

Colin Kidd,

Ancients, Moderns and the Question of Troy

One of the principal theatres of the Ancients v Moderns debate in the later Scottish Enlightenment concerned the location of Troy. In the 1780s the French scholar Jean-Baptiste Lechevalier, under the influence of his mentor the French Ambassador to Constantinople, Choiseul-Gouffier, challenged conventional interpretations of Troy and its situation. However remote this antiquarian issue seems from the concerns of the Scottish Enlightenment, Lechevalier - championed by Andrew Dalzel, the Professor of Greek at Edinburgh - used the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh* as his principal mouthpiece, and the issue reverberated in its pages. The question also raised in an acute form one of the major issues of the Ancients versus Moderns debate: did the eighteenth-century Moderns, such as Lechevalier, really know classical antiquity better than Ancient tradition, indeed better than the Ancients themselves? The debate over Troy remained one of the major themes of discussion in Scottish erudition well into the nineteenth century, intersecting with the debate over the Elgin Marbles, and involving a range of major figures in Scottish literary circles.