

“We are All Servants”:
The Diversity of Service in Premodern Europe (1000-1700)

Edited by Isabelle Cochelin and Diane Wolfthal

Service permeated premodern Europe and was a key concept for defining relationships. Unlike earlier volumes on service, “We Are All Servants” explores simultaneously the medieval and early modern periods, and considers service and servants through multiple discourses and in a wide variety of contexts, from courts to anchorholds, and including monastic and hospital settings throughout western Europe. The volume brings together an interdisciplinary and international team of scholars who study a highly diverse group of servants: male and female, young and old, lay and religious, of both high and low status, with few or great expectations for their future.

Advance Praise

Bringing together visual, archival, and normative sources from various parts of Europe, this innovative collection of essays illuminates the degree to which “service” structured the lives of pre-modern people from nearly every echelon of society. It renders visible the lives of those who have long remained invisible and challenges our notions of religious poverty by exposing the degree to which monks, friars, nuns, and recluses depended upon the humble labour of others.
SHARON FARMER, *University of California, Santa Barbara*

By their very definition, servants work at the edges of the events that usually attract historical attention. By putting servants at the centre of analysis, this exciting collection of essays reveals how context, gender, and region shaped life as a servant in medieval Europe. The authors deploy innovative methodologies and diverse source materials to ask insightful questions about the circumstances, intimacies, and vulnerabilities that came with working as a servant.

KATHERINE FRENCH, *University of Michigan*

The essays in this volume bring together a diverse perspective revealing servants and service in Europe from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern period. Using a variety of methodologies and sources, visual and textual, the innovative interpretations provide vital information for scholars. Many chapters include newly discovered evidence revealing the daily lives of servants, secular and religious, who have hitherto been shrouded in opaque invisibility.

ELIZABETH A. LISOT-NELSON, *University of Texas at Tyler*

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