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978-0-521-17413-8 - The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England

Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos

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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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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521174138

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First published 2008

First paperback edition 2011

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Ben-Amos, Ilana Krausman.

The culture of giving: informal support and gift-exchange in early modern England /
Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-86723-8 (hardback: alk. paper)

1. Public welfare – Great Britain – History – 16th century. 2. Gifts – Great Britain – History – 16th century. 3. Charities – Great Britain – History – 16th century.
4. Great Britain – History – 1485– I. Title.

HV245.B46 2008

361.7'4094209031 – dc22 2007041723

ISBN 978-0-521-86723-8 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-17413-8 Paperback

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Acknowledgements

Over the years of working on this book I have had the support of colleagues and friends and incurred many debts. First and foremost I am indebted to the published work of many historians, sociologists and other scholars, as the citations in the notes and bibliography of the book make apparent. I also wish to acknowledge the professionalism of the staffs of libraries and archives in Oxford and London, and especially the support offered by the staff of the Guildhall Library, where I spent many extended visits over the past decade.

A year in the congenial atmosphere of Nuffield college in Oxford prompted my thinking and initiation into the world of gift giving and reciprocal exchange. It also offered opportunities for presenting some of my initial excursions into informal support in the early modern period, in the social and economic history and early modern British history seminars. I thank the participants for their comments and reactions. Early drafts and ideas were also presented in seminars and workshops in the University of Sheffield, the University of Warwick, Tel-Aviv University, Ben-Gurion University and the European social science history conference held in Amsterdam. Some of the ideas presented in these meetings appeared at an earlier stage in the *Journal of Modern History*, while parts of Chapter 1 are based on an article that appeared in the *Journal of Family History*. I thank the publishers of these journals for permission to draw upon these articles here. Recently I have also had the chance to present my work in a workshop on 'Charity and piety in the late antiquity and the middle ages' at the Institute for Advanced Studies, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I am grateful to the participants for their critical comments and support.

Among colleagues and friends I owe special thanks to Avner Offer for many discussions and suggestions, and for his enthusiastic support of this project from its inception. At an early stage of my research I also had the benefit of an informal meeting with Natalie Zemon Davis and Ilana F. Silber, who offered fruitful insights and ideas for pursuing my work. Ilana Silber continued to offer her support and remained a source of

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x Acknowledgements

inspiration over the years of working on this project. Scholars and colleagues who offered advice and encouragement at various stages also include Gadi Algazi, Donna Andrew, Ian Archer, Sandra Cavallo, Margot Finn, Felicity Heal, Steve Hindle, Joanna Innes, Craig Muldrew, Margaret Pelling, Bob Shoemaker and Amy Singer. Keith Thomas posed pertinent queries and offered valuable comments. Other colleagues and friends invariably offered support over the years: Benny Arbel, Miri Eliav-Feldon, Lea Freilich, Gad Freudenthal, Michael Heyd, Bryna Goodman, Iris Parush, Adi Parush and Yulia Ustinova. In London, Bob Shoemaker, Wendy Bracewell, Paul and Kirsten Seaver offered kind, cheerful and repeated hospitality that over the years remained unreciprocated. I cannot thank them enough for it all.

Paul Seaver read substantial parts of the book, and his keen eye and profound knowledge saved me from errors and offered much to ponder about. I am also grateful to the anonymous reader of Cambridge University Press and to the editors of *Social and Cultural Histories*, whose queries and suggestions sent me back to my notes and forced me to sharpen the argument of the book. Special thanks are also due to Rachel Lieberman, whose expert and careful editorial work improved my initial writing considerably.

The book would never have been completed without the constant and unfailing encouragement of my husband, Avner, and without the patience of my children, Noa and Ory, whose presence amidst my paperwork and the computer was a continuous source of hope and joy. The book is dedicated to them all.

Abbreviations

BL	British Library, London
GL	Guildhall Library, London
OBSP	<i>The Proceedings at the Sessions of the Peace, and Oyer and Terminer, for the City of London and County of Middlesex</i> [Old Baily Session Papers]
<i>The Ordinary</i>	<i>The Ordinary of Newgate: His Account of the Behaviour, Confessions, and Last Dying Words of the Malefactors That Were Executed at Tyburn</i>
PRO	Public Record Office
RO	Record Office



Figure 1 ‘The industrious ‘prentice out of his time & married to his master’s daughter’, engraving by William Hogarth, from ‘Industry and idleness’, plate 6, 1747. Reproduced by permission of the Guildhall Library, City of London.