of the subject and, one hopes, a stimulus to further research. These and some associated publications will be discussed later in this article.

First, however, it will be useful to clarify what we mean – or at least what I understand – by the Catholic Enlightenment, based on – and perhaps biased by – my experience of studying Joseph II's enlightened reforms in Austria. The following features are central:

1. Prelates and monarchs inspired by the Catholic Enlightenment rejected the popular baroque piety, with its cults of saints, shrines, pilgrimages, and the like, which had grown up in the wake of the Council of Trent, and whose remnants still astonished the Berlin Enlightener Friedrich Nicolai (1733-1811) when he visited Vienna in 1781. The authorities knew that opponents of Catholicism could and did denounce such practices as superstitious. There were also economic concerns: pilgrimages and feast-days reduced the number of working days in the year. A leading figure among Enlightened clerics, Lodovico Antonio Muratori (1672-1750), who in *Della regolata divozione de' Christiani* (1747) condemned processions, pilgrimages and festivals as leading to disorder and impiety; church services should be orderly, with beggars and animals excluded from services; devotion should be inward. Muratori's influence was extensive; in Germany it especially inspired Johann Michael Sailer (1751-1832), Bishop of Regensburg, who reformed pastoral theology and practice in Bavaria. Opposition to superstition of course antedated Muratori. Voltaire tells in *Le Siècle de Louis XIV* how in 1702 the enlightened bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne discarded the

[6] See Renée Haynes, *Philosopher King: The Humanist Pope Benedict XIV* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970), and the excellent article by Catrien Santing, 'Tirami sù: Pope Benedict XIV and the beatification of the flying saint Giuseppe da Copertino' in Ole Peter Grell and Andrew Cunningham (eds.), *Medicine and Religion in Enlightenment Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 79-99.

[7] Helena Rosenblatt, 'The Christian Enlightenment', in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 7: *Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution*, ed. by Stewart J. Brown and Timothy Tackett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 283-301; David Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Ulrich L. Lehner, *Enlightened Monks: The German Benedictines 1740-1803* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

supposed navel of Christ which had been preserved for centuries; many prominent churchmen and lay citizens protested, claiming that the navel was just as genuine as Christ's robe kept at Argenteuil, his handkerchief at Laon, his foreskin both at Rome and at Puy-en-Velay; but the bishop stood his ground.[8] Cardinal Lambertini., the future Benedict XIV, as Archbishop of Bologna, burnt the phial of the Virgin's milk and the piece of Moses' rod which were on display in Bologna.[9]

2. An inward devotion, focusing on the word of Scripture rather than images, under the guidance of well-educated parish priests, was promoted. Again Muratori was a leading figure here, but some important influence came from Jansenism. The severely Augustinian theology of Cornelis Jansen's *Augustinus* (1640), which to Catholic authorities seemed suspiciously close to Protestantism and was effectively denounced by the bull *Unigenitus* (1713), encouraged believers to examine themselves for signs of grace and thus fostered inwardness. From its stronghold at Louvain in the Austrian Netherlands, Jansenism was diffused to Austria by prominent immigrants such as Gerard van Swieten (1700-72), personal physician to Maria Theresia.[10]
3. Enlightened and reform-minded clergy favoured practical and moral theology which could help parish priests to do their work. More emphasis was placed on pastoral care by secular clergy. Regular clergy, especially monks, were accused of self-indulgence and idleness, often with reason. Thus we learn that the abbey of Tepl, when ruled by Count Trauttmansdorff as abbot, accommodated many young noblemen who practised horsemanship, fencing and dancing, were attended by liveried servants, and were entertained by the abbot, an enthusiast for horses and shooting, who never conducted services and appeared in church only on high festivals.[11] Hence Carlantonio Pilati (1733-1802), a professor in the prince-bishopric of Trent, recommended abolishing all monasteries in his *Di una riforma d'Italia* (1767); Venice suppressed 306 out of its 421 monasteries between 1768 and 1773; and

[8] Voltaire, *Œuvres historiques*, ed. René Pomeau (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), p. 1040.
[9] Haynes, *Philosopher King*, p. 58.
[10] See the pellucid account by William Doyle, *Jansenism: Catholic Resistance to Authority from the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000); Peter Hersche, *Der Spätjansenismus in Österreich* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1977).
[11] Eduard Winter, *Der Josefinismus und seine Geschichte: Beiträge zur Geistesgeschichte Österreichs 1740-1848* (Brünn, Munich, Vienna: Rohrer, 1943), p. 148.

Joseph II did in fact close the monasteries of the contemplative orders, and use their property partly to endow newly created parishes and pay their priests.[12]

4. Many enlightened clerics wanted a structural reform of the Church in which national Churches should have autonomy and the Pope's role should be reduced. Gallicanism, the doctrine that the Church in France should be free from the authority of the Papacy, was preached throughout eighteenth-century France. Under the pseudonym 'Febronius', Johann Nikolaus von Hontheim (1701-90), suffragan bishop of Trier, who had studied among Jansenists at Louvain, published in 1763 *De statu ecclesiae*, in which he argued for reducing the power of the Pope and having the Church governed by regular general councils of bishops. Such proposals would mean in practice that national Churches would fall increasingly under the control of the state. Thus when the elector of Bavaria persuaded the Pope to appoint a nuncio in Munich, it was inevitable that the appointee would work closely with the temporal power. His appointment also prompted four prince-archbishops, meeting at Ems in 1786, to issue the Punctation of Ems (*Emser Punktation*), which demanded that the Church within the Empire should be governed by bishops and archbishops, leaving the Pope with an honorary role.[13]
5. Catholic intellectuals showed an increasing interest in the secular science and scholarship of the Enlightenment, first in Descartes and Wolff, then in Newton and Locke. From the 1740s, Wolffianism, as 'a complete and self-sufficient system, proved an ideal substitute for the neo-scholastic Jesuit teaching that had dominated Catholic higher education for over a century'.[14] The study of science in particular could be justified as promoting a better understanding of God's wisdom in planning the orderly universe. The Benedictines were especially open to new ideas; they had their own university at Salzburg. Its most distinguished scientist was Father Dominikus Beck (1732-91), who erected the first lightning-conductors in Salzburg, and whose works include treatises explaining the lightning-conductor to ordinary

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[12] Derek Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder: European Catholic Monasteries in the Age of Revolution, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 187-9; Chadwick, *The Popes and European Revolution*, pp. 435-6; Beales, *Prosperity*, pp. 192-204, and *Joseph II, 2: Against the World, 1780-1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 271-306.

[13] On Hontheim and the Ems Punctation, see Michael Printy, *Enlightenment and the Creation of German Catholicism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 42-54. An over-zealous copy-editor has turned the Punctation into the 'Punctuation' of Ems (p. 52).

[14] Joachim Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), ii. 478.

readers – an example of scientific popularization.[15] The lightning-conductor was a key symbol of Enlightenment, since lightning was supposed to be God's means of punishing sinners; deflecting lightning could therefore imply opposing God's purposes. The Jesuits were old-fashioned in their educational methods, teaching an outdated Aristotelianism and using the *Ratio studiorum* (1599) which ignored history and stressed mathematics rather than science. Although they gradually included experimental philosophy in textbooks, they were slow to do actual experiments; only in the late 1720s did they begin to consider actually buying experimental equipment.[16] They tended to read only textbooks by other Jesuits, so that their knowledge of Newton came largely from the independent-minded Jesuit physicist Ruggiero Boscovich (1711-87), whose appointment to the Collegio Romano in 1740 helped to establish Newtonianism in Italy. But one must give due credit to the Jesuit astronomer Maximilian Hell (1720-92), who at the age of 35, was put in charge of the new observatory at the University of Vienna, and eventually became a member of the scientific societies of Copenhagen, Göttingen, Stockholm, Trondheim and Bologna, and a corresponding member of that of Paris.

6. Catholic Enlightenment scholarship drew on older traditions of critical historiography. The Bollandists had used critical judgements in compiling saints' lives. Jean Mabillon (1632-1707), of the Benedictines of St Maur, pioneered the study of diplomatics, and his work was continued in early eighteenth-century Austria by the brothers Pez of Melk Abbey.[17] Secular clergy also wrote history: the Scottish Jacobite exile and priest Thomas Innes (1662-1744), described by Hugh Trevor-Roper as 'the first and greatest of Scottish antiquaries', demolished the mythic history of Scotland in *A Critical Essay on the Ancient Inhabitants of the Northern Parts of Britain or Scotland* (1729).[18] The English Catholic historian John Lingard (1771-1851), following the critical methods of the Maurists, wrote what has been called 'the first thoroughly documented history of England'.[19] We find also a

[15] See Virgil Redlich, 'Die Salzburger Benediktiner-Universität als Kulturerscheinung', in *Benediktinisches Mönchtum in Österreich*, ed. by Hildebert Tausch O.S.B. (Vienna: Herder, 1949), pp. 79-97 (p. 94).
[16] Marcus Hellyer, 'Jesuit physics in eighteenth-century Germany', in John W. O'Malley, S.J., *et al.* (eds.), *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts 1540-1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), pp. 538-54 (p. 543).
[17] See Lehner, *Enlightened Monks*, ch. 1.
[18] Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Invention of Scotland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 3. Cf. Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish whig historians and the creation of an Anglo-British identity, 1689–c. 1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 101-2.
[19] Joseph P. Chinnici, *The English Catholic Enlightenment: John Lingard and the Cisalpine Movement, 1780-1850* (Shepherdstown, WV: Patmos Press, 1980), p. 108.

Catholic contribution to the higher-critical study of the Bible. The *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (1680) by Richard Simon (1638-1712), which was banned in France at the request of Bossuet, belongs to the prehistory of the Enlightenment, though it had in part the polemical purpose of undermining Protestant reliance on the Word.[20] But it made possible such radical criticisms as that of the Scottish Catholic priest (and supporter of the French Revolution) Alexander Geddes (1737-1802), who argued against the historicity of the events described in the Pentateuch.[21]

7. As Michael Printy observes in the new *Companion*: 'If there were a unifying feature of the Catholic Enlightenment, not only in Germany but throughout Europe, it was its anti-Jesuit impulse.'[22] The Jesuits were seen not only as intellectually old-fashioned, but as conservative proponents of the Counter-Reformation and dedicated supporters of the Papacy. The 'black legend' of the Jesuits was upheld by enlightened Catholics and *philosophes* alike.[23] Thus the Jesuits retained their reputation of advocating, and even performing, the assassination of refractory monarchs and others. When Cardinal de Tournon, sent to China by the Pope to stop the inclusion of Chinese rites in the ceremonies of native converts (something tolerated by the Jesuit missionaries), the Emperor put him in prison, where he died in 1710, and his death was readily attributed to Jesuit poison. Strict Jansenists fought against Jesuit laxity, and rejoiced when the Jesuits were expelled from one country after another and when their Society was dissolved in 1773.

In giving this summary, I have side-stepped terminological problems which must be addressed. Many writers distinguish between the Catholic Enlightenment and Reform Catholicism. The former term indicates the penetration into Catholic culture of ideas from the secular Enlightenment. The latter denotes a process of reform with its own dynamic within the Church, continuing and extending the reforming impulses that came from the

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[20] A point made already by Ernst Cassirer, *Die Philosophie der Aufklärung* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1932), p. 247.
[21] See Mark Goldie, 'Alexander Geddes at the limits of the Catholic Enlightenment', *Historical Journal*, 53 (2010), 61-86..
[22] Michael Printy, 'Catholic Enlightenment and Reform Catholicism in the Holy Roman Empire', in Ulrich L. Lehner and Michael Printy (eds.), *A Companion to the Catholic Enlightenment in Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 165-213 (p. 192). See Richard van Dülmen, 'Antijesuitismus und katholische Aufklärung in Deutschland', in his *Religion und Gesellschaft: Beiträge zu einer Religionsgeschichte der Neuzeit* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1989), pp. 141-71.
[23] See Peter Burke, 'The Black Legend of the Jesuits: an essay in the history of social stereotypes', in Simon Ditchfield (ed.), *Christianity and Community in the West: Essays for John Bossy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 165-82. All the standard charges against the Jesuits can be found in Jean d'Alembert, *Sur la Destruction des Jésuites en France* ([Paris], 1765), and in his article 'Jésuites' in the *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (Neuchâtel: Faulche, 1765), viii. 512-16.

Council of Trent.[24] However, while the distinction may have value, it is important to stress the relation between them. Just as the Council of Trent was spurred on by the alarming success of the Protestant Reformation, so Reform Catholicism constantly took account of developments in the secular Enlightenment which made important aspects of Catholic belief, practice, and teaching look outdated and mistaken. There could be no question of surrendering the supernaturalist core of Christianity, but it was necessary also to acknowledge, albeit implicitly, that some hostile criticism of Catholicism was justified; otherwise one would be left defending the indefensible. I see no difficulty, therefore, in using the term 'Catholic Enlightenment' to denote a process of intellectual and practical change in which internal and external impulses interacted.

The Catholic Enlightenment was swept away, like so much else, by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. The Catholic landscape of Germany was transformed in 1803, when the Reichsdeputationshauptschluss, under Napoleon's influence, decreed that the ecclesiastical principalities should be secularized. Secular states, ostensibly serving the cause of enlightenment, in fact seeking easy riches, took over Church buildings, property, and land. The year before, the Elector of Bavaria, encouraged by his anti-clerical minister Count Montgelas, had suppressed seventy-seven male and fourteen female houses. By 1812 almost all the south German monasteries had been suppressed. The Benedictines retained only St. Jakob in Regensburg.[25] Hundreds of thousands of books, according to Lehner, perished in this 'cultural disaster'.[26]

The nineteenth-century Papacy strengthened its power by the policy known as Ultramontanism. The Jesuits were restored in 1814, recruited largely from elderly priests whom Catherine the Great had invited to Russia to take charge of education there. As Plongeron puts it, 'La "réaction" se dresse triomphante contre la démoniaque libéralisme que l'*Aufklärung* catholique prétendait baptiser.'[27] The Church signalled its opposition to modern ideas, enlightened or otherwise, by issuing the Syllabus of Errors (1864) and by proclaiming increasingly rebarbative doctrines: the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin

[24] While these terms are often used with insufficient explanation, a lucid distinction between 'Catholic Enlightenment' and 'enlightened Catholicism' is provided by Richard Butterwick in 'Catholicism and Enlightenment in Poland-Lithuania', *Companion*, pp. 297-358 (pp. 307-11). Some writers use strange hybrid terms: thus Mario Rosa's contribution to the *Companion* is entitled 'The Catholic *Aufklärung* in Italy', evidently following the French historian Bernard Plongeron, who talks about 'l'*Aufklärung* catholique': see Plongeron, 'Recherches sur l'"Aufklärung" catholique en Europe occidentale (1770-1830)', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 16 (1969), 555-605. Plongeron even occasionally has 'un *aufklärung* catholique' (p. 555).
[25] Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder*, pp. 286-7.
[26] Lehner, *Enlightened Monks*, p. 227.
[27] Plongeron, 'Recherches', p. 587.

(1854) and Papal Infallibility (1870). When dissident Old Catholics, accompanied by Ignaz Döllinger, left the Church rather than accept the latter doctrine, their action, Michael Printy suggests, 'could be seen as the last gasp of the Catholic Enlightenment'.[28]

For many years the very existence of the Catholic Enlightenment was forgotten or denied. Madame de Staël's dismissal of South Germany and Austria as a region whose mild climate debarred the inhabitants from any intellectual or cultural achievement (except in music) was broadly accepted.[29] In 1908 the German liberal Church historian Sebastian Merkle (1862-1945), speaking at the International Congress for Historical Science in Berlin, defined and described the Catholic Enlightenment in a lecture which was intended to defend eighteenth-century Church reforms against their later critics. Merkle pointed out that low educational standards, especially in Jesuit institutions where an outdated scholasticism was still taught, badly needed reform; that festivals and pilgrimages were occasions for misbehaviour rather than piety; and that it was unjust to dismiss religious toleration as mere 'indifferentism'.[30] Very gradually, as Lehner describes in the introduction to the *Companion*, the concepts of 'Catholic Enlightenment' and 'Reform Catholicism' found acceptance within Church history, and, from the 1970s, among a wider range of historians. Hence the *Companion* is more than timely.

The *Companion* is an extremely welcome volume, not least for its enormous wealth of bibliographical references, and Lehner's introduction, 'The Many Faces of the Catholic Enlightenment', is particularly accessible and useful. As a whole, however, the *Companion* is somewhat uneven. It is divided by country, with essays on France, Austria, the Holy Roman Empire, Italy, Malta, Poland-Lithuania, Portugal, and Spain. Britain and the Dutch Republic are omitted, partly for lack of space, partly because the editors wish to concentrate on countries where Catholicism was the dominant religion. It would have been helpful nevertheless if a brief bibliographical guide to the Catholic Enlightenment in these countries could have been provided, drawing attention, for example, to the pioneering work of Joseph Chinnici and Mark Goldie.[31] The relative allocation of space is surprising. Two of the most important countries for the Catholic Enlightenment are Austria (including the dispersed Habsburg territories) and Italy. Yet these get the shortest chapters, with 37 and 36 pages respectively. France gets the most space (63 pages), followed by Poland-Lithuania (61

[28] Printy, 'Catholic Enlightenment', pp. 207-8.
[29] See Germaine de Staël, *De l'Allemagne*, ed. Simone Balayé, 2 vols. (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1968), esp. i. 75-6.
[30] Sebastian Merkle, 'Die katholische Beurteilung der sogenannten Aufklärungszeit', in his *Ausgewählte Reden und Aufsätze*, ed. Theobald Freudenberger (Würzburg: Schöningh, 1965), pp. 361-413.

pages) and the Holy Roman Empire (49 pages). Roughly equal space is given to Spain (50 pages), Portugal (43 pages), and Malta (45 pages). While it is interesting to learn something about state-Church conflict in Malta, the chapter tells us mostly about what didn't happen there: 'public debate of Church reforms was lacking in Malta' (p. 261); 'No such criticism of monasticism can be detected in Malta' (p. 273); 'the program of the Maltese reformers did not suggest any Muratorian kind of piety' (p. 289). By contrast, Harm Klueting, writing about 'The Catholic Enlightenment in Austria or the Habsburg Lands', feels obliged in his very first footnote to apologize for having to eliminate many names, facts, and bibliographical references because of insufficient space (p. 127). He has nevertheless provided a very valuable, if inevitably schematic, overview of the main phases and topics of the Austrian Enlightenment, which will undoubtedly help future researchers to orient themselves in this initially bewildering area. The generous space given to Poland-Lithuania is forgivable since Richard Butterwick's article, in many ways the gem of the collection, is an exceptionally lucid account of a subject on which it is otherwise difficult to find information. Butterwick, who has researched this area for many years, bases his narrative on an enormous array of primary and secondary literature, almost all in Polish.

Problems of a different sort, concerning the boundaries of the Catholic Enlightenment, are raised by Jeffrey Burson's very long, dense, and indigestible article on France. Burson gives considerable attention to the controversies between the Jansenists and their antagonists provoked by the bull *Unigenitus*. He wants to regard the two sides as opposed discourses of Catholic Enlightenment. But what is 'enlightened' about theological controversies concerning 'sufficient grace' and 'efficacious grace'?[32] It was characteristic of the Enlightenment to turn away from such futile disputes towards ethical and practical issues. I am inclined to think that Burson's 'Augustinian Enlightenment' (p. 67) and his 'Pro-*Unigenitus* Enlightenment' (p. 75) owe their origins to an over-extension of the term Enlightenment. And since Jansenism undoubtedly fed into the Catholic Enlightenment, though less as a theology than as a habit of mind and a practice of opposition to Papal authority, there may also be here an inclination to identify preconditions of the Enlightenment with their eventual effects.

A subject absent from Burson's article, and seriously under-represented in the *Companion* as a whole, is the effect of the Catholic Enlightenment on ordinary believers.

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[31] See Mark Goldie, 'The Scottish Catholic Enlightenment', *Journal of British Studies*, 30 (1991), 20-62.
[32] Explained in Burson, 'The Catholic Enlightenment in France, 1650-1789', *Companion*, pp. 63-125 (p. 73), and more clearly in Doyle, *Jansenism*, p. 21.

Better pastoral care made a difference to people's lives, but the reduction of feast-days, the abolition of most pilgrimages, and the increase in the number of working days, probably made a greater difference. The Enlightenment meant also a transition from a Counter-Reformation culture of the image to a culture of the word, oriented on Protestantism.[33] In its efforts to Christianize the population more firmly, the Counter-Reformation set great store by the visual: images of saints and the Virgin, Baroque church interiors where the eye mounts to a glimpse of heaven, Jesuit plays on sacred subjects. It was feared that if more people could read, and knew their Bible at first hand, they would be exposed to Protestant influences. Before Maria Theresia introduced her General School Ordinance (*Allgemeine Schulordnung*) in 1774, many clerics actually proposed that parish schools should be abolished.[34] Education was undoubtedly the way to create an independent-minded and well-informed population. But it perhaps admitted people into a more orderly and hard-working, but duller and less colourful world. The reform of religious practice, moreover, created the category of 'popular religion', which was implicitly inferior and often explicitly stigmatized as superstition, and the existence of this value-laden category served to justify in retrospect the project of reform.[35] We could also have been told more about the efforts of enlightened clerics to reform popular belief. Mario Rosa tells us a little about Muratori's recommendations for orderly worship, but does not mention the Abbate Girolamo Tartarotti (1706-61) and his denunciations of belief in witchcraft.

Despite these reservations, the *Companion* opens up the fueld of the Cathilic Enlightenment and makes t easirer to purse a number of themes and topics that deserve much more attention. There is, for example, much to be explored in the hiustory of monasticism, and Ulrich Lehner has made an impressive start in his astonishing monograph *Enlightened Monks*. This path-breaking study, based on prodigious knowledge of archives and of an extensive, little-known secondary literature, describes the growth of enlightenment – both as internal impulses and as external influences – in the Benedictine houses of the eighteenth century. In the latter part of the century, monastic discipline was

[33] For Austria, see the chapter'From image to word: cultural reform and the rise of literature culture in Theresian Austria' in James Van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the Eighteehnth-Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 60-90.
[34] See Melton, pp. 60-1; more generally, Anna Coreth, *Pietas Austriaca: Ursprung und Entwicklung barocker Frömmigkeit in Österreich* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1959), and for an excellent case study, Howard Louthan, 'Religious art and the formation of a Catholic identity in Baroque Prague', in Gary B. Cohen and Franz A.J. Szabo (eds.), *Embodiments of Power: Building Baroque Cities in Europe* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2008), pp. 53-79.
[35] See Christof Dipper, 'Volksreligiosität und Obrigkeit im 18. Jahrhundert', in Wolfgang Schieder (ed.), *Volksreligiosität in der modernen Sozialgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), pp. 73-96.

hard to sustain. Monks often questioned authority and demanded their rights. Some sympathized with the French Revolution, and hoped that the French invasion would liberate them. Even earlier, they participated in the consumer culture which historians have described in loving detail.[36] Many monks drank coffee, some curled and powdered their hair instead of wearing the tonsure, many played cards and billiards, and some drank to excess. The rules were most relaxed at Melk, where the monks voted to eat meat during Lent, and where Ulrich Petrak (1753-1814), appointed Prior by Joseph II, moved in Viennese literary circles and was sympathetic to Freemasonry.[37] Texts from the secular Enlightenment found their way into monastic libraries: Melk had a second-hand copy of the *Encyclopédie*; a Regensburg monastery had the complete works of Voltaire; the librarian at Neresheim secretly obtained the works of the materialist Helvétius. To their long-standing reputation as historians, the Benedictines added achievements in natural science. Many Benedictines belonged to the Bavarian Academy of Sciences; its secretary from 1761 on was the Benedictine Ildephons Kennedy (1722-1804; born Thomas Kennedy in Perthshire), who also lectured on physics to the general public.

Lehner also reveals the darkest side of monastic life – the monastery prisons. Persistently disobedient or disorderly monks were not expelled from their cloisters, for fear they would fall into yet worse ways and/or bring the Church into disrepute. They were instead confined, often in unlit underground cells, in solitude and without occupation. Some went mad, others committed suicide. Lehner reconstructs several deplorable cases in detail, notably that of Nonnosus Gschall, who cut his throat in his cell at Oberalteich in 1777 and features repeatedly in the pamphlet literature of the time. It appears that Gschall was gifted, scholarly, independent-minded and depressive, with radical ideas about the interpretation of the New Testament. His case, like the others recounted by Lehner, would suggest that the monastic system was not well equipped to deal with people who were difficult, headstrong, psychologically disturbed, or original. Techniques of personnel management had yet to develop. Monastic prisons, though officially banned by Maria Theresia in 1771, survived well into the nineteenth century. In 1869 a Carmelite convent in Cracow was found to contain an imprisoned nun, Barbara Ubryk, who had been confined there for over twenty years for breaking her vow of chastity. She was discovered naked and covered with filth; a

[36] For Germany, see Michael North, *'Material Delight and the Joy of Living': Cultural Consumption in the Age of Enlightenment in Germany*, tr. Pamela Selwyn (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).
[37] See Johannes Frimmel, *Literarisches Leben in Melk: Ein Kloster im 18. Jahrhundert im kulturellen Umbruch* (Vienna, Cologne, Weimar: Böhlau, 2004).

window in her cell had been partially bricked in to prevent her from calling to passers-by.[38] Besides shedding light on social relations within convents, such discoveries provided important ammunition for the anti-Catholic side in struggles between the Church and the state.[39]

Returning to intellectual matters, we find abundant evidence that monasteries were open even to the main currents of secular Enlightenment thought. Lehner presents numerous Benedictine philosophers and theologians who read Leibniz, Wolff, Hume, Kant, and other leading Enlightenment authors. Matern Reuss (1751-98), professor of philosophy at Bamberg, lectured in 1788 on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, and in 1792 made a 'philosophical pilgrimage' to visit Kant in Königsberg. Beda Mayr (1741-97) of Donauwörth put forward a basis for reunion with the Protestant Churches which involved sacrificing a great deal of scholastic theology and accepting only a strictly limited concept of Papal infallibility.[40] Much of this work was written in Latin, in keeping not only with early modern intellectual practice but also with a Catholic suspicion of German as a language tainted by Protestantism. Cogent arguments, however, were put forward for using the vernacular, and Mayr published his major works in German.

Altogether, Lehner's *Enlightened Monks* is a rich and absorbing work of scholarship. My only cavils are trivial. He tells us that Magnoard Ziegelbauer's literary history of the Benedictines (*Historia rei literariae ordinis S. Benedicti*, 1754) is still in use, but does not tell us what it contains; it can hardly be a literary history in the modern sense of the term. Although his focus is on Germany rather than Austria, he might have told us more about the scientific work done at Kremsmünster, the wealthiest abbey in Upper Austria, which had its own astronomer, the internationally distinguished Father Placidus Fixlmillner (1721-91). Fixlmillner, who managed the abbey's eight-storey observatory, calculated the orbit of the planet Uranus after Sir William Herschel had discovered it in 1781.[41]

If we acknowledge the importance of the Catholic Enlightenment, we may want to write German history in a different way, or at least with different emphases. Michael Printy

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[38] See Manuel Borutta, 'Enemies at the gate: The Moabit *Klostersturm* and the *Kulturkampf*: Germany', in Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser (eds.), *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.227-54 (esp. pp. 234-7).

[39] See Ulrich L. Lehner, *Monastic Prisons and Torture Chambers: Crime and Punishment in Central European Monasteries, 1600-1800* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013).

[40] One of Mayr's major works is now readily available, thanks to Lehner: Beda Mayr, *Vertheidigung der katholischen Religion, sammt einem Anhang von der Möglichkeit einer Vereinigung zwischen unserer und der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (1789), ed. Ulrich L. Lehner, Brill's Texts and Sources in Intellectual History, 5 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009).

[41] See Johann-Christian Klamt, *Sternwarte und Museum im Zeitalter der Aufklärung: Der Mathematische Turm zu Kremsmünster (1749-1758)* (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1999).

suggests how this might be done in his study of Catholicism and Enlightenment in Germany, which complements and extends Lehner's book. If Lehner excels in the presentation of fascinating detail, Printy's is more of a synthetic work which places his material in the service of an ambitious argument. He opposes the long-established Protestant narrative of German history, running from Luther's Reformation via Goethe's Weimar to Bismarck's unification of a predominantly Protestant Germany which left Catholic Austria to stagnate. In Printy's account, the Protestant and Catholic Enlightenments in Germany were parallel. Each was sustained by a growing class of university-educated administrators; here Printy acknowledges Nicholas Boyle's argument about the crucial importance of the 'Beamtenstand' in eighteenth-century Germany.[42] The educated Catholic bourgeoisie sympathized with enlightened clerics who proposed institutional reform of the Church. Printy provides a guide through the *De statu ecclesiae* of 'Febronius', assuring us that 'at about 600 quarto pages it was in fact quite concise by early modern theological standards'.[43] He shows how far enlightened Catholic opinion was unified by opposition to the Jesuits, who of course continued to exist after the dissolution of their Society, and, as ex-Jesuits, were considered even more dangerous because they were now invisible. He illustrates this opposition by discussing Peter Philipp Wolf's four-volume history of the Jesuits, underplaying the extent to which Wolf reheats the 'black legend'.[44] He quotes from liberal Catholic clerics many views of Christianity that have a twentieth-century ring: thus Franz Giftschütz (1748-88) said in his lectures on pastoral theology that Jesus 'taught true, practical philosophy and purified moral doctrine'.[45] Wolf, in a tract calling for Church reform (1800), claimed that even priests no longer believed in the doctrine of transubstantiation and were 'secretly ashamed of it'.[46] Clerical celibacy, then as now, was debated, and it is significant that the arguments advanced in its favour were less theological than economic: a priest who had to provide for his wife and children would be unable to attend properly to his spiritual duties. Thus it becomes clear that the Catholic Enlightenment saw a remarkable freedom of discussion.

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[42] See Nicholas Boyle, *Goethe: The Poet and the Age*, vol. 1: *The Poetry of Desire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 18-19, and Boyle, *German Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), ch. 1: 'The bourgeois and the official'.

[43] Michael Printy, *Enlightenment and the Creation of German Catholicism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 43.

[44] Peter Philipp Wolf, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Jesuiten von dem Ursprunge ihres Ordens bis auf gegenwärtige Zeiten*, 4 vols. (Lisbon: bei Pombal und Compagnie, 1792). The place of publication and the publisher are clearly fictitious: Pombal was the enlightened Portuguese minister who expelled the Jesuits from his country.

[45] Quoted in Printy, *Enlightenment*, p. 146.

[46] Quoted in Printy., *Enlightenment*, p. 178.

To show further how close the Catholic Enlightenment was to the intellectual mainstream, Printy gives a detailed account of the 22-volume *Geschichte der Deutschen* by Michael Ignaz Schmidt (1736-94), a Catholic priest in Würzburg, who became director of the state archives in Vienna. Printy argues that Schmidt's work fits the Enlightenment model of philosophical history represented, for example, by William Robertson with his *History of Scotland* (1759). Instead of offering a narrowly political or ecclesiastical history, Schmidt focuses on the history of culture and the progress of enlightenment. Thus the importance of St Boniface as missionary to the Germans, and of the influx of Scottish and Irish missionaries, lies not only in their conversion work but in the refinement they brought to the early Germans' manners. In contrast to the familiar Protestant association of the Reformation with the Enlightenment, Schmidt argues that the Reformation actually created obstacles to enlightenment by polarizing the confessions and sharpening the differences among them. Although Printy does not make this point, there is a striking resemblance to Hugh Trevor-Roper's argument against those who would see the religious radicals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as precursors of the Enlightenment.[47]

There is, however, room for dispute about the longer history in which the Catholic Enlightenment should be placed. While Printy's analysis of the intellectual vitality and variety of the German Catholic Enlightenment is cogent and well documented, his suggestions about the larger historical framework are not invariably convincing. It may well be that the Catholic Enlightenment, in its criticism of the Church as an institution, looked back to the Conciliar movement of the fourteenth century; but Printy also maintains that its impulses survived and added to the strength of nineteenth-century German Catholicism. Perhaps, but did Germany really offer much opposition to the growth of Ultramontanism? And when we consider one of the most spectacular events of the period, the mass pilgrimage to the Holy Shroud of Trier (*Trierer Rock*) in 1844, are we not bound to think that the cause of enlightenment had been decisively defeated?[48]

The diversity of the Catholic Enlightenment, and of the possible relations between the Enlightenment and Catholicism, emerges from a collection of biographical essays edited by Burson and Lehner.[49] Strictly speaking, I should not review this book, as I am among the contributors. But it is too important to be omitted from the present survey. The editors have

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[47] See Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The religious origins of the Enlightenment', in his *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* (London: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 193-236.
[48] On the Trier pilgrimage, see Jonathan Sperber, *Popular Catholicism in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 55, 70-1.

assembled a remarkable international set of writers to give brief accounts of twenty-one figures associated, in whatever way, wit both Catholicism and the Enlightenment. Pope Benedict XIV, discussed by Mario Rosa, occupies the place of honour. After that we have five essays on French figures, two on the Holy Roman Empire (Benedict Stattler and Beda Mayr, both treated by Lehner), two on Austria (the educational reformer Franz Stephan Rautenstrauch, discussed by Thomas Wallnig, and my piece on the satirist Johann Pezzl), then three Italians, two Spaniards, two Scots, two Poles, and two international figures, Ruggiero Boscovich and Luke Hooke, under the heading 'Transnational Trajectories: The Intersection of Irish, French, Italian, and Habsburg Developments'. Such well-known figures as Muratori, Antonio Genovesi (better known as an economist), and Benito Jerónimo Feijoo appear alongside lesser-known names which deserve to become familiar, such as the Milanese mathematician Maria Gaetana Agnesi. It will already be apparent how original and how useful this book is.

Where, though, do we draw the boundaries of the Catholic Enlightenment? Readers of the Burson-Lehner collection may well be astonished to find in it articles on Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821) and Félicité de Lamennais (1782-1854), both by Carolina Armenteros. De Maistre attacked the Enlightenment for giving rise to the French Revolution. He rejected optimistic views of human nature and insisted on humanity's deep urge for violence. Humanity needed to renounce the fantasy of individual freedom and accept the authority of the Pope. Lamennais, from his first publication in 1809 onwards, was an ardent Ultramontanist, until he broke with the Church and even with Christianity to become a radical Socialist. In this context, the traces of Enlightenment thinking that Armenteros discerns in their work seem marginal. However, the inclusion of these Counter-Enlightenment thinkers reminds us that some early nineteenth-century antagonists of the Enlightenment had their intellectual roots there. Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829), who ended as a Catholic convert and bureaucrat in Metternich's Vienna, started as an iconoclastic critic on the fringes of Weimar Classicism, while his friend Friedrich von Hardenberg (1772-1801; known as Novalis), author of the reactionary manifesto *Die Christenheit oder Europa* (written 1799, published 1826), was deeply versed in Enlightenment philosophy and natural science. There is more to be said about the transition many writers made from Enlightenment to reaction, and it may be that a large-scale comparative study would make Armenteros' theses look more plausible.

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[49] Jeffrey D. Burson and Ulrich L. Lehner (eds.), *Enlightenment and Catholicism in Europe: A Transnational History* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014).

These studies of the Catholic Enlightenment testify to a historical revision which finds its boldest and broadest statement in David Sorkin's *The Religious Enlightenment*. Book titles with *The X Enlightenment*, of which there are now many, are somewhat ambiguous. If the adjective is local or limited (*The Scottish Enlightenment, The Cynic Enlightenment*), it professes to describe only one aspect of the Enlightenment, but if its meaning is broader (*The Radical Enlightenment, The Pragmatic Enlightenment*), it invites us to adjust our understanding of the movement as a whole.[50] Sorkin starts from Jonathan Israel's now well-known distinction between the mainstream, moderate, or (in Israel's terms) conservative Enlightenment, represented by Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Hume, and the radical Enlightenment which in Israel's account takes its inspiration from Spinoza.[51] If the radical Enlightenment is one flank of the movement, Sorkin argues, the religious Enlightenment is the opposite flank. This claim, if accepted, will of course rebalance our understanding of the Enlightenment as a whole.

Sorkin has been developing this argument for many years. He first put it forward, so far as I know, in 1996, in the introduction to his study of Moses Mendelssohn. There he challenged the 'common wisdom […] that there was an irreconcilable hostility between the Enlightenment and established religion', and pointed out that all the established religions in fact had 'influential representatives who welcomed the new science and philosophy of the Enlightenment as a means to renew and reinvigorate faith'.[52] There was not room to elaborate the argument. But, even in this preliminary form, it had the advantage of bringing Mendelssohn and the Jewish Enlightenment (the Haskala) more fully into the Enlightenment as a whole. The following year, in an important article, Sorkin made a comparison between the institutions of different religions, focusing on Berlin and London, and revealing parallel developments in respect of conversion and intermarriage.[53] This sociological approach is not pursued in *The Religious Enlightenment*, which concentrates on intellectual history.

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[50] Louise Shea, *The Cynic Enlightenment: Diogenes in the Salon* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); Margaret Jacob, *The Radical Enlightemnent: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981); Dennis C. Rasmussen, *The Pragmatic Enlightenment: Recovering the Liberalism of Hume, Smith, Montesquieu, and Voltaire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
[51] See Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[52] David Sorkin, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Religious Enlightenment* (London: Peter Halban, 1996), p. xxi.
[53] David Sorkin, 'Enlightenment and emancipation: German Jewry's formative age in comparative perspective', in Todd M. Endelman (ed.), *Comparing Jewish Societies* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 89-112.

Sorkin's *The Religious Enlightenment* has two theses which are logically independent. One, the existence of the religious Enlightenment, is a matter of empirical research, and here I think Sorkin makes a good case. The other thesis is a matter of historical interpretation. Sorkin has in his sights the familiar narrative of secularization, identifying it especially in the work of Peter Gay. In this narrative, secularization or de-Christianization is an epochal process which was massively assisted by the Enlightenment's assaults on revealed religion and the authority of Scripture. Sorkin rightly does not address the huge and intractable issue of secularization itself, but he does oppose the common view that compromises in religious issues are unstable points on a slippery slope which cannot delay for long the slide towards a secular society. 'The slippery slope metaphor is fundamentally mistaken in its point of departure, by erroneously investing one formulation or period of religious thinking with normative status, and in its destination, by supporting a linear notion of secularization.'[54] The religious positions that he outlines were, he argues, not fragile compromises but tenable positions. If we think otherwise, it is because we are too attached to a distorting present-day perspective. The French Revolution and the associated upheavals 'virtually eliminated the religious Enlightenment'.[55] Many parts of nineteenth-century Europe, especially the France of the Third Republic, saw only the opposed extremes of anticlericalism and Ultramontanism.

The bulk of Sorkin's book consists of six case studies.[56] His witnesses are the Anglican bishop William Warburton, the Calvinist theologian Jacob Vernet from Geneva, Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten, Lutheran professor of theology at Halle, Moses Mendelssohn, the Jewish protagonist of the Berlin Enlightenment, and two representatives of Reform Catholicism: the Austrian Johann Valentin Eybel and the French Adrien Lamourette. These thinkers, all well-known in their time, wished to defend a 'reasonable' – far from reductively rational – religion not only against dogmatic theology, which could easily license persecution, but also against the doctrinal free-for-all which in the previous two centuries had produced so many warring sects. They sought a 'middle way' between extremes, reclaiming 'natural religion' from the deists, but insisting that natural religion needed to be supplemented by revelation. The many oddities of the Scriptures were explained by the principle of accommodation: God had 'condescended' to people's intellectual limitations. Theological truths might be above reason, but could not be contrary

[54] Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment*, p. 17.
[55] Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment*, p. 311.

to reason. When they considered the relation between Church and state, these thinkers avoided both Erastianism (state control of the Church) and any clerical, papal, or rabbinical theocracy. They accepted some degree of state authority in return for doctrinal autonomy. They found no difficulty in participating in the wider republic of letters, the 'public sphere' of the Enlightenment, without making concessions to unbelief.

Sorkin's characterization applies well to his Austrian example, the Church historian and canon lawyer Eybel (1741-1805). As a representative of the Catholic Enlightenment, Eybel argued forcefully for a return to the values and institutions of the early Church, before the rise of the papacy and the monastic orders. The Pope, he argued, had originally been little more than the chairman of a council of bishops, while monks had originally not been priests but individuals who wished to live in seclusion. Joseph II put Eybel in charge of closing monasteries in Upper Austria. He went beyond his remit in closing down some monasteries whose suppression had not been authorized by the Imperial Commission. Derek Beales observes that 'he derived obvious pleasure from ordering great abbots about and taking part in the formalities attending the suppression of monastic houses'.[57]

Although Eybel fits Sorkin's criteria, one may wonder whether he represented a stable religious position. He was a zealous reformer who wanted a root-and-branch reconstruction of the Church, a radical critic who happened to find himself in a position of power and in some respects abused it. Such a person could hardly have rested content with any settled arrangement.

Moses Mendelssohn (1729-86), about whom Sorkin writes with particular authority, also presents a less than straightforward case against the secularization thesis. Mendelssohn's opposition to the futile ingenuities of Talmudic debate, his preference for a literal reading of Scripture based on accurate linguistic knowledge, his advocacy of toleration, his emphasis on the practical as opposed to merely theoretical notions, all correspond to Sorkin's model of religious Enlightenment. But the version of Judaism he put forward, in which there is no specific religious doctrine beyond natural religion, and the ceremonial law acquires a merely contingent character, was unstable, shot through with contradictions, and did not find much acceptance.[58] This is in no way to reduce Mendelsssohn's standing as a shining

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[56] This paragraph is adapted from my review of *The Religious Enlightenment* in *German History*, 27 (2009), 289-90.
[57] Beales, *Prosperity*, p. 202.
[58] See Allan Arkush, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Enlightenment* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

example of humanity, tolerance, and reasonableness; but his version of Judaism did not offer a stable bulwark against either assimilation or secularization.

Different doubts arise about Sorkin's first case-study, that of William Warburton (1698-1779), in his day an immensely prominent cleric and author of *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated* (two volumes, 1738 and 1742). Here Warburton met the deists on their own ground by accepting one of their criticisms of the authority of the Old Testament. They argued that as it said nothing about a future state, a doctrine essential to Christianity, there was a grave breach in the supposed continuity of sacred history from the revelation of Moses to that of Jesus. Warburton replies that Moses knew quite well that there was a future state, since he had acquired the learning of the Egyptians with their elaborate funerary practices, but he chose to keep this doctrine from his people. Instead, he instituted a theocracy in which God was king and legislator. Even when the judges were replaced by kings, these kings were really only God's viceroys. In this theocracy, the Jews were kept separate from other nations in order to preserve intact the divine truths which had been revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai. And they had no need to think about rewards or punishments in a future life, because God, ruling them directly, ensured that they always met their just deserts in this life:

Now in the *Jewish* Republic, both the Rewards and Punishments promised by Heaven, were *temporal only*. Such as Health, long Life, Peace, Plenty, and Dominion, &c. Diseases, immature Death, War, Famine, Want, Subjection, and Captivity, &c. And in no one Place of the *Mosaic* Institutes is there the least Mention, or any intelligible Hint, of the Rewards and Punishments of another Life.[59]

This exceptional dispensation granted to the Jews is, Warburton concludes, the surest proof that Moses' revelation was authentic.

I have let Warburton speak a little for himself because in a mere paraphrase his argument sounds utterly eccentric and perverse. It does not even correspond to the text of the Old Testament, which shows that the ancient Hebrews had many contacts with neighbouring peoples and were constantly being rebuked by the prophets for backsliding into alien cults.

[59] William Warburton, *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated, on the Principles of a Religious Deist, from the Omission of the Doctrine of a Future State of Reward and Punishment in the Jewish Dispensation*, 3rd edn., 2 vols. (London, 1742), ii. 449.

In his day, Warburton found few supporters and many critics.[60] John Pocock, who places Warburton among the leading figures of the tolerant Enlightenment in England, comments that his arguments were self-defeating: 'His argument concerning immortality, however, came so close to asserting that it was philosophically unintelligible as to open the door to scepticism.'[61] So it seems strange that Sorkin should choose him as the key example of an enlightened cleric holding a tenable theological position. Warburton's fantastications about the Old Testament are the kind of speculation which not only the deists but the higher critics of the Bible, from Richard Simon onwards, wanted to undermine.

The need to argue with Sorkin's book acknowledges its importance. He has made a major contribution to the study of the Enlightenment and, I hope, decisively shifted our understanding of it. The issue of secularization really demands another book, and if Sorkin writes it the result will be a must-read. If the Catholic Enlightenment, in particular, has largely escaped notice until recently, one reason must be that it did not survive into the nineteenth century. Something of its spirit reappears in the liberal Catholicism of the Austrian priest and philosopher Bernard Bolzano (1781-1848); in the Modernism of Alfred Loisy (1857-1940), which however was firmly suppressed by the Church; above all, in the Second Vatican Council; and possibly in the outlook of the present Pope, though the further we get from the eighteenth century, the harder it is to trace influences and filiations. Now, however, thanks above all to the energetic activity of Ulrich Lehner, the Catholic Enlightenment is conspicuous on the map of Enlightenment scholarship, and we can hope for much more research in this difficult and fascinating field.

However, our map of the Enlightenment itself, or our understanding of the Enlightenment as a historical phenomenon, may also be changed by admitting the importance of the Catholic Enlightenment. Should we adopt J. G. A. Pocock's well-known approach and abandon 'the Enlightenment' as a unitary phenomenon, talking instead of diverse national, local, and even denominational Enlightenments? Doing so would still acknowledge that all these Enlightenments are versions of the one phenomenon, and make the problem of coping with its diversity even more difficult. Another approach might be to see that the noun 'Enlightenment' is used in two ways. It can denote a body of progressive thinkers, like the *Encyclopédistes* or the Edinburgh literati, but it can also denote a diffuse

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[60] See B.W. Young, *Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England: Theological Debate from Locke to Burke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 180-5.

[61] J.G.A. Pocock, 'Clergy and commerce: the conservative Enlightenment in England', in *L'età dei lumi: studi storici sul settecento europeo in onore di Franco Venturi*, 2 vols. (Naples: Iovene, 1985), i. 523-61 (pp. 554-5).

movement of ideas in a direction which we recognize as consonant with Enlightenment ideals. Roy Porter has demonstrated that enlightenment, in the latter sense, occurred in England, but he has not thereby shown that there was a distinct and self-aware English Enlightenment, spearheaded by a *partie philosophique*.[62] It hardly matters, however, if there was no sharply defined English Enlightenment, for there is ample evidence, supplied by Porter and others, that a gradual process of enlightenment was going forward.

However, this conception of enlightenment as a process has its dangers. If, having read Lehner and Printy on the Catholic Enlightenment, and Sorkin (even with reservations) on the religious Enlightenment, we may suppose that enlightenment was spreading everywhere, like a rising tide, bringing fresh life even to the remotest rock pools. It did not feel like that at the time. The *philosophes* and like-minded intellectuals felt they engaged in a painful struggle against the almost overwhelming forces of religious obscurantism, political despotism, and popular superstition. Some of them paid for their convictions with imprisonment – brief though still unpleasant for Voltaire and Diderot, prolonged for Pietro Giannone, who was captured by the Church authorities in 1736 and kept in prison at Turin till his death in 1748.[63] The stakes were high, and the forces arrayed against Enlightenment were formidable.[64] It would be salutary therefore to do further research on the careers and influence of prominent opponents of the Enlightenment. One who deserves study, and for whom there is abundant material, is Aloys Merz (1727-92), a Jesuit who was the principal preacher at Augsburg Cathedral and a continual target of polemic and satire in the Austrian Enlightenment.[65] Research on the Catholic Enlightenment, especially, needs to focus on enlightenment as a struggle, and to pay attention to both sides in the struggle.

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[62] See John Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples 1680-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 26-7, and his sharper critique of Porter in 'The Case for the Enlightenment: A Comparative Approach', in Joseph Mali and Robert Wokler (eds.), *Isaiah Berlin's Counter-Enlightenment: Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 93, part 5, pp. 73-90 (pp. 76-7).
[63] See Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, p. 677.
[64] See Darrin M. McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment: The French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[65] See e.g. *Text des augsburgischen Intoleranten mit den Noten eines toleranten Oesterreichers* (Vienna: Sonnleithner, 1782), which reprints Merz's notorious Whitsun sermon against toleration with comments by the enlightened cleric Marc Anton Wittola. Friedrich Nicolai vividly describes Merz's preaching in *Beschreibung einer Reise durch Deutschland und die Schweiz im Jahre 1781. Nebst Bemerkungen über Gelehrsamkeit, Industrie, Religion und Sitten*, 8 vols (Berlin and Stettin: no pub., 1783-7), v. 30.