Preface

Previous reprints of this book allowed some minor corrections of errors and a little updating of the bibliography, but no changes of substance. This second edition tries to preserve the bulk of a text for which there has been a continuing demand while updating it extensively. It also uses significant additional wordage to incorporate important issues that have risen to prominence in a generation of unprecedented vigour for Scottish history. The book is not, and within its limited compass cannot hope to be, a balanced survey of all aspects of national life. As before, the text seeks coherence and penetration by focusing primarily on the political history of Enlightenment Scotland, but tries to provide a broader picture of a lost world by setting its politics in the widest possible economic, social, religious and intellectual context. A new final chapter on the achievement and heritage of the Scottish Enlightenment has been added. The selective bibliography totally replaces an older discursive one, happily rendered obsolete by excellent recent scholarship. The author has benefited from and is grateful for friendly and shrewd advice from Professors Michael Lynch and Chris Whatley, but neither of these distinguished scholars should be held responsible for the shortcomings of this book which derive solely from the mind of the author.

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