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THE CATHEDRAL OF MILAN AND ITS FABULOUS DONOR

by

MARTINA SALTAMACCHIA

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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By MARTINA SALTAMACCHIA

Dissertation Director:
Rudolph M. Bell

This dissertation focuses on Marco Carelli, a fourteenth-century wealthy Milanese merchant who in 1391 donated his vast patrimony to jump-start the building of the city's new cathedral. The intent in each chapter is to weave together a "life" that reflects upon its time. Through wills, merchandise inventories, confraternity statutes, accounting books, sale contracts, and trial minutes dug out of the archives of Bruges, Lille, Milan, and Venice, I reconstruct the life of a man who is in many ways typical for his period. The profile that emerges from this detailed analysis profoundly contradicts the standard historiography of the rapacious merchant who bestowed lavish gifts to buy his way into heaven by paying off time owed for his sins and as well to create earthly monuments to himself.

Further, the thesis challenges the prevailing divide among scholars that separates economic and religious spheres, which leads in my judgment to an artificially bifurcated portrait of medieval society and mentality. For a medieval merchant, I argue, being a good Christian meant devoting himself to success in business and equally to charitable deeds, always making great profits on his investments.

After an introductory chapter to set the scene, Chapter Two focuses on the Carelli

family before Marco was someone of importance, showing how his attitudes and skills were rooted in a robust familial tradition of merchants with solid patrimony and tight networks of commercial alliances acquired through farsighted marital strategies. Then, it explores Marco Carelli's golden age and the construction of his trans-regional mercantile empire, looking at his *modus operandi* to understand more about choices and decisions, explaining the factors that contributed to his success, and showing the profound intertwining between business and faith, omnipresent in the merchant's life. Chapter Four examines the merchant's bequest to the Milan Cathedral through the examination of his two wills and codicil. The final chapter describes how the cathedral Fabbrica decided to celebrate his death, and to honor his body and his memory – notwithstanding that he asked for none of the pomp and ceremony, only for masses for the salvation of his soul.

Dedication

To Rudy, «lo mio maestro»,

With gratitude and affection

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List of abbreviations

AFD: Archivio della Fabbrica del Duomo di Milano

ASV: Archivio di Stato di Venezia

MARIEGOLA: S. Maria Gloriosa ai Frari, b. 100-XIV-1: Mariegola della Scuola dei
Milanesi 1361-1790, f. 63v

ANNALI: *Annali della Fabbrica del Duomo dall'origine fino al presente, pubblicati a
cura dell'Amministrazione della Fabbrica*. Milano: Brigola, 1877-1895

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This dissertation centers on Marco Carelli, a super-wealthy Milanese merchant who on August 15, 1391, the day commemorating the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, divested himself of everything he owned to jump-start the construction of a vast new cathedral for the city of Milan.¹ Initially I wanted to understand why he made such a fabulous donation, for he was rich indeed. I hoped to get inside his head and his heart in order to capture the moment when he signed the piece of paper that made him an instant pauper, even while he lived on a few years and attended to making sure that the cathedral received the full benefit of his charity. I planned to figure out how he had become so rich, how he was or was not emblematic of his merchant class, and what difference his money made to the mundane earthly concerns of constructing the cathedral. I aimed to explore the ways in which churchmen chose to honor him when he died and perhaps even to ask why things transpired as they did. As it turns out, not all my questions have been answered and I have come to see that some mysteries must remain mysterious, especially in matters of individual faith. But the effort has had its many rewards, as I hope the chapters that follow will reveal.

Toward my goal of understanding Marco Carelli, more than three years ago I started digging into registers and parchments in the archives of Milan with the aim of collecting material about the world of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century merchants, as part of a larger project on medieval mercantile culture in theory and practice. In particular, I was interested in the moral and religious context in which merchants operated, exploring the

¹ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli.

dialectic relationship between the motive of profit and the ethical force of religious belief. A parallel dialectic, although cast in the modern secular terms of personal greed versus social good, exploded in September 2008 as a consequence of the economic crisis highlighted best, at least in the United States, by the collapse of Lehman Brothers and the ensuing Wall Street versus Main Street debate. Risky and unscrupulous speculation by billionaire financial brokers had brought hard-working men and women to their knees. And yet the people, or their representatives in democratic governments everywhere, more or less willingly bailed out the rich bandits and rather passively took on themselves the burdens of unemployment, housing foreclosures, and wiped out pension funds.

I remain acutely aware of the global economic crisis, which impacts me on a variety of practical, every day issues, but through the contemporary detritus I have come to see a fundamental difference between my life and the lives of fourteenth-century people. Whereas we in the twenty-first century tend to assess our circumstances from the perspective of a dialectic bifurcation of good and evil, right and wrong, greed and altruism, such a binary mode does not adequately capture the world of Marco Carelli and his compatriots. In this thesis I shall argue that he and the people who surrounded him lived and died within a shared unitary intellectual, moral, and emotional construct that could and did accommodate both good and evil, both self-indulgent secular activity and certitude about heavenly reward. I shall not be able to prove the accuracy of this unitary vision in the sense of scientifically testing a hypothesis but I do hope to demonstrate its utility as a way to make sense of Carelli's fabulous donation.

I first came upon the wealthy merchant Marco Carelli while leafing through ledgers, notarial acts and statutes several years earlier, during my undergraduate thesis research.

For that project, I focused on the financing and fundraising for the construction of the Cathedral of Milan in the fourteenth and fifteenth century. Popular tradition long had asserted that the devout people of Milan built it, but professional historians instead designated as the cathedral true founder none other than Gian Galeazzo Visconti. The duke, eager to erect a mausoleum to celebrate his dynasty, saw an opportunity as well to gain through this construction project the forgiveness of the citizens for his many ruthless actions.² Determined to set the record straight and challenge whether professional historians knew better than popular tradition, I transcribed the long lists of gifts and donors from the Registers of the Donations for the construction of the cathedral.

My analysis of thousands of records revealed how Gian Galeazzo Visconti's bequest amounted to only 16% of the total income of the cathedral, while the main component of the donations, equivalent to the remaining 84%, derived from an extraordinary inflow of hundreds and even thousands of modest donations – a cent, an egg, a piece of cheese – mostly coming from poor people. Among the various stories of donors, from Marta, the prostitute converted for love of the Virgin Mary, to Caterina, a poor old woman who donated her only shabby fur as an offering for the construction, there was also the record of the merchant Carelli, who donated his entire patrimony, amounting to more than the total donations of everyone else for that year, at a critical early moment in the building of the cathedral. Magnificent though his gift surely was, my focus was on completing an analysis of the donation registers more generally and I later published a revised version of

² Gian Galeazzo Visconti was the first Duke of Milan, a title he received from Wenceslaus, King of the Romans in 1395 for 100,000 florins. Before that date, the State of Milan was a principality: technically, Visconti led Milan with the title of prince from 1385 to 1395, and with the title of duke from 1395 to 1402, year of his death. Yet, in order to avoid confusion, I will refer to him as duke throughout the entire dissertation, also because he was known as such in subsequent centuries.

this study under the title *Milano: Un popolo e il suo duomo*, with an emphasis on “popolo” and “suo.”

But the bequest of Marco Carelli continued to intrigue me and so I decided to center my Ph.D. thesis on mercantile culture around the case of this man, tracing back his life with the intent of understanding the reasons behind his extraordinarily generous gift. This opening chapter begins with a brief account of the enterprise to which Marco Carelli gave his entire fortune – building the new cathedral of Milan – showing the uniqueness of its form of financing in respect to other cathedrals built in late medieval Italy. It then delineates the system of fundraising and management of the works for the Milan Cathedral through its administrative body, the *Fabbrica*, showing how the popular lay component of its council acquired and maintained independent leadership of the project of construction.³ After a concise overview of the historical context surrounding Carelli’s donation, namely the special jubilee proclaimed in 1391 for the city of Milan, it surveys what is known from secondary sources about his fellow Milanese merchants. My conclusion is that while he may have been the richest among them, his ways of doing business, his civic commitment, and his charitable impulses all were well within the normative commercial culture of his time and place. In short, he was “typical.” The chapter continues with a brief sketch of Marco Carelli, the “prince of the medieval *mercatura*,” arguing that precisely the vivid contradictions of his life allow us to delve into one of the most fundamental yet complex traits of medieval society: a unitary view of the world ultimately ascendant over dualistic understandings of God and man, good and evil. The closing paragraphs explain how the remaining chapters are organized.

³ The Fabbrica was in charge of the administration of the cathedral construction, its building and its maintenance. For the definition of *fabbrica*, see Genicot, *Rural Communities*, 101, and Soldi Rondinini, “Fabbrica artis,” 107–20.

Milan's economy during the Visconti period (1277-1447)

By the second half of the fourteenth century, Milan affirmed itself as one of the most feared states of the Italian peninsula. The Lombard capital, which the Visconti dynasty ruled with a firm grip, underwent a period of geographic, economic and demographic expansion. The city counted 90,000 inhabitants at the end of the thirteenth century; in less than a hundred years its population rose by two-thirds, reaching 150,000 residents, placing it along side Paris and Granada as one of the three most populous cities in Europe, and one of only five with a population over 100,000.⁴

From the end of the thirteenth century, Milan and its *contado* (the countryside around the city) experienced rapid economic growth. Agriculture benefitted from the extensive land reclamation projects and irrigation networks begun in the area as early as the mid-twelfth century under the supervision of Cistercian and Benedictine monasteries, together with *Humiliati*.⁵ This early work of drainage and recovery of previously uncultivated terrains laid the basis for the construction two centuries later of a hydraulic infrastructure through the deviation of the Ticino and the Adda Rivers that not only built canals for the irrigation of surrounding fields but also facilitated communication and transport. In this way, Milan fully exploited the competitive advantage of its fortuitous geographical location, a natural crossroad between the two major axes of international commerce: from Venice to the Alps, and from the central states of the Italian peninsula to France and Provence, passing through the Alps.⁶

⁴ Malanima, *Decline or Growth?*; Malanima, *Italian Cities*, 91-126. In addition to Paris and Granada, each with 150,000 inhabitants as Milan, the other two European cities with a population over 100,000 were Venice and Florence, each with 100,000 inhabitants.

⁵ Ferrari, "Acque naturali," 13.

⁶ Frangioni, "Milano l'è buona tera," 437-40.

Fourteenth-century Milan's economy excelled in the production of wool, cotton (*bombace*), leather, and in the metallurgic industry. Since the Carelli family was primarily engaged in the manufacture and sale of wool, this is the sector we now examine more closely. Among cloths, the trade of Lombard wool cloth was particularly important. They were produced at Milan, Monza, Brescia, Como and Bergamo, and from there distributed to the main markets of the Italian communes and, from the mid-thirteenth century onward, in Constantinople and the Levant.⁷ Venice represented the gathering point for trade towards the South of the Italian peninsula and the Levant – a key role that the city used several times over the course of the fourteenth century as leverage in its commercial wars against Milan.⁸

The table of customs rates redacted for the Milanese merchants in Venice lists five different varieties of wool that the Lombards sold there (see Table 1.1).⁹

⁷ Mainoni, "Il mercato della lana," 20-21.

⁸ Consider, for instance, the embargo on the import into Venice of Lombard wool cloth in 1316, which was lifted only one year later, when the Venetians obtained the abrogation of all transportation tolls the Milanese had imposed on them. Mainoni, "Milano Venezia," 13.

⁹ The table of customs rates is reported in the *Mariegola della Scuola dei Milanesi*, the confraternity Marco Carelli started in Venice, as fully explored in Chapter 3. ASV, MARIEGOLA. The document is fully transcribed in Saltamacchia, "Marco Carelli," 211-80; partially edited in Cantù, *Scorsa di un Lombardo*, 176-94, and more recently in Luisetto, *Archivio Sartori*, 1871-83.

<i>Lana francescha</i>	4 soldi/ sacco ¹⁰
<i>Lana san matheo</i>	1 soldo/ sacco ¹¹
<i>Lana de la Zudecha</i>	1 soldo/ sacco
<i>Lana de campagna</i>	1 soldo/ sacco
Wool of any other kind	1 soldo/ sacco

Table 1.1 Table of customs rates for the wool the Milanese merchants sold in Venice (1454).
Source: ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 63v.

The finest wool, called *francescha*, was imported in raw form from England and Flanders and then manufactured in the workhouses of Milan and Como, while the *contado* and the other Lombard centers of wool production were entrusted with the manufacturing of wool of inferior quality.¹² The *lana di san matheo* was a Spanish wool, imported from the province of Castellón; it appeared on the Milanese market beginning in the second half of the fourteenth century, and, thanks to its competitive price, soon became the predominant wool on the Lombard market, a position it managed to retain for the following five to six decades.¹³ As shown in the list of wools in Table 1.1, Milan did not confine itself to the manufacture of the finest wools, but produced also cloths of lesser quality and price, such as *lana de campagna* and mixed wool.

A new cathedral for Milan

The proud Milanese were eager to display their growth and floridity, showing their supremacy over the other Italian states through the construction of a cathedral grander than all the rest. With such a monument to their wealth and power, they would finally

¹⁰ In fourteenth-century Milan, 1 sacco of wool = 230-437 libbre = 386.64-734.6 pounds.

¹¹ In fourteenth-century Milan, 1 sacco of *lana san matheo* = 230-400 libbre = 386.64-672.41 pounds.

¹² Caracausi, "Glossario," 386; Mainoni, "Il mercato della lana," 22.

¹³ Mainoni, *Mercanti lombardi*, 26.

enter in the competition among the communes of the peninsula, which during the Trecento had challenged each other by building churches designed to exceed the others in beauty, height, and majesty, in a singular fusion of religiosity and civic identity.¹⁴

Several of these cathedrals, most notably San Lorenzo in Genoa, San Gimignano in Modena, and San Petronio in Bologna, had been heavily financed through a 10% tax imposed on all pious bequests for any objective. In Genoa, the construction of San Lorenzo had begun in the twelfth century, thanks to the money the Genoese gained from their successful enterprises as mercenary fleets in the Crusades, and continued until the end of the fourteenth century. The 10% fiscal imposition had benefitted the cathedral works starting in 1174 and continued for nearly a century, until in 1270 the revenue from that same tax was redirected towards financing the city's harbor works.¹⁵

In Modena, the construction of a new Romanesque cathedral began at the end of the twelfth century, thanks to an initiative that from the outset embraced different strata of the population. The enterprise consciously affirmed their common civic identity, and their shared cultural and religious values. Nonetheless, financing of the construction relied significantly on revenue derived from a 10% tax on pious bequests imposed beginning in 1217 and continuing until the completion of the works towards the end of the fourteenth century.¹⁶

In 1389 the city of Bologna initiated the construction of the Basilica of San Petronio as an act of thanksgiving for its state of freedom and independence, to which the commune officials then added the hope that this new votive temple would serve to

¹⁴ Soldi Rondinini, "La fabbrica del Duomo come espressione," 49-64.

¹⁵ Polonio Felloni, *Opere*, 123; Petti Balbi, "Accrescere, gestire, trasmettere," 388.

¹⁶ Pistoni, *San Geminiano*, 253; Fasoli, "La cattedrale," 114-30; Bocchi, "La costruzione del Duomo," 27-33.

intercede in seeking God's grace in perpetuating their freedom. In its original design, the church would have competed directly with the projected new cathedral of Milan, surpassing it in length – a plan that the papacy subsequently halted, in order to allow Saint Peter's in Rome to establish the record. The Bologna basilica's length therefore was reduced to 433 feet. Moreover, the façade was left strikingly unfinished, perhaps due to financial constraints. The works of construction for the Bologna Church, in addition to benefitting from a 10% tax on pious donations, were further financed through an indirect tax equivalent to 1.66% on all the credits of the commune.¹⁷

In three other late medieval central Italian cities, public revenues from taxes and fines again played a decisive role in the financing of new or enhanced cathedrals. All three, gothic in design, competed against each other in their dimensions: in chronological order, the Cathedral of Siena, the Cathedral of Orvieto, and the Basilica of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence.

In Siena, a new cathedral was built between 1215 and 1263 on the site of an earlier church. Throughout these years, voluntary donations and testamentary bequests, some of modest amounts, represented a steady source of income but were not a significant part (1-11%) of the total revenues. Regular and more relevant funding (10-30%) came from the revenues obtained from the commune, which played an important role in the promotion of the works, sustaining the payment of workers, and coverage of materials' acquisition and transportation costs.¹⁸ Finally, the core revenue for construction (40-80%) came from

¹⁷ The 1.66% tax on all the credits of the commune did not apply to loan restitution and victual expenditures for the *Anziani*, the political leaders of the *popolo*. Fanti, *La Fabbrica di S. Petronio*, 44-46; Trombetti Budriesi, "I primi anni," 52-53; Soldi Rondinini, "La fabbrica del Duomo come espressione," 51.

¹⁸ Giorgi and Moscadelli, "Quod Omnes Cerei," 497-517, 560-64.

what amounted to a tax paid in wax.¹⁹ From the beginning of the works, the city introduced an obligatory donation in wax, to be brought to the cathedral on the feast of Assumption. The entire population of Siena between the ages of 18 and 60 were compelled to make this annual bequest, under the surveillance of the *sindaci* of the city's *contrade*, the districts into which Siena was divided. In addition, whenever lords or extra-diocesan rural communities stipulated an act of submission to the commune of Siena, a portion of the wax customarily brought annually to the commune as census was bequeathed to the cathedral.²⁰ In 1339, several decades after the completion of the cathedral, a new project of massive additions to the cathedral began, with the intent of doubling its size. However, in less than ten years a combination of structural architectonic miscalculations and the financial hardship that overcame the city in the wake of the Black Death abruptly halted the works. Even today, the remains of the uncompleted nave and façade remind visitors of the ambitious plan's failure.

In our second example, Orvieto, works for a new cathedral started formally in 1290 with a papal blessing and continued under the aegis of the local bishop who, directly involved in the financing of the works with his personal resources, assumed a position of administrative and managerial control over the project. In the following years, however,

¹⁹ The commercial value of wax was very high – the cost of 1 *libbra* (equivalent, more or less, to 11 oz.) was greater than the daily salary of the master builder of the cathedral, the highest position in the construction site. Even the candles' drops (*gocciolature*) and ends (*scamozzi*) from the candles lighted in the church were resold on the market – generating a modest but constant entry equivalent to 3-4% of the total cathedral income. For detailed wax prices and salaries per year, see Giorgi and Moscadelli, "Quod Omnes Cerei," 502 n. 22, 564-67, 574-76; for the annual income the sale of candles' drops and ends generated, see *Ibid.*, 522, 567-74.

²⁰ Lords and extra-diocesan communities stipulated acts of submission to the commune of Siena often as a result of heavy pressures, or were forced to it by Siena's aggressive politics. The submission was a sort of alliance: lords and communities could enjoy Siena's protection, while obtaining Sienese citizenship, with all its rights and duties, against their promise of loyalty to the commune. The submission entailed the payment of a yearly census in wax to Siena, of an amount decided at the stipulation of the act.

participation by the people and the commune grew. During the Trecento the city experienced rapid urban and economic growth, favored by the frequent presence of the pope who had taken up residence there as early as 1216. With the transfer of the papal court to Avignon (1309) the Signori Sette Consoli delle Arti, Orvieto's executive body, gained an increasing role in directing the construction project, both financially and artistically. While voluntary donations and bequests from private citizens continued, it was public financing from the commune that became the greatest source of income for the cathedral works, including revenues from fines against sodomites and witches.²¹

Lastly, in 1293, Florence decided to replace the fifth-century crumbling Church of Santa Reparata with a larger and more majestic one. To aid the construction, the commune imposed a tax on all wills and testaments redacted in Florence or the surrounding *contado*. With the same purpose, the commune ordered a subsidy of four denari on each lira paid out of the city treasury and a head-tax of two soldi on every male. Private voluntary donations remained only a marginal source of income for the cathedral works, while the amounts generated by these *gabelle* (taxes and subsidies) coercively imposed upon the population constituted throughout the years the core revenues of Santa Maria del Fiore.²²

Quite different, indeed unique from this perspective, was the construction of a new church for Milan, heavily financed by voluntary donations of the people. I shall return to an examination of the charitable spirit of the Milanese, a characteristic long attributed to them in popular Italian lore, and amply demonstrated in their successful building of a

²¹ Riccetti, "Le mani sull'opera," 167–228; Riccetti, "Le Dôme," 67. The register "De pena conmiectentes scelus sodomiticum" is edited in Andreani, "Un frammento di statuto," 143–72.

²² Haines, "La grande impresa civica," 137–66; Haines, "Firenze e il finanziamento," 74; Fabbri, "La Gabella"; Bartlett, *Civilization*, 37.

new cathedral without resort to taxation or forced levies of any sort. But first allow me to introduce the particulars surrounding the initiation of Milan Cathedral project.

The city unquestionably needed a new cathedral to replace its old one. The ancient Chiesa Maggiore had been badly damaged in 1162 in a punitive expedition by Pavese troops loyal to Frederick Barbarossa, sent to avenge Milan's decision to oppose the emperor. Two centuries later, the collapse of the recently reconstructed bell tower caused further serious damage to the church, destroying parts of the outside walls.²³ Many Milanese called for the construction of a bigger, new cathedral – the citizens, for their civic pride; the merchants, a class of newly affirmed protagonists for the socio-economic life of the city, who desired to celebrate their rising power in this way; and the archbishop, who surely welcomed the possibility of presiding over a grand new edifice.

In 1386 critical support for these ambitions came from Gian Galeazzo Visconti, the powerful lord of Milan. His voice was instrumental at the beginning of the construction, although as I have demonstrated elsewhere, he did not back up his rhetoric with enough money to make the cathedral truly his own.²⁴ Within fifteen years of the beginning of the works, indeed, the Milanese managed to oust the duke from the project, gaining full control over the construction and leaving the project to depend exclusively on public voluntary donations.

From the outset, an administrative body called the Fabbrica assumed direction of this gigantic civic effort. The Fabbrica exercised authority primarily through its elected council, which met weekly to deliberate on all matters regarding the construction, management and administration of the cathedral. Council members were enjoined to

²³ Cattaneo, *Il Duomo*, 10.

²⁴ See Saltamacchia, *Costruire cattedrali*, 160-89; Saltamacchia, "Prince and Prostitute," 173-91.

attend every meeting, under penalty of a fine amounting to their daily salaries.²⁵

Resolutions on issues large and small, everything from petty hirings and firings to choices of suppliers, were preserved in the council's written records.

The three main actors on the civic scene - the duke, the church and the people - were all represented in the council, although in different proportions. The duke did not take part in person at council meetings, but the presence of the Vicar of Provisions and the twelve members of the Council of Provisions, the central legislative institution of the commune, reminded everyone of his authority.²⁶ The church was represented in the council only by the vicar to the archbishop and three monsignors, for a total of four people among approximately three hundred members: clearly, the Fabbrica possessed very marked lay traits. Finally, nearly three hundred citizens, fifty officials elected from each of Milan's six *porte* – the gates that identified the city's six districts – constituted the core of the council.²⁷

Engineers, masters, blacksmiths and dealers working in the building yard of the church or providing technical advice to the builders of the cathedral participated in the council as well; their opinions were particularly valued in decisions of an architectural nature. Council meetings often involved lengthy and sometimes disputed discussions about the state of the art of the building and the best ways to move forward. These

²⁵ ANNALI, 1: 214 (May 23, 1400); on the fee amount, see ANNALI, 1: 252 (August 29, 1402), and ANNALI, 1: 255 (February 2, 1403). See also Saltamacchia, "Prince and Prostitute," 173-91.

²⁶ Leverotti, "*Governare*," 79, 124-28; Kleinhenz et al., *Medieval Italy*, 866.

²⁷ Mezzanotte, "Il Duomo," 872; Soldi Rondinini, *La Fabbrica del Duomo nei primi anni*, 29. The six gates of Milan at the time were Porta Romana, Porta Ticinese, Porta Vercellina, Porta Comasina, Porta Nuova, and Porta Orientale.

discussions could last for years until some proposed solution found agreement or else work on the ground made the issue moot.²⁸

Both in the style of its decision making and in the ways its representatives were chosen, the Fabbrica clearly exercised full control over Milan's new cathedral, an authority and independence it was ready to defend even at the price of renouncing Gian Galeazzo Visconti's conspicuous bequests. When the Fabbrica officials dared to drive the duke out of the cathedral project and decided, quite unusually, to depend solely upon people's generosity, without imposing any tax on the population for financing the construction, they apparently relied on the tradition of excellence in charity that they themselves believed had characterized Milan over the centuries. Medieval chronicles record, for instance, the precious rings and necklaces the wealthy matrons of the city offered up after the destruction of the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in 1162. And however well or not sufficiently documented, the Lombard capital prided itself as first among equals for its traditions in civic charity. Donations, indeed, constituted just a small part of a greater ensemble of generous works, from hosting strangers and pilgrims, to raising orphans, to taking care of sick people and sheltering the poor.²⁹

The public exercise of charity had become more and more necessary in Milan in the thirteenth and the fourteenth century, when a flourishing communal life attracted to the city hundreds of indigent people from the *contado* and economically depressed areas nearby, lured by the possibility of jobs and earnings in the thriving scene of an urban

²⁸ An example that comes to mind here is the controversy over the erection of the vault of the *tiburio* (central tower) in the fifteenth-sixteenth century. The council took almost six decades to reach a decision, after pondering the advice of many illustrious architects of the time, including Leonardo Da Vinci and Donato Bramante. Schofield, "Amadeo, Bramante and Leonardo," 68-100; Da Vinci, *Notebooks*, 60; Saltamacchia, *Costruire cattedrali*, 120.

²⁹ Grassi, Introduction to *La carità a Milano*, 9-11.

setting. The commune often favored and protected the creation of large and small charitable institutions, effectively delegating to these private initiatives the task of assistance, and limiting its intervention only to situations such as epidemics. Inheritances and gifts from private donors supported the proliferation of these institutions, profoundly religious in their inspiration, but markedly lay in their nature and composition.³⁰

A special jubilee for Milan

Since the beginning of the cathedral project, the Milanese had been outstanding in their generosity. Seemingly everyone, according to his or her means, offered something for financing the building costs – working *pro nihilo* at the construction site, or donating whatever he or she possessed, perhaps only an egg, or for others a precious ring, a modest house or a parcel of land.³¹ At the main altar inside the church, offerings in money and goods were collected day and night, while gold, silver and copper coins filled the wooden boxes placed at the busiest crossroads throughout the city and at the entrances of the public city palaces. Teams of preachers and laymen went everywhere in the *contado* collecting donations in forage and wine from the farmers, while white dressed maids, the *puellae cantagolae*, encouraged offerings with dances and songs.³² Beginning already in 1386, and then for the three following years, the archbishop of Milan, Antonio da Saluzzo, had conceded the Milanese an indulgence of forty days for each donation – in money, in goods, in time or energies – offered to the cathedral, with no restriction on the

³⁰ Several charitable institutions explicitly stated their lay nature, adopting rules in their statutes that prohibited the election of a cleric as rector of the association, as the Milanese Consorzio della Misericordia, or allowed only to lay people to take part in it, refusing any form of control of the archbishop, as was the case in the Lombard center for the Scuola della Divinità. Albini, “Continuità e innovazione,” 137-38; Noto, *Gli Amici dei Poveri*, xviii, xxi.

³¹ Saltamacchia, *Costruire cattedrali*, 25-55.

³² *Ibid.*, 26-36.

number of forty-day indulgences that might be earned within a year. Instead, the archbishop warmly assured the faithful that “the Immaculate Virgin, on the day of the supreme judgment, will remind the just Judge the works fulfilled in Her honor.”³³

Yet, such magnificent displays of individual charity were never enough to cover the expenditures and to supply the needs of the gigantic construction site. The cathedral deputies needed to develop new ways to obtain funds, and events taking place in Rome at this time offered them the occasion for daring to advance before the pontiff an unprecedented request. In 1389, Piero Tomacelli was elected pope and chose the name Boniface IX. One of his first acts was to confirm the jubilee for the year 1390 that his predecessor Pope Urban VI had proclaimed before his death, one that would then be repeated every thirty-three years in remembrance of the age of Christ. By proclaiming this Year of Jubilee Boniface IX aimed to enhance his respect and authority among the faithful as his contest against the Antipope Clement VII continued in what historians have come to label the Western Schism (1378-1417) – and at the same time benefitting financially from the granting of jubilee indulgences, a motive widely noted by his contemporaries.³⁴

Medieval people hailed joyfully the announcement of the plenary indulgences that accompanied the proclamation of a new jubilee. During such a special year, Christians

³³ ANNALI, Appendici, 1: 211 (May 12, 1386). Cazzani, “Due bolle,” 8-9. The archbishop was the cousin of Gian Galeazzo Visconti - as the duke called the archbishop in the decree conceding the cathedral permission to collect offerings for the construction, *consaguineum nostrum carissimum dominum archiepiscopum mediolanensem*. While the pope had the power of granting any kind of indulgence to anyone, after Innocent III’s 1215 reform bishops’ authority at this regard was limited to the granting of partial indulgences of one year at the dedication of a church, and of forty days on other occasions. Kent, “Indulgences.”

³⁴ Rocco Negri, “Storia e cronologia,” 186. For a concise and thorough biographical sketch of the pontificate of Boniface IX, including also a detailed bibliography, see Esch, “Papa Bonifacio IX.”

animated by a sincere spirit of contrition who confessed their sins and who then visited seven churches in Rome, could obtain this gift of grace, with its promise of getting them closer to eternal life in paradise. Christians believed that indulgences could remit the temporal punishment associated with sin that had to be expiated in purgatory, thus shortening or completely eliminating the period of time the sinner had to spend there before getting to heaven. While plenary indulgences remitted the entirety of temporal punishment, partial indulgences were associated with a certain number of days or years, equivalent to the portion of the penalty commuted. Clearly, an indulgence of so many days expressed a relative value that had the advantage of being concrete and therefore easily comprehensible by the people of the time, yet did not claim any exactness or prescience on God's measure of punishment and redemption. While a ledger mentality was increasing at the time, the mechanism behind partial and plenary indulgences always required a leap of faith. Medieval people did not treat this doctrine as an arithmetic account: any indulgence they received was a sign of God's mercy that gave a renewed sense of hope to an otherwise hopeless sinner.

The proclamation of the 1390 Jubilee and the growing expenditures for the works inspired the bold idea of asking the pope to allow the Milanese, the following year, to gain the jubilee plenary indulgence in Milan as well – bringing offerings to the cathedral and visiting for ten days the city's five main churches.³⁵ The Fabbrica designated a small group of five honorable and trustworthy citizens – the merchant Marco Carelli and the soldier Giovanni Pusterla, together with Francesco della Majrola, Rizzardo Resta, and Rizzardo de Conti - to ask the powerful Gian Galeazzo Visconti to present the pope with

³⁵ The churches were: the cathedral itself, Sant'Ambrogio, San Nazaro in Brolio, San Lorenzo, San Simpliciano fuori le mura. ANNALI, 1: 41-43 (February 1, 1391).

this daring request.³⁶ For the duke, it was the perfect occasion to demonstrate to Boniface IX renewed loyalty – and especially so in that moment, given that the recent marriage of his daughter Valentina with the Duke of Orléans, and the bloody wars he had precipitated against the Guelph cities of Bologna and Florence had cast serious doubts on it. A few days later, Gian Galeazzo advanced the request to the pope, deploring the impediments that prevented the Milanese from going to Rome to gain the indulgence - the continuous tensions with the neighboring states, the lack of roads, and the frequent brigands' assaults on pilgrims.

In response, the pope demanded that half of the donations collected by the Milanese during the jubilee year be transferred to Rome to finance the new churches being built there - a condition he also imposed upon the other states to which he granted the same privilege: Ancona in 1390, Sardinia in 1391, Bavaria in 1392, and so on until 1398. With this unprecedented extension of the jubilee indulgence outside Rome, Pope Boniface IX aimed to benefit those devotees unable to undertake the pilgrimage to Rome, while also greatly benefitting from the conspicuous flow of money resulting from the granting of the indulgences.³⁷ Whatever the mix in his motivations, the agreement worked well financially for the Cathedral of Milan, as the Fabbrica collected during that jubilee year donations five times greater than in previous years. In that same year, 1391, among the thousands of offerings and bequests the Fabbrica officials received, one stood out

³⁶ ANNALI, 1: 32 (April 4, 1390).

³⁷ ANNALI, 1: 33-34 (April 16, 1390). The indulgence was granted on the condition of making penitence with a contrite heart, and bestowing a donation equivalent to the sum of money the devotee would have paid, had he undertaken the pilgrimage to Rome. An official appointed to the task of collecting indulgences would set such amount, case by case, according to the donor's ability to pay – a modality that easily led to corruption and abuses. Esch, "Papa Bonifacio IX."

remarkably: the astonishing 35,000 ducats the merchant Carelli promised to the cathedral upon his death, independently of the jubilee call.

Munificent merchants in medieval Milan

Marco Carelli rightly occupies a place of high regard in the history of the construction of Milan Cathedral. His donation was spectacularly munificent, and yet he was not alone in his generosity: on the contrary, he found himself in the good company of many other munificent Milanese who shared his profession and his successful career. A survey based on secondary literature may set the scene before returning to Carelli himself - sketching attitudes and dispositions of his fellow Milanese to demonstrate how fully even his exceptionally generous bequest nonetheless was part and parcel of fourteenth-century Milanese practices. The frequency and multiplicity of donations and donors' stories show not a collection of heroic gestures by exceptional men, but, on the contrary, a propensity toward charity profoundly rooted in the mercantile mentality of the time.

Beginning in the first half of the Trecento, we have the Milanese merchant Guglielmo Saliverti, *alias dictus Niger*, "the Black," who was active at the market of Avignon, just as it exploded in prominence when the papacy relocated there in 1309. Saliverti obtained citizenship and honorific titles in Avignon, was befriended by the popes and the Visconti alike, and made his fortune through trade in luxury goods between Provence and Milan. At the moment of dictating his will, his mind must have returned to his hometown and the poor of his district, Porta Vercellina. He bequeathed his substantial patrimony to the foundation of a charitable institution, the Luogo Pio della Pagnottella o Michetta, so called from the name of the loaf it aimed to distribute four times a week to

feed the hungry – a task the institution would successfully pursue for centuries after its benefactor's death.³⁸

A few years later in 1368, and closer to home, indeed a few steps away from the square of the civic market, a group of twenty-five friends, all successful merchants in Milan at precisely the time when Marco Carelli began to make his mark, combined their riches to found the Consorzio della Misericordia dei poveri, a charitable institution that in the following decades became the most important in the city for donations and inheritances. Its statutes prescribed precise rules to assure that the entirety of the oblations would be spent in assisting the poor – with no money set aside to pay for masses for the donors' souls or other expressions of ulterior motives.³⁹ The administrators were always chosen from among wealthy citizens, men who would be detached from the patrimony they managed and beyond any temptation to make themselves beneficiaries of the charity's expenditures and gifts. Similarly, they were prohibited from using the money collected for the organization of social lunches, those lavish banquets some confraternities held weekly, monthly or annually.

Among the founders, Giacomo Assandri was the first to donate his entire patrimony to the pious association, specifying as the beneficiaries of his money the *pauperes Christi*, with special regard for the *pauperes verecondi*, those noble or middle class people who had suffered recent calamities and adversities throwing them into misery, but who were too proud or ashamed to ask for help.⁴⁰ Assandri's friend, Arnolfo Albizzati,

³⁸ Noto and Viviano. *Visconti e Sforza*, 237-39; Albini, Introduction to *Dare et habere*, viii-ix.

³⁹ For the history of the Consorzio della Misericordia, its founders and its first statutes, see Calvi, "Il codice del pio luogo," 725-75; Albini, "Continuità e innovazione," 138; Noto, *Gli Amici dei Poveri*, xxii; Viviano, "Ospedali," 57-76.

⁴⁰ On the *pauperes verecondi*, the ashamed poor, see Ricci, "Povertà, vergogna," 305-37.

followed him in his generosity. First he donated his house to become the headquarters of the association; then he nominated the Consorzio to be his universal heir at his death.

From the next century, other illustrative cases show that the propensity to charity continued unabated. In donations dated 1451 and 1455, the Consorzio della Misericordia was named heir of half the conspicuous patrimony of the wealthy merchant Giovanni Rottole, the other half going to benefit the charitable institution Scuola delle Quattro Marie.⁴¹ Abandoning in his youth the wool industry sector where his family before him had thrived, Giovanni turned his attention to the world of finance and banks. With rare passion and acumen, he occupied himself for his whole life in financial transactions and transnational commerce, embarking, in summer as in winter, on risky travels around Europe. Never elected to political office, nonetheless he always remained in good standing with the dukes of his time. Held in great esteem among the merchants of the *Camera Mercatorum*, the organ that represented the interests of the city's merchants, Rottole was appointed procurator for the drafting of a commercial treaty with Genoa. His business instinct brought him to invest in silk production, which although known on the Lombard market, by the 1440s still had not been established as an industry in Milan. Rottole entered in a business partnership with a silk merchant from Florence and three noble men from Genoa and Perugia. With aid and subventions from Duke Filippo Maria Visconti, the group successfully introduced the manufacture of the precious textile in the city.⁴²

The last years of his activity saw the growth and consolidation of the Banca Rottole, with its headquarters in Milan, enriched by frequent transactions with his correspondents

⁴¹ Barbieri, *Origini del capitalismo*, 157-247.

⁴² Mainoni, "La seta a Milano," 871-96.

in Genoa, Rome and other European cities. Serving as an intermediary for bills of exchange and inheritances, Rottole came into contact with the pious institutions of Milan, where often his clients asked him to deposit their offerings. Inspired, perhaps, by the generosity of his clients, the wealthy merchant-banker ended his days himself with the final grand gesture of donating several properties to the Consorzio della Misericordia and to the Scuola delle Quattro Marie, designating their revenues to the “poor of Christ, for the soul of the aforementioned donor and the dead of his family.” He prescribed for the two charitable institutions specific acts towards the needy. On St. Francis’s feast, every year, they were to clothe twelve poor people from head to foot, and every week day *in perpetuum* an official on horseback was to distribute baked bread and wine through the streets of the city – a charitable disposition of proportions never before heard.⁴³

Rottole’s solicitude towards the needy did not cause him to forget his kin. In his will, the merchant left jewelry, clothes, and an annual income to his wife and he disposed money for the care until marriageable age of Margherita, a girl he had hosted and educated in his house “for the love of God,” as well as for the education in Grammar of his young godson, Ambrogio. He was similarly generous with friends and collaborators, and also with servants, tenants and *massari*. Lastly, expressing that trust in the practice of piety profoundly rooted in the Milanese devotees at the time, Rottole specified that a daily mass be celebrated for the repose of his soul in the Church of San Tomaso.

A similar level of attention, practical in its intentions and concrete in its expression, to the needs of the poor who thronged the streets of Milan is found at the origin of

⁴³ Commenting about this distribution of alms, to be continued forever by the two institutions, Gino Barbieri notes that never before had a private benefactor specified such a colossal measure of social assistance. Barbieri, *Origini del Capitalismo*, 179. Whether the financing of this charity was intended to be financed by interests earned on the original gift or alternatively, when the gift run out, to be continued at the good will of future donors, we do not know.

another pious institution, the Scuola della Divinità. Started in the first half of the fifteenth century, the confraternity aimed to alleviate the extreme state of misery in which hundreds of people found themselves during the severe crisis that occurred in the aftermath of Gian Galeazzo Visconti's death (1402). Famine was widespread and epidemics ravaged the people, sparking violent disorders everywhere. Scuola della Divinità assistance consisted in bringing alms to the "great and numerous multitude of poor," each day alternating its distribution among the six gates of the city.⁴⁴ The man behind this meritorious association was, once again, a wealthy merchant, Donato Ferrario from Pantigliate. An astute businessman with a keen sense for the right investment at the proper moment, Ferrario consolidated his patrimony through land acquisitions, rent activity, stock farming and agriculture, and, later, with the buying and selling of textiles – fustians, wools, and woollen cloths. Serving in prestigious offices, including councilor on the board of the Fabbrica and as a member of the Twelve of Provision in the Milanese commune, he affirmed his position in the city's social milieu.⁴⁵

As the historian Marina Gazzini traces, his life took a different turn in 1425 when, sixty years old and at the apex of his commercial career, he experienced a powerful dream. On the eve of All Saints' feast, the Divinity (*maiestas divina Dei patris*) appeared before him, exhorting him to found a pious institution for the assistance of the poor people of the city. And so it would be. Ferrario immediately abandoned his business and spent the last ten years of his life administering his patrimony, which he entirely assigned to the newly founded Scuola della Divinità. In the statutes of the confraternity, he required the presence of members of his family heirs among the administrators – desiring

⁴⁴ Noto, *Statuti dei luoghi pii*, 31-42; Gazzini, "Devozione, solidarietà e assistenza," 91-120.

⁴⁵ Gazzini, *Dare et habere*, 31-43.

to leave his patrimony in the hands of people he trusted, and, at the same time, to inscribe a trace of his name for posterity, linked with a meritorious cause.

Similar intentions appear to have motivated the contemporary merchant Vitaliano Borromeo. For the Pio Luogo dell'Umiltà, the charitable institution he started in 1444, he advanced a similar request: according to the norms he specified in his 1449 testament, only the Borromeo family were to have the right to elect the administrators of the association, as well as to summon its council.⁴⁶ Borromeo's rise to economic power was linked with the successes of the Visconti family. Thanks to his close relationship with them, he was created count and appointed treasurer of the duke. The prestige and access to large amounts of cash that came with the office consolidated his financial and political position and jump-started his banking career, allowing him to put together in a short time a conspicuous patrimony of large estates and lands. A "new man" who rose quickly on the Milanese scene, Vitaliano Borromeo desired to celebrate his success in a tangible way. With a mixture of honor, pride, glory, piety and religiosity, he called upon renowned artists and architects to build and decorate a *domus* for his family, with an imposing square in front of it, the restoration of the church nearby and the construction of a Borromeo chapel inside it, and finally the foundation and endowment of the Pio Luogo dell'Umiltà for the distribution of alms and dowries to poor girls.⁴⁷

This brief overview of some of the better known protagonists of late medieval Milan's charitable milieu cannot omit the hundreds of wealthy testators who named the Cathedral of Milan as their heir. And before turning directly to the events of Marco Carelli's life, another merchant on the Fabbrica lengthy list of donors merits attention.

⁴⁶ Chittolini, "Borromeo, Vitaliano," 72-75; Noto and Viviano. *Visconti e Sforza*, 260-63; Albini, "Continuità e innovazione," 141.

⁴⁷ Albini, Introduction to *Dare et habere*, xi.

Marco Serraineri surely had exchanged greetings many times with Marco Carelli at the weekly meetings of the Council of the Fabbrica, on which both served during the early years of the works – Carelli as supervisor of the works at the construction site in Milan, Serraineri as supervisor of the extraction of marble and stones at the quarry near Lake Maggiore.⁴⁸ Both were well known in the city's mercantile society, and very likely had exchanged information about the far away worlds they had encountered in their far-flung business activities.

In the years 1395-1398, just after Marco Carelli's death, Marco Serraineri, together with his two brothers and another partner, launched a commercial society for the exchange of goods between Milan, Catalonia and Provence, with branches in Avignon and Valencia. A small but vibrant commerce in wool, cloths, spices, wax, alum, leather, hay and grain engaged him and his factors between Milan, Monza, Venice and Genoa. Serraineri never reached the status of Carelli and the other great merchant-bankers of the city, and yet he ran his business with considerable success, accumulating a small fortune that in his last years he invested in various houses and lands in Milan, Monza and the *contado*. His entire patrimony finally ended up among the donations of the Fabbrica, when he died heirless, his only son having died two years earlier. As with many others involved in the administration of the Fabbrica, Serraineri destined to the construction of the cathedral all that his business acumen had earned him in life.⁴⁹

Studies of individual merchants' charity in Milan have been relegated largely to nineteenth-century tomes now gathering more dust than scholarly attention, but the records clearly suggest that Marco Carelli was not atypical in making his fabulous

⁴⁸ Santoro, *Ufficio di Provvisione*, 17:11, 16; ANNALI, 1: 18 (February 1, 1388); 1: 22 (January 24, 1389).

⁴⁹ Mainoni, "Marco Serraineri," 331-77.

donation. The merchants' abundant availability of cash led to frequent investments beneficial to the economy, and at the same time as a group they distinguished themselves as benefactors and patrons *par excellence*, founding hospitals and pious institutions, organizing charitable consortiums, and financially supporting churches, chapels and convents. The commitment of merchants, bankers and businessmen who in life and post mortem devoted their patrimonies to start or subsidize charitable institutions and works of public utility made possible the rise and sustenance over the centuries of a network of charity and assistance to address, at least in part, the problems, contradictions and disparities of urban communities. An inextricable mix of motives moved them to small and great acts of charity: desire for rehabilitation of their public image, catharsis for illicit trafficking, pride and ostentation, devotion and religiosity, and compassion for the least privileged of society. The welfare of their fellow citizens became for these merchants a major investment: far from resting upon an individualistic conception of their successes, they actively engaged in managing the redistribution to society of the profits their careers had gained them. An interesting question to contemplate is just what community the good merchant had in mind in distributing his largesse. In the case of Marco Carelli, although he was much a Europe-wide merchant, and spent many years including his final ones in Venice, his fabulous donation was entirely targeted to Milan's greatest civic project of all time.

Their contemporaries admired rich medieval merchants (a view not generally shared by later historians) for what they accepted as a genuine spirituality in their lavish gifts. Few were the contemporaries (and many the modern historians) who pointed a finger against the wealthy donor as a shrewd calculator seeking nothing more than a bargained

ticket to heaven. But the division is artificial and oversimplified. In the past six decades, the debate about late medieval merchants' charity often has been polarized between scholars who underline merchants' self-interested attitude, revealed in formal respect for rules and rituals that might bring them selfish hope of material return, as Christian Bec argues, and scholars who prefer to highlight the tormented spirits of these men, joyful in their wealth but continuously assaulted by self-doubt through the vilifications of preachers and theologians, as Charles de la Roncière argues.⁵⁰ Yet, as the Italian historian Giuliana Albini asserts, a univocal interpretation is not useful, and each act of charity needs to be studied in the context of the choices, modalities, and reasons that moved it, without necessarily labeling it as the pre-ordained outcome of a life in the liminal space between licit and illicit.⁵¹

“The prince of Milanese medieval *mercatura*”

After this brief look at some of the protagonists of the commercial and charitable life of Milan in the Trecento and Quattrocento, let us now return to the protagonist of the chapters that follow, Marco Carelli. His munificent donation has not bought him an entry among the 35,000 names of illustrious Italians collected in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, nor has it inspired thorough biographical research.⁵² Yet Carelli,

⁵⁰ For further reference, see Bec, *Sur la spiritualité des marchands*, 676-93; De la Roncerie, “La foi du marchand,” 237-50; Byrne, *Merchant as Penitent*, 219-31; Petrocchi, *Ascesi e mistica trecentesca*, 21-40.

⁵¹ Albini, Introduction to *Dare et habere*, vii.

⁵² The only published study on this fourteenth-century merchant is a short article in the Milanese journal *Archivio Ambrosiano*, including the transcription of his will (Ciceri and Rocco Negri, “Marco Carelli,” 365-86). The article reads like an outline for a future project, and this may well have been the intention of the author, but he died shortly after the article appeared, and I have not found any trace of work-in-progress left behind. Two undergraduate dissertations on Marco Carelli followed. The first briefly touches upon the main events of his life, barely mentioning his donation to the cathedral (Cometti, “Marco Carelli”). The second, a more

emblematic of the transitional and still profoundly medieval merchant of the later Middle Ages, witnessed major changes to Europe's social and economic patterns in a life that spanned seven decades of plague and warfare. His biography provides therefore valuable insights into the late medieval mercantile world which, still today, although raising some interest among historians, remains little known in many of its aspects, especially in specific geographical areas. This is particularly the case of Milan, one of the main centers of European trade at the time, where the dispersal of archival sources renders the historian's task quite hard and occasionally discouraging.⁵³

Known for centuries as the "prince of medieval Milanese *mercatura*," Carelli in many respects was typical of the great merchant-bankers of fourteenth-century Milan who, while conducting their business in Lombardy and abroad, administered lands and possessions in the *contado*. They simultaneously served in the most prestigious public offices, and practiced a thriving money-lending activity, often financing the city's lords and dukes with their capital.⁵⁴ More broadly, Carelli represents well the international, highly diversified merchant banker of late medieval Europe, born out of the transition

complete work, has the merit of presenting a detailed analysis of a few documents pertaining to the merchant; yet it raises more questions than it resolves, and does not consider the activity of the merchant outside Milan's borders (Papagna, "Marco Carelli"). No publication followed the two works. From a different angle, Prof. Stefano Piasentini, in the context of a study on Venetian citizenship privileges at the Archivio di Stato in Venice twenty years ago started a research project on Carelli, intrigued by the fact he was the only merchant who legally obtained three citizenships, but then interrupted his studies when he realized that the bulk of the archival sources were housed in Milan. I wish to thank Gabriella Papagna, who kindly gave me access to her dissertation, prof. Patrizia Mainoni, who supervised the same dissertation and provided me with valuable suggestions, and Prof. Reinhold Mueller and Prof. Piasentini who shared with me their findings on Carelli's citizenship privilege. For a detailed review of these previous works on Carelli, see Saltamacchia, "Marco Carelli," 21-25.

⁵³ Fifty years ago, Caterina Santoro, Gino Barbieri and Armando Saporì deplored the lack of works on mercantile culture in Lombardy, especially in the case of Milan. Over the past 35 years, several researchers - most notably Luciana Frangioni and Patrizia Mainoni - contributed greatly to a deeper knowledge of the topic, but still a lot remains to be done on the subject.

⁵⁴ Soldi Rondinini, "Visconti e Sforza," 18.

from the local merchant, who in the early Middle Ages mostly bought and sold a single product in a limited geographic and political setting, to an international actor conducting “all [his] business from the counting-house, using partners, factors, or correspondents to represent [him] in foreign parts.”⁵⁵

Carelli’s life also reflects the paradoxes of an epoch when religion, economics and ethics were inextricably intertwined. He married twice, but died without sons to whom he might have transmitted his wealth. After renouncing his paternal inheritance, he started his career seemingly from nothing, initially engaging in commerce in partnership with a cousin and two uncles, but later working on his own. A brilliant businessman, some would say ruthless, with keen acumen for the market and backed by the constant availability of large amounts of cash, Carelli fruitfully invested his wealth in financial operations and land acquisition. He made an immense fortune, astutely diversifying his activity in a multiplicity of sectors, from the trading of nutmeg to the import of alum, from loan activity to the management of at least sixty-four properties, including both houses and lands. In a short time, he built an empire able to compete on an equal footing with the patrimonies of the richest men of his time.

In the face of religious doctrine forbidding usury, some looked with suspicion on the merchant’s craft, given how difficult it was for men of commerce to navigate the labile seas of licit and illicit profits. Surely Carelli did not obtain his successes entirely without compromising himself, sometimes with reproachable decisions. For example, he served

⁵⁵ De Roover, *Money, Banking and Credit*, 11. “This evolution involved such a drastic change in the methods of doing business that the transition from one system to the other could be called, without exaggeration, the commercial revolution of the end of the thirteenth century. The most permanent result of the commercial revolution was to pave the way for the advent of mercantile capitalism which, in most European countries, was not displaced by industrial capitalism before the middle of the nineteenth century.”

pro bono as an officer for the Cathedral of Milan precisely at the time when he faced, more than once, charges of usury, although apparently he managed on each occasion to emerge unscathed and continued with his moneymaking activities. Trade skills, diplomatic talent, and loyalty made Carelli a rare trustworthy person, as dukes of Milan and doges of Venice soon acknowledged, appointing him on several occasions to ambassadorial missions and political offices.

Yet, during the very months when he was sealing delicate diplomatic treaties, Carelli might be found evicting insolvent debtors from their houses, without any apparent thought about their impelling needs. His practice was rather straightforward: if a debtor did not pay back what he owed by the due date, Carelli would set a new deadline, six months later, at the price of doubling the amount of the initial loan. If the debtor could not meet this extended deadline, then Carelli would take possession of his house. Often the debtor wanted to remain with his family to live in the house he once had owned – and so the now landlord Carelli would charge an astronomical rent, placing the debtor in a spiral of financial obligations difficult to escape. And at the same time that the devout Marco Carelli founded a confraternity together with 300 influential merchants from Milan and Monza to aid the poor people of Venice, the wily merchant trafficked beautiful Tartar slaves on the market at the Rialto Bridge.

And yet, in this merchant, faithful devotee of the Virgin Mary, and astute handler of goods and money, slave-trader, usurer, and generous benefactor of the *pauperes Christi*, what appear to us today as vivid contradictions add up. They were anything but odd in late medieval society, where behavioral consistency was not valued. A prostitute might go into the church to offer a tenth of her profit, and a thief murmur a prayer before setting

upon a victim. It was a society of sinners, more or less aware of their individual limits and shortcomings, nevertheless capable of aspiring to higher levels of perfection, even sanctity, beyond their own merits.

Carelli is one of the last representatives of those great merchants described by the Italian historian Armando Saporì as men who, “working rightly or wrongly, always worked on a grand scale. They were always agitated by passions that gave a continuous character of drama to their life. It is this clashing, it is this alternation of feelings, each one engaging them without reserve, which gives an heroic sense to their life. A life that was forged and consumed in a great fire of hate and love, of greed and generosity, of risk and boldness.”⁵⁶

This biography of Marco Carelli, with its striking conjunctures of holy and illicit, of economy and religion, means to delve into one of the essential traits, and at the same time one of the most difficult to fully comprehend, of medieval society, its unitary view of the world, now and in the hereafter. Analyzing the apparent contradictions in the merchant’s life, I argue that its many facets were inextricably united. The day-to-day practices of the acquisitive late medieval merchant were both compatible with his religiosity and sanctioned by religious authorities. Citizens, preachers and theologians alike understood, tolerated and even praised merchants’ accumulation of wealth because they recognized the crucial added value in their work and counted on their post-mortem redistribution to hospitals, churches and confraternities.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Saporì, “Cambiamento di mentalità,” 458-59.

⁵⁷ Saltamacchia, “Marco Carelli,” 16-18.

In the following chapters, I follow the merchant Carelli's life through its many stages, from the beginning, with an exploration of his ancestry, to the end, culminating in his extraordinary donation and the honors the Fabbrica bestowed upon him in death.

In Chapter Two, I focus on the Carelli family before Marco was someone who mattered, demonstrating the importance for the young man's future development of the attitudes and skills of a robust family tradition of merchants – from his grandfather to his uncles and cousins - with tight networks of commercial alliances acquired through farsighted marital strategies. Commercial and testamentary evidence shed light here on the first years of Marco's activity, from his renunciation of his paternal inheritance, to the formation of a partnership with his uncles Franzio and Albertolo and his cousin Simonolo (1345). Together, the Carellis engaged in the buying and selling of fine wool cloth and various precious goods between Milan and Venice for at least a decade. The partnership was later dissolved in the aftermath of the Black Death, in consequence of the bankruptcy of Marco's cousins and the death of his uncle.

In Chapter Three I elucidate the nexus between religion and economy in Carelli's rise to fortune and fame, arguing that being a good Christian for him meant devotion to success in business and equally to charitable deeds, always aiming for maximum profits. Here I analyze his *modus operandi*, delineating his choices and decisions in terms of partners, markets, prices, and sectors of activity. The factors that contributed to his success are explicated by looking at his commercial relationships with the big families of merchant-bankers, both in Milan as well as abroad, and at his commercial relationships derived from family-based strategies. I follow the merchant's *cursus honorum* examining his political appointments and diplomatic roles, both in Milan and in Venice, in their

complementarity with the economic and religious aspects of his life, showing the decisive role political connections and appointments had for his business success and for his acquisition of double citizenship, while at the same time gaining him personal satisfaction and intangible rewards.

In Chapter Four, I demonstrate how Carelli's bequest to the cathedral, far from being money spent to put his soul at peace, was a carefully thought out investment aimed at maximizing his resources to see that the construction of the cathedral project would survive for the ages. Here, I recount the circumstances and events that led the merchant to donate his patrimony, explaining how critical his intervention was for the continuation of the works in a moment of great financial hardship for the Fabbrica. I look at Carelli's decision-making process by examining his two wills (1390 and 1393) and codicil (1394), showing that he did not leave anything to chance in assuring that masses, thousands of them, would be celebrated for his soul and his family.

Chapter Five focuses on the cathedral sumptuous celebrations of the merchant's death, in striking contrast with the sobriety of Carelli's requests in his wills. Thanks to his remarkable bequest, the merchant surely would have seen realized in death any desired wish for earthly honors; yet, he decided not to leave any indication regarding the obsequies or his burial site. I analyze the different phases of the funeral ritual the Fabbrica organized for Carelli through the lens of the tripartite rites of passage model originally proposed by Arnold van Gennep - preliminal separation, liminal transition, and post-liminal incorporation. I argue that the lengthy phase of separation, together with his multiple wills, shows that for Marco Carelli death was not a terrifying thought, but a moment of passage he had accepted and was awaiting with serenity. Illustrating the

triumphal suffrages celebrated for the merchant both in Venice and in Milan over the course of seven months, which constituted the transition and incorporation phases, I show how the Fabbrica organized such lavish ceremonies not only in gratitude to the benefactor, but also with the intent of setting him up as an example of generosity for the people.

Lastly, in the Epilogue I look at the tribute the Fabbrica paid to Marco Carelli a few years after his death: the sculpture of a marmoreal sarcophagus with his effigy, which still today in the Cathedral of Milan remains a monument to the munificent merchant.

CHAPTER TWO

The Carelli Family

Long before Marco Carelli's fellow citizens came to notice his acumen for business deals and his diplomatic skills, even before he was born, already his family had achieved a certain reputation in northern Italy for their flourishing trade activities between Milan and Venice. Although it was Marco whose deeds entrusted his patronymic to posterity, the fourteenth-century merchant was not a medieval 'self-made man.' On the contrary, the admittedly sparse documentation concerning his lineage suggests a family that by the end of the twelfth century had established significant ties with one of the most important ecclesiastical institution of Milan, the female Benedictine convent of San Maurizio al Monastero Maggiore, which owned most of its properties in the *contado* northwest of Milan. Moreover, a close look at Marco's immediate ancestors, in particular at his grandfather Albrigolo, shows how the grandson's abilities, achievements and attitudes in business, no less than his outlook on life and death, were rooted in a robust familial tradition of merchants and wool-makers, with a solid patrimony and tight networks of commercial alliances acquired through farsighted marital strategies.

At the onset of his mercantile career in 1345, Marco renounced his paternal inheritance, a step I analyze carefully in the pages that follow, yet within less than two decades he managed to regain most of his grandfather's patrimony through his shrewd participation in a business society with his uncles and cousins. The core elements of the patrimony Marco bequeathed to the cathedral Fabbrica, now over seventy years later and on a much grander scale, had once belonged to his grandfather Albrigolo: the wool

manufacture and the cloths, lands, houses, merchandise, and credits – firm evidence of how his career followed in his grandfather's footsteps.

This chapter begins with the earliest evidence about the Carellis and then looks in depth at the division of goods made in 1321 among Albrigolo's three sons, as specified in his testament. The chapter then traces the family's rise to a position of prominence in Milanese society in the following decades, thanks both to the success of their business activities and their upwardly mobile marital strategies. The chapter continues with a close look at the Carelli *fraterna*, the society formed first by Albrigolo's sons at his death, who subsequently added their own sons, including the Marco Carelli who is the subject of this study. I chronicle the main turning points in the rise and decline of the society, with particular attention to the events that brought the young merchant Marco to leave the Carelli society and continue his mercantile activity independently, with such success that in the end he owned most of his grandfather's 1321 patrimony, and a great deal more.

The Carrellis of Baranzate

Little is known about the origins of the Carelli family. Yet, suggestive documents dated between the end of the twelfth century and the first decades of the thirteenth century indicate the presence of a certain Carrelli family in connection with San Maurizio al Monastero Maggiore in Milan as early as 1197.¹ San Maurizio was an ancient female

¹ The double 'r' in Carrelli here does not represent an identification problem, as in medieval Latin the incorrect use of double letters in first and family names was quite common. Source for the history of the Monastero Maggiore are a limited number of parchments housed at the Archivio di Stato di Milano (Fondo di Religione, Milano, monasteri: San Maurizio detto Monastero maggiore, benedettine; and Fondo Pergamene, Milano: San Maurizio) that historian Elisa Occhipinti has thoroughly analyzed. The results of her study were first reported in her undergraduate dissertation (Occhipinti, "La signoria," 1967), and then published fifteen years later in a broader study of the Milanese *contado* and the monastery's land tenure administration in

convent of the Benedictines, located nearby Porta Vercellina; although its founder and foundation date are uncertain, the existence of the monastery is already attested at the beginning of the ninth century.² Dedicated to the Roman soldier St. Maurice, it was called “Maggiore” because of its preeminence and importance in medieval Milan – as the nuns’ high social level and noble origins, as well as the extent of the monastery’s properties demonstrated.³

Through a shrewd strategy of land exchanges and acquisitions, by the end of the eleventh century the monastery had managed to assemble property totaling over 800 *pertiche*, nearly 13,000 acres, in the territory of Baranzate, a rural area located a few miles northwest of Milan (see Figure 2.1).⁴ Since the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Monastero Maggiore leased a significant part of its property to members of the Carrelli of Baranzate family, who had recently established themselves there, joining other family members already in residence, having moved earlier from Cadrezate, a small village on the Lake Monate shore (see Figure 2.1).⁵

the thirteenth century (Occhipinti, *Il contado milanese*). I am grateful to Prof. Occhipinti for the insights she shared with me about the Carrelli di Baranzate.

² Occhipinti, “Appunti per la storia,” 48-49; see also *Ibid.*, 50-71 for a detailed presentation of the various historical figures proposed as founders of the monastery, from St. Martin of Tours to the Emperor Otto I.

³ Ambrosioni, “Le abitanti del monastero,” 8-12; Occhipinti, “Appunti per la storia,” 72.

⁴ In late medieval Milan, one *pertica* was equivalent to 6.54517944 hectares. Hence, 800 *pertiche* = 12,938.72 acres. See Martini, *Manuale di metrologia*, 350.

The documents report several exchanges of lands, clearly with the aim of providing territorial continuity among the monastery’s possessions. For instance, in 1212 the monastery’s abbess exchanged a small lot of *gerbido* (arid terrain) to a certain Pietro Crippa for a small strait of land that allowed access from the nuns’ lands to the public road. Occhipinti, *Il contado milanese*, 103-4.

⁵ Alberto Carrelli is indicated as coming from Cadrezate in a document dated 1206. Judging from the dates of the monastery’s acts in which he is present as witness (as early as 1197), he moved to Baranzate by the end of the twelfth century. Among the family members who already resided in Baranzate by the time Alberto moved there, a certain Petrino Carrelli was called up in 1206 as *vicinus* (neighbor) of Baranzate for the approval of commune consuls’ election.

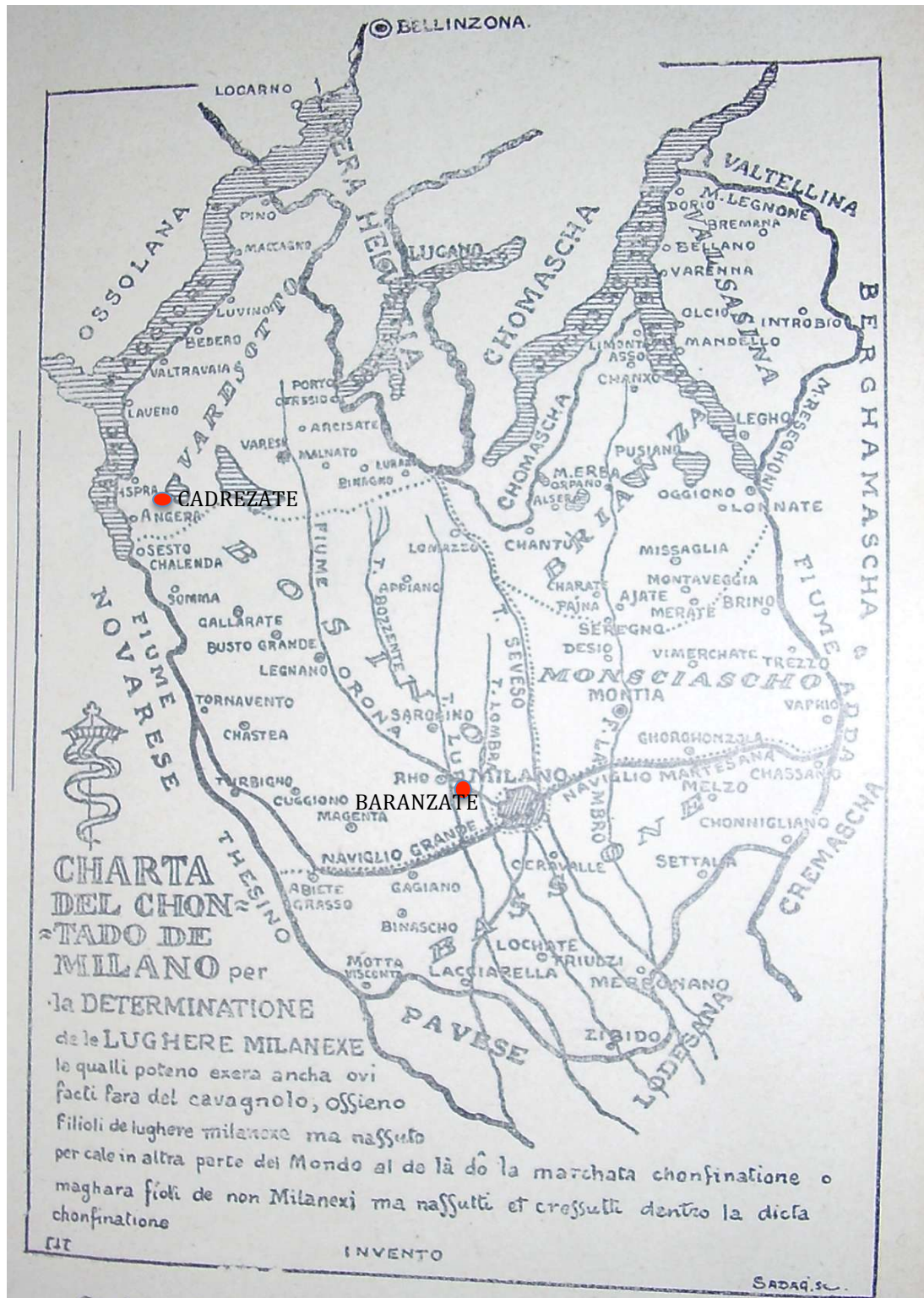


Figure 2.1 The Milanese *contado*. Source: Elaboration on map contained in Ferdinando Fontana, *Antologia meneghina*. Bellinzona: Colombi, 1900.

Occhipinti, *Il contado milanese*, 105; Occhipinti, "Appunti per la storia," 47-96; Occhipinti, "S. Maurizio," 67-80.

Carrellis' ties with the monastery go back at least to the end of the twelfth century. Already in 1197, and then again in 1204, in 1206 and 1210, Alberto Carrelli was mentioned as witness or appraiser in acts concerning acquisitions of the Monastero Maggiore – suggesting that he was living on the nuns' properties, along with the notaries and bakers named in the same documents.⁶ The following years saw explicit rental agreements between Alberto and the monastery: in 1211, he received two small lots of land in leasing with a twenty-year contract; in 1212, he was chosen as lessee of another, bigger lot, while in 1222 he was enfeoffed with two lots of land in the territory of Baranzate. By the middle of the thirteenth century, Alberto, together with other members of the Carrelli family – Ambrogio, and the brothers Pietro, Carrello, and Marchisio – arrived to lease over 360 *pertiche* (5,822 acres) of land: over a third of the monastery's properties, estimated in 1246 as 14,701 acres.⁷ At that time, the Carrelli lived in three *sedimi* (plots of land) the Monastero Maggiore owned, where they had built edifices.⁸

Later on, for reasons not specified in the fragmented documentation preserved, the relationship between the family and nuns grew tense, until in 1251 the monastery's abbess enfeoffed all the lands previously leased to the Carrelli family to a certain Bruzano de Vialba and his sons. In effect, the monastery rescinded previous contracts (or let them expire without renewal), and gradually moved toward a policy of fractioning of the leased properties among several lessees rather than concentrating them in the hands of one family. The Carrelli vigorously resisted the change, on the grounds that they had cultivated the lands at length, excavated ditches, built edifices, and made other substantial

⁶ Occhipinti, "Appunti per la storia," 93-94.

⁷ The estimation of the monastery's properties was made in 1246: six *vicines* of Baranzate, among which Ambrogio Carrelli, reported under oath to the Milanese officials a description of the terrains. Occhipinti, "Appunti per la storia," 105.

⁸ Baroni, *Le Pergamene*, 474: 697-700.

improvements. The nuns called up the Consul of Justice from Milan, who decided in their favor and ordered the family to immediately hand over all the contested lands, in the presence of witnesses. The Monastero Maggiore, on their part, were to pay 45 lire terziole to the Carrellis for the improvements made over the years – a sum that the nuns tried for several years to avoid paying.⁹ Over the following decades, the litigious monastery repetitively involved itself in lengthy controversies over fees, payments, and leases with the three new family groups who had taken over the cultivation of their lands. As for the Carrellis, they did not disappear entirely from the scene and as late as 1279 there is record of their presence in Baranzate.¹⁰

The gap of more than forty years between the last document pertaining to the Carrelli of Baranzate (1279) and the first document concerning Marco Carelli's predecessors in Milan (1321) makes it difficult to trace a single family tree, to assert with certainty the continuity between the two branches of the family and determine whether the latter group was in fact a successor of the former. However, recurring names in the Carelli/Carrelli branches support such hypothesis.

⁹ Occhipinti, *Il contado milanese*, 106-8.

¹⁰ Ibid., 109. Ambrogio Carrelli, presumably the son of one of the three brothers Pietro, Marchisio, and Carrello, sons of the late Ambrogio, is mentioned in the capacity of local juror in an act of mortgage of the Monastero Maggiore against one of the family of land cultivators, dated December 15, 1279.





Carrelli di Baranzate		Carelli di Porta Orientale*
Alberto		Albertolo, Albrigolo, Albrigolo
Marchisio		Marco/Marcolo
Pietro/Petrino		Petrolla
Ambrogio, Ambrogio		Ambrosolo
Carrello		

Table 2.1 Onomastic correspondences between Carrelli of Baranzate and Carelli of Porta Orientale (Milan). Source: Author, based on Figure 2.6, and Occhipinti, *Il contado milanese*.

The comparison of the names in the family group of the Carrellis of Baranzate with those of the Carellis of Porta Orientale is striking. Out of the five names of the Carrellis of Baranzate that we can infer from the Monastero Maggiore's documentation (see Table 2.1, left column), four are recurrent in the Carellis of Porta Orientale's family tree (see Table 2.1, right column). The name Alberto is given to Marco's paternal uncle, Albertolo, and, in the version Albrigolo, to Marco's grandfather and to Marco's cousin, son of his uncle Franzio. The name Marchisio is a diminutive for the name of Marco himself, also called Marcolo - presumably for his short stature. The female version of the name Pietro, nicknamed Petrino, is given to Petrolla, the first daughter of Marco's cousin Simonolo. Lastly, Marco's cousin, second son of Franzio, Marco's paternal uncle, is called Ambrosolo, a diminutive of Ambrogio.¹¹

Another element usually significant for establishing continuity between two branches of a family is the geographical localization of the territories owned by the two. However, such component is here of to apply since we know from the Monastero Maggiore's

¹¹ The practice of repetitive naming within the same family line, especially naming the child after the father or the grandfather, was quite widespread in the Middle Ages. In order to assure the transmission of a name, a child could be named after an elder brother, especially one who had recently died (practice of substitution). Wilson, *The Means of Naming*, 3-19; Smith-Bannister, *Names and Naming Patterns*, 70-71.

documentation that the lands enfeoffed to the Carrelli of Baranzate were handed over to the monastery at the beginning of the second half of the thirteenth century, and subsequently leased to other families. What we do know, though, is that the Carrelli distinguished themselves as lessees and *massari*, in charge of administering large plots of land.¹² The numerous landed properties owned by Albrigolo Carelli, Marco's grandfather, and passed to his sons at his death may represent a continuation of such a tradition.¹³

Finally, no Carrelli appears in the lists of people who were elected over the twelfth and thirteenth century as *podestà* or representatives of the *contado* for the Monastero Maggiore.¹⁴ Although this by itself does not represent a proof, nonetheless it suggests the middle-class origins of the family, correspondent to the fact that the Carellis of Milan resided in Parrocchia di San Babila in Porta Orientale, at the time a less developed and prestigious area of the city (see Figure 2.2). In a phrase intended at some risk to link the Car[r]ellis to existing historical terminology, I judge that they were originally well-to-do peasants.

¹² For the definition of the contract of *massaria* in the late medieval Milanese *contado*, see Chiappa Mauri, "Riflessioni sulle campagne," 123.

¹³ For the properties Albrigolo Carelli owned and divided among his sons on November 3, 1321, see AFD, Possessi foresi, c. 230, Case in Milano, Porta Orientale, Parrocchia di San Babila foris, f. 4.

¹⁴ Such lists are edited in Zagni, *Le pergamene*.



Figure 2.2 Medieval Milan and its six *Porte*. *Carelli's house, near the Pusterla of Monforte. Source: Pietro del Massaio, 1475.

In conclusion, several elements converge in suggesting a familial link between the thirteenth-century Carrelli of Baranzate and the fourteenth-century Carelli of Porta Orientale. Most of the notable families on the Milanese scene could boast of their ties with the city's ecclesiastical institutions, and the Carrellis were no less in this regard. Their important connection with one of the most important ecclesiastical institution of the city, the female Benedictine convent of San Maurizio al Monastero Maggiore, shows how the family had already reached a certain socio-economical status a century before

Marco's birth. Admittedly, they fell into disfavor with the quarrelsome nuns who decided to abrogate leases with them but they were nonetheless economic players of some consequence. Whatever the motivations for Marco Carelli's fabulous donation, they are not to be found in the litigious relationship between the nuns of San Maurizio al Monastero Maggiore and the merchant's distant ancestors.

The Carellis of Porta Orientale: Albrigolo, Marco's grandfather

Since the mid-thirteenth century, the Carellis of Porta Orientale had distinguished themselves in mercantile activity between Milan and Venice, especially in the wool trade.¹⁵ Marco's grandfather, Albrigolo, skillfully employed his geographical sense and his knowledge of the product to deal in the different types of wool and cloths and their various characteristics, depending on the area of provenance.¹⁶

In Milan he had two *cloderie*, where the wool-cloths were stretched on cloth-frames after dying, and he owned in Venice a *fondaco* - a two- or three-story warehouse where merchants and especially foreigners customarily stored their merchandise on the upper level while using the ground floor premises as their residence.¹⁷ At his death, huge quantities of cloths of various quality, color and provenance were inventoried at his house in Milan and at his storage facility in Venice: he imported both raw wool and finished *oltramontani* (that is, in this case, from France and England) products, and then resold the cloths both in Milan and Venice. Given the generally good state of his patrimony toward the end of his life, the significant debt of 3894 lire he left to his sons most probably

¹⁵ AFD, Possessi foresi, c. 230, Case in Milano, Porta Orientale, Parrocchia di San Babila foris, f. 4.

¹⁶ On the geographical and product knowledge required of a wool merchant operating in an international market such as Venice, see Rebora, "Materia prima," 149.

¹⁷ The term *fondaco* derives from the Arab *funduq*, storage. Calabi, "Foreigners and the City," 12.

reflects an investment in the purchase of large quantities of raw wool to be transformed into finished cloths. Purchasing raw material on credit and arranging to pay back later upon sale of the finished goods was the prevailing modality of business at the time among buyers of wool, cotton and hides.¹⁸

Albrigolo was among an emerging class of medium-sized entrepreneurs, between large importers and small artisans, who rose to prominence in thirteenth-century Milan. They operated on an individual or family basis, purchasing raw material directly from large wholesale importers and transforming the wool into cloth. Often they incorporated their manufacturing within their houses with the help of skilled workers, and then resold the finished products on the public market – mostly, back to raw materials wholesalers and merchants from beyond the mountains. Their unified control of all phases of manufacture and sale, from the initial acquisition of raw material to the final sale of the finished product, allowed them great flexibility in following market tendencies and consumer needs, understanding the general economic situation and latest fashion trends and consequently adapting production, product variety and costs.¹⁹

With the revenues earned from his wool activity, Albrigolo started to invest in land; at his death he possessed several properties, for a total of 223 *pertiche*, equivalent to over 3600 acres, and two houses through *fitto livellario* (emphyteutic lease). The *fitto livellario* was a common form of agrarian contract through which a *livellante*, the lessor, granted the usufruct of a piece of land to a *livellario*, the lessee, for a certain period of time against the payment of a *fitto*. The *livellario* was responsible for cultivating the land, and making improvements to it.

¹⁸ Mainoni, “Il mercato della lana,” 27.

¹⁹ Santoro, *La matricola dei mercanti*, x; Verga, *La Camera dei mercanti*, 24; Zerbi, *Aspetti economico-tecnici*, 23-24.

While it is not possible to estimate the total value of Albrigolo's properties, as the earnings obtained from their sale in the following years are not reliable or directly comparable with their initial value before the improvements his tenant farmers introduced, nonetheless it is evident that the activity was very profitable to him. Just to give a telling example, he had obtained through *livello* a house adjacent to his main residence in the area of San Babila parish for which he paid annually a *fitto livellario* of, respectively, 20 and 15 soldi (1 lira imperiale and 15 soldi in total) to the two owners, Guglielmo Bianco and the Vecchioni della Chiesa Maggiore di Milano, an ancient religious congregation in the city that managed its own hospital, where members resided.²⁰ Then, he rented the house to a certain Guglielmo Pezzolo, obtaining from him an annual perpetual rent of 18 lire terziole (that is, 9 lire imperiali), a capon, and 24 eggs or 12 eggs and 2 *ounces* of piperata, an expensive spice mix made of wine or vinegar infused with pepper.²¹

Frater Albrigolo

For the Carelli family, making money was not an all-consuming concern. These merchant entrepreneurs also thought of spiritual matters and life everlasting. We catch a glimpse of the Carellis' religiosity in the 1347 will of the youngest of the three brothers, Albertolo. At the beginning of the document, the testator says, "I, Alberto Carelli, son of

²⁰ Giulini, *Memorie*, 7: 327.

²¹ Starting from the thirteenth century, the *piperata* was commonly used in Milan for meat seasoning and food preservation. Its recipe is quite complex, and, by decree of the Tribunale di Provvisione, chemists were bound to swear the exactness of the recipe followed for its preparation. The city authorities fixed its ceiling price. In a 1386 act, the Vicar of Provision set to 12 *lire* the price of one ounce of *piperata*: same price as ginger and white fine sugar, and double the price of pepper. Laghi, "Piperata e spezie," 434-46.

late *frater* Albrigolo Carelli.”²² In a fourteenth-century Milanese manuscript, the term *frater* had a twofold meaning: it might indicate *frater de penitentia*, that is, Franciscan friar, or *frater tertii ordinis*, that is, *Humiliati* Third Order brother.²³

The *Humiliati* (literally, “the Humble Ones”) were lay men and women who, over the course of the twelfth century, evolved into an order officially recognized by the church and subdivided into three orders: those consecrated to priesthood, lay people who decided to live a common life, and lay people, married or not, who continued to lead their secular life. Regulations governing the *Humiliati* were built on the Benedictine Rule, with a particular emphasis on three qualities of life: humility, as their name suggests, for which they wore simple undyed clothing; poverty, in accordance with the evangelic counsel of selling everything to follow Christ, but in a less radical way than the Franciscans, especially for the members of the third order, who were not required to surrender their possession; and labor, which they exerted as merchants and wool-workers.²⁴

No further specification is provided in Albertolo’s will to clarify whether Albrigolo was a Franciscan friar or a *Humiliati* tertiary, yet two elements inferred from the 1321 division of goods’ act converge in suggesting the latter. The first hint is Albrigolo’s activity, wool making and selling. The work *Humiliati* engaged in most frequently was the manufacturing of cloth, especially of wool; they adopted as their symbol the Lamb of God, which referred both to their trade and their humility. The prosperity of these weaver brothers’ industry was instrumental in the development, florescence, and diffusion in

²² AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 2, Albertolo Carelli. “Ego Albertus carrellis filius quondam domini fratris Albrici carrelli.”

²³ Alberzoni, “Penitenti e terziari,” 212.

²⁴ Andrews, *The Early Humiliati*, 13-14; Little, *Religious Poverty*, 113-14, 116-18; Alberzoni, “Dicebant se esse canonicos,” 39-40; Marinoni, “La carità in Bonvesin,” 111-12.

Milan and Lombardy of the art of wool-cloth making. Starting in the thirteenth century, many among them became successful entrepreneurs and *mercatores* thanks to the success of their activity.²⁵

The second element suggesting that Albrigolo belonged to the *Humiliati* is the mention in the second part of the 1321 division of goods' act of the *hospitio magno civitatis*, where it appears he had held quarters for some time. Surely the formulation "*hospitio magno civitatis*" refers to the Ospedale del Brolo, the main hospital of Milan until the construction of the Ospedale Maggiore in the second half of the fifteenth century. In his *De magnalibus urbis Mediolani* ("On the Marvels of Milan"), the thirteenth-century Milanese poet Bonvesin de la Riva narrates that the hospital, financed exclusively through donations of private citizens, hosted more than 350 orphans and over a thousand sick poor, bedridden and not, who were all maintained for free.²⁶ The administration of the hospital and the management of revenues and expenses were entrusted to twenty-four Milanese citizens, called *decani* (deans), who served in shifts of four people at a time. Starting in the thirteenth century, deans were chosen from among *Humiliati*, who also were entrusted with the administration of other major hospitals of the city, such as the Ospedale dei Santi Benedetto e Bernardo, the Ospedale Nuovo o di Donna Bona, and many others.²⁷ Albrigolo's inclusion among the *Humiliati* would explain his strong ties to the Ospedale del Brolo; per contra, no hospital in the city was entrusted to Franciscan friars.²⁸

²⁵ Andrews, *The Early Humiliati*, 32; Little, *Religious Poverty*, 118-19; Santoro, *La matricola dei mercanti*, x; Zanoni, *Gli Umiliati*, 185, 278; Zerbi, *Aspetti economico-tecnici*, 23.

²⁶ De la Riva, *Le grandezze di Milano*, 52, ch. III, par. VI.

²⁷ Pecchiai, *L'Ospedale Maggiore*, 44-45; Alberzoni, "L'esperienza caritativa," 203; Bevacqua, "L'Ospedale del Brolo," 30.

²⁸ Alberzoni, "Penitenti e terziari," 215.

The element of general sobriety and shunning of ostentation and luxury, together with the clear sense of unity between work, business and religion, all typical of the *Humiliati*, characterized also the life of Albrigolo's grandson Marco two generations later. It is unlikely that Marco actually knew his grandfather, as by the time of his death in 1321 Marco was at most an infant. However, Albrigolo's values and morals seem to have left a decisive mark on the Carelli family and, passed through his father and uncles, they also reached young Marco.

The division of the goods

On November 3, 1321, some time after Albrigolo's death, his three sons Franzio, Albertolo and Guidotino decided how to administer the patrimony their father had left them.²⁹ The recurrence in the act of division of goods of expressions such as "the cloths the brothers had in Venice," "the debt the brothers had," "the properties the brothers had" indicates clearly that until that point in time they had worked together and administered their goods collectively, under the direction of the father. From then on, instead, they decided to manage their business as a *fraterna*, a form of partnership frequent in the late medieval period, where the descendants continued the father's activity after his death under the direction of the eldest. A significant number of *fraterne* characterized Trecento Milanese economic activity, wherein the general rule for mercantile companies was strict

²⁹ AFD, Possessi in Milano, c. 230, Porta Orientale, Parrocchia San Babila, f. 4. The date "1321 die 3 novembris" can be found on the back of the parchment document. Erroneously, the nineteenth-century cover of the document, and its copy in AFD, Possessi foresi, c. 230, Case in Milano, Porta Orientale, Parrocchia di San Babila foris, both indicate "3 Novembre 1361" as the date for the document, which is not possible, as by that time all three brothers, Franzio, Albertolo, and Guidotino, were dead. The same mistake is repeated in the copy of cover, in AFD, Possessi foresi, c. 344, Pioltello, Pieve di Segrate, f. 1; AFD, Possessi foresi, c. 344, Pobbiano, Pieve di Segrate, f. 2; AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Albertolo Carelli, f. 2. The correct date appears, instead, in the document summary of this act, written by the Fabbrica officials at the death of Marco Carelli in 1394 and contained in AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 15, n. 134.

collaboration between siblings, whatever the societal form chosen or the presence or absence of collective possession of goods among them.³⁰

The earliest preserved Milanese *matricola della lana sottile*, the list of all woolmen (wool weavers and sellers), dated 1393, enumerates 363 firms: almost 40% (96) of them are family firms, formed by brothers, father and son, uncle and nephew, or cousins, while the remaining 60% (267) are individual firms; no firm is present with members or partners outside the family circle.³¹ Late-medieval statutes of Milan and other Lombard cities make no references to partnerships and companies, whereas other civic statutes, such as those of Piacenza, already in the first decades of the fourteenth century include detailed regulations on such non-familial business associations.³²

The small, familiar structure of Milanese wool firms allowed for great flexibility and quick reorientation of production to follow market demand. However, the fragmentation of the wool sector in myriad small enterprises severely limited the great capital accumulations. Different was the case, to offer a point of comparison, of Florence, where instead the familial structure of mercantile societies evolved throughout the fourteenth century, often including partners external to the family. At the father's death, the patrimony routinely was divided among the brothers, who then usually undertook separate independent careers. As Richard Goldthwaite observes, this was not a sign of disaffection among brothers, but a consequence of the composition of the inheritances, mostly composed of cash, and of the siblings' divergences in terms of investment choices.³³ The formation of big companies, often formed by several partners with no

³⁰ Mainoni, *Economia e politica*, 174-75.

³¹ Zerbi, *Aspetti economico-tecnici*, 24; Santoro, *La matricola dei mercanti*, 1-193.

³² Mainoni, "Una grande metropoli commerciale," 430.

³³ Goldthwaite, *Private Wealth*, 63.

familial ties, favored the accumulation of huge amounts of capital that were quickly reinvested in the business.³⁴

A precise choice of asset management formed the base of the Carelli *fraterna*: on the one side, their strong ties and affinity in terms of investment choices allowed for a collaborative solution; on the other side, the coexistence of different mercantile and patrimonial activities suggested minimizing of downward risk through diversification of the portfolio among the brothers. In their agreement, Franzio, Guidotino and Albertollo reciprocally pawned all their goods, obligating their properties to one another for the safeguard and guarantee of each one's share of the inheritance, and agreeing to each pay a third of any possible damage that might occur to merchandise stored in Venice while it was transported to Milan.

As the document attesting to the division of goods indicates, the father himself may have encouraged in his will the division of his patrimony among the three siblings and the separation by sector of activity of their careers, at the same time exhorting them to continue to run their business together. Albrigolo's testament has not been preserved, but a formula in the division of goods' act – *juxta forma testamenti dicti patris eorum fratrum* – in reference to specific indications suggest he left very detailed dispositions, which the three sons then followed closely. The division, as the beginning of the act specifies, was done in three parts of equal total value, without any special treatment for the eldest of the brothers, who the document suggests was Franzio. In fact, he was mentioned first in the division of goods' act, and in the back of the same parchment, the document was summed up as "*Divixio fra[terna] inter dominum franzium carellum et*

³⁴ Mainoni, "Una grande metropoli commerciale," 430.

fratres suos,” again giving prominence to his name.³⁵ This bore also legal implication, as typically the *fraterna* was managed under the direction of the oldest brother. Although nominally of equal value, the three shares were nonetheless very different in their composition. Such differences decreed the direction of the brothers’ careers: one inherited the wool trade and the tavern in Milan, another the cloth trade in Venice, and the third the lands in the Milanese countryside.

Franzio, the eldest, received the wool manufacture in Milan, as summarized in Table 2.2: the two *cloderie*, as well as a large quantity of raw material and finished products stored in Milan - 1146 *libbre*, equivalent to 825 pounds, of spun wool, 48 wool cloths dyed in different colors, 5 *pezze* of wool cloth, and 9 *pezze* of white wool, worth in total 1528 lire imperiali.³⁶ Together with the Milanese wool activity, he also inherited several properties in the area of *borgo Montifortis* in Porta Orientale, between the *pusterla* (small gate) of Monforte and the Church of San Babila (see Figure 2.3).³⁷

³⁵ AFD, Possessi in Milano, c. 230, Porta Orientale, Parrocchia San Babila, f. 4.

³⁶ In late medieval Milan, wool’s weight was measured in *libbre sottili*; 1 *libbra sottile* = 0.326793 kg. Martini, *Manuale di metrologia*, 351; Frangioni, *Milano e le sue misure*, 43-44. The *pezza*, used to indicate the dimensions of cloth and wool, had a precise measure set by the city authority; during the fourteenth century, in Milan it had a length between 50 and 60 *braccia* - that is to say, between 97 and 117 feet, as 1 *braccio da panno* = 0.5949 meters = 1.951772 feet. Ibid., 78. Hereinafter, when not otherwise specified, “lire” is used to indicate lire imperiali of Milan, equivalent to 20 soldi and to 240 denari.

³⁷ The *pusterle* were small gates of the city. Differently from the *Porte* (main gates), characterized by two arches sided by a quadrangular tower on both sides, the *pusterle* were formed by a single arch opened underneath a defensive tower. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the historian Galvano Fiamma enumerated seven *pusterle* for Milan: starting from west, Sant’Ambrogio, Azze, San Marco, Monforte, Sant’Eufemia, Chiusa and Fabbrica. Giuliani, *Memorie*, 3: 725; Bevacqua, “Pusterla e pusterle,” 37.

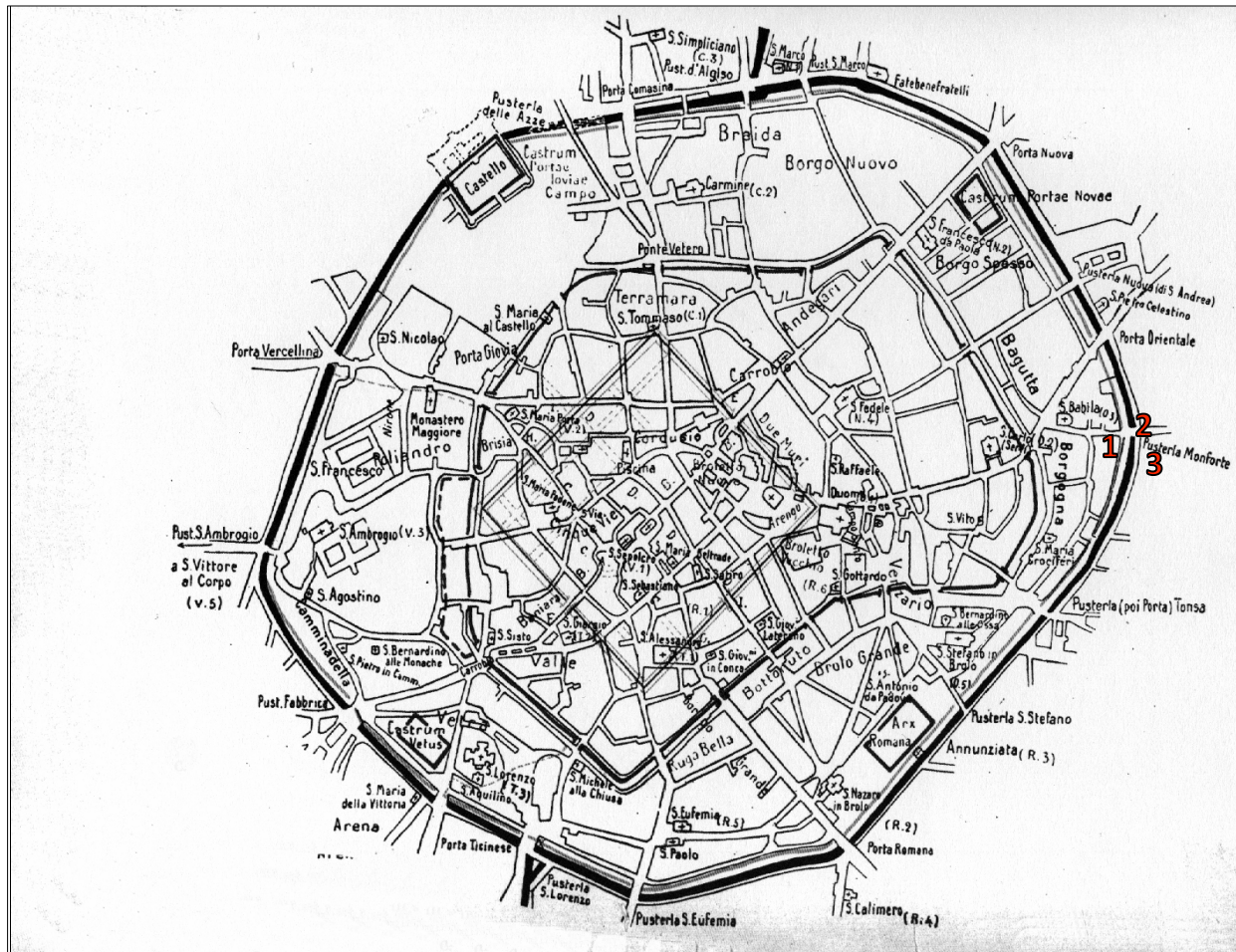


Figure 2.3 Thirteenth-century Milan. 1. House and the tavern inherited by Franzio (approximately). 2. Pusterla di Monforte. 3. Field called *in Brajda* inherited by Franzio (approximately). Source: Elaboration on map from Internet.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Nero, "Cartografie milanesi (1300-1860)," *Nero* (blog), December 10, 2006, <http://nero.noblogs.org/post/2006/12/10/cartografie-milanesi-1300-1860/>.

The central building of Albrigolo's possessions in that area was a house near the Cagozario Bridge, which became in the following years the Carellis' principal place of residence, and subsequently the main habitation of Marco himself, finally bequeathed to the Fabbrica of the Cathedral of Milan together with all his properties.³⁹ The house was initially quite modest, but, as the patrimony of the family grew, it was progressively enlarged and new edifices were added to it. In 1321, at the time of the division of goods among the three brothers, a house with a court, a vegetable garden, a well, and the two *cloderie* for wool manufacturing composed the core of the complex.

The house's location in Porta Orientale, parish of San Babila, near the small gate of Monforte, and adjacent to a bridge (see number 1 in Figure 2.3) is telling. In Milan, artisanal shops were grouped by specialization; the area of Porta Orientale was indeed where most wool weavers of the city were centered.⁴⁰ Moreover, almost all wool workers, according to the *matricola della lana sottile*, had their houses along the city's external moat; they concentrated mostly in the area of the parishes of San Bartolomeo and San Babila, and in general they were located in parishes neighboring the Naviglio, the navigable canal around Milan.⁴¹ Thanks to their location, woolmen could utilize the canal for the various phases of wool manufacture and cloth production, which needed considerable amounts of water, and finally for the transportation of their finished goods. This was the case also for Albrigolo Carelli, who had his main residence in the same

³⁹ ANNALI, 1: 189 (October 20, 1398).

⁴⁰ Soldi Rondinini, "Vie, piazze, dimore," 336.

⁴¹ Santoro, *La matricola dei mercanti*, xxii-xxiii; see also Ibid., xxix-xxxi for a numerical analysis of the distribution of woolmen in the city by gate and parish. The data refer to the earliest *matricola della lana* preserved (1393), since the previous *matricole* have gone lost. Yet, the consistency of the findings recorded between 1393 and 1721 suggests that the percentages of concentration by gate and by parish were approximately the same also before 1393.

building where his *cloderia* for wool manufacturing was located, as it was common among woolmen in late medieval Milan.⁴²

Adjacent to the main building, the Carellis owned another house, rented to a certain Guglielmo Pezzolo, and a tavern *cum hedificiis* – where, the act specified, Franzio had to provide to each of his sisters a decent accommodation. The properties in the Monforte area were completed with a small field of 18 *pertiche* (almost 3 acres) called *campo di Brajda*, located outside the walls beyond the small gate of Monforte, neighboring the Church of San Martino in Compedo.

With the acquisition of these properties, Franzio inherited also a number of rights and obligations. On the positive side of the ledger, he became the recipient of the perpetual rent for the house leased to Guglielmo Pezzolo – 9 lire, a capon, and 24 eggs or 12 eggs and 2 *ounces* of piperata, as noted above. On the negative side of the ledger, Franzio acquired with the two houses the obligation to pay the *fitti livellari* on them. For the first house, the main residence of the Carelli family, Franzio had to pay a *fitto livellario* of 7 lire terziole (that is, 3 lire and 10 soldi imperiali) to a certain Giovanni Lazzate or his wife, and another one of 5 soldi and 10 and half denari imperiali to the Church of San Babila. For the second house, the one the Carellis rented to Guglielmo Pezzolo, Franzio had to pay a *fitto livellario* of 40 soldi terzioli (that is, 20 soldi imperiali) to a certain Guglielmo Bianco, and another one of 15 soldi imperiali to the Vecchioni della Chiesa Maggiore di Milano. It was common at the time that the *livellante* was an ecclesiastical institution, as, in this case, the Church of San Babila and the congregation of the Vecchioni della Chiesa Maggiore di Milano: the church often used this type of agrarian contract in order to obtain the maximum revenue from its properties

⁴² Santoro, *La matricola dei mercanti*, xxiii-xxiv.

while at the same time safeguarding its integrity, as only the usufruct of a *livello* could be alienated.

The share Franzio inherited was completed by a credit of 2 lire, 3 soldi and 4 denari in grossi veneziani, equivalent to 3 lire imperiali, with Albertino da Padova in Venice.

Finally, the three brothers decided to split in equal parts among themselves the mentioned debt of 3894 lire, 5 soldi and 4 denari Albrigolo left them to pay.

	lire	soldi	denari
ESTATES			
House with court, vegetable garden, well, and two <i>cloderie</i> near Cagozario bridge in borgo Monforte (Milan)			
Fitto livellario to Giovanni Lazzate	(3)	(10)	
Fitto livellario to church of San Babila		(5)	(10½)
House adjacent to the others			
Annual perpetual rent from Guglielmo Pezzolo *[+1 capon +24 eggs or 12 eggs + 2 oz. piperata]	9*		
Fitto livellario to Guglielmo Bianco		(20)	
Fitto livellario to Vecchioni della Chiesa Maggiore		(15)	
Tavern in borgo Monforte			
Field called <i>campo di Brajda</i> of 18 pertiche, outside the small gate of Monforte			
GOODS			
1146 lb. wool	515		
48 wool cloth dyed in different colors	700		
5 pezze of wool cloth	70		
9 pezze of white cloth	243		
FINANCIAL ASSETS			
Credit with Albertino da Padova	3		
⅓ of a debt of 3894 lire, 5 soldi, 4 denari	(1298)	(5)	(3½)

Table 2.2 Franzio Carelli's inheritance. Source: AFD, Possessi in Milano, Porta Orientale - Parrocchia San Babila, c. 230, f. 4.

The second son Guidotino, Marco's father, inherited all the properties the Carellis owned in the area of Pioltello, northeast of Milan (see Figure 2.4): the ground of a house (*sedimen*) with court and vegetable garden, and an adjacent enclosed area (*clausi*); another bigger enclosed terrain, next to the previous one, located in the place called *in Pessinella*, adjacent to the property of the female community of *Humiliati*, and next to that, a small field called *in Rugori*; a field in the area called *al Castelletto* (literally, towards the little castle), next to the church of Pioltello; an enclosed terrain called *alla Serada in Casarolo*, in nearby Limoto (see Figure 2.4), and a small field adjacent to it; and a piece of land called *in Rosso* (literally, in red) in nearby Pobbiano (see Figure 2.4), neighboring the Ospedale del Brolo, for a total of 205 *pertiche*, 18½ *tavole* and 39 *piedi*, equivalent to over 33 acres. All the cattle, utensils, furniture (including a bed), and other things found in the properties of Pioltello also went to Guidotino.



Figure 2.4 The Milanese *contado* (detail from Figure 2.1): localization of Guidotino's properties. Source: Elaboration on map contained in Fontana, *Antologia meneghina*.

In addition to these estates, he inherited significant quantities of wine and finished cloths, which suggests Guidotino was conducting a mercantile activity of some sort in addition to the management of lands. His share comprised two *plaustri* (almost 240 gallons) of wine *de crerio*, worth 60 lire, and all the textiles the brothers kept in their *fondaco* in Venice: 9 *pezze* of dyed cloth, a *pezza* of dyed cloth kept by Filippolo de Opreno in Venice, 20 other *pezze* of dyed cloth, a *pezza* of vermillion cloth of *zendado* - a light silk tissue similar to taffeta, five *pezze* of cloths treated with oil (*que fuerunt ynollie*), a *pezza* of ash-colored (*berretin*) *zendado*, and two *pezze* of cloth of ash-colored wool, for a total value of 112 lire and 5 soldi (see Table 2.3).⁴³

⁴³ In late medieval Milan, 1 *plaustro* = 6 *brente* = 453.326316 liters = 119.7561 gallons. ANNALI, Appendici, 1: 11; Frangioni, *Milano e le sue misure*, 121. Oil was a fundamental component in the process of wool cloth fabrication, and represented the principal cost for the woolman. The wool was lubricated and soaked in oil to soften and render it silky, so that it was possible to comb and card without breaking it. Rebora, "Materia prima," 145; De Poerck, *La draperie medievale*, 45.

ESTATES	<i>pertiche</i>	<i>tavole</i>	<i>piedi</i>
Ground area with court, vegetable garden, and enclosed terrain in Pioltello	6	6	6
Enclosed terrain <i>in Pessinella</i> in Pioltello	72	13	7
Field <i>in Rugori</i> in Pioltello	17	5 ½	
Enclosed terrain <i>alla Serada in Casarolo</i> in Limite	38	21	8
Field <i>in Rosso</i> in Pobbiano	32	13	6
Field <i>al Castelletto</i> in Pioltello	23	2	2
Field <i>in Casarolo</i> in Limite	15	6	10
GOODS	lire	soldi	denari
2 plaustri of wine	60		
9 pezze of dyed cloth	24	15	
1 pezza of dyed cloth	28	16	
20 pezze of dyed cloth	46	8	
1 pezza of vermillion <i>zendado</i> cloth	1	2	
5 pezze of cloth treated with oil	6	8	
1 pezza of ash-colored <i>zendado</i>	1	12	
2 pezze of cloth of ash-colored wool	3	4	
FINANCIAL ASSETS	lire	soldi	denari
½ of a debt of 3894 lire, 5 soldi, 4 denari	(1298)	(5)	(3½)

Table 2.3 Guidotino Carelli's inheritance. Source: AFD, Possessi in Milano, Porta Orientale - Parrocchia San Babila, c. 230, f. 4.

The third brother, Albertolo, inherited the commercial activity the father had started in Venice several years before: the *fondaco* - the building used as storage, headquarter and habitation - and all the merchandise (*masseria*) stored there, of a value estimated over 209 lire (see Table 2.4).⁴⁴ Albertolo's share comprised also some French, Milanese

⁴⁴ I believe the term *masseria* is used in the document with the meaning of "goods," as in the definition proposed by Du Cange, "*merces cujusvis generis*." In fact, the common meaning of *massaria* - "colonic farm administered by a *massaro* who is the owner of a number of holdings forming the estate" - would not make sense in the context of Venice. See *Glossarium mediae et*

and Venetian cloths: 5 *pezze* of cloth of France, 44 *pezze* of cloth of Milan, 7 *pezze* of ash-colored cloth of Venice, and 2 *cavezzoli* (remnants) of cloth of France. For his part, the value of each textile was not specified, as it was in the case of Franzio's and Guidotino's shares.⁴⁵ Yet, we can easily suppose the total value of the 58 *pezze* was quite significant. In fact, as shown in Table 2.2 and Table 2.3, the value of a generic *pezza* was as high as 28 lire, and the stock Albertolo inherited included a number of precious cloths imported from Venice and France, of quality and therefore value greater than that produced in the Milanese manufacture of the Carellis.⁴⁶

ESTATES	lire	soldi	denari
Masseria in Venice	209	12	
GOODS			
5 <i>pezze</i> of cloth of France			
44 <i>pezze</i> of cloth of Milan			
7 <i>pezze</i> of ash-colored cloth of Venice			
2 remnants of cloth of France			
FINANCIAL ASSETS	lire	soldi	denari
1/3 of a debt of 3894 lire, 5 soldi, 4 denari	(1298)	(5)	(3½)

Table 2.4 Albertolo Carelli's inheritance. Source: AFD, Possessi in Milano, Porta Orientale - Parrocchia San Babila, c. 230, f. 4.

infimae latinitatis, s.v. "masseria," accessed December 31, 2012, <http://ducange.enc.sorbonne.fr/masseria>.

⁴⁵ The word *cavezzollo*, from *cavetium* or *capitium*, appears in late medieval Milanese documents with three different meanings: first, it indicates remnants of textiles, or entire *pezze* of linen or cloth; second, it refers to neckbands, in fashion among nobles since the mid-thirteenth century, often pearl-studded and embellished with gold and silver decorations; third, it is used as a unit of measure of surface for estates, as a synonym of *pertica* or *trabucco*. In the case of Albertolo's inheritance, the context suggests the meaning of the word here is "remnant." Verga, "Le leggi suntuarie milanesi," 15; Giulini, *Memorie*, 8: 62; Gazzini, *Dare et habere*, 136; Caso, "Per la storia," 543; Frangioni, *Milano e le sue misure*, 79.

⁴⁶ The cloths produced in Milan, Como, Bergamo, and other cities of Lombardy were of inferior quality and cheaper than those imported from abroad. Santoro, *La matricola dei mercanti*, vii; Zerbi, *Aspetti economico-tecnici*, 35.

Hospitio magno civitatis

The document that divided their father's goods among the three brothers concluded with stipulations about a certain *hospitio magno civitatis*. The word *hospitio* has a twofold meaning: it could indicate either a tavern or a hospital. The Carellis owned a tavern in Borgo Monforte, next to the small gate by the same name and adjacent to the main building with two *cloderie*, a court, a vegetable garden, and a well, all inherited by the eldest brother Franzio. The use here of *hospitio* together with the formulation *magno civitatis* point rather in the direction of the latter meaning of "hospital," with specific reference to the Ospedale del Brolo, the main hospital of the city at the time. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the relationship of the father, Albrigolo, with this institution derived from his membership in the tertiary order of the *Humiliati*, who were appointed to its administration.

As stipulated among the three brothers and recorded in the document, Franzio was required to pay to the Ospedale a total amount of 300 lire, that is, 100 lire for each brother, plus an annual interest of 2 soldi per lira. With all probability, this amount was a rental fee for quarters their father Albrigolo held at the institution – as the division of the spaces that follows seems to indicate.

Brothers Guidotino and Albertollo, the act specifies, might *stare et habitare*, each in one third of the section of the hospital now left to Franzio, for the following ten years, but with a singular condition: in case they did not wish to live there anymore, and decided to leave the place, they could not come back or [further] remain there against Franzio's will.⁴⁷ For each year that either of them decided to live in the *hospitio*, he had to pay

⁴⁷ AFD, Possessi foresi, c. 230, Case in Milano, Porta Orientale, Parrocchia di San Babila foris, f. 4. "Et si quorumlibet eorum guidotini et albertolli se partiret seu reccedere de dicto

Franzio a rental canon of 10 lire, that is, a third of the annual portion of the 300 lire he had paid to the Ospedale for the decennial use of the three sections.

The spaces assigned to the two younger brothers were precisely described. Guidotino could use half of the anterior rooms (*camere*) where the father Albrigolo used to store his merchandise, and all the anterior *solaria* facing the street.⁴⁸ Albertolo, instead, could occupy all the rooms on the ground floor together with the portico, most probably used to store goods, with the exception of the anterior room facing the street and the small *solario* on the back – which, presumably, Franzio retained for himself. Available for their use were also the common areas: the court, the well, the hallway and the entrance door to the *hospitio*.

Judging from the significant annual canon the brothers paid for renting the space and from the very detailed terms used to describe which room or space went to whom, the quarters that father Albrigolo held at the Ospedale appear to be anything but somber monastic cells reserved for humble persons living a life of charity and service. Rather, the ample spaces at his disposition constituted an important place of business, employed for storage of his merchandise.

The Ospedale del Brolo was located next to the ancient basilica of Santo Stefano in Brolo, outside the circle of the Roman walls and within the perimeter of the Navigli canals, at some distance from the political and commercial heart of the city (see Figure

hospitio nollens ibi stare non possit ulterius reverti in ipsum nec in eo hospitio stare contra voluntatem dicti franziolli.”

⁴⁸ Houses in medieval Milan were generally one- or two-story buildings, surmounted by an upper *solarium* mostly used as storage. Soldi Rondinini, “Vie, piazze, dimore,” 336.

2.5).⁴⁹ Late-medieval Milan's civic and business life was concentrated in the large rectangular area, today Piazza dei Mercanti, adjacent to the two main basilicas of the city, Santa Maria Maggiore and Santa Tecla.⁵⁰ Streets departing from the city gates and small gates converged into the square, where the main edifices of the city were erected: the Broletto nuovo, the ancient Hall of Justice, with a huge porch on the ground floor that housed the banks of merchants, lawyers and notaries; the Loggia degli Osii, where sentences, public announcements and proclamations were read out loud; and the Palazzo del Podestà, the chief authority of the Commune.⁵¹

The Ospedale's position was too peripheral with respect to the city center to suggest that Albertolo employed his quarters there as a place where he conducted business deals or sold merchandise. Rather, the Ospedale provided easy access to the waters of Naviglio for the transportation of his goods, and this seems to confirm that the rooms were used as storage for merchandise ready for export.⁵²

⁴⁹ The term *brolo*, from the celtic *brògilos* and the late medieval Latin *brogilum*, originally meant "fenced orchard," and in the Lombard area assumed the meaning of open space, usually the property of the church. Soldi Rondinini, "Vie, piazze, dimore," 334.

⁵⁰ Before the construction of the new cathedral of Milan in 1386, the two churches worked as winter and summer basilicas for the city. Santa Maria Maggiore was enclosed in the new cathedral built around it, whereas Santa Tecla was demolished in 1458 to make room for a large square in front of the cathedral.

⁵¹ Soldi Rondinini, "Vie, piazze, dimore," 334.

⁵² The strategic position of the area, which represented for the religious, political and commercial center of the city the closest access to the Naviglio, was fully exploited in 1388, when a small lake called Laghetto di Santo Stefano in Brolo was excavated next to the Ospedale del Brolo as continuation of the Naviglio Grande. The Laghetto worked until the mid-nineteenth century as an artificial dock for the unloading of marble blocks for the construction of the Cathedral of Milan, transported to the center of the city from the quarry of Candoglia on the Lago Maggiore.

Marital strategies: the Carelli family tree

In the first decades of the fourteenth century, the Carellis began to run a flourishing business, judging from the patrimony Albrigolo left to his three sons, yet they were still not widely known on the Milanese scene. This relative obscurity changed rapidly in the following decades, up to the point that by the end of that century Marco Carelli came to be known everywhere in the city as “the prince of Milanese medieval *mercatura*.”

The family’s rise to a position of prominence in Milanese society was gradual. In 1340, less than two decades after the division of goods among the three brothers, the election of the youngest, Albertolo, as member of the Consiglio Generale marked the first public recognition of the family’s growing importance.⁵⁴ The Consiglio Generale, comprised of citizens’ representatives, was summoned at least once a year to elect the city consuls, approve laws and statutes, and deliberate on matters of particular interest for the city such as declarations of war, stipulation of peace, and so on.⁵⁵ Notwithstanding the role of the Consiglio’s members in Milan’s governance, actually rather limited, Albertolo’s election shows that by mid-century the Carellis had gained public importance. Fruitful investments in the wool trade allowed them to have constant access to cash, which in turn permitted them to become lenders of significant sums to their fellow citizens. Most notably, around 1350 Albertolo’s brother Franzio lent money to the Visconti, the *signori* of Milan – an evident sign not only of the family’s considerable wealth but also of its citywide reputation.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Santoro, *Ufficio di Provvisione*, 18: 88.

⁵⁵ Franceschini, *La vita sociale*, 4: 113-392.

⁵⁶ Mainoni, *Economia e politica*, 162; Zerbi, *La banca*, 161.

Yet, as historian Aron Gurevic points out in his study of medieval merchants, for these “new men” who distinguished themselves thanks to their success in commercial and financial activity, wealth did not assure esteem and prestige in society at large. In order to obtain a stable and respected position among the patriciate, merchants generally resorted to land acquisition and socially advantageous marriages.⁵⁷ In this respect, the Carelli family’s marital strategies are noteworthy, both for the importance of the alliances they forged (most notably, with the Pusterla, Liprandi, Settala, Caimi, and Ferrari families) and for the commercial networks these new bonds opened or consolidated: most of these newly acquired relatives and their families had been in business relationships with the Carellis in the past or would become so in the following years (Liprandi, Sappa, and Settala).

Bits of information scattered in dozens of notarial acts pertaining to the Carelli assets, and in the Fabbrica del Duomo’s registers regarding Marco Carelli’s bequest to it, allow us to trace the Carelli family tree starting from Marco’s grandfather Albrigolo down to his cousin’s daughters (see Figure 2.6).

⁵⁷ Gurevic, “Il mercante,” 61–127.

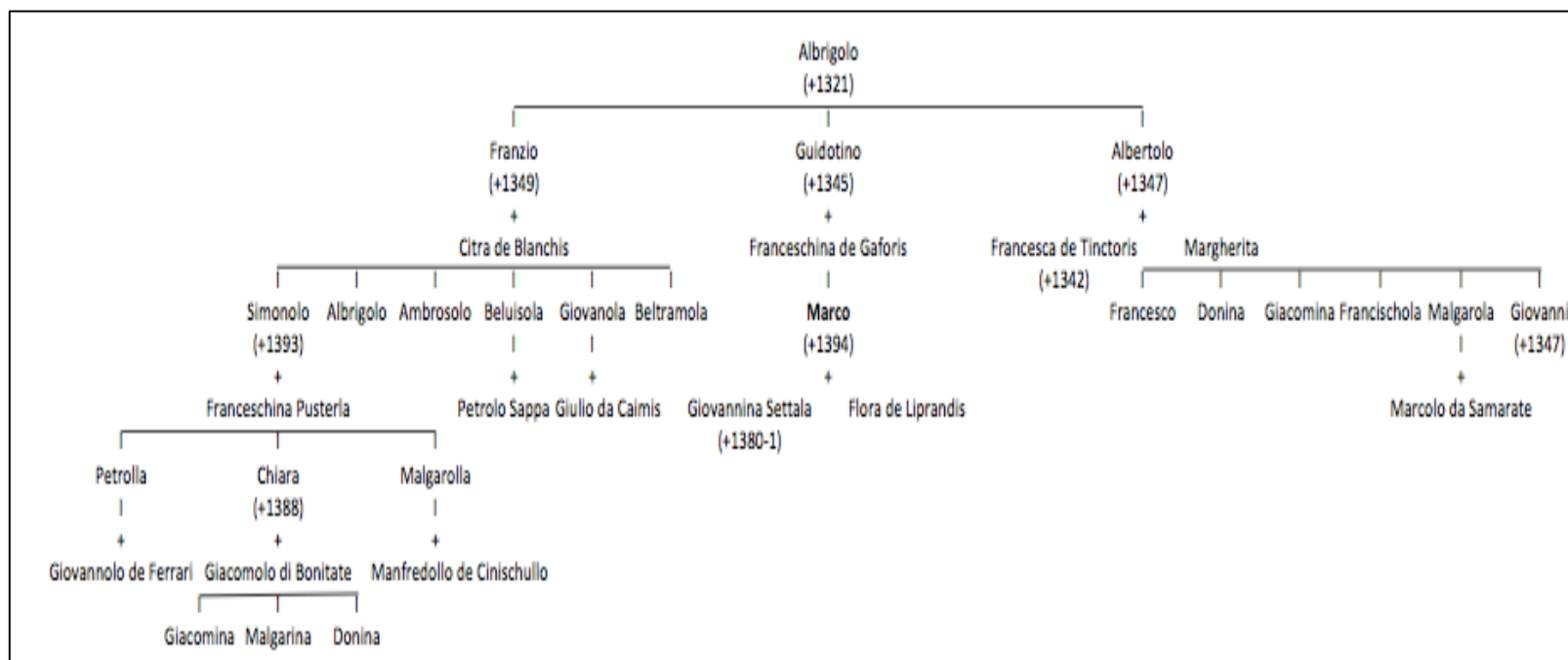


Figure 2.6 Carelli family tree. Source: AFD, Registri, r. 32, fo. 109v; AFD, Registri, r. 35, fo. 10, 103v; AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 21; AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 22v, 15, 16, 23; AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 2, 8; AFD, Possessi in Milano, Case in Milano. A. San Babila di dentro, c. 229, f. 9.

Reading the family tree from the left, the eldest of the three brothers, Franzio, married Citra de Blanchis, daughter of Lanzio de Blanchis, which in 1328 brought him a modest but significant dowry of 216 lire terziole, equivalent to 108 lire imperiali – later inherited back and sold by Citra in 1355 after his death.⁵⁸ Franzio died by 1349, as on September 30 of that year he is noted as *quondam* in his eldest son Simonolo's division of goods act.⁵⁹

Franzio's oldest daughter Beluisola married Petrolo Sappa, whom Marco Carelli appointed in 1366 as his procurator for all his trials and lawsuits, and was later recorded in the acts of the Commune as procurator in 1387 for a certain Caterina Lanziapanico, about whom there is no further information.⁶⁰ Towards the end of the fourteenth century Petrolo was appointed to several distinguished offices, sign of an established reputation and social status: official of Porta Nuova in 1385; counselor in Parrocchia di San Martino in Nosiggia, where he lived, in 1388; and official for the Cathedral of Milan in 1392.⁶¹ We do not have any information about Beluisola's younger sister Beltramola, but we do know that the second one, Giovanola, married Giulio de Caimi, entering in this way within the network of the Caimi, an ancient family established firstly in Turate, in the

⁵⁸ AFD, Registri, r. 35, fo. 103; AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 22v, n. 210. "Instrumentum unum cessionis titulo venditionis facte per donna Citra uxorem quondam domini Franzii Carelli et filia quondam domino Lanzio Bianchi parochia San Babile nominative de illis lire 216 terziole quas predictus dominus Franzius Carellus olim mariter suis et filius quondam Albrici Carelli confessus fuit recepisce et habuisse a suprascripto domino Lanzio Blancho patre dicte domine Citre per dote ipsius domine. Iter prout in eo instrumento tradito et registrato per suprascriptum Ubertum Moresini notarium Mediolani 1355 die sabati 5 Semptember."

⁵⁹ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 15, n. 136. "Instrumentum unum divisionis facte per [...] filios quondam dicti domini Franzii."

⁶⁰ AFD, Registri, r. 32, fo. 109v; AFD, Registri, r. 35, fo. 103; AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 21. "[...] dominus marcholus carellus filius condam [*sic*] domini guidoti civitatis mediolani porte horientallis parochie sancti babille intus fecit et constituivit petrolum de sappis procuratorem [...] ad omnes suas causas lates et questiones tam civiles quam communales." Santoro, *Ufficio di Provvisione*, 14:10.

⁶¹ Santoro, *Ufficio di Provvisione*, 17:43, 13:61, 98; see also Ibid., 13:43, 57 for Petrolo Sappa's controversy with Manfredolo da Bernadigio.

Milanese contado, and later in the city.⁶² Mentioned among the nobles of Milan already at the beginning of the twelfth century, the Caimi had their emblem sculpted in marble on the side tower of Porta Ticinese, one of the main gates of access to the city.⁶³

Franzio's eldest son, Simonolo, married Franceschina, daughter of Giovanni Pusterla.⁶⁴ The Pusterla were a powerful family of wealthy landowners and successful wool merchants. In 1340, together with several noble Milanese, including members of the Aliprandi clan, Francesco Pusterla hatched a plot against the tyrant Luchino Visconti with the intent of replacing him as Milan's ruler with one of his younger brothers. However, the conspiracy was discovered and the perpetrators were hanged in the public square. Relationships between the Pusterla and the Visconti remained tense in the following decades; nonetheless, in 1402 a Giovanni Pusterla – presumably a descendant of Franceschina's father – was among the first four dignitaries at Gian Galeazzo Visconti's funeral procession.⁶⁵

Simonolo Carelli and Franceschina Pusterla first lived in Parrocchia di Sant'Andrea alla Pusterla Nuova in Porta Nuova, and then in Parrocchia di Santo Stefanino in Borgogna in Porta Orientale, and had three daughters. The eldest, Petrolla, also known as Muzia (literally, "the mute"), married Giovannolo de Ferrari, whose noble family boasted

⁶² AFD, Registri, r. 35, fo. 103v.

⁶³ Giulini, *Memorie*, 3: 701, 725.

⁶⁴ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 16, n. 150. "Instrumentum unum continens sicut predictus dominus Marcolus Carelus [...] apprehendit corporalem possessionem [...] unus hospitii magni cum hedifitiis cameris solariis octo porticis lobiis et cloderiio magnus [...] salvo et reservato [...] illa camera que consueverat esse camera cubicularia dicti simonoli et camereta [...] in qua etiam stabat domina franceschina uxorem dicti simonoli cum porticus que est per medium ipse cameram et cameretam. Iter prout in eo instrumento tradito et registrato per Johanolo de Anzano parochia San Babile notario, 1359 die martis 21 mensis maii." For the full document, see AFD, Possessi in Milano, c. 229, Case in Milano A, San Babila di dentro, f. 6.

⁶⁵ Betto, "Il testamento," 261–302; for the Pusterla plot, see Noto, "La congiura Pusterla," 211–36.

ancient Longobard origins, and already in 1117 had ancestors named among the eighteen consuls leading the city of Milan in the communal period.⁶⁶ Simonolo's second daughter, Chiara, lived with her husband Giacomolo de Bonitate in Parrocchia San Martino de Nusiggia in Porta Nuova and died in 1388, dividing her remaining inheritance in equal parts among her three daughters Giacomina, Malgarina and Donina, after specifying a donation of 25 gold florins *una tantum* for the construction of the Cathedral of Milan "for the salvation and mercy of her soul."⁶⁷ Franzio's youngest daughter, Malgarolla, married Manfredolo, Filippo de Ciniscullo's son, and lived with him in Parrocchia Santa Maria alla Passerella, in Porta Orientale.

Albrigolo's second son, Guidotino, married Franceschina, Gaforo de Gaforis' daughter; the couple's only child was the Marco Carelli of our study, who married Giovannina Settala and then, after her death around 1380, Flora, Ambrogio de Liprandi's daughter, as fully explored in the next chapter.⁶⁸ The Settalas and Liprandis (or Aliprandi) were feudal lords who owned numerous territories in various areas of Lombardy. Their nobility was long established: the Liprandi boasted a regal Longobard origin, and both families appear in the *Matricula Nobilium Familiarum Mediolani*, the list of almost two hundred nobles Ottone Visconti compiled in 1277, along with the Pusterla and the Caimi.

Albertolo, the youngest of the three brothers, married Francesca, daughter of Pietro

⁶⁶ Giulini, *Memorie*, 3: 196, 293.

⁶⁷ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 8, Chiara Carelli. "Item lego et iudico de meis bonis post meum decessum, Ecclesie Mayoris Mediolanensis florenos vigintiquinque auri boni, et quos vollo debere dari, statim post meum decessum, per dictas heredes meas, deputatos Fabrice ipsius Ecclesie convertendos in Fabrica ipsius Ecclesie, et hoc pro salute et mercede anime mee." Edited in Galli, "Carità e remissione," 93-96.

⁶⁸ AFD, Possessi in Milano, c. 229, Case in Milano A, San Babila di dentro, f. 9. "...domine Franceschine filie quondam et herede domini Gaforii de Gaforis."

de Tinctoris, a family of Milanese notaries.⁶⁹ She died by 1342, and he remarried a woman recorded only as Margherita, who bore him five children in five years: Francesco, Donina, Giacomina, Francischola, Giovanni and Malgarola, who married Marcolo de Samarate, a Milanese notary.⁷⁰ Albertolo, who lived with the family in Parrocchia Sant'Eusebio in Porta Nuova, died between July and September 1347.⁷¹

The *Quaternus instrumentorum*

In the immediate aftermath of Marco Carelli's death in September 1394, the Fabbrica officials, beneficiaries of the donation of virtually his entire patrimony, went to the house where he lived together with his wife, in Parrocchia San Babila, Porta Orientale, to make an inventory room by room of all the goods and furniture there contained, perhaps to be sure nothing would get stolen by an avid relative or a sly passerby. At the same time the officials, who from that moment on were in charge of all of the merchant's business, took hold of the commercial and even personal documents found in his house.

Later on, the officials decided to retain only some of these documents, apparently destroying those not directly pertaining to the assets inherited, but not before the Fabbrica bookkeeper, Pietro da Lodi, together with the two *negotiis gestores* for the cathedral donations, Leonardo da Trivulzio and Beltramolo Tana, compiled an accurate description

⁶⁹ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 2, Albertolo Carelli. "[...] dona franceschina quondam uxore mea [that is, Albertolo's] et filia quondam domini petri de tinctoribus [...]" AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 23, n. 211. "Instrumento tradito et registrato per Guidolum Toschanum de Tinctoribus notarium."

⁷⁰ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 2, Albertolo Carelli. "Item dico et protestor ad eternam memoriam que donam malgarolam filiam meam [that is, Albertolo's] et uxorem marcholi de samarate ego suffitientem dotem secundum vires et facultatem bonorum meorum et etiam in pluri quem conveniebat facultati mee."

⁷¹ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 2, Albertolo Carelli. "26 Luglio 1347. Testamento di Alberto Carello, col quale doppo diversi legati istituisce erede universale Francesco suo figlio in eta' pupillare, e morendo questi sostituisce Donina e Giacomina sue figlie per eguali porzioni. Rogato Grazietto Sacchi notaio di Milano."

of the totality of documents, indicating for each one a brief summary of its content and date, the actors involved, and the notary's name.⁷² The 40-folio parchment notebook includes sales, pacts, sentences, wills, protests, bail receipts, promises, obligations, powers of attorney, letters, dowries, reports, goods divisions, conditional sales, emphyteutic leases, money exchanges, endorsed bills, and arbitrations, for a total of 327 instruments. Each is described in as little as a single line or in as much as an entire recto or verso.

The order in which the entries in this 40-folio parchment are recorded is extremely informative. They are not classified chronologically, but by type of asset, presumably in the way Marco Carelli personally had arranged them. For each asset there is what amounts to a title search going back to the origins of the asset, with connections that might seem obscure to someone not personally involved in the operations. So, for example, a 1362 document pertaining to a division between Marco and his cousin Simonolo of certain goods the brothers Hermenulsi sold to the grammar teacher Guidotto da Grado, who in turn gave them in emphyteutic lease to the two Carelli cousins and to Albrigolo Castana, is bundled together with two other instruments.⁷³ The first is a 1340 act that documents the sale between a certain Ayroldo de Osnago and the teacher

⁷² AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 1. "Quaternus registri [...] instrumentorum spectantium Fabrice ecclesie mediolani occasione hereditatis quondam domini Marcholi Carelli sua bona relinquit Fabrice suprascripte. Et alie scripture facte per hereditate dicti quondam domini Marcholi [...]"; AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 2. "MCCCLXXXV. Descriptio facta repertorum instrumentorum et scripturorum quondam domini Marcholi Carrelli [...] domino Petro de Laude ad libri deputato et Leonardo de Trivulzio et Beltramolo Tana negotioribus gestoribus fabrice ecclesie mediolani."

⁷³ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 15, n. 139. "Instrumentum unum divisionis facte inter predictum Simonolum Carelum ex una parte et dictum Marcolum ex altera de certis bonis que fuerunt [...] dominorum Abrosii et Johannoli fratrem de Hermenulsi que de ipsis fecerant venditione et datum ad fictum libellarium domino Albrigolo de Castana et dictis Simonolo et Marcolo et [...] domino magistri Guidoti de Gradi [...] 1362 die 26 decembrii."

Guidotto da Grado of a tavern with two front entrances in *contrada* Cagozario Bridge, Parrocchia San Babila *di dentro* - the same area where the Carellis had their main residence.⁷⁴ The second, dated ten years later, is the contract of perpetual emphyteutic lease on the same tavern between the teacher and Simonolo Carelli for an annual canon of 36 lire.⁷⁵ These multiple title searches are then aggregated within broad categories by geographical area (business of Mantova, business of Rho, business of Settala), by institution involved (business with the Ospedale del Brolo, business with the confraternity of the Quattro Marie), by instrument typology (business pertaining to emphyteutic leases), and by parties or partners involved (business with the Meliati brothers, business with Pobbiono da Casoretto, Simonolo and Marcolo Carelli's business).

Within these 327 instruments, which span the years 1321 to 1394, in the remainder of this chapter I shall consider several turning points from the first fifteen years of Marco Carelli's mercantile career, as revealed in this particular bundle of documents: his renunciation of his father's inheritance (1345), the formation of a partnership first with the uncles (1349) and then with his older cousin Simonolo (1350), and lastly the break with Simonolo after his imprisonment for debts (1359). This break marks the beginning of the central phase of Marco's career when, finally on his own, he rapidly rose to fortune and fame, as explored in Chapter Three.

⁷⁴ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 15v, n. 140. "Instrumentum unum venditionis facte per dominum Ayroldolum de Osnago domino magistro Guidoto de Gradi magistro scholarum de hospitio uno cum suis iuribus et pertinentiis et duabus portis anterioribus iacente in parochie san Babile intus [...] 1340 die 26 augusti."

⁷⁵ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 15v, n. 141. "Instrumentum unum investiture facte nomine libeli usque in perpetuum per dominum magistrum Guidotinum de Gradi doctorem gramatice in Simonolus Carelum filius quondam domino Franzii predictum de sedimine uno cum suis iuribus et pertinentiis et duabus portis a platea iacens in parochia san Babile in contrats pontis Chagozarii per libbre 36 imperiali in anno [...] 1350 die 14 Jullii."

The renunciation of his inheritance

Marco Carelli was born to Albrigolo's second son Guidotino and Franceschina de Gaforis at some point between 1320 and 1327, as in 1347 he appears in the role of official witness in an obligation act between a certain Dionigi de Ferrari towards the late Albertolo Carelli's sons and heirs for the payment of a dress and jacket the widow Margherita sold him - a function Marco could not have exerted had he not become of age (that is, twenty) by then.⁷⁶

The first act in which Marco appears as a principal sees him in 1345 renouncing his paternal inheritance.⁷⁷ In the 1321 division of goods, Marco's father, Guidotino, had inherited only lands and estates: among the three brothers, the direction his career took in consequence of that division was the furthest removed from the mercantile path Marco chose, initially in association with uncles and cousin and then by himself. Since we have no diaries or correspondence, we are left to imagine Marco growing up fascinated by the world in which his uncles and cousins worked: the variety of merchandise they dealt with daily, their superb knowledge of usages, customs, and measures among various peoples, their frequent travels to fairs and markets. We may imagine as well a young man attracted by the fast-paced action of the market far more than by the land-owning world of his father. In this sense, the renunciation of his paternal inheritance may be explained as the price he willingly paid for deciding not to follow his father's footsteps and not to collaborate with him in the management of properties, possibly at the suggestion of his uncles who promised to make a great merchant of him.

⁷⁶ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Albertolo Carelli, f. 1. "Interfuerunt ibi testes marcholus carellus filius quondam domini guidoti porte nove parochia sancta euebii notus [...]."

⁷⁷ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 34v, n. 318. "Instrumentum unum continens sicut dominus marcolus carrelus renunziaverit hereditate paterne. Tradito et registrato per gratietum sachum notarium mediolani, 1345 die mercole 4 januarii."

Yet, given the absence of any document confirming this speculation, we are left with the general legal pattern that this renunciation may have been the consequence of deals gone bad on the side of the uncles and cousins or simply a prudential precaution, an agreement among the three brothers in order to protect the family's immobile assets and diversify the risk in case the merchant branch of their activities failed, limiting their co-responsibility in the remainder of their father Albrigolo's patrimony. There are complicating factors that makes the picture problematic, such as a 1355 statement in which a certain Minolo Ferrario formally renounced any right on the properties belonging to Marco and his late parents Guidotino and Francesca, hence suggesting Marco was involved at some level in the management of the very assets he had renounced a decade earlier.⁷⁸

Another interesting clue emerges from a 1362 act of division of a large house located in Porta Orientale, Parrocchia San Babila ordered by the city judge, for which Marco Carelli obtained most of the property and the brothers Robiati were required to pay him 3 gold florins for the asset share assigned to them. In the document, Marco is not registered as "son of the late Guidotino," as customary, but rather as "son and heir of the late Franceschina, daughter and heir of the late Gaforo de Gaforii," an anomalous specification that can only be explained by a direct connection with the issue at stake

⁷⁸ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 17, n. 161. "Instrumentum unum confessionis facte per dominum minolum ferrarium filius quondam domini Albrici parochie sancte marie ad passerellam domino marcolo carello de ulterius non petendo de omni et toto eo quod dictus dominus minolus eidem marcolo et domino guidoto et domine francesce uxorem sue et olim matrem ipsius marcoli vel alicui eorum qui retro petere et requirere poterat et posset ut in eo instrumento tradito et subscripto per suprascriptum hornigolum de canturio notarium mediolani 1355 die 9 novembre."

between the parties, the property of the house.⁷⁹ We infer, therefore, that Marco inherited the patrimony of his maternal grandfather, Gaforo de Gaforiis, left to his mother Franceschina, and this better explains the liberty he could take in renouncing Guidotino's inheritance.

Piecing all the factors together, the most plausible explanation for the 1345 renunciation of his paternal patrimony seems to be that the young and enterprising Marco either decided to cash in his share from his father, to invest it in partnership with his uncles and cousin, or, better yet, renounced his father's legacy in order to protect himself from the risk inherent in the bold large-scale operations that characterized his mercantile career. Either way, a decade later we know that, somehow, he was once again in possession of what he had seemingly renounced.

The Carelli society

In 1345, now aged about twenty and having renounced his land-based paternal inheritance, Marco entered into a partnership with his father's brothers, Franzio and Albertolo, and his cousin Simonolo. They engaged in the buying and selling of wool cloth, *bombace* (cotton) and various precious goods between Milan and Venice, reinvesting their gains in the acquisition, leasing and renting of houses and terrains. Around this date, in the 40-folio notebook summary of Carelli's business instruments, we find, for instance, an obligation regarding Marco's purchase of a large quantity of cotton for 72 lire from a certain Guillolmolo Famiano in 1347, while two years later the young merchant is already involved in the acquisition of an expensive property worth 1280 gold

⁷⁹ AFD, Possessi in Milano, c. 229, Case in Milano A, San Babila di dentro, f. 9. "[...] Marcholus Carellus filius quondam et heredes domine Franceschine filie quondam et herede domini Gaforii de Gaforis."

florins, a two-story house with bedrooms, attics, court and well in Parrocchia di San Nazaro in Brolo ad Petrasanta.⁸⁰

In addition to instruments listed in the *quaternus instrumentorum*, Marco's early activities in partnership with his relatives are documented in a dozen commercial acts from Milan and Venice housed at the Archivio della Fabbrica del Duomo di Milano.⁸¹ The instruments register primarily credits and debts related to sales of cotton and wool, and money loans. We have documentation, for instance, of the 30 silver grossi veneziani that Simonolo had to pay to a certain Ottorolo Preda within the term of three months for the exchange of 454 lire imperiali of Milan, as well as of the 126.10 lire of credit Marco received in favor of Mafiolo and Lanfranco Binaghi in 1348 for a sale of *bombace*, to be paid in five months, with a fee of 126.10 for late payment if the debt were not to be resolved within 15 days from the deadline.⁸² The payment of double the debt as penalty

⁸⁰ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 17v, n. 165. "Instrumentum unum obligationis facte per Guillolmolum Famianum filius quondam domini Ambrosii porta ticinense parochia san protasii in campo pretio et mercato bombacis Marcolo Carello tunc porta nova parochia san eusebii de libbre 72 et soldi 14 imperiali [...] 1347 die 11 mensis aprilis." AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 18v, n. 174. "Instrumentum unum venditionis facte per dominum Pasinum de Sollario filius quondam domini Bonincorti et Federgolum de Sollario eius filium domino Marcolo Carello de sedimen uno cum hedifitiis cameris sollariis curte puteo et aliis suis iuribus et pertinentibus iacens in ps nazarii in brolio ad petrasancta pretio florenos 1280 auri [...] 1349 die 23 octobris."

⁸¹ The commercial acts were catalogued and registered in the eighteenth century by the archivist of the Archivio della Fabbrica del Duomo Tarantola, who ordered them chronologically and wrote on the paper folder of each document a brief summary of its content.

⁸² AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 6. "In nomine domini anno nativitate eiusdem milliotrecentesimoquingagesimoseptimo indictione decima. Die veneris tertiodecimo mensis Januarii. Simonolus Carrellus filius quondam domini Franzii mercator mediolani porte horientali parochia sancti babille per cambio et ex causa cambii librarum quatuorcentumquingagintaquatuor imperiali bonorum mediolani quas confessus fuit se habuisse et recepisce in civitate mediolani ab ottorolo de preda filio quondam domini guillelmoli de predda cive et mercatore mediolani porte ticinese parochia sancti sepulcri promisit et convenit [...]." AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 1. "In nomine domini anno nativitate eiusdem millio trecentesimo quadregesimo octavo indictione prima. Die lune septimo mensis januarii mafiolus et lanfrancholus fratres de binago filii quondam domini beltrami de binago cives et mercatores mediolani porte nove parochie sancti eusebii [...] pretis et mercatis bombacis quam confessus fuit

in case of late payment seems to be a commonly accepted practice: the same condition is found in another document from the same period, concerning Marco's sale of *bombace* to a certain Giovanni di Carugate, who in January 1348 obligated himself to the payment of 69 lire and 5 soldi within four months or double the amount in case of payment after 15 days from the deadline.⁸³

A relationship of great trust must have bonded the young Marco with his uncle Albertolo in these years, as is apparent in the 1347 testament of the latter, who fell mortally ill when his only son Franciscolo was three years old.⁸⁴ After designating Franciscolo as his universal heir, Albertolo named his second wife, Margherita, as tutor of his sons and daughters, conceding her the usufruct of all his goods and properties until the end of her life provided she "kept his bed honestly," that is, did not remarry or have sexual relationships of any sort.⁸⁵ Interestingly, he ordered her to administer and manage

se recepisce [...] a domino marcholo carrello filio quondam domini guidotini carrelli civis et mercator mediolani [...] ad kallendis mensis Junii praedicto in pecunia numerata tantas libras centumvigintasex et soldos decem bonori mediolani."

⁸³ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 2. "In nomine domini anno nativitate eiusdem millesimo trecentesimo quadragesimo octavo indictione prima. Die veneris undecimo mensis Januarii. Johanolus de Carugate filius quondam domoni Jacobi de carugate civis et mercatores mediolani porte nove parochia sancti bartholomei pretio et mercato bombacis quam confessus fuit se recepisce habuisse et emisse a domino Marcholo Carrello filio quondam domini Guidotini Carrello cive et mercatore mediolani porte nove parochie sancti euebii promisit et convenit [...] ad mensos quatuor [...] libras sexagintanovem et soldi 5 imperiali bonorum mediolani [...] et interesse [...]."

⁸⁴ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 2, Albertolo Carelli. "[...] francescholum filium meum legiptimum natum ex me et ex predicta dona margarita uxore mea maiorem annis tribus et minorem annis quatuor." Albertolo and Margherita had also another son, Giovanni, but he was predeceased to the father. A summary of the document is contained in AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 15, n. 135.

⁸⁵ In the event of Franciscolo's death without legitimate descendants, Albertolo's daughters Franciscola, Donnina and Giacobina would have inherited his patrimony – but not Malgarola, who had already received her share as dowry, and for this had to stay "tacit and content without asking anything more" – Albertolo's inheritance would be transferred to his brother Franzio and his nephew Marco in case of his daughters' death without legitimate descendants. Albertolo's other brother Guidotino, Marco's father, is not mentioned in the will as he had already died two years before. AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 2, Albertolo Carelli. "Item dico et protestor ad eternam

his possessions following the decisions, suggestions and deliberations of Franzio and Marco.⁸⁶

The death of Marco's uncles, Albertolo in 1347 and Franzio in 1349, marked significant turning points in the course of his involvement in the Carelli *fraterna*. After the death of Albertolo (1347), Marco, who according to historian Patrizia Mainoni directed the society's Genoa branch at that time, moved to Venice. The Genoese branch was closed, never again to be reopened.⁸⁷ From that moment on, he became closely associated with his cousin Simonolo, who must have been at least twenty years older than himself, since as early as 1321 Simonolo appears in a statement attesting to the complete settlement of the rent fee for a house immediately outside the small gate of Monforte – 5 lire, a capon and 12 eggs.⁸⁸

memoriam que donam malgarolam filiam meam et uxorem marcholi de samarate ego sufficientem dotam secundum vires et facultatem bonorum meorum et etiam in pluri quem conveniebat facultati mee. Et ea occasione non nominam eam aliquantulum superius nec eam aliquantulum institui iuro eam in dote per me sibi data et in habens que sibi dedi. Instituo michi heredem hore proprio nominando et iubeo et mando eam esse et stare tacitam et contentam et nichil posse ulterius petere. [...] Item vollo statuo et ordino que si illi omnes filius meus et filie mee decederent sine descendibus legitimis dominus francius carrellus predictus fratres meus et eius descendentes per dimidia et predictus marcholus carrellus nepos meus et eius descendentes per alia dimidia sint mei et ipsorum filii et filias meorum heredes universales ut supra.” AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 2, Albertolo Carelli. “Item vollo statuo et ordino quod donna margarita uxor mea legitima esse debeat et que sit donna massaria et usufructuaria omnium bonorum meorum donec ipsa donna vixerit et lectum meum honeste custodierit. [...] Quibus filio et filiabus meis do et constituo tutricem generallem suprascriptam donam margaritam uxorem meam.”

⁸⁶ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 2, Albertolo Carelli. “Et vollo et etiam mando que ipsa uxor mea in agendis se habeat et regat et fatia iuxta deliberationem et voluntatem dominorum franzii fratris mei marcholi nepotis mei amborum de carrellis [...] et etiam mando que illa uxor mea in regimine ordinatione et dispositione bonorum predictorum se habeat regat et fatiat secundum consillum voluntatem et deliberationem ipsorum dominorum franzii et marcholi de carrellis.”

⁸⁷ Mainoni, *Economia e politica*, 194. The lack of commercial documents in the Milanese archives pertaining to Marco's Genoese period, and the absence of any evidence in the Archivio di Stato di Genova referring to Carelli and their Genoese branch of the society leaves this period of the Carelli society quite unknown.

⁸⁸ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 19v, n. 183. “Instrumentum unum confessionis facte per dominum simonolum carelum de libbre 5 imperiali capone uno et ovis duodecim per plena solutione ficti predicti anni 1321 a festo sancti martini [...] ex quadam domo iacens in

Two years later, with the death of his father Franzio (1349), Simonolo became the eldest member of the Carelli society. His first act in this new capacity was to divide Franzio's properties among his brother and sisters, Albrigolo, Ambrosolo, Beluisola, Giovanola, and Beltramola, in a way similar to what his father had done before him at the death of grandfather Albrigolo.⁸⁹ Then, he formalized his commitments to his cousin Marco, first with a solemn promise to help and protect him and his heirs in the preservation of his goods and the fulfillment of his debts, signed together with his brother Albrigolo, and subsequently with the stipulation of a society formed "by Marco Carello on the one side and Simonolo Carello on the other" regarding "certain quantities of money and wool."⁹⁰ As a result of this formal deal, from that moment on their acts opened with the phrase "Simonolo Carello, son of the late Franzio and Marcolo Carello son of the late Guidotino, both merchants of Milan, Porta Orientale, Parrocchia di San Babila, full partners [*in solidum*]."⁹¹

burgo de monteforti foris. Rogato et subscripto per marzolum de camisiliasca notarium. 1321, die lune 30 novembris."

⁸⁹ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 15, n. 136. "Instrumentum unum divisionis facte per Simonolum Carelum parochia S. Andree ad Pusterlam Novam Porta Orientale Mediolani ex una parte et Albrigolum Ambrosolum Beluisolam Johanolam et Beltramolam fratres et sorores suos [...] filios quondam dicti domini Franzii."

⁹⁰ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 17 n. 159. "Instrumentum unum promissionis per solempnem stipulationem facte per simonolum et albrigolum fratres de carelis filius quondam domini franzii domino marcolo carello de conservare et iudempiare prestando perpetuo ipsum dominum marcolum et eius heredes res et bona ab illis omnibus et singulis debitis in quibus appareret ipsum marcolum fore obligatum et teneri principaliter una cum ipsis fructibus [...] 1349, die 15 decembri." AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 15 n. 137. "Instrumentum unum societatis facte per domini marcolum carelum ex una parte et simonolum carelum ex altera de certis quantitatibus pecunie et lane [...] 1350 die 12 maij."

⁹¹ See, for instance, AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 4. "In nomine domini anno nativitate eiusdem millesimotrecentesimoquingagesimosexto indictione decima. Die jovis vigesimosecundo mensis decembris dominus Simonolus Carrelus filius quondam domini Franzii et Marcholus Carrelus filius quondam domini Guidoti ambo mercatores mediolani porte horientale parochie sancti babille uterque eorum in solidum [...]."

The *quaternus instrumentorum* allows for no more than a restricted understanding of the mechanics of their society, as only the documents regarding Simonolo are listed there under the section “Business of Simonolo Carelli and some other business pertaining to Marco Carelli.”⁹² We have no similar section for the instruments pertaining to Simonolo’s brothers Albrigolo and Ambrosolo. For the latter, no trace remains in the documents, casting doubt on their involvement in the Carelli society, while Albrigolo, although actively participating in the *fraterna*, was never directly associated with Marco in the same transactions, and therefore no documents pertaining to him were to be found at Marco’s house when the Fabbica officials compiled the 40-folio instruments summary.

The activity of Albrigolo instead may be traced through documentation contained in his personal folder housed at the Archivio della Fabbrica del Duomo, mostly concerning obligations for the payment of significant quantities of cloths, Genoese, English and Burgundian wool, and exchanges of Milanese and Venetian money, reflecting once again the two main poles of the Carelli society’s transactions, Milan and Venice. On December 1353, for instance, the Milanese money-changer Simone Po’ exchanged for him 225 lire to be paid back by mid-April of the following year, and in the following months Albrigolo purchased a lot of Genoese wool worth 362 lire and 17 soldi, three *pezze* of white Milanese cloth for 100 lire, and 6 *balle* of Genoese wool worth 261 lire.⁹³

⁹² AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 1v. “Negotia domini Simonoli carelli et certarum aliorum pertinarum domino marcolo carelo.”

⁹³ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Albrigolo Carelli, f. 2. “In nomine domini anno nativitate eiusdem millesimo trecentesimo quinquagesimo tertio. Indictione septima. Die martis tertio mensis decembris Albrigolus Carrellus filius quondam domini Franzii carrelli civis et mercator mediolani porte horientalis parochie sancti babille per cambio et ex causa cambii librarum ducentarum vigintiquinque imperialium bonorum mediolani quam confessus fuit huissse et recepissee in civitate mediolani a domino simono de pado filio quondam domini ubertini civis et mercator mediolani porte cumane parrochie sancti victoris [...] promisit et convenit dictus debitor dicto creditori

Even allowing for the disparity of available sources, the impression provided by the ensemble of preserved documents is that Simonolo was the cleverest of the group. He appears in the 1350s to have assumed leadership of the Carelli society, as was customary for the eldest brother in a *fraterna*, and as the position of preeminence of his name in several commercial documents from that period confirms. In 1350, “Simonolo Carello on his own behalf and on behalf of Marcolo Carello” paid 12 ounces of gold worth 105 florins to a certain Guidotino de Vicomercato in exchange for a tumbledown property in Porta Orientale, Parrocchia di San Babila.⁹⁴ The same formula is repeated the following year in another document through which Simonolo Carello, “on his behalf and on his *germano* Marcolo Carello’s behalf,” leased to the brothers Emeraldino and Aresinolo Prederii a property neighboring the female house of the *Humiliati* of San Luca, while around the same time “Simonollo son of the late Franzio Carelli and his partner Marcollo son of the late Guidotino Carelli” received 36 lire from Guidolo de Gradi for the annual rent of nearby properties located in Porta Orientale, Parrocchia di San Babila.⁹⁵

presenti et recipienti dare et solvere [...] ad medium mensis aprilis proxime in venetiis [...].” See Santoro, *La matricola dei mercanti*, 174-77.

⁹⁴ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 15, n. 138. “Instrumentum unum cambii facti per dominos Guidotinum de Vicomercato filius quondam domini Mafioli ex una parte et Simonolum Carellum suo nomine et nomine Marcoli Carelli ex altera parte in quo dictus dominus Guidolus dedit ipsis de Carellis sedimen unum derupatum iacens in parochia san babile et ipse de Carellis dederint ipsi domino Guidollo onze duadecim auri valor florenos 105 [...] 1350 die 2 decembris.”

⁹⁵ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 24, n. 221. “Instrumentum unum investiture facte per Simonolum Carellum suo nomine et nomine et vice Marcoli Carelli germani sui in Emernaldinum et Aresinolum fratres de Prederiis de sedimine uno cum hedifitiis iacens in parochia san babile super strata [...] cum coheret amane dominarum de sancto lucha [...] 1351 die veneris ultimo septembris.” AFD, Possessi foresi, c. 230, Case in Milano, Porta Orientale, Parrocchia di San Babila foris, f. 2; AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 23, n. 212. “Instrumentum unum confessionis facte per dominum magistrum Guidotinum de Gradi Simonolo Carello et Marcolo Carello de libbre 36 imperiali per completa solutione ficti libellarii unus annu finiti in kalende augusti tunc praesentis unus sediminis cum hedifitiis iacens in parochia sancti babile in contrata pontis chagozarii cum coheret amane donnarum humiliatarum de sancto luca [...] 1351 die martis 16 augusti.”

In a few years, thanks to the success of his business deals, Simonolo managed to buy back from his brothers and sisters their share of the inheritance. In 1355, he bought from them the main house of the Carelli family *in stricta Primicerij* near the Cagozario Bridge, where his father Franzio and his grandfather Albrigolo had lived before him. In the same transaction, he acquired the tavern nearby the house, other buildings and terrains in the same area, and a *fitto livellario* of 10 lire terziol (that is, 5 lire imperiali) and a capon from a certain Giuliano de Pozzolo on another property outside the small gate of Monforte.

He also obtained from his siblings a tavern *cum hedificiis*, with a court, a well, a vegetable garden, rooms and attics, located immediately outside the small gate of Monforte – that is, in the same area of the field called *in Brajda* that Franzio had inherited in 1321 from his father, and where most probably he had built over the years this tavern and house.⁹⁶ In this way, Simonolo managed to retain for himself almost all of the patrimony his father Franzio had inherited from grandfather Albrigolo back in 1321.

⁹⁶ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 22v, n. 208. “Instrumentum unum venditionis facte et date in solutione per Albrigolum Ambrosolum donam Johannolam et Beltramolam fratres et sorores filii quondam domini Franzii Carelli parochie sancti babile domino Simonolo Carello fratrem [*sic*] dictorum venditorum et datorum in solutum [*sic*] nominative de instrumento videlicet de hospitio uno cum hedeftiis curte puteo cameris solariis et omnibus suis pertinentis iacens extra pusterlam de monteforte parochia sancti babile et de uno alio hospitio cum hedifitiis curte orto puteo et pluribus cameris et dormib. et sollariis et suis pertinentis iacens in suprascriptis porte et parochia in contrata in stricta primicerij cum onere factum legatum [...] ecclesie sancti babile omni anno usque in perpetuum soldi 12 terzioli vel circa et de uno alio sedime cum hedifitiis curte orto dormib. et omnibus suis pertinentis iacens ibi prope et de ficto libellario et iure ficti libellarii libbre 10 terziol et caponi unus quod fit per Giulium dictum pozolum de pozolo suprascripte pusterle foris de monteforti super sedimine uno cum hedifitiis curte orta puteo cameris et sollariis et suis pertinentis iacens extra predictam pusterlam de monteforti et de directo dominio et [...] possessioni ipsius hospitii super quo fit ipsum fictum libellarium [...] 1355 die 5 septembris.”

The break with Simonolo

Shortly thereafter, the Carelli society experienced some severe economic setbacks. The business took its first dive with Albrigolo's financial difficulties around 1355. On that occasion, Simonolo had to step in by acquiring his brother's debts and solemnly promising his creditors to pay back the sums due by the agreed upon dates. Thus, when Albrigolo found it impossible to honor his debt to the moneychanger Simone Po' for the previously mentioned exchange of 225 lire made in December 1353, Simonolo bought that credit from Simone, who swore before him on the Gospel to "remain a true creditor."⁹⁷

The situation took a turn for the worse in the following years, when Simonolo overreached himself and experienced a series of disasters that rapidly undermined his financial stability and finally resulted in 1359 in his bankruptcy and imprisonment for debt. The commercial acts preserved from the period 1356-1359 do not show any specific deal that ended badly or a major event that abruptly altered Simonolo's economic situation; rather, they attest to a progressive process of indebtedness that became chronic over the years. Already in 1356, Marco appears to have been aware of his cousin's precarious financial state: while until that moment the two had signed contracts and

⁹⁷ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Albrigolo Carelli, f. 3. "In nomine domine anno a nativitate eisudem militecentesimoquingentesimo quinto indictione octava die sabbati octavo mensis augusti dominus Symon de Pado filius quondam domini Ubertini de Pado civis et campsor mediolani porte ticinesi parochia sancti victoris [...] ex causa et titulo venditionis cessit et dedit atque mandavit domino symonolo carrello filio quondam domini franzii carrelli civis et mercatori mediolani porte horientalis parochia sancti babille presenti et valenti omnia iura omnesque actiones et rationes utiles, et directas, reales et personales, atque ypothecare sibi quocumque modo, et jure pertinentia et pertinentus contra et adversus Albrigolum Carrelum fratrem dicti domini Symonoli et filium quondam suprascripti domini Franzii Carrelli civem et mercatorem mediolani porte horientalis predictae parochie sancti babille et eius heredes res et bona et possessores et detentores bonorum rerum et fructarum suorum [...] et dictus dominus Symon de pado cedens iuravit corporalia ad sancta dei evangelia esse creditor eius de quo cedit ius et que de suddetto suo cedit jus et non in fraudem. [...] Et similiter dictus cessionarius iuravit ad sancta dei evangelia tactis scripturis que hanc juricessionem non recipit in fraudem nec per malitia."

business transactions together *in solidum*, by the end of that year Marco began to safeguard his finances. Thus, for instance, on 22 December 1356 Marco obtained from Simonolo exoneration from any responsibility for a debt of 55 lire of silver grossi veneziani they had contracted together against a certain Drudeto Vincemalla *occaxione* [sic] *cambii* of 880 lire.⁹⁸

In the following two years, Marco intervened more directly, lending considerable sums of money to his cousin in an effort to reestablish his financial stability - as in February 1358, when Simonolo appears as a creditor towards Marco for 110 silver grossi veneziani in exchange for 1760 lire his cousin had previously paid him.⁹⁹

Yet, Marco's repeated attempts were not enough to keep Simonolo out of prison, and by mid-1359 he ended up in the Carcere della Malastalla, the prison in Via degli Orefici near the Broletto Nuovo (see Figure 2.5) reserved for those who were unable to repay

⁹⁸ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 5. "In nomine domine anno antivitae eiusdem millotrecentesimoquinquagesimosexto. Indictione decima die jovis vigesimosecundo mensis decembris dominus Simonolus Carrellus filius quondam domini Franzii mercator mediolani porte horientali parochie sancti babille per stipulatione solempnem promisit domino Marcholo Carrello filio quondam domini Guidoti civi et mercatore mediolani suprascripte porte et parochie ibi praesenti stipullanti [...] ipsum et eius heredes res et bona perpetuo indempnem et indempna [...] deliberare a quodam debito libbrarum quinquagintaquinque venetorum grossorum bonorum argenti ad libram completam ad quod ipsi ambo principaliter [...] tenentur et obligati sunt domino Drudeto Vincemalle filio quondam domine Franzii civi et mercatori mediolani porta cumana parochie sancte marie secrete occaxione cambii libbrarum octocentum octuaginta imperiali bonorum mediolani pro ut constat publico instrumento inde rogato et tradito per me notario hodie." The public instrument the notary makes reference to is AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 4.

⁹⁹ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 10. "In nomine domini anno anativitate eiusdem millesimo trecentesimo quinquagesimo octavo. Indictione undecima die jovis vigesimo secundo mensis february. Simonolus Carrellus filius quondam domini Franzii Carrelli mercator et civis mediolani porte horientalis parochie sancti babille per cambio et ex causa cambii libbrarum millesepcentumsexaginta imperiali bonorum mediolani quas confessus fuit se recepisse et habuisse in mediolano a domino marcholo carrello filio quondam domini guidoti carrelli cive et mercatore mediolani porte horientalis parochie sancte babille promisit et convenit dictus debitor dicto creditore [...] solvere et dare [...] ad kallendas mensis aprillis proxime futuras in civitate venetiariis in denariis numeratis tantum libras centundecem venetorum grossorum bonorum argenti ad libram completam."

their debts or were otherwise in bankruptcy.¹⁰⁰ Detention was the customary penalty for insolvent debtors at the time in Milan. In order to avoid imprisonment, it was necessary for a debtor to pay to the Camera dei Mercanti the entire sum of the debt, plus the eventual matured interest as stipulated in the contract with the creditor, to whom the Chamber then would transfer the money. Debts expired only after 12 years of imprisonment, and taking flight to avoid incarceration was not a feasible option: the defaulting debtor was banished and identified to surrounding villagers, so that they could capture the fugitive. In the meantime, the disgraced debtor would lose his Milanese citizenship and would risk having the Merchants' Chamber confiscate his goods to repay his creditors.¹⁰¹

In accordance with Milanese law governing a bankrupt debtor, Marco had to cover some of the obligations Simonolo had contracted over the previous years, either as an immediate relative or as a result of transactions undertaken in partnership.¹⁰² For example, in April 1360 he acquired from the brothers Maffiolo and Aurelio Sordi several of the credits in favor of Simonolo they had bought the year before from Ottorolo Preda, who had contracted them with Simonolo in 1357, with Marco himself as warrantor.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 15v, n. 142. "Instrumentum satisdationis facte per dominum Simonolum Carelum predictum detentum in carceribus malestale mediolani ad petitionem Simonoli Grassi per libbre 1873 imperiali penes Rugiolum Cataneum [...] carcerum de non recedendo a dictis carceribus nec fugam fatiendo sine spetiali licentia dicti superstior [...] 1359 die 17 jullii." AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 24v, n. 230. "Instrumentum unum sicut Simonolus Carellus detentus in carceribus malestalle iter. ad exonerationem Marcoli Carelli Guidoti et Johannoli dicti Eugerii de Bonitatibus Ambrosii Sansonii et Ambrosii Crivelli consignatus fuit ad ipsos carceros [...] 1359 die 9 mensis novembris."

¹⁰¹ Verga, *La Camera dei mercanti*, 57-58.

¹⁰² Mainoni, "Una grande metropoli commerciale," 430.

¹⁰³ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 12, 15; AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 7. "In nomine domini anno anativitate eiusdem millesimotrecentesimoquinguesimo septimo. Indictione decima die lune vigesimo septimo mensis februarii. Simonolus Carrellus filius quondam domini Franzii Carrelli mercator et civis mediolani porte horientalis parochie sancti babille per cambio et ex causa cambii librarum sexcentum quadraginta imperiali bonorum

Then, in October of the same year he bought a credit of 150 lire in favor of his cousin from Lantelmolo Vaprio, who had bought it two months earlier from Roffino and Pedrolo Freganeschi and their family, with whom Simonolo had contracted a debt of 2530 lire in 1355 for the purchase of 12 wool bales from England, originally conceded for the term of eight months but by then still not honored.¹⁰⁴

In the meantime Marco, as compensation for the considerable sums he had lent his cousin and that his cousin could not repay, seized Simonolo's properties – those same properties Simonolo had acquired over the previous years from his siblings. In February 1359 he obtained from Simonolo the tavern outside the small gate of Monforte with several rooms and attics, a court and a well, and the *sedimen* in the same area; the other

mediolani quad confessus fuit se habuisse et emisse et recepisce in civitate mediolani ab Ottorolo de Preda filio quondam domini Guillelmi de Preda cive et mercator mediolani porte ticinensi parochie sancti sepulcri promiserunt et convenerunt dictus debitus [...] et fideiussione nomine qui se debitore constituerunt principalem debitore et solutore Marcholus Carellus filius quondam domini Guidoti [...].”

¹⁰⁴ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 16; AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 17. “In nomine domino anno anativitate eiusdem milliotrecentesimosexagesimo indictione quartadecima die jovis vigesimo secundo mensis octubris [...] cessionem titulo venditionis fecit et facit Lantelmolus de Vapprio filius quondam Aglieli porte horientalis parochie sancti babilie mediolani domino Marcholo Carello filio quondam domini Guidoti dictarum porte et parochie ibi praesenti et recipienti. Nominative de libris centumquingenta imperiallium que sunt ex illis libris duabus millibusquingentitriginta imperiallium quas Symonolus Carellus filius quondam domini Franzii civis et mercator mediolani porte horientali parochie sancti babilie solvere et dare promisit Beltramolo de Vicomercato notario recipienti nomine et vice et ad utilitate domini Roffini de Fraganoscho filii quondam domini Antonii et Petroli de Fraganoscho et fratrem et filiorum quondam domini Bertoldi de Fraganoscho porte cumane parochie sancti thome in cruce sichariorum mediolani pretio et mercato ballarum duodecim lane ut patet instrumento obligationis tradito per ipsum Beltramolum de Vicomercato notarium milliotrecentesimoquingentesimoquinto die quinto decembris.” AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 3. “In nomine domini anno nativitate eiusdem millesimo trecentesimo quinquagesimo quinto indictione nona die sabati quinto mensis decembris dominus simonolus carrelus filius quondam domini franzii carrelli civis et mercator mediolani porte horientali parrochie santi babilie pretio et mercato ballas duodecim lane anglie quas ad instantiam et requisitione mei note persone publice fu stantis [...] ad portem et utilitatem domini rostinii de fraganoscho filii quondam domini antonii civis et mercator mediolani et petroli ambrosi francishum et michelini [...] filios quondam domini berthololi de fraganoscho [...] mercatores et cives mediolani porte cumasine parochia sancti thoma [...] ad menses octo in denari numeratis tantum libbras duomilliaquingecentumtriginta ipse bonorum mediolani.”

tavern with rooms and other properties *in stricta Primicerij*, and the nearby *sedimen* with rooms, court and a vegetable garden; the annual *fitto livellario* of 10 lire terziole, a *bono et grosso* capon and 12 hen eggs from Simonolo Giuliano said Pozzolo de Pozzolo, and other properties and terrains.¹⁰⁵ And then, a few months later, in compensation for the two loans of 1760 lire and 790 lire that Marco had granted his cousin in an attempt to spare him from imprisonment, he took possession of the main residence of the Carellis, the big house with the tavern and the *cloderie* located near the Cagozario Bridge, with the exception of a small portion of the property owned by Franceschina, Simonolo's wife, in exchange for her dowry.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 19, n. 181. "Instrumentum unum venditionis facte per Simonolum Carelum et datum etiam insolutum Marcolo Carello nominative de hospitio uno cum hedifitiis curte puteo cameris solariis et aliis suis [...] pertinens iacens extra pusterlam de monforte. Item de uno alia hospitio cum hedifitiis curte orto et puteo et pluribus cameris et dormibus et solariis et aliis suis pertinentis in suprascripta parochia in stricta primicerii cum honore fatiendi fictum vel legatum seu census ecclesie sancti babile porte horientali mediolani omni anno usque in perpetuum soldi 12 terzioli. [...] Item de uno alio sedimen cum hedifitiis curte orto dormibus et aliis suis pertinentis iacens ubi prope aliud hospitium super proxime terminatum. Et item de illo ficto libellario et de iure illius ficti libellarii libbre 10 terziole in denariis et caponi unus et ovarum 12 quos [...] caponem et ova consuerit prestare omni anno predicto Simonolo Giulianus dictus Pozolus de Pozolo suprascripte pusterle de monforte foris parochia sancti babile. Et sedimen uno cum hedifitiis iacens extra pusterlam de monteforti suprascripte parochia sancti babile. Et item de directo dominio et civili possessioni predicti hospitii per quo prestat fictum libellarium iuris pretio et mercato libbre 800 imperiali et hoc in solutione et per solutione usque ad continentem quantitatem illarum libbre 110 venetorum grossorum bonorum argenti ad libbram completam in quibus predictus Simonolus scribatur ipsi marcolo per cambio libbre 1760 imperiali. [...] 1359 die 27 februarii. "

A few days later, Marco stipulated a new instrument with Giulianum, known as Pozzolo Pozzolo, renewing the terms of his annual lease: AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 19v, n. 182. "Instrumentum unum investiture facte per dominum Marcolum Carellum nomine libelli usque in perpetuum in Giullianum dictum Pozolum filius quondam Andree de Pozollo porte horientali foris parochie sancti babile in burgo de montefortis nominative de sedimine uno cum sollariis curta et cameis et aliis suis hedifitiis et pertinentis iacentes in dicto burgo de monteforti foris ps babile per ficto libellario quolibet anno libbre 10 terziole caponis unus boni et grossi et soldate unus ovarum galine. [...] 1359 die lune 4 martii."

¹⁰⁶ AFD, Possessi in Milano, c. 229, Case in Milano A, San Babila di dentro, f. 6; AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 16, n. 150. "Instrumentum unum [...] sicut predictus dominus Marcolus Carelus vigore et ex forma pactorum insertorum in unus inscriptis obligationum uno videlicet de libbre 110 venetorum grossoum occasione cambii et altero de libbre 1290 occasione depositi de quibus supra sit mentio [...] apprehendit corporalem

In this way Marco, who in 1345 had renounced his paternal inheritance, by 1360 had taken possession of a large share of what the grandfather Albrigolo had divided among his three sons almost forty years before - not by birth right, but by means of his keen, some might say ruthless, business abilities. As a result of this succession of events, Marco decided to separate himself completely from the Carelli *fraterna* – a resolve that determined the course of his career over the next three decades, as explored fully in the next chapter.

possessionem [...] unus hospitii magni cum hedifitiis cameris solariis octo porticibus lobiis et cloderiis magnus in acre tenetibus cum predicto hospitio salvo et reservato unus camere site in dicto hospitio que est ad introntu dicti hospitii amanu destra mediante quidam alia camera et est illa camera que consuenerat esse camera cubicularia dicti Simonoli et camereta perna cum ipsa camera et in qua etiam stabat domina Franceschina uxorem dicti Simonoli cum iureo porticus que est per medium ipse cameram et cameretam. [...] 1359 die martis 21 mensis maii.”

The same day Marco took possession of the house, he rented part of it to a certain Lantelmolo Saprio for the annual canon of 450 lire terziolate, that is, 225 *lire*: AFD, Possessi in Milano, c. 229, Case in Milano A, San Babila di dentro, f. 7 (May 21, 1359).

CHAPTER THREE

Marco on His Own

After the break with his cousin Simonolo and his decision to abandon the Carelli *fraterna*, Marco catapulted himself into a stunningly successful career of work and trade on his own. In this central period of his life, spanning the decades from 1360 to 1390, he matured from a youthful man in his thirties to a universally recognized political and economic powerhouse in his sixties. Along the way, he consolidated the patrimony of 35,000 ducats that shortly thereafter he would donate to jumpstart construction of the Cathedral of Milan. In his maturity he was, without doubt, not only a rich merchant but equally a civic patriarch and a devoutly religious elder, yet he was not father to any kin. During these same years his less fortunate cousin Simonolo managed to pay his debts and was released from prison; he returned to trade, but never again with the success he had experienced initially in partnership with Marco. Although they no longer engaged in new joint business operations, the two cousins crossed paths many times in the following decades. The section “business of Simonolo Carello and Marcolo Carello” within the *quaternus instrumentorum* examined closely in the preceding chapter contains several folios dated post-1360. The two men did not trade jointly anymore, yet the numerous business enterprises they had started in the earlier partnership continued to impact Marco’s activities (and presumably Simonolo’s as well, although we shall not pursue further his story in this chapter).

Two marriages and no child

Around the middle of fourteenth century, Marco Carelli married Giovanna de Settala. Only very few documentary traces remain concerning this marriage, which lasted for three decades until her death in 1381. Five years later, in 1386, he married Flora de Aliprandis. Interestingly Marco, already in his sixties, waited quite some time before deciding to remarry. Had he wished to father a son, logic suggests that this man in his sixties might have remarried more quickly, but there is no evidence at all on the matter. Nor are there any letters or other documents that shed light on the nature of their relationship as they entered into matrimony. The fact that the Aliprandi family was in business with the Carelli society over at least the previous thirty years suggests a plausible speculation: a marriage concluded with the aim of consolidating commercial partnerships.¹

Whatever the situation leading to marriage, the two extant documents mentioning Flora both convey the idea of a thoughtful husband. In the first, dated two years after their marriage, Marco returned to his wife 700 lire terziole (that is, 350 lire imperiali)

¹ An act of 1360 mentions a title sale between Simone Aliprandi, Antoniolo Aliprandi, Simone Zuppu, Giovannolo Boniperti and Marco Carelli, and refers to an earlier instrument dated 1358 in which Simonolo Carello owes 640 lire to Antonio Aliprandi within three months for the loan of 400 gold florins. AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 14. “In nomine domini anno anativitate eiusdem millotrecentesimo sexagesimo indictione tertiadecima die martis tertio mensis marzj. Datum et cessione titulo venditionis fecer. et faciunt dominus Symon Liprandi filius quondam domini Cabrij et Antoniulus dominus Bellorminus Liprandi et dominus Symonis filius Pabulla Zuppu et mandato dicti patris sui et uterque eorum in solidum dominus Marchollo Carrello filio quondam domini [blank] porte horientali parochie sancti babille mediolani et Johannolo Boniperti filio domini Uberti porte Romane parochie sancte eufemie mediolani ibi presentibus et recipientibus suis nominibus et item nomine et vice Aliprandi grassij filij quondam domini Antonij porte cumane parochie sancti thome in terramara mediolani. Nominative de florenis centuquinquaginta aurei bonus et iusti ponderis qui sunt ex illis libbris sexcentusquadraginta imperialium quas Symonolus Carellus filius quondam domini Franzij mercator mediolani porte horientali parochie sancti babille solvere et dare promisit dicto Antoniolo ex causa cambij florenos quatercentos aurei ut constat instrumento obligationis tradito per beltramolo de vicomercato notario milletrecentesimoquinquagesimo octavo die nono februarj [...].”

from her dowry, perhaps with the intent of securing her financially for the future as he began to meditate upon his plan to make the grand donation of his patrimony in its entirety to the Fabbrica.² The second document is a bill of payment dated a few days before Marco's death; it records the purchase of a shawl sent as a gift to Flora, who had remained at home in Milan while he actively wound down his business dealings in Venice.

No information comes to us about their descendants, and no children are named in Marco's two wills, where instead he listed among his beneficiaries several cousins and nephews. Such absence by itself does not exclude entirely the possibility of paternity, as children who died before him or daughters already married and provided with dowry would have not appeared in the document.

Indeed, we have a notice from Fr. Pietro Mazzucchelli, archivist of the Ambrosian Library in Milan at the beginning of the nineteenth century, of the existence of a letter concerning payment of a shipping fee for unspecified goods, found among the pages of the merchants' accounting book, the lost *Liber Albus*. The letter, written around the middle of fourteenth century in Latin – and for this very reason copied by the archivist, as he considered it to be a remarkable proof of the level of education of women at the time – starts with these words: “To the wise and good man *signor* Marcolo Carello, dearest

² AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 47. “In nomine domini anno a nativitate eiusdem millesimo trecentesimo octuagesimo septimo Indictione decima die sabati duodecimo mensis Januarii. Constitutus et confessus [...] dominus marcholus carellus filius quondam domini guidoti porte horientalis parrochie santi babile [...] Flore Aliprandis filia domini Ambrosii et uxoris legiptimit suprascripti domini marcholli [...] dominus marcholus recepisce [...] per suprascripta donna flora uxorem sua ab alia persona eius nomine libras septem centum tertiolorum monete mediolani [...] et hoc per dote plena [...] et plena solutione et restitutione dotis et consultas suddetta donne flore [...] suddettus dominus marcholus promixit vadium dedit.”

The merchant then asked the Fabbrica in his 1393 will to return to Flora the entire dowry, worth 14,700 lire terzole (that is, 7,350 lire imperiali), as explored in Chapter 4.

father. I entrust to you, dearest *signore*, a good wine to be given to Bebulco [...],” thus suggesting the existence of a daughter.³

An ulterior piece of evidence hinting at the existence of children is provided in the motivation specified by the Doge of Venice in 1367 upon granting Marco the privilege of Venetian citizenship in addition to his other two citizenships, Milanese and Genoese. Circumstances and context of this episode are explored fully later in the chapter; yet, for the present discussion it is interesting to note how the doge, Marco Cornaro, granted him the requested privilege under the condition that he reside in Venice and that his wife and *familia* join him.⁴ During the medieval period the term *familia* indicated the group of people living under the same roof, domestic servants, maids and slaves included, and therefore the document does not necessarily implicate the existence of children. Yet, the

³ “Sapienti et descreto viro domino Marchollo Carello patri carissimo. Domine carissimo Mito [*sic*] vobis carum unum vini bonum [*sic*] placeat vobis dare bebulco pro victura sua libr. I sold. X imper et pro pedagio sold. Xij donec hero Mediolanum propter vobiscum loquere faziatis honorem bebulcho. Malgarina de crivellis. Cazzoni, die xxvii febr.” The letter was contained in the *Liber albus inceptus MCCCCLXXXVIII die X aprilis, per me Marchiolo de Carellis* [“White register, started on April 10, 1389 by me, Marco Carelli”], a book of credits, commercial notations, letters and memoirs written by Marco Carelli himself in Latin and kept from 1389 to his death. The register was lost in a theft that occurred at the Fabbrica Archive at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Fr. Mazzucchelli serendipitously recognized the stolen registers on a local drugstore counter, and, before bringing the materials to the Tribunal of Criminal Justice, took note of some information contained therein. Among these, he copied the letter addressed to Marco Carelli in Latin. Unfortunately, the judicial authority returned to the Fabbrica Archive only some of the stolen registers, and the *Liber albus* was among those that disappeared. The precious document has been missing ever since. Ciceri, “Fonti per lo studio,” 169-92.

⁴ “Cum, sicut exponit Marcolus Carelus de Mediolano, in MCCCCLII venit habitatum Venecias cum sua familia, supportando onera et factiones terre, ita quod obtinuit a dominis Provisoribus Communis quod posset mercari et navigare suum avere solvendo unam pro centenario set, propter quamdam infirmitatem que sibi supervenit, non potuit habitationem suam continuare in Veneciis et propterea petat de gratia quod sit civis Veneciarum intus et extra, cum per Provisores Communis sibi promissum fuerat alias de fieri faciendo ipsum civem Veneciarum, propter quoddam mercatum quod procuravit de sale cum domino Bernabone in magnum avantagium Communis; [...].” ASV, Cassiere della bolla ducale, Grazie 16: c. 72r, n. 898 (June 14 – July 6, 1367).

comparison with usages of this word in similar documents of the same period in Venice suggests a more restricted definition of the word, limited to the nuclear family.⁵

But the fact remains that there were no direct progeny mentioned in his testaments, and given the modest but highly specific provisions for various cousins, the reasonable conclusion is that there were no sons or daughters to be provided for, rather than that a child was excluded. Unlike his uncles Franzio and Albertolo, who experienced fecund marriages, he was to be the last male heir in his father Guidotino's line (see Figure 2.6). Perhaps the death(s) of his child (children) who may have been alive in 1367 influenced his decision twenty-five years later to make the fabulous donation, but we can say no more.

The new international merchant

A new way of doing business in Europe emerged as early as the Duecento, one that Raymond de Roover termed the commercial revolution of the thirteenth century. According to de Roover and scholars who followed his lead, this revolution provided the basis for the advent of mercantile capitalism in Europe two centuries later.⁶ The small local merchants typical of the earlier Middle Ages, mostly buying and reselling a specific product in a geographically and politically delimited area, gave way to international merchant-bankers trading in highly diversified merchandise across dispersed markets.

Marco Carelli was among these early new international and highly diversified merchants, one who worked and amassed a fortune straight through the economic

⁵ This is the position Prof. Reinhold Mueller and Prof. Stefano Piasentini held in discussion with me about this passage of the document. Reinhold Mueller (Professor, Università di Venezia), in discussion with the author, July 7, 2009.

⁶ De Roover, *Money, Banking and Credit*, 11.

disruptions and opportunities afforded by the ravages of the Black Death. Ascending to the zenith of his success in the years following his break with Simonolo, Marco consolidated a thick network of partnerships and commercial relationships between Milan, Venice, Genoa, Padua, and Bruges, supported by a system of procurators and agents in the various markets where he maintained frequent contacts (see Figure 3.1). His business was based in Milan, where he most often resided and where he had his *cloderie* for the manufacture of wool. The secondary center of his network was Venice, where he often travelled and occasionally resided for periods lasting even a few years. Genoa, Bruges, and Padua represented instead satellites of these two principal centers, with a volume of exchanges still significant but less important than those taking place between Milan and Venice, and with Marco's participation mostly mediated through the use of agents.



Figure 3.1 European commercial routes, 1300 AD. In evidence, the five centers of Marco Carelli's business. Source: Internet.¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ Veldriss, "Il commercio: Studi iniziali," *Medio Evo Universalis* (blog), March 25, 2009, <http://www.medioeouniversalis.org/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=6&t=100&start=30>.

No documentation for Carelli's commercial activity in Genoa has been found in either the Milanese or the Genoese archives; yet, it seems likely that he took advantage of the Genoese citizenship he had obtained even before he attained citizenship in Venice, both for the conduct of trade there and for the propitious access through the sea to Bruges offered by the harbor of L'Ecluse. For Padua, we know from Marco's first will in 1390 of the existence of several holdings in the city. Yet, no other instruments pertaining to such properties have been preserved; there is only the merchant's specification to his seven testamentary executors that upon his death they must sell all his properties in Padua and devolve the proceeds to the Fabbrica.⁸

Evidences documenting the merchant's regular exchanges with Flanders, by contrast, are numerous. In his last will, dated 1393, Marco wrote of "all the mobile goods that I have and on the day of my death I will leave in the cities of Milan and Venice and also *ultra mare*," a clear reference, in this context, to Bruges.⁹ Some "bales of merchandise of the late Marcolo Carelli that were sent to Bruges to be sold through Tommaso de Sonvico," a Milanese citizen who lived there, and who presumably had worked as an agent for Marco in Flanders in the past, are mentioned in the registers of the Fabbrica concerning the merchant's patrimony.¹⁰ And in the months following the merchant's death, throughout the process of repaying his debts and redeeming his credits, the cathedral officials encountered several transactions involving Bruges. In one instance,

⁸ ASV, Procuratori di San Marco de ultra, b. 81, f. 5-5v, Marco Carello, Quaderno della Commissaria. "Primo namque voluit iusit et ordinavit dictus testator que per infrascriptos suos commissarios vendantur omnia et singula bona mobilia et immobilia dicti testatoris [...] existentia in civitatibus Venetiarum et Padue."

⁹ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli. "[...] omnia et singular mea bona mobilia res et mercadanzias mobiles que et quas habeo et die obitus mei reliquero in civitatibus mediolani et venetiarum et etiam ultra mare."

¹⁰ ANNALI, 1: 125 (December 30, 1394).

they had to recover the finished products Marco had sent and stored for sale in the Flemish city. The undertaking involved Tommaso de Sonvico's partners, Albertolo de Alcheriis e Ambrosio de Raude, who resided in Bruges; they arranged for the transport from there to Milan of some bales of wool Marco Carelli had stored in Bruges, and for this service the Fabbrica remunerated them 39 lire and 18 soldi each.¹¹ In another instance, the officials had to recover the considerable credits Marco held at the moment of his death in connection with the sale of substantial quantities of wool in Flemish markets. In 1394, Benegrolo de Camporgiagio paid to the Fabbrica an obligation to the deceased Marco Carelli of 200 lire, and then again for 240 lire the following year; in the same year 1395, Antonio Gringello paid to the Fabbrica 1200 lire he owed Marco Carelli for wool bales transported to Bruges.¹²

Wool, spices, pearls and slaves

Marco's activity, as that of the Carelli society before him, was primarily centered on buying and selling wool. By the end of fourteenth century, the *mercatores qui faciunt laborare lanam* – who in 1330 had organized their own guild, separate from that of the other *mercatores mediolanensi* – had assumed growing importance in Milan. Evidence of such growth is given by the 1393 redaction of a new list, the *Matricola dei mercanti di lana sottile*, with the names of the three hundred members previously enrolled and amended with the names of more recent members.¹³ In this entire listing, Marco Carelli appears as front-runner, recognition that clearly speaks to his reputation. Quite rightly, a

¹¹ AFD, Registri, r. 35, fo. 95.

¹² AFD, Registri, r. 22, 32.

¹³ Giulini, *Continuazione delle Memorie*, 1: 275, 277. For the edition of the 1393 wool merchants list, the *Matricola dei mercanti di lana sottile*, main source for the history of wool market in Milan in late medieval period, see Santoro, *La matricola dei mercanti*, 1-193.

recent historian considered him as “one of the most typical representative of the mercantile class of the Trecento.”¹⁴

As the historian Tommaso Zerbi observed, however, by 1393 Marco Carelli probably was no longer directly involved in wool processing and the production of wool cloths. Hence, his membership in the woolmen’s guild has to be considered “ex antiquis meritis,” as was the case for other merchants who had been involved in the wool manufacturing in the past and for that reason had been admitted to the guild, but who now appeared as representatives of the interests involved in foreign importation and exportation.¹⁵

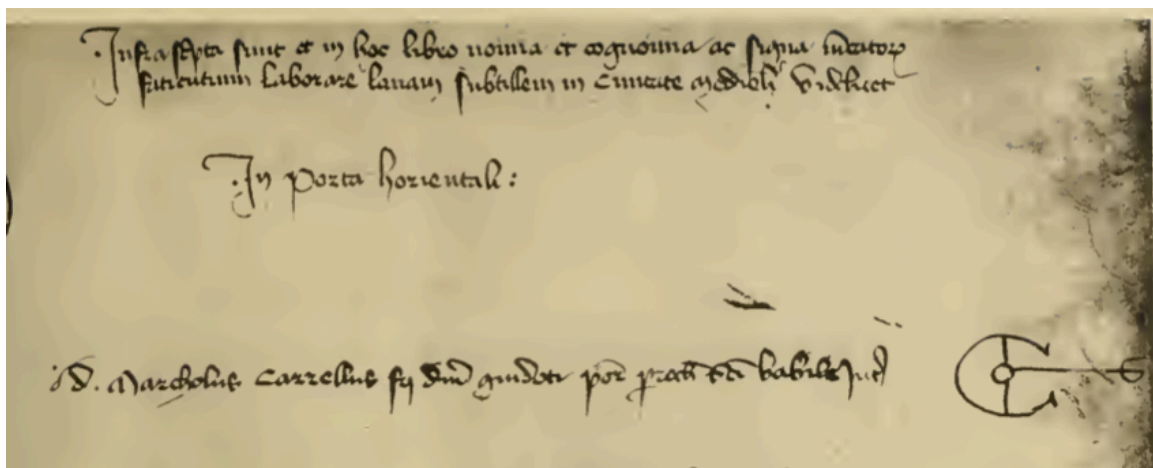


Figure 3.2 First folio of the *Matricola dei mercanti di lana sottile*. Next to the name of Marco Carelli, his trademark.¹⁶ Source: Santoro, *La matricola di mercanti di lana sottile di Milano*, 193.

Yet, Carelli’s success was due as well, even primarily, to his ability to diversify his trading activities in a multiplicity of sectors and markets. From trading precious pearls to the sale of slaves, from wool exportation to alum import, from commerce in rare spices to the sale of pigs, in a few decades, basically out of nothing at the point of Simonolo’s

¹⁴ Mainoni, “Il mercato della lana,” 26; Santoro, *La matricola dei mercanti*, xxv, 3.

¹⁵ Zerbi, *Aspetti economico-tecnici*, 29.

¹⁶ On the use of trademarks in the Milanese wool industry, see Santoro, *La matricola dei mercanti*, xxv.

bankruptcy and the breakup of the Carelli society, he consolidated a patrimony that could rightly compete with that of the wealthiest men of his time.¹⁷ And this was the complex economic ensemble that greeted the cathedral officials who, at the news of the merchant's death, went to his big house to make an inventory of goods and furniture – a simple and austere hall, crammed with bales of clothes, fustians, velvets, leathers, linen and cotton piled up everywhere; large sealed bags that upon being broken open revealed their content of nutmeg and pepper with their strong exotic smell; caskets of wax piled next to others with iron, copper and alum; splendid pearls and shiny weapons hidden in precious cases.¹⁸

A brilliant businessman with great supplies of cash, Marco soon learned to move skillfully among bank operations, financial deals, and land investments. He gained success on the foreign markets thanks to his facility in adapting to their different contexts and customs, as is evident in his trading activity in Venice. From his childhood onward, Venice represented for Marco a familiar place, surely recurrent in conversations among his uncles and cousins, when they remembered the business of their grandfather Albrigolo, who had managed a wool storage there, or when they organized brief travels to the city in order to verify the work of their agents. Beginning in the 1350s Marco often stayed in Venice to supervise his business. And throughout the years, he made his own

¹⁷ A pig worth 2 gold florins, just to mention an example, was sold by Marco to Simonolo Settala, as attested in the injunction of payment within six month (by the feast of St. Peter the Apostle) redacted by the Vicario Pretorio of Milan on January 19, 1387. AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 48.

¹⁸ As soon as the news of Carelli's death arrived in Milan, the Fabbrica appointed a team composed of a notary, the commander of the city guards, and another two officials with the task of surveillance over the merchant's main house for two and half days, before anyone could take advantage of the situation and steal what now had become the property of the Fabbrica. On that occasion, the Fabbrica deputies redacted a detailed inventory of the goods they found in the house. ANNALI, 1: 118 (September 27, 1394).

the mimesis that was the virtue of accomplished medieval merchants. The success of a merchant at the time, in fact, depended heavily upon the ability to learn rapidly the units, currencies and languages of the various regions where he traveled and traded, and, at the same time, upon his perspicacity in intuiting and assimilating traditions and manners, so as to gain in a short time the inhabitants' trust.¹⁹ Several elements suggest that Venice became Carelli's second home, and, far from feeling himself a foreigner in the city, he had been able to adapt through the years to the local uses and customs. Revealingly, the merchant had in his wardrobe several Venetian style outfits and ornaments, and in Venice he traded in Greek and Tartarian slaves – a common practice there, while in Milan the possession of slaves was at the time virtually unknown.²⁰

Doing business with Giovannolo de Sonvico

While Marco no longer carried out new economic endeavors in society with his relatives, he successfully worked with non-family partners. From the onset of his mercantile activity Marco began a limited partnership with a certain Giovannolo de Sonvico, one that continued for more than twenty years. The two appear in society exclusively for transactions related to houses and terrains located in Porta Comasina, Parrocchia di San Protaso in Campo Foris. Two documents dated 1348 refer to the canon paid to them by a certain Giovannolo for the rent of a *sedime* in that area that once

¹⁹ See the medieval merchant's description in Fried, *Il mercante e la scienza*, 51.

²⁰ Marco's slave sales in Venice are documented in acts that are now lost, for which the Fabbrica del Duomo Archive has preserved only the folders: AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 28-33. A dissertation thesis written before the documents were lost allows me to reconstruct their content. It appears that between 1373 and 1378 Carelli bought in Venice a total of five female slaves and a child. See Cometti, "Marco Carelli." On the sale of slaves in Italy during the medieval period, see Epstein, *Speaking of Slavery*, 16-25.

belonged to Guillolmolo Famiano.²¹ In 1357, Giovannolo for two parts and Marco for the remaining one part leased to Antonio de Castronovo a *sedime* with buildings, several bedrooms and attics, vegetable garden, well and court for the following three years against the annual canon of 14 lire and 10 soldi; two years later, the contract was renewed for other four years.²² At the expiration of the lease, Marco and Giovannolo leased again the properties for nine years, at the increased canon of 16 lire and 2 soldi.²³

The two appear again in some sort of joint venture in 1370, as Marco deposited the considerable sum of 1100 gold ducats with Giovannolo under the condition of immediate restitution at his demand, requiring that at the end of one month his father and brothers would become co-obligated for the debt.²⁴ Following this transaction, which may well have been a disguised loan to help the merchant in a moment of financial difficulty or to finance a bold investment, the documents do not mention the name of Giovannolo de

²¹ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 17v, n. 166. “Instrumentum unum protestationis facte per dominum Johannolum de Sonvico ad instantia domino Marcoli Carelli que ipse dominus Johannolus vult que pensio et reditus cuiusdam sediminis quod erat Guilloli Famiani iacens in porta cumasina in parochia san protasii in campo foris [...] 1348 die ultimo septembris”; AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 18, n. 167. “Instrumentum unum confessionis facte per dominos Johannolum de sonvico et Marcolum Carellum johannolo de H.ba porta cumasina in parochia san protasii in campo foris de libbre 7 et soldi 10 terziole per solutione pensionis unus domus iacens in dicta porta et parochia [...] 1348 die primo octobree.”

²² AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 18, n. 168. “Instrumentum unum investiture facte per dominum Johannolum de Sonvico per duabus partibus [...] et dominum Marcolum Carellum per reliqua tertia parte cuiusdam sedimen per indiviso cum hedifitiis cameris solariis orto puteo et curia et alie suis pertinentis iacens in porta cumasina in parrochia san protasii in campo foris ad annos tres inceptos in festo sancti michaelis tunc proximo praeterito et deinde iter in Antonium de Castronovo dictarum porte et parochie pro pensione libbre 14 soldi 10 imperiali in anno [...] 1359 die.”

AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 18, n. 170. “Instrumentum unum investiture facte per dominos Johannolum de Sonvico et Marcolum Carellum in Antonio de Castronovo [...] 1359 die 2 aprilis”; AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 18, n. 171. “Instrumentum unum confessione facte per dominos Johannolum de Sonvico et Marcolum Carellum Antonio de Castronovo [...] pro completa solutione pensionis [...] 1359 die martis octobris.”

²³ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 18, n. 169. “Instrumentum unum investiture facte per dominum Johannolum de Sonvico et per dominum Marcolum Carellum [...] per pensione libbre 16 soldi 2 imperiali in anno [...] 1364 die primo junii.”

²⁴ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 24-26.

Sonvico again, and no trace of him is found in the following twenty-four years of Marco's life.

Salt and Venice

Marco's political connections and appointments amply complemented his mercantile activity. His business reputation was instrumental for obtaining multiple citizenships, while his holding of these various citizenships brought him significant commercial advantages, which in turn consolidated his business success. In this regard, the obstacles he had to overcome in order to obtain Venetian citizenship are emblematic. In Venice, a natural crossroads for centuries between cultures and civilizations from East and West, late medieval legislation prescribed citizenship as a condition for the right to trade within the city.²⁵ Citizenship rights obtained by privilege had to be renewed every five years with an oath of fidelity to the Republic; the applicant also had to own a house in Venice and to bequest donations to the State church. At this point, the new citizen was granted the faculty of trading, the possibility of marrying a Venetian, and of participating in a confraternity.²⁶

It was precisely Carelli's familiarity with the Venetian environment that moved the Lord of Milan, Bernabò Visconti, to appoint him to the post of Procurator of the Salt in 1364, entrusting him with the delicate task of the renewal of the convention by which the

²⁵ On the obligation of citizenship for trading in the city, see Luzzatto, *Storia economica di Venezia*, 58-60. On Venetian legislation on foreigners, see *Ibid.*, 165-66, 190-207; Calabi, *Gli stranieri e la città*, 914.

²⁶ Fedalto, *Le minoranze straniere*, 143-62; Molà and Mueller, "Essere straniero a Venezia," 839-51; Calabi, *Gli stranieri e la città*, 913-46. Citizenship was not required, by contrast, to take part in the guilds – and in fact, the very coexistence of Venetians and foreigners in the same association gave them a notably multiethnic quality. Lanaro, "Corporations et confréries," 34-35.

Venetians provisioned of salt for Milan.²⁷ I have reconstructed the situation from the *Commemoriali* housed at the Archivio di Stato in Venice, a collection in thirty-three parchment volumes containing thousands of diplomatic acts, mostly of secondary importance, but also the minutes of all the doge's hearings.²⁸

Starting in the seventh century, Venice began the extensive exploitation of its salt deposits in the lagoon and in the limitrophe islands; over the twelfth and thirteenth century, the city began to utilize the salt deposits in nearby Chioggia, and after that in Istria. At the same time, Venice acquired huge quantities of salt from Apulia, Sicily, and Sardinia.²⁹ During the Middle Ages, great possibilities of profit and competitive advantage were assured to whomever managed to achieve a monopoly in the salt trade. Salt had exiguous extraction costs and yet it represented an indispensable and irreplaceable good for the seasoning and conservation of food and drink, for leather manufacturing, and even as ballast for returning ships. In order to facilitate salt importation, in fact, Venetian law required merchants who traded there to fill their ship-holds with salt on their way back to Venice.³⁰

Over the centuries Venice had strategically consolidated its oligopoly on the production side, destroying the salt deposits of its competitors, increasing the value of its local deposits, incentivizing major producers with special treaties so as to obtain exclusivity on acquisition, and closely monitoring in its warehouses the volume of salt

²⁷ ASV, *Commemoriali*, VII; 1364, ind. II, March I, c. 36 (32) t.°

²⁸ The *Commemoriali* represent a protocol of Venice's current affairs, and collect acts such as civil contracts, obligations, instructions for ambassadors, fees, relationships with foreigners and merchants, dating between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. At the end of the nineteenth century, the archivist Vincenzo Predelli catalogued them and edited their *regesti*, brief summaries of the content of each act, which are published in Predelli, *I libri commemoriali*.

²⁹ Luzzatto, *Storia economica di Venezia*, 50.

³⁰ For a study of the role of salt as ballast for ships and of the consequences of its usage on Venetian commercial trades, see the second volume of Hocquet, *Il sale*.

extracted, in order to avoid the possibility that an abundance of the product might encourage smuggling. On the distribution side, Venice reinforced its monopolistic position by means of treaties of exclusivity negotiated with other Italian cities and states.³¹

This was the context in which the troubled commercial relations between Milan and Venice took place. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Venice managed to impose on the Lombard center its monopoly on the provision and re-export of salt. Yet, in the following decades Venice was forced to loosen its commercial grip in the face of Milan's progressive consolidation under Azzone, Bernabò and Gian Galeazzo Visconti.

Beginning in the thirteenth century, Milan had been able to insert itself in the lengthy conflict between Venice and Genoa, exploiting to its advantage their strong rivalry to stipulate with both of them, alternatively, treaties for salt at lower cost. Toward the end of the century Venice managed to negotiate with Milan the exclusive provision of salt, through the stipulation of a series of treaties that were progressively profitable for both sides. In the 1320s, commercial conflicts between Milan and Venice led to an embargo on the importation of Lombard cloths into Venice and to the expulsion of all Milanese merchants from the city. In 1317 Milan, wishing to put an end to these disabling measures, had to accept Venice's conditions, which imposed a Venetian monopoly on both the provisioning and the commercialization of salt, with detailed specification of markets where Milan could export salt. Venice's monopolistic grip on the Lombard center gradually loosened over the fourteenth century. Frequent renegotiations of salt treaties occurred (1349, 1353, 1385, 1386, 1393, 1401), with different conditions

³¹ For a detailed analysis of the importation and re-exportation volumes, see Hocquet, *Il sale*, 1: 189-220.

depending upon the diplomatic ability of the negotiator, but also the wider context of the political vicissitudes among Milan, Venice, and Genoa.³²

In 1364, a moment when Venetian supremacy was being challenged, the renegotiation Marco Carelli stipulated with the doge Lorenzo Celsi seemed to satisfy greatly both sides. Venice committed to the provision of Milan with fifteen *migliaia* of sea salt for five years at the price of 11 gold ducats per *moggio*. In exchange, Milan assured Venice a monopoly over the provision of salt for Milan and its countryside during that period.³³

Venetian by grace

The successful conclusion of these negotiations earned Marco the praise of Bernabò Visconti in Milan and of doge Lorenzo Celsi in Venice, so much so that the doge's successor, Marco Cornero, obtained for him the privilege of Venetian citizenship *de intus et de extra* three years later. This honor came despite that fact that Carelli did not meet the requirements for minimum years of residency required by law and that he already held both Genoese and Milanese citizenship.³⁴ Legislation governing citizenship, in fact,

³² Hocquet, *Il sale*, 1: 505; Mainoni, "Milano di fronte a Venezia," 13; Mainoni, "Venezia, il sale," 431-36. For a commentary on each salt treaty, see Hocquet, *Il sale*, 2: 294-95, 491. Page references are to the original French edition.

³³ ASV, Commemoriali, VII; 1364, ind. II, April 13, c. 36 (32) t.°; Commemoriali, VII; 1364, ind. II, April 29, c. 37 (33) t.°

³⁴ ASV, Cassiere della bolla ducale, Grazie 16: c. 72r. "Cum, sicut exponit Marcolus Carelus de Mediolano, in MCCCLII venit habitatum Venecias cum sua familia [...] cum per Provisores Communis sibi promissum fuerat alias de fieri faciendo ipsum civem Veneciarum, propter quoddam mercatum quod procuravit de sale cum domino Bernabone in magnum avantagium Communis; cum Provisores Communis dicant quod dictus Marcolus fecit se scribi ad suum officium, set habitationem predictam non continuavit nec factiones fecit a dicto tempore citra, set habuerunt per suos precessores quod, propter dictum mercatum, promissum fuit sibi de faciendo ipsum civem et propterea, considerata bona dispositione et fama sua, credunt quod sit dignus gratia quam petit, cum conditione quod teneatur facere venire suam uxorem et familiam, cum

prescribed as a minimum requirement ten consecutive years of residence in Venice, with contextual payment of rent and taxes, and forbade anyone who already held double citizenship from the request of a third one. In this regard the merchant Carelli represented an absolute exception: among the almost four thousand foreigners who obtained Venetian citizenship between the fourteenth and the sixteenth century, he was the only one who legally held triple citizenship.³⁵

Exceptions from the normative terms for Venetian citizenship, taxes, and trading privileges conceded to foreigners depended heavily upon the city's demographic and economic prosperity, and varied between alternating protectionist and liberalist phases. Well-informed and shrewd merchants tried to take advantage of these swings.³⁶ Success in a citizenship request paved the way for exercising wider mercantile activities in Venice, since only citizens were allowed to trade directly in the city.³⁷

Marco Carelli, basking in the esteem he had acquired with the doge, astutely took advantage of the delicate political context to advance his business interests. In these years Venice was engaged in a costly war with Crete, during which time many who had acquired their citizenship by privilege left the city in order to avoid the payment of war taxes. Once the revolt was crushed, Venice loosened its bureaucratic regulations for the procedures for obtaining citizenship, with the aim of providing an incentive for foreigners to return. Marco presented his request for citizenship during this very period when

qua stare et habitare debeat Veneciis sicut alii cives; consideratis predictis, fiat sibi gratia prout petit et sicut consulunt Provisores.”

³⁵ Mueller, *La banca dati CIVES*.

³⁶ Calabi, *Gli stranieri e la città*, 914; Luzzatto, *Storia economica di Venezia*, 165-66, 190-207.

³⁷ Luzzatto, *Storia economica di Venezia*, 58.

procedures had been liberalized, and in 1367 the Doge Marco Cornero granted him that privilege, under the condition that he would then reside in the city with his family.

The *Scuola dei Milanesi*

While in Venice, Marco regularly gathered with his compatriots at the *ruga Mediolanensium*, the street of the Milanese, nearby the Rialto Bridge, and there he routinely frequented the *Loggia dei Milanesi* to talk business and stipulate contracts.³⁸ Perhaps it was in one of these conversations with his fellow Milanese friends that in 1361 the idea of starting a confraternity (*schola*, in Venetian dialect) matured, joining together 300 influential merchants of Milan and Monza trading in Venice.³⁹

Confraternities formed by people of the same nationality were common in places such as Venice, where the presence of foreigners was continuous. The shared provenance of the members constituted a formidable tie for people far from home for months or

³⁸ From the eleventh century onward, the presence of Milanese in Venice was significant, so much so that Venetians named as “streets of the Milanese” the places where they gathered. Cantù tried to locate the streets with the help of a document extracted from the register *Cerberus* of the *Avogaria de Comun*, containing the Major Council’s laws: on October 4, 1237, in accordance with the Merchants’ Consul, the Major Council prohibited the Venetians from residing in *ruga de Ca Vidali*, “as merchants and Lombards resided there.” Cantù, *Scorsa di un Lombardo*, 179; Luzzatto, *Storia economica di Venezia*, 59; Mainoni, *Mercanti lombardi*, 33; Britnell, “Towns of England,” 22. The *loggia*, which existed not only in Venice but in many European cities, was a gallery open on one side where nobles, financiers and merchants gathered to stipulate contracts, away from the confusion of the market place. See Calabi, *Il mercato e la città*, 213-14; Calabi, “Foreigners and the City,” 6.

³⁹ In Venice confraternities took the name of *scholae* (*scuole*, in Italian), a term initially used to designate the place where people with common interests gathered, and that came to be applied by extension to the association itself. The *scuole* in Venice at the beginning of the fifteenth century were divided in three main categories: *scuole piccole* (minor confraternities) - in turn divided in *scuole artigiane* (craft confraternities), *scuole di devozione* (devotional confraternities) and *scuole nazionali* (national confraternities), associations of emigrants grouped by nationality -, and *scuole dei Battuti* (confraternities of flagellants), which in time identified themselves with the *Scuole Grandi* (major confraternities). Fortini Brown, “Le Scuole,” 314. On the etymology and use of the word *scola*, see *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis*, s.v. “scholae,” 815-17; Gazzini, “Confraternite/corporazioni,” 152-53; De Sandre Gasparini, “Il movimento delle confraternite,” 366-67.

years; the company of other foreigners gave valuable support for those who resided apart from their families. In Venice, between the fourteenth and the middle of the fifteenth century there were confraternities for Milanese, Florentines, Lucchesi, Germans, and Albanese. They represented a point of reference for foreign merchants who passed only occasionally through the city as well as for those who resided in Venice for many years. For each, they offered tangible affirmation of their identity, the safeguard of their rights, and assistance in their most immediate needs.⁴⁰

The confraternity of the Milanese was put under the protection of Milan's and Monza's patron saints, and thus named Scuola dei Milanesi di Sant'Ambrogio e San Giovanni Battista.⁴¹ From the founding year of 1361, Marco Carelli was elected among the small group of *anziani*, the confraternity's board – an honor that speaks to his importance within the confraternity and among the circle of Milanese merchants in Venice.

The main source for studying the history of the Confraternity of the Milanese in Venice is its *Mariegola* – a dialectal term that indicates both a confraternity's statute and its norms, including a chronicle of the most relevant events in the association and its list of members, often accompanied by the record of their annual membership fees.⁴² The Confraternity of the Milanese Mariegola - a 107-folio parchment illuminated codex

⁴⁰ Pullan, "Natura e carattere delle scuole," 9, 11-12.

⁴¹ The majority of the members of the confraternity were from Milan and Monza. Yet, there were no restrictions of citizenship for entering the confraternity: the priors were free to admit whomever wished to participate, even non-Lombards, up to the maximum number of 300 brothers established by the Venetian authority, the *Consiglio dei Dieci*.

⁴² ASV, MARIEGOLA; Meersseman, *Ordo fraternitatis*, 21; Sbriziolo, *Le confraternite veneziane*, 29-31. For a brief overview of the main interpretations historians have given to the term *mariegola*, see Ibid., 66-72. The term *mariegola* is attested also in other cities of the Venetian area, especially Mestre, Treviso, Vicenza and Padua; see De Sandre Gasparini, "Il movimento delle confraternite," 368-69. The Mariegola was read aloud during the confraternity's meetings, and members knew its content by heart; see Angelozzi, *Le confraternite laicali*, 48-49.

housed at the Archivio di Stato di Venezia - is composed of two statutes, one in Latin and one in the vernacular, mostly concerning the devotional aspects of the Scuola, and a third, later statute in Italian dealing with its business aspects.⁴³

Central to the liturgical life of the confraternity was the chapel in the Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Frari that the Franciscans had conceded to them in exchange for payment for various works of construction and maintenance in the church.⁴⁴ In the chapel the brothers gathered on the first Sunday of the month for the Mass *cantada in voxe*.⁴⁵ Moments of special faith, joy and civic pride were the solemn annual celebrations of the two patronal feasts, when the Lombards would go in procession to the Chiesa dei Frari, announcing their passage through the streets “with as much solemnity and feast as possible.”⁴⁶

⁴³ Angelozzi, *Le confraternite laicali*, 51. The redaction of the statute in two copies, one Latin and the other Italian, answered the need of facilitating its comprehension and meditation among less educated confraternity members.

⁴⁴ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 8v, 10-10v, 40v. “Tenore presentium infra scriptas concessiones et promissiones facimus per nos et per nostros successores in posterum nostris nominibus ac nomine et vice totius conventus et capituli dicte domus. In primis et atque concedimus vobis capellam que per vos fit seu incepta est in ecclesia nova dicti conventus derupata, sub nomine predictorum sanctorum intitulandam, et in qua positus facere per fratres administrari divina et deo et prefatis sanctis perseverare. Item concedimus vobis omnes lapides et lateres alias operatos in dicta ecclesia nova, illos videlicet qui expedierint ad reparationem seu fabricationem dicte cappelle.”

⁴⁵ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 7, 8v, 10-10v, 27. “Qualibet prima dominica cuiuslibet mensis debeat quilibet scholaris dicte fraternitatis existens venetiis interesse misse conventuali que solennizabitur ad instantiam comunitatis dicte scole.” All the brothers present in Venice were required to take part to the Mass celebrated by the Franciscans according to the intentions of the confraternity: “Et sive interfuerit ad missam sive non teneatur solvere ad canzillum dicte scole pro qualibet prima dominica cuiuslibet mensis usque in perpetuum secundum ordinem datum seu dandum per priores et decanos supra scriptos presentes et futuros, silicet pauperes soldum unum, mercatores soldos duos, ultra aliud ordinatum.”

⁴⁶ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 26v-27. “[...] con tanta solennitate e festa quanto plu se po.” ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 6v. “Fiant per omnes scholares seu fratres dicte scole que temporibus infra scriptis fuerint venetiis oblationes more solito ad capellam ipsius scole seu fraternitatis in festivitibus prefatorum sanctorum Johannis et Ambrosii singulis unis et perpetuis duraturis futuris temporibus pro quibus oblacionibus faciendis debeant solemniter convenire in ruga mediolanensium horis et modis atque ordinibus statutis seu statuendis per priores et decanos dicte scole qui pro temporibus fuerint.”

Public celebration was the communitarian expression of a faith that continued in forms of private devotion. Every member was required to follow a simple rule of prayer: the daily recital of five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys, “in honor and reverence to the five wounds of Christ on the cross.”⁴⁷ Care for the sick and assistance to the dying represented, together with alms to the poor, the central pillars of charitable activity by the confraternity.

The participation of Marco Carelli and his fellow merchants in the life of the Confraternity of the Milanese was not only an expression of their religiosity: it also procured them economic advantages, and had positive effects on their trading networks in Venice. Devotion and business were for the merchants an ensemble, and so they would pray together “God, Our Lady and all the saints” so that “they would grant us the grace of working well and that our business would go always better, and in a reasonable and ordered way, according to modalities good and praiseworthy for God and for the world.”⁴⁸

This unity was expressed in the double nature of the Scuola, as over time a sort of guild was formed within the confraternity - a unique case among all the confraternities of Venice. The guild coincided with the Scuola dei Milanesi in its name and in the roll of its members, but had its own hierarchy, parallel to the board of the *anziani*, and was closely tied with the Camera dei Mercanti in Milan. The main rules and mechanisms of the guild

⁴⁷ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 6-6v, 26. “Quilibet scolari seu frater dicte scole seu fraternitate teneatur quotidie quinquies oracionem dominicam dicere, videlicet pater noster et totidem ave maria ob reverentiam quinquie vulnerii domini nostri Jesu Christi. Et cum fuerint ad obsequia cuiuslibet scholaris dicte fraternitatis totidem pater noster et ave maria dicant pro ipsius defuncti anima.” See also Bornstein, “Bounds of Community,” 68.

⁴⁸ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 54. “[...] conceda[no] gratia de ben fare e faza che le nostre mercadantie ogni di vadano de bene in meglio e [...] cum bon ordene e raxone e con li modi che a dio e al mondo siano boni e laudabili.”

are contained in the third statute, in Italian, within the *Mariegola*, which allows a better understanding of the impact of the Confraternity on the merchants' business.⁴⁹

Through a detailed mechanism of *conducts* and *conductors*, the Confraternity managed over time to exert a monopoly on the importation and exportation of goods by its members on the Milan-Venice route.⁵⁰ According to this system, each merchant of the Confraternity was required to entrust all his merchandise to a conductor, remunerated with a fixed salary.⁵¹ The conductor could not participate in the trade directly or indirectly through other merchants; as a warranty, he had to deposit 100 gold ducats, and he could be held jointly and severally liable "if by chance his damage was greater than that."⁵² The merchants, on the other side, were required to pay a fee to the Confraternity for any goods that "they transported inside or outside the land of Milan to the Confraternity of St. Ambrose," against a series of advantages and warranties that rendered their participation highly profitable.⁵³

⁴⁹ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 53-59.

⁵⁰ For the definition of *condutori* (conductors), see Ortalli, "*Per salute delle anime*," 105.

⁵¹ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 54-54v. "Prima volemo e ordenemo che zaschun nostro marchadante o altra persona la quale voglia essere a nostri ordini sia tegnudo de dare tutte le robe in conduta al condutor nostro, el qual sia per el nostro Consolo o compagna dada la conduta cum li ordeni infrascritti, le quale robe se farano, o per altri se fesseno comperare per mandare in Lombardia da Mantoa in la, pagando el dicto condutore de sua conducta al prexio dado per noi merchadanti como de sotto se contien." On the procedure of election of the conductor, see ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 55v.

⁵² ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 56-56v. "Item che zaschun condutore electo per lo consolo e compagni como e dicto avanze chel domanda nave al dicto ho licentia de meterla sia tegnudo de i dare segurta al dicto consolo e compagni de ducati 100 doro la quale ali dicti para bona la quale se obliga de pagare senza dubio ne exception alchuna dicti ducati 100 la qual parte che per li dicti fera terminada per danno de robe alui dato inconduta. Intendendo che se per caxo el danno fosse cognosudo per li dicti maggiore de ducati 100, chel ditto condutore sia obligato in li soi beni de pagare quello che per li ditti sia cognosudo e inanci che li sia dada la conduta se obligi stare a quello che per li ditti ha terminato."

⁵³ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 39v.

The merchant on trial

No matter how committed Marco Carelli may have been to his confraternity in Venice, and to the range of pious activities for which he was known in Milan, there is no doubt that he, like any successful merchant had operated many times in the liminal area between licit and illicit. Preachers' sermons sketch the sinister image of the usurious merchant, libeled in the public square as a favorite subject of the moralizing exempla that mendicant friars used to indoctrinate their crowds. They thundered about the monkey who snatched the merchant's purse during a sea voyage, and, scampering up the boat mast, smelled the coins one by one, throwing into the water those illicitly gained. They explained the seriousness of the sin, recounting the tale of the usurer whose neighbors could not lift at his funeral, due to the weight of sins upon his soul. They frightened onlookers with the story of the usurer who in 1240 died in Dijon as he went to a wedding; while crossing the church threshold, it was retold, the usurer's bag from a stone figure sculpted on the Judgment Day portal fell and smashed the man's head.⁵⁴ Although the debate over usury remained lively and without a clear doctrinal resolution in the fourteenth century, theologians and preachers generally chastised merchants for their usurious practices: the gain of money over the passing of time was a sin. Since time was God's own, they were making profit from something not theirs to dispense. Aristocrats and churchmen alike condemned the usurers' greedy accumulation, though for different reasons. In open disapproval of the merchants' thrifty attitude of saving, accumulating, and shrewd spending, for aristocrats it was their public richness and lavish dissipation that marked their nobility.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Gurevic, "Il mercante," 71-75; Mueller, "Eva a dyabolo," 229-45.

⁵⁵ Gurevic, "Il mercante," 78-80.

The late medieval mercantile world evolved an ever more precise definition of the meaning of biblical and patristic prohibitions against loans with interest: “receiving back something more in respect to what has been lent.” But, at the same time, there was a widening gap between professions of faith and confessors’ advice manuals on the one hand and on the other hand the practices and strategies employed by merchants to hide the interest charges carried in their contracts, as the numerous judicial processes and acquittals endured by Marco Carelli display fully.⁵⁶

On the same year 1392 that Marco Carelli made his fabulous donation to the Milan Cathedral construction project, a rather nasty legal process in which he had been involved finally came to conclusion. In 1379 the two Meliati brothers - Giovanolo and Ambrosolo - had incurred a debt of 1000 lire with the merchant-banker Cressino de Monti for the exchange of 625 gold florins he had loaned them – an obligation then acquired in 1384 by Carelli, who three years before had sold the two brothers on credit a great quantity of pepper, worth 500 florins.⁵⁷ The following year, when the stipulated period for repayment

⁵⁶ On church attitudes towards economy and risk in the Middle Ages, see Ceccarelli, *Il gioco e il peccato*.

⁵⁷ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 10, n. 95. “Instrumentum unum obligationis facte per suprascriptos Johannolum et Ambrosolum fratres de meliatijs fili quondam domini vicentij cives et mercatores mediolani porte horientali parochie sancti babile foris domino Cressino de monte de libbre mile imperiali [...] 1379 die veneris 3 mensis Junij.” AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 35.

AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 43. “In nomine domini Anno Anativitate Eiusdem millesimotrecentesimo octuagesimo quarto. indictione octava. Die lune quinto mensis decembris. Dominus Cressinus de monti filius quondam domini Andree cives et mercator mediolani porte vercelline contrate sancti sepulcri ex causa et titullo venidtionis cessit dedit atque [...] cedit et dat [...] domino marcholo carrello filio quondam domini guidoti civitatis mediolani porte horientali intus parochie sancti babile presenti stipulanti et renti omnia iura omnesque actiones et rationes utiles et directas reales et personales atque ypothecarias mistas et quascumque alias sibi quocumque modo et iure pertinentia et pertinens et competitura et competituras contra se adversus Ambrosolum meliazium filium quondam domini vicentij civem et mercatorem mediolani porte horientali foris parochie sancti babile ibi presentem et volentem et debitorem infrascriptum confitentem et eius heredes res et bona et possessores et detentores bonorum rerum et iurium suorum que sunt fuerunt aut erunt et omnem personam et rem nominative de [...] libras

expired, the brothers managed to give Carelli back only 200 florins. As a result, they found themselves forced to transfer to Marco their personal home, paying him a high rent in order to continue to live there.⁵⁸ The legal process ended in 1392 with a sentence of usury against Carelli for the rental conditions imposed upon the two brothers: “With this sentence - the Vicario Pretorio affirms – the instruments of sale [of the house] and the *fitto livellario* are declared usurious, simulated, and fraudulent, and for this reason the instruments and their invocation cannot damage the Meliati brothers and their rights.”⁵⁹

centum trib. et denar sex imperiali bone monete mediolani remansis ad solvendum per illis et ex illis libras mille imperiali bone monete mediolani quas Johanolus et dictus Ambrosolus fratres de meliazis uterque eorum insol. dicto cressino ex causa cambij florenum sexcentum vigintiquinque auri bonorum et iusti ponderis dicto domino Cressino solvere et dare promiserunt ut constat publico instrumento obligatione rogato et tradito et suprascripto per me notarium Anno eiusdem 1379 indictione secunda die veneris tertio mensis junii [...].”

AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 38. “In nomine domini anno anativitate eiusdem millesimotrecentesimo octuagesimo primo. Indictione quarta. Die sabbati vigesimoseptimo mensis aprilis. Ambrosolus et Angermus fratres de meliatij filii quondam domini vicenzij ambo civis et mercatores mediolani porte horientali parochie sancti babille foris uterque eorum pretio et mercato piperis quem confessi fuerunt se emisse recepissee et habuisse et eis dati et venditi esse a domino marcholo carello filio quondam domini guidoti cive et mercatore mediolani porte horientali parochie sancti babille intus. Promiserunt [...] dare et solvere [...] ad quatuor menses proxime future in somma numerata tantum florenum quinquagentus auri bonos et iusti ponderis.”

⁵⁸ AFD, Possessi foresi, c. 230, Case in Milano, Porta Orientale, Parrocchia di San Babila foris, f. 9.

⁵⁹ AFD, Possessi foresi, c. 230, Case in Milano, Porta Orientale, Parrocchia di San Babila foris, f. 9; AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 38; AFD, Possessi foresi, c. 230, Case in Milano, Porta Orientale Parrocchia di San Babila foris, f. 13. “In nomine domini Amen [...] indictione decima die lune sexto mensis novembris in vespere hora causa et coram domino caynevario de astulfis vicario domini potestatis mediolani [...] instrumenta venditione et ficti libellari fuisse et esse uxuraria et simulata et in fraudem uxurar. [...] nec aliquo eorum contram non possit nec debere in aliquo nocere nec preiudicare dictis fratribus de meliatis nec iuribus suis.” AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 10v, n. 105. “Certi processus et teste facti et producti in causa vertente inter dictum dominum marcholum ex una parte per dictos de meliatij ex altera.” AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 10v, n. 104. “Instrumentum unum sententie late inter dictum dominum marcholum ex una parte et suprascriptis de meliatij ex altera 1392 die 16 Jan per dominum carnevarium de Astulfis vicarium domini potestatis mediolani sine aliqua.” Four days later, Marco appeared in front of the Vicario di Potestà for ratifying the sentence: AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 10v, n. 101. “Instrumentum unum continens sicut suprascriptus dominus marcolus carellus comparvit coram domino vicario domini potestatis mediolani et ascrivit [...] intelxisse ipsum dominum vicarium pertulisse sententiam [...] inter ipsum dominum marcholum ex una parte et dictos de meliatij ex altera [...] 1392 die sabati 20 mensis Januarij.”

Yet, the merchant's name was never removed from the mercantile guild, as was customary when a merchant was found guilty of such a crime.⁶⁰ This was not the first time Carelli had faced a usury accusation, although in every circumstance he had successfully defended himself and continued his business undisturbed.

Several other judicial processes saw Marco, by contrast, on the side of the accuser. The first involved a certain Antoniolo de Limiate, renter of a plot of land (*sedimen*) in the area outside the small gate of Monforte against a *fitto livellario* of 10 lire terziole (that is, 5 lire imperiali), a capon and 12 eggs paid annually to Marco.⁶¹ The original document of the 1387 process has not been preserved among the Fabbrica records – presumably an indication that the trial ended with a positive conclusion for Marco and therefore did not require the full record to be kept – and we are left only with the usual brief summary of the act recorded in the *quaternus instrumentorum*.⁶² Yet, given the nature of the contractual relationship between Marco and Antoniolo, we may presume a delay in the rent payment or the renter's impossibility to pay as the original reason for the process.

The second process saw the merchant Carelli pitted against a certain Masetto Suave. In 1389 Marco had protested against him a bill of exchange (*littera cambii*) of 600 gold florins, yet the Consoli di Giustizia dei Mercanti di Como acquitted Masetto of any

⁶⁰ Verga, *La Camera dei mercanti*, 33.

⁶¹ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 20, n. 185. "Instrumentum unum confessionis facte per dominum Marcolum Carelum Antoniolo de Limiate de libbre 10 terziole capone uno et ovis 12 per ficto libellario unus anni finiti in festo sancti martini tunc proxime praeterito et etiam adicto festo retro occasione ficti libellarii quod prestabatur per ipsum Antoninum dicto domino Marcolo super quodam sedimen iacens in contrata de monteforti foris [...] 1380 die 18 junii."

⁶² AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60, fo. 20, n. 188. "Certi processus [*sic*] facti et testes producti in causa vertente inter dictum dominum Marcolum Carellum ex una parte et predictum Antoninum de Leimate ex altera. [...] 1387."

charge.⁶³ A year later, Carelli presented the case again, this time before the board of ducal officials formed by Milanese merchants and bankers - Aliprandi Grassi, Dionigi Biglia, Andreoto del Majno, Rizardo Resta and Gallo Resta. These men accepted unchanged the deliberations that had led to the previous judicial finding.⁶⁴ Yet, the issue between Marco and Masetto Suave did not end there: a few months later, Carelli came before a board of judges again, this time in Venice. These judges ruled that Tommaso Borserio, creditor of Masetto Suave, had to constitute within eight days Marco as his procurator for the redemption of 60 lire of grossi veneziani from Masetto that Borserio owed Carelli – as in fact the two would do, five days later.⁶⁵

Among the Twelve of Provision and the Fabbrica del Duomo

Like other merchants, Marco Carelli's reputation was not without blemish, certainly by the end of his long life and, realistically, from the days of his first bold transactions. Whatever ethical lines he may have crossed, surely such behavior cannot possibly have given pause to the new ruler of the city, Gian Galeazzo Visconti, who in the period 1385-1389 appointed him several times as a member of the *Ufficio di Provvisione*, the main

⁶³ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 51. "In nomine domini Amen anno a Nativitate Ipsius millesimotrecentesimo octuagesimonono Indictione duodecima die veneris vigesimonono mensis Januarij hora campane que pulsant post nonam hora causa. Nos Antonius de manticis et Ayroldolus de piperombi consules iustities mercatores cumensi ferentes in banco [...] super solario ipsorum mercatores ubi per nos iura redduntur loco consueto in quidam causa et questione vertenti coram nobis inter dominum marcolum de carelis mercatorem et civem civitatis mediolani ex parte una et ser masetum de suave civem et mercatorem civitatis cumani ex parte alia occasione florenos seycentum auri boni qui petentur [...] per eum dominum marcolum ipsi ser maseto occasione eiusdem littere cambij tenoris hm. videlicet Carissime mitto tibi que dare et solvere deberis per istam litteram cambij die octavo septembre domino marcolo carelo libbre sesaginta de grossi. Et hoc est per unum cambium factum cum Thomasio de borserijs ad rationem de libbre de grossi [...]."

⁶⁴ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 54.

⁶⁵ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 55-56.

legislative institution of the commune.⁶⁶ The twelve officials of *Provvisione* were chosen every two months by the Visconti among “wise, sufficient and fit” Milanese citizens he trusted.⁶⁷ Formally, the administrative, legislative and judiciary power entrusted to these men was remarkable; they exercised full faculty of action for any matter concerning the commune, and direct control over numerous offices.⁶⁸ Yet, effective power remained in the Visconti’s hands: any Ufficio di *Provvisione* decision had to be approved by him and supervised by the Vicar, a foreigner the Visconti designated to control his officials’ work.⁶⁹

In 1386 in the center of Milan works had started for the construction of a new marmoreal cathedral to replace the modest church of Santa Maria Maggiore. Following a *cursus honorum* typical for those Milanese who served in the most important public

⁶⁶ The archbishop of Milan, Ottone Visconti, in the second half of the thirteenth century, instituted the Twelve of Provision with the aim of centralizing the commune’s management and administration. At that time their appointment was in the hands of the *podestà*, the commune’s judicial authority. During the fourteenth century, however, the Visconti family managed to gain effective control over the election of the officials, thereby exerting direct power over the city administration. Leverotti, “*Governare*,” 79, 127-28; Kleinhenz et al., *Medieval Italy*, 866.

⁶⁷ The rapid rotation of the appointments aimed at avoiding concentration of power in the officials’ hands. At the end of his mandate, one of the Twelve was appointed to accompany in the transition process for fifteen days the newly elected Twelve, so that the rapid rotation system would not be detrimental to the continuity of their work.

⁶⁸ Among the offices devolved from the Twelve of Provision there were: two *Sindaci* in charge of controlling the Commune’s incomes and expenses and monitoring charges; the officials of streets and waters; the officials of taxes; the officials of ailments, and others. For a detailed analysis of each office, their election, tasks and remuneration, see Santoro, *Gli Uffici del comune*, 85-102. The Twelve were also in charge of the election of the Consuls of Justice, who presided over civil justice in private matters – from the assignment of tutors for underage children, to witnessing duels – while the Lord had the right of appointing a foreign lawyer as Captain of Justice, a judiciary magistrate with the aim of limiting the Podestà’s power. Leverotti, “Gli ufficiali,” 25, 27.

⁶⁹ Ottone Visconti created the position of Vicar of Provision in 1279. Initially, the Vicar exerted more or less a formal role of moderator and observer. Yet, in the following decades he gained growing authority, including veto power over the decision of the other twelve members. Leverotti, “*Governare*,” 124-28. The main sources for study of the Office of Provision are the registers where notaries transcribed their deliberations and the Vicar’s decisions, and the registers of the duke’s letters to them. For the Visconti period, the registers have been transcribed (or reconstructed from other sources, in cases of missing registers) and edited in Santoro, *Ufficio di Provvisione*.

offices, Marco was involved in the Fabbrica of the cathedral and appointed to prestigious offices pro bono. As documented for his contemporaries who covered relevant positions within the Fabbrica, such appointments were highly sought after; the wish to do a charitable deed might combine with political ambition, desire for publicity, and even access to large amounts of cash.⁷⁰

During the first years of construction, Marco was appointed as supervisor of the works and responsible for fundraising efforts in Porta Orientale and Porta Nuova districts. Moreover, since Gian Galeazzo Visconti held Marco in such high esteem, as had his uncle Bernabò before him, the Fabbrica chose Carelli as their ambassador to the duke – as in 1390, when the officials of the Fabbrica, which was running short of money, begged the duke to intercede with Pope Boniface IX for the proclamation of an extraordinary jubilee for the city of Milan, as fully explored in Chapter One.⁷¹

The decision

In 1390 Marco Carelli returned to Venice and made the first of two wills and a codicil that together would seal his fabulous donation. These are the subject of the next chapter. I close this chapter with the observation that nothing in what Marco did, good

⁷⁰ This was especially the case for the unsalaried appointment of treasurer. The treasurer was required to deposit a caution of 10,000 florins and to lend the Fabbrica 1000 florins whenever needed. The treasurer's family was fully responsible (*in solidum*) for the restitution of the Fabbrica revenues, which had to occur within three days from the Fabbrica councilors' request. All these precautions suggest that the treasurer had some liberty in the way he administered Fabbrica money, provided that he was able to pay demands upon request. Indeed, precisely the possibility of handling considerable amounts of cash made the appointment to treasurer highly desirable among the rich Milanese, so much so people did not hesitate to offer warranties greater than requested in order to gain the position. For example, this was what a certain Giovanni de Po did in 1424, nominating himself for the post with an offer to "deposit a caution of 20,000 florins and offering to donate to the Fabbrica 1000 ducats in case of any fault." ANNALI, 2 (January 2, 1424; January 6, 1426).

⁷¹ ANNALI, 1 (April 4, 1390).

and bad, nor anything that Marco failed to do, provides us with reliable guidance as to what would come next. As a historian, my preference might well be to seek explanations and continuities rooted in his past and nourished by his experience. But it is more candid to invoke precisely the reverse: his fabulous donation is what sets him apart from his fellow Milan merchants, even more so than his great success as a merchant and a political adviser. His decision helps us to understand his earlier record of success and failure, or at the very least calls for the close examination I have undertaken.

CHAPTER FOUR

Two Wills and a Codicil

*«Chi crepa e lascia molto alle congreghe e ai frati
fa dire a chi rimane: ‘Eran quattrin rubati!’»*^{*}

Giacomo Puccini, “Gianni Schicchi”

Coming to the end of a long and successful life, after surviving more than once the fourteenth-century’s deadly outbreaks of plague, and after building a commercial empire through his dense network of mercantile relationships and transactions extending from Milan to Genoa, Venice, Padua and Bruges, Marco Carelli no doubt pondered what to do with his vast patrimony. His decisions are the subject of the present chapter. The chapter opens with a brief account of the circumstances and events that led the merchant to donate virtually the entirety of his fortune for the construction of Milan Cathedral. Then, the analysis addresses the earliest of his testaments, wherein he arranged for the disposition of his assets in Venice and Padua. Lastly, the focus shifts to the lengthy and detailed arrangements he made in 1393 concerning the remainder of his vast patrimony.

The basic documents under scrutiny are the will Marco Carelli wrote in Venice (1390), and then the testament he subsequently wrote in Milan (1393), together with the codicil he added a few months later (1394). There is no doubt that the 1394 codicil updated by building upon the 1393 testament but whether the 1393 document abrogated the earlier Venice testament is a more complex matter. The precise words of the 1393

^{*} [«Who kicks the bucket and leaves a lot of money to confraternities and friars makes people say: “It was stolen money!”»].

testament clearly state that it abrogated all previous testaments, and this was what happened for an earlier will he wrote in Milan on August 15, 1391, wherein he had already made his decision to designate the Fabbrica as his universal heir. We know with certainty from Fabbrica deliberations about the existence of this earlier Milan will but it was not preserved, presumably because it was abrogated by the 1393 testament. Clearly, though, the same did not happen with his 1390 Venetian will, because the Procurators of San Marco carried on their tasks as specified there. It would have been unusual for a testator to make different wills for different places, although the fact that Carelli was a citizen of Venice as well as of Milan encourages entertaining this possibility, as does the actual content of the two wills. Further, it is plausible that the 1390 will, done with a Venetian notary and under Venetian law, intentionally dealt only with holdings in Venice. The 1393 will, executed by a Milanese notary under Milanese law, contained the usual phrase about superseding any prior will but the intent and the reality was that only the Milan 1391 will was abrogated, not the arrangements specified in 1390 for his Venetian holdings. Thus, I judge that the two Venice and Milan wills were complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

In 1391, the same year when Marco Carelli made the Cathedral of Milan the primary beneficiary of his vast patrimony, another declaration, this one from Rome, came to the Fabbrica aid. Pope Boniface IX granted the Milanese an unprecedented plenary indulgence, conceding for one year the full pardon of every sin – killings, violence and thefts included - to all confessed and contrite donors who brought offerings for the construction of Milan's magnificent and expensive new cathedral.¹ Half of the donations

¹ ANNALI, 1: 41 (February 1, 1391). As the details in a later indulgence concession (1397) specify, full pardon for thefts and similar crimes was granted under the condition that the penitent

collected during this year would be sent to Rome to finance new churches being built there but the other half would go directly to Milan's Fabbrica.² The late fourteenth-century was a time when preachers regularly invoked the terror of hell's fire, a message rendered particularly vivid by the horrifying material circumstances of life during these decades. Longing for heaven's peace oriented the behavior, practice and devotion of the faithful. Sinners yearned to obtain the precious gifts offered by an indulgence even at the cost of great financial sacrifice.

Christians believed that partial and plenary indulgences remitted, respectively, a part or the entirety of the temporal punishment for sin that otherwise had to be expiated in purgatory after their deaths.³ Popes and bishops had begun granting indulgences from the eleventh century, and the practice grew rapidly in popularity during the troubled times of the fourteenth century, when canonists and theologians formulated and perfected its doctrinal assumptions. Indulgences differed from prayer, fasting, alms-giving and similar penitential works in that their value depended not upon the penitent's merit but upon those of Christ and the saints; their merits constituted what was dogmatically

make an offering of the same value as what had been stolen – to be given half to the Milan Cathedral and half to the *camera apostolica*. ANNALI, 1: 257 (December 9, 1403). The indulgence was intended to remit the penalty connected to past sin but not to prevent or remit future ones. Hence, the pope specified in his bull that the indulgence would be invalidated for those who, having gained it, then quit devout practices and good deeds, thinking themselves assured of their access to heaven. Such a guarantee could be offered by no indulgence since final judgment depended not upon the church, but on God. Moreover, in order to discourage abuse of indulgences, those who used the papal concession to extort money and to defraud the cathedral would have incurred an instantaneous (*ipso facto incurrenda*) excommunication. Cazzani, "Due bolle," 15. Cazzani uses as his documentary source the papal bull of 1397, which is the most ancient bull preserved as the 1390 one was lost in a fire. Given that the promises and concessions of the 1397 indulgence were similar to the ones proclaimed in 1390, one may assume that the clauses and specifications were also similar.

² ANNALI, 1: 33-34 (April 16, 1390).

³ According to the tenets of the faith, the sacrament of penance removed the eternal punishment due to mortal sin (i.e. hell), but it left temporal punishment that had to be fulfilled either during earthly life (through good works and indulgences) or in the afterlife (i.e., in purgatory) before the sinner would be granted access to heaven. See Kent, "Indulgences."

defined as the church “treasury.”⁴ Indulgences, initially granted to sinners who participated in crusades, pilgrimages and visitations to holy places, later became associated as well with contributions to pious works such as the construction of churches, hospitals, and bridges construction. The indulgence became an indispensable fundraising tool for works that depended mainly upon devotees’ donations, and at the same time a powerful reminder to the faithful of the efficacy of their good deeds on earth for the salvation of their soul, achieved by drawing upon the treasury of merit created by Christ and the saints.⁵

A fabulous donation

The positive effect of the 1391 papal concession to the Diocese of Milan soon became evident. During the year of plenary indulgence, the cathedral sophisticated fundraising system collected amounts far greater than in preceding years. Among the many individuals who rejoiced at the announcement of the jubilee and promptly answered the call, the Milanese merchant Marco Carelli was only one but he alone was in a position to promise upon his death the astonishing sum of 35,000 ducats – an amount that exceeded by far the total average annual income of the cathedral from all other sources.⁶ In what may be viewed as an act of dedication, Carelli chose to dictate his will on August 15, 1391, feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, the day on which the

⁴ The definition and existence of the infinite treasury of merits was proclaimed by Pope Clement VI in 1343 with the Bull “Unigenitus.”

⁵ Shaffern, “Learned Discussions,” 367.

⁶ ANNALI, 1: 54 (October 8, 1391). 35,000 ducats of Milan are equivalent to 56,000 lire imperiali of Milan, as in 1391 1 ducat of Milan = 32 soldi imperiali of Milan. On Milanese money and the local exchange in Milan between ducats and lire, see Mueller, *Venetian Money Market*, Appendix C, Table C 1, 592. To make a rapid comparison, one can look at the total incomes of the Fabbrica in the years 1389, 1390 and 1391, that amounted respectively to 46,337 lire, 29,338 lire and 57,288 lire. The lira was equivalent to 20 soldi, or 240 denari (1 soldo = 12 denari).

cornerstone of the new cathedral had been laid five years before. In his will, the wealthy merchant named the new cathedral as the recipient of virtually his entire patrimony – ranging from houses, lands, and taverns to gold, precious clothes, and exotic spices.⁷

Carelli had cherished the idea of a grand donation since the beginning of the cathedral construction, elaborating it as his involvement with the cathedral and its administration grew. The rich merchant was well known in the Fabbrica not only because he was a leading figure in the city's mercantile community, but also because he had been appointed by the Fabbrica several times as an officer *pro bono*. The deputies had chosen him for such prestigious offices as: supervisor to the works; fundraiser responsible in his district, Porta Orientale; and ambassador to the Duke Gian Galeazzo Visconti with responsibility for presenting various requests.⁸ Already in 1390 he had made a small initial donation, transferring half of one of his credits to the Fabbrica, for the amount of 270 lire and 10 soldi to be paid within four years.⁹ At the end of the same year, Carelli vastly increased his beneficence when he named the Fabbrica as his principal heir in a will dictated in Venice, where he conducted a major part of his business. In this document, he requested the Procurators of San Marco to devolve to the Fabbrica almost the totality of the total value (*pretium*) obtained from the post-*emmortem* sale of his properties in Venice and Padua. The operation ultimately gained a total amount of 15,000 lire: a sum amounting to about one half of the Fabbrica total donations received in the

⁷ ANNALI, 1: 54 (October 8, 1391); 1:55 (October 8, 1391).

⁸ ANNALI, Appendici, 1: 126-27 (April 13, 1390).

⁹ ANNALI, 1: 30 (February 18, 1390).

year of redaction of that first will, 1390. The gift was dwarfed only by what Carelli bequeathed the Fabbrica two years later in consequence of his second will.¹⁰

Understandably, there was great enthusiasm among the deputies at the news of Carelli's extraordinary bequest of his patrimony in its entirety – which was formally communicated to the council in October of the year 1391. In order to facilitate the channeling of donations to the cathedral, and avoid leaving testamentary wills unsettled, by decree of Gian Galeazzo Visconti legal consultants and notaries were obligated to communicate promptly to the Fabbrica any donation they drew up, in wills as well as in private agreements.¹¹

But even the prospect of these riches to be received upon Carelli's death did not sufficiently address the needs immediately at hand, which became more compelling each day. The pope, who had already agreed to the Milanese request to extend the previously proclaimed jubilee period by a few months, specified that he would not extend the concession any further, since “this was never conceded to any church in the world.”¹² Easter 1392, therefore, marked the end of the jubilee, and, with it, the inevitable decrease of offerings (see Figure 4.1). The spike seen in this graph does not include the inheritance that would come from Carelli to the Fabbrica upon his death, since the Jubilee Year division of monies with the papacy involved only actual income, not future promises.

¹⁰ ASV, Procuratori di San Marco de ultra, b. 81, f. 5-5v, Marco Carello, Quaderno della Commissaria.

¹¹ ANNALI, Appendici, 1: 214 (October 21, 1387).

¹² ANNALI, Appendici, 1: 191 (September 16, 1391). “[...] numquam alicui ecclesiae mundi fuit hoc concessum.”

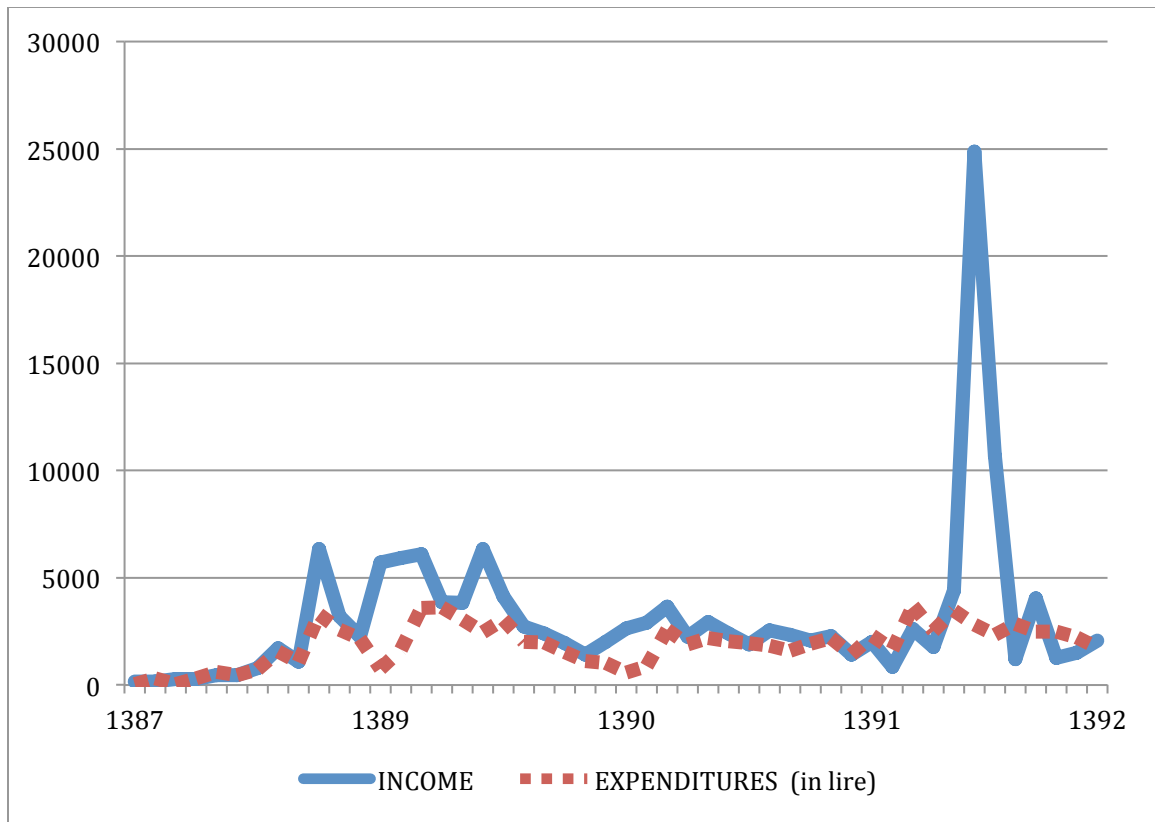


Figure 4.1 Milan Cathedral's Fabbbrica: Income and Expenditures, 1387-1392. Source: AFD, Registri, r. 4, 11, 15, 17, 20; see also ANNALI, 1 (1387-1392).

As discussed more fully in Chapter One, the solution frequently adopted for financing the construction of cathedrals in Italian communes was taxation. In twelfth- and thirteenth-century Genoa, for example, building the Cathedral of San Lorenzo was funded with a 10% tax on all pious bequests, whereas in Florence, to mention another prominent commune, the certainty of constant financial support for the construction of the Basilica of Santa Maria del Fiore was obtained through levies imposed on the population by law – taxes on wills, rights of fiscal and penal pardons, and so on.¹³ In sharp contrast to other Italian cities, Milan's Fabbbrica from the beginning of the cathedral project chose to rely almost entirely upon spontaneous private donations from the

¹³ For the financing of the Cathedral of San Lorenzo in Genoa and for the "gabella di Santa Maria del Fiore," see Chapter 1.

faithful. This decision released the city both from reliance on its duke and from forced taxation, thereby affirming its independence and the popular character of the construction. In a city held firmly under the despotic grip of the Visconti family, the building of the cathedral became the high point of freedom for the citizens of Milan.¹⁴ But the Milanese paid a high price for their financial autonomy: while a communal gabelle might have assured constant revenues over time, the Fabbrica income, always at the mercy of individual benefactors, remained both precarious and variable.

With the end of the jubilee and its extraordinary spike in donations, a year of profound crisis began. Gian Galeazzo's unscrupulous expansionistic policy repeatedly engaged Milan in costly wars, financed through the imposition of heavy taxation on the population. Having obtained dominion over Verona, Feltre, Belluno and Padua in 1388, Gian Galeazzo became the most powerful lord of northern Italy. Directly threatened by the Milanese expansion, Florence organized a league to face Gian Galeazzo. On its side, the Tuscan center gathered Bologna, Pisa, Lucca, Perugia, Stephen Duke of Bavaria, the French John III of Armagnac, and John Hawkwood's mercenary troops. Milan, for its part, could count on support from the king of France – an alliance Gian Galeazzo had forged in his youth, when at the age of ten he married the king's daughter, Isabel of Valois.

Throughout the following year, attacks, invasions and insurrections raged across Lombardy, with the outcome uncertain until the decisive battle of Alessandria in 1391, when Gian Galeazzo defeated his enemies. But this was a pyrrhic victory, since the conflict did not gain anything for the Visconti. The duke was forced to renounce control

¹⁴ For the antagonism between Gian Galeazzo Visconti and the Fabbrica of the Cathedral of Milan, see Saltamacchia, *Costruire cattedrali*, 113-22, 194-96.

over Padua and now faced a consolidated and powerful league arrayed against him. It was the Milanese people who ended up paying the highest costs, in the destruction of their property, the pillaging of their goods, and heavy new taxation. Unavoidably, their consequent impoverishment resulted in decreased offerings to the cathedral.¹⁵

Against reduced income, the ongoing construction demanded more and more onerous expenses. The great works involved in the foundation's excavation in the preceding five years had seen the generous participation of hundreds of people; fishermen and lawyers, goldsmiths and butchers had enthusiastically given their services *pro bono* to the church building site.¹⁶ But over time the initial ardor waned, and fewer people made themselves available to work *gratis*. Moreover, now that the foundation had been dug out and walled, the first phase of heavy manual labor ended and increasingly specialized manpower was needed. Heated discussions, no doubt exacerbated by the financial straits, among the architects and the master builders about the best way to proceed with the construction momentarily arrested the works. After all, such a majestic marble cathedral had never been built before, and the absence of models necessitated extreme caution. The expensive materials to be employed could not be wasted in a

¹⁵ An analysis of trends in donations shows how heavy fiscal imposition (as well as other factors that had an impact on the wealth of the population, such as famine and plague) reduced the number and value of offerings from big donors. Small donations from poor people, instead, did not register significant variation in number or quantity – as the donors were already so poor that external negative factors did not affect them. See Saltamacchia, “Non nobis Domine,” 115-16. The *frottole* of Bartolomeo Sachella, moralizing mots and proverbs written in the fifteenth century in open criticism of the court environment, represent an interesting eyewitness testimony of social denunciation of the fiscal imposition under the Visconti and the heavy burden on the population. See Mainoni, “Una testimonianza di denuncia,” 140-41.

¹⁶ See, for instance, ANNALI, Appendici, 1: 49 (November 2, 1387; November 4-7, 1387; November 14, 1387; November 16, 1387). The new cathedral was being erected around the old Santa Maria Maggiore, encapsulating the small church inside the majestic new cathedral. In this way, the old cathedral continued to be used to celebrate masses and religious functions until the new one was ready.

structural collapse.¹⁷ Now that the external socle of the church was completed, this was the moment to decide the dimensions, design, and architectonic specifics regarding pillars, windows, and buttresses. Several illustrious architects arrived from France and Germany, the countries of the Gothic, to give their opinion and sketch their projects for the majestic cathedral – often opening more disputes and new disagreements than resolving the outstanding issues.¹⁸

Financial difficulties forced the Fabbrica to impose new measures to contain its deficits. Expenses were significantly cut - administrative costs, as well as operating costs such as those for the extraction of marble from the quarry on Lake Maggiore, for the purchase of beasts of burden and hay to feed them, and for bread and wine distributed to the workers at noon. Salaries were reduced, and the laborers were invited to work only half days. To scrape together some immediate cash to pay the workers, the desperate Fabbrica deputies decided to sell at public auction all the rings, pearls, buttons, silver and ornaments the wealthy women of Milan had donated over the previous years. These had previously been jealously locked in a casket watched night and day.¹⁹

Notwithstanding the councilors' efforts, the Fabbrica expenses grew steadily. Table 4.1 shows in summary form the expenses of the Fabbrica in the first five years of activity. The data reveal that almost half of its total expenditures (45%-52%) were in salaries, with the exception of the first year, when total salaries constituted only one third of total expenses. The lower fraction in this initial year is due both to the high number of workers

¹⁷ For a detailed exposition of the evolution of the works, including an artistic and architectural point of view, see Romanini, "Il Duomo," 859–931; Boucheron, *Le pouvoir de bâtir*, 129–97, 473–81. A clear example of this cautious way of proceeding is the discussion, a century later, about the erection of the *tiburio* vault, mentioned in Chapter 1.

¹⁸ For a detailed narration of the discussions and the proposals advanced over these years, see Romanini, "Il Duomo," 875–83; Braunstein, "Il cantiere del Duomo," 147–53.

¹⁹ ANNALI, 1: 87 (December 30, 1392).

who labored pro bono at the beginning of the construction, and to the initial fixed costs of investment that formed a great part of the expenses during that year.

The Fabbrica account books recorded wages by dividing them in workers' salaries, calculated in reference to the number of effective working days (between 18 and 26 per month, depending on climate and festivities), and other salaries, paid as a fixed monthly income to qualified workers such as accountants, supervisors, architects, materials distributors, purchaser of provisions, and master builders. Workers' wages represented over 90 percent of total salary costs. Daily wages varied from 6 denari per day, paid to the young apprentices, to 8 soldi per day, paid to the masters who in turn coordinated and supervised teams of workers who were paid 3 soldi per day. A small part (less than 10%) of salary expenses remunerated the people who held positions of great responsibility: the master builder (*inziagnere generale*), the highest authority in the construction site, earned 16 lire per month, roughly equivalent to 14 soldi per day, while accountants (*ragionati*), purchasers (*spenditori*), auctioneers and traders (*gestore di negozi*) and supervisors at the marble quarry earned 6 lire per month.²⁰

Expenses for materials constituted the other major cost for the Fabbrica, amounting to between 38% and 48% of total expenditures. Expenses on each material fluctuated significantly from year to year, depending upon the quantities needed in the construction site during the different phases of progress of the works, the residual stocks available in the Fabbrica storehouses, and the donations in the form of raw materials. During the first three years of construction the Fabbrica had to spend much of its income on lime for the walling of the foundations, but in short order things would change very rapidly. In 1389 the external socle was built and then walls erected upon it, while two years later the

²⁰ ANNALI, Appendici, 1: 56 (1388). See also Saltamacchia, "Non nobis Domine," 157-66.

sacristies' doors were sculpted. For such works, the Fabbrica needed more money for sarizzo, the granitic gneiss used for the walls; also for iron, used in great quantities for the stonecutters' tools such as splines and cotters, and for heavy tie rods for the walls; and for wood, employed for scaffoldings, construction models, cranes and other machines used for lifting heavy marble blocks. Expenses for materials also included the cost of transportation to the construction site. The conveyance of large marble blocks was particularly expensive. The quarrymen extracted them in Candoglia, on Lake Maggiore, and from there the carriers shipped them by water to the Naviglio Grande, the major canal of the city of Milan; finally, they hoisted them on carts for transport from the Naviglio Grande to the cathedral.²¹

²¹ The Fabbrica project of canal system extension, which started in 1388 and continued until 1438, reduced the marble transportation costs by two thirds.

	1387	1388	1389	1390	1391
SALARIES					
<i>Workers' salaries</i>	4006	N/A	10531	9990	12530
<i>Other salaries</i>	451	894	1155	895	1210
<i>SALARIES TOTAL</i>	4457	N/A	11686	10885	13740
% salaries/total expenditures	33%	N/A	45%	52%	45%
MATERIALS					
<i>Sarizzo</i>	88	11464	3879	4672	1663
<i>Marble</i>	165		562	423	7552
<i>Wood</i>	148	790	593	419	566
<i>Ironware</i>	295	983	319	330	888
<i>Rope</i>	25	130	115	138	211
<i>Sand</i>	550	335	90	12	39
<i>Lime</i>	3049	3350	1791	0	487
<i>Bricks</i>	65	4522	1022	78	14
<i>Coal</i>	28	N/A	150	184	130
<i>Transportation Costs</i>	712	N/A	3273	3068	3140
<i>MATERIALS TOTAL</i>	5125	21574	11794	9324	14690
% materials/total expenditures	38%	N/A	46%	44%	48%
OTHER EXPENSES	3954	N/A	2378	863	2211
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	13536	N/A	25858	21072	30641

Table 4.1 Fabbrica expenditures 1387-91. Source: AFD, Registri, r. 4, 11, 15, 17, 20.²²

In short, construction costs required every year for salaries and materials always rose, while income, in the aftermath of the jubilee, dramatically decreased. At stake was the continuation of the works itself, and faced with such financial challenges, the minds of the Fabbrica councilors surely went to the fabulous bequest Marco Carelli, now in his seventies but still an active and dynamic merchant, had made in his will only few months before, on August 15 1391. If only the construction project could start benefitting from at

²² See also ANNALI, Appendici, 1: 52-53 (1387); 1: 56 (1388); 1: 106-7 (1389); 1: 150-51 (1390); 1: 205-7 (1391).

least part of his donation, their financial problems would be substantially alleviated and the construction site might resume full time. Moreover, as one of the councilors, Ambrogio Cattaneo, reported, Marco Carelli himself had once expressed his desire to transfer the full property and enjoyment of all his goods and houses to the Fabbrica while he still lived, against the payment of a fair and reasonable compensation (*fictum conveniens et rationabile redditum*) until his death.²³

On January 12, 1393 a small group of councilors, including Cattaneo, and accompanied by the deputy Franciscolo de Montebreto, and the Fabbrica two traders, in charge of selling and auctioning goods offered to the Fabbrica, Beltramolo Tana and Leonardo de Trivulzio, called upon Carelli to consider, given the urgent necessities of the cathedral, anticipating his generous pledge made back in 1391. Apparently the merchant quickly showed his openness to the bold suggestion. While nothing is reported directly about his immediate answer, and the entirely reasonable compensation he requested was never mentioned again in the council meetings nor recorded in the Expense Registers, the interactions between him and the councilors over the following days suggest how seriously and thoughtfully he was considering the proposal.

As the first step in taking care of his last dispositions before divesting himself of everything, just five days later he went before the Fabbrica Council to ask permission to sell a mill located on his property, nearby Porta Ticinese. In this way, he was able to keep aside an intended dowry for Ursina, a girl educated in his house, to assure her marriage.²⁴ Again, in May of that year he requested councilors and the city authorities' consent to

²³ ANNALI, 1: 90 (January 12, 1393).

²⁴ Carelli regularly hosted needy girls in his house “for the love of God,” providing them with an education and a dowry at the time of marriage, as explored below.

transfer to the same girl some lands around the mill.²⁵ The Fabbrica councilors promptly agreed to his request, and not solely for his merits. On this occasion the *Annali* do provide a precious record of the Fabbrica sentiments: “Marcolo deserved to obtain this benefit from the Fabbrica, and from those who act on behalf of it, for his meritorious precedents, and especially because we [the Fabbrica councilors] hope that in the future, with the blessing of the Almighty grace, he may more generously and more copiously confer to us his goods.”²⁶ Since Carelli had already granted virtually all his patrimony to the Fabbrica, “more generously and more copiously” could not have referred to the amount of the donation, as he did not have anything else left to give, but bequeathing it a little sooner, yes. Clearly the councilors understood what they were after - they knew well how to cultivate a donor and how to obtain what they so desperately needed.

And so it came to be: on July 4, 1393 the merchant, sound of mind and body and with a good memory (*sanus mente et corpore ac bone memorie*), dictated a new will transferring all his property, goods, and credits (minus debts) to Milan Cathedral (*ecclesia majoris mediolani*) - only setting aside a modest sum for a new dress to be provided for his wife and his cousins on the day of his funeral, and other small endowments for friends, friars and fellow parishioner.²⁷ The Fabbrica councilors received an autograph letter from Marco Carelli himself, communicating to them his “donation of all my possessions.”²⁸

²⁵ ANNALI, 1: 91 (January 17, 1393).

²⁶ ANNALI, 1: 98 (May 18, 1393).

²⁷ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli; edited in Ciceri and Rocco Negri, “Marco Carelli,” 369–86. See also ANNALI, Appendici, 3: 257.

²⁸ “Notom quod die quinto mensis augusti 1393 ego Marchollus Charellus fezi donationem de omnes meas possessiones ad Ecclesiam Maioris Mediolani pro Ecclesiae per cartam rogatam die soprascripto per Primollum Venzagoni notarium.” [“Note that on the fifth day of the month of August 1393 I, Marco Carelli donated all my possessions to the Chiesa Maggiore of Milan

The great donor devoted the time until his death to redeeming his credits and managing his remaining business dealings, so as to leave his patrimony in a solid state. The management of such a conspicuous and diversified inheritance was a complex process, and it took months before the Fabbrica could begin to enjoy what it obtained from the sales and rentals of houses and goods.

The councilors' decisions in the following years continued to reflect the serious shortage of money faced by the Fabbrica. They sent a delegation to Duke Gian Galeazzo Visconti, informing him of their financial difficulties, in the hope of soliciting a generous donation; they halted new hiring of skilled workers and supervisors, and they urged the redemption of all their credits.²⁹ The financial measures proposed and implemented in these years, while continuing to display the great inventiveness and efficiency characteristic of the Fabbrica management, show also a constant preoccupation with trying to save even a few soldi whenever possible - buying in great quantities wine for the workers at the end of grape-harvest time, when it was cheaper, and then storing it for the rest of the year, or building a conduit at a height of 120 *braccia* for the transportation of stones from the terrains of collection to the river mouth, so as to eliminate the cost of the cart drivers, just to mention two examples.³⁰

through a document redacted on the aforementioned day by the notary Primolo Venzago"]. The letter was transcribed in Marco Carelli's *Liber albus*, the register lost at the beginning of the nineteenth century and partially transcribed by Fr. Mazzucchelli, archivist of Ambrosiana Library. Ciceri, "Fonti per lo studio," 169-92; Saltamacchia, "Marco Carelli," 25-26.

²⁹ ANNALI, 1: 115 (July 22, 1394); 1: 116 (August 16, 1394); 1: 168 (August 24, 1396; August 27, 1396).

³⁰ Other solutions the Fabbrica considered to save money included finding a person who would bring bread and wine to the workers at top of the mountain, with the promise of an indulgence, so to reduce the salary of the laborer who was in charge of transporting and cooking the food there; building a *cassina*, an edifice for the workers covered with straw, to make them happier to work there and compensate in this way a further salary reduction; and hire up to 50 workers at the minimum wage, training them to the art of cathedral building, and forming this

Yet, following the merchant's bequest, the tone of the Fabbrica deliberations profoundly changed: a note of optimistic enthusiasm accompanied the councilors' decisions, and new works were approved "given the present abundance of means because of Carelli's inheritance." There were even resources to build the *Camposanto*, a graveyard beside the cathedral. Before receiving Carelli's bequest, the Fabbrica councilors had not undertaken such a doubtful proposition but now, they reasoned in the council meeting, "even though the expense for the construction of the graveyard's inside and outside walls would be greater than the income derived from the graveyard itself, this decision was taken anyway." The council also expressed "that some [potential donors] desired to be buried there, for the growing devotion to the cathedral – as Andriolo de Vergiate, who bequeathed to the Fabbrica 100 florins under the condition of being buried in the Camposanto."³¹

Equally notable, with a decision that would shape indelibly the cathedral design, in 1397 the deputies decided to use part of the merchant's donation to erect the first spire, on the right side of the apse. In gratitude and everlasting memory of the benefactor who made their bold works possible, they chose to name the spire Guglia Carelli, as it is known even today. In 1404 the spire was completed from the socle to the statue placed at its top. The incongruent monument stood out at a height of roughly 200 feet, most of the walls far below alongside the greater part of the cathedral perimeter were still to be erected. For over four centuries the spire remained alone high in the sky while on the bottom little by little the remainder of the building took shape, perhaps giving workers, donors and devotees an anticipated taste of the cathedral ultimate magnificence in this

way a numerous team of skilled master craftsmen. ANNALI, 1: 164 (July 2, 1396). 120 *braccia* are equivalent to 234.22 feet (1 *braccio* = 0.594936 meters).

³¹ ANNALI, 1: 121 (November 29, 1394).

seemingly endless construction site. The spire finally gave up its somewhat grotesque uniqueness and became instead the prototype for the nineteenth-century sculptors who, appointed with the task of constructing other spires on the back of the cathedral, copied the Guglia Carelli very closely – so much so that for a visitor observing today the back of the cathedral it is impossible to tell that the spires were constructed four centuries apart.³²

Not surprisingly, given that the Fabbrica every month had to balance fixed expenses for salaries and materials with a variable income dependent upon the generosity of the Milanese, financial difficulties would be a constant refrain over the whole construction period. But Marco Carelli's fabulous donation arrived in a crucial moment of decision for the Fabbrica, dispelling doubts about the sustainability of the entire project, and inspiring that boldness that made them dare to erect the largest cathedral in the world at the time.³³

The two wills: Venice 1390 and Milan 1393

Although mediated by notarial convention and even intervention, and ridden with formulaic stereotypes, wills represent a source of extraordinary potential for peering into a testator's life, glancing at his emotional attachments, his network of partners and friends, his economic and social status, his religious beliefs.³⁴ The choice made by the testator among the range of available options – to leave money and properties to family

³² Saltamacchia, *Costruire cattedrali*, 94-95.

³³ With its 123,785 square feet, in the fifteenth century Milan Cathedral was the largest ever built. For a rapid comparison, Seville Cathedral measured 107,640 square feet, Cologne 96,875 square feet, whereas Notre-Dame in Paris was less than half as large: 59,200 square feet. Only the construction, a century later, of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome (161,460 square feet) reduced Milan's standing to second place. See also Boucheron, "Villes, cathedrales," 8.

³⁴ Cohn, *Cult of Remembrance*, 16; Chiappa Mauri, "Testamenti lombardi," 217. Cohn warns that a network of outside forces – the notary, the priest, the monk, the confessor, and the family – limited the testator's options. Analogously, Chiappa Mauri stresses the necessity of taking into consideration the cultural mediations, the institutional components, the stereotyped juridical form and the rigid notarial formulas of the wills.

and friends or to donate to strangers, to dispose for alms-giving, masses or elaborate funeral rituals, to fund a hospital, a confraternity or a convent – taken together with other documents pertaining to the testator, may reveal precious information about his attitude towards life and death, wealth and work.³⁵

Moreover, the form Carelli chose for his last wills, the orally dictated will (*testamentum nuncupativum*), guaranteed that the words contained in the parchment would be as close as possible to the merchant's own. The relevant statutes required that for the validity of this kind of document, the testator had to dictate word by word his dispositions to the notary before two proto-notaries and five witnesses chosen among the testator's acquaintances and declared suitable (*idoneus*) by the notary.³⁶ At the end of the redaction, the notary then read the text aloud, so that testator and witnesses could confirm the accuracy of his document. Finally, the witnesses signed to acknowledge the authenticity of the document.

³⁵ Among the historians who most recently have discussed the relevance of the testament as documentary source, Judde speaks of wills as testimony of the testator's faith (Judde de Larivière, "Procédures, enjeux et fonctions," 531). For Lorcin, pious dispositions and funerary requests give fundamental hints about the testator's religiosity (Lorcin, "Les clauses religieuses," 287), whereas Petti-Balbi looks mostly at the destination of goods and the lists of bequests as a source to comprehend the value attributed to work, money and social status – and even to understand whether the testator was happy and fulfilled (Petti Balbi, "Accrescere, gestire, trasmettere," 381–403). Rigon highlights the significant potential of the wills as documents of the testator's conscience – as opposed to other kinds of private acts, greatly conditioned by the formulaic outline. For him, a will's dispositions translate in concrete terms emotions and affections, attitudes and mentalities, and for this they are first and foremost expressions of the testator's religiosity (Rigon, "I testamenti," 397).

³⁶ The exact dispositions regarding number of proto-notaries and witnesses varied from city to city. For Milan, the most ancient city statute that has been preserved, dated 1396, prescribed the presence of at least five witnesses and two proto-notaries for the validity of the will. Often the number of notaries and witnesses exceeded the minimum required by law: for instance, for Marco Carelli, two notaries, two proto-notaries and seven witnesses were present at the dictation of his will. AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli; Appendix, XXIX-XXXI; see also Zagni, "Osservazioni sulle subscriptiones," 263–68.

“Mortal life sometimes vanishes all of a sudden, and the shadow of death follows us in every step”: with this grim reminder, the opening preamble (*arenga*) of Marco’s will introduces the popular formula “there is nothing so certain as death, and nothing so uncertain as the hour of death.”³⁷ This topos, widely used in wills from Italy and France at the time, summed up in a few incisive words everyone’s untold terror: sudden death, which could drag into eternal damnation the man or woman caught in their last hour in a state of mortal sin.³⁸ “Since each one’s life and death are in the omnipotent God’s hands,” the will explains with savvy wisdom, “it is better to live in fear of death than to hope for life and die suddenly.”³⁹

Life’s fragility, a recurring motif in the minds and hearts of late medieval people, was particularly apropos for the merchant Carelli. Accustomed by his profession to travel side by side with risk and fortune, entrusting his destiny to God at each new enterprise, travel or storm, the merchant was still healthy of body and mind, yet he was now at an age most of his friends would have been glad to reach.⁴⁰ And he knew well his good

³⁷ ASV, Procuratori di San Marco de ultra, b. 81, f. 5-5v, Marco Carello, Quaderno della Commissaria. The original will (1390) is lost, and it was never sent to the Fabbrica. What we have is a later transcription copied at the beginning of October 1394, that forms the first page of the “Quaderno della Commissaria,” a booklet of a few pages recording the transactions of the *commissario* and of the Procurators of San Marco, Carelli’s testamentary executors in Venice, whose task began in the weeks immediately following his death.

³⁸ For the use of the topos “there is nothing so certain as death, and nothing so uncertain as the hour of death” (*nihil est certius morte et nihil incertius hora mortis*) in Avignon, see Chiffolleau, *La comptabilite de l’au-dela*, 110; for Lyon, Lorcin, “Les clauses religieuses,” 317; for Milan and Lombardy, Chiappa Mauri, “Testamenti lombardi,” 236; and for Arezzo, Cohn, *Cult of Remembrance*, 15.

³⁹ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli; see also the Appendix. The *arengae* of the two wills employ different formulas – probably because of the different wills’ notaries and their regional provenance – both expressing, though, the same concept, and given this similarity they are considered together here. For the use of the topos “it is better to live under death’s fear than full of hope to die a sudden death” (*melius est sub metu morte vivere quem sub spe vivendi ad mortem subitanam pervenire*), see Vismara, “La norma e lo spirito,” 74.

⁴⁰ For the will to be valid, the notary and the witnesses had to attest that the testator was in full possession of his mental capacities, not altered by physical infirmities if present, and acting

fortune: the death of his first wife Giovannina, ten years before, and those of the many friends and partners carried away by repeated plague epidemics in the second half of the century that ravaged Venice and Milan, surely were vivid reminders of his own mortality.

Neither reporting any illness nor facing imminent death, Carelli decided nonetheless to attend to the redaction of his will, following a custom quite common at the time among people of his profession, age and wealth.⁴¹ Against the uncertainty and circumstances that would surround the time of his death, the merchant proposed detailed documents, reassuringly asserting management over the only aspect of his life he could control for the years to come: his goods and his properties. Such prudence was especially appropriate for a man in Carelli's familial situation. He had arrived at the last stage of his life without the comfort of any offspring from his two marriages, and no one, therefore, who for filial piety, gratitude or social norms would assure him rites, suffrage masses and prayers.⁴²

The first will: Venice 1390

The document Marco Carelli prepared in Venice in 1390 pertained exclusively to the management of his assets located in Venice and Padua without any mention of his main properties in Lombardy, nor any words on his family and friends. In this first will, Carelli ordered the sale after his death of all his moveable and immoveable assets, contrary to the

without constraint. The formulaic “for Jesus Christ/God grace” (*gratia Jhesu Christi, gratia Dei*) that usually followed “sound of mind (and body)” (*sanus mente (et corpore)*) was a common formulaic expression, but it nonetheless confirms the strongly rooted belief that life was in God's hands and health depended upon His will.

⁴¹ The existence of multiple copies of his wills (Venice, 1390; Milan, 1392; Milan, 1393 and finally a codicil dictated in Milan, 1394) shows that the procedure was habitual to Carelli – as medieval manuals of good customs recommended: “Keep always a will done, and in case you want to add or take out anything, write another one and annul the previous one.” Da Certaldo, *Il libro di buoni costumi*, lxxvi; Bonanno, Bonanno, and Pellegrini, “I legati pro anima,” 186.

⁴² Chiappa Mauri, “Testamenti lombardi,” 243.

condition of non-alienation frequently inserted in wills.⁴³ At the end of a prosperous life, in fact, merchants and landowners usually expressed their desire to leave a permanent remainder on earth of their good fortune and their success. They therefore took elaborate precautions to ensure that their estate would be preserved intact – in most instances imposing non-alienation of the property as a condition of validity for the succession.⁴⁴

The reason for the different disposition ordered by Marco Carelli becomes clear in the following lines, which address the beneficiaries of the fruits of such a sale. There were two relatively small bequests of a hundred ducats each, the first destined to the *pauperes* of the Venetian confraternity to which he belonged, the Scuola Grande di Santa Maria di Valverde della Misericordia, and the second to the poor people of the city.⁴⁵ As a clause attached to this disposition, Carelli specified that the money had to be divided among at least 62 people, none of whom was to receive more than 10 lire of Venice (the total of the bequest, 100 ducats, corresponds to 420 lire of Venice, or 170 lire imperiali of Milan).⁴⁶ Such a division had two consequences. On the one hand, multiplying the beneficiaries assured the faithful testator of multiple prayers for his soul from the poor themselves in gratitude for the received gifts. On the other hand, we can observe here the tendency, noted almost everywhere in Europe during this period, of a progressively growing individualization in bequests to the poor: attention to the actual needs of selected

⁴³ ASV, Procuratori di San Marco de ultra, b. 81, f. 5-5v, Marco Carello, Quaderno della Commissaria. “[...] omnia et singula bona mobilia et immobilia.”

⁴⁴ Cohn, *Cult of Remembrance*, 163, 169.

⁴⁵ ASV, Procuratori di San Marco de ultra, b. 81, f. 5-5v, Marco Carello, Quaderno della Commissaria. The money was entrusted to the confraternity earmarked for the confraternity’s *pauperes*; the confraternity’s treasurer and his officers were in charge of this charitable distribution. On the *Scuole Grandi* in Venice, see Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, 33-131.

⁴⁶ In 1390, 1 ducat of Venice = 84 soldi piccoli of Venice = 34 soldi imperiali of Milan. Spufford, “Currency Exchanges.”

beneficiaries takes the place of generic generosity without criteria towards a nameless crowd of *pauperes*.⁴⁷

All the vast remainder of what would be obtained from the sale of Marco Carelli's properties was to be donated to the Chiesa Maggiore of Milan, "for the construction and repair of the abovementioned church."⁴⁸ In an effort to regulate the patrimonies of the church and avoid concentration of properties in the hands of a few religious institutions, Venice's statutes severely limited the donation, cession or sale of houses or lands through testaments to pious associations, churches, religious communities or individuals.⁴⁹ With regard to Carelli's intention to donate his wealth to the Fabbrica, the issue was even more complex; his substantial amounts of property consisting of houses and lands in Venetian territory would be alienated to a Milanese institution, by none other than a wealthy merchant who had been given the rare honor of Venetian citizenship. Carelli knew well the laws of Venice, and especially the norms regulating the sale, rent and cession of estates: mastery of statutes for each city where he conducted his business was fundamental to the merchant's success in disentangling himself from legal restrictions. To avoid the complications Venetian legislation might have caused for the Fabbrica, and to maximize the gain the cathedral deputies would make from his houses and lands in Venice and Padua, Carelli opted for a post-mortem sale of all his Venetian properties,

⁴⁷ ASV, Procuratori di San Marco de ultra, b. 81, f. 5-5v: Marco Carello – Quaderno della Commissaria; Rigon, "I testamenti," 399. On Milanese money and the local exchange in Milan between ducats and lire, see Mueller, *Venetian Money Market*, 592; Soldi Rondinini, "Politica e teoria monetarie," 288–330.

⁴⁸ ASV, Procuratori di San Marco de ultra, b. 81, f. 5-5v, Marco Carello, Quaderno della Commissaria. "[...] pro fabrica et reparatione dicte ecclesie."

⁴⁹ At the opposite side of the spectrum, Milan's law not only did not prohibit such donations, but also favored them with juridical instruments with the aim of channeling bequests. As a result, the cathedral Fabbrica became in few centuries the biggest estate owner in northern Italy, until the confiscations of ecclesiastic properties ordered in the nineteenth century. Barbot, *Le architetture della vita quotidiana*.

resulting ultimately in a transfer to the Fabbrica of the total proceeds obtained from the operation.⁵⁰ Apparently Carelli understood well how to circumvent Venice's rules about mortmain and the exclusion of non-Venetian holdings from any mention in this will further supports the possibility that he indeed wrote one testament as a Venetian citizen and another as a citizen of Milan.

Although he had living familial relatives, Carelli did not choose his wife, or his cousins, as executors of his will, a practice that was usual among the Venetian patriciate.⁵¹ Considering the entirety of the Venetian properties at stake, worth in total the huge sum of 15,000 lire, he may have been mindful of the proven ineptitude of his family in conducting business, as he had learned through the vicissitudes forty years earlier that had led to the bankruptcy of his cousin and the consequent dissolution of the Carelli fraternal business association (see Chapter Two). There is no evidence that his second wife, although very wealthy, actively engaged in business, certainly not in Venice. Instead, for the destiny of his possessions in Venice and Padua he decided to designate an associate friend and merchant from Como, along with the legally required Procurators of San Marco.

Just as the circumstances suggest that Marco Carelli's donation was not a spur-of-the-moment gesture, so also this bit of evidence weighs toward the conclusion that he intended to do all he could to ensure from beyond the grave that the construction of the cathedral be assured as a result of his gift, as if it were a controlled legacy or an investment for all eternity. We know, of course, that husbands routinely attempted to

⁵⁰ The complete lack of any mention, in the minutes of the Fabbrica Council, of Carelli properties in Venice suggests that the sale was Carelli's own idea – and not the inspiration of some councilor, which would normally have been annotated in the acts of the council.

⁵¹ Judde de Larivière, "Procédures, enjeux et fonctions," 539-40.

control the lives of their widows and I think it reasonable to assert that Marco had analogous intentions about his magnificent donation to the Fabbrica. Over the previous fifty years, conducting business all around Europe, he had built his success upon astute calculations of how to obtain the greatest gain from each sale and how to re-invest his money in new acquisitions of goods, houses, and lands. He had learned that the greater the resources invested, the higher the risk but also the greater the potential gain. And now he would do the same for the Fabbrica, none of whose delegates could possibly match Marco Carelli in business acumen. Obtaining the highest possible gain from the sales of his properties in Venice and Padua was fundamental. That the profits were destined not to himself but to the Fabbrica in no way diminished his desire to use every legal means to maximize his gains. He apparently calculated that forced or rushed sales over the months before his demise would yield less profit than a more cautious and time-consuming approach governed by local experts working over a period of decades.

For this reason, he chose to entrust this task to the experts on the Venetian market: the Procurators of San Marco, six men appointed for life personally by the doge, who acted as executors for Venice's wealthiest citizens. Supported by a specialized staff, they were in charge of liquidating commercial credits and debts for the testator, investing his patrimony for the heirs or devolving it in charitable bequests, according to what was specified in the will.⁵² Specifically, as recorded in full detail along with the copy of Carelli's testament, the merchant personally chose his friend, Ciliolo da Como, as

⁵² ASV, Procuratori di San Marco de ultra, b. 81, f. 5-5v, Marco Carello, Quaderno della Commissaria. For a detailed exposition of the history of the Procurators of San Marco, see Mueller, "Procuratori of San Marco," 105–220.

commissario – a fiduciary in charge of taking care of each testamentary disposition.⁵³ As customary, once the named *commissario* died, the Procurators of San Marco would carry on the administration of what was left. Rather than asking them to liquidate quickly the properties and bring hastily the lesser monies that would remain to the Fabbrica, Marco required them to take whatever time they needed, even decades, but obtaining from the sales and therefore ultimately providing to the Fabbrica the maximum possible amount. The liquidation of the Venetian portion of Carelli's assets engaged, then, the Procurators of San Marco for almost thirty-five years, until 1426, eventually gifting the Fabbrica with a total of 15,000 Milanese lire.⁵⁴

The Venetian testament also sheds light on the possible motivations behind Carelli's final donation three years later. According to this first will, by 1390 the rich merchant had already made up his mind about the post-mortem allocation of his Venetian and Paduan properties, deciding to donate them to the Fabbrica. He had reached his decision before the pope's proclamation of an indulgence for donors to the cathedral. The subsequent Milan bequest was not an action decided by a man losing his grip on reality,

⁵³ ASV, Procuratori di San Marco de ultra, b. 81, f. 5-5v, Marco Carello, Quaderno della Commissaria. "Ad que omnia et singula sic effectualiter exequenda esse voluit et decrevit ipse testator suos fidei commissarios et executores nobiles et sapientes viros dominos Procuratores Sancti Marci super commissariis constitutos et ser Ciliolium de Chumis quondam domini Iohanis cive Veneciarum de contrata Sancti Salvatoris. Quibus quidem commissariis et executoribus prefatus testator contulit et dedit plenariam libertatem, auctoritatem et bayliam ac arbitrium dicta omnia bona mobilia et immobilia existentia in civitatibus Venetiarum et Padue intromittendi vendendi et alienandi et pretia pettendi et recipiendi."

After each testator's request, the Procurators of San Marco added the formula "we have solved this disposition," with the exact date of completion for each one. The execution of the will began shortly after Carelli's death in 1394 and ended in 1427.

⁵⁴ ASV, Procuratori di San Marco de ultra, b. 81, f. 5-5v, Marco Carello, Quaderno della Commissaria, fo. 6-10v. For the participation of Marco Carelli in the Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Valverde, and for his charitable practices towards the poor, see below. I believe this first donation's news was communicated to the Fabbrica only after Marco Carelli's death (September 18, 1394). In fact, I have not found any mention of it among the Fabbrica Council deliberations during the preceding years, while the councilors were always very scrupulous in annotating such bequests – as the note regarding the 270 lire credit transfer attests.

nor by a sinner who feared impending death. It was not done under the pressure of a sly Fabbrica deputy, nor even to gain from Pope Boniface IX's plenary indulgence. Instead, it was a decision carefully thought through and planned out over a considerable period of time.

The second will: Milan 1393 (with the 1394 codicil)

Some of the issues surrounding Marco's testament will be familiar to operagoers who enjoy the lively comedy of Giacomo Puccini's "Gianni Schicchi." In a construction worthy of a good drama, the last line of Marco Carelli's will says it all: the Fabbrica of the Chiesa Maggiore of Milan is named as the wealthy merchant's universal heir.⁵⁵ Yet we, as opera-goers do and as the Fabbrica officials did, first need to sift through all the small bequests to see how much would be dissipated from the massive donation.

Profound interpreter of his time, Carelli shared intensely the hopes and fears of his contemporaries. The 275 dense lines that precede the actual donation in the will, beyond their apparent simplicity and repetition, open a fascinating window on the complex panorama of late medieval European dogma and belief. In itself, the very reappearance of the use of the will in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, after the oblivion of the high medieval period, attests to the deep changes at work in the society at this time.⁵⁶ Greater social stability in the age of the rise of the communes allowed for the emergence of the individual. The advent of the study of law, centered around the University of Bologna in

⁵⁵ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli; see Appendix, XXVIII.

⁵⁶ Rigon, "I testamenti," 393.

the mid-twelfth century and from there diffused in schools around Europe, formed a new class of skilled notaries who perfected a rigid structure for the new will.⁵⁷

While the Roman model was essentially an act based mostly on blood ties regulating succession of property and the designation of an heir, the late medieval will was a religious document in which people, before disposing of their goods and distributing them among family, partners and friends, most importantly looked to the salvation of their souls. “For the salvation of my soul” (*pro remedio anime mee*) was the refrain that motivated each disposition, the bequest left to the widow and sons no less than the gifts lavished on churches, hospitals or confraternities, masses, anniversaries and burial wishes. Wills of this time reveal a new awareness of a transcendental dimension that permeated the everyday lives of late medieval people. They believed unquestioningly that there was a continuum between life and death, one bound by a correlation between the sins and good deeds committed on earth and the eternal punishments or rewards of the afterlife.⁵⁸

Although never directly mentioned in the documents, a place in the hereafter was constantly in testators’ minds while preparing their wills: purgatory, a locus that over the thirteenth century became increasingly familiar in Western Christianity among peasants and theologians, poets and popes.⁵⁹ As with many dogmas and tenets of faith approved and proclaimed during the late medieval period, purgatory was the ecclesiastical

⁵⁷ Rossi, “Il testamento nel medioevo,” 52-53.

⁵⁸ Howell, “Fixing Movables,” 11; Brentano, “Considerazioni di un lettore,” 8; Judde de Larivière, “Procédures, enjeux et fonctions,” 523-27; Rossi, “Il testamento nel medioevo,” 52-54.

⁵⁹ Lorcín, “Les clauses religieuses,” 318. Dante with his *Divine Comedy* contributed greatly to the rapid diffusion of the notion of purgatory at every level of the society, imposing for centuries in his readers’ minds his depiction of it as a physical place, appearing as a mountain in the Southern Hemisphere formed by several terraces, one for each sin.

recognition and theological systematization of a grassroots belief and movement of piety present in the church since the first centuries.⁶⁰

From the beginning, the idea of purgatory was that of an intermediary place of purification (*purgatorius*) through which the sinners' souls would transit, while being punished for a shorter or longer period of time, between the moment of death and their access to heaven. The time spent was proportional to the seriousness of the earthly misdeeds.⁶¹ One's time in purgatory, Christians believed, could be reduced through meritorious deeds on earth, fulfilled by the sinner himself during his life, and also after his death thanks to the intercession of family and friends, mostly through masses and almsgiving – practices that gained an unprecedented increase during this period.⁶²

As the doctrine spread rapidly in all of Christendom, a new solidarity bonded together the living and the dead, the former having an obligation to do everything possible to speed up the release of the latter from purgatory. The transactional relationship was not unlike what happened in a mercantile company, as John Bossy describes in his recapitulation of Thomas Aquinas' doctrine, wherein some merchants actively labor around the world while their partners remain sleeping and resting at home, yet sharing nonetheless the business' profits.⁶³ Without acceptance of the existence of

⁶⁰ The belief in an intermediary place of expiation existed among Christians since the end of the second century. Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, 1-3, 52-94.

⁶¹ New disciplines emerging over the twelfth and thirteenth century provided the basis for a fuller formulation and definition of the notion of purgatory. The development of bookkeeping and cartography, the progress in arithmetic, mathematics and law made possible the idea of a spatially located place, where a sophisticated legal and penal system was in force: sinners underwent a double trial with two judgments, one at the moment of death, and one at the end of times; between the two, the suffrages of the living could mitigate the penalty, quantitatively commensurate with the sins committed and their seriousness. Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, especially 5-11, 227-29.

⁶² Burgess, "By Quick and by Dead," 838; Bonanno, Bonanno, and Pellegrini, "I legati pro anima," 218.

⁶³ Bossy, "Mass," 44.

purgatory and a firm belief in the efficacy of intercessions by the living on behalf of the dead, masses, suffrages, almsgiving and request for prayers, which predominate the verbiage of late medieval wills, would be inconceivable.

The most efficacious way to seek divine mercy was the sacrament of the Mass, a powerful work that benefitted the living and the dead with the merits accumulated through the divine sacrifice renewed at each celebration on the altar. Among late medieval Christians, bestowing a donation under the requirement of post-mortem masses for his or her soul was a common practice.⁶⁴ Requests for perpetual masses appear frequently in wills of this time, especially after recurrences of pestilence – something with which the merchant Marco was very familiar. Perpetual masses constituted a devotional antidote against the fear of oblivion generated by the sense of transience that deepened as seemingly random epidemics carried off entire families. With perpetual masses, in fact, “the memory of the testator did not end with death, but would be carried on - in the earthly as well as in the spiritual sphere.”⁶⁵

How large a donation was necessary to support the celebration of a mass in the Milan Cathedral is not known for certain, but we have in the *Annali* of the Fabbrica the record of the request of a noble Milanese citizen, who on April 22, 1403 allocated the conspicuous sum of 40 florins per year as payment for a mass to be celebrated daily in suffrage of his soul: dividing 40 florins by 365 days results in a cost of 5 soldi and 2 denari per mass, a day’s pay for a skilled cathedral sculptor.⁶⁶ Sometimes, the Fabbrica

⁶⁴ Cohn, *Cult of Remembrance*, 205-23.

⁶⁵ Cohn, *Cult of Remembrance*, 206.

⁶⁶ ANNALI, 1: 256 (April 22, 1403). 40 florins were equivalent to 1920 soldi (in 1403, the florin was 48 soldi). Skilled sculptors were paid 5 soldi per day. In case of people asking for masses in perpetuity, the multiplier in the ratio between money bequeathed and number of celebrations was infinite, thus resulting in a “discount” of the cost per mass that approached but

officials authorized the celebration of masses for particularly generous benefactors, in the hope of soliciting new bequests. To “give a good example,” the Council of the Fabbrica decided to cover expenses for the funeral, plus seven and thirty day suffrage and annual masses for the noble woman Antoniola de Vassalli, who in 1395 named the Fabbrica universal heir of her patrimony, composed of goods worth 213 lire and a house valued and sold at the price of 1326 gold florins.⁶⁷

Reading carefully through Marco Carelli’s will, it becomes evident that he did not leave anything unsaid for making sure masses and prayers would be offered for his soul and his family, scattering donations small and great among numerous beneficiaries, seemingly so as to amortize the risk in a way similar to the decision of diversification of goods and markets as the basis for the merchant’s commercial success.⁶⁸ First, Carelli sprinkled small legacies (25 lire terzole in Milanese coins, worth 12 lire imperiali and 10 soldi) over six different Milanese convents, placing on his gifts the obligation to celebrate masses and divine offices for his soul.⁶⁹ Quite interestingly, among the great variety of ecclesiastical and charitable institutions emerging in the city at that time, the merchant decided to direct his alms exclusively at mendicant friars – Dominicans, Franciscans and their Celestine branch, Carmelites, Augustinians, and Servites: the exemplary adherents

never reached zero. While arithmetically true, I do not believe that cost per mass was the point of the Fabbrica or the donors in their request for perpetual masses.

⁶⁷ 1326 gold florins were equivalent to 2121 lire and 12 soldi (in 1395, the florin was 32 soldi). ANNALI, 1 (August 8, 1395; August 15, 1395; October 24, 1395; November 7, 1395; November 14, 1395; November 16, 1395; January 23, 1396).

⁶⁸ Miller, “Donors, Their Gifts,” 35.

⁶⁹ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli; see Appendix, XV-XX. The exchange rate between lire terzole and lire imperiali has been calculated from the following Fabbrica Council resolution: “Pay the legacies Marco Carelli ordered with his will, received from the Milanese notaries Primolo de Venzago on July 4, 1393, to the following people: [...] Chapter of the convent of the friars of the Order of Preachers, 25 lire terzole, worth 12 lire imperiali and 10 soldi.” ANNALI, 1: 118-19 (October 11, 1394).

of voluntary poverty, who had divested themselves of everything to follow the way to perfection.⁷⁰

Then, he requested of the Fabbrica a mass in perpetuity (*in perpetuum*), to be celebrated daily for himself and his kin, loved ones, and ancestors, at a new altar built for this specific purpose inside the cathedral. He specified that the money to pay for these masses was to come from the emphyteutic lease on one of his many properties located in Arcagnago, just outside Milan.⁷¹ The priest would be compensated with an annual remuneration of 64 lire: roughly 3 soldi and 6 denari per mass, obtained from the same property lease.⁷²

Fabbrica deputies took very seriously the request and the temporal specification of celebrating forever the mass for Carelli's soul. Their commitment was not just before men, but also before God, and for this they must have felt morally obligated to fulfill their task even centuries after the merchant's death, when with all probability no descendent from his family could have been there to protest against a cessation. This practice was quite expensive for the Fabbrica, since a priest was paid daily for saying a special mass exclusively with this intention. Even into the nineteenth century, the cathedral still celebrated a mass for Marco Carelli's soul every day, continuing until the

⁷⁰ Marco's choice confirms the tendency, highlighted in recent historiography, on the shift of late medieval and Renaissance piety away from monasteries towards the friaries, and the growing affirmation of the new mendicant orders within the context of the city. Helping the poor friars was in itself an act of charity. Cohn, *Cult of Remembrance*, 38; Bonanno, Bonanno, and Pellegrini, "I legati pro anima," 197.

⁷¹ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli; see Appendix, XXVII. Arcagnago, today *frazione* of Carpiano, province of Milan, in the fourteenth century was included in the *Pieve di San Giuliano*, as it appears in the statutes of the waters and the roads of the Milanese *contado* (1346). Archivio Storico Civico di Milano, Estimi del ducato di Milano del 1558, con aggiornamenti fino al XVII secolo, Località foresi, c. 1-52.

⁷² Institution of perpetual masses supported by an annuity destined to pay for a priest who celebrated a mass daily took the name of *cappellanie*, or chantries. Bonanno, Bonanno, and Pellegrini, "I legati pro anima," 213; Wood-Legh, *Perpetual Chantries in Britain*, 1-9.

limitations on church wealth that came with the unification of Italy rendered the cathedral unable to maintain the perpetual mass obligations it had accumulated for Marco Carelli and many others over the centuries.⁷³

Carelli must have been persuaded that the quantity of masses had efficacy for his soul's escape from purgatory but even a daily mass was not enough. Five months after compiling his testament, he had his notary write a codicil asking the officers of the cathedral to celebrate also an anniversary mass on the day of his death each month.⁷⁴ The celebrant was to be remunerated 1 lira and 12 soldi per each anniversary mass – equivalent to thirty times the payment fixed for the daily one, an amount justified because of the more extensive ritual employed in this monthly celebration.

Anniversary masses, essentially a solemn repetition of the funeral rite, evoked to the living the presence of the dead, with the intent of stimulating them to renewed prayers.⁷⁵ As Wood-Legh suggests, since saints and martyrs were celebrated every year for their holy virtues, people desired to be likewise annually remembered in their need for intercession.⁷⁶ Usually the anniversary was celebrated once a year, on the date of the death – unless otherwise requested by the testator: sometimes, a special recurrence or the festivity of a particular saint was indicated in the will instead. Among the twenty-six testators who, between the fourteenth and the sixteenth century, asked the Fabbrica for an anniversary mass for their soul, Marco was the only one to have it celebrated each month rather than once a year, as reported in the parchment notebook that bears on the cover the

⁷³ It was imperative for churches and parishes that daily, monthly and annual masses be maintained: the non-observance of the testator's request would have resulted in the confiscation of the endowment, as often specified in the will itself. Burgess, "Service for the Dead," 205.

⁷⁴ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 14, Marco Carelli.

⁷⁵ Burgess, "Service for the Dead," 191, 204.

⁷⁶ Wood-Legh, *Perpetual Chantries in Britain*, 3.

telling title: “Book of the annual masses orders that the Fabbrica [...] deputies have to make celebrate for the souls of the various people who requested them, giving and donating their goods to the Fabbrica in their wills and bequests, so that hell could not trap them in its clutches.”⁷⁷ In the unusual and expensive repetition of the anniversary he requested each month on the day of his death we must assume that he sought to strengthen the redemptive power of the suffrage: once again, an affirmation of the merchant’s firm belief in purgatory and in the powerful effect the Church Militant might exert on the Church Triumphant.⁷⁸

In his will, Carelli also took care of the place where he thought he would be buried, even though that turned out not to be the case (see Chapter Five): the parish of San Babila, where for generations the Carellis had been interred.⁷⁹ The kind of concern that the merchant displayed for the problem of the Fabbrica’s insufficient income and had moved him to fund with his patrimony the cathedral building enterprise must have been at work when he noted that the construction of the sacristy in the Church of San Babila had been interrupted. The works had begun several years before, but lack of means

⁷⁷ AFD, *Messe e Legati Pii*, c. 56, f. 1, *Libro Annuali* (1394-1508). The notebook is a 48-folio parchment manuscript, divided by months. For each month, it keeps track of the annual masses in chronological order, including some short bibliographic details about the testator, indication of the church where the celebration is held and the price paid for each mass. Under September, on folio 33, we find the record for the annual mass celebrated for Marco Carelli: “Marco Carelli, son of the late *dominus* Guidotino, of Porta Orientale Parish of San Babila, who died in Venice on the abovementioned day; mass instituted in his will, drawn up by Primolo de Venzago on July 9, 1393, in which, after making some bequests, he instituted the Fabbrica as his heir. And also later instituted in a codicil on January 26, 1394, which Marco [Carelli] himself copied in the green book of his account book, on folio 16, ordering to make the chapter of the Chiesa Maggiore celebrate an annual mass each month forever after his death for the salvation of his soul. 1 lira and 12 soldi to be given to the chapter for each annual mass.” AFD, *Messe e Legati Pii*, c. 56, f. 1, fo. 33.

⁷⁸ Piacitelli, “La carità,” 169.

⁷⁹ Marco’s uncle, Albertolo, had asked at his death in 1347 to be buried in the Church of San Babila, “where my father, my son Giovannolo, and other predecessors of mine lie.” AFD, *Testamenti*, c. 42, f. 2, Albertolo Carelli.

stalled the project for a long time. To pose a rapid solution to this interruption, the merchant bequeathed a house close to the church, near the Cagozario Bridge, to the neighbors and parishioners of San Babila, conceding them full authority over the property.⁸⁰ What obtained from the sale was meant to cover all the expenses of construction until completion. Yet, to avoid ulterior delays in the continuation of the works, the merchant specified a term of one year after his death, by which the sale had to be concluded and the money obtained from it gifted to the Church of San Babila.⁸¹ Especially noteworthy in this specification is how it diametrically varied from Carelli's instructions for his Venetian holdings. Whether his orders were to proceed quickly or slowly, the merchant always aimed to control his patrimony from beyond the grave.

In his many deeds, Marco Carelli carried out fully the third admonition of the thirteenth-century chronicler Bonvesin de la Riva: "Three things are needed in order to obtain the forgiveness of sins: devotion to Mary, confession, and almsgiving."⁸² During his lifetime, the merchant had made a practice of helping paupers: feeding the hungry in Venice, bringing them food together with the brothers of the confraternity he started there, or hosting poor girls in his house "for the love of God," raising them as daughters, and providing them with an education and a dowry.⁸³ These people he assisted in life were now listed among his heirs in his will.

⁸⁰ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli; see Appendix, XXIV.

⁸¹ The clause achieved the desired effect, as things went exactly as he hoped. In 1395, one year after the merchant's death indeed, the works in the Church of San Babila resumed. The sacristy was lavishly paved with red marble; Carelli's bequest also covered, in the following years, the acquisition of precious chasubles, chalices and missals. AFD, Registri, r. 38, fo. 107; Registri, r. 37, fo. 95-105v, 112- 21v, 130v.

⁸² For a general context of the text *De Elymosinis* by Bonvesin de la Riva, see Marinoni, "La carità in Bonvesin," 111–21. Bonvesin's maxim echoes a concept already present in the Old Testament, the belief that almsgiving frees from death and sin (Tobit 4:11; Ecclesiastes 11:1-4).

⁸³ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60.

We have already mentioned the mill and the lands that Marco earlier had asked the Council of the Fabbrica the permission to alienate on behalf of a girl raised in his house, to keep her intended dowry.⁸⁴ While providing indigent maids with dowries was an act of charity frequently performed at the time, especially through testamentary bequests to pious institutions created with that aim, the degree of Carelli's personal involvement in this work of charity was less common.⁸⁵ The girls were living with him and his wife in his main habitation in Milan, near the Church of San Babila; a room in the house, with three beds, was reserved for them. The merchant paid a Latin teacher who also instructed them in other subjects, and, when required, a doctor was called to provide them with medical care.⁸⁶

The young needy girls for the old childless man may have been substitutes for the daughters he never had the privilege to raise.⁸⁷ For one of them in particular, a certain Ursina, Carelli felt a special paternal affection. In the spring of that same year 1393, provided with the mill Carelli alienated for her, she married Albertino de Nigri, described as an honest and trustworthy man, chosen by the merchant as administrator of his entire patrimony during the last two years of his life. The two lived in the big house of Carelli, soon gladdening it with the arrival of a baby – and on that occasion the merchant

⁸⁴ ANNALI, 1: 91 (January 17, 1393).

⁸⁵ Cohn, *Cult of Remembrance*, 65, 70. Cohn defines the practice of providing dowries to indigent girls “the most basic form of social welfare for women over the course of a lifetime [as] the gift buttressed the principal lifetime insurance policy for women of the late medieval and early modern periods: the dowry.”

⁸⁶ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60.

⁸⁷ While the documents reveal Carelli's deep affection for the girls, nothing suggests the existence of anything inappropriate in these relationships; on the contrary, the fact that the fiancée, and then husband, of one of these girls, Ursina, was living with them in the Carelli's house further strengthens the likelihood of a purely filial relationship.

provided a doctor for Ursina to take care of her after childbirth and to cure for several weeks a breast disease she contracted.⁸⁸

Indigent girls were not the only recipients of the merchant's charity: coming at about midpoint in the list of his dispositions was that crowd of nameless paupers medieval people were used to call the "poor of Christ."⁸⁹ The expression *pauperes Christi*, frequently recurrent in medieval testaments, confraternities and hospitals' statutes, forcefully conveyed the evangelic identity between the poor and Christ, which animated the florescence in this period of works of charity.⁹⁰ Giving alms was believed to be doubly efficacious for the salvation of the benefactor's soul: it was a pious deed, and also it compelled the beneficiaries to pray for their benefactors. Prayers offered by the humble, the suffering sick, and the poor, then, were deemed particularly dear to God, and their intercession considered especially powerful.⁹¹

Marco Carelli, in an act of lavishness, asked that shirts be made for the *pauperes Christi* with all his linen cloths – hundreds of pieces of the precious fabrics he traded.⁹² Marco's gift was not trivial considering the estimates of the cloths' value the Fabbrica deputies made while inventorying the merchant's goods. As soon as the news of his death arrived in Milan, in fact, the Fabbrica appointed a team comprised of a notary, the city guards' commander (*conestabile*), and two *barneriis* with the task of going to the merchant's main house to look after his goods until the completion of a detailed

⁸⁸ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60.

⁸⁹ Rigon, "I testamenti," 407. For the *pauperes Christi*, often mentioned in late medieval testaments, an exception is made to the rule that only precisely designated heirs and not generic people may be named as heirs in the wills.

⁹⁰ On the expression *pauperes Christi*, see also Bonanno, Bonanno, and Pellegrini, "I legati pro anima," 205; Vismara, "La norma e lo spirito," 80.

⁹¹ Lorcini, "Les clauses religieuses," 319; Noto, *Gli Amici dei Poveri*, xxxi; Burgess, "By Quick and by Dead," 845; Burgess, "Service for the Dead," 190.

⁹² AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli; see Appendix, XXII.

inventory of all the items room by room, no doubt to decrease the possibility that someone might take advantage of the situation and steal what had become the property of the Fabbrica but also with an eye to finding a prospective buyer for the entire warehouse of assorted goods before some of them began to deteriorate or decay.⁹³

The merchant's generosity towards the poor did not exclude his own blood – after all, theologians and confessors were the first to exhort testators not to neglect in their dispositions their families in favor of indigent strangers, arriving even to the point of refusing bequests made to the church to the detriment of natural heirs.⁹⁴ To his wife, *donna* Flora de Aliprandi, Marco disposed in his will for the restitution of her entire dowry, worth the considerable sum of 14,700 lire *terziole*, and her trousseau: linen and wool cloths, pearls and rings. To this ensemble, he added also a small sum to dispense in alms to the poor, a brown cloth to make a mantle and a dress for the day of his funeral, the bed “where I sleep with my wife,” two pairs of sheets, a white blanket and a wide bedcover, specifying that she choose “obviously, the one you like the most.” Such personal effects responded to a practical need, since he might suppose that, in keeping with customary practice, Flora would remain for one year to sleep in that house. To this end, he granted her the usufruct for one year of a portion of their main house in Milan: three bedrooms on the first floor and a room in the attic. At the same time, these provisions reveal a certain tenderness, carrying the affective value that an undifferentiated bestowal of cash would not have conveyed.⁹⁵

⁹³ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 63; ANNALI, 1: 118 (September 27, 1394).

⁹⁴ Vismara, “La norma e lo spirito,” 81.

⁹⁵ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli; see Appendix, IV. Martha Howell, analyzing the objects listed as gifts in late medieval Douai wills, observes that “cups, belts, cloaks and beds did not function as measures of value or media of exchange in quite the same way as cash, commodities or even the family patrimony: [...] they carried and marked social and cultural

These provisions for his wife may seem poor things in comparison with what he possessed and what he could have left her. Yet, however long a life Flora would have had ahead after the husband's death, her dowry was surely more than enough to allow her to continue a lavish lifestyle without any need to remarry, maintaining the same high standard of living she had enjoyed with her wealthy natal family. Juxtaposed against his Milanese contemporaries, Carelli's overall spousal bequest appears quite generous, considering that Lombard succession right did not prescribe dowry restitution as a norm.⁹⁶ As a point of comparison, for example, his contemporary the wealthy merchant Donato Ferrario da Pantigliate devolved his entire patrimony to the confraternity he founded, the Scuola della Divinità, and left his old wife Antonia a life annuity of 36 florins and the usufruct of their house until her death, three years later, but only under the oath of not demanding her dowry back.⁹⁷

The bequests Marco disposed for his cousins were quite diversified - signifying, presumably, the different degrees of closeness he felt for them. Perhaps also for this reason, anticipating potential disputes of jealousy among the heirs over the different treatments reserved to them, the merchant did not neglect to add at the end of each disposition a clause that in essence stated the typical warning that "she has to be and stay

value, they [...] forged a link between giver and receiver, they told a life-story." Howell, "Fixing Movables," 39.

⁹⁶ Succession right and norms regulating dowry restitution after the husband's death varied in late medieval Italy from city to city. In Florence, for instance, legislation prescribed that, similarly to what Donato Ferrario actually disposed, the wife was given the usufruct of the house or part of it, as long as she remain chaste, did not remarry and did not demand her dowry restitution. In Arezzo, Pisa, Perugia, Assisi and Siena, under the same conditions the wife was given, in addition to the usufruct of the house, also her dowry and her bridal trousseau that included linens and jewelry. In Venice, only the most generous husbands would dispose for the wife the dowry restitution in its entirety, as law did not prescribe so doing. For central Italy, see Cohn, *Cult of Remembrance*, 220; for Venice, see Judde de Larivière, "Procédures, enjeux et fonctions," 541.

⁹⁷ Gazzini, *Dare et habere*, 73.

silent and happy for the above-mentioned bequests I decided for her as specified above, and she cannot demand nor ask nor obtain anything else of my patrimony, otherwise everything I bequeathed her will be subtracted to her.” Even within the formulaic expression, Carelli used five different ways to state this admonition: a clear indication that unlike a notary who would always use the same formula, Carelli dictated his own will in his own way.⁹⁸

He asked the Fabbrica councilors to make for his paternal uncle’s Albertolo daughter Malgarina, and his paternal uncle Franzio’s daughters Giovannola and Beltramolla each a brown dress for his funeral, similar in dimension and value to the one for his wife, and to each of them he left a life annuity, respectively of the value of 50, 30 and 30 lire, to be given to them every year at Christmas.⁹⁹ For Petrolla and Malgarolla, daughters of his bankrupted cousin Simonolo, he left a small life annuity of 10 lire to the first, and to the other, the transfer of a credit Carelli had towards her husband, worth 28 lire and 12 gold florins.¹⁰⁰

Among his friends, Marco sprinkled *una tantum* little gifts. He destined to Lorenzo Sansoni a precious cloth of white wool to make a *pellanda* (a long-sleeve vest finely decorated) and a little hood, while small amounts of money (10, 30, 32 lire) were destined to the other members of the Sansoni family: Albertollo, Giovannolo, Leonardo and Giacomo’s daughter.¹⁰¹ Maffiolo nicknamed Perla di Negro got 30 lire, Giorgio da

⁹⁸ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli; see Appendix, IV-XI, XIII-XIV, XXI-XXIII.

⁹⁹ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli; see Appendix, V-VI.

¹⁰⁰ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli; see Appendix, XIII-XIV. Petrolla and Malgarolla were the granddaughters of his paternal uncle, Franzio.

¹⁰¹ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli; see Appendix, XIII, IX, XI, XXI, XXII.

Glassiate only 16, while 100 lire were to be given to a certain Beltramino Pazanani at the time of his sister's wedding.¹⁰²

Seemingly as an afterthought, having completed all the small donations Marco went back again to his cousin Malgarina, to whom it seems he was bound with a special affection. In addition to the generous annual sum aforementioned, he decided to leave her a house near the Cagozario Bridge, some land around it, and another house outside Milan – specifying that she might use the properties at her will, for herself or to bequest them “to the poor of Christ for love of God.”¹⁰³ We do not know if Carelli was working from a list of beneficiaries, or from a list of goods and intended bequests. In any case, while the order of things as listed in the will occasionally seems chaotic, the final result is not: the merchant clearly knew what he was doing.

Reading the will at an appropriate legal speed, it would have taken the deputies roughly half an hour to get to the end of these 275 lines of small bequests showered among poor of Christ, friends and cousins. At that point, they would finally arrive at the big give: the nomination of the Fabbrica of the Chiesa Maggiore of Milan as Marco Carelli's universal heir. As a result, the property of all his goods and real estate (*mobilia et immobilia*), in Milan, Venice and Bruges was transferred to the Fabbrica officials, together with all the merchant's debts and credits, carefully registered in his personal accounting books, including a list of debtors and instruments. Carelli knew well the difficult financial situation into which the Fabbrica had fallen, and how fundamental his money would be for the continuation of the works. For this reason, he exhorted the deputies to dispose of his giant patrimony and to redeem all debts owed to him as soon as

¹⁰² AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli; see Appendix, X, XXIII, VII.

¹⁰³ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli; see Appendix, XXV.

possible (*quam citius poterit*), so that what obtained could be rapidly invested in the construction works.

What moved Marco to his grand donation? As for many other late medieval munificent merchants, what motivated him was an inextricable mix of desire for redemption of his public image no less than his soul, catharsis for the many underhanded business dealings he had conducted, pride and ostentation, devotion and religiosity, piety and compassion toward the neediest. The small acts of charity performed over all his life – from hosting indigent girls in his house to his care for poor and sick people in Venice, from the administrative assistance he gave pro bono to the Fabbrica to the alms repeatedly offered to the beggars, from gifts to the Chiesa Maggiore, to his parish church, San Babila, and to the mendicant convents of his neighborhood – all reveal a constant ideal tension. The same tension moved him to found a confraternity of merchants or to buy barrels of nutmeg from Eastern traders in Venice and import anew at an 800% markup to Milan, to invest in a wool manufacturing business or in the construction of the new grandiose cathedral of the city. For him being a good Christian meant to devote himself to success in business and equally to charitable deeds, always making great profits on his investments.

The rigid compartments in which historians tend to squeeze medieval people - the individual's business, religiosity, emotional attachments, ... - did not exist for him, as his will reveals. Its structure reflects a lack of order and hierarchy among the dispositions. The usual testator arranged his wishes and beneficiaries according to a precise sequence: first charitable bequests, then disposition regarding funeral rite and burial site, and lastly

gifts for family and friends, or, vice versa, decisions regarding the estate and its division among heirs, followed by pious donations and provisions for the salvation of the soul.¹⁰⁴

In the case of Marco Carelli's will, it is the absence of structure that is telling. After the gifts to the wife, Marco distributed his cloths and dresses to the poor; then his dictated words went back to his family, leaving small life annuities to his cousins and *una tantum* gifts to his business partners and friends. He sprinkled small bequests among six convents, then listed other friends among his beneficiaries, and then decided to leave a house to his fellow parishioners for the works of the Church of San Babila's sacristy. Whether proceeding from a list or what was in his head, next he disposed an additional bequest to his cousin and asked her to give alms to the poor for his soul, ordered the celebration of a mass 7 and 30 days after his death, and then each year for his anniversary, and finally named the Fabbrica as his universal heir, requiring contextually the celebration of a daily mass in perpetuity in the cathedral. The apparent disorder of the dispositions strongly suggests that Marco, a man of great power and accomplishments, dictated himself the terms of his will, rather than patiently answering the notary's list of prepared questions, as was customary at the time. Reading the will means actually listening to his wishes in the precise order they came to his mind. I argue, then, that family, friends, partners, masses, *pauperes*, houses, lands, funeral rites and churches construction were not in separated sections in his will because they were not in his life: for him, a substantial unity joined business and charity, religiosity and trading investments. In this merchant, faithful devotee of the Virgin Mary, astute money handler,

¹⁰⁴ Cohn, *Cult of Remembrance*, 15; Bonanno, Bonanno, and Pellegrini, "I legati pro anima," 189, 205, 218; Lorcín, "Les clauses religieuses," 292; Vismara, "La norma e lo spirito," 76.

slave trader, usurer, and generous benefactor of the *pauperes Christi*, what may appear to us today as vivid contradictions fruitfully coexisted.



Now that the Fabbrica had obtained this magnificent donation from the merchant Marco Carelli, its councilors could sigh with relief, as its most compelling needs would be met. The works could resume without further interruption. At the same time, the Fabbrica now faced two immediate issues: first, how to properly honor the donor, with an eye to doing what was right but also with careful consideration about how to best solicit new donations encouraged by the publicity and public acclaim surrounding Carelli's bequest; second, how to use the merchant's money effectively. The next chapter deals with the first of these two aspects, looking at the triumphal funeral celebrations in Venice and Milan after Marco's death.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Funeral

The meticulous precision that Marco Carelli employed in taking care of his business and recording every expense, credit, and transaction in his mercantile activity is evident as well in the detailed dispositions enumerated in his two wills – those regarding his assets, his house goods, and his donations to family, friends, paupers and friars. One might assume that a person who took such extraordinary care in keeping track of every lira and in detailing requests for masses and anniversaries might also have been very concerned with the details of his funeral and interment. Yet, this was not the case. Quite to the contrary, in his detailed testament Carelli advanced no requests regarding his funeral, nor did he leave any indication regarding his preferred burial site. The only reference he made to the funeral concerned the modest brown dresses he requested the cathedral councilors to buy for his wife and his cousins Malgarina, Giovannola and Beltramolla, to be worn at the ceremony.³³⁹

Certainly, thanks to his huge donation, the merchant easily could have asked for and surely would have obtained whatever sumptuous ceremony and prestigious burial site for his body he wished – as in fact his Milanese contemporaries customarily did, willing to pay great sums of money for an assurance of being buried in the graveyard at the back of the cathedral, or to have a chapel built for their family inside one of the city's main churches.³⁴⁰ Such a conspicuous omission on Carelli's part surely was deliberate, and as such claims fully our attention.

³³⁹ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli; see Appendix B, IV-VI.

³⁴⁰ Bonanno, Bonanno, and Pellegrini, "I legati pro anima," 211.

Marco Carelli, as with other people of substantial means, had three specific areas wherein he might make requests in his will with regard to burial and the hereafter. These were place of burial, funeral ceremonies, and commemoration rituals. Chapter Four showed the great specificity with which the merchant had attended to the state of his soul, with detailed specifications and monetary allocations for perpetual or anniversary masses celebrated in intercession for his soul. In the present chapter we will see that in the remaining two areas, the locus of burial and the manner of the funeral celebration, he showed stunning indifference or, I would argue, a calculated decision about what was and what was not important.

Following an overview of the choices and attitudes regarding burial and funeral arrangements made by Carelli's contemporaries, this chapter analyzes in detail the various phases of the merchant's death ritual, none requested or shaped by him, from his preparation for death up to the Fabbrica decision ten years later to authorize a marble sarcophagus for his bodily remains. The adoption of Arnold van Gennep's classic tripartite schema - rites of separation (preliminal), transition (liminal), and incorporation (post-liminal) – in the study of the ritual sequence allows for an appreciation of the remarkable length of the first two phases in Carelli's case, providing, I would argue, insights into late medieval and, more specifically, Carelli's attitudes towards death.

My choice to use van Gennep's framework came after careful consideration of the more recent model proposed by Philippe Aries, which draws a fundamental contrast between "tamed" and "tormented" death. In his view, medieval people hoped to experience the former, dying with the serenity expressed in paintings of Mary, the mother

of Jesus, and of the martyr saints they venerated.¹⁰⁷ But they feared the torments of hell so rivetingly described by Dante, especially so in the wake of the widespread and inexplicable death brought about by the spread of plague. Whether in the Camposanto at Pisa or in other macabre images emphasized by art historian Millard Meiss, the specter of a tormented death stalked fourteenth-century people.¹⁰⁸ My understanding of Marco Carelli's mentalité as he approached the inevitability of his death, coming in his mature years, fits poorly with the tamed versus tormented dichotomy. Rather, just as I believe that his fabulous donation was a decision made carefully over time and with much reflection, so also I judge that his confrontation with death came in considered stages of reconciliation.

A place for my mortal remnants

Canon law recognized the possibility for the testator to choose a preferred burial site in his or her will.¹⁰⁹ Although place of burial was a spiritual matter that should not have been subject to purchase, bequests left to the church in exchange for assurances regarding the desired interment site became customary.¹¹⁰ During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the burial gift – often substantially greater than the actual cost of interment – was apparently intended as a sort of compensation for the testator's appropriation of a portion of what in reality was public, communal space.¹¹¹ Burial at the parish of birth was the usual choice among testators; it was considered socially prestigious to do so, and

¹⁰⁷ Aries, *The Hour of Our Death*, 5-28.

¹⁰⁸ Meiss, *Painting in Florence*, 71-73.

¹⁰⁹ Harding, "Burial Choice," 120.

¹¹⁰ Binski, "Ways of Dying," 56.

¹¹¹ Harding, "Burial Choice," 131.

established a solid reputation for the family among the community.¹¹² In order to assure the interests of the parish's priest while allowing freedom of choice, canon law also prescribed that a substantial part of the mortuary fee, usually corresponding to one quarter, was to be assigned to the parish of birth, no matter the interment site the individual chose.¹¹³

Perhaps, Marco did not consider it necessary to specify his burial site in his will, on the assumption that he would be interred alongside his ancestors. For several generations, the Carellis had been buried in the Church of San Babila, in the parish where the merchant, and his uncles and grandfather before him, had lived. But his uncle, Albertolo, had made no such assumptions and had asked that at his death (1347) he be buried in that church "where my father, my son Giovannolo, and other predecessors of mine lie."¹¹⁴ Moreover, the small but significant donation Marco left for the Church of San Babila, and specifically for the completion of the works for the sacristy, reinforces the hypothesis that he expected to be buried there.¹¹⁵ The reunion of familial ancestors in the same sepulcher in the parish cemetery or chapel was a norm that synodical statutes strongly suggested, and a practice that gained rapid diffusion throughout the fourteenth century.¹¹⁶ It was as if death's rapacious victory on earth might be defeated in the cemetery, where the family lineage – mostly intended as birth family and not as family acquired through marriages – could go on, reunited once again and for all eternity.¹¹⁷

¹¹² Harding, "Burial Choice," 119; Heath, "Urban Piety," 215; Binski, "Ways of Dying," 56.

¹¹³ Binski, "Ways of Dying," 56.

¹¹⁴ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 2, Albertolo Carelli.

¹¹⁵ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli. See Chapter 4.

¹¹⁶ Trexler, *Synodal Law*, 196-98, 257-59; Rigon, "Orientamenti religiosi," 46; Bonanno, Bonanno, and Pellegrini, "I legati pro anima," 216.

¹¹⁷ Visceglia, "Corpo e sepoltura," 602-3; Chiffolleau, "Perché cambia la morte," 456-58.

Over the second half of the fourteenth century, concern over one's burial site acquired ever greater significance. The sudden and inexplicable tragedy that came with the Black Death, initially in 1347-48 and then relived at every new occurrence of the deadly epidemic, changed profoundly the way people thought about life and death, memory and oblivion. The randomness with which the plague hit, without any rule, predictability or respect, was echoed in the macabre spectacle of mass graves where the corpses of poor and rich, children and elderly were piled anonymously one upon another. In response to this crisis of death, a new "cult of remembrance," to use Samuel K. Cohn's expression, emerged, paralleled by growing attention toward lineage. The result was a heightened importance given to the construction of individual, and especially familial, burial places.¹¹⁸ As an antidote to the inexplicability of the plague and the fear of oblivion, a growing number of people chose to indicate precisely in their wills their preferred burial place, often together with details concerning the interment ceremony – everything from the desired number of torches to be lit on the scene to the size of the funeral cloth to be draped on the coffin.

The inclusion (or not) of such specifications in the testament varied greatly from place to place, mostly depending upon two factors: notarial usages, namely whether or not notaries prompted the testator with a direct question regarding the desired burial place and arrangements, and family, social, or local traditions. In several cities and towns where intense local studies have been done, burial decisions became increasingly prominent in wills. In the French city of Lyon, for example, between 1390 and 1420, concerns about burial appear to be the most pressing matter among the testator's

¹¹⁸ Cohn, *Cult of Remembrance*, 140-42, 160.

wishes.¹¹⁹ Similarly, in a study of burial practices in Naples in following centuries, virtually all known wills specified the interment place.¹²⁰ In Pisa and Perugia, 96% and 92% respectively of testators began their last wishes by specifying the place chosen for burial and the amount of money to be set aside for the interment ritual. In Florence, Arezzo and Siena, where (unlike at Pisa and Perugia) notaries did not always prompt testators to choose a burial site, the number of wills including such indications was lower (70%-79%), yet still significant.¹²¹ At the other end of the spectrum were locales and situations where no specification of burial place was made, as customary practices firmly established where the corpse would be laid to rest. To mention one telling case, university professors in Trecento Bologna, regarded as key players in the town's politics and economy, hardly ever included indications regarding their place of interment. Indifference to public show was hardly the motive, as they nevertheless expected to have their prestige honored with the construction of a monumental sarcophagus, often adorned with exquisite bas-reliefs.¹²²

Milanese testators fall somewhere between these two extremes. Mention in their wills of a preferred burial site was not widespread, as in most cases family tradition, which for generations had buried its ancestors in the family chapel or in the parish of birth, made the specification unnecessary. Yet, there were some who requested a site for interment different from the one that custom would have assigned. Often, the donors of pious bequests accompanied their bestowals with requests to be buried within or immediately outside the walls of a church or, starting at the end of the Trecento, of the

¹¹⁹ Lorcin, "Trois manières d'enterrement," 6, 15.

¹²⁰ Visceglia, "Corpo e sepoltura," 595.

¹²¹ Cohn, *Cult of Remembrance*, 133-34.

¹²² Wray, *Communities and Crisis*, 229-30.

cathedral. So, for example, a noble citizen in 1399 bequeathed 1000 florins to the Fabbrica, asking in return permission to have a chapel built in the cathedral and to choose the place of burial for himself and his heirs inside the Camposanto, the graveyard at the back of the cathedral built with the money from Carelli's inheritance.¹²³ Two years later, a certain Andriolo de Vergiate promised to donate 200 florins, on condition that he be buried in the Camposanto, and the same privilege was conceded to a Milanese testator who intended to subsidize a chaplain in the cathedral with an annual annuity of 40 florins.¹²⁴ Some testators to the Fabbrica required that it take care of the entire interment process. The illustrious landowner Balzarino della Pusterla in 1407, for example, named the Fabbrica heir of his properties in Milan and the *contado*, requiring the deputies to bury him in the monastery of the Olivetans he had founded in Baggio. His testament directed the Fabbrica to send the monastery a beech casket for him and his wife, along with a marmoreal tombstone sculpted with their effigies.¹²⁵

Precisely how common was the inclusion in Milanese wills of indications regarding choice of burial place? To answer this question, I undertook an analysis of the first one hundred wills by donors in favor of the Fabbrica of Milan Cathedral drawn from a published collection; these come from the first 18 years of construction of the cathedral (1386-1403).¹²⁶ Analysis of the wills shows that about 10% of the included testators requested a specific place of burial. For the aims of my analysis, approximately two

¹²³ ANNALI, 1: 199 (December 7, 1399). 1000 florins = 1600 lire (in 1399, one florin was worth 32 soldi).

¹²⁴ ANNALI, 1: 240 (November 27, 1401). 200 florins = 480 lire (in 1401, one florin was worth 48 soldi). For the exchange rates of lira and florin in Milan, see Martini, *Manuale di metrologia*, 352-53; ANNALI, 1: 256 (April 22, 1403). 40 florins = 10 lire (in 1403, one florin was worth 50 soldi).

¹²⁵ Betto, "Il testamento," 285-86.

¹²⁶ The wills are edited in Galli, "Carità e remissione."

thirds of these first hundred documents were considered, because the remaining one-third, were available only as incomplete extracts. In these cases the extract often reported the gift to the Fabbrica but not the remainder of the will wherein requests about place of burial may have been recorded.¹²⁷

For the wills examined closely, the variety of formulas notaries used to express the testator's wishes regarding funeral, procession, place of burial, and commemorative rituals, together with the placement of these requests in different parts of the wills, suggest that the specifics, even when similar in outcome, were not directly prompted by the notary via a set of questions routinely addressed to the testator. Rather, the structure and the wording suggest that testators themselves decided to include various requests in their wills, phrasing them individually rather than in accord with a notarial formula. Such a freewheeling usage would explain why only seven testators among the examined wills indicated a specific burial site. In three of these seven cases, the testators asked to be buried in the newly constructed Camposanto at the back of the cathedral, but there was a fourth who requested to be interred in the churchyard of Santo Stefano in Brolo, a fifth who specified the house of the Mount Carmel friars in Milan, and a sixth who appointed a specific person to make decisions concerning her burial.¹²⁸ Only one testator among

¹²⁷ When the testator divided the patrimony among multiple beneficiaries, often the notary gave to the Fabbrica only the section of the will of its direct interest. Therefore, in the absence of the full document, it is not possible to assess from the extract whether or not the testator left indications regarding the burial site. Such reference would be found in the Fabbrica extract only in cases where the donor requested burial next to the cathedral.

¹²⁸ AFD, Testamenti, c. 55, f. 7, Nicorina Vogonzate (March 9, 1400); Giovannola Ezerissi (July 26, 1400); Castellino Pasquale (September 6, 1400).

AFD, Testamenti, c. 41, f. 18, Giovannino Battaglia (August 21, 1399).

AFD, Testamenti, c. 50, f. 17, Giacomina Pasquali (January 7, 1400).

AFD, Testamenti, c. 53, f. 3, Simonola Speroni (July 28, 1388); Giovannola Corradi (August 26, 1400).

these seven asked for a sepulchral monument to be erected over her tomb, while the other six requested no more than a simple interment in a specified graveyard.¹²⁹

<i>Total number of wills</i>	<i>100</i>
Indication of burial (in complete wills)	7
Cathedral churchyard	2
Other sites	2
Executors in charge of burial	2
Sepulchral monument	1

Table 5.1 Burial indications in Fabbri benefactors' wills (1386-1400). Source: AFD, Testamenti.

The sample of wills examined was chosen to be temporally closest to Marco Carelli's testament (1392). I readily concede that the number of testators asking to be buried in the Camposanto behind the cathedral rose immediately in the first years of the Quattrocento, with the completion of its construction and the growing devotion to it. Aside from numerical percentages, however, what emerges from these 67 early wills is that the request for a designated burial place was clearly an option for late medieval Milanese donors, one the generous merchant Carelli, himself an official of the Fabbri, must have known about and surely pondered for himself. And in the end he decided not to give any indication regarding his desired burial place: that is, he chose to do what 90% of his compatriots also did. He was, however, unlike any of his fellow citizens in the fabulous amount he intended to donate, a fact that makes his choice not to place himself

¹²⁹ Five of the seven testators who left some indication regarding their choice of burial place were women. I think there is an interesting correlation here between gender and decisions regarding entombment, one that I would like to explore further in a future inquiry extending to a longer time period and to other churches in Milan specifically and in the Italian peninsula more generally.

among the 10% who thought to purchase in advance their final resting place all the more significant and worthy of exploration.

Consider the stark contrast between Marco's choice and that of another wealthy benefactor of the Cathedral of Milan at the end of the Trecento, Duke Gian Galeazzo Visconti, deemed by some as founder of the cathedral. The construction of a new, bigger cathedral at the center of Milan in place of the small and ruined Santa Maria Maggiore Church had been clamored for vigorously over many years by several constituencies: the archbishop, the wealthy merchants, the whole citizenry and crowds of devotees.¹³⁰ Yet only in 1386 did the works begin, thanks to Gian Galeazzo Visconti's significant support by way of monetary donations, tax exemptions and free exploitation of a marble quarry in his territorial possession.¹³¹

Perhaps the duke was inspired to this largesse by some spiritual sensibility, though there is little evidence in his well-documented life to sustain such speculation.¹³² More likely, the financing of the cathedral project represented for Visconti a brilliant way to

¹³⁰ Santa Maria Maggiore, the basilica of Milan from the ninth century, had been devastated by fire in 1075, and a century later had been badly damaged by Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa as a punishment for the city's leading role in constituting the Lombard League against his despotic power. The church's gigantic bell tower, pulled down on that occasion, had been rebuilt at the beginning of the fourteenth century by Azzone Visconti, but only twenty years later the new tower proved to be as weak in its foundation as it was powerful in appearance. It collapsed abruptly, killing two hundred people and carrying away a good section of the church walls in its fall. (See Cattaneo, *Il Duomo*, 10). Moreover, the modest dimensions of the basilica did not rightly fit with the city's growing ambitions as a center of commerce and manufactures.

¹³¹ Galeazzo bequeathed a monthly donation of 250 florins (the equivalent of the annual wages of between ten and eleven skilled workers). For the fluctuations of florin's value, see Zerbi, *Le origini della partita doppia*. For salaries and annual wages, see AFD, Registri, r. 51. The equivalency has been calculated in the following way: 250 florins = 8250 soldi, which at 252 work days in 1387 at 3 soldi would pay for 10.9 annual workers. For privileges and tax exemptions Gian Galeazzo granted the Fabbrica, see ANNALI, 1: 13-14 (October 24, 1387); ANNALI, 1: 174 (February 14, 1387); Boucheron, *Le pouvoir de bâtir*, 473-80. See also the laws Gian Galeazzo promulgated to facilitate fundraising for the construction: Archivio Storico Civico of Milano, Litterarum ducalium, r. 2, fo. 153, Decree of May 10, 1387, confirmed on October 15, 1403; ANNALI, 1: 1 (February 7, 1387); ANNALI, 1: 137-38 (May 18, 1395).

¹³² Cattaneo, *Il Duomo*, 28.

gain acceptance and loyalty from the Milanese, who were restive over his seizure of power over them by treacherous means, and who were exasperated by his continuous wars and the consequent heavy taxation that compromised their commercial activity.¹³³

His assistance came with some strings, as he aimed to transform the cathedral into a giant mausoleum for his dynasty.¹³⁴ His project included placing his family's monumental sarcophagus in the cathedral and decorating the apsidal stained glass window with his dynastic emblems.¹³⁵ At first the Fabbrica seemed to consent to his project, having little choice until they developed independent sources of income. Then, little by little, as their finances improved, the councilors started to push away the duke, progressively gaining their independence over the cathedral.¹³⁶ Confronted with such a

¹³³ Gian Galeazzo Visconti obtained power over Milan in 1385 imprisoning and poisoning to death his uncle Bernabò, lord of Milan at the time. For a fuller account of the ambivalent relationship between Gian Galeazzo and the Fabbrica of Milan Cathedral, and his support in the construction, see Saltamacchia, "Prince and Prostitute," 173-91; Saltamacchia, *Costruire cattedrali*, 113-22. See also Cognasso, "Istituzioni comunali e signorili," 539.

¹³⁴ Boucheron, *Le pouvoir de bâtir*, 189.

¹³⁵ For almost a decade Duke Gian Galeazzo had proposed embellishing the main focus of the church, the apsidal central window, with a Visconti dynasty emblem: an enormous grass snake sliding from the top to the bottom of the window. The Fabbrica initially agreed with the project and with his spokesman in the council, architect Mignot. But then they slowly began to regain terrain in this dispute, first reducing the dimensions of the snake, then moving its position to a corner on the top. Even today, from the back of the Cathedral of Milan, one can see the final result of the controversy. The apsidal central window displays an Annunciation scene, a religious representation linked with the dedication of the church to the Virgin Mary. In the center of the window, between the Virgin Mary and the Archangel Gabriel, a sun stands out, its rays formed by ten little wavy snakes: it is the *raza*, another Visconti family emblem. Technically, the counselors finally approved the insertion of the Visconti symbol in the decoration of the window, perhaps to the joy of Mignot and the duke, but any pleasure must have been short-lived once the result appeared. The *raza* was still there, but it was included in a vertical progression together with a bas-relief of God the Father and a dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit. People would immediately recognize in that radiant sun the second person of the Trinity, Christ, in his iconic representation as *Sol Justitia*, the Sun of Justice, referring to the gospel description of the Incarnation as the triumphant moment in the victory of light over darkness; very few would be reminded of the Visconti dynasty. See Saltamacchia, *Costruire cattedrali*, 113-22; Mezzanotte, "Il Duomo," 859-96; Boucheron, *Le pouvoir de bâtir*, 189.

¹³⁶ ANNALI, 1: 199 (December 14, 1399); 1: 202-10 (January 11, 1400); 1: 224-29 (May 15, 1401); 1: 240-41 (November 27, 1401); Mezzanotte, "Il Duomo," 859-96; Romanini, "La fabbrica del Duomo," 356; Frankl, *Gothic*, 63-86.

humiliating defeat, Gian Galeazzo turned instead to Pavia for a more receptive place to build his magnificent tomb.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, Marco Carelli's choices reflect the mendicant ideals of contempt for ambition and earthly glory, expressed unambiguously by disinterest in the burial site and any monumental apparatus built to entrust one's name to posterity – a sobriety and shunning of ostentation that forcefully echoes the *Humiliati* values lived by the merchant's grandfather Albrigolo and passed to him through his father and uncles.¹³⁷ Judging, indeed, from what the merchant chose to include – the thousands of masses listed in full details in his two wills and codicil, as examined in the previous chapter – as well as what he chose not to include, Carelli appears to have been concerned with the salvation of his soul but not with the ultimate fate of his body.

The same conclusion is reached by examining a closely related portion of the merchant's will, where he shows a similar indifference to his own funeral ceremony. He made no specific requests about the obsequies, nor did he ask that a chapel be built in his honor and for the celebration of daily masses for his soul. He specified perpetual masses and he designated with exactitude the funds to pay the priest who would offer the masses, but about the edifice he was silent. This he chose in sharp contrast to the custom among late medieval people of his rank to invest money in the construction of a chapel with the primary intent of buttressing their everlasting memory.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Cohn, *Cult of Remembrance*, 160. On the *Humiliati* values lived by Marco Carelli's grandfather Albrigolo, see Chapter 2.

¹³⁸ For examples of detailed requests for chapels by Carelli's contemporaries, see for instance Cohn, *Cult of Remembrance*, 125, 131-32, 142, 144-45.

Rites of passages

Despite the general indifference Marco Carelli demonstrated in his will toward his place of burial and his funerary celebration, a long, sumptuous and elaborate ritual marked his death. The French ethnographer Arnold van Gennep's rites of passage tripartite structure provides a useful starting point for an analysis of Marco Carelli's funeral. On the one hand, it facilitates systematizing the various rituals celebrated over the years immediately before and after his death into a coherent three-phase schema, and, on the other, it is helpful for understanding and appreciating the peculiarities of the merchant's obsequies, which in turn provide insights into late medieval Milanese attitudes towards death, including those of Marco Carelli.

Van Gennep posited that life is composed of a series of stages with similar beginnings and ends, marked by rites that enable the passage from one stage to the next – most notably, pregnancy and childbirth, birth and childhood, betrothal and marriage, death. The different rites of passage in each life stage present a common structure divided into three phases: separation, transition, and incorporation, marked by preliminal, liminal and post-liminal rites respectively.¹³⁹

The separation phase: *pre-liminality*

Typically, the separation phase of a funeral starts with the transportation of the corpse outside the home wherein death occurred, followed by the washing and anointing of the body, and the rites of purification in general. Yet, death does not always function as the beginning point of the funeral rite of passage, which may indeed start earlier. The

¹³⁹ Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, 3, 11. See also Dinn, "Death and Rebirth," 153; Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 5-12.

French sociologist Robert Hertz, elaborating on van Gennep's schema, examined societies in which death is not an instantaneous binary process, but rather the funeral rite of passage begins with an *intermediary period*, in which the individual is not yet dead nor fully alive anymore.¹⁴⁰

Moving beyond van Gennep's definition of the separation phase, Frederick Paxton suggests a similar fluidity about the start of the death ritual in medieval Europe itself. He characterizes it as an ensemble of rites "usually marked by symbolic behavior signifying a detachment of the individual or the group from either an earlier fixed point in the social structure, or an established set of cultural condition."¹⁴¹ The beginning of the *preliminal* stage of Marco Carelli's death, in this extended sense, may be designated as the precise moment in July 1392, when, after naming the Fabbrica as his universal heir, he responded to the councilors' request to anticipate part of his donation by divesting himself of everything he owned (see Table 5.2).

¹⁴⁰ Several societies in the world present an *intermediary period* preceding the liminal phase of funeral rites; Hertz, in particular, bases his analysis upon the close study of the inhabitants of the island of Borneo. Huntington and Metcalf, *Celebrations of Death*, 33; Hertz, *Death*, 29-53.

¹⁴¹ Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 10-12.

The separation phase: <i>pre-liminality</i>	
July 1392	Carelli's universal donation to the Fabbrica and anticipation of funds
August 1392-September 1394	Carelli works pro bono for the Fabbrica in Venice
September 1394, early	Confraternity <i>visitatori</i> 's visits to Carelli* Confraternity <i>priori</i> 's visits to Carelli* Carelli's full Confession, Eucharist, Last Rites' anointment*
September 18, 1394	Carelli's death in Venice
September 18-20, 1394	Confraternity brothers pray for Carelli's soul* Two <i>nonzoli</i> clean and clothe Carelli's body, and his coffin* Carelli's body transported to the Cappella dei Milanesi* Exposition of the body and homage of confraternity's brothers*

Table 5.2 The separation phase: pre-liminality. Source: ANNALI, MARIEGOLA. (*) Inferred from the customary funerary ritual for the members of the Scuola dei Milanesi, as reported in the confraternity's statute.¹⁴²

Differently from a Francis of Assisi, for whom the grand gesture of divesting himself of his paternal clothes and riches was followed instantly and publically by an abrupt shift in life, as he abandoned his dissipated behaviors and spent the rest of his existence as a beggar and preacher, Marco Carelli did not cease to be a merchant after his munificent donation. He continued to exercise his trading activity, now on behalf of the Fabbrica. Yet, the once wealthy businessman was by now so poor that he had to borrow from a friend the money to buy a piece of soap. The wealthy life he once knew was now gone, and in this sense he was dead to the world. This is not say that Marco had no access to any of his vast wealth; rather, those who knew him understood why he had impoverished himself. They also knew that anything done on his behalf would be repaid handsomely by the Fabbrica. Even if the soap story is entirely apocryphal, and the document stating that the cost was repaid suggests otherwise, it tells us about the man's frame of mind, and of the awe he inspired among his acquaintances.

¹⁴² ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 5, 24-25, 28v.

As we have seen in Chapter Four, Carelli did not wait until the last moment to dictate a rushed deathbed will. Rather, he redacted several different copies of his testamentary document over the last four years of his life, as if he were preparing himself for that moment with great care. The variations were on steadfast themes of heavenly not earthly glory, they refined but did not substantially alter the content of the testament. For him, the multiple wills seem to suggest that death was not a terrifying thought to be kept afar for as long as possible, but a moment of passage he had accepted and calmly prepared for.¹⁴³

The horrific recurrence of epidemics he had witnessed in Milan and Venice during the second half of the century apparently did not nurture in him the anguished terror of the unexpected grim reaper depicted in contemporary paintings, songs, and tales of death's torments.¹⁴⁴ On the contrary, the nature of his testamentary requests and the unusual length of what may be defined, using van Gennep's terminology, as the pre-liminal phase of his death, suggest that he had methodically prepared himself for the great passage. Perhaps a sense of gratitude for the long life of over seventy years he had been given played a role, especially in a century when plague, wars, and famines reduced significantly the life expectancy of many of his contemporaries. This would have been particularly evident to the merchant, considering that so many in his family had died over

¹⁴³ In this regard, Jacques Chiffolleau notes that historians often forget how medieval people conceived death not as an end, but a passage. Their minds were deeply upset not by the epidemic's horror but – he argues – by the way in which the demographic crises profoundly disturbed this passage and the link between this world and the hereafter, the living and the dead. Chiffolleau, “Perché cambia la morte,” 456.

¹⁴⁴ For a concise analysis of the grim context of the time, when the constant presence of death, high mortality, repetitive epidemics of plague, and fear of contagion, added to a period of famine, natural catastrophes, and wars, see Chiffolleau, *La comptabilité de l'au-delà*, 12, 85-93, 96, 99.

the previous decades, one after the other – his father, his uncles, his cousins, his first wife, and perhaps even his children.

Historians have often interpreted the generous donations that medieval merchants lavished at their deaths on the poor and for the construction of churches, hospitals, and bridges as their way of making amends for a life of abuses and illicit practices, a sort of last-moment conversion to buy access to heaven.¹⁴⁵ Marco Carelli's last years support an alternative view: a man at peace with himself and his life, calm and serene as he faced death; not a hasty deathbed conversion, but the continuity of a believer in God's mercy, reassured that heaven awaited him after a life spent in mercantile activities and charitable deeds. Whosoever lived a life of virtue need not be afraid of death, fourteenth century theologians preached.¹⁴⁶ Medieval people believed, in fact, that a worthy life, marked by works of charity, did not automatically guarantee but certainly made for easier access to heaven.¹⁴⁷

Preparation for death - confraternity

After his living donation, Marco Carelli relocated to Venice, where he spent the last years of his life working, now pro bono, on behalf of the Fabbrica. He had done business for years in Venice and knew the mercantile scene as few others among his fellow

¹⁴⁵ Derbes, *The Usurer's Heart*, 117-44; Galassi, "Buying a Passport," 313-26; Le Goff, *La civilization*, 240; Saporì, "L'interesse del danaro," 161-86; Saporì, "La beneficenza," 1-20; De Roover, "Restitution in Renaissance Florence," 773-90; Petrocchi, *Ascesi e mistica trecentesca*, 21-40, 179-99.

¹⁴⁶ Tenenti, *Il senso della morte*, 49-59. From this belief the *Ars Moriendi* emerged, according to which the believer was called to live every day as if it were to be his last, as if the next moment he might be summoned before the divine judge.

¹⁴⁷ Boase, *Death*, 122-24. The charitable provisions required of any Christian, derived from Christ's injunction (Mt 25, 35-36) and known as the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy, were: admonishing the sinner, feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, visiting the prisoners, and burying the dead.

citizens. It was far easier for him to collect in person his most conspicuous credits, now the property of the Fabbrica, than to leave the task after his death to cathedral officials.

He died there on September 18, 1394. The Fabbrica records do not shed light on the cause of his death, nor whether his demise was sudden or drawn out. We do know that one year earlier testamentary documents still mentioned him as “healthy and sound.”¹⁴⁸ We also know with relative certainty about the network of assistance the Scuola dei Milanesi, his Venetian confraternity, would have tightened around him at the first signs of impending death.¹⁴⁹ This was customary for all its brothers, and therefore even more so for Carelli, who had been among its founders.¹⁵⁰

Assistance to the dying and care for the dead were among the pillars of charitable activity confraternities exercised in their collective aim to gain eternal salvation.¹⁵¹ Confraternities met the medieval person’s desire not to die alone and not to disappear into oblivion after death.¹⁵² The wish for a comforting presence at the deathbed, adequate funeral rites and remembrance may have been even more pressing for those Lombard merchants who, as in the case of Marco Carelli, happened to fall sick and die in Venice, far from the support of their families, neighbors and friends. Membership in the Scuola dei Milanesi assured merchants of a generous response to their needs.

The Scuola’s network of assistance for the sick was organized in a precise and efficient way. The confraternity appointed two to four brothers, called *visitatori*, with the

¹⁴⁸ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli. “[...] sanus mente et corpore.”

¹⁴⁹ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 24-24v.

¹⁵⁰ For a full description of the Scuola dei Milanesi death rituals, see Saltamacchia, “Marco Carelli,” 145-47, 160-64.

¹⁵¹ Based on this twofold level of confraternities, started as associations of the living but which “honored, remembered and assisted the dead,” Pullan spoke of the transcendental meaning of the confraternities. Pullan, “Natura e carattere delle scuole,” 24; Ortalli, “*Per salute delle anime*,” 57; Vauchez and Bornstein, *Laity in the Middle Ages*, 107-18.

¹⁵² Banker, *Death in the Community*, 1.

task of monitoring the medical condition of sick brothers, and keeping the confraternity priors promptly updated.¹⁵³ When their patient's condition worsened, the *visitatori* would visit him "without shame or upset," as the confraternity statute recommended, to comfort them, assist them in their most compelling needs, and make sure they received the last rites – a charity deemed "*ovra de dio e de santi*" (the work of God and of the saints).¹⁵⁴ Then, it was the priors' turn to follow up the earlier comfort offered by the *visitatori* by attending in person to the infirm brother to provide spiritual and material care at the confraternity's further expense.¹⁵⁵ The priors, sometimes assisted by brothers they delegated to the task, did everything possible for the good of the sick person's soul, so that he could prepare himself for his last moment "in the way that is becoming to any true Christian" – that is to say, make a full confession, receive the Eucharist and be anointed with last rites.¹⁵⁶

Making a good end was a perennial issue for medieval men and women.¹⁵⁷ After the horrors of the Black Death, concerns about how to die well intensified, leading to the formulation of what in the fifteenth century was codified as the *Ars Moriendi*. These treatises, aimed at sick and dying people, described temptations that might occur at the point of death and offered ways to fight them. They recommended the company of a devout friend who, quite differently from today, when the fiction of probable recovery is

¹⁵³ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 5, 24-24v.

¹⁵⁴ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 24-24v.

¹⁵⁵ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 28v.

¹⁵⁶ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 5, 24-24v, 28-28v. "[...] in tute le cose che fosse necessarie del corpo, non lesinandosi nel fare tuto quello che fosse bene per l'anema de quello infermo, così che potesse giungere al traguardo finale come se appartene a ziaschaduno veraxe cristiano." The Eucharistic host and wine given to the sick as closely as possible to the moment of death were called *viaticum*, that is, the provision for the journey to the hereafter. Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 33.

¹⁵⁷ Boase, *Death*, 119.

sometimes maintained to keep a sick person from facing squarely impending death, would be open with the individual about his or her condition.¹⁵⁸ In this earlier time, allowing the sick to hope for recovery was deemed counterproductive and even diabolic, as that would leave only a short time for the dying person to prepare his or her soul properly. The concern was that the last moments of physical suffering and mental anguish might dangerously cloud the soul of the dying, impeding a full confession and complete abandonment to God.¹⁵⁹

Death in Venice

The news of Marco Carelli's death no doubt spread rapidly among his confraternity brothers who, as they did at each man's death, accompanied his passage to the next world by reciting five Hail Mary and five Our Fathers.¹⁶⁰ With this supplement of prayers, the communion that united the confraternity brothers in life continued after death.¹⁶¹ Christians believed that in the hours immediately following death, the deceased soul appeared before God to be judged; merits and sins committed in life determined the destination. If the immediate destination was purgatory, then God also assigned the amount of time to be spent there before entry into heaven.¹⁶² Recitation of prayers at or shortly after the moment of physical death worked as a special supplication in that instant of judgment so that, as the confraternity statute explained, "God could destine him more hastily to the glory of the Holy Heaven."¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Huntington and Metcalf, *Celebrations of Death*, 201, 207.

¹⁵⁹ Tenenti, *Il senso della morte*, 101.

¹⁶⁰ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 6v.

¹⁶¹ Bornstein, "Bounds of Community," 68; Angelozzi, *Le confraternite laicali*, 58.

¹⁶² Pullan, "Natura e carattere delle scuole," 16.

¹⁶³ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 6v; ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 26: "[...] che lo meta dio piu tosto a la gloria del santo paradiso."

Thanks to the precise description of funerary ceremonies detailed in the confraternity statutes, we may confidently describe the subsequent phases of the rituals that took place in Venice as the news of the merchant's death spread. At the death of a brother, two *nonzoli* paid by the confraternity attended to the preparation of the corpse and the coffin, and organized the funeral procession.¹⁶⁴ After the body had been cleaned and clothed, and the coffin prepared, the corpse was then moved to the Church of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari and there displayed. The side chapel of the confraternity was decorated for the occasion with silk drapes depicting St. Ambrose and St. John the Baptist, the confraternity's co-patrons, affirming the deceased's continued membership in the association even after his death, and soliciting the two saints' protection, "so that they could be advocates for his soul before God."¹⁶⁵

The transition phase: *liminality*

Once the body had been carefully washed, clothed, and displayed to receive the homage of the confraternity brothers, the central stage of the rite, centered on the actual funeral mass, began. The *liminality* phase, invoking again van Gennep's tripartite schema, was the moment of the deceased's passage from the world of the living to that of the dead. At the same time, the mourners embraced at least temporarily for themselves this condition of transition, determined by a suspension in the normal rhythms of their

¹⁶⁴ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 5-5v, 24-25. The word *nonzolo* is a lemma from the Venetian dialect, meaning "gravedigger." According to Boerio, the term derives from the gravedigger's task of announcing mass times to the people. *Dizionario del dialetto veneziano*, s.v. "nonzolo." It was customary for confraternities to have paid officials appointed with executive tasks – while all the other appointments in the associations were pro bono. Angelozzi, *Le confraternite laicali*, 56; Ortalli, "Per salute delle anime," 24.

¹⁶⁵ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. iiiv-iiiii, 26v.

social life and constituting membership in a special group set apart from society, bonded by their common relation with the defunct.¹⁶⁶

Communion between the living and the dead formed naturally at this stage of the ritual process, with their analogous condition of being suspended between the two worlds particularly accentuated.¹⁶⁷ Late medieval Europe saw the growth of a new solidarity between the living and the dead, nurtured by the development of the doctrine of purgatory and belief in the agency that the living had as intercessors for the deceased.¹⁶⁸ Such solidarity manifested itself in increased attention to the needs of the dead, in a substantial growth in suffrages, and in the repositioning of cemeteries and burial sites within the city walls, near to churches and convents, closer to the homes of the living.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, 146-47; Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 12, 203.

¹⁶⁷ Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 12.

¹⁶⁸ The ritual ties bonding the living and the dead were severed with the abolition of the doctrine of purgatory during the Protestant Reformation, with profound repercussions on the way funeral rites were conceived and organized. As Clare Gittings observes, “there was no longer any need for the dying person to be involved with his own funeral preparations since the ritual had ceased to benefit his soul in any way. In this new scheme, death became the decisive moment at which the soul's fate was sealed forever; there was no longer the halfway house of purgatory to offer a lifeline to the dying and a sense of purpose to be bereaved. The burial service was used solely at interment, as no further benefit would be gained from repeating it. [...] The individual alone became responsible of his own fate. It was a more individualistic philosophy that emerged at the Reformation, and one in which the dividing line between life and death, the living and the dead, assumed a far greater clarity.” Gittings, “Urban Funerals,” 171, 173.

¹⁶⁹ Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 17, 203; McLaughlin, “On Communion,” 31. Differently from Jacques Le Goff who highlights the development in this period of a new sympathetic coexistence between the living and the dead, Megan McLaughlin has seen instead in the signs of the times “the educated elite’s anxious response to their increased sense of alienation from the dead” - a thesis that, I believe, evidence from late medieval Italy does not generally support.

The transition phase: <i>liminality</i>	
September 20, 1394	Carelli's funeral in Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice Confraternity's funeral cortege to burial place Interment at Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari in Venice
September 29, 1394	<i>Settimo</i> for Marco Carelli in Milan Celebration of the Office of the Dead (presbyters) Celebration of 25 Masses in San Babila Presbyters' procession to the cathedral Celebration of Office of the Dead with mourners Doles of food (bread and chickpeas) distribution Mass with family, city authorities, and mourners
October 17, 1394	<i>Trigesimo</i> for Marco Carelli in Milan Celebration of the Office of the Dead (presbyters) Celebration of 25 Masses in San Babila Presbyters' procession to the cathedral Celebration of Office of the Dead with mourners Doles of food (bread and chickpeas) distribution Mass with family, city authorities, and mourners
March 20 - April 20, 1395	Transportation of Carelli's corpse from Venice to Lodi
April 20, 1395	Arrival and welcoming of the corpse in Lodi Transportation of the corpse by cart from Lodi to Milan Arrival of the corpse in Milan, outside Porta Romana Preparation of the corpse with herbs

Table 5.3 The transition phase: liminality. Source: ANNALI, MARIEGOLA.

The rituals staged by the Scuola dei Milanesi at the death of each of its brothers were a forceful reminder of such communion, and marked the eternal place of the deceased within the living body of the pious association. Every confraternity brother present in Venice was expected to take part in the commemoration ritual, first by visiting the confraternity chapel to pay homage to the corpse, then by attending the funeral, where six friars from the Santa Maria Gloriosa convent were also present, and lastly by

accompanying the association's priors and officials to the burial rite (see Table 5.3).¹⁷⁰ In order to allow all the brothers to have time to pay homage to the corpse, the confraternity statute forbade precipitous burials. According to the confraternity's minutes, brothers sometimes went to the priors asking permission for immediate burial of a companion but even in these instances a minimum interval of time was always observed between notification of the demise, reception of the coffin at the confraternity's chapel, and the burial rite.¹⁷¹

Indeed, funeral ceremonies were, along with the feasts of patron saints, one of the community's defining moments: all the brothers gathered together, forcefully united by the perception of the same destiny, as the dead companion silently reminded them.¹⁷² There was a theological as well as social reason for this. As Banker elucidates in his analysis of the celebration and ritualization of death by late medieval Italian confraternities, the commemorations of these pious associations were modeled after the funeral ritual of monastic communities, where all the monks together prayed for each deceased brother. In the monastery as in the confraternity, the treasure of merit earned by the brothers, through asceticism in the former and charity in the latter, could never be deemed sufficient to assure a place in heaven for the dead brother's soul. Piety demanded as well a collective final plea for God's mercy by as large a contingent of living persons as possible.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ The attendance of at least six friars at the funeral ceremony of a defunct brother was one of the terms of mutual allowances and responsibilities stipulated between the friars of Santa Maria Gloriosa and the Scuola dei Milanesi. A pecuniary penalty equivalent to one *grosso* was inflicted upon the convent for each absent friar from the minimum number of six. ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 9, 11v, 36.

¹⁷¹ ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 37v-38v.

¹⁷² Banker, *Death in the Community*, 9.

¹⁷³ Banker, *Death in the Community*, 51, 62.

At the end of the funeral mass, a somber long cortege of hundreds of brothers followed the bier, led by the confraternity's priors and *anziani* (elders), as the confraternity's board was called. A large processional cross in golden copper and four black torches led the way for the mourners, each of whom carried a flickering candle. The funeral procession then moved from the chapel to the designated place of burial. Unless otherwise requested in the deceased's will, the *nonzoli* then closed the ritual by burying the corpse in the location the Franciscans had left to the brothers of the Scuola dei Milanesi for this purpose - a small area within their graveyard, near the church bell tower.¹⁷⁴ And there Marco Carelli's body was initially put to rest, while awaiting clearance from Milan for the transportation of the corpse to his native place - a wait initially expected to last only few weeks but that, due to complications related to a recent outbreak of plague, was prolonged by several months.¹⁷⁵

A triumphal suffrage

A few days later, with Carelli's corpse now interred in Venice, news of his death reached Milan. Although he had died on September 18, it was only on September 24 that Albertino de Nigri, whom Carelli had put in charge of taking care of his household accounts during his sojourn in Venice, ceased to record expenses, a sure indicator that Marco's death was known.¹⁷⁶ At the same time, the Fabbrica appointed a notary to survey

¹⁷⁴ The concession to the Scuola dei Milanesi of an area within the church graveyard for the burial of its members and its poor, informally stipulated with the Franciscans since the inception of the Scuola, was officially ratified in 1422, with an act signed by twenty-two friars, transcribed in the Scuola's statute. ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 16-19v. For a description of the tasks of the *nonzoli*, see ASV, MARIEGOLA, f. 5-5v, 24v-25.

¹⁷⁵ ANNALI, 1: 131 (February 14, 1395).

¹⁷⁶ AFD, Eredità, c. 67, Marco Carelli, f. 60.

all the household goods, which now belonged to the cathedral, establishing an inventory to assure that none of its assets went missing.¹⁷⁷

On the following Sunday, September 27, the Council of the Fabbrica gathered to deliberate on the rites and rituals to be performed to commemorate the merchant's demise. They decided to celebrate the *settimo*, the mass usually celebrated seven days after the death, two days late – just enough time to prepare the funereal apparatus and spread news of the commemoration among the city's inhabitants.¹⁷⁸ Christians believed that celebration of masses for the dead seven and thirty days after death shortened the souls' torments.¹⁷⁹ The numerology, adopted from Jewish tradition, referred to the seventh day of the Genesis creation narrative and to the thirty day period of mourning for Moses, as narrated in Deuteronomy 34:8.¹⁸⁰ The rich symbolism typical of the late medieval period here found expression in elements of funeral ritual meant to express beliefs and hopes about death that had their roots in two millennia and more of Judeo-Christian tradition. Those in attendance readily understood the profound meanings of such simple observances as the seven and thirty day masses.

On the morning of Tuesday, September 29, 1394 the clergy of the cathedral, joined by the clergy of nearby Santa Tecla and the *canonici decumani* gathered to celebrate the

¹⁷⁷ ANNALI, 1: 118 (September 27, 1394).

¹⁷⁸ ANNALI, 1: 117 (September 27, 1394).

¹⁷⁹ Gittings, "Urban Funerals," 171-173. Since such belief was grounded on the doctrine of purgatory, when the latter was abolished during the Protestant Reformation, any repetition of funeral services ceased as well.

¹⁸⁰ In the original Jewish commemoration ritual, the period up to seven days of abstention from work, personal care and adornment - subsequently passed into Christian observance and transformed in the celebration of the *settimo* - was explained as referring to the time of Joseph's mourning for Jacob. Rowell, *Liturgy of Christian Burial*, 4, 12.

Office of the Dead, a prayer cycle from the Book of Hours divided into vespers, matins and lauds, which was enacted before the Mass and served as the main funeral service.¹⁸¹

The assemblage of presbyters then processed to the Church of San Babila, the parish where the Carelli family lived, to celebrate twenty-five masses, each one including a recitation of the Office of the Dead. Everyone in attendance received a two-ounce candle, and in front of the altar were placed two nine-ounce candles and two large crosses, each surmounted by ten three-ounce candles, all lighted. A black drape was spread on the pavement, a usage with ancient pagan origins.¹⁸² The hope for eternal salvation symbolized as light contrasted powerfully with the black tone as it expressed the deep grief of the mourners, while reminding the living with its absence of color about the realities of unconsciousness and decomposition.¹⁸³

In the afternoon, the presbyters returned in procession to the main cathedral to recite the Office of the Dead together with the cathedral priests, in the presence of a crowd of mourners who flocked from every corner of the city and the countryside. Funerals for important people attracted popular curiosity for their great scenic apparatus and for the promise of doles of food and drink customarily distributed to participants at the end of

¹⁸¹ Binski, "Ways of Dying," 53. The *canonici decumani* were a body of chaplains founded in Milan between the eight and the ninth century, who were called upon to celebrate masses, funeral ceremonies and offices of the dead, and often also worked as church custodians. They were called *decumani* after the *decime* (tithes) they collected for their services. *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica da S. Pietro sino ai nostri giorni*, s.v. "stallo," 69: 180.

¹⁸² In ancient pagan rituals, it was believed that corpses veiled in sable hue were invisible to the spirits, and therefore could not be molested. Black was the color that wool garments assumed after being rolled in dirt and ashes as a sign of penitence – a custom forbidden in Christian funerals, which allowed for expressions of grief, but were more centrally a triumphant reminder of the resurrection that awaited all the dead. Rowell, *Liturgy of Christian Burial*, 23; Puckle, *Funeral Customs*, 98.

¹⁸³ Huntington and Metcalf, *Celebrations of Death*, 63; Turner, *Forest of Symbols*, 89; Binski, "Ways of Dying," 54-55.

the ceremony.¹⁸⁴ On occasions of grand commemoration, such as the one celebrated for Marco Carelli, officials were sent everywhere in Milan and into the villages nearby to invite the people to participate in the event. A large assemblage of mourners was considered a great honor rendered to the deceased, believed to multiply the number of intercessory prayers offered to reduce the sufferings of his soul.¹⁸⁵

Dozens of flames illuminated the scene, symbolizing that hell's darkness would not prevail over the death of the just man: four one-pound candles glowed in front of the draped altar, the cathedral *canonici ordinari* (resident priests) each had a six-ounce candle in his hands, while the presbyters, the cathedral officials and guardians each received a smaller two-ounce candle. This great burning of candles was another form of intercession for the deceased's soul, and was considered homage in recognition of the individual's former rank and position.¹⁸⁶ The number of candles and their size varied according to the dead's prestige, within limits. From the thirteenth century onward, Milan's sumptuary laws precisely regulated expenses for candles and torches, with the intent of curbing status pressures that compelled the governing classes to squander greater riches on wax and apparatus for funerals, endangering their financial stability.¹⁸⁷

While people crowded around the cathedral, gargantuan doles were given out: in the Chiesa Maggiore, three *moggia* of wheat bread were distributed to the poor, while five *moggia* of wheat bread and four *staia* of chickpeas with the *grassa* were brought to Marco Carelli's house to be distributed to the poor of Christ, to the beggar's houses in Milan, to the incarcerated debtors in Malastalla, San Satiro and other prisons in Milan,

¹⁸⁴ Vitale, "Pratiche funerarie," 423; Gittings, "Urban Funerals," 171.

¹⁸⁵ Dinn, "Death and Rebirth," 156; Gittings, "Urban Funerals," 171.

¹⁸⁶ Puckle, *Funeral Customs*, 78; Gittings, "Urban Funerals," 171.

¹⁸⁷ Owen Hughes, "Mourning Rites," 33, 36; Vitale, "Pratiche funerarie," 431.

and to the houses of his family and neighbors.¹⁸⁸ The total was roughly equivalent to 2,475 pounds of bread and 154 pounds of chickpeas, enough to feed a throng of over six thousands mourners and prisoners.¹⁸⁹ The doling out of food to the poor after funerals derived from the pagan Roman custom of serving meals on the same day and the day following a death, essentially marking the incorporation of the deceased into the next world and the reestablishment of the social order among the survivors. Adopted by early Christians, this ritual was later replaced by St. Augustine with provisions for the poor, forcefully tying together care for the dead with care for the poor.”¹⁹⁰

However much these enormous doles may have been joyously welcomed by hundreds and even thousands of beneficiaries, they were not distributed with the intent of addressing the problem of poverty in the city. Had that been the primary concern of the donor, he or she could have stipulated a fund for daily distribution of bread to the city poor – as in fact other merchants did at the time.¹⁹¹ Rather, such offerings had a symbolic

¹⁸⁸ The use of chickpeas as funerary dole may derive from a combination of ancient traditions. Among pagans, it was customary to offer male mourners food that was round in shape, such as lentils and eggs, to remind them of the revolving wheel of fortune. In ancient Greece, huge pots of chickpeas, beans and broad beans were cooked on the occasion of the Feast of the Dead to provide the deceased with a fulfilling meal before her or his return in the afterlife. Rowell, *Liturgy of Christian Burial*, 4; Buttitta, *I morti e il grano*, 94-96; Capatti, De Bernardi, and Varni, *L'alimentazione*, 126; Cavalcanti, *Cibo dei vivi*, 81-82.

¹⁸⁹ In late medieval Milan, one *moggio da grano* was equivalent to 146.23 liters, one *staio* was equivalent to 18.28 liters, and 1 liter = 0.96 kilograms. Hence, 8 *moggia* = 1169.84 liters = 1123.0464 kilograms = 2475.8935 pounds; 4 *staia* = 73.12 liters = 70.1952 kilograms = 154.7539 pounds. For the value of the *moggio da grano* and the *staio*, see Martini, *Manuale di metrologia*, 350-51.

¹⁹⁰ Rowell, *Liturgy of Christian Burial*, 11; Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 24-27; Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, 20-24, 164-65.

¹⁹¹ See for instance the case of the fifteenth-century Milanese merchant Giovanni Rottole in Chapter 1. Historian Wilbur K. Jordan harshly criticizes the offering of such gifts to the poor at funerals, arguing that they encouraged mendicancy rather than solving the problem of poverty. I believe Jordan's argument does not get it right, as funerary doles, although sometimes quantitatively significant, as in Marco Carelli's case, were limited to the funeral day and sometimes to its anniversary every year, a scope too restricted to have a positive or negative

meaning, as suggested by the numerology of the quantities distributed: three, as the Holy Trinity; five, as the wounds of Christ; and four, as the Evangelists. The beneficence was not indiscriminate, but targeted specific groups: the poor, debtors, prisoners, one's family, and one's neighbors.¹⁹²

Food distribution constituted a final work of charity exercised on behalf of the merchant Marco Carelli; it was a literal response to the words Christians recite daily in the Pater Noster ("Give us this day our daily bread") and satisfied the Gospel's injunctions to feed the hungry and visit the prisoners.¹⁹³ At the same time, the beneficiaries of such generosity were expected to pray for the deceased, as elucidated in the previous chapter. Their role as powerful intercessors for the soul of the dead was warranty of a safe passage to the hereafter, in a reciprocal "economy of redemption," as Miri Rubin has defined it.¹⁹⁴

Once the distribution of bread and chickpeas ended, at the fourteenth hour of the day (late in the afternoon), the merchant's family was invited to take part in the celebration of the mass of the *settimo*, together with local authorities. As Richard Trexler elucidates in his study of Renaissance Florence, the sacrality of a ritual was mediated and heightened "by the combined authority of heaven and earth," and the simultaneous presence of the spiritual and civil establishment reinforced this perception in the spectators.¹⁹⁵

impact on the population. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England*, 146-47; Thomson, "Piety and Charity," 182.

¹⁹² Cullum and Goldberg, "Charitable Provision," 38.

¹⁹³ Boase, *Death*, 122; Cullum and Goldberg, "Charitable Provision," 28, 34; Banker, *Death in the Community*, 49.

¹⁹⁴ Cullum and Goldberg, "Charitable Provision," 37; Dinn, "Death and Rebirth," 157; Chiffolleau, *La comptabilite de l'au-dela*, 314-16.

¹⁹⁵ Trexler, "Ritual Behavior," 128.

The Carelli family occupied the front position. Marco's widow, Flora de Aliprandi, was most probably accompanied by Marco's four cousins mentioned in his will: Giovannola and Beltramola, the daughters of Marco's uncle Franzio; Malgarola, the daughter of Marco's uncle Albertolo; and Petrolla, also known as Muzia, the daughter of Marco's cousin Simonolo. The widow Flora wore the new dress that the cathedral administrators had ordered for her.¹⁹⁶ The dead merchant in his will had specified that the cathedral councilors provide her with a different dress, expressly for the occasion of his funeral celebration: a dress of cloth thirteen arms long, of the value of 32-36 soldi per arm, in brown, the color the deceased's female family members were required to wear in Milan at obsequies.¹⁹⁷ In defiance of the dead man's instructions, the Fabbrica chose to do more than the truly ascetic specifications in Marco Carelli's will, although less than they might have had they tried to outshine the pomp ordered by other fourteenth-century men of his wealth and stature. The councilors, "to give a good example to everyone," decided to buy her a longer and more expensive dress than the modest garb he had deemed appropriate, completing her sober mourning costume with two *siptulares*, three *velleti*, (the small veils a widow put on her head), and two *lamponi vayrorum* (inserts of vair fur) to line her mantle as a sign of nobility.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Most probably, the widow Carelli was accompanied by Marco's four cousins mentioned in his will: Giovannola and Beltramola, Marco's uncle Franzio's daughters; Malgarola, Marco's uncle Albertolo's daughter; and Petrolla also known as Muzia, Marco's cousin Simonolo's daughter.

¹⁹⁷ AFD, Testamenti, c. 42, f. 13, Marco Carelli; Levi Pitzesky, "Come vestivano i Milanesi," 746.

¹⁹⁸ The term *siptulares* derives from the medieval lemma *sitularius*, from the verb *serare*, to close. See *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis*, s.v. "serare," accessed December 31, 2012, <http://ducange.enc.sorbonne.fr/serare>. Presumably, it indicated the *benda* the widow customarily put around her head to express humiliation, as a sign of her "rejection of the world and loss of identity." Owen Hughes, "Mourning Rites," 33.

During the fourteenth century, the use of veils for widows became widespread, with a similar symbolic value as the former custom of letting down the hair disheveled.

Standing immediately behind the family were Milan's civic authorities: the Vicar, the Twelve of Provision, the Board of the Judges, and dozens of deputies and councilors from the board of the cathedral. Each of them was given a *sesino*, a little coin worth six dinars, to be brought to the altar as a token offering for the Fabbrica – presumably with the intent of attracting offerings from the people in emulation of this long procession of noble officials. The same elaborate ritual was celebrated again on the thirtieth day after his death, on October 17.¹⁹⁹ All this was done without the presence of the dead man's body.

A funeral procession from Venice to Milan

On the very next day, October 18, the Council of the Fabbrica met to organize the transportation of Marco Carelli's corpse from Venice to Milan. They decided to appoint this task to deputy Martino della Croce, who, in the immediate aftermath of the merchant's demise, had been sent to Venice together with his brother Giovannino on behalf of the Fabbrica to recover his credits, the payment of his debts and the retrieval of his remaining goods and merchandise.²⁰⁰

However, complications related to sanitation procedures ensued, and after four months the councilors still had to postpone the transfer of the corpse.²⁰¹ A month later, in March 1395, the Fabbrica officials presented to Duke Gian Galeazzo Visconti a formal request for exemption from the norms regarding corpse transportation, and, after a few

Vain fur inserts were a status symbol. The Sumptuary Laws redacted in Milan two years later, in 1396, allowed only officials and counselors of the Collegio di Milano to wear clothes lined with vair or ermine fur. Levi Pitzesky, "Nuove mode," 887, 905; Owen Hughes, "Mourning Rites," 34.

¹⁹⁹ ANNALI, 1: 119 (October 11, 1394).

²⁰⁰ ANNALI, 1: 119 (October 18, 1394).

²⁰¹ AFD, Ordinazioni Capitolari, c. 23, f. 116; ANNALI, 1: 131 (February 14, 1395).

days, they obtained a special permit for carrying the merchant's coffin solemnly from Venice to Milan along the Po and the Adda Rivers, entering through Porta Orientale.²⁰²

Over several decades of recurrent epidemics and plagues, the Milanese had heeded well the practice of barricading themselves within the city's walls as soon as the news of an outbreak reached them, without letting anything in, greatly reducing the possibility of contagion. Thanks to such firm measures, while the Black Death rapidly spread and ravaged Europe during the infamous year 1348, Milan had managed to isolate itself and remained untouched by the deadly disease – although the Lombard center did not always enjoy that same good fortune in the following years.

Given the immediate circumstances and the experience gained from decades of taking measures to isolate the city from epidemic disease, the insistence of the Fabbrica in bringing Carelli's body back to his native place, even at the cost of spending a considerable sum of money and putting their lives at risk, is noteworthy. Surely, the Fabbrica desire to provide the Milanese with a relic of their great benefactor played an important part, as the sumptuous ceremonies they organized at the corpse's arrival in Milan attest. Yet, even more, the councilors' insistence on obtaining the merchant's remains reveals the substantial importance corpses had for them. And in this the Fabbrica officials were not alone. By the end of the fourteenth century, the practice of secondary burial – the disinterment of the bones of kin who had died far from home, bringing them back to be buried in the family tomb – was becoming common practice among the elite, as Sharon Strocchia has documented for Florence.²⁰³

²⁰² AFD, Ordinazioni Capitolari, c. 24, f. 119; ANNALI, 1: 133 (March 14, 1395).

²⁰³ Strocchia, *Death and Ritual*, 66-67.

“Close attention to the combined symbolic and sociological contexts of the corpse,” Hertz and Metcalf argue, “provides insights into a culture’s understanding of the nature of death.”²⁰⁴ While pagans, Jews, and Muslims deemed the corpse to be a source of pollution, and therefore any contact with it had to be avoided, for medieval Christians the corpse was seen as the sacred temple of the Holy Spirit. As death was the moment of passage that granted them access to eternal life, a dead body symbolized in their eyes a soul that had passed through the gate to salvation.²⁰⁵ For Christians, Jesus’ resurrection in the flesh had transformed and dignified corporality; care for the deceased’s corpse, as Augustine had affirmed centuries before, was not a mere esthetic concern but a profession of faith in the resurrection of the body.²⁰⁶

In the High Middle Ages, when the death of an important man occurred away from his native land, it was customary to bring home the bodily remains. The corpse was disemboweled, cut into pieces and boiled in water or wine to separate flesh from bones. Then, the flesh was interred at the place of death while the bones, considered the noblest part because they were more long lasting, were sent home to be solemnly buried in native soil.²⁰⁷

Some theologians looked askance at this practice, which posed a number of challenges to belief in bodily resurrection. In 1299, Pope Boniface VIII proclaimed what

²⁰⁴ Huntington and Metcalf, *Celebrations of Death*, 37; see also Finucane, “Sacred Corpse, Profane Carrion,” 41.

²⁰⁵ On ideas about the corpse among Greeks and Romans, see Pigeaud, “La question du cadavre,” 43-71. On the dismemberment of saints’ bodies in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages, and the cult of relics, see Canetti, “Reliquie, martirio e anatomia,” 113-53, with its bibliography. On the symbolic meaning of the body in the medieval period, see Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 25; Finucane, “Sacred Corpse, Profane Carrion,” 60; Georges, “Mourir c’est pourrir un peu,” 363; Gregory, “Per una fenomenologia del cadavere,” 11-42.

²⁰⁶ Rowell, *Liturgy of Christian Burial*, 18.

²⁰⁷ Boase, *Death*, 113; Finucane, “Sacred Corpse, Profane Carrion,” 46; Brown, “Death and the Human Body,” 221.

he intended to be the definitive sentence on the matter, declaring “impious and abominable” such a custom, and allowing the transportation of the corpse’s remains only when, after being buried at the place of death, it had decomposed. However, as Elizabeth Brown observes, the papal bull, far from restraining the practice, had the opposite effect, rendering it yet more desirable, as only the rich could afford the price of the costly dispensation needed to perform the ritual.²⁰⁸

Embalming represented a viable alternative that circumvented the papal prohibition. First the deceased’s body was disemboweled: entrails, heart, brain and eyes were removed - an operation that required some skill and at least some marginal anatomical expertise, and was therefore performed ideally by doctors, or in their absence monks, or even butchers or cooks. In this way, the putrefying and perishable parts of the body were discarded, in order to better preserve the skeleton, which truly represented the deceased’s identity.²⁰⁹ Then, the corpse was treated to retard decomposition during transport: the dead’s remains were soaked in vinegar or wine, then covered with salt and aromatic herbs, and lastly sewn in animal hides.²¹⁰

For the transportation of Marco Carelli’s remains, the Fabbrica official in Venice, Martino della Croce, had contracted with the brothers Maffiolo and Luchino Mariani to escort the funeral craft up to Lodi, approximately 20 miles southeast of Milan (see Figure 5.1).²¹¹ The boatmen were paid for their service 10 gold florins - a considerable amount, even greater than the monthly salary that the Fabbrica paid to the *inziognere generale*, the

²⁰⁸ Brown, “Death and the Human Body,” 221, 223, 265.

²⁰⁹ Georges, “Mourir c’est pourrir un peu,” 375-76. On embalming practices in the Middle Ages, see also Charlier and Georges. “Techniques de préparation,” 405-38.

²¹⁰ Boase, *Death*, 113; Finucane, “Sacred Corpse, Profane Carrion,” 46.

²¹¹ AFD, Registri, r. 35, fo. 102v.

cathedral masterbuilder.²¹² Yet, the compensation fit the risk of engaging in the weeks-long transportation of a corpse; disease and infection were often the fate of embalmers and gravediggers.²¹³



Figure 5.1 Itinerary of Marco Carelli's corpse transport from Venice to Milan. Source: Elaboration based on ANNALI.

²¹² AFD, Registri, r. 35, fo. 102v; AFD, Ordinazioni Capitolari, c. 24, f. 119; ANNALI, 1: 133 (March 14, 1395). The comparison between salaries has been calculated comparing the two ferrymen's salary, 10 florins, with the monthly amount of the annual salary (16 lire correspond to his annual salary divided by the months of actual work) paid in 1388 to Simone Orsenigo, *inziognere generale e maestro della Fabbrica* (Fabbrica masterbuilder), as recorded in *Liber Dati e Recepti* (1388) and transcribed in ANNALI, Appendici, 1: 56 (1388). One florin in 1395 was worth 33 soldi: for the conversion florin/lira, see Zerbi, *Le origini della partita doppia*.

²¹³ Just to give a notorious example, when King Henry I of England died in 1135 at Saint-Denis-en-Lyons in Normandy, his corpse was sent for burial at Reading, the abbey he had founded a few years before "for the salvation of [his] soul, and the souls of King William, [his] father, and of King William, [his] brother, and Queen Maud, [his] wife, and all [his] ancestors and successors." Yet, such was the state of his body that the surgeon who carried out the embalming operation died of infection. Boase, *Death*, 113.

In the first weeks of spring 1395, inhabitants along the Po and the Adda Rivers valleys witnessed the passage of a somber boat, covered in rich black cloth from end to end, embellished with 24 crosses and lit night and day by 24 perpetual torches - a number that perhaps symbolized the twelve tribes of Israel added to the twelve Apostles.²¹⁴ Although initially opposed by Christians as pagan ritual, torches came to be allusive symbols of life and faith; they were frequently employed in late medieval procession funerals for their evocative character and their festive atmosphere.²¹⁵ Providing a mysterious sense of transcendence to the scene, they powerfully transformed it into a celebration of certainty in the resurrection.²¹⁶

Requests for torches and torchbearers often appear in the wills of the wealthy who desired to make of their funeral a grandiose drama expressing their status and fame.²¹⁷ Medieval and Renaissance chronicles of public funerals frequently enumerate rather hyperbolic quantities of torches and other apparatuses employed. Whatever the true numbers, the count of torches, the quality and dimension of the pall, and the estimate of mourners were considered indicators of the social status, rank and office of the

²¹⁴ AFD, Registri, r. 35, fo. 102v; AFD, Ordinazioni Capitolari, c. 24, f. 119; ANNALI, 1: 133 (March 14, 1395); Visceglia, "Corpo e sepoltura," 591.

²¹⁵ In ancient rituals, it was customary to surround the deceased's body with torches, forming a circle of light as a form of protection for the dead against evil spirits' attacks. The practice was later adopted in the Christian funeral rite, although with a different meaning: at the arrival at the church, the torches carried in procession were placed around the coffin in front of the altar, and there they were left until the burial. Puckle, *Funeral Customs*, 76-77; Dinn, "Death and Rebirth," 155.

²¹⁶ Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 25; Rush, *Death and Burial*, 224-28; Visceglia, "Corpo e sepoltura," 591; Puckle, *Funeral Customs*, 76-78. Bertram Puckle recalls the ancient custom of burying the dead at night by torchlight, and suggests that practice as the origin of the word funeral (*funeralis*, in Latin), literally "procession by torchlight," from *funis*, torch. Although suggestive, the explanation fails to persuade: the etymological meaning of "ritual of death" from *funus*, death, seems simpler and more convincing.

²¹⁷ Dinn, "Death and Rebirth," 155.

deceased.²¹⁸ Yet, this is not the case here. Marco Carelli asked for nothing and even the Fabbrica officials bent on showering him with honor after his death did so judiciously. The source for the description of Marco Carelli's rituals are the minutes of the Council of the Fabbrica, which include deliberations over the expenses they themselves would have to cover, backed up by the Fabbrica registers of expenses. Therefore, the account on expenditures for torches and crosses to surround the merchant's coffin appear to be reliable.

After a month of navigation, the boat arrived in Lodi, where three clerics – San Babila Church's beneficiary, who was a Celestine friar, and other two clergy not further specified - welcomed its arrival and from there transported the corpse in proper style to Milan.²¹⁹ The route Lodi-Milan followed the road departing from Pavia and was one of the roads suitable for carts already by the end of the fourteenth century. For this reason, it represented one of the principal ways of access by land to the Lombard capital, which naturally was not connected to the Po River and therefore, before the completion of the network of artificial canals in the fifteenth century, had to use other cities with fluvial harbors.²²⁰

In preparation for the arrival of the merchant's body in Lodi, the Fabbrica had told the cart driver Mirano di Arnate, together with Botigio da Lavagna and Tommaso da Vigevano, to arrange an elaborate funeral wagon, richly covered with 32 *braccia* (over 62 feet) of *bogazam*, a black linen drape, and decorated with the Carelli family's

²¹⁸ Vitale, "Pratiche funerarie," 393, 431; Heath, "Urban Piety," 217; Kermode, *Medieval Merchants*, 144; Chiffolleau, *La comptabilite de l'au-dela*, 130, 133.

²¹⁹ The funeral craft left Venice on or around March 20, 1395 and reached Lodi a month later, on April 20. AFD, Registri, r. 35, fo. 102v.

²²⁰ Frangioni, "Milano e le vie," 442, 450.

emblems.²²¹ Four horses, also clothed in black, pulled the coffin along a path marked by torches and lamps. Over the previous days, three nuncios had visited every city district and parish to bring news of the pending arrival of the generous merchant's body, and so, at its passage, townspeople hailed the coffin at every crossroad.

While officials waited to receive the final permit to enter the city, the bier, covered with a rich black silk pall, was left outside the city walls at Sant' Erasmo friars' Church, guarded in turns by two friars, while the locals were charged with sprinkling the body with perfumes and herbs. The operation had a very practical function: the Fabbrica deliberations specify that the reason was "to abate the corpse's *fetorem*."²²² At the same time, the act held a deeper symbolic meaning: it commemorated the precious spices – 100 *libbre* of myrrh and aloe – that, according to the Gospel, Nicodemus sprinkled on Jesus' corpse after Joseph of Arimathea had obtained it from Pontius Pilate.²²³

Treatment of the corpse with herbs was just one part of the lengthy and complex ritual in which the deceased was closely associated with Christ and made one with him. Such identification began at the deathbed, when the Gospel accounts of the Passion were read to the faithful to nurture a sense of living Christ's part through one's present sufferings.²²⁴ Afterwards, the preparation of the deceased's body followed closely the same Jewish burial customs recounted in the Gospels; the corpse was washed, to

²²¹ In late medieval Milan, one *braccio* was equivalent to 0.5949 meters. Hence, 32 *braccia* = 19.0369 meters = 62' and 5.48." See Martini, *Manuale di metrologia*, 350.

AFD, Registri, r. 35, fo. 102v; AFD, Ordinazioni Capitolari, c. 24, f. 121; ANNALI, 1: 135 (April 14, 1395). The funeral cloth, or *pall*, was originally a cloak used to wrap the body for the procession to the burial; with the diffusion of the use of wooden coffins, the *pall* lost its functionality, but it was still used to drape dramatically the casket. Puckle, *Funeral Customs*, 115.

²²² AFD, Registri, r. 35, fo. 102v; AFD, Ordinazioni Capitolari, c. 24, f. 121.

²²³ Georges, "Mourir c'est pourrir un peu," 377; Georges, "Les aromates," 257-68; Puckle, *Funeral Customs*, 36.

²²⁴ Binski, "Ways of Dying," 53; Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 42.

symbolize the purification of the soul, then anointed, and finally wrapped in a linen cloth, knotted at head and feet.²²⁵ Through this identification of the deceased with Christ, mourners were forcefully reminded of their belief in the resurrection of the body and life eternal, promised to all believers. Buttressed by this hope, a note of joy and triumph entered into Christian funerals – as the massive use of torches and candles, symbol of the light of resurrection, powerfully attested.²²⁶

The incorporation phase: *post-liminality*

The day after, April 21, 1395, with the ducal exemption now granted, the funeral entourage entered Milan, and solemnly moved from Porta Romana (see Figure 5.2, A) to the Church of Santa Tecla (D), the city's second cathedral. A vast crowd followed the procession, including citizens whom the Fabbrica messengers had called from the city and the countryside the previous day, together with the city authorities, nobles and clergy.²²⁷

The funeral cortege was the pivotal rite in the obsequies, because this last journey concluded the phase of transition and marked the beginning of the final phase, with the definitive incorporation of the deceased among the dead (*post-liminality*).²²⁸ Indeed, as is apparent from the map (see Figure 5.2), the funeral cortege did not take the shortest nor the quickest route to get to the church where mass would be said. On the contrary, the Fabbrica officials decided to process with a noisome and potentially plague ridden body

²²⁵ Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 21, 44; Boase, *Death*, 110; Rowell, *Liturgy of Christian Burial*, 2-3; Puckle, *Funeral Customs*, 34; Binski, "Ways of Dying," 56.

²²⁶ Rowell, *Liturgy of Christian Burial*, 52.

²²⁷ AFD, Registri, r. 35, fo. 102v; AFD, Ordinazioni Capitolari, c. 24, f. 121; ANNALI, 1: 135 (April 14, 1395).

²²⁸ Chiffolleau, "Perché cambia la morte," 452. On the incorporation phase, see also Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, 164; Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 10-12.

through the streets of the city along a route intended to touch all the places that marked stations in the merchant's life: his house, his district of Porta Orientale and his parish, San Babila (B). From there the solemn funeral moved along Corsia dei Servi (C) and Strada del Compito to arrive to the Church of Santa Tecla (D), where the coffin and its bier were placed in the side chapel of San Bassiano.²²⁹

²²⁹ AFD, *Ordinazioni Capitolari*, c. 24, f. 121; ANNALI, 1: 135 (April 14, 1395).



Figure 5.2 Carelli's funeral procession. A. Porta Romana; B. Carelli's house near San Babila Church; C. Corsia dei Servi; D. Santa Tecla. Source: Elaboration on map by Antonio Lafreri. Milano, 1560. In Braun, Georg and Franz Hogenberg. *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, 1572.

The sumptuous cortege connected in this way the places of Marco Carelli's life to those of his death – the cathedral where the funeral mass was celebrated and his first burial place, the Church of San Babila, where his body was put to rest alongside the corpses of his ancestors, who had been entombed there for generations. Visually and physically, the funeral procession sanctioned before the eyes of thousands of mourners and curious onlookers his passage from the world of the living to the world of the dead, from the merchant's house in Milan to his new house in heaven; all in all, it was a triumphal *adventus* into the eternal life (see Table 5.4).²³⁰

The incorporation phase: <i>post-liminality</i>	
April 21, 1395	Funeral procession from Porta Romana to Santa Tecla Carelli's coffin placed in San Bassiano chapel in Santa Tecla Second funeral in Santa Tecla Procession to burial site Interment of corpse in San Babila
April 22, 1395 – 19 th c.	Celebration of daily and monthly masses

Table 5.4 The incorporation phase: post-liminality. Source: ANNALI.

The second funeral rite mirrored the acts and gestures of the first one that had been celebrated in the cathedral seven months before, magnifying its flamboyance even further.²³¹ An astonishing quantity of wax (2 *quintali*, or over 144 pounds) was burned,

²³⁰ Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 42. On the symbolic importance of processional routes, see Trexler, "Ritual Behavior," 127-28; Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 235.

²³¹ By way of comparison, consider the development in Avignon and Florence during the late medieval period of the new funerary style characterized by conspicuous consumption, defined as "the triumph of flamboyance," Chiffolleau, *La comptabilite de l'au-dela*, 101-4; Chiffolleau, Jacques. "Pratiques funéraires," 271-303; Strocchia, *Death and Ritual*, 55-67.

and the renowned Carmelite preacher *magistro* Bardo *de Bononia* (Bologna) was invited to deliver a funeral sermon over the merchant's corpse.²³²

The ceremony and the interment of Carelli's body at San Babila did not mark the conclusion of the funeral rite. Rather, the day's events continued a precise ritual of commemoration that had begun months before, in the immediate aftermath of the merchant's death, and would continue long into the future, in fact until the nineteenth century.²³³ Scrupulously attending to the benefactor's last wish, as detailed in Chapter Four, the Fabbrica would celebrate a daily and annual mass *in perpetuum* for the merchant and his kin, as a way of aiding his soul's incorporation into the other world.

Conclusion

A close examination of the requests contained in Marco Carelli's two wills and a codicil showed the conspicuous absence of instructions regarding his funereal ceremony, along with the total absence of directions regarding the place or modality of his burial. In addition to reinforcing the conclusion set forth in Chapter Four, namely, that a quest for fame and honor was not the driving force behind Marco Carelli's unprecedented bequest for the Cathedral of Milan's construction, the evidence presented in this chapter leads me to conclude that it was the Fabbrica, and not the merchant, who conceived, planned and staged the triumphal ritual at his death.

The Fabbrica put on the lavish ceremonies as an act of gratitude towards its generous benefactor, arguably also in the hope of soliciting new donations by offering to the

²³² AFD, Registri, r. 35, fo. 102v. In late medieval Milan, one *quintale* was equivalent to 32.6793 kilograms. Hence, 2 *quintali* = 65.3586 kilograms = 144.1 pounds. See Martini, *Manuale di metrologia*, 351.

²³³ See Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 7.

crowds of Milanese the shining example of this devout merchant.²³⁴ Devious and hard-driving he may have been in life, but in death Carelli had done an act of charity to be emulated by all, each according to her or his means. As St. Augustine had remarked centuries earlier, funerals were really for the living rather than for the dead, and the months-long honors paid to Marco Carelli at his demise draftwere no exception.²³⁵

The function of rituals, especially those surrounding birth and death, in all epochs of human history has been the affirmation and communication of beliefs. Funeral rites assumed heightened importance in the late medieval period, when epidemics and wars threatened to subvert the very social order. When Marco Carelli died, the public rites staged through the streets of Milan, in the presence of thousands of mourners, reinforced the devotees' faith in the destiny that awaited them all, their assimilation with Christ. While everything around them spoke of transience and death, the symbolic flamboyance of his obsequies gave renewed strength to their belief in their own redemption and resurrection.²³⁶

²³⁴ "The virtues of great men," Thomas Boase observes, "were not only praiseworthy in themselves, but commendable in that they drew the admiration of others." Boase, *Death*, 73.

²³⁵ See Finucane, "Sacred Corpse, Profane Carrion," 40; Gittings, "Urban Funerals," 181.

²³⁶ See Binski, "Ways of Dying," 50; Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 219.

EPILOGUE

We cannot know the eternal consequences resulting from Marco Carelli's fabulous donation and the tens of thousands of perpetual masses celebrated for his soul. What we do know is the post-mortem earthly journey of his corpse over the six centuries following his demise on September 18, 1394. We have already traced the elaborated journey his coffin took through the Po and the Adda Rivers, at first buried in Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari in Venice and then solemnly transported to Milan in 1395 at the Fabbbrica insistence. But the dead man's body was not granted repose even in his native town, and several centuries were to pass before his remains finally found a permanent home.

At the conclusion of the sumptuous funeral rite celebrated in the Lombard capital on April 21, 1395 Marco Carelli's body was buried in the Church of San Babila, alongside his deceased family and his ancestors. Ten years later, as the prolonged death ritual continued, the Fabbbrica decided to honor the memory of their great donor with the construction of a monumental marble sepulcher. Toward this end, the officials initiated a competition among Italy's most renowned artists for a commission to design Carelli's effigy on a sarcophagus. Filippo degli Organi da Modena won the competition with a sketch realized by drawing directly from the now decomposing corpse, exhumed from its tomb and now deposited before him on a wooden table.⁴⁷¹ The mastery displayed in this endeavor would soon earn the young artist the title of *inziagnere generale*, the highest artistic authority at the construction site. Shortly thereafter, Jacopino da Tradate was chosen to sculpt from that preparatory sketch, using the same Candoglia marble chosen for the construction of the cathedral itself. He was one of Italy's most renowned

⁴⁷¹ ANNALI, 1: 278 (October 3, 1406).

sculptors. He had distinguished himself in various works for the Milanese cathedral over the previous years, and he had been entrusted with the commission of important sculptures, such as the bas-relief of God the Father on top of the apsidal window of the *raza*; a few years later, in 1416, he would be called to the Gonzaga court in Mantua, where his reputation became firmly established.



Figure 6.1 The Arca Carelli, Milan Cathedral. Source: ©Archivio Fotografico Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo.

The sarcophagus portrays a man richly clothed with a *capuzium*, gently posed on a rich tasseled pillow, elbow-buttoned gloves, a long broadsword in his hands, and his feet veiled, as was a customary sign of deference to the dead. The elaborated marmoreal frame, which forms the base of the sarcophagus, seems to confirm that someone of importance is buried there. Eight little statues of evangelists and saints, six in front and two on the sides, look out from arcades that remind the viewer both of the pinnacles of the Milan Cathedral and of the neo-gothic windows typical of Venetian noble palaces.

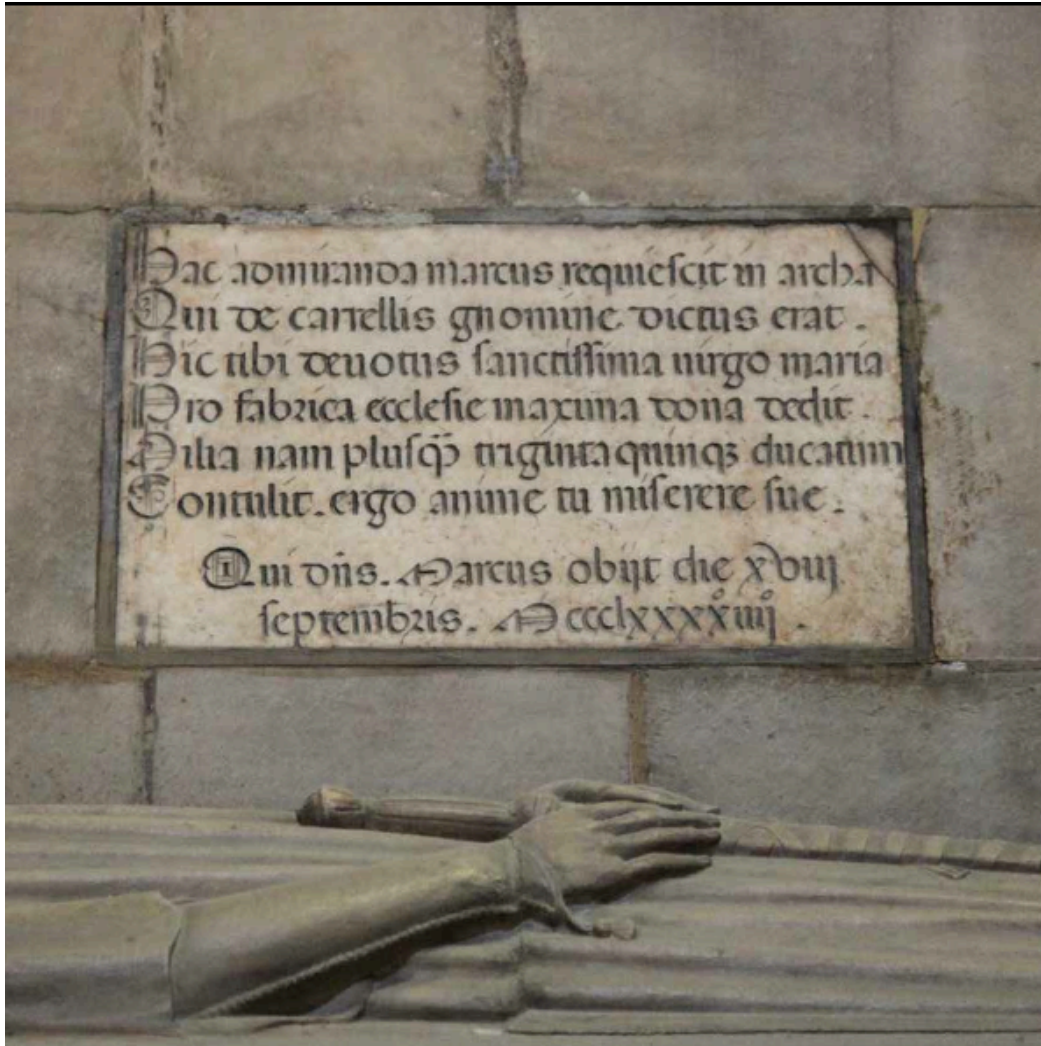


Figure 6.1 Plaque on top of the Arca Carelli, Milan Cathedral. Source: ©Archivio Fotografico Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo.

A simple plaque of a few dry lines accompanies the sepulcher.²³⁸ “In this splendid sarcophagus,” the inscription explains, “rests Marco, whose last name was Carelli.” His name is entrusted to posterity for the grand gesture he made a few years before his death: “Out of devotion to you, most holy Virgin Mary, he lavished great gifts for the

²³⁸ “Hac admiranda marcus requiescit in archa
Qui de carrellis gnomine dictus erat.
Hic tibi devotus sanctissima virgo maria
Pro fabrica ecclesie maxima dona dedit.
Milia nam plusquam triginta quinque ducatum
Contulit. ergo anime tu miserere sue.
Qui dominus Marcus obiit die xviii septembris mcccxciv.”

construction of the church.” Thus, his name is recorded for posterity not for his acumen in business or his diplomatic skills, nor for his vast holdings of houses, lands and properties or his flourishing trade in Milan, Venice, Padua, Genoa, and Bruges. The tablet instead records what mattered – his fabulous donation – not how he had accumulated such great wealth. The carved words continue with the specificity of circumstances so valued by medieval people: “He brought more that thirty-five thousand ducats.” And finally, the tablet’s request on behalf of the cathedral is presented to the Virgin Mary: “Therefore, have pity on his soul.”

The exquisite sarcophagus and its plaque were placed in 1406 against the wall of the first chapel built within the Camposanto, the graveyard built at the back of the cathedral with Carelli’s inheritance, “in wholly deserving memory of the extraordinary and very devout late Marcolo Carello, who bestowed and left to the Fabbrica many goods of great value.”²³⁹ Over the centuries, though, the chapels and tombs of the Camposanto were torn down, apparently to make space for the construction of a main road passing behind the cathedral. The Carelli sepulcher was unceremoniously relegated to the dark underground storages of the cathedral, and there forgotten. Only in the nineteenth century was the marble sarcophagus found again, amidst dusty spires and damaged statues. The Fabbrica officials decided to transfer the Arca Carelli inside the main floor of the cathedral, putting the merchant’s remains at peace once and for all, in the fourth bay wall along the right nave, where curiosity seekers and serious scholars may view it to this day.

²³⁹ ANNALI, 1: 278 (October 3, 1406). “Quod ad condignam memoriam egregii et plurimum devoti quondam Marcoli Carelli, qui fabricae tanta bona et tam notabilis valoris tribuit et reliquit, nunc praecipue quod fieri potest, in prima cappella Campisancti constructa versus stratam Compedi Mediolani, propere laboretur et perficiatur notabile et decens sepulcrum marmoris figuratum, ponendum in pariete seu muro cappellae praedictae, in quo sepulcro reponatur cadaver ejusdem domini Marcoli.”

APPENDIX

Marco Carelli's Last Will

I	<p>In the name of the Lord on the 1393rd year since His Nativity at dawn on the day Friday the 4th of the month of July. Since for each of us life and death are in God's omnipotent hand, it is better to live in the fear of death than to hope for life and die suddenly. Certain of this, in the name of God, I Marco Carelli, son of the late Messer Guidotino, citizen of Milan, Porta Orientale, Parrocchia di San Babila <i>de intus</i>, sound of mind and body and with a good memory, wishing to die neither without leaving a will nor leaving my possessions in disorder, wish to make my aforementioned will or ordainment or codicil or last good intentions and I want to make and order all the aforementioned things. I want each and every thing written to have significance and to be observed with the legal force of a nuncupative will, and if the force of a nuncupative will is not valid, then I want it to have the value and be observed with the legal force of an ordainment, and if the force of an ordainment is not valid, I want it to have value and be observed with the legal force of a codicil, and if the force of a codicil is not valid, I want it to have the value and be observed with the legal force of a bequest, and if the force of a nuncupative will is not valid, I want it to have the value and be observed with the legal force of institutions and last good intentions of mine and in any other manner, in the best and more efficacious way and form that may have legal force and must be observed.</p>
II	<p>In the first place, I revoke and annul, and I wish them to have no legal value or importance, the will, ordainment, codicil and last intention that may be found that I have written in the past, even if some special clauses were to be in it, of which it is</p>

	necessary to make a special mention in this present will and therefore I wish and I order that this present will of mine prevail on the others because in this way I decreed my last good intentions.
III	Moreover, I wish to establish and order that all the ill-gotten gains found, however I may have received them, should and must be given back through my mentioned heirs from my goods to any person to whom it must be rightfully given back.
IV	Moreover, I wish to establish and order <i>donna</i> Flora de Aliprandi, daughter of the late Messer Ambrogio and my legitimate wife, to stay and to live, and that she must stay and live, for an year after my decease in my house located in the aforementioned Porta Orientale Parrocchia di San Babila <i>de intus</i> in Milan. And [I wish to establish and order that <i>donna</i> Flora de Aliprandi] should and must have her dowry that is 14,700 lire terzole and all the woolen and linen cloths and the pearls and the rings that she has for her own use. And [I wish to establish and order <i>donna</i> Flora de Aliprandi] to bring with her also the decorated bed where my wife and I sleep, with two pairs of sheets and a white blanket and a big bedcover, obviously the one she will prefer, and a cloth of brown wool 13 <i>braccia</i> long worth 32 to 36 soldi imperiali to make a mantle and a dress. And also [I wish to establish and order] that my legitimate wife <i>donna</i> Flora, in addition to the things mentioned, have and that she must have for her benefit from my patrimony 100 lire terzole to live and to bequest to the poor of Christ for my soul for an year after my death and the usufruct of those three bedrooms on the ground floor in my house located in the aforementioned Porta Orientale Parrocchia di San Babila <i>de intus</i> in Milan, and of a bedroom in the attic located in my house, and manage all these goods of mine for one year after my decease, without being forced to accept the judgments of the <i>boni homines</i> [Commune's officials]. And [I wish to establish and order <i>donna</i> Flora de Aliprandi] to give back those same goods once the period of

	usufruct is concluded, unencumbered and with fair compensation. I wish [my estate] to be unencumbered and I wish and I order my legitimate wife Flora to stay and to remain silent and content for the aforementioned things left in inheritance and deliberated by me for my legitimate wife <i>donna</i> Flora as above, and [I wish and I order that] she cannot and has not to claim, have, ask nor obtain anything else from the mentioned heirs nor from the goods I left.
V	Moreover, I wish to establish and order that <i>donna</i> Malgarina de Carelli, daughter of the late Messer Alberto, after my death every year and for the whole time of her life should and must receive from my goods thirteen <i>braccia</i> of brown wool worth between 32 and 36 soldi, to make her a dress and a mantle, obviously at the time or around the time of my funeral. And I wish and I order that she, <i>donna</i> Malgarina, must stay and remain silent and content for the aforementioned things left in inheritance and deliberated by me for <i>donna</i> Malgarina as above and [I wish and I order that] she should not and must not to claim, have, ask nor obtain anything else from the mentioned heirs nor from the goods I left.
VI	Moreover, I wish to establish and order that <i>donne</i> Giovannola and Beltramolla sisters Carelli, daughters of the late Messer Franzio, each one of them must receive and have from my goods at the time or around the time of my funeral thirteen <i>braccia</i> of brown wool worth between 32 and 36 soldi per <i>braccia</i> , to make each one of them a dress and a mantle. And in addition to the mentioned things, [I wish to establish and order] that they should and must have each one from my goods after my death every year as long as they live 30 lire terziole at the feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ each year and I wish and I order that the sisters Giovannola and Beltramolla each one must stay and remain silent and content for the aforementioned things left in inheritance as mentioned above by me to the two sisters Giovannola and Beltramolla and that they

	<p>could not nor have not to claim, have, nor obtain anything else from the mentioned heirs of mine nor from the goods I left. And in case at a certain moment the said sisters Giovannolla and Beltramolla, both or one of them, ask anything to the same said heirs of mine and from the goods I left, then and in that case I establish and order that none of the said sisters Giovannolla and Beltramolla have nor must have anything because of aforementioned bequest made by me to them as above.</p>
VII	<p>Moreover, I wish to establish and order that Beltramino, son of Bassanollo Pazanani, should and must have from my goods at the time or around the time when that certain married daughter of the aforementioned Bassanollo shall marry, 100 lire terzole. And I wish and I order that the daughter and son of the aforementioned Bassanollo, must stay and remain silent and content for the bequests and the things left in inheritance aforementioned as above by me to the sons of Basanollo and that nothing else could nor must claim to have nor obtain from the said heirs of mine nor from the goods left by me.</p>
VIII	<p>Moreover, I wish to establish and order [<i>illegible</i>], daughter of Messer Giacomo Sansoni, to have and to must have from my goods at the time or around the time when she shall marry 32 lire terzole. And I wish and order that she must stay and remain silent and content for the bequests and the said things left in inheritance as above by me to [<i>illegible</i>], and nothing else could nor must claim to have nor obtain from the said heirs of mine nor from the goods left by me.</p>
IX	<p>Moreover, I wish to establish and order that Messer Albertolo Sansoni after my death for his life once should and must have from my goods 32 lire terzole. And I wish to and order that he, Messer Alberto, must stay and remain silent and content for the bequests and the things left in inheritance as above by me to him Messer Albertolo, and nothing else he can ask claim obtain nor have from the said heirs of mine nor from the</p>

	goods left by me.
X	Moreover, I wish to establish and order that Maffiolo known as Perla di Negro, son of the late Messer Giovannolo, should and must have after my decease from my goods for his life once 30 lire terziole. And I wish and order that he Maffiolo known as Perla must stay and remain silent and content for the bequests and the said things left in inheritance as above by me to him Maffiolo, and nothing else he can ask claim obtain nor have from the said heirs of mine nor from the goods left by me.
XI	Moreover, I wish to establish and order that Lorenzolo Sansoni after my death should and must have from my goods white wool seven <i>braccia</i> long, worth 20 soldi imperiali per <i>braccio</i> or so, to make a suit and a hood. And I wish and order that he, Lorenzolo, must stay and remain silent and content, and nothing else he can ask claim obtain nor have from the said heirs of mine nor from the goods left by me.
XII	Moreover, I wish to establish and order to bring all the cloths that I have for my use and to give and to distribute all the linen cloths that I have to the poor of God for the salvation and in recompense for my soul and [I wish to establish and order] to make and must be made shirts to give to the poor on his or her own initiative.
XIII	Moreover, I wish to establish and order that <i>donna</i> Petrolla known as Muzia Carelli, daughter of the late Messer Simone, widow of the late Messer Giovannolo de Ferrari, should and must have after my death every year until her death from my goods 10 lire terziole in Milanese coins at the feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ each year, and I wish and order that she <i>donna</i> Petrolla known as Muzia must stay and remain silent and content for the bequests and the said things left in inheritance as above, and nothing else she can ask claim obtain nor have from the said heirs of mine nor from the goods left by me.
XIV	Moreover, I say and declare that truly I must receive from Manfredollo de Ciniscullo,

	son of the late Messer Filippo of the city of Milan, Porta Orientale, Parrocchia di Santa Maria alla Passerella, in one part 28 lire imperiali and in another part 12 gold florins for the loan and I wish and establish and order <i>donna</i> that Malgarolla Carelli, daughter of the late Simone and wife of the aforementioned Manfredollo, should and must have from my said goods 28 lire imperiali in one part and 12 gold florins in another part that I must receive back from her husband the aforementioned Manfredollo de Ciniscullo, and I wish and I order that she <i>donna</i> Malgarolla must stay and remain silent and content for the bequests and the said things left in inheritance as above, and nothing else she can ask claim obtain nor have from the said heirs of mine nor from the goods left by me.
XV	Moreover, I wish to establish and order the chapter and the convent of the house of the Preacher friars of Milan to have and it must have from my goods in remedy and recompense for my soul and those of my dead [ancestors] 25 lire terziole to celebrate masses and divine offices for my soul and those of my dead [ancestors].
XVI	Moreover, I wish to establish and order the chapter and the convent of the house of the Preacher friars of Milan to have and it must have from my goods in remedy and recompense for my soul and those of my dead [ancestors] 25 lire terziole to celebrate masses and divine offices for my soul and those of my dead [ancestors].
XVII	Moreover, I wish to establish and order the chapter and the convent of the house of the friars of Mount Carmel of Milan to have and it must have from my goods in remedy and recompense for my soul and those of my dead [ancestors] 25 lire terziole to celebrate masses and divine offices for my soul and those of my dead [ancestors].
XVIII	Moreover, I wish to establish and order the chapter and the convent of the house of the Hermit friars of Milan to have and it must have from my goods in remedy and recompense for my soul and those of my dead [ancestors] 25 lire terziole to celebrate

	masses and divine offices for my soul and those of my dead [ancestors].
XIX	Moreover, I wish to establish and order the chapter and the convent of the house of the Celestine friars of Milan to have and it must have from my goods in remedy and recompense for my soul and those of my dead [ancestors] 25 lire terziole to celebrate masses and divine offices for my soul and those of my dead [ancestors].
XX	Moreover, I wish to establish and order the chapter and the convent of the house of the Servite friars di Santa Maria <i>noncupati del Sacco</i> of Milan to have and it must have from my goods in remedy and recompense for my soul and those of my dead [ancestors] 25 lire terziole to celebrate masses and divine offices for my soul and those of my dead [ancestors].
XXI	Moreover, I wish to establish and order that the aforementioned Giovannolo Sansoni, son of the late Messer Pietro, should and must have from my goods in remedy and recompense for my soul 10 lire terziole in Milanese coins. And I wish and order that he Messer Giovannolo must stay and remain silent and content for the bequests and the things left in inheritance as above by me to him Messer Giovannolo and nothing else he can ask claim obtain nor have from the said heirs of mine nor from the goods left by me.
XXII	Moreover, I wish to establish and order that Leonardo Sansoni, son of the aforementioned Messer Giovannolo, should and must have from my goods 10 lire terziole in Milanese coins now in currency, and I wish and order that he Messer Leonardo must stay and remain silent and content for the bequests and the things left in inheritance as above by me to him Messer Leonardo and nothing else he can ask claim obtain nor have from the said heirs of mine nor from the goods left by me.
XXIII	Moreover, I wish to establish and order that Giorgio da Glassiate, son of the late Messer Guglielmo, should and must have from my goods in remedy and recompense

	<p>for my soul 16 lire terziole in Milanese coins now in currency, and I wish and order that he Messer Giorgio must stay and remain silent and content for the bequests and the things left in inheritance as above by me to him Messer Giorgio and nothing else he can ask claim obtain nor have from the said heirs of mine nor from the goods left by me.</p>
XXIV	<p>Moreover, I wish to establish and order through the neighbors and parishioners of the Parrocchia di San Babila <i>de intus</i> in Milan or through others as the parishioners would like to sell and must be sold a house of mine, that is to say a plot of land (<i>sedimen</i>) of mine located in Porta Orientale Parrocchia di San Babila <i>de intus</i> in Milan near Cagozario Bridge - a house or <i>sedimen</i> I bought from Messer Giovanni da Perazzo and his son Antonello, and it borders on both of them on one side. And I grant and concede to these neighbors and parishioners of the said Parrocchia di San Babila <i>de intus</i> in Milan, Porta Orientale in Milan, or to those that these parishioners would choose, full license authority and power to sell or alienate in any way that said house or that said <i>sedimen</i> that borders, which I bought from Messer Giovanni and Antonello, father and son Perazzo, with solemn obligations, renunciations, constitutions in the form of clauses and with the solemnity needed for such occasions for a public instrument. And [I wish to establish and order] that all the money that will be estimated and received and that will happen to be estimated and received through the neighbors and the parishioners of the said Parrocchia di San Babila <i>de intus</i>, Porta Orientale in Milan from the price of that said house of mine, that is to say of that said <i>sedimen</i> of mine, to give and must be given by one year after my death in remedy and recompense of my soul to and for the construction of the sacristy of San Babila <i>de intus</i>, Porta Orientale in Milan. And [I wish to establish and order] that the parishioners and neighbors of the said Parrocchia di San Babila <i>de intus</i> in Porta Orientale in Milan should and must</p>

	<p>have good care and solicitude and they must give this order so that all the said money that will be estimated and received and that will occur to be estimated and received through them neighbors and parishioners of the said Parrocchia di San Babila <i>de intus</i> in Porta Orientale in Milan from the price of the said house of mine or the said <i>sedimen</i> be brought and must be brought to that construction to the fabbrica and for the benefit of the said sacristy of the Fabbrica of San Babila <i>de intus</i> in Porta Orientale in Milan, since the [works for the] sacristy have already started and have not been completed yet.</p>
XXV	<p>Moreover, I wish to establish and order that the said <i>donna</i> Malgarina Carelli, daughter of the late Messer Albertolo, in addition to the aforementioned things bequeathed and declared from me to her <i>donna</i> Malgarina as above in remedy and recompense for my soul, should and must have from my goods a certain house of mine, or a certain <i>sedimen</i> of mine, located in Porta Orientale <i>de intus</i> in Milan, Parrocchia di San Babila near Cagozario Bridge, which I bought from the Castanas, where Colombino who makes belts lives, and another ruined house, that is to say a certain <i>broglia</i> of mine, located in Porta Orientale outside Milan in Parrocchia di San Babila, which borders on two sides on the Castanas, on one side and on the others. And [I wish to establish and order] it to be kept in the name of Messer Edoardo de Curati, lawyer, to give and to dispose of this <i>sedimen</i> of mine and ruined house or <i>broglia</i> to her <i>donna</i> Malgarina bequeathed and declared by me as above to the wish of the same <i>donna</i> Malgarina and to be given to the poor of Christ for love of God as it will seem to the same <i>donna</i> Malgarina and as she will like.</p>
XXVI	<p>And [I wish to establish and order] to celebrate solemn masses on the seventh day, thirtieth day, and year anniversary of my death.</p>
XXVII	<p>And [I wish to establish and order] to keep and must be kept, through the deputies or presidents or those who will be in the Fabbrica, some money for the Fabbrica of the</p>

	<p>Chiesa Maggiore of Milan from the emphyteutic lease of my possession in Arcagnago that Paolino de Cavaleri, emancipated son of Messer Giovanni, keeps in emphyteusis. And [I wish to establish and order] him to lend for me every year in perpetuity from the emphyteutic lease 48 lire imperiali or so, should and must be build in the Chiesa Maggiore of Milan an altar near the sacristy that is near the Compedo street of Milan. And [I wish to establish and order] a priest every day in perpetuity should and must celebrate on this altar a Mass and the other divine offices in remedy and recompense of my soul and those of my dead [ancestors]. And [I wish to establish and order] that this priest who will celebrate the Mass on this altar and the other divine offices as said above should and must have from my goods in remedy and recompense of my soul and those of my dead [ancestors] for his remuneration for the said things from the emphyteutic lease 48 lire imperiali or so, and 16 lire imperiali every year, or, instead of the said emphyteutic lease and the said 16 lire imperiali every year, 64 lire imperiali every year for his remuneration for the things said above.</p>
XXVIII	<p>Moreover, [I wish to establish and order] that the deputies or the deputies and presidents and those who will preside the said Fabbrica of the said Chiesa Maggiore of Milan or will be elected in the Fabbrica of the said Chiesa Maggiore of Milan must demand to receive and have all my movable goods and movable merchandise that I have and I will leave on the day of my death in the cities of Milan and Venice and also overseas, and especially everything that I must get back and that I will to get back at the time of my decease from Nicoletto Unguibene, who is Messer Ziglioli da Como's son-in-law, as it will be found in my account books and especially in the white book and in the red book and in other books and writings of mine. I institute my universal heirs of any thing of the other goods things rights instruments and debtors' names that I have and that I will leave on the day of my death nominating the deputies and the</p>

	<p>presidents of the said Fabbrica of the said Chiesa Maggiore in Milan in the name of the Fabbrica. And [I wish to establish and order] my heirs after my decease to dispose of my goods and to distribute them as soon as possible to the aforementioned Fabbrica of the aforementioned Chiesa Maggiore of Milan in addition to the aforementioned bequests and confirmed and established and subscribed by me indicated and bequeathed as above. And [I wish to establish and order] my heirs must pay the aforementioned bequests as indicated and ordered by me above. I did and I ordered and I do and I order anything aforementioned because I established, decreed, and ordered in this way my last good intentions.</p>
XXIX	<p>The testator Messer Marcolo swore the aforementioned things to me, Primolo de Venzago, said notary and acquaintance of the testator Messer Marcolo so that he could make public instrument.</p>
XXX	<p>Written in Milan in the house of the Servites friars di Santa Maria <i>noncupati del Sacco</i> of Milan, located in Porta Orientale, Parrocchia di Santa Maria alla Passerella in Milan. As notaries, Ambrogio de Raude, son of Antonio of Porta Nuova, Parrocchia di San Vittore e Quaranta Martiri, and Zanono de Spoti from Seregno, son of the late Messer Paolo of Porta Orientale, Parrocchia di San Simpliciano, were present, both notaries of the city of Milan and known to the aforementioned testator Messer Marcolo. There were here as witnesses Messer Nicoletto de Sonvico, son of the late Messer Ambrogio, Andreolo de Sonvico, son of the late Messer Perollo, both of Porta Orientale Parrocchia di San Pietro all'orto, Marco and Zanono brothers Ammiconi, sons of the late Messer Maffiolo, both of Porta Orientale Parrocchia di San Paolo in Compedo, Antonino de Corradi, son of the late Messer Perollo of Porta Orientale Parrocchia di San Babila <i>de intus</i>, Zanono de Sertori, son of the late Messer Pietro and Stefanino de Alberti, son of the late Alberto, both of Porta Orientale, Parrocchia di Santa Maria alla</p>

	Passerella, all Milanese citizens, known, qualified, called and registered.
XXXI	<p>I Primolo, son of the late Messer Petrino de Venzago, public notary of the city of Milan of Porta Nuova Parrocchia di San Vittore e Quaranta Martiri, and known to the aforementioned testator Messer Marcolo transmitted and wrote the question.</p> <p>I Marcolo de Cagnorati, son of the late Messer Giacomolo of the city of Milan, Porta Orientale Parrocchia di San Pietro all'orto, notary at the service of the aforementioned notary, subscribed.</p> <p>I aforementioned Ambrogio de Raude, protonotary of the aforementioned notaries, was the secretary and subscribed.</p> <p>I aforementioned Zannone de Spoti from Seregno, was protonotary of the aforementioned notaries as above and subscribed.</p>

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