

# Augurative and Commemorative Names from Early 14th-Century Imola

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# Plan of the talk

- 1 What is an augurative name?
- 2 Commemoration via names.
- 3 The source material.
- 4 Examples and discussion.
- 5 Comparisons with contemporary data.

# What is an augurative name?

Augurative names:

- describe the nature of the birth (for example, a longed-for child)
- express hope for the child's future
- call upon God's aid and help
- can also include commemorative names, given in memory of an ancestor or a predeceased sibling.

# The rise of augurative names: Context

Part of the process of “Christianisation” of names:

- Saints’ names.
- “Mystical” names: augurative & theophoric (12th C onwards)

## Source material

- Antonio Pini, *La popolazione di Imola e del suo territorio nel XIII e XIV secolo*:

Contains in an appendix a taxation roll from 1312, listing the names of 2166 men and 325 women from Imola, about 40km south-east of Bologna.

## Statistical analysis: masculine names (1)

- 2166 men bear a total of 736 distinct name forms.
- Grouping variants and diminutives together: 473 distinct names.
- 283 names (59.83%) occur just once.

## Statistical analysis: masculine names (2)

### The popular names, with variants

- *Johannes*: borne by 1 in 10 (9.88%) men.
- The top five, *Johannes*, *Jacobus*, *Guido*, *Franciscus*, *Ugo*: borne by just over a quarter (26.5%) of the men.

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### The popular names, individually

- 1 *Johannes*: 135 occurrences (6.23%).
- 2 *Franciscus*: 66 occurrences (3.05%).
- 3 *Pirundus*: 58 occurrences (2.68%).
- 4 *Jacobus*: 54 occurrences (2.49%).
- 5 *Guido*: 44 occurrences (2.03%).



## Statistical analysis: feminine names (1)

- 325 women bear a total of 172 distinct name forms.
- Grouping variants and diminutives together: 137 distinct names.
- 86 names (62.31%) occur just once.

## Statistical analysis: feminine names (2)

### The popular names, with variants

- *Malgarita*: 6.81% of the women.
- The top five, *Malgarita*, *Benvenuta*, *Francisca*, *Imelda*, *Imigla*: 28.94% of the women.

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### The popular names, with variants

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### The popular names, individually

- 1 *Benvenuta*: 14 occurrences (5.96%).
- 2 *Francisca*: 12 occurrences (5.11%).
- 3 *Malgarita*: 11 occurrences (4.68%).
- 4 *Gisila*: 10 occurrences (4.26%).
- 5 *Imigla*: 9 occurrences (3.83%).

## Names of saints

Saints names, or other names with ecclesiastical references such as *Sanctus* and *Santa*, were exceptionally popular, for both men and women. 30 of the women's names are either names of female saints or feminine forms of masculine saint's names or derivatives of such.

Of the top 10 most popular men's names, 8 are saint's names; 63 other names are names of saints. (Interestingly, there doesn't appear to have been too much regional preferentialization; the name of the local martyr, Cassiano, showed up only 5 times.)

An interesting name is *Samaritana* (1); the bearer of this name was a nun.

## Augurative names: Women

17 (possibly 18) of the 137 names are clearly augurative (12–13%):

*Bensevina* (1), *Benvenuta* 'welcome' (14), *Bitina* a derivative of *vita* 'life' (1), *Bonaventura* 'good fortune' (2), *Consola* 'consoling' (1), *Cora* 'girl' (2), *Corsa* 'help' (1), *Creadea* 'God creates' (1), *Deutacora* 'God's girl' (1), \**Donata* 'given' (1), *Çoia* 'joy' (1), *Honorata* 'honored' (2), *Mirabillis* 'marvelous, wonderful' (1), *Paxe* 'peace' (1), \**Postera* 'coming after, following' (1), *Recordança* 'recalled' (1), and *Ventura* 'fortune' (4).

Possibly: *Giugla* (1), perhaps a feminine form of *Iuglio* 'July'.

## Augurative names: Masculine

38 of the 473 names are clearly augurative (8%):

*Amadore* 'loved gift' (2), *Ameus* 'loved' (1), *Amodeus* 'loved by God' (2), *Avesanus* 'hail and healthy' (1), *Bambinus* 'child' (1), *Benencasa* 'good home' (2), *Bencevenne* 'it is or will be well' (13), *Benedictus* 'blessed' (3), *Benvenutus* 'welcome' (38), *Bitinus* a derivative of *vita* 'life' (13), *Bonaiunta* 'good arrival' (3), *Bonannes* 'good year' (3), *Bonaventura* 'good fortune' (45), *Bonfides* 'good faith' (2), *Bonfigliolus* 'good son' (3), *Cambius* 'exchange' for a child born after the death of another (3), *Carucius* a derivative of *caro* 'loved' (1), *Dadeus* perhaps 'of God' (2), *Deudatus* 'gift of God' (2), *Deutaide* (3), *Donatus* 'gift, given' (8), *Dondideus* 'gift of God' (2), *Dragus* 'loved' (1), *Facius* 'destiny, fate' (8), *Figlolus* 'son' (1), \**Gaudius* 'joy' (1), *Genarius* 'January' (2), *Guardi* 'guarded, protected' (1), *Horabonus* 'beautiful hour' (3), *Juncta* 'arrival' (8), *Mante* 'loved' (1), *Nasinbenne* 'born in good' (10), *Novellus* 'novel, new' for a child born after the death of another (2), *Pax* 'peace' (7), *Servodeux* 'serve God' (1), *Tornanbenne* 'comes at the right time' (2), *Vernandinus* derived from Lat. *vernans* 'relating to the proper process of spring' (1), and *Vivianus* a derivative of Lat. *vivus* 'alive' (5).

## Possibly augurative names

Many physical/mental/social descriptives could be augurative. However we class separately those names which do not explicitly refer to the nature or circumstances of the child *at birth*.

- Women: Another 36 names (26%)
- Men: Another 52 names (11%)

## Possibly augurative names for women

*Amatasana* 'loved and healthy' (1), *Bella* 'beautiful' (4), *Bellaflore* 'beautiful flower' (2), *Berta* 'bright' (6), *Blancha* 'white' (1), *Blonda* 'blonde' (1), *Bona* 'good' (8), *Bonavisina* 'beautiful visage' (2), *Certa* 'certain, trustworthy, reliable' (1), *Clara* 'clear, bright' (2), *Corvata* a derivative of *corvo* 'crow' (2), *Dança* perhaps related to *danza* 'dance' (1), *Druda* 'true, sincere' (3), *Dulce* 'sweet' (1), *Fina* 'fine' (1), *Fiordelisia* 'flower of the lily' (2), *Flora* 'flower' (3), *Flordiana* 'flower' plus some uncertain element (1), *Gimigna* 'twin' (1), *Guerrola* derived from *guerra* 'war' (1), *Hostia* 'victim, sacrifice' (1), *Jema* perhaps variant of *gemma* 'gem' (1), *Lise* 'lily' (2), *Mala* 'bad, evil, ugly' (1), *Misina* 'wormwood' (from \**Artemisia*) (1), *Palma* 'palm' (1), *Piçanina* perhaps a derivative of *pica* 'magpie' (1), *Pirola* 'squirrel' (1), *Plasença* 'pleasure' (1), *Regate* 'young servant' (1), *Richa* 'rich' (1), *Rosa* 'rose' (2), *Sena* 'senna (a medicinal plant)' (2), *Soave* 'sweet' (1), *Vermigla* 'red' (1), and *Vinca* 'win, conquer' (1).



## Possibly augurative names for men

\**Anchebenne* perhaps 'also good' (1), *Auriccollus* perhaps 'gold neck, throat' (1), \**Augustus* 'august, venerable' (1), *Baça* perhaps from Lat. *bac(c)a* 'berry' (1), *Bassus* 'fat' (1), *Becacius* perhaps from *beccaccia* 'woodcock' (1), \**Bello* 'beautiful' (1), *Boniacobus* 'good Jacobus' (2), *Bonjohannes* 'good Johannes' (2), *Bonlusinus* 'good Lusinus' (1), *Bonus* 'good' (2), *Branchaleo* 'lion's paw' (1), *Buvellus* perhaps a derivative of Lat *bubus* 'ox, bull, cow' (1), \**Clarus* 'bright, clear' (1), *Curçius* 'short' (1), *Dolcebonus* 'sweet and good' (1), *Dragonus* either 'dragon' (the mythical monster) or 'tarragon' (1), \**Drudus* 'true, sincere' (6), \**Falcus* 'falcon' (1), *Finus* 'fine' (1), \**Florus* 'flower' (1), \**Fortus* 'strong' (1), *Galante* 'gallant; honest, loyal, brave' (1), \**Honestus* 'honest' (1), *Liberius* 'free' (2), \**Longus* 'long, tall' (1), *Maçus* 'thin, lean' (2), *Miglorucius* 'best' (1), *Mirra* 'myrrh' (1), *Orsattus* a derivative of Lat. *ursus* 'bear' (1), *Paganus* 'pagan' (4), *Pandolfus* 'wolf, valiant warrior' (1), *Pedrobonus* 'good Petrus' (1), *Piçus* 'magpie' (4), *Piginus* perhaps a derivative of *piga* 'freckle' (1), *Pirolus* 'squirrel' (4), *Ricius* 'curly-headed' (13), *Rustiganus* 'servile, rustic' (1), \**Salvus* 'saved' (1), *Savis* perhaps a derivative of *savio* 'wise' (1), *Serbatus* 'protected, saved' (1), *Smeraldus* 'emerald' (1), *Sollesanus* perhaps 'only healthy' (1), *Tagliaferus* 'cut iron' (1), *Testa* 'head' (1), *Tondus* 'round' (4), *Tonsus* 'cut, shorn; tonsured' (2), *Ursuçus* perhaps from Lat. *ursutus* 'hirsute, hairy' (1), *Valente* 'able, talented' (1), *Vinciguerra* 'win the war' (1), and *Vitalis* 'vital, life-giving' (2).

## Negative names

The examples of uncomplimentary names, such as *Hostia*, *Mala*, *Bastardus*, and *Villanus* are unusual and surprising.

# Comparisons with contemporary data

## Comparison data:

- Masculine names from the Florentine Tratte, 1282–1332.
- Feminine names from Perugia census of 1285.

Neither Perugia nor Florence are exact linguistic matches, but the dialects spoken are similar.

## Comparisons with contemporary data: masculine names

- 563 distinct masculine names dating from 1282 to 1332.
- Of the 563 names, only 117 (20.78%) match up with names in the Imola data.
- Of those 117, only 12 (2%) of the augurative names show up in both datasets: *Amadore*, *Amodeus*, *Benedictus*, *Benincasa*, *Benvenutus*, *Bonaiunta*, *Cambius*, *Deudatus*, *Donatus*, *Dondideus*, *Guardi*, *Paçus*, *Pax*

## Comparisons with contemporary data: feminine names

- Names of roughly 600 women, bearing about 251 distinct names.
- Only 15 out of 172 (8.72%) names from Imola show up in the Perugia data in the same spelling.
- A further 22 (12.8%) show up in the Perugia data in a slight variant form.
- Of these 37 names, only 5 (2%) of the augurative names show up in both data sets: *Bensevina*, *Benvenuta*, *Bonavintura*, *Consola*, *Venturola*, *Vinturola*.