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.

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CRIME AND MENTALITIES IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

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

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

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.