



The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England (Cambridge Social and Cultural Histories)

Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos

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An innovative study of gift-giving, informal support and charity in England between the late sixteenth and early eighteenth centuries. Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos examines the adaptation and transformation of varied forms of informal help, challenging long-held views and assumptions about the decline of voluntary giving and personal obligations in the transition from medieval to modern times. Merging historical research with insights drawn from theories of gift-giving, the book analyses practices of informal support within varied social networks, associations and groups over the entire period. It argues that the processes entailed in the Reformation, state formation and the implementation of the poor laws, as well as market and urban expansion, acted as powerful catalysts for many forms of informal help. Within certain boundaries, the early modern era witnessed the diversification, increase and invigoration, rather than the demise, of gift-giving and informal support.

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