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978-0-521-39414-7 - Science as Public Culture: Chemistry and Enlightenment in Britain,
1760-1820

Jan Golinski

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Science as Public Culture joins a growing number of recent studies examining science as a practical activity in specific social settings. Jan Golinski considers the development of chemistry in Britain from 1760 to 1820, and relates it to the rise and subsequent eclipse of forms of civic life characteristic of the European Enlightenment. Within this framework the careers of prominent chemists like William Cullen, Joseph Black, Joseph Priestley, Thomas Beddoes, and Humphry Davy are interpreted in a new light. The major discoveries of the time, including nitrous oxide (laughing gas) and the electrical decomposition of water, are set against the background of alternative ways of constructing science as a public enterprise. The book makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the relationship between scientific activity and processes of social and political change in a period of great transformations in chemistry and in the conditions of public life.

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SCIENCE AS PUBLIC CULTURE

*Chemistry and Enlightenment
in Britain, 1760–1820*

JAN GOLINSKI

*Department of History
University of New Hampshire*



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To my parents

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