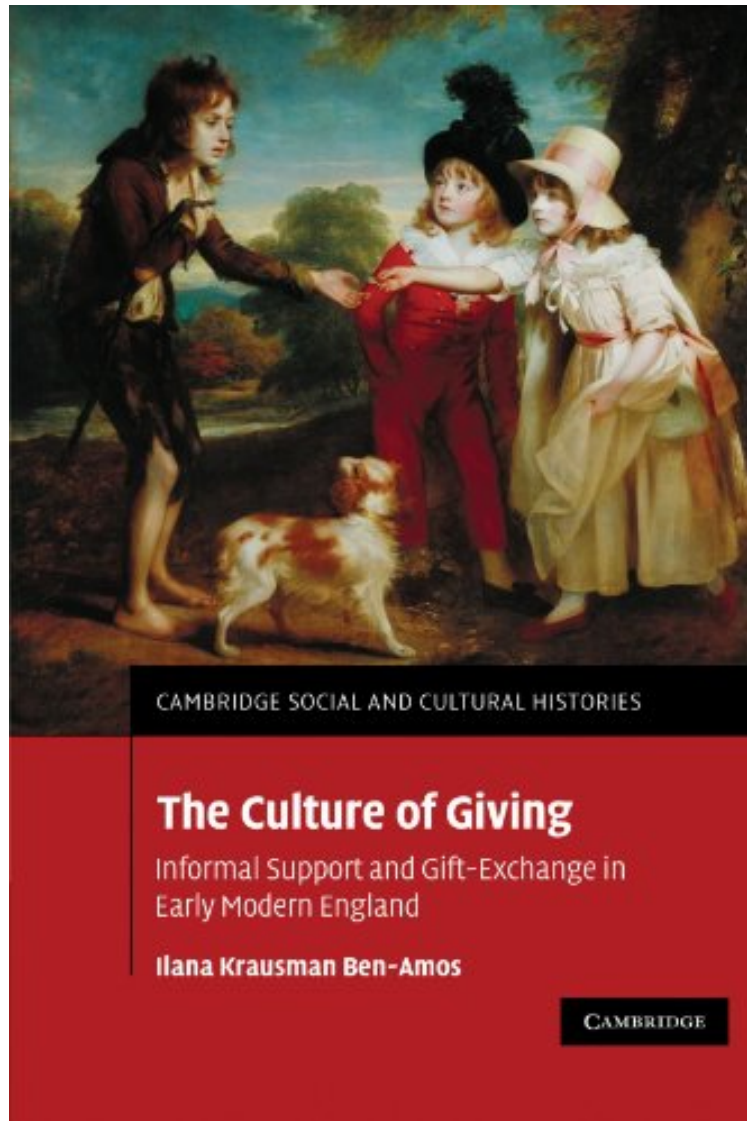


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## The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England (Cambridge Social and Cultural Histories)

*Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos*

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England (Cambridge Social and Cultural Histories):

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.

"Ben-Amos captures the quality of these diverse kinds of giving with great success, comprehensively surveying the existing literature about them, and charting in detail the ways in which they changed between the 1580s and 1740s... The result is a wealth of information on subjects as different as the texture of family and business life, and the amounts available from various sources for relief of the poor." - Paul Slack, Times Literary Supplement "Ben-Amos has written a model of social history blending theory with specific examples. Highly recommended." -Choice "The traditional historiography on charities has had a limited focus on the vicissitudes of bequests and charitable organizations, but Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos works here with a much wider lens. The Culture of Giving is concerned less with organized giving than with the social and cultural history of exchange as it is most broadly defined." Susannah Ottaway, Journal of British Studies About the Author 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).