The Culture of Giving

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 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.

ILANA KRAUSMAN BEN-AMOS is senior lecturer at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. Her publications include articles on service and apprenticeship, families and households, and informal forms of support in early modern England. She is the author of *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England* (1994).

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The Culture of Giving

Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England

Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

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