Preface

This book is the result of a decade of work, and the lists of specific tasks and of individual actors involved in its making are both extensive. The foundations were laid by a Leverhulme Trust-funded project on 'Women's Work in Rural England, 1500–1700: A New Methodological Approach' between 2015 and 2019. During this project Jane, as Principal Investigator, and Mark, as a Postdoctoral Researcher, developed the 'work-task methodology', and with the invaluable help of Mark Merry at the Institute of Historical Research, designed the work-task database. During this period Mark (Hailwood) collected and entered the material from the south-west of England, as well as entering coroners' data kindly supplied by Steven Gunn and Tomasz Gromelski from their Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)-funded project on 'Everyday Life and Fatal Hazard in Sixteenth-Century England'. Charmian Mansell also worked on the project in 2017–18 and undertook some important developmental work on the database. This initial project was then followed up with a European Research Council grant to research 'Forms of Labour: Gender, Freedom, and Experience of Work in the Preindustrial Economy', with Jane as Principal Investigator and Mark as Co-Investigator, one strand of which provided the resources to expand the work-task dataset. Hannah and Taylor were hired as Postdoctoral Researchers, and between 2019 and 2022 they collected and entered new data from the north and east of England, with Hannah concentrating on church court records and Taylor on quarter sessions material. In this phase Ian Wellaway at the University of Exeter provided valuable help in improving the design of the database, and the broader Forms of Labour project team – Vivienne Bates, James Fisher, Li Jiang, and Grace Owen – all supplied helpful advice and support through regular project meetings. After the completion of the data collection in late 2022, Jane, Mark, Hannah, and Taylor worked together analysing the data and writing this book. All parts of the book have received input from all four authors, and it very much represents a collective endeavour. Each chapter was made the primary responsibility of at least one author, who undertook the main

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bulk of drafting and analysis, and readers might find it helpful to know who those were for the purposes of directing queries or seeking out follow-up conversations: Introduction – Jane; Chapter 1 – Mark; Chapter 2 – Mark; Chapter 3 – Jane, with Section 3.3 by Mark; Chapter 4 – Taylor, with Section 4.4 by Mark; Chapter 5 – Jane (housework) and Hannah (carework); Chapter 6 – Jane; Chapter 7 – Taylor; Chapter 8 – Hannah; Conclusion – Jane.

Throughout this book gender is treated as a binary distinction between females and males. This is for ease of analysis and adopts the common understanding of gender in early modern England. It is not intended to imply that this is the only way that gender difference exists or can be understood.

Developing and applying a new methodological approach relies on a considerable amount of advice and feedback from experts in the field who understand the issues and the sources, and we have benefited enormously from the critical engagement and generous encouragement of our fellow historians. A special mention must go to Maria Ågren, Jonas Lindström, Karin Hassan Jansson, and the entire Gender and Work team at Uppsala University, whose collaboration has been central to the development of our methods and analysis. We would also like to thank everyone who has participated in an advisory role on either of our two projects, which includes Amy Burnett, Nandini Chatterjee, Nick Collins, Elise Dermineur, Amy Erickson, Henry French, Maria Fusaro, Laura Gowing, Steven Gunn, Charmian Mansell, Craig Muldrew, Sheilagh Ogilvie, Alexandra Shepard, John Styles, Brodie Waddell, Garthine Walker, and Nicola Whyte. The conference and seminar audiences that have offered insightful comments and suggestions on various aspects of our approach or results are too numerous to specify, but we are no less grateful for each opportunity we have had to discuss this work.

This book is dedicated to our families: Alex, Esther, Andrew, Laura, Arthur, Ralph, Bea, Louise, and Cora.

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