The varieties of British political thought, 1500–1800

There is at present no overall history of English and British political thought and literature in the early modern period, although new approaches to the writing of its history have taken shape in the past forty to fifty years; and during that time British political history has itself been subjected to intensive revision.

This volume, written by directors of seminars at the Folger Institute Center for the History of British Political Thought in Washington DC, attempts to review the period from the English Reformation to the French Revolution, to suggest new ways of studying the articulation of political consciousness and the conduct of political argument, and to point out the extraordinary intellectual and linguistic richness of the ongoing English and British political debate.
The varieties of British political thought, 1500–1800

Edited by
J. G. A. Pocock

with the assistance of
Gordon J. Schochet and Lois G. Schwoerer

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for it to sponsor seminars, conferences and lectures from 1984 to the present. It enabled the Steering Committee to appoint Directors of the seminars and permitted the Directors of the initial series of six seminars, conducted over the three years 1984–7, to invite a number of distinguished scholars in the field to take part in their respective seminars. We thank those Directors and with them express our gratitude to their visiting scholars; the presentations of visiting scholars, together with those of participating members of the several seminars, form the basis of the six volumes of proceedings which Gordon J. Schochet has edited for distribution by The Folger Institute. The publication of


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The present volume grew out of the conviction that the Directors of the initial six seminars, with other scholars who have directed seminars from time to time, should seek to organize and articulate the fruits of their own studies and those of participants in their seminars in the form of a volume of essays surveying the history of British political thought as it has been examined by the Center. The resulting volume has taken time to assemble. The editors are grateful to their colleagues and fellow contributors for their patience and hard work in the course of bringing it together. They also thank the staff at the Cambridge University Press for smoothing the road to publication.

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