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Household Service and Literary Patronage

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Sharon Kettering, Household Service and Literary Patronage. Texte d'intervention (mars 1999), sans notes et bibliographie, mis en ligne sur le site d'Orest Ranum (<http://ranumspanat.com/kettering.html>).

Extrait de l'article

Men of letters, including historians, were often employed in great noble and royal households in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Three of the six historians that Orest studied in *Artisans of Glory* were in household service. Charles Bernard was a reader in Louis XIII's household. Jean Chapelain was a tutor and intendant in the household of the marquis de la Trousse, and Paul Pellisson was a secretary of Nicolas Foucquet. Writers usually held the position of secretary, but they could also be tutors, librarians, chaplains, readers, preachers, almoners, intendants, chancellors, and maîtres d'hôtel. Secretary was a loosely-defined job that went far beyond composing letters and copying documents. Pellisson, for instance, handled Foucquet's financial affairs and acted as his business manager. The humanist Nicolas de Fabri, sieur de Peiresc, was a secretary to Guillaume Du Vair, but he was also a companion, friend, and surrogate family member because neither man had married. The poet François de Boisrobert was not only Richelieu's secretary, but also his literary adviser who advanced those whom he thought talented. This paper discusses the advantages and disadvantages of household service as a form of literary patronage, and suggests some reasons for its replacement by other forms of patronage in the late seventeenth century.

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