The Languages of Gift
in the Early Middle Ages

This is a collection of original essays on gift in the early Middle Ages, from Anglo-Saxon England to the Islamic world. Focusing on the languages of gift, the essays reveal how early medieval people visualized and thought about gift, and how they distinguished between the giving of gifts and other forms of social, economic, political and religious exchange. The same team, largely, that produced the widely cited The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe (Cambridge, 1986) and Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages (Cambridge, 1995) has again collaborated in a collective effort that harnesses individual expertise in order to draw from the sources a deeper understanding of the early Middle Ages by looking at real cases, that is at real people, whether peasant or emperor. The culture of medieval gift has often been treated as archaic and exotic; in this book, by contrast, we see people going about their lives in individual, down-to-earth and sometimes familiar ways.

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The Languages of Gift in the Early Middle Ages

Edited by
Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre
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Preface

This book has been written by a group which has been meeting regularly for the past thirty years. In the preface to Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages we wrote ‘We plan a third volume and trust that it will be ready more quickly than the second.’ This third book, however, has taken an even longer time to get to press, although we have continued to meet for regular weekends of concentrated charter talk and of constructive criticism of our individual contributions. The problem is perhaps that the more we talk, the more we find we need to discuss. We no longer meet in Bucknell, which gave an informal name to the group, since WD moved from there to Woolstone (in the shadow of the White Horse) more than ten years ago, but the physical context of garden, kitchen and dinner table is similar. When we began to talk about gift, Tim Reuter and Patrick Wormald were still with us and their insights influenced our decisions and our planning; we continue to miss them acutely, although a strong sense of their distinctive approaches is always present. For most of this gestation time we have also had the benefit of Leslie Brubaker’s and Ann Christys’s expertise, which has stimulated a welcome extension of our perspectives. We remain committed to the quest for deeper understandings of what early medieval people thought and did. It was this that drew us to the languages of gift, as it first did to the settlement of disputes and then to the question of how property generated power. It is our hope now, as it was in our first two books, that collective thinking will have brought some fresh insights into areas that are much discussed but not always well understood.

WOOLSTONE
We are very grateful to the following bodies for their permission to reproduce figures: to Österreichische Nationalbibliothek; to Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana; to Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Image Collections & Fieldwork Archives, Washington, DC; to the Michigan–Princeton–Alexandria expedition to Mt Sinai; to The British School at Athens; and to Palazzo Venezia. We are also extremely grateful to Peter Rose for preparing figure 6.1, to Rebecca Day for preparing the index and to Anna Oxbury for very helpful copy-editing.
### Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>AAL</td>
<td>Archivio arcivescovile di Lucca, fondo diplomatico</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Atti privati</em></td>
<td><em>Glì atti privati milanesi e comaschi</em>, ed. C. Vittani, C. Manaresi and C. Santoro, 4 vols. (Milan, 1933–69)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARF</td>
<td><em>Annales regni Francorum</em>, ed. F. Kurze, <em>MGH SRG</em>, vol. VI (Hannover, 1895)</td>
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<tr>
<td>C1, C2 etc.</td>
<td><em>Colección documental del monasterio de San Pedro de Cardeña</em>, ed. G. Martínez Diez (Cardeña/Burgos, 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td><em>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cel1, Cel2 etc.</td>
<td><em>O Tombo de Celanova</em>, ed. J. M. Andrade, 2 vols. (Santiago de Compostela, 1995)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSEL</td>
<td><em>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>D/DD</td>
<td><em>MGH Diplomata Karolinorum</em>, vol. I, ed. E. Mühlbacher (Hannover, 1906)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DACL</td>
<td><em>Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie</em></td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>Bede, <em>Historia Ecclesiastica in Baedae Opera Historica</em>, ed. Plummer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IF</td>
<td><em>Islenzko Forntitt</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGH</td>
<td><em>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGH AA</td>
<td><em>MGH Auctores Antiquissimi</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>MGH Capit.</td>
<td><em>MGH Capitularia Regum Francorum</em>, ed. A. Boretius and V. Krause, 2 vols. (Hannover, 1883, 1897)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MGH Epp.</td>
<td><em>MGH Epistolae</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>MGH SRG</td>
<td><em>MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>MGH SRM</td>
<td><em>MGH Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum</em></td>
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<td>MGH SS</td>
<td><em>MGH Scriptores (in folio)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ov1, Ov2 etc.</td>
<td><em>Colección diplomática del monasterio de San Vicente de Oviedo (años 781–1200)</em>, ed. P. Floriano Llorente (Oviedo, 1968)</td>
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List of abbreviations


**PG** Patrologia Graeca

**PL** Patrologia Latina

**PMH xiv,** Portugaliae Monumenta Historica a saeculo octavo post Christum usque ad quintum decimum, Diplomata et Chartae, ed. A. Herculano de Carvalho e Araujo and J. J. da Silva Mendes Leal, vol. I (Lisbon, 1867–73)

**PMH xv etc.**

**Porro** Codex diplomaticus Langobardiae, ed. G. Porro-Lambertenghi (Turin, 1873)

**RC** Regesto di Camaldoli, ed. L. Schiaparelli et al., 4 vols. (Rome, 1907–22)


**Sam1, Sam2 etc.** El Tumbo de San Julián de Samos (siglos VIII–XII), ed. M. Lucas Álvarez (Santiago de Compostela, 1986)

**SM1, SM2 etc.** Cartulario de San Millán de la Cogolla, ed. A. Ubieto Arteta (Valencia, 1976)

**Sob1, Sob2 etc.** Tumbos del monasterio de Sobrado de los Monjes, ed. P. Loscertales de García de Valdeavellano, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1976)

**T1, T2 etc.** Cartulario de Santo Toribio de Liébana, ed. L. Sánchez Belda (Madrid, 1948)

**V1, V2 etc** Cartulario de Valpuesta, ed. M. Desamparados Perez Soler (Valencia, 1970)