



Adam Smith and Geneva: Some Long-Lasting Encounters



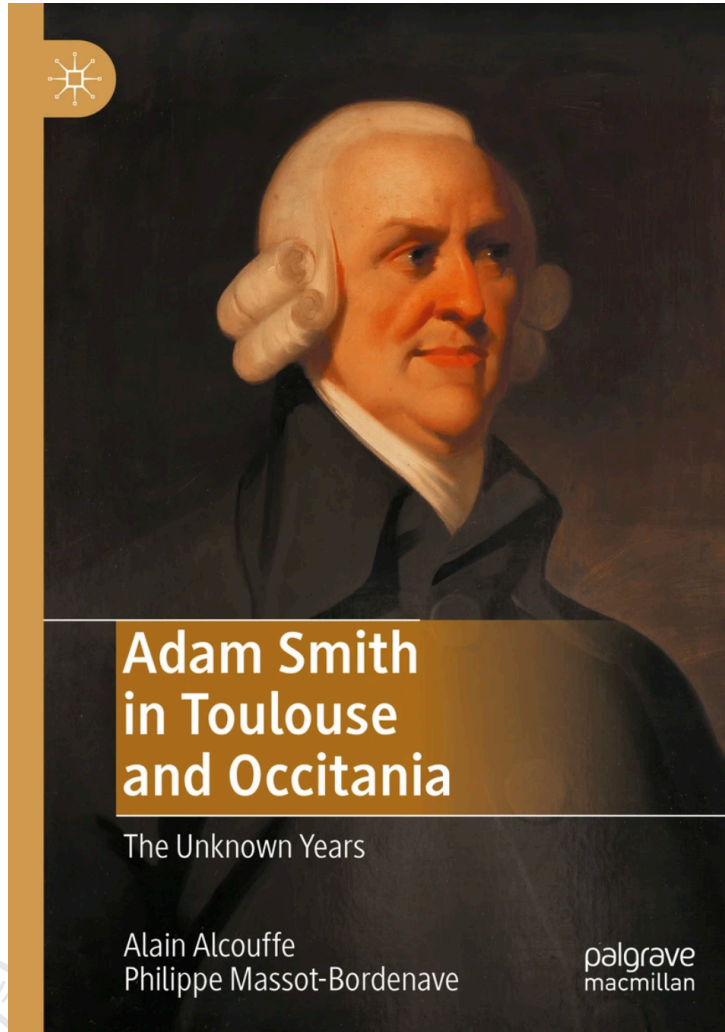
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Prologue

- Walter Bagehot (1876) : **“Of Adam Smith’s Political Economy almost an infinite quantity has been said, but very little has been said as to Adam Smith himself. And yet not only was he one of the most curious of human beings, but his books can hardly be understood without having some notion of what manner of man he was.”**
- W. R. Scott (1940) : **“... there remain opportunities, even at this late date, for remedying the present meagre knowledge of Adam Smith’s life.”**

Motivation



Adam Smith in the City of Light

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Abstract

The general outline of Adam Smith's travels in Europe has been retold many times, but little is known about his comings and goings in Paris. What we can say, however, is that the Scottish philosopher's time in the City of Light marks an important turning point in his personal and intellectual life. He began his Paris sojourns by permanently resigning his professorship. He concluded them by mourning the death of one of the teenage boys who had been entrusted to his care. In all, Adam Smith made three separate visits to Paris. His first visit occurred in February of 1764 and lasted less than a fortnight (Rae 1895, p. 174; Ross 2010, p. 210), but his second and third stays lasted much longer--from February to July 1766 and then from September to October 1766--interrupted only by a short interlude in Compiègne in August. Moreover, several important events took place in Paris during all three of Adam Smith's stays in the City of Light, dramatic episodes that a keen observer of the world like Smith must have taken notice of, including the intense debate from May 1763 to April 1764 over taxation and royal finances that took Paris by storm the political showdown known as the "séance de la flagellation", when Louis XV made a rare appearance in the French capital to scold the members of the legislature at a session of the Parlement de Paris on 3 March 1766; and the appearance of David Hume's reply to Rousseau, which was published in Paris on 21 October 1766. Accordingly, Part 1 of this work revisits Smith's first foray in Paris in February 1764. Next, Part 2 explores Smith's second sojourn in Paris, from February to July 1766. Part 3 then concludes by revisiting Smith's last days in Paris.

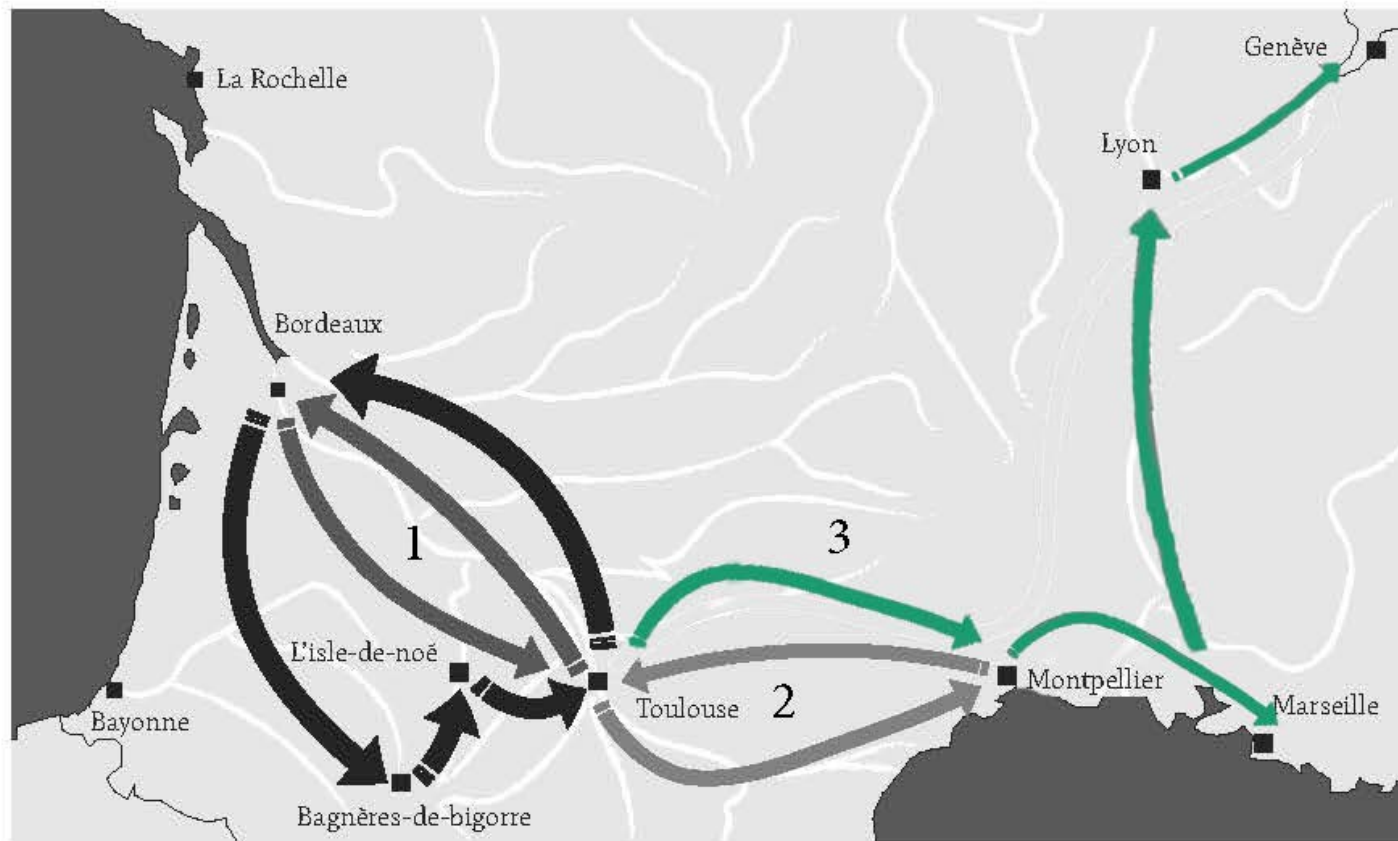
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Smith's travels 1764-1765



1- Summer 1764

2- Fall 1764

3-Fall 1765



Geneva in 1765/66:

Context, Contacts, and Consequences

- Many English and French elites are residing in or near Geneva at this moment in time, including the duchesse d'Enville, Charles Bonnet, Lord Stanhope, and Voltaire (Ferney)
- Major controversy over Rousseau's *Du contrat social*, *Emile*, and *Lettres de la montagne*
 - Exile in Môtiers, renunciation of Genevan citizenship, and eventual flight to England with Hume
- Political turmoil
 - Impasse over the annual election of Geneva's syndics in January 1766

Some Previous Scholarship on Adam Smith in Geneva

■ John Rae's *Life of Smith* (1895)

- ❑ Seven encounters : Charles Bonnet, the Syndic Turretin, M. Le Sage, Duc de la Rochefoucauld & Duchess d'Enville, Lord Stanhope, Lady Conyers
- ❑ Sources : Samuel Rogers, Pierre Prévost, Adam Ferguson, Patrick Clason, letters from and to Smith and Hume

■ Correspondence of Adam Smith (Glasgow ed., 1977/87)

■ Brian Bonnyman (2009)

- ❑ Hints to Lady Stanhope's table plan for Christmas 1765

Persistent Puzzles

- How did Adam Smith's stay in Geneva influence WN and subsequent editions of TMS?
 - Many references to Switzerland in WN
 - Smith retracts his condemnation of La Rochefoucauld's *Maximes* in the 6th and final edition of TMS
- Also, how long did Smith stay in Geneva and what did he do there?
- One more puzzle: What was Smith's relation to the duchesse d'Enville?

Abbé Colbert of Castlehill's letter to Adam Smith dated 18 Sept. 1766

« Et toi, Adam Smith,
Philosophe de Glascow,
heros et idole des
highbroad Ladys, que
fais-tu, mon cher ami?
Comment gouvernes-tu
La Duchesse d'Anville
et Mad. de Boufflers
....? »



The duchesse d'Enville

Marie Louise Nicole de La Rochefoucauld (1716-1797)

- A scion of François de La Rochefoucauld (1613 –1680) :
Les Maximes, (1664-1678: 5 editions) (compared with Mandeville in the *TMS*
 - ❑ Great-great granddaughter of the author of *Les maximes*
- She presented the Calas' affair to Voltaire and played a role in the latter's defense of the Calas family.
- An Enlightened aristocrat, widow at 30, she manages the family estates, holds a *salon* in Paris and receives the literati in Paris and at her castle at Château-Guyon.
 - ❑ The management of her estates was praised by Arthur Young.



The duchesse d'Enville

2

- A mother dedicated to her children, searching the best physician for them --> Dr. Théodore Tronchin in Geneva
 - She entrusts the scientific education of her son to Georges Le Sage.
 - Several additional sojourns in Geneva, where she and her sister (Duchesse d'Estissac) visit to escape the burdens of French etiquette.
- Also, she is a friend of Turgot and played a role in the beginnings of the Physiocracy.
 - Perhaps she even introduced Smith to Turgot at her salon in Paris in 1766?

Two sister duchesses

**La duchesse d'Enville, par Nattier
in 1740 (she was 24 years old)**



**Madame d'Estissac, par Nattier 1742
(she was 24 years old)**



Correspondence of duchesse d'Enville

- Her correspondence published by Michèle Crogiez (2016).
- Her correspondence with Le Sage and Turgot provides evidence that she was not just a mere “muse” or benefactress but took part in her own right in the scientific debates of her time.
 - Her exchanges with Turgot and Le Sage contain a mix of scientific observations, protestations of scientific modesty, personal/sentimental teasing.
- Also, during the Rousseau/Hume quarrel (summer of 1766), she was on the same line as Smith, avoiding pouring oil on the fire



A possible connection between the duchesse and Adam Smith: James Macdonald

- James Macdonald - *Marcellus of the North* - 8th Bart of Sleat was received in France by the duchesse d'Enville, and he also stayed at her house in Geneva in October 1765.
- Smith and the Duke traveled from Dover to Paris with James Macdonald and it is quite possible the three Scots were introduced to the Duchesse by Hume.
- More generally, she was very “anglophile” : among her other English-speaking contacts, we find Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Charles Stanhope.
 - *To date, however, no evidence of contacts between her and Hume.*



La Rochefoucaulds in the Correspondence of Adam Smith

- Five (or six) occurrences of La Rochefoucauld in Corr
 - ❑ 23 March 1769 from Smith to Lord Hailes (hypothetical mention)
 - ❑ 3 May 1776 a quotation of *Les Maximes* (Hume to Smith)
 - ❑ 3 March 1778, from the Duc –Ma mère et moi – new edition
 - ❑ 6 Aug. 1779, from the Duc – reference to a letter from Smith
 - ❑ 16 Nov. 1784 – Smith sent copies to the Duc and his sister.
(*TMS*? Or *WN*)
 - ❑ 1 Nov. 1785 – Confirmation of the changes in the *TMS* and “May I beg to be remembered in the most respectful manner to the Dutchess D' Anville and to the Dutchess Chabot”.
- Nota bene: The actual exchanges between the Dutchess and Smith seem to be always “protected” or “dissimulated” under the exchanges with or from the children.



Philip, 2nd Earl Stanhope, (1714 –1786)

- He was a Fellow of the [Royal Society](#) from 1735, and had a lifelong interest in mathematics.
 - Among other things, he was editor of the works of Robert Simson, Adam Smith's professor at Glasgow.
- With his wife Grisel (née Hamilton) they had two sons
 - Philip Stanhope, Viscount Mahon (24 June 1746 – 6 July 1763). An Etonian, his illness led his parents to sojourn in Geneva entrusting his health to Tronchin
 - Charles Stanhope, 3rd Earl Stanhope (3 August 1753 – 15 December 1816)
- For his part, Smith would later play a role in the appointment of Adam Ferguson as a tutor to the Earl of Chester (to whom Lord Stanhope was guardian).

Lady "Grisel" Stanhope' Christmas Party 1765

Pâté de Boef Stakes	Boeuf pates 3 goularde Moulin	Noeli 1 Canard Stouille et d'herbes St Onion
Petit gate	Poisson on Rost Boarff	Petit gate
Pâté de Mouton et d'herbes à pignon	2 Langue d'alle chaude	des Truie en saum.
Olives	Dindon à l'huile Salade	Truffes
Citron Maché	Oye au lait	Quatre de Gomme
Epinars	Pâté Citron	Crème ou Blanc pommé sans poches
Salle'	Mince pie	Blanc mange
Truie Crème Frette jette	Citron Four tolettes de Pomme gruesques	Micaroni Rost en Chardon
Europe 2 dms.		



List of the guests

4 Conyers
3 Bucc
4 Conyers
1 Bucc
1 Smith
1 Ditzil
1 Crofts
1 Needham
2 Abingdon
3 Gausen
15
3 selfs
18
Christm
Day 1765

- 4 Conyers
- 1 Bucc [leuch]
- 1 Bucc [leuch]
- 1 Smith
- 1 Ditzil
- 1 Crofts
- 1 Needham
- 1 Abingdon
- 3 Gausen

Another Geneva connection: John Tuberville Needham (1713-1781)

- He was an English biologist and Roman Catholic priest.
- Experiment seeming to show that there was a life force that produced *spontaneous generation*.
- Popular with d'Holbach's materialism
- Unpopular with Voltaire's deism
 - ❑ L'univers m'embarrasse, et je ne puis songer –
 - ❑ Que cette horloge existe et n'ait point d'horloger
- Debates with C. Bonnet, Spallazani, and Voltaire!



Yet another Geneva connection: Charles Bonnet (1720-1793)

- Letter from Adam Smith to David Hume dated 9 May 1775: “Mr Bonnet, the Gentelman mentioned in the enclosed letter from Mr Clawson, is one of the worthiest, and best hearted men in Geneva or indeed in the world; **notwithstanding he is one of the most religious.**”

