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PETER COSS is Professor of Medieval History, School of History and Archaeology, Cardiff University.

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Preface

All but one of the essays presented in this volume are based on papers delivered to a Past and Present conference on *The Moral World of the Law* held at the University of Birmingham on 12 and 13 July 1996 and organised jointly by Chris Wickham and myself. The one exception was specially commissioned from Andrew Lewis and I am most grateful to him for stepping in to plug a potential gap in the volume's coverage. I owe him a second debt of gratitude for suggesting the very apt cover illustration. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking, on behalf of myself and my co-organiser, all those who gave papers to the conference, whether represented here or not, and of thanking both them and the many other participants whose lively and informed discussion helped to make the conference a notable success. Special thanks are due to Chris Wickham for his aid and generosity during the editing of this volume, to Joanna Innes for her helpful criticisms, to Charles Philpin for his ever welcome advice, and to my wife, Angela Coss, for compiling the index.

P. R. C.