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Edited by Ole Peter Grell and Roy Porter  
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## Toleration in Enlightenment Europe

Grell and Porter

The Enlightenment is often seen as the great age of religious and intellectual toleration, and this volume offers the first systematic European survey of the theory, practice, and very real limits to toleration in eighteenth-century Europe. A distinguished international team of contributors demonstrates how the publicists of the European Enlightenment in fact developed earlier ideas about toleration, gradually widening the desire for religious toleration into a philosophy of freedom seen as a fundamental attribute of and a precondition for a civilized society. Nonetheless, Europe never uniformly or comprehensively embraced toleration during the eighteenth century: although religious toleration remained central to the Enlightenment project, advances in toleration of all kinds were often fragile and short-lived.

This volume is the successor to the acclaimed study of *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation*, edited by Ole Peter Grell and Bob Scribner and published by Cambridge in 1996.

OLE PETER GRELL is affiliated lecturer in the Faculty of History, University of Cambridge.

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## Preface

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These essays have emerged out of a conference held in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, 17–19 September 1997, which was the culmination of a series of academic symposia which began in 1988 during the William and Mary Tercentenary, and which has resulted in the publication of two previous volumes: O. P. Grell, J. I. Israel and N. Tyacke (eds), *From Persecution to Toleration: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England* (1991); and O. P. Grell and Bob Scribner (eds), *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation* (1996).

The issue of toleration still remains as important today as it was during the Enlightenment. The continuous conflict in the former Yugoslavia, with its horrific examples of intolerance between different religious and ethnic groups, which started in Bosnia and has now moved on to Kosovo, reminds us that toleration cannot simply be a passive response, something akin to indifference. We are reminded that, if it is to have any meaning, toleration will occasionally mean active intervention to protect those who are exposed to intolerance and persecution. Edmund Burke's 200-year-old dictum: 'For evil to succeed it only takes good men to do nothing' remains as relevant as ever.

The editors are grateful to all the contributors for their cooperation in transforming conference papers into published essays, aided by constructive referees' reports provided by Cambridge University Press, and the encouragement of Richard Fisher of the Press.

We are beholden to the William and Mary History of Toleration Committee and the British Academy for their generous financial support of the conference which made this volume possible. For administrative aid, the editors wish to thank Frieda Houser.

Ole Peter Grell  
Roy Porter  
Cambridge/London, November 1998