Arguments about the place and practice of the duel in early modern England were widespread. The distinguished intellectual historian Markku Peltonen examines this debate, and shows how the moral and ideological status of duelling was discussed within a much larger cultural context of courtesy, civility and politeness. The advocates of the duel, following Italian and French examples, contended that it maintained and enhanced politeness; its critics by contrast increasingly severed duelling from civility, and this separation became part of a vigorous attempt in the late seventeenth century and beyond to redefine civility, politeness and indeed the nature and evolution of Englishness. The book ends with a detailed and original analysis of Bernard Mandeville’s influential theory of politeness, to which duelling was central. To understand the duel is to understand much more fully some crucial issues in the cultural and ideological history of Stuart England, and Markku Peltonen’s study will thus engage the attention of a very wide audience of historians, cultural and literary scholars.

Markku Peltonen is Senior Lecturer in General History at the University of Helsinki. His previous publications include Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought (Cambridge, 1995) and he has also edited The Cambridge Companion to Bacon (Cambridge, 1996).
The books in this series will discuss the emergence of intellectual traditions and of related new disciplines. The procedures, aims and vocabularies that were generated will be set in the context of the alternatives available within the contemporary frameworks of ideas and institutions. Through detailed studies of the evolution of such traditions, and their modification by different audiences, it is hoped that a new picture will form of the development of ideas in their concrete contexts. By this means, artificial distinctions between the history of philosophy, of the various sciences, of society and politics, and of literature may be seen to dissolve.

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A list of books in the series will be found at the end of the volume.
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The Duel in Early Modern England
THE DUEL IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

Civility, Politeness and Honour

MARKKU PELTONEN
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