

Introduction

‘A Hundred Gates Open for Entrance’

For almost a thousand miles, the deep Godavari River snakes its way across the breadth of subcontinental India. As it descends from the Eastern Ghats towards the Bay of Bengal, it splinters and breaks into a number of tributaries to form a sprawling river basin, second in extent only to the Ganges. In the seventeenth century, the Godavari delta was an affluent commercial region of the sultanate of Golconda, a great south Indian Muslim state centred on the Deccan. The Qutb Shahi dynasty that had carved out its domain here in the early sixteenth century ruled over a culturally, politically and religiously diverse land that included a Hindu population speaking the native Telugu, governed by an Islamic Persianate elite, perhaps best illustrated by the adoption of a bi-lingual administration, with royal documents issued in both Persian and Telugu.¹

Six miles from the Bay, the Godavari curves sharply before it empties out into the vast azure of the sea. Nestled on this lowland bend sat the town of Narsapur, famous for its ‘madapollam’ cotton piece goods that became the region’s principal export.² At the beginning of the seventeenth century, this inevitably attracted the European East India Companies, including the Dutch *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC) and, from 1611, the English East India Company, seeking to partake in the lucrative textile trade.³ This was facilitated by the ponds of water which dotted the region, ‘where the washers were whitening of cloth’, as well as the town’s burgeoning shipbuilding industry which attracted Golcondan, Mughal, Siamese, Dutch and English merchants.⁴ By the mid-seventeenth century, Narsapur had emerged as an important centre

¹ Richard M. Eaton, *A Social History of the Deccan, 1300–1761* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 145.

² Vijaya Ramaswamy, ‘The Genesis and Historical Role of the Master Weavers in South India Textile Production’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 28, no. 3 (1985), p. 303.

³ Chris Nierstrasz, *Rivalry for Trade in Tea and Textiles: The English and Dutch East India Companies (1700–1800)* (Basingstoke, 2015), p. 10 and p. 158.

⁴ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ‘A Note on Narsapur Peta: A “Syncretic” Shipbuilding Centre in South India, 1570–1700’, *Journal of the Economy and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 31, no. 3 (1988), p. 307; Sir Richard Carnac Temple, ed., *The Diaries of Streysham Master, 1675–1680* (London, 1911, 2 volumes), Madapollam, 9 April 1679 (hereafter DSM).

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of production and trade, home to perhaps some 10,000 people.⁵ As a frequent visitor to the region, the English merchant Thomas Bowrey observed in the 1670s that the ‘great Masse of riches these lands Enjoyed . . . caused the Christian Nations to Settle and trade here’.⁶

Despite being a relatively new element in Narsapur, the Dutch and English communities quickly established homes, estates and families in the town and surrounding countryside. When he passed through in the 1670s, the English agent of Madras Streynsham Master described it as ‘a very pleasant country’, noting the sheer number of Europeans who had put down roots and immersed themselves in the cultural, economic and political life of the region.⁷ The homes of the most influential Europeans lined the river bank, and by far the largest of these was that of Robert Fleetwood. His ‘faire great house’ was built of brick and sat amidst sprawling gardens, its status reflecting the fact that from 1671 this Englishman was both chief of the English factory and a Golcondan governor.⁸ Fleetwood had married Margery Winter, the *mestizo* or Eurasian daughter of an Indo-Portuguese woman and her husband, Sir Edward Winter, previously an agent of Madras further down the Coast. Together, the Fleetwoods produced a ‘Numerous’ multiracial family that filled the rooms of their sumptuous estate.⁹ This kinship group, crossing multiple ethnic, cultural and linguistic borders, enabled Robert Fleetwood to establish lucrative social and commercial networks throughout the Godavari delta. The ‘great house’, as both the home of an English chief and the residence of a Golcondan official, therefore stood as a symbol of the way in which the English Company was able to flourish within the carapace of powerful and affluent Asian states. This was best encapsulated by the visit of the Golcondan sultan himself, Abdul Hasan Qutb Shah, who, when passing through Narsapur in 1678, chose to stay at Fleetwood’s house. He was, one Company servant observed, ‘much taken with [the house], praising it severall tymes, and saying when he came next from Golcondah he would take up his residence therein’.¹⁰ As Fleetwood’s experience in the Godavari delta illustrates, the world of the Company servant in Asia was a culturally amorphous and politically entangled one.

The overlapping loyalties and complex associations which bound English agents into local economic and political structures in Asia were not tenuous or

⁵ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ‘Rural Industry and Commercial Agriculture in Late Seventeenth Century South Eastern India’, *Past and Present*, no. 126 (February, 1990), p. 97.

⁶ Sir Richard Carnac Temple and Thomas Bowrey, eds., *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal, 1669 to 1679* (Cambridge, 1903), p. 109.

⁷ DSM, 15 April 1679.

⁸ BL, APAC, IOR/G/26/1, ‘Concerning the Company’s Servants and Current Events at Masulipatam’, 1676.

⁹ BL, APAC, IOR/G/26/12, Major William Puckle’s Diary, consultation at Masulipatam, 13 December 1675.

¹⁰ BL, APAC, IOR/G/26/2, consultation at Masulipatam, 25 December 1678.

marginal, either. Robert Fleetwood rapidly expanded his position in the Godavari hierarchy within a short space of time. In 1670, ‘without the advise of the Agent and Councill of Ffort St George’, Fleetwood had nonetheless ‘contracted with the King of Golcundah’ for the right to govern Narsapur.¹¹ In exchange for an annual rent of 115 pagodas, Fleetwood’s government over the town allowed him possession of the territory encompassing the Company’s factory and ‘ye river by wch means he can ship of Goods without asking leave of any Governr or be stopt by them’.¹² In this respect, Fleetwood became the Company’s Golcondan landlord at Madapollam.

Capitalising on Narsapur’s prosperous revenues from cloth production, much of which was then sold to the Company, Fleetwood began to raise substantial sums from local merchants in order to invest 10,000 pagodas in trading ventures. These creditors included the political and mercantile elite of the region, such as the governor of Masulipatam Agha Jalal and his deputy, as well as the prominent Mughal merchant Mir Jamal Muhammad.¹³ Fleetwood had vessels built at the Narsapur shipyard and recruited English and Indian sailors to crew his trading voyages as far afield as Persia. His success in integrating the commercial and political worlds of Golconda and the Company at Narsapur soon emboldened him to expand. In 1672 he again ‘contracted’ with the sultan to purchase the rights to farm the tax of the neighbouring town of Veeravasaram, about eight miles north of Narsapur, for the sum of 300 pagodas. Within two years he was able to quadruple the revenue collected from the town, benefitting from the subsequent establishment of a new Company factory there that was no doubt largely facilitated by Fleetwood himself in his role as chief. By 1675 he had further ‘contracted with the King of Golconda for the Farme of severall towns and Lands’, acquiring two more territories to add to his growing fiefdom.¹⁴ Nestled in the Godavari delta and sustained through the patronage and capital of his transcultural networks, Fleetwood’s lucrative jurisdiction was a hybrid political construct born out of his duality as the English chief and a regional Golcondan official. The sultan of Golconda’s visit, then, was not just to the home of Chief Fleetwood of the English East India Company but to tax-collector Fleetwood, the increasingly powerful Golcondan official who had become ‘obliged to pay a greate Summe of money yearly to the [Golcondan] King’ and whose interests were being consolidated throughout the delta.¹⁵

¹¹ BL, APAC, IOR/G/26/12, Major William Puckle’s Diary, consultation at Masulipatam, 28 July 1675.

¹² BL, APAC, IOR/G/26/12, Major William Puckle’s Diary, consultation at Masulipatam, 13 December 1675.

¹³ BL, APAC, IOR/G/26/1, consultation at Masulipatam, 4 January 1677.

¹⁴ BL, APAC, IOR/G/26/1, consultation at Masulipatam, 28 July 1675. ¹⁵ Ibid.

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The experiences of Robert Fleetwood in the riverine worlds of Golconda demonstrate perhaps more than anything else that the acquisition and exercise of wealth and power by Europeans in Asia was achieved largely through blending together the often competing interests of the English nation state and its corporate arm in Europe with the more local and regional interests of Asian states and their elites. As English agents such as Fleetwood were drawn deeper into local systems of trade and structures of government, so too were their employers, whether willingly or otherwise. Witnessing the astonishing success of Robert Fleetwood in entrenching himself in the Godavari delta, the committees wrote to the governor of Madras from their headquarters at East India House in London, ordering him to investigate ‘the whole business of the Farmes’ to see whether the Company could acquire Fleetwood’s rights and privileges, and to make a report on whether their government over the territories would ‘tend to Our proffitt and advantage’.¹⁶ Having toured the various towns within Fleetwood’s jurisdiction, the chief of Masulipatam, Major William Puckle, concluded that they ‘would bee much to the Companys interest and advantage to rent’, and Fleetwood was duly ordered to hand them over to the Company.¹⁷ As a result of the thriving transcultural¹⁸ networks of its agent, the Company was now no longer just a foreign commercial organisation operating out of the Godavari delta but a legitimate cog in the wider Golcondan regime, exercising government over prosperous urban centres, collecting taxation from thousands of Asian subjects but also doing so in the service of the Golcondan sultan. As for Fleetwood himself, he was allowed to remain in possession of Narsapur, on account that ‘he could not easily remove his Numerous family’ from that town, and also because Major Puckle argued on his behalf that the retention ‘of the little village wherein he lives’ would not have been ‘prejudiciall to the Companys affairs’.¹⁹ And indeed Fleetwood and his ‘numerous’ family remained at Narsapur until his death the following year, when his widow Margery remarried another Company servant from the Madapollam factory, who himself then took over the government of Narsapur, ensuring its possession remained within the family.²⁰

¹⁶ BL, APAC, IOR/E/3/88, court of committees to Madras, 24 December 1675.

¹⁷ BL, APAC, IOR/G/26/12, consultation at Madras, [?] 1674.

¹⁸ This book purposefully adopts ‘transcultural’ instead of ‘cross-cultural’, the latter predominantly referring to the interaction between contrasting cultures, as opposed to transcultural which more appropriately describes the merging of cultural practices, identities and values, a process studied in the following chapters. Nonetheless, historians have predominantly adopted these terms in an interchangeable manner. Dominic Sachsenmaier, ‘World History as Ecumenical History?’ *Journal of World History*, vol. 18, no. 4 (December, 2007), pp. 465–489.

¹⁹ BL, APAC, IOR/G/26/12, Robert Fleetwood to Masulipatam, Madapollam, 13 December 1675.

²⁰ Records of Fort St George, *Diary and Consultation Book* (Madras, 1910–1943, 85 volumes), consultation at Madras, 15 April 1679 (hereafter DCB).

This book reconsiders the origins of the British Empire in Asia. It does so by challenging traditional understandings of European ‘expansion’ as a process which occurred against Asian states, whether through the projection of maritime force, aggressive commercial monopolisation or the carving out of independent, fortified jurisdictions – just some of the usual suspects historians look to in explaining European success in Asia. However, rather than expanding at the expense of Asian ‘rivals’, this book reveals the ways in which the British Empire emerged gradually as a process of political and economic enfranchisement at the hands of Asian communities and their elites, who integrated individual Europeans into their commercial and social hierarchies and political structures, and empowered them – and by extension their corporate employers – with a dazzling array of rights and privileges. From the power to exercise judicial authority, tax subjects, build forts, trade customs free and govern jurisdictions, these constitutional concessions sustained and expanded the English Company’s presence at the heart of some of the world’s most powerful empires. In India, for instance, over the course of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries substantial centres of Company government and trade emerged in regions such as the Coromandel Coast and Bengal. And yet the mighty Mughal Empire, at the height of its power in this period, had no more room for an English ‘colony’ in its midst than England did a Mughal one. What the Mughals were willing to accommodate, however, was a subordinate and productive European presence that contributed to the economic vitality and political consolidation of the empire, whilst simultaneously acknowledging the sovereignty of the emperor and maintaining social and commercial ties with regional elites on both a personal and official level. The English East India Companies did not grow outside, or at the expense of, the Asian states that they came into contact with but rather flourished within the carapace of their expansive Asian hosts. In this sense, this book emphasises the Asian genesis of the British Empire.

The following pages tell the story of how servants of the struggling and failing English East India Company eventually learned to abandon ineffective and unsustainable mercantilist strategies of force and monopoly in the early seventeenth century, and instead embraced the need to adapt to their cultural and political surroundings in Asia. After much fumbling about, individual Europeans eventually learned to cultivate the ties that unlocked commercial and political success in Asia, for themselves and their employers. They married into prominent Asian families, established expansive transcultural kinship networks, opened up crucial sources of credit and capital, maintained social and business partnerships with Asian elites, became part of local and regional commercial enterprises to acquire the knowledge, expertise and legitimacy to operate in the intricate and complex trading and diplomatic landscapes of Asia, and utilised their influence to obtain important political

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offices and privileges for themselves and their families. Whilst such a degree of integration was often actively and even violently resisted by their corporate employers in Europe, concerned as metropolitan authorities always were with notions of ‘corruption’ and ‘going-native’, the eventual success of their servants on the ground pulled the Company’s official presence further into the affairs of Asian states and their communities – both willingly and reluctantly – and firmly entrenched them in the region, much to their advantage. Learning to accommodate the private ambitions of their servants by the later seventeenth century, the Company was eventually able to utilise their expansive networks to acquire and maintain large jurisdictions of its own in Asia, and particularly in India: governing cities, building fortresses, trading freely and enjoying the patronage of powerful rulers. By the early eighteenth century, the English Company emerged as the most successful European presence in Asia, and by far the largest trader in Asian goods. If this book is primarily about the Asian genesis of the British Empire, then it is of necessity also an exploration of the decentred nature of early modern empire, in which the national and imperial aims of European states in Asia were more often than not reshaped by the interests, demands and affairs of those on the spot who had to contend with, accommodate and even serve a broad range of non-European actors with the power to make or break them.

Of course, the argument put forward by this book flies in the face of the almost sacred role ascribed to the West European nation-state in overseas expansion. Buoyed up by the dramatic examples of the Iberian empires in the Atlantic in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the more modern dominance of the British, French and Dutch in Asia in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, historians have for many years accepted the strength and capabilities of the European nation-state to project itself as an almost incontrovertible truth, believing that European expansion overseas was the natural product of the expansion of the European state system itself, whether fiscally, militarily, technologically or ideologically.²¹ The centralisation of these resources and the conceptualisation of the state as an institutional monopoly over the means and uses of violence shaped the parameters by which we understand state formation and judge the capabilities of the state itself, in which Europe supposedly achieved a fiscal-military advantage which allowed it to overwhelm the non-European world.²² From this Eurocentric

²¹ Charles H. Parker, *Global Interactions in the Early Modern Age, 1400–1800* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 15. Such arguments often adopt the European ‘military revolution’ thesis, and its supposed export overseas, see for example Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, 1988), especially chapter 4.

²² Charles Tilly, ‘War Making and State Making as Organized Crime’, in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 169–191; John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State*,

perspective, Europe's East India Companies are often depicted as effective arms of this extra-European capability, applying lethal maritime force and superior capital organisation to monopolise Asia's markets and conquer its most productive and fertile regions, as in the Dutch VOC's colonisation of Southeast Asia's archipelagos in the seventeenth century or the English Company's territorial expansion in India after 1757.²³

The centrality of the state and of national interests in determining the shape and form of overseas enterprises has thankfully begun to be questioned by historians as they recognise the substantial limitations of the early modern state. After all, Whitehall, the heart of the English state, employed hardly more than a thousand people in the seventeenth century, with government relying predominantly on 'amateur, part-time and unsalaried' provincial officials.²⁴ The unstable fiscal-military dynamics of the English state also ensured that the projection of its power remained heavily circumscribed throughout this period, even in Europe, let alone further afield. From the disintegration of the army sent by James I to intervene in the Thirty Years War, to the financial extremities of Charles II which mothballed the Royal Navy and allowed the Dutch to sail up the Medway with impunity and burn the English fleet, the English state was simply unable to sustain serious projections of force.²⁵ Lacking the means itself, the Stuart state outsourced overseas expansion to a range of constitutionally autonomous entities, 'to make the risks and expense bearable'.²⁶ Through the mechanism of the letter patent, the crown granted charters to corporations and proprietorships to nobles to colonise overseas territories or maintain commercial monopolies. Proprietary grants were used widely in the Atlantic in the seventeenth century, establishing colonies in Maryland, New York and the Carolinas, while charters set up corporations to maintain jurisdictions and monopolies elsewhere, notably the Muscovy Company in Russia, the Levant Company in the Eastern Mediterranean and, of course, the East India Company in Asia.²⁷ It has even been argued that the latter was not just an arm of the English state from 1600 onwards, either, but acted as a body politic in its own

1688–1783 (London, 1989); Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1997).

²³ For a critique of Eurocentrism in this context, see Maxine Berg, ed., *Writing the History of the Global* (Oxford, 2013), p. 5.

²⁴ Mark Goldie, 'The Unacknowledged Republic: Officeholding in Early Modern England', in Tim Harris, ed., *The Politics of the Excluded, c. 1500–1850* (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 154.

²⁵ David Scott, *Leviathan: The Rise of Britain as a World Power* (London, 2013), p. 133; J. R. Jones, *The Anglo-Dutch Wars of the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1996), pp. 174–177.

²⁶ Rupali Mishra, *A Business of State: Commerce, Politics and the Birth of the East India Company* (Cambridge, MA, 2018), p. 19.

²⁷ For an overview of many of these and the mechanisms through which they were developed, see William Pettigrew and David Veevers, eds., *The Corporation as a Protagonist in Global History, c1550–1750* (Leiden, 2018).

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right, ‘neither tethered to supposedly broader national histories, nor as an imitation, extension, or reflection of the nation state’, and indeed should be viewed as a ‘Company-state’ with its own sovereign power.²⁸ Alongside proprietary grants and chartered companies also existed a host of private overseas initiatives, as L. H. Roper has recently emphasised, directed by ‘a cohort of aristocrats and merchants’ who planned, financed and launched numerous schemes of colonisation, monopolisation and exploration across the globe.²⁹

Yet if these new avenues in research have made it possible to move beyond the narrow scope of the state when considering the origins of the British empire, they continue to place the overseas development of these various entities firmly within a metropolitan or European context, with English officials, ideas and domestic political and social currents centrifugally disseminating from Europe to determine English interests overseas. Figures representing City and court, men such as Maurice Thompson or the earl of Warwick, and the factional or commercial interests which dictated their overseas projects, loom large in any analysis of the subsequent development of the latter.³⁰ When it comes to the East India Company, historians fetishise and privilege the role of crown charters as the decisive factor in its development overseas, with some emphasising the continuous need for Company leadership to petition the crown for new powers, often for each separate voyage to Asia, a dynamic which ensured ‘Company and crown worked together’.³¹ From this perspective, therefore, the development and growth of the Company in Asia was largely determined by national interests and the domestic forces of a faraway European metropole. Even those historians who have placed more emphasis on the Company’s independence from the state still depict it operating like a great ‘chain of command’ tying the various regions of Asia firmly to London, bound together with ‘institutional unity and unanimity’ through a ‘constant circulation of people, things, and documents’.³² The latter has been given particular attention as a tool for ensuring control and conformity by servants in Asia to their superiors in Europe. According to Miles Ogborn, as a long-distance bureaucratic institution, the Company’s reliance on writing and accounting meant that they acted as ‘forms of knowledge and power’, and the success in regulating these practices by the Company’s leadership created

²⁸ Philip J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (Oxford, 2011), p. 6.

²⁹ L. H. Roper, *Advancing Empire: English Interests and Overseas Expansion, 1613–1688* (Cambridge, 2017), p. 2.

³⁰ This is most evidenced in Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London’s Overseas Traders, 1550–1653* (London, 1993). See also Roper, *Advancing Empire*, particularly chapters 2–4.

³¹ Mishra, *A Business of State*, p. 177. ³² Stern, *Company-State*, p. 11.

‘social collectivity, order, and authority’ throughout its settlements, rendering those in Asia as obedient public servants carrying out metropolitan demands.³³ However, one need only glance at the Company’s records to discover ‘a far more chaotic reality’, as Anna Winterbottom has termed it.³⁴

Indeed, English crown charters, chains of command and institutional practices mattered more in the minds and actions of ministers, committees and shareholders in Europe, and did not reflect actual developments on the ground in Asia. In fact, the limited resources of the Company for much of the seventeenth century ‘deprived it of an overarching administration with a clear chain of command and a permanent base’, with servants largely left to their own initiatives to establish the Company in Asia.³⁵ When one crossed the Cape of Good Hope into the Indian Ocean, wielding a charter from Charles II outlawing interlopers, for instance, meant very little to the Indian prince within whose sprawling jurisdiction interlopers lived, did business and received patronage and protection from elites. Although Philip J. Stern has pointed out that the Company’s development ‘rested in a complex amalgam of English charters, Asian grants, and its own deliberate and aggressive political behavior’, much less attention has been paid to how the Company negotiated, acquired and utilised these Asian grants, let alone at the very least attributing to them a significant place alongside their domestic English equivalents.³⁶ And yet, as William Pettigrew has made clear, it was the ‘array of grants from Asian officials and rulers’ which actually made possible the Company’s ‘right to mint money, to trade without paying customs, and to set-up trading factories and forts, to exercise legal jurisdiction over its employees and a growing range of Company subjects, and to establish its rule over towns and settlements.’³⁷ Charters from its domicile nation-state proved just one central strand in a sprawling web of non-European constitutional and judicial rights which allowed the Company to operate in Asia. The outer threads of this web, the multitude of grants, *farmans* and treaties offered by Asian states, elites and communities, proved more decisive in forming the overall shape of the web, anchoring the Company legitimately and securely within a diverse range of political and economic structures in Asia. However, when the Company’s leaders in London or indeed the crown itself directly dispatched ambassadors to Asian courts to obtain such grants, negotiations always ended in complete

³³ Miles Ogborn, *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company* (London, 2007), p. 72.

³⁴ Anna Winterbottom, ‘Company Culture: Information, Scholarship, and the East India Company Settlements 1660–1720s’ (PhD dissertation, University of London, 2010), p. 8.

³⁵ Roper, *Advancing Empire*, p. 90. ³⁶ Stern, *Company-State*, p. 6.

³⁷ William A. Pettigrew, ‘Corporate Constitutionalism and the Dialogue between the Global and the Local in Seventeenth-Century English History’, *Itinerario*, vol. 39, no. 3 (January, 2016), p. 491.

failure, from Thomas Roe in the early seventeenth century to Sir William Norris at the turn of the eighteenth century.³⁸

If the driving force behind the Company's presence and growth in Asia in the early modern period was neither the English (and, later, British) state nor the corporate interests of Company leaders and shareholders in the English metropole, who or what, then, was capable of integrating the Company into Asian state and society on a scale that allowed for the negotiation and acquisition of this complex web of rights and privileges? The answer may be found by returning to the domestic English state, where historians have succeeded in reconceptualising the key agents of the state formation process. In the absence of a capable, centrifugal state in early modern England, state power was embodied, actualised and exercised by a range of provincial constituents, including urban elites, magistrates, parish officials and the gentry, all of whom were enfranchised by the communities within which they operated. Michael Braddick has argued that 'the exercise of political power depended on the action of individuals', revealing the crucial role of local office-holders and the social networks they established in English counties.³⁹ Similarly, Phil Withington has reconceptualised early modern English state formation from the centralisation of government or force to the enfranchisement of a network of local corporations and their citizens, a process which eventually created a 'city commonwealth'.⁴⁰ Village office holders and borough officials blurred their private, provincial interests – the acquisition of wealth, patronage for their families and the elevation of their social status – with their more public roles as agents of state authority. Rather than create tension or conflict, the pursuit of parochial interests embedded and strengthened state power in the localities. In other words, the successful negotiation of their position in their local surroundings allowed provincial agents to successfully realise and maintain state interests – the maintenance of order, social conformity, the extraction of revenue and local cooperation with government policies.⁴¹

³⁸ For Thomas Roe's embassy, see Colin Paul Mitchell, *Sir Thomas Roe and the Mughal Empire* (Oxford, 2001). There are no recent studies of Sir William Norris's embassy to India, but for a published account of the manuscript sources, see H. H. Das, ed., *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzib* (Calcutta, 1959).

³⁹ Michael J. Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England, c. 1550–1700* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 27.

⁴⁰ Phil Withington, *The Politics of Commonwealth: Citizens and Freemen in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 266–267.

⁴¹ This has sometimes been termed the 'early modern power grid'. See Michael J. Braddick and John Walter, eds., *Negotiating Power in Early Modern Society: Order, Hierarchy and Subordination in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 39. See also Steve Hindle, *The State and Social Change in Early Modern England, 1550–1640* (Basingstoke, 2000).