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Crime and law have now been studied by historians of early modern England for more than a generation. *Crime and Mentalities in Early Modern England*, however, attempts to reach further than most conventional treatments of the subject, to explore the cultural contexts of law-breaking and criminal prosecution, and to recover their hidden social meanings. In this sense the book is more than just a 'history from below': it is a history from *within*.

Conversely, the book exploits crime to shed light on the long-term development of English mentalities in general. To this end, three serious crimes – witchcraft, coining (counterfeiting and coin-clipping) and murder – are examined in detail, using a wide range of primary sources, revealing new and important insights into how religious reform, state formation, secularisation, and social and cultural change (for example, the spread of literacy and the availability of print) may have transformed the thinking and outlook of most ordinary people between 1550 and 1750.

MALCOLM GASKILL is Fellow and Director of Studies in History, Churchill College, Cambridge.

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For Rosamond

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While the notion of mentalities originated as an ethnographic problem, it is . . . of very general applicability and concerns the historian, the psychologist and the philosopher of science as much as the social anthropologist.

G. E. R. Lloyd, *Demystifying mentalities*

Cultural history achieves most coherence and makes most sense when it is viewed as a kind of retrospective ethnography in which the historian studies the past in a frame of mind similar to that of an anthropologist studying an alien society.

Keith Thomas, 'Ways of doing cultural history', in Rik Sanders *et al.* (eds.), *Balans en Perspectief van de Nederlandse Cultuurgeschiedenis*

[It is] those aspects of a society which appear to contemporaries as wholly 'natural' and matter-of-course which often leave the most imperfect historical evidence . . . One way to discover unspoken norms is often to examine the *untypical* episode or situation.

E. P. Thompson, 'History and anthropology', in *Persons and polemics: historical essays*

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ABBREVIATIONS

Add.	Additional
APC	<i>Acts of the Privy Council</i>
<i>Arch. Cant.</i>	<i>Archaeologia Cantiana</i>
BIHR	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
BL	British Library
BNJ	<i>British Numismatic Journal</i>
C&C	<i>Continuity and Change</i>
CCDRO	Canterbury Cathedral Diocesan Record Office
CJ	Chief Justice
<i>CJH</i>	<i>Criminal Justice History</i>
CJKB	Chief Justice of the King's Bench
CKS	Centre for Kentish Studies
CPR	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls</i>
CRO	Cambridgeshire Record Office
CSPD	<i>Calendar of State Papers Domestic</i>
CTB	<i>Calendar of Treasury Books</i>
CTP	<i>Calendar of Treasury Papers</i>
CUL	Cambridge University Library
DNB	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>ECHR</i>	<i>Economic History Review</i>
EDR	Ely Diocesan Records
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
ESRO	East Sussex Record Office
<i>Gent. Mag.</i>	<i>Gentleman's Magazine</i>
Harl.	Harleian
<i>HJ</i>	<i>Historical Journal</i>
HLRO	House of Lords Records Office
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
IAHCCJ	International Association for the History of Crime and Criminal Justice
JBS	<i>Journal of British Studies</i>

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<i>JHC</i>	<i>Journals of the House of Commons</i>
<i>JHL</i>	<i>Journals of the House of Lords</i>
<i>JKB</i>	Justice of the King's Bench
<i>JMH</i>	<i>Journal of Modern History</i>
<i>JP</i>	Justice of the Peace
<i>KB</i>	King's Bench
<i>Lansd.</i>	Lansdowne
<i>LCJ</i>	Lord Chief Justice
<i>NC</i>	<i>Numismatic Chronicle</i>
<i>P&P</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>PRO</i>	Public Record Office
<i>RO</i>	Record Office
<i>TLS</i>	<i>Times Literary Supplement</i>
<i>TRHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>

NOTE

All quotations from primary printed and manuscript sources adhere to the original spelling. Where necessary, punctuation has been modernized to assist meaning.

All dates in the text are rendered according to the New Style calendar, with the year taken to start on 1 January.