



The Rule of Moderation: Violence, Religion and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England

Ethan H. Shagan

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Why was it that whenever the Tudor-Stuart regime most loudly trumpeted its moderation, the regime was at its most vicious? With the answer to this fundamental question at its heart, *The Rule of Moderation* comprehensively rewrites the history of early modern England, showing that many of its key developments—the via media of Anglicanism, the rise of the 'middle sort', the idea of political liberty, the development of empire, the rise of religious toleration—were defined and defended as instances of coercive and aggressive moderation, producing the 'middle way' through the forcible restraint of apparently dangerous excesses in Church, state and society. Ethan Shagan draws on literary and historical sources to illuminate the subtle violence of English history and explain how, paradoxically, England came to represent reason, civility and moderation to a world it slowly conquered. The quintessentially English quality of moderation was, at heart, an ideology of control.

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