negotiating power in early modern society

This book addresses the dynamics of power in early modern societies and challenges the existing tendency to see past societies in terms of binary oppositions – such as male/female, rich/poor, rulers/ruled – in which the disadvantaged have influence only in moments of direct confrontation.

Drawing on recent social theory, the essays offer a series of micro-sociologies of power in early modern society, ranging from the politics of age, gender and class to the politics of state formation in the post-Reformation confessional state. They explore the weapons with which subordinated groups in their everyday lives could moderate the exercise of power over them. Recovering the agency of the disadvantaged, the book also explores the limits to the power that the disadvantaged could claim in the past. Its findings have relevance for thinking about inequality in present-day societies.

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Acknowledgements

Mike Braddick would like to thank the Huntington Library for the award of a Mayers Fellowship which supported the work on which his chapter was based; and the Nuffield Foundation for the award of a Social Science Fellowship. It was during his tenure of the Nuffield fellowship that much of the original work of assembling the collection was undertaken. The collection came together while he was a fellow at the Max-Planck-Institut für europäische Rechtsgeschichte in Frankfurt. He is grateful to the Department of History at the University of Sheffield for allowing him periods both of study leave and special leave which enabled him to take up these fellowships. Both editors would like to thank Cambridge University Press, in particular William Davies for his patience and indulgence and Nancy Hynes for her very careful and thorough copy-editing of the typescript.
Abbreviations and conventions

APC  Acts of the Privy Council
BL  British Library
CLRO  Corporation of London Record Office
CSPD  Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series
DNB  Dictionary of National Biography
ERO  Essex County Record Office
Guildhall  Guildhall Library, London
HEH  Henry E. Huntington Library
HJ  Historical Journal
HLO  Huntington Library Quarterly
HMC  Historical Manuscripts Commission
JBS  Journal of British Studies
LMA  London Metropolitan Archives
LPL  Lambeth Palace Library
PP  Past and Present
PRO  Public Record Office
RO  Record Office
SR  Statutes of the Realm

Dates are given old style but with the new year taken to begin on 1 January. Where possible original spelling has been preserved in quotations. Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.