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**Servants in husbandry  
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# Servants in husbandry in early modern England

ANN KUSSMAUL

*Glendon College, York University, Toronto*

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TO MY PARENTS

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## *Preface*

It has been seven years since my preliminary thesis notes, ten cassettes, two sleeping bags, a roll of paper towels, a tin of condensed milk, and an English cucumber were stolen from my car in Lyons. The theft brought about the first of several fresh starts to thinking about servants in husbandry. The others were the result of my good fortune in finding a post as lecturer at York University in Toronto, which made it impossible to recall, each May, exactly what I had intended to do the September before. The research, supported for three years by a Canada Council fellowship, took the intermediate form of a thesis between a first set of drafts in 1975–7 and a second set in 1978–80.

In Cambridge from 1973 to 1975 I was able to attend the King's College seminars in social history, organized by Alan Macfarlane and Martin Ingram, and to share thoughts with others, especially Keith Wrightson, John Walter, and David Levine, on what seemed to be an at least theoretically interlocking puzzle, whose parts were the various research projects being done at the time. Back in Toronto, I read preliminary versions of parts of the work at the Economic History Workshop of the University of Toronto and at the Toronto Social History Group, and gained from the critical discussions. I was challenged into the production of a better thesis by John Munro, Andrew Watson, and Scott Eddie, not least by knowing that if I intended to ignore some of their suggestions, I had to present a compelling defence of this position. Karl Helleiner, Abraham Rotstein, John Beattie, Bob Malcolmson, Donna Andrew, Nick Rogers, and Barry Cooper all read the whole or part of various drafts, and offered helpful suggestions, substantive and stylistic. In the two summers since 1978, I was able to return to England, thanks to grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, to continue the research. The revisions took a surprising turn when, in trying to explain the abandonment of farm service in the nineteenth century more amply (Chapter 7), I found myself pulled back into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Chapter 6), where I had begun, by the bank of marriage data drawn from parish registers, kindly made available to me by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social

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Structure, just as the 1851 census had earlier pulled me into the nineteenth century.

The Cambridge Group have been the one constant spanning the seven years' work. It was with their collection of parish listings, at the suggestion of Peter Laslett, that I restarted the research in the summer of 1973, and to their aggregative parish register file that I returned in 1979 and 1980. Peter Laslett, Roger Schofield, Richard Smith, Richard Wall, and Tony Wrigley encouraged and helped me at each stage of the work. Keith Snell and David Souden, research students at the Group in 1979, freely offered extensive and valuable suggestions based on their own research.

I visited too many county record offices to risk slighting some by praising others. None was unhelpful; I shall single out for specific thanks only one, the Lincolnshire Archives, and Miss Judith Cripps, then archivist there, and do so because it is hard to separate the joy of finding a rare record, in this case the astonishing Holland Statute Sessions lists, from gratefulness to those who made the discovery possible.

I must not be the first author to have been handling editor's queries about the consistency of form of the bibliography and endnotes whilst writing the preface: I believe I will be very grateful to the staff of the Cambridge University Press in a few months' time. Bernice Eisenstein typed the draft that became the thesis in great spirits, and the typing pool at York must be glad that it is all about to end. Oh yes, the thesis notes were eventually recovered and mailed to me by the Lyons police. No trace was found of the cucumber.

*Cambridge, August 1980*