



The Power of Gifts: Gift Exchange in Early Modern England

By Felicity Heal

Oxford University Press. Hardback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW PRINT ON DEMAND., The Power of Gifts: Gift Exchange in Early Modern England, Felicity Heal, Gifts are always with us: we use them positively to display affection and show gratitude for favours; we suspect that others give and accept them as douceurs and bribes. The gift also performed these roles in early modern English culture: and assumed a more significant role because networks of informal support and patronage were central to social and political behaviour. Favours, and their proper acknowledgement, were preoccupations of the age of Erasmus, Shakespeare, and Hobbes. As in modern society, giving and receiving was complex and full of the potential for social damage. 'Almost nothing', men of the Renaissance learned from that great classical guide to morality, Lucius Annaeus Seneca, 'is more disgraceful than the fact that we do not know how either to give or receive benefits'. The Power of Gifts is about those gifts and benefits - what they were, and how they were offered and received in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It shows that the mode of giving, as well as what was given, was crucial to social bonding and political success. The...

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