Migrant Charity, Collective Life, and the Poor
in the March of Ancona, 1400–1460

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Although they belonged to different linguistic, cultural, and religious communities, inhabitants of the fifteenth-century March of Ancona worked and practiced charity in close proximity to one another. Fishermen, merchants, artisans, and ship-workers, all participants in a thriving maritime economy based in the port city of Ancona, depended on notaries to create contracts for marriages, business associations, and land transfers. They also depended on notaries to organise their end-of-life wishes. In 1420, Polo Georgio, a cobbler from Zadar, Dalmatia, but now an inhabitant of Ancona, created a testament with the civic notary Chiarozzo Sparpalli. Along with contributions for all *maleablatis*, the restitution of interest to former debtors, and a tithe to San Ciriaco, the cathedral of Ancona, Polo also provided a small donation to a mendicant church. According to the notary, 'He leaves as his place of sepulture the church of San Francesco of Ancona, [to which] he also leaves one ducat for his soul'.[1] Although formulaic and fragmentary, testaments provide the best evidence related to the charitable activities of migrants from the eastern Adriatic world.[2] These records of migrants' charitable donations can offer insight into how vulnerable groups responded to shifting relationships with civic authorities and the local population.

Late-medieval Ancona, like other parts of Adriatic Italy, was home to not only increased cultural production and technological development but increased anti-migrant sentiment as well. Starting in the early thirteenth century, noble families and wealthy merchants of peninsular city-states brought over eastern Adriatic peoples forcibly as slaves. Enslaved peoples came from Venetian-controlled Greek islands and the Genoese Black Sea region, as well as from ports on the eastern Adriatic coast.[3] The first free individuals from Slavic- and Albanian-speaking lands arrived only after the Black Death. In the late fourteenth century, Italian municipal governments invited Slavic and Albanian guest workers to help build infrastructure and reverse

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[1] Archivio di Stato di Ancona (heretofore ACAN), Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 2, 1420, ff. 16rv: 'Item elegit suam sepulturam apud ecclesiam sancti francisci de ancona cum ecclesie reliquit unum ducati pro eius anima'.

[2] To date, the field of medieval Adriatic migration would benefit from a cultural and geo-political history of the fall of Constantinople. However, the event's political and historiographical stakes can be found here: MARIOS PHILIPPIDES et al. eds, *The Siege and the Fall of Constantinople in 1453: Historiography, Topography, and Military Studies* (London: Routledge, 2017).

[3] FERDO GESTRIN, 'La migrazione degli Slavi in Italia nella storiografia jugoslava', *Quaderni storici* 14, no. 40 (January–April 1979): 13. For a recent social and economic survey of slavery in the Black Sea region, see HANNAH BARKER, *That Most Precious Merchandise, The Mediterranean Trade in Black Sea Slaves, 1260-1500* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

demographic losses resulting from the Black Death. Eastern Adriatic migrants came largely from agricultural backgrounds, but also artisan and fisherman families. High rents levied by landlords pushed tenant farmers to Trsat, Zadar, Senj, Split, and Ragusa (now Dubrovnik). From there, they boarded ships for Italian port cities, including Venice, Pesaro, and Ancona.[4] As more migrants arrived, sizable communities emerged, impacting the religion, language, and culture of the region.

In the first half of the fifteenth century, charitable gifts fulfilled several religious functions, from intercessory prayers for the dead, to facilitating the compensation of ill-gotten gains accrued during a person's life. Overlapping and conflicting parties, such as chapel priests, confraternities, and more informal parish groups, could carry out these works. Beginning in the twelfth century, donors from Ancona and its environs gave freely to pious causes, such as maintenance for churches and support for the poor.[5] Migrant residents came from territories with different record-keeping systems and not necessarily from notarial cultures as robust as Ancona's. Moreover, migrants often faced civic and ecclesiastical challenges, which made charitable assistance for their communities all the more important. For this reason, appearances of migrant clients in the notarial record of Ancona demonstrate individuals and families attempting to adapt to the institutional, legal, and administrative systems of their city of resettlement.

Historiographical Trends

In the scholarly traditions related to medieval Ancona, archivists and historians have considered the Adriatic Sea as a place of competition, or of 'instability', according to Giulia Spallacci's recent book on the rise of the commercial economy of Ancona.[6] Within this scope, competitive forces saw the Adriatic as easily subdued but also as a site of opportunity. Ancona, as a city, republic, and trading empire, fit between these two realities, sometimes uncomfortably. Ancona's place in late medieval and early modern scholarship has also influenced the choice of sources, topics of interest, and organisation of evidence in scholarly works on the maritime republic. Beginning in the nineteenth century, scholars standardised medieval statutes, codified notarial materials such as contracts and cartularies, and provided a basis for understanding how the city rose as an economic and diplomatic force despite the formidable presence of the Venetians and Ottomans.[7] From Ludovico Zdekauer to Carisio Ciavarini, early archivists analysed printed statutes to better understand this history.[8] More recently,

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[4] GESTRIN, 'La migrazione degli Slavi', 17.

[5] For an overview of diocesan structure and pious activities in the hinterland near Ancona, see MARCO MORONI, *Recanati in età medievale* (Fermo: AndreaLivi Editore, 2018).

[6] GIULIA SPALLACCI, *I commerci adriatici e mediterranei di Ancona nel XV secolo* (Bologna: CLUEB, 2020), 13.

[7] For a recent, and thorough, survey of the complexities surrounding territorial competition between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, see PETAR STRUNJE, 'Defining Spaces of Exchange: Venice and the Eastern Adriatic', PhD diss. (Università IUAV di Venezia, 2022).

[8] MARCO MORONI, 'Ludovico Zdekauer e la storia del commercio nel medio Adriatico', *Quaderni monografici di «Proposte e richerche»* 22 (1997): 11–36.

archivists have taken up the task of editing and digitising sources pertaining to the fifteenth-century economic success of Ancona.[9]

Scholarship on medieval charity has developed within different categories over time, and tends to highlight distinctions, binaries, and differences between various charitable acts and institutions. Some scholars have called for narrow definitions of charity, based on particular legal formulae in testaments, statutory language, and arrangements with charitable institutions as seen in notarial charters. These scholars are less inclined to argue that charity changed over time and are more concerned with identifying acts mistakenly attributed to charity. For such scholars, any charitable practice enacted with the expectation of a reciprocated act would not count as charity. These works are also supported by anthropological social theory, built on the groundwork developed by anthropologist Marcel Mauss.[10]

Other historians have adopted a broader view of charity that argues against limited, rigid, or static definitions.[11] For these scholars, reciprocity or the expectation of a counter-gift should be included within a broad range of charitable ideals, which also adheres to a neat chronological framework. For instance, charity began in an inconsistent fashion in the early Middle Ages, in commentary, sermons, theological treatises, and penitentials, before emerging as something more institutionalised by the high Middle Ages. With the advent of the mendicant orders, voluntary poverty, confraternities, and family chapels, charity took on a more complicated role and was often performed through urban conduits such as new religious orders, or through the repair and maintenance of important urban churches. For historians who valued this broader view, most works seen as charity could not really count as charity at all because of the formulaic, repetitive, and involuntary nature of such practices. To these scholars, rote and obligation-based gifts for the poor in legal sources could not be born out of an individual's free will.[12]

More recent scholarship has moved away from binary models that categorise charity strictly or more broadly. For some, pointing out innovations became a central focus, especially in terms of gender and the creation of new, and flexible, charitable

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[9] Please see relevant issues of the periodical *DigItalia: Rivista del Digitale Beni Culturali*, https://digitalia.cultura.gov.it/issue/archive.

[10] MARCEL MAUSS, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1967), 22. For Mauss and his influence on the study of medieval Christianity, see THOMAS HEAD, 'The Early Medieval Transformation of Piety', in *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe: New Directions in Early Medieval Studies*, eds JENNIFER R. DAVIS and MICHAEL MCCORMICK (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 155–62. For a helpful separation of ritualised gift exchanges, which are not enacted for profit, from mundane economic activity, see MARCEL HÉNAFF, 'Is There Such a Thing as a Gift Economy?' *Gift Giving and the Embedded Economy in the Ancient World. Akademiekonferenzen,* 17 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2014), 71–84.

[11] For a discussion of these scholars, and a general survey of the historiographical traditions of medieval charity, see ADAM J. DAVIS, 'The Social and Religious Meanings of Charity in Medieval Europe', *History Compass* 12, no. 12 (2014): 935–50.

[12] In turn, scholars also challenged this view, indicating that the gifts fluctuated in price and consistency, defying any town's attempt to regulate and enforce charity.

institutions.[13] In particular, institutions neither ushered in nor hindered social welfare, but developed through political, economic, or cultural needs and the rise of the early-modern state. Scholars have also looked at cross-cultural and trans-religious institutions over time, such as in comparing medieval Islamic charitable *waqfs* to hospitals.[14] Similarly, there have been considerations of early-modern Jewish charity in Christian-dominated European cities, as Jewish residents raised money to ransom hostages taken from their communities.[15] In sum, scholars have searched for overlooked cultures of charity that existed beyond the typical sources.

In other recent publications, scholars have considered Ancona's remarkable ability to garner power through seizing diplomatic opportunities and creating political and religious ties with eastern Adriatic ports.[16] Inevitably, the interventions of Ancona's governing authorities in politics and economy helped create a mixed and interdependent urban society. However, this interconnection meant that the social framework of the city was vulnerable to change, crisis, and upheaval, such as after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Building on that challenge, I argue that migrants' charitable activities in the fifteenth-century Papal States varied in meaningful ways, from institutionalised, orderly, and normative to ad-hoc and idiosyncratic. Moreover, considerations of changes in statutory models and notarial sources can provide rationale for these discrepancies before the arrival of the Ottomans and the Venetian conquest of much of the eastern Adriatic coastline. These legal changes simultaneously show that migrants depended on new local legal processes to strengthen their own social bonds.

The present essay contends that testamentary formulae put into place by civic statutes did not remain untouched by historical tensions, as populations at times had to push against legal systems. My intervention builds on attempts to move beyond historiographical binaries placed on charitable activity, separating charity into state-based and devotional acts, and builds on efforts to dispel dichotomies of charity defined by reciprocity and non-reciprocity, voluntary and involuntary acts, and the necessity of specific formulae in legal texts versus cultural diffusion in many source genres. Nonetheless, charity should be understood as experiential and subject to social change, and as contextualised and contingent. For this reason, small shifts in formulae

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[13] DAVIS, 'The Social and Religious Meanings of Charity', 940–41. For specific works on lay movements and the possibilities for charitable innovation, see ROISIN COSSAR, *The Transformation of the Laity in Bergamo, 1265-c.1400* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); DAVID MICHAEL D'ANDREA, *Civic Christianity in Renaissance Italy: The Hospital of Treviso, 1400-1530* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007).

[14] For a foundational examination of the medieval *waqf*, with some connections made to medieval Christian charity, see ADAM SABRA, *Poverty and Charity in Medieval Islam Mamluk Egypt, 1250–1517* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006). For a more recent discussion of the *waqf* and its urban implications, see RANDI DEGUILHEM, 'The Waqf in the City', in *The City in the Islamic World*, eds SALMA J. KAYYUSI et al., 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2008), vol. 1, 929–56.

[15] TAMAR HERZIG, 'Slavery and Interethnic Sexual Violence: A Multiple Perpetrator Rape in Seventeenth-Century Livorno', *The American Historical Review* 127, no. 1 (March 2022): 194–222.

[16] Some of this issues that arise in the sixteenth century in papal diplomacy are foregrounded in the following article: FRANK LACOPO, 'The Curious Case of Ancona: 'Levantines', Accommodation, and the Exigencies of Papal Power in Adriatic Italy, 1532–1555', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 55, no. 1–2 (Spring/Summer 2024): 93–111.

can indicate push back from below, as well as adaptation and resilience. Innovations also show moments of religious and social change during particular years or decades.

Even as migrant charity in Ancona evolved from individual gifts to formal confraternity-based charity, migrants still eluded the normative modes of social assistance from either church or state.[17] Eastern Adriatic migrants in the Italian peninsula depended on mostly private and family-based support systems in Italy, which could often contradict local charitable norms.[18] Migrants came from regions without institutionalised charitable frameworks but arrived in places where those structures had been long established. As a result, migrant charity in Ancona should be understood not in stark contrast to either earlier medieval family-based or pre-Enlightenment rational civil society, but through adoption of unfamiliar urban frameworks that help not only the poorest of one specific community, but the population at large.

Overview of Sources

In Ancona, eastern Adriatic migrants most often appear in the many volumes of notarial contracts and testaments from the fifteenth century housed at the Archivio di Stato di Ancona.[19] Each volume contains at least some presence of speakers of Albanian and different Slavic and Romano-Slavic dialects, either as testator, witness, heir, or other type of participant.[20] An abundance of documentation exists for relations between Ancona and the southern Dalmatian coast, in particular. Beginning with the notary Giacomo del Pellegrino in 1391, multiple civic notaries worked with migrants in Ancona in forming trading partnerships (*societas*), selling property, and drafting marriage contracts.

Today, some 640 notarial volumes survive from the first half of the fifteenth century, enough to establish mass migration to Ancona and its surrounding March. In particular, the notary Chiarozzo Sparpalli was active for long stretches of time, from 1420–1426, 1432–1439, and 1444–1447.[21] In contrast to Venetian contracts, which provide a notable point of comparison, Ancona's notarial sources contain references to trans-Adriatic merchant exchange, and merchant corporations, such as the *Universitas sclavorum* and the poorer *sclavi bastagi*, which do not appear in sources from outside the Papal States. These two groups counted as an alternative to Ancona's guilds, as the communal government of Ancona refused permission to members of

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[17] For a discussion of the kinds of confraternities formed by Slavic and Albanian migrants to Italy, see TOCCACELI, *San Germano*; GIUSEPPE CAPRIOTTI, 'The Cauldron of St. Venera and the Comb of St. Blaise. Cult and Iconography in the Confraternities of Albanians and Schiavoni in Fifteenth-Century Ascoli Piceno' *Confraternitas* 27 (2016): 33–39; JASENKA GUDELJ, 'The Hospital and Church of the Schiavoni / Illyrian Confraternity in Early Modern Rome', *Confraternitas* 27, nos 1–2 (May 2017): 5–29.

[18] One example from many similar archival findings speaks to civic pushback to migrant family violence in Recanati: ANR 54 124 v, Giacomo Petrucci, 1428.

[19] For sources pertinent to the study of charity in the fifteenth century, see the volumes within the *Archivio Notarile di Ancona* housed in the ACAN.

[20] ROMUALDO SASSI, 'Immigrati dell'altra sponda adriatica a Fabriano nel Quattrocento', in *Italia Felix: migrazioni slave e albanesi in Occidente. Romagna, Marche e Abruzzi, secoli XIV-XVI*, ed. SERGIO ANSELMI (Ancona: Quaderni di Proposte e Richerche, 1988), 94–110.

[21] LUCIO LUME, 'Presenze slave secondo la documentazione notarile', *Quaderni Storici* 5 (January–April 1970): 251–60.

both occupational collectives from entering most trade guilds and instead forced them to work with the lye, a putrid and undesirable substance, as leather preparers and soap makers, according to redacted city statutes beginning in 1394.[22]

In particular, the testaments from the Archivio Notarile di Ancona are rich in references to charitable practices, if sometimes oblique in nature. However, even indirect references to charity can help historians reconstruct practices that helped build and support a system of mutual aid.[23] Of the almost sixty migrant testaments that I have viewed so far, all contain a universal format dictated by statutory law. Migrant testaments, like so many other documents compiled in early fifteenth-century Ancona, contained specific formulae, such as a statement of mental and physical capacity, provisions for ill-gotten gains, pious gifts, location of burial, a voluntary (or perhaps involuntary) contribution to Ancona's civic infrastructure assistance program, and ecclesiastical destinations, typically at least to one of two parish churches, San Martino and San Claudio.[24] Testators then named their executor and fideicommissaries, or subsidiary heirs who inherited goods, coins, or property after the passage of a period of time or the death of primary heirs, and directed properties to individual family members, friends, and business associates. Wills concluded with identification of fideicommissaries, sometimes female family members, usually to help create dowries or support widows. It remains impossible to know how many wills went into probate, a process by which notaries and legists reviewed wills against city statutes.[25] Following the publication of a will, a *quietatius*, or a receipt of payment of gifts mentioned in a testament, would also be issued to all heirs and ecclesiastical beneficiaries.[26]

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[22] ACAN, Statuti e privilegi n. 4, Statuti della città di Ancona, 1394. This statute is described in CARLO GIACOMINI, *Le magistrature giudiziarie di Ancona nei documenti comunali di antico regime (1308-1797)* (Ancona: Affinità elettive, 2009), 15–16.

[23] The important role parish churches played in the dispersal of charitable alms has been overlooked in the scholarship. For a relevant discussion, see Davis, 'The Social and Religious Meanings of Charity', 944.

[24] In Italy, the collection of civic and ecclesiastical fees could vary city to city. For a helpful explanation of how dioceses collected dependent tithes from churches, and how churches extracted fees from individuals, see NESLIHAN ŞENOCAK, 'Pievi and the Care of Souls', in *A People's Church: Medieval Italy and Christianity, 1050-1300*, ed. AGOSTINO PARAVICINI BAGLIANI and NESLIHAN ŞENOCAK (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2023), 71–92. For an original analysis of the role of civic charity for infrastructure, see EDWARD LOSS, 'Benefattori dall'aldilà: i lasciti per i lavori edilizi di pubblica utilità a Bologna (secoli XIII e XIV)', in *Oltre la carità: Donatori, istituzioni e comunità fra Medioevo ed Età contemporanea*, ed. MAURO CARBONI and EDWARD LOSS (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2021), 49–68.

[25] Larger cities in Italy a more sophisticated probate processes that included the creation of probate inventories. See ISABELLA CECCHINI, 'A World of Small Objects: Probate Inventories, Pawns, and Domestic Life in Early Modern Venice', *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme* 35, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 39–61 (40).

[26] For a similar, and comparative, function that quietanze could have for migratory workers and shepherds in subalpine Liguria, see MARCO CASSIOLI, 'Migrazioni intralpine e affitto del pascolo. Analisi di una quietanza conservata a Ventimiglia (XV secolo)', *Bollettino Storico-Bibliografico Subalpino* 122, no. 1 (2024): 117–124.

Category	Subcategory	Count
Gender	Men	52
Gender	Women	5
Occupations	Carbonis (smith or forge worker)	1
Occupations	Calzoleri (shoemaker)	2
Occupations	Famulus (domestic servant)	1
Occupations	Policca (city guardsman)	1
Occupations	Fornarius (baker)	1
Occupations	Unlisted	51
Place of Origin	Sclavus	21
Place of Origin	Jadra (Zadar)	5
Place of Origin	Sclavonia	17
Place of Origin	Vegla	1
Place of Origin	Zagreb	6
Place of Origin	Albania	6
Place of Origin	Segna (Senj)	1

Figure 1. Table showing gender, occupations, and places of origin in the testamentary sample.

While migrant testators did not state their motivation for making charitable offerings, nor provide identities for the poor in question, the steady formulae of testaments and contracts can still supply historians with abundant information. For instance, changes in the formulae reveal that migrants in Ancona depended on more typical channels of charity, such as testamentary bequests, rather than on any non-institutional methods

of charitable giving. There is some indication that charity extended from religious fear of God's judgement and for the state of one's own soul after death. For instance, in 1432, the testator Polo di Giorgio from Zadar included unique language that pertained to fears of eternal judgement: 'On account of Christ's grace, health in mind, senses, but ill in body [and] knowing and fearing judgement and death'. [27] In the same year, the testator Giorgio, referred to only as *sclavus*, made reference to the suffering expected before an untimely death: 'Fearing divine judgement and the final trials of death, not wanting to die intestate'.[28] This formulaic inclusion reveals the urgency and frequency by which migrants used the statutory norms of Ancona. Even individuals who lacked patronyms or toponyms adopted local notarial culture and conveyed their property through testaments.

Charity in Ancona: Sticking to the Formula

A survey of testaments deposited by migrant townsmen indicate their gifts to the same traditional religious establishments preferred by all residents of Ancona, including the native-born. Rather than give to peripheral or more neighbourhood-based ecclesiastical churches, migrant men donated charitable gifts to institutions similarly preferred by all residents of the city, indicating the normative, formal, and adaptive character of migrant male charity. Gifts to institutions like the cathedral, particular parish churches, and mendicant convents represented a typical form of charitable donation.[29] The wills left by other migrant men in the 1430s also contain support for mendicant convents, payment of tithes, and charitable donations to parish churches. For instance, Giovanni di Optimide, a smith from the region of Slavonia in the Kingdom of Hungary, demonstrated such features in his will. The document begins with motivations, and the urgency behind the will's creation: 'Being, however, sick in body, fearing and knowing the judgement of God and human fragility, and not wanting to die intestate, [he completes] the deposition of all his moveable and immoveable goods for the present and future'.[30] His will also include ecclesiastical and civic fees paid upon death, typical of all *anconitani*: 'He leaves 5 *soldos* of *moneta parva anconitana* and certain other coinage a perpetual *canonum* for his soul. He also leaves to the *patronatico* 10 *soldos*'.[31] Finally, his ecclesiastical bequests also carried charitable connotations:

> He leaves for the construction of the church of San Agostino di Ancona one ducat. He also leaves for the works of San Domenico one ducat. He leaves for the works of

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[27] ANAS, Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 2, book 1, 25 July 1432, f. 16r: 'Pro Christi gratiam sanus mente et sensu licet corpore languens. Timens et cognitans divinam iniutitiam et mortem'.

[28] ANAS, Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 2, book 1, 25 July 1432, f. 15v: 'Timens divinam iniutitiam et mortem ultimum tribulium nolens in testabus decedere suum bonorem'.

[29] ANAC, Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 2, book 2, 11 June 1439, ff. 195r.

[30] ANAC, Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 2, book 1, 24 September 1432, ff. 78r: 'Tamen corpore languens timens et cognitans dei indictum et fratilitatem humanem. Et nolens in testatus decedere dispositonem omnium suum bonorem mobilium et immobilium praesens et futurum'.

[31] ANAC, Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 2, book 1, 24 September 1432, ff. 78rv: 'Reliquit suum precepta canonum pro eius animam soldos quinquem denari anconetanae pavorum et certa alia…legata infrascripta fecit de dicta parva moneta anconitana. Item patronatico reliquit decem soldi denari'.

the church of San Francesco the Greater one ducat. He also leaves for the works of the church of San Claudio one ducat and in this church he wishes to be interred.[32]

As shown by this will, men like Giovanni di Optimide preferred long-established churches, some more directly associated with charity than others, but that still acted as traditional conduits for charitable gifts.

Like in other parts of Italy, Slavic and Albanian migrants in Ancona developed their own charitable networks, both individually and collectively in groups such as confraternities.[33] Their charitable works helped to create and support their communities in the face of civic suppression. Migrant charity could be both traditional and innovative, even simultaneously in the same act.[34] For instance, a testament followed a formulaic structure required by city statute, but choice of ecclesiastical beneficiaries, and the emergence of more collective and undifferentiated types of charity demonstrate migrants attempting to develop resilience in everyday life across the fifteenth century. Individual migrants depended on long-established charitable institutions and norms for the purposes of assisting the general urban poor and impoverished members of their own communities, often through legal apparatus such as testaments. Collectively, migrants sought to create their own religious confraternities. Confraternity membership was important, as it provided permission from diocesan authorities to help the poor and infirm, or simply engage in the

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[32] I am creating a map of the various residences of the migrants of Ancona. Until that work is completed, I note that, while the San Ciriaco, the cathedral of Ancona, was located on a northeastern hill of the city, other parish churches preferred by migrants in their testament could be found across Ancona, rather than located in one neighbourhood. As typical for central Italy, mendicant convent churches such as San Francesco the Greater located in the town's periphery. See VINCENZO PIRANI, *Le Chiese di Ancona* (Ancona: Arcidiocesi Ancona-Osimo, 1998). ANAC, Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 2, book 1, 1432, ff. 78rv: 'Item reliquit operi ecclesie sancti augustini de ancona unum ducatum. Item reliquit operi ecclesie sancti dominici unum ducatum. Item reliquit operi ecclesie sancti francisci maioris unum ducatum. Item reliquit operi ecclesie santi claudii unum ducatum apud quam ecclesiam voluit sepelliri et suam elegit sepulturam'.

[33] Italian scholarship has begun to focus on artistic production, trade, intermarriage, and other ways in which late-medieval eastern Adriatic migrants influenced urban life in the Italian peninsula. See GIUSEPPE CAPRIOTTI, 'The Cauldron of St. Venera and the Comb of St. Blaise. Cult and Iconography in the Confraternities of Albanians and Schiavoni in Fifteenth-Century Ascoli Piceno', *Confraternitas* 27 (2016): 33–39; FRANCESCA COLTRINARI, 'Confraternities, immigrants and artistic production of the 'Illyrians' in the Marche (XV-XVI cent.). Master Piero di Giorgio da Sebenico in Fermo (1462)', in *Visualizing Past in a Foreign Country: Schiavoni/Illyrian Confraternities and Colleges in Early Modern Italy in Comparative Perspective*, ed. MASSIMO MONTELLA (Macerata: EUM Edizioni Università di Macerata, 2018), 165–85; ERMANNO ORLANDO, *Migrazioni mediterranee: migranti, minoranze e matrimonio a Venezia nel basso medioevo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2014).

[34] Regarding the work of anthropologist Marcel Mauss, fifteenth-century migrant charity in Italy belongs within more normative pre-modern hybridised gift-exchange, albeit marked by a sense of urgency. In a fifteenth century city-states where gift-giving was becoming more motivated by compunction and overshadowed by economic policy of the state, migrants relied on earlier historical forms of pure gift-giving to survive. This can be seen in regard to their reliance on intricate and extended forms of gift-giving based on overlapping concentric circles of kinship. While the relevant theoretical literature on this subject is extensive, please see JOHN FINE'S introduction to *The Early Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century* for a survey of scholarly discussion. See MARCEL MAUSS, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (New York City: W. W. Norton & Company, 1967); NATALIE ZEMON DAVIS, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), 1–14; JOHN V. A. FINE, JR., *The Early Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991).

celebration of important saints' feast days and maintain parish churches.[35] In rural dioceses of the Papal States, authorities' written consent for the construction of a migrant church often permitted a confraternity to be based there as well.[36] In order to take advantage of such privileges, Slavic and Albanian migrants respectively petitioned the diocese of Ancona for official confraternity charters.[37] However, such permission proved elusive until the end of the fifteenth century, as bishops repeatedly denied migrants' requests to create new groups.

More than to any other type of charity, Slavic and Albanian male testators gave charitable assistance through Ancona's churches to benefit the whole city. Civic pride and general concern for the urban poor can also be expressed in gifts to city churches. Most typically, support of the poor appeared indirectly as a gift to important local churches, such as those of the Franciscan order.[38] As testator, Giovanni gave significant gifts of one ducat each to three mendicant convents and a parish church. The support of the mendicant orders counted as an indirect way of assisting the poor and infirm in Ancona even more specifically, as the friars directed concerted effort towards urban pastoral care.[39] While some historians counter that the Franciscans were not actually involved in poverty relief, churches of all kinds used offerings to help pay

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[35] Scholarship on the laity overlaps with the field of confraternity studies. Starting with the volume *The Politics of Ritual Kinship*, edited by Nicholas Terpstra (1999), scholars have identified the tension between secular and sacred functions of the confraternity, and demonstrated how the space between the two modes widened closer to the Enlightenment after the age of Catholic reform. In an edited volume from 2006, the essays within represented a sea change in the study of the pre- and early modern confraternity, as scholars focused on new and global themes such as the importance of confraternities to class structures, the relationship between lay groups and political power, and the spread of such groups across the Atlantic Ocean via colonialist endeavours. That work has been furthered by a more recent volume (2019) that confraternity involvement could help groups further other types of aims, whether artistic, cultural, economic, or political in nature. Work on migrant confraternities in Adriatic Italy draws upon the essays in these volumes, showing how confraternity charters represented the ultimate goal of migrants who sought to establish an institutional and permanent presence in their adoptive hometowns. See NICHOLAS TERPSTRA, ed., *The Politics of Ritual Kinship: Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); CHRISTOPHER BLACK, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); CHRISTOPHER BLACK et al., *Early Modern Confraternities in Europe and the Americas: International and Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006); KONRAD EISENBICHLER, ed., *A Companion to Medieval and Early Modern Confraternities* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

[36] For instance, see the example of San Germano a rural church outside of Ancona, and its resident confraternity. FABIO TOCCACELI, *San Germano: Una Chiesa di Schiavoni. Appunti e documenti per una storia della Parrocchia fra Quattrocento e Ottocento* (Camerano: Cassa Rurale ed Artigiana "S. Giuseppe", 1991).

[37] While outside the immediate chronological scope of this article, migrant groups, particularly Greeks, received official recognition for their confraternity charter petitions in the sixteenth century after widespread policy changes led by Leo X (r. 1513–1521). Nonetheless, in the fifteenth century, migrants similarly sought out official administrative and institutional recognition from dioceses for their respective groups. Regarding the Greek community of Ancona, much of this later history has been explored by Niccolò Fattori, who delved deeply into the sixteenth-century notarial archive of Ancona to ground his conclusions related to the fate of the Greek community of Ancona 100 years after the Council of Florence. NICCOLÒ FATTORI, 'Strong-headed Barbarians'. The Greeks of Ancona and the Papal Policies in the Sixteenth Century - 'Barbari, e di cervello gagliardo'. I Greci di Ancona e le politiche religiose del papato nel XVI secolo', *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia* 72, no. 1 (January–June 2018): 117–40.

[38] ANAS, Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 2, book 2, 11 August 1437, 154rv.

[39] ANDRÉ VAUCHEZ, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. JEAN BIRRELL (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

for repairs, procure wax for candles, and engage in assistance to the poor and infirm.[40] Charitable acts could be quite efficient, as this same gift both helped church maintenance and supported the poor. Coins flowing through mendicant establishments helped support not only the community of friars, but more generally with poor assistance, even if available sources do not often reveal specific instances of local friars who supported the poor.[41] Testamentary bequests could also help the repair and maintenance of mendicant buildings.[42] While statutory norms dictated the structure of a will, testators still chose their preferred institutions. In particular, migrant testators preferred to give to similar churches, such as the mendicant convents of San Francesco, San Domenico, and San Agostino of Ancona, as well as the parishes of San Claudio and San Martino.[43] These churches, chosen out of the many ecclesiastical beneficiaries available to Ancona's late medieval testators, provide information about how migrants directed their charitable bequests strategically.

The testament of Giovanni di Optimide provides individualised information, even within rigid legal formulae. Through their choice of heirs and ecclesiastical beneficiaries, other migrant testators provided information pertinent to the social and religious features of migrant communities in Ancona. For example, Marco Filippi, a baker from Slavonia, mentioned leaving an inheritance to members of his own community, as well as more direct family members, in his will. He stated,

> In all his other movable and immovable goods…he made and willed that his carnal and universal heirs... be Antonius his son and Catherine di Marinotius of Monte San Vito, his wife, who shall have the portions between them and if the said Antonio his son dies, but with [Antonio's] [own] sons he substitutes Catherine for the portion and part of the aforementioned Antonius.[44]

The presence of gifts to local parish churches indicated a connection to indirect charity, but also a church freely chosen by the testator, as the choice of ecclesiastical beneficiaries belonged solely to the individual commissioning the will.[45] The churches

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[40] See relevant discussion in DAVIS, 'The Social and Religious Meanings of Charity', 943.

[41] More quantitative research must be done demonstrating the extent to which the Franciscans assisted the urban poor in fifteenth-century Ancona.

[42] Previously, I have discussed the connections between bequests for church maintenance in testaments and Franciscan spirituality. BIANCA LOPEZ, *Queen of Sorrows: Plague, Piety, and Power in Late Medieval Italy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2024), 61.

[43] See the following for examples: ACAN, Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 2, 1420, ff. 16r; ANAS, Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 2, book 2, 23 June 1438, ff. 165r; ANAC, Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 2, book 2, 11 June 1439, ff. 195r. In nearby Recanati, migrant testators also chose mendicant convents, as well as the Marian shrine Santa Maria di Loreto. For a discussion of these institutions in the context of trans-Adriatic migration, see Lopez, *Queen of Sorrows*, 133–50.

[44] ANAS, Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 2, book 2, 23 June 1438, ff. 165rv: "In omnibus autem aliis suis bonis mobilibus et immobilibus…suos heredes carnales et universales...fecit et esse voluit antonium eius filium et catarinam marinotii de monte sancto vito eius uxorem quis portionibus inter eos et si dictus Antonius eius filius decesserit quando cumquam suiis filiis autem cum filiis substituit catarinam in portionem et partem dicti antonii."

[45] Beginning with Michel Mollat, scholars have noted continuously the ambiguous relationship between the Franciscans and care for the urban poor, at least according to the available source material. MICHEL MOLLAT, *The Poor in the Middle Ages: An Essay in Social History*, trans. ARTHUR GOLDHAMMER (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 127–28. At the very least, charity for the poor, help for urban

might not have been precisely associated with migrant communities, but with entire neighbourhoods. The migrants' donations therefore hint at a deep sense of connection to their neighbourhoods and to the other Christian families, whether migrant or local, that lived near them. Both migrants and locals held affinity for these locations, which they expressed through their gifts.

Along with these stipulations, placed either before or directly after gifts to their heirs, migrants also provided assistance to other beneficiaries through gifts that reflected support for the entire city. Both civic and ecclesiastical contributions included in wills left by migrant men demonstrated an affinity for the city of Ancona. For instance, Giorgio Pietro from Zadar directed five gold small coins in local *anconetano* currency to pay for civic fees, as required by the city of Ancona, and he left the same amount to mortuary fees, as well as two small coins to the civic construction of a bridge. In this way, Giorgio participated in civic projects along with fellow residents of Ancona.[46] Although some scholars have indicated that such acts fall outside traditional medieval charity, others have pointed out the similarities between contributions towards public infrastructure and gifts meant to influence Christian intercession by God and saints.[47] Both types counted as attempts to alter the present through small gifts, and to behave within the collective norms of the city.[48]

The testator's gifts to churches also followed a predictable formula, but the specific identification of these churches indicate a special relationship the testator had with each of these institutions. These churches also had strong connotations with charity and works of mercy, not just for the poorest of his own community, but for the needy residents of his entire neighbourhood. According to his testament,

> [Giorgio] also left one ducat to works for the church of Santa Maria di Misericordia. He also left one ducat for the works for the church of San Domenico. He also left the works for the church of San Martino 20 *soldos* which he wished to owe to Christ in the construction of the bell tower of the aforementioned church.[49]

As seen by Giorgio's diversified gifts that both follow a stipulated formula and contain unique information in the choice of specific churches, migrant townsmen's testaments show awareness of the importance of charitable causes, the fear of God's judgement in the face of ill-gotten gains, and a sense of obligation for all of Ancona's poorest residents. With his gifts, Giorgio enacted different types of charitable acts, including more straightforward poverty relief, assistance to churches, and contributions to civic

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CHURCHES, and voluntary poverty were all enveloped in a broader culture of charity. See GIULIANA ALBINI, *Carità e governo delle povertà (secoli XII-XV)* (Milan: Unicopli, 2002), JAMES W. BRODMAN, *Charity and Religion in Medieval Europe* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 270.

[46] ANAC, Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 2, 1435, ff. 195r. For another gift to the same bridge project, see ANAC, Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 2, book 2, 23 June 1438, ff. 165r.

[47] For a summary of studies that define medieval charity in either a stricter, or looser, sense, see DAVIS, 'The Social and Religious Meanings of Charity', 940–41.

[48] LOSS, 'Benefattori dall'aldilà'.

[49] ANAC, Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 2, 1435, ff. 195rv: 'Item reliquit operi ecclesie sanctie marie misericordia unum ducati. Item reliquit operi ecclesie sancti dominic unum ducatum. Item reliquit operi ecclesie sancti martini vigniti soldos quos voluit debere con Christi in fabrica campanilie dicte ecclesie'.

architecture. This final act seems unique to Giorgio's will and suggests that he assigned great importance to making a tangible impact on his adopted city. While this migrant came from the Dalmatian town of Zadar, his post-mortem charity was connected to Ancona, where his family resettled, where his current parish priest—and most likely his confessor—resided, and where his charitable deeds would have the most impact.

While much fewer in number, female testators were much more directly involved in poverty relief.[50] Moreover, some women included diffused and innovative ways to support their social networks with their wills, even when their donations were directed towards established ecclesiastical institutions.[51] In 1437, the notary Chiarozzo Sparpalli helped to compile a testament with Lena, daughter of a certain Nicola from Zagreb. Living in Ancona, she confirmed that, while she was healthy in her mind and senses, her body was in a state of ill-health. As recorded by the notary, she stated, '…fearing the judgement of God and the danger of death, which is [as] certain as the hour is uncertain. She wishes to make a testament and dispose of all of her goods'.[52] While her wish to avoid intestacy did not deviate from statutory formulae, her charitable choices were unique and indicated her attempts to both prevent God's wrath and help the poor. Finally, her motivations ended with the following statement that also appears as distinctive in my survey of Ancona's migrant wills: 'She procured and made, asserting and swearing by the holy gospels of God', which further demonstrates the testamentary connection between charity, faithfulness before God and his court of angels, and the religious significance of drafting a will in the face of death. [53]

Later in the document, Lena noted donations to two different hospitals for the poor in Ancona, San Thomaso and Santa Maria dell'Assunzione. For the latter hospital, she left the sizable gift of six Venetian ducats, rather than the small *anconetonae* coins left by male testators. She also provided ducats for the repair of her parish church San Martino and forty *soldi* for the *operi* of San Agostino di Plano, where she asked to be interred.[54] The specific direction of her estate towards hospitals indicates a more direct and personalised form of charitable offerings not seen in most wills left by male migrants living in Ancona. These gifts reveal that migrant women supported

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[50] Only five women out of 57 total testators created wills in this sample. Nonetheless, their activities still provide a suggestive counterpoint to male expressions of charity. Moreover, scholars have noted the wider possibilities afforded to widows who led households and drew up wills. For the variety of pious causes supported by widows in their testaments in nearby Umbria, see MARIA IMMACOLATA BOSSA, 'I testamenti in tre registri notarili di Perugia (seconda metà del Trecento)', in *Nolens Intestatus Decedere: il testamento come fonte della storia religiosa e sociale, atti dell'incontro di studio* (Perugia, 3 maggio 1983), ed. ATTILIO BARTOLI LANGELI (Perugia: Giunta Regionale dell'Umbria – Editrice umbra cooperativa, 1985), 77–93.

[51] This tendency has also been observed elsewhere in late medieval and early modern Italy. TERPSTRA, *Cultures of Charity*.

[52] ANAC, Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 2, 1437, f. 164 v: "Lena filia dictum Nicolaii de yzagabria habitrix anconae sana mentis et sensus et bone dispositoris expensis licet corpore languens timens dei indictum et periculum mortis quia nil certius mortis et nil incertius hora mortis. Volens facere testamentum et dispositere omnium suum bonorem."

[53] This connection was not unique to migrant women, as it was shared by all Christian testators of Ancona. Nonetheless, the link between charity and the afterlife was a primary focus for migrant testators as well as the native-born. ANAC, Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 3, 164rv: 'Procuravit et fecit asserens et jurans ad sacra dei evangelia'.

[54] ANAC, Chiarozzo Sparpalli, vol. 2, 23 June 1438, f. 165r.

institutions that also dealt more directly with the poor. However, like their male counterparts, migrant women were concerned with the undifferentiated poor of their city, rather than individual family members in need. This transition to supporting masses of anonymous poor also demonstrates how migrants more fully adhered to local charitable culture, which centred on aiding the poor, by the 1430s.

Exceptions: Recanati

Deeper into the interior of the Papal States, migrants engaged in more personalised charitable practices. In 1423, Tomaso di Francesco, *sclavo* and resident of the hill town of Recanati wished to go on a long-distance pilgrimage and to make suitable end-of-life preparations in the event that he died en route. On March 3rd, he compiled a will with the notary Giacomo di Petrucci: 'Wanting to visit the ends of the earth, St. James the Apostle, and not wanting to die intestate'.[55] Importantly, he left large wax candles and an entire Venetian ducat to the order of *clericos et pauperes*, a semi-institutionalised order of clergymen and poor who begged for alms and accompanied funeral biers to their final resting places.[56] In Recanati, this order was funded by the mortuary fees left in every will, along with a little extra supplemental fee made on a voluntary basis by the testator. In this case, Tomaso di Francesco participated in expected and normative charitable offerings to the *clericos et pauperes*, while also making more individualised contributions to members of the migrant community of Recanati.[57] To that end, he left his house to Tomaso di Tornario, his relative, who lived in the small village near the popular pilgrimage shrine of Santa Maria di Loreto, to which he also left eight ducats. He enacted this choice even though his wife could very well have survived him. This example demonstrates the blurred lines and competition between charity to the poor, charity to ecclesiastical institutions, and aid to one's own kin.

By the mid-fifteenth century, more formalised acts of collective charity that necessitated sanction in the form of a confraternity charter appear in the documentary record. Migrants' collective attempts at self-protection through charity often followed expulsion measures enacted by local authorities. For example, Recanati's town priors expelled its population of *albanensi* in 1448. Eight years later, another reference to limits on migrant activity appeared in the civic *Annales*, naming the Confraternity of *sclavi* of St. Peter Martyr, which successfully overturned forced labour as executioners and gravediggers through the invocation of a diocesan charter that approved their confraternity.[58] The most visible and vocal organisation of migrants in Recanati, the Confraternity of St. Peter Martyr, used the term *sclavus* to refer to themselves, and those

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[55] Archivio di Stato di Recanati, Giacomo Petrucci, vol. 113, 3 March 1437, ff. 111r: 'Volens limina beati jacobi apostoli visitare et nolens decedere intestatus'.

[56] For a discussion of the typical roles of *clericos et pauperes*, see EMANUELE C. COLOMBO et al.., 'L'economia rituale dalla rendita alle celebrazioni (Lodi, età moderna)', *Quaderni Storici* 49, no. 147 (2014): 871–903.

[57] For a discussion of the intellectual construction of the poor as a radical affront to governance in the early and high Middle Ages, see BRIAN HAMILTON, '*Pauperes Christi*: Voluntary Poverty as Political Practice', Thesis (Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2015).

[58] Archivio Comunale di Recanati, vol. 27, *Annales*, f. 6r, 21 May 1452.

they wished to exclude from city appointment of executioners.[59] Participation in confraternities assisted individual members of a community and could also have political ramifications. As a form of collective bargaining, confraternities allowed individuals to petition for better representation in government and to push back against civic mistreatment.

Connections between migrant charity and exclusionary measures directed against migrant groups are also discernible in Ancona's statutory and notarial record. The presence of a confraternity charter granted by the diocese, with officially endorsed charitable activities administered by the group, helped protect the community from civic exclusion.[60] In the first half of the fifteenth century, traditional social functions of religious brotherhoods in the Papal States, specifically the March of Ancona, gave way to more flexible and innovative collectives that helped create political leverage for newly arrived Slavic and Albanian migrants. While the landscape of lay Christianity changed throughout the March during this period, structures based on charity and its function in society continued. Specifically, as more migrants congregated in Ancona, there appeared more need for officially recognised confraternities, especially with the growing degree of political exclusion.[61]

Conclusion

The charitable activity of migrants suggests that they did not immediately feel integrated into the city's social fabric, but their borrowing of legal norms of Ancona nonetheless indicate attempts to integrate and to ensure stability in the face of exclusion. Late medieval charitable networks served as the basis of civic and social life for all urban residents of the Papal States. Members of extended communities made up of relations, friends, and neighbours depended on one another for assistance. To cope with the shifting political and economic structures in the early to mid-fifteenth century, migrants relied on increasingly more formal and collective forms of charity to

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[59] Medieval Italian notaries adopted the term *sclavus* most likely from earlier Byzantine legal and historical sources. See FLORIN CURTA, 'The Making of the Slavs: Between Ethnogenesis, Invention, and Migration', *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana* 2, no. 4 (2008): 168–69. I argue that the administrative officials in the Papal States also used the term to refer to Slavic-speaking residents in their territories. Scholar Mario Sensi also cited chronicle sources supporting the existence of an informal lay groups in Recanati devoted to Santa Maria delle Grazie in the 1460s and a formal chartered group devoted to Santa Venera in the 1470s. MARIO SENSI, 'Fraternite di slavi nelle Marche', in *Italia Felix: migrazioni slave e albanesi in Occidente. Romagna, Marche e Abruzzi, secoli XIV-XVI*, ed. SERGIO ANSELMI (Ancona: Quaderni di «Proposte e Ricerche», 1988), 192–212 (211, n. 41). For a summary of the evidence for these groups, see MORONI, *Recanati*, 265–67.

[60] Confraternities were responsible for all kinds of civic charity and activities related to poor relief, including care for criminals, widows, and orphans. For a wide range of chronological and regional case studies on this topic, see the following volumes: TERPSTRA, ed., *The Politics of Ritual Kinship*; Black et al., *Early Modern Confraternities*; KONRAD EISENBICHLER, ed., *A Companion*.

[61] Other ad-hoc groups that lacked a confraternity charter, such as the *Pauperes Christi* represented a traditional, mendicant-based form of collective charity that held several functions, from singing intercessory prayers for the dead, to providing a way for local Christians to recompense for ill-gotten gains accrued during their lifetimes. For a comparable finding from northern Italy, see ROISIN COSSAR, 'The Quality of Mercy: Confraternities and Public Power in Medieval Bergamo', *Journal of Medieval History* 27, no. 2 (June 2001): 139–57; FLORIANO GRIMALDI, *Pellegrini e pellegrinaggi a Loreto nei secoli XIV-XVIII* (Foligno: Bolletino storico della città di Foligno, 2001), 16–68.

support both their city and their own communities. Earlier in the fifteenth century, these forms of aid looked nothing like the more public or church-sanctioned groups found in Italy, such as occupational guilds and religious confraternities, both of which were ratified with town charters by mid-century.

By the time the papacy returned to Italy in the 1420s, migrant charity had long been embedded in local charitable frameworks. In contrast to earlier groups, migrant brotherhoods forged complex relationships with both church and state. Acquisition of an official confraternity charter also allowed migrants to petition for representation in government and push back against state mistreatment. Furthermore, migrants' charitable activities in Ancona and its surrounding region hint at the challenges to everyday experience of migrants in Quattrocento Italy, especially as their numbers grew and as they faced exclusion from their adoptive cities. In Ancona, displaced peoples from the eastern Adriatic often drew on the norms of religious devotion and institutional organisation typical throughout Italy in the 1440s. However, migrants in Recanati also gave long-established institutions and patterns of charity more personal features. Eastern Adriatic groups in the Papal States such as confraternities to assist their poorest members and gain political leverage in face of new discriminatory policies. These efforts to create community show how migrants used charity to reestablish safety, security, and crisis management, all within traditional Latin Christian frameworks. Compared to migrants to other cities in the March of Ancona, the migrants to Ancona used charitable causes to support the cities at large. This tendency demonstrates the mixed and interactive social nature of urban neighbourhoods, where people of different faiths and language groups lived near one another, worked together, and used charity to support the most vulnerable members of their communities.