

# **Experiences of Charity, 1250-1650**

Anne M. Scott

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For a number of years scholars who are concerned with issues of poverty and the poor have turned away from the study of charity and poor relief, in order to search for a view of the life of the poor from the point of view of the poor themselves. Great studies have been conducted using a variety of records, resulting in seminal works that have enriched our understanding of pauper experiences and the influence and impact of poverty on societies. If we return our gaze to †charity' with the benefit of those studies' questions, approaches, sources and findings, what might we see differently about how charity was experienced as a concept and in practice, at both community and personal levels? In this collection, contributors explore the experience of charity towards the poor, considering it in spiritual, intellectual, emotional, personal, social, cultural and material terms. The approach is a comparative one: across different time periods, nations, and faiths. Contributors pay particular attention to the way faith inflected charity in the different national environments of England and France, as Catholicism and Calvinism became outlawed and/or minority faith positions in these respective nations. They ask how different faith and beliefs defined or shaped the act of charity, and explore whether these changed over time even within one faith. The sources used to answer such questions go beyond the textual as contributors analyse a range of additional sources that include the visual, aural, and material.



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