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978-1-107-61938-8 - The Wealth of the Gentry 1540-1660: East Anglian Studies

Alan Simpson

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PREFACE

IT is a pleasure to acknowledge the stimulation and help I have received in my excursions into the economics of family history. My debt to the historians of the gentry—rising or otherwise—is sufficiently obvious and my dissent from some of their views argues no lack of admiration. I owe my introduction to estate documents to my friend and colleague R. C. Bald, who drew my attention to the Bacon manuscripts which the University of Chicago acquired from Redgrave Hall a generation ago and in which Professor Bald discovered the materials for his study of *Donne and the Drurys* (Cambridge University Press, 1959). My efforts to familiarise myself with the East Anglian scene and its archives were greatly helped by the courtesy of Mrs Alan Rowe, The Elms, Ixworth, Suffolk; Mr Martin Statham, of the Bury St Edmund's and West Suffolk Record Office; Mr Dereck Charman, of the Ipswich and East Suffolk Record Office, Mr Hepworth of the Norwich City Library, Captain Anthony Hammond, of Mousehold House, Norwich; Sir Edmond Bacon, of Raveningham Hall, Norfolk; Mr R. W. Ketton-Cremer, of Felbrigge Hall, Norfolk; Mr John Holt Wilson, of Snape Hill, Rickingham, Suffolk; Mrs John Holt Wilson, of Broomhills, Rickingham, Suffolk; the Earl of Iveagh, of Elveden Hall, Suffolk; Mr Basil Cozens-Hardy, of Letheringsett, Norfolk; Mr T. F. Barton, of 16 Albemarle Road, Norwich; Professor Bruce Dickins, of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge; and others whom I have tried to thank in the text. I trust that the occasional solecisms in local allusions will be forgiven to a stranger.

I also trust that the charity which the ablest blunderer in estate documents must ask for himself will be extended to other perplexed pilgrims. The possibilities of error in the attempt to reconstruct the finances of the gentry are large and forbidding. For the delays in the publication of this study, and for any unfamiliarity with very recent work, I have only myself to blame; a change in duties obliged me to set it aside.

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Preface

My particular thanks are due to one or two others: to Professor Michael Postan who taught me how to read a medieval roll; to Professors H. J. Habakkuk and Herbert Heaton who read this manuscript; to a succession of students who shared in my encounters with accounts—Kenneth Dodd, Ronald Matthias, Ernest Sandeen, James Farnell; to the Social Science Research Committee of the University of Chicago, which made my visits to England possible; and to my wife, whose indulgence for these researches was only equalled by her incredulity that anyone should undertake them.

ALAN SIMPSON

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

14 September 1960

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations have been adopted in the footnotes:

E.S.R.O. East Suffolk Record Office

W.S.R.O. West Suffolk Record Office

H.R.O. Hertford Record Office

N.C.L. Norwich City Library