

The bells of Santa Maria in Monserrato degli Spagnoli¹

*Las campanas de Santa Maria
in Monserrato degli Spagnoli*

*Le campane di Santa Maria
in Monserrato degli Spagnoli*

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ABSTRACT: The history and the art of the Spanish national church in Rome, known as the church of Santiago, San Ildefonso and Santa Maria di Monserrato degli Spagnoli, has been the object of research. Nevertheless, its bells have not received any scholarly interest so far. This short contribution deals with these artefacts, four bells dated to the fifteenth, eighteenth and twentieth centuries. Their inscriptions and artistic features are described and placed in the evolution of bell casting in Rome. Moreover, two documents related to one of the bells (no. 2), the contract between the church and the bell founder and the receipt, are dis-

RESUMEN: La historia y el arte de la Iglesia nacional española de Roma, conocida como la iglesia de Santiago, San Ildefonso y Santa Maria di Monserrato degli Spagnoli, ha sido objeto de investigación. Sin embargo, sus campanas no han suscitado hasta ahora ningún interés académico. Esta breve contribución se ocupa de estos artefactos, cuatro campanas datadas en los siglos XV, XVIII y XX. Se describen sus inscripciones y características artísticas y se las ubica en la evolución de la fundición de campanas en Roma. Además, se comentan dos documentos relacionados con una de las campanas (n.º 2), el contrato entre la iglesia y el

1 The research for this article was undertaken while I was a fellow at Real Academia de España en Roma, where I was granted a seventh-month fellowship in 2023-2024. The bells in Rome that I refer to in this article and which do not show a bibliographic reference will appear in a database that I am currently finalizing: <https://www.bellsbase.com/>.

cussed. They provide details about the production of the bell in 1746.

KEYWORDS: Santa Maria in Monserrato degli Spagnoli, bells, Angelo Casini, Eugenio Lucenti, Rome.

fundidor de campanas y el recibo, que proporcionan detalles sobre la producción de la campana en 1746.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Santa Maria in Monserrato degli Spagnoli, campanas, Angelo Casini, Eugenio Lucenti, Roma.

RIASSUNTO: La storia e l'arte della chiesa nazionale spagnola di Roma, nota come chiesa di Santiago, San Ildefonso e Santa Maria di Monserrato degli Spagnoli, sono state oggetto di ricerca. Tuttavia, le sue campane non hanno ricevuto finora alcun interesse accademico. Questo breve contributo si occupa di questi manufatti, quattro campane datate al XV, XVIII e XX secolo. Le loro iscrizioni e caratteristiche artistiche sono descritte e inserite nell'evoluzione della fusione delle campane a Roma. Inoltre, vengono discussi due documenti relativi a una delle campane (n. 2), il contratto tra la chiesa e il fonditore di campane e la ricevuta. Forniscono dettagli sulla produzione della campana nel 1746.

PAROLE CHIAVE: Santa Maria in Monserrato degli Spagnoli, campane, Angelo Casini, Eugenio Lucenti, Roma.

Next year the Catholic Church celebrates the Jubilee of 2025. The Italian authorities are currently undertaking works across Rome to prepare for an event that is expected to receive thirty-five million pilgrims. In December last year the Pontificia Fonderia Marinelli, which is located in Agnone (Isernia), cast the 2025 Jubilee bell. The foundry had also cast the bell of the previous Jubilee, that of 2000, which can be seen in the private gardens of the Vatican.² The importance of the Jubilee is already attested on bells cast in previous centuries. Inscriptions on church bells, both in Rome and elsewhere, refer to the Jubilee year in which they were cast. The earlier instance that I am aware of was in the church of Santa Maria in Aquiro, Rome; it was produced in 1525 but was recast in 1654.³ Two extant instances dating back to the seventeenth century are found in Rome. One is the oldest bell of San Francesco a Ripa, which is dated to 1650 (**fig. 1**).⁴ The other is the oldest bell in Santi Quattro

2 Jan Hendrik Stens, "Die Glocken der Patriarchalbasiliken zu Rom: 1. Der Petersdom – San Pietro in Vaticano", *Jahrbuch für Glockenkunde* 15-16 (2003/2004), 206-208; Antonio Delli Quadri, *Arte campanaria. Manuale tecnico pratico* (Naples: Arte Tipografica Editrice, 2010), 109-111; José Luis Alonso Ponga, *Vox Dei ac vox populi. Las campanas de San Pedro del Vaticano*, electronic version (Fundación Joaquín Díaz, 2020), 138-144.

3 Pietro Romano, *Campane di Roma* (Rome: Tipografia Agostiniana, 1944), 39. Its inscription apparently read AD HONOREM GLORIOSAE VIRGINIS MARIAE, SANCTA SODALITAS SACERDOTUM F. F. ANNO JUBILAEI 1525 - OPUS PAULINI DE BUORIS.

4 Part of its inscription reads ... ANNO · IVBILEI · M · D C · L ·

Coronati, which was cast in 1675 (fig. 2).⁵ One of the bells of the basilica of St Peter in the Vatican, which was cast in 1725, also has an inscription referring to the Jubilee.⁶ More recently, a bell cast for the church of Santa Maria Porto della Salute, Fiumicino, in November 1974 refers to the Jubilee of 1975.⁷ These examples clearly indicate that the Jubilee was such a special event that it was worth recording on bells. Actually, the pealing of the instruments announced the beginning of the Jubilee throughout the centuries.⁸

This short contribution looks at the four bells of the national church of Spain in Rome, known as the church of Santiago, San Ildefonso and Santa Maria di Monserrato degli Spagnoli. Dated to the fifteenth, eighteenth and twentieth centuries, so far they have not received much interest from scholars.⁹ In fact, even though the art and architecture of Rome have been the object of countless studies, the bells of the city are among the least known instances of the material culture of the Italian capital.¹⁰ The article does not only analyse the bells, it also discusses two documents dated to 1746. These reveal information about the production of bell no. 2. The preservation of both types of evidence -material and written- is not that frequent and so this instance offers the chance to have a bigger picture about the artefact and the circumstances of its manufacture. The study of the bells' features does not only shed light on the evolution of bell founding in Rome, but it also provides a few details about the history of the Spanish community in Rome.

1. Santa Maria in Monserrato degli Spagnoli

The national church of Spain is located in Via di Monserrato, in the Rione Regola.¹¹ Its construction started in 1518; it was built on the land occupied by the

5 Its inscription reads + IESVS · MARIA · ANNO · IVBILEO · M DC · L · XXV ·

6 Alonso Ponga, *Vox Dei ac vox populi*, 116. The specific inscription reads BENEDICTVS / XIII · / PONT· MAX / ORDINIS PRAEDICATORVM / ANNO IVBILEI / MDCCXXV.

7 Part of its inscription reads VESCOVO MONS· ANDREA PANCRAZIO · ANNO SANTO · NOVEMBRE 1974

8 Alonso Ponga, *Vox Dei ac vox populi*, 70-72.

9 As far as I am aware publications have only reported the date of the oldest bell; see Begoña Alonso Ruiz, "La reforma de la iglesia de Santiago de los Españoles en Roma durante el reinado de los Reyes Católicos", *Anthologica Annua* 70 (2023), 66. Some more details can be found in the following database: <https://campaners.com/php/campanar.php?numer=10960>.

10 For the main studies, see Romano, *Campane di Roma*; Emma Amadei, "Campane di Roma", *Capitolium* 42/7-8 (1967): 289-296; Sible de Blaauw, "Campanae supra urbem sull'uso delle campane nella Roma medievale", *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia* 47/2 (1993): 367-414; Stens, "Die Glocken der Patriarchalbasiliken zu Rom: 1", 179-212; idem, "Die Glocken der Patriarchalbasiliken zu Rom: 2. San Giovanni in Laterano – Sankt Johann im Lateran", *Jahrbuch für Glockenkunde* 17-18 (2005/2006): 113-34; idem, "Die Glocken der Patriarchalbasiliken zu Rom: 3. Groß St. Marien – S. Maria Maggiore", *Jahrbuch für Glockenkunde* 19-20 (2007/2008): 167-180; idem, "Die Glocken der Patriarchalbasiliken zu Rom: 4. St. Paul vor den Mauern – S. Paolo fuori le Mura", *Jahrbuch für Glockenkunde* 21-22 (2009/2010): 157-170; Alonso Ponga, *Vox Dei ac vox populi*.

11 For the church, see José Ángel Rivera de las Heras, *La iglesia nacional española de Santiago*

chapel of a hospice for pilgrims from the Crown of Aragon. The church was originally dedicated to the Virgin Mary of Montserrat, the patroness saint of Catalonia. While the main altar was consecrated in 1594, the church was only completed in the second half of the seventeenth century. In any case, further works took place in the nineteenth century, when the interior was renovated and the facade was finished. In 1807 Pope Pius VII (1800-1823) approved the fusion of the two Spanish churches in Rome, San Giacomo degli Spagnoli, which was located in Piazza Navona and was founded in the second half of the fifteenth century, and Santa Maria in Monserrato. The former was stripped of its furnishings and then sold. Consequently, Santa Maria in Monserrato became the only church of Spain in Rome. In one of the chapels of the church is the funerary monument of the two popes of the Borgia family, Calixtus III (1455-1458) and Alexander VI (1492-1503). Their remains were moved from the Vatican in the early seventeenth century.

2. Bells

The four musical instruments hang from a bell gable built on the top of the church (figs. 3-4). The structure has two different levels, a higher one with three openings (bells no. 1, 3-4) and a lower one with one opening (bell no. 2). The bells are electrified and can be swung, rung with an external hammer and also flipped. The latter method is a Spanish tradition that was introduced in 2020, when the bells received new wooden headstocks and were electrified. Every day they signal -with nine strikes- the *salutatio angelica* at 8:00, 12:00 and 20:00. On the weekends they announce the Mass five minutes before its beginning, once on Saturday (17:25) and twice on Sunday (10:25 and 11:55). Below are the details of each bell, information that I noted during my visit to the church in December 2023. The data includes the following fields: Measurements (height and diameter), inscription, decoration, date and bell founder. In some cases, some fields are missing because either I could not report them or they are not provided. I completed the abbreviations found on the inscriptions; these appear between brackets.

No. 1 (fig. 5)

Measurements: Height, 67.5 cm; diameter, 56 cm.

Inscription: Around the top reads + XP(IST)VS REX VENIT IN PACE DEVS HOMO / FACTVS EST. AMEN. ANNO D(OMI)NI M CCCC LXX V III (fig. 6).

Decoration: Two small and circular seals are under the inscription band, on opposite sides. Each one has a different size (figs. 6-7). Both show the same coat of arms. The larger seal has an inscription around it; however, it is too small to read. The crown, which is made of six handles, shows a rope design (fig. 8). One is missing.

Date: 1478.

Bell founder: Anonymous.

y Montserrat de Roma (Rome: Iglesia Nacional Española de Santiago y Montserrat, 2018).

The late medieval bell of the church is one of the few fifteenth-century bells in Rome.¹² The artefact has a rather unique profile, which does not seem to be shared by other bells of the city. The reason for this could be the lack of other reported examples. The Latin inscription, which is written in Gothic letters, translates as “Christ the King came in peace – God became man”. This text is taken from a prayer to ward off storms and so it has been suggested that its function was protective.¹³ Certainly, the sound of bells was thought to have the power to repel storms and other dangers.¹⁴ The same text is found in other medieval bells; for example, it is also reported in other Italian locations, Spain, France, Hungary and Transylvania.¹⁵ At the moment I only know of another instance in Rome, in the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano.¹⁶ The fact that this inscription is so widespread indicates its popularity among bell founders at the end of the Middle Ages and the early modern period. The two small seals show the coat of arms of Alfonso de Paradinas, bishop of Ciudad Rodrigo and papal legate to Paul II (1464-1471) and Sixtus IV (1471-1484).¹⁷ The same coat of arms decorates his funerary monument (**fig. 9**).¹⁸ While residing in Rome,

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- 12 Other instances are found in San Benedetto in Piscinula, Santa Maria Maggiore and Santa Cecilia in Trastevere; see Emma Amadei, “S. Benedetto in Piscinula e la più piccola e antica campana di Roma”, *L'illustrazione vaticana* 5/2 (1934), 75; Enzo Pio Pignatiello, “La paleografia, disciplina indispensabile per lo studio campanologico: Il caso della campana piccola di S. Benedetto in Piscinula a Roma”, *Quaderni campanologici* 1 (2010), 59; De Blaauw, “Campanae supra urbem”, 411 (no. 3), 412 (no. 16).
- 13 Joan Alepuz Chelet, Antoni Ruiz i Engra and Pau M. Sarrió Andrés, “Campanarios, campanas y toques de Sobrarbe. Propuestas de estudio y catalogación (primera fase)”, *Revista del Centro de Estudios de Sobrarbe* 17 (2019), 186. For the whole text of the prayer, see Severinus Lueg, *Manuale benedictionum: accedunt processiones variae publicis necessitatibus congruentes* (Passau: Elsässer & Waldbauer, 1849), 345 (“Preces ad repellendam tempestatem duriora minantem”).
- 14 Éric Sutter, *La grande aventure des cloches* (Paris: Zélie, 1993), 90-96; Xavier Pallàs Mariani, *Campanes i campanars de la Garrotxa* (Olot: El Bassegoda, 2019), 20-21.
- 15 Luciano Artusi and Roberto Lasciarrea, *Campane, torri e campanili di Firenze* (Firenze: Le Lettere, 2008), 41; Francesco Viridis, *Le campane della Sardegna. Dalle origini alla fine del Cinquecento* (Nepi, 2016), 116-121, 281-282; Salvador A. Mollà i Alcañiz, *Campanas góticas valencianas. Ensayo histórico y colección epigráfica* (Valencia: Tilde, 2001), 47, 84 (no. 5), 87 (no. 7), 93 (no. 13), 100 (no. 22); Antoni Ruiz i Engra and Pau M. Sarrió Andrés, *El paisaje sonoro de la Jacetania: campanas, toques y relojes públicos* (Jaca: Asociación Sancho Ramírez e Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses, 2019), 47; Thierry Gonon, *Les cloches en France au Moyen Age* (Paris: Errance, 2010), 107; Laurent Pie, *Chants des cloches, voix de la terre : carillons et traditions campanaires en Languedoc-Roussillon* (Montpellier: Les Presses du Languedoc, 2000), 119; Patay Pál, *Corpus campanarum antiquarum Hungariae. Magyarország régi harangjai és harangöntői 1711 előtt* (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, 1989), 22 (no. 15); Elek Benkó, *Erdély középkori harangjai és bronz keresztelõmedencéi* (Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány / Kolozsvár: Polis Könyvkiadó, 2002), 329-330 (no. 270), 360-361 (no. 354), 362 (no. 358), 525.
- 16 De Blaauw, “Campanae supra urbem”, 411 (no. 5); Stens, “Die Glocken der Patriarchalbasiliken zu Rom: 2”, 131-132.
- 17 Rivera de las Heras, *La iglesia nacional española*, 13.
- 18 Seals showing coat of arms decorate bells since at least the late thirteenth century, Luís Sebastian, *Subsídios para a História da fundição sineira em Portugal: Do sino medieval da igreja*

Alfonso founded the church of San Giacomo as the national church of Castile.¹⁹ The seals on the bell indicate that he commissioned the artefact, which was going to be employed in the church built by him. Known as San Giacomo degli Spagnoli, it was closed in 1798.²⁰ Most furnishings and tombstones were then moved to Santa Maria in Monserrato. Among them was the fifteenth-century bell, which to this day remains in this church.

No. 2 (fig. 10)

Measurements: Height, 47 cm; diameter, 40 cm.

Inscription: Around the top reads AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA (fig. 11). This is preceded by a hand with a finger indicating the beginning of the inscription (fig. 12). Around the bottom reads OPVS ANGELI CASINI ROM.(ANI) FVND(ITORI) A(NNO) D(OMINI) MDCCXLVI (fig. 13). It is preceded by a small leaf.

Decoration: The main body is occupied by four single leaves (fig. 13). They are very realistic and each one is different.

Date: 1746.

Bell founder: Angelo Casini.

This bell is located at the lower level of the bell gable. Two holes have been made at the top of the instrument, next to the crown. Their use is unclear, but they do not assist in sustaining the bell and so they probably suspend the clapper. The crown is made of three handles. This type was usually manufactured for small bells. While it was already employed in the Middle Ages,²¹ its design is slightly different. It is slimmer and delicate. The top inscription reproduces the beginning of the Hail Mary, a Christian prayer addressing the Mother of God. This verse was inspired by the first words pronounced by the Archangel Gabriel during the Annunciation.²² The text already appears on bells in Rome and other locations of Italy and Western Europe in the Middle Ages.²³ In fact, it is going to

de São Pedro de Coruche à actualidade (Coruche: Museu Municipal de Coruche, 2008), 56.

19 Alonso Ruiz, "La reforma de la iglesia de Santiago", 64-70.

20 In 1878 the church was sold to a congregation founded by the French priest Jules Chevalier. Today it is known as the church of Nostra Signora del Sacro Cuore, Rivera de las Heras, *La iglesia nacional española*, 18; Michael Erwee, *The churches of Rome 1527-1870*, vol. 1 (London: Pindar Press, 2014), 190.

21 For thirteenth-century instances, see Sauro Cantini and Giuseppe D'Onorio, *Obertinus me fecit. Un enigmatico fonditore di campane del Duecento* (Sora: Centro di studi sorani Vincenzo Patriarca, 2017), 74, 109, 121.

22 Luke 1:28.

23 Some bells may show a longer version of the text. The inscription may also include other texts, De Blaauw, "Campanae supra urbem", 384, 411 (nos. 3 and 9), 412 (no. 16), 413 (no. 22), 414 (nos. 28 and 29); Artusi and Lasciarrea, *Campane, torri e campanili*, 41; Sauro Cantini, *Le campane di Siena nella storia della città* (Siena: Cantagalli, 2006), 45, 85, 94, 99-100, 108, 114; Tobia Moroder and Stefan Planker, *Magister Manfredinus me fecit* (San Martino in

be quite popular throughout the centuries.²⁴ While the church in which the bell is currently employed was first dedicated to the Virgin, below we will see that this artefact was originally cast for another church. The hand with the finger indicating the beginning of the inscription is a charming detail. As a result, the inscription with religious content is not preceded by a cross, which was the most common occurrence since the Middle Ages. The bottom inscription identifies the name of the bell founder, Angelo Casini, who describes himself as Roman founder. This is followed by the year of production, 1746. Ten years later Angelo cast a bell that found its way to the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Tivoli.²⁵ By then he was already working for the Sacred Apostolic Palaces, that is, the Quirinale and the Vatican. In 1768, together with his brother Felice Casini, he cast a mortar preserved in Castel Sant'Angelo (**fig. 14**).²⁶ Angelo Casini was still alive a year later, when he and Felice cast a bell for the basilica of Santa Agnese fuori le mura in Rome (**fig. 15**).²⁷ In these two artefacts they are described as founders of the Sacred Apostolic Palaces. Thus, Angelo had been at the service of the pope for at least thirteen years. Both bells and mortar show the hand with the finger (**figs. 16-17**). Moreover, the bells are decorated with realistic leaves (**fig. 17**). That is, throughout his career Angelo Casini repeated certain features on his bells. However, that was not always the case, as these do not appear in a simpler bell that he cast for the church of Santa Lucia del Gonfalone in 1760. Angelo and Felice were relatives of Innocenzo Casini,²⁸ who cast a bell for the basilica of St Peter in the Vatican in 1725, the so-called Campanoncino.²⁹ This

Badia: Museum Ladin, 2009), 93, 100-101; Viridis, *Le campane della Sardegna*, 85-87, 269-270; Mollà i Alcañiz, *Campanas góticas valencianas*, 47, 81, 99 (no. 20), 105 (no. 24), 117 (no. 34), 118 (no. 35), 119 (no. 36), 120 (no. 36), 121 (no. 37); Robert Lizarte Fernández, *Homes i dones de Canillo, als auficis! Les campanes i els campaners de la parròquia de Canillo* (Andorra: Anem, 2022), 102-106. A fourteenth-century bell on display at the courtyard of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere reads AVE MARIA GRA(TIA) PLENA D(OMI)N(V)S TECV(M).

- 24 For instance, a sixteenth-century bell at Santa Maria della Scala reads + AVE · MARIA · GRATIA · PLENA · D(OMI)N(V)S · TECVM · MDXCVIII... A bell at the Basilica of Santa Sabina all'Aventino reads + AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA DOMINVS TECVM A.(NNO) D.(OMINI) MDCCC. A nineteenth-century bell at the convent of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, in Trastevere, reads + AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA A(NNO) MDCCCXLI.
- 25 Its inscriptions read AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA · 1756 · and OPVS ANGELI CASINI ROM· F· S· P·A.
- 26 One of its two inscriptions reads OPVS ANGELI ET FELICIS FRAT. DE CASINIS ROM. FVND. SAC. PAL. APOST.
- 27 One of its two inscriptions reads OPVS ANGELI ET FELICIS FRATRVVM DE CASINIS ROM. FVND. SAC. PAL. APOST. For more bells cast by Angelo and Felice, see Sible de Blaauw, "The medieval church of San Michele dei Frisoni in Rome", *Mededelingen van het Nederlandsch Historisch Instituut te Rome* 51-52 (1992-1993), 199, fig. 46, 200; Erwee, *The churches of Rome*, 115, 519, 607.
- 28 He surely was their father. Innocenzo had seven children, Alonso Ponga, *Vox Dei ac vox populi*, 51, footnote no. 101.
- 29 Alonso Ponga, *Vox Dei ac vox populi*, 115-119. His name appears as INNOCENTIVS CASINI ROMANVS.

commission was undertaken in the Campo Carleo,³⁰ the quarter built on top of Trajan's Forum. Innocenzo probably had his foundry there. He was already active in 1719, when he cast a bell for the basilica of Santa Maria in Aracoeli.³¹ One of his bells is preserved in Castel Sant'Angelo (**fig. 18**).³² This bell already shows the hand with the finger pointing to the beginning of the inscription, which is followed by a cross, and the decoration with realistic leaves. For this reason, it is sensible to suggest that Angelo and Felice were trained at the foundry of Innocenzo and, consequently, copied certain features that he employed. Another relative (their brother?) was Paolo Casini, who in 1744 cast a bell that found its way to Narni.³³ Also another member of the family was Andrea, who, together with Giuseppe Spagna, cast the two bells for the Campidoglio in 1803 and 1804.³⁴ More discussion about the bell cast by Angelo in 1746 can be found below, in the section devoted to the documents.

No. 3 (fig. 19)

Measurements: Height, 42 cm; diameter, 38.5 cm.

Inscription: Around the rim reads + LUCENTI EUGENIO FUSE IN ROMA A.(NNO) D.(OMINI) MCMIX.

Decoration: The shoulder shows two types of leaves pointing down (**fig. 20**). The top of the main body is decorated with garlands and bearded faces (**fig. 21**). Below, on opposite sides, are two religious figures: the Archangel Michael trampling the demon (**fig. 21**) and a bust of St John the Baptist holding the cross (**fig. 22**). Part of a lamb is visible on the bottom left. The soundbow is decorated with leaves pointing down.

Date: 1909.

Bell founder: Eugenio Lucenti.

This is the smallest of the four bells. Its crown is a more developed version of that in bell no. 2. It is made of three small handles that are joined before they reach the top of the instrument. Such a crown was already employed by the Lucenti family in 1848, when they cast a bell that found its way to the church of San Bartolomeo all'Isola in Rome. Certain decorative features, such as the garlands and the individual leaves pointing down, were not present in the two previous bells. Nonetheless, founders had employed them to decorate bells for centuries. Thus, their use in this and the next bell is not a novelty; rather, it is the outcome of a long history of bell casting in Rome. The inscription informs

30 Alonso Ponga, *Vox Dei ac vox populi*, 116-117, footnotes nos. 332 and 333.

31 Francesco Cancellieri, *Le dve nvove campane di Campidoglio* (Rome: Antonio Fvlgoni, 1806), 56, footnote no. 1.

32 One of its two inscriptions apparently reads OPVS INNOCENTI CASINI ROMANI, personal communication, Direzione Musei statali della città di Roma.

33 <https://catalogo.beniculturali.it/detail/HistoricOrArtisticProperty/1000139163>.

34 Cancellieri, *Le dve nvove campane*, 49-50.

us that the bell was cast by Eugenio Lucenti in Rome in 1909. The next year he also cast bell no. 4. Eugenio was already active in 1898, when he produced a bell for the Vatican Basilica.³⁵ In 1905 he cast a bell for the church of San Andrea Apostolo in Anagni.³⁶ It is unclear why the two images decorating the main body of the bell are unrelated to the patron saints of the Spanish church. This fact suggests that the decoration was not selected by its staff. It may well be that the bell was not cast specifically for Santa in Monserrato. Could it be that the artefact was purchased together with the next bell, a year after it had been cast? Otherwise, for some reason, the church purchased two bells one year apart.

No. 4 (fig. 23)

Measurements: Height, 67 cm.

Inscription: Around the top reads + D·(EO) O·(PTIMO) M·(AXIMO) IACOBO · AP(OSTOLO) · MAIORI · ET · BEATAE · MARIAE MONTSERRATENSI / + TEMPLI · HUIUS · TUTELARIBUS · SANCTISSIMIS · SACRUM A(NNO) D(OMINI) MCMX (fig. 24). Above the soundbow reads EUGENIO LUCENTI FU FRANCESCO FUSE IN ROMA.

Decoration: The handles of the crown are decorated with leaves on the top and a lion paw on the bottom (fig. 24). The shoulder shows two types of leaves pointing down (fig. 24). The top of the main body, just beneath the inscription bands, has a relief with garlands and bearded faces. Underneath the beginning of the top inscription is a bust of the Virgin Mary with Child (fig. 25). She is crowned. Underneath this are two angels holding a garland. The soundbow is decorated with single leaves pointing down while the rim has a frieze of waves (fig. 26).

Date: 1910.

Bell founder: Eugenio Lucenti.

The inscription informs us that this bell was cast for the church of the Apostle James the Great, who is claimed to be buried in Santiago de Compostela and is the patron saint of both Galicia and Spain, and the Virgin Mary of Montserrat. We also read that the bell was cast in 1910, a year after the previous bell was produced. The bottom inscription provides the name of the bell founder, Eugenio Lucenti, who cast the artefact in Rome. Thus, this and the previous bell were cast by the same man. Moreover, we are told that the previous manager of the foundry was Francesco, probably Eugenio's father. Francesco cast a bell for the church of San Andrea Apostolo in Anagni in 1883.³⁷ The Lucenti family

35 Alonso Ponga, *Vox Dei ac vox populi*, 127-128.

36 One of its inscriptions reads LUCENTI EUGENIO FU FRANCESCO FUSE IN ROMA. On the Lucenti family, see bell no. 4.

37 Its nameplate reads FRANCESCO / LUCENTI / FONDITORE / ROMANO.

dominated the production of bells in Rome during most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, even though their bell casting activities started earlier.³⁸ Also, theirs was the last foundry to manufacture bells in Rome, which closed at the end of the twentieth century.³⁹ It was located in Vicolo del Farinone, near St Peter's Basilica.⁴⁰ Since this and bell no. 3 were produced by the same man, some of their decorative features are repeated, the leaves on the shoulder and the relief with garlands and bearded faces. The image of the Virgin with Child may refer to the patroness saint of the church, the Virgin of Montserrat. It is unclear whether the two bells by Eugenio replaced previous bells. The crown, which is decorated with leaves and lion paws, appears in many bells produced by members of the Lucenti family. For instance, it already appears on the bell that Giovanni Battista and his sons cast for St Peter's Basilica in 1893.⁴¹ The basilica of Santa Sabina all'Aventino also has a bell with such a crown. It was cast by Ernesto and Oreste Lucenti in 1906. The large bell of a clock preserved in the Presidio Nuovo Regina Margherita, in Trastevere, also shows this type of crown. It was cast by Francesco Lucenti in 1933. The basilica of Sant'Agnese fuori le mura also has a bell with this type of crown. It was cast by the Lucenti foundry in 1973. Hence, the Lucenti foundry used the same design for almost a century, if not longer. This detail indicates that certain features employed by the Lucenti family did not change much, at least not in the last years of their activity.

3. Documents

During my stay in Rome, I also visited the archive of the Spanish church. There I requested to see the documents of payments made in the years that the four bells were cast: 1478, 1746, 1909 and 1910. My aim was to find written evidence about their purchase. I was only able to find documents for bell no. 2.⁴² These provide details about how the production of the bell was arranged. Two pages are kept within a file entitled "Conto della Venerabile Regia Chiesa delli S.S. Giacomo, e Ildelfonso della Nazione Spagnola con Angelo Casini fonditore di Metalli," which translates as the account of the venerable royal church of Sts Giacomo and Ildelfonso, of the Spanish nation, with Angelo Casini, founder of metals. The first of the two documents is dated to 10th January 1746 (**fig. 27**). It informs us that Angelo Casini has received a broken bell ("una campana di metallo rotta") from the hands of the camerlengo of the church, that is, the

38 Alonso Ponga, *Vox Dei ac vox populi*, 53.

39 Claudio Brufola and Enzo Rava, *Campane a Roma* (Caserta: Tipolito Russo, 1982).

40 Gianni Loperfido and Nicolò Giuseppe Brancato, *Roma : iscrizioni dal Medioevo al Duemila : la storia della città raccontata sui muri* (Latina: Il gabbiano, 1999), 299 (no. 23).

41 Alonso Ponga, *Vox Dei ac vox populi*, 120-123; Stens, "Die Glocken der Patriarchalbasiliken zu Rom: 1", 204.

42 Rome, Iglesia Nacional Española, Archivo de la Obra Pía 292, Cuentas de Santiago y de la Archicofradía de la Resurrección, año 1746. Fondo: Obra Pía de Santiago y S. Ildelfonso. Serie: Contabilidad.

individual that administers its property and revenues. This bell weighed ninety-five pounds (“di peso libre novantacinque”). We also read that the bell has been valued at fifteen baiocchi per pound (“Baiochi quindici per libra”). At the time the currency of the Papal States was the Scudo Romano, which equalled a hundred Baiocchi. The document states that this amount will be deducted from the payment for a new bell that Casini pledges to cast. This artefact will weigh about a hundred pounds (“di peso libre cento incirca”). He vows to produce it of good metal. Moreover, he promises to maintain it for a whole year from the day of delivery (“con obligo di mantenerla un anno continuo dal giorno della consegna”). The fact that part of this text is underlined indicates the importance of this point. Actually, the document goes as far as to say that, if during this period of time a fault arises due to the casting or the metal employed, Angelo will recast the bell at his own expenses (“e quando in detto tempo non succeda nesuna disgrazia che venga il difetto dal gettito o dal metallo, mi obligo di rifarla di nuovo a tutte mie spese”). The value of the metal to be used for this new bell would be thirty baiocchi per pound, excluding the iron clapper. At the end of the document is the signature of Angelo Casini, followed by those of Bartholomeo Rodriguez and Diego Martin, who were present during the draft of the document.

This document is the contract established between the Spanish church, that of Sts Giacomo and Ildefonso, and Angelo Casini, the founder who was going to cast the new bell. The latter, who was active in the mid-eighteenth century, has already been discussed above. Because the contract is dated to 1746, that is, it coincides with the production date of bell no. 2, we can safely assume that the document refers to this bell. As a result, bell no. 2 was originally cast for the church of Sts Giacomo and Ildefonso and, like bell no. 1, was moved to Santa Maria in Monserrato when the Spanish community left the church in Piazza Navona. Consequently, none of the current bells belonged to the church of Santa Maria in Monserrato before the union of the two foundations. From the document we also learn that one of the bells from the church is broken and its staff is looking to replace it. It is unclear how many bells the church had. A painting from the second quarter of the seventeenth century shows two bells hanging from a bell gable (**fig. 28**), a structure that is not currently preserved (**fig. 29**). If this depiction is truthful, one of these is bell no. 1 while the other could have been the instrument given to Angelo Casini to be recast. That the founder received the broken bell is quite common, since the artefact was useless. Moreover, this way the church did not have to pay as much for a new bell. In other words, broken bells were usually melted down to recycle their metal. For example, in 1746, the same year that Angelo Casini recast the bell, Francesco Giardoni cast a bell for St Peter's Basilica. This was going to replace a broken bell. A written document shows that the broken artefact was first weighed

and then smashed into pieces so that the bronze could be recycled.⁴³ Like in our case, the value of the bell -the amount of bronze- was assessed so that the price to be paid for the new instrument could be calculated. The contract includes a warranty. In case the bell had any defect due to the casting or the metal employed during the first year of use, the founder was obliged to recast it. Such warranties seem to have been common. For instance, Giacomo Pucci, who was active in Rome in the seventeenth century, promised that he would recast a bell that he was going to manufacture, if this would break at some point in the four years after its delivery.⁴⁴ In 1769 the authorities of Gubbio, Umbria, commissioned Giovanni Battista Donati to recast the “campanone”, that is, the large bell, of the town. The contract they signed included a three-year warranty.⁴⁵ Such contracts had not always included such a guarantee. The contract drafted between the city of Treviso, Veneto, and Lucas, a bell founder from Venice, in 1315 specified that the sound of the bell would be checked by a group of monks a few days after the delivery of the bell.⁴⁶ If they were not pleased with it, the bell would have to be recast. Thus, the way that the quality of bells was assessed had changed throughout the centuries. It is worth noting that the contract does not include any request regarding the look of the bell. It is inferred that the staff of the church did not require the instrument to have any particular inscription or image, as they did in other instances.⁴⁷ The reason for this is unknown. Could they have omitted this detail from the contract? The non-religious decoration of the bell confirms that the client did not ask for anything specific, at least not regarding its imagery. In other words, it was Angelo who decided how the bell was going to be decorated. This instance corroborates that bells without requested decoration could also be commissioned and not cast for speculative sale.

The second document is the receipt for the bell (**fig. 30**). This is actually written in Spanish on the back of the page (“recibo de la campana”). The beginning of the document describes what the text is about: Account of the venerable royal church of Sts Giacomo and Idelfonso, of the Spanish nation, with Angelo Casini, founder of metals. Then we read how the price of the bell is calculated. The instrument will weigh 129,5 pounds of metal. Since each pound will cost thirty baiocchi, the final amount is thirty-eight scudi and eighty-five baiocchi (“Per prezzo, e fattura d’una campana rifusa per la Re/gia Chiesa di libre Centoventinove, e Mezzo Metallo / calcolato à baiocchi 30 la libra così

43 Alonso Ponga, *Vox Dei ac vox populi*, 51, 101-102.

44 Alonso Ruiz, “La reforma de la iglesia de Santiago”, 52-53.

45 Fabrizio Cece, *La fusione del campanone di Gubbio 1769. I documenti* (Gubbio: Fotolibri, 2019), 28.

46 Alex Rodriguez Suarez, “Magist[er] Lucas de Veneciis me fecit: A Venetian bell founder from the Middle Ages”, *The Antiquaries Journal* 103 (2023), 272.

47 Rodriguez Suarez, “Magist[er] Lucas de Veneciis”, 272.

dacordo importa - 38:85"). Next is the deduction of the amount from the broken bell, the value of which the bell founder specified in the previous document: fifteen baiocchi per pound. Hence, the broken bell was worth fourteen scudi and twenty-five baiocchi ("Da quali Levati per prezzo di libre 95 metallo che / pesava la Campana Vecchia Valutato d'ac/cordo baiocchi 15 la libra - 14:25"). Then it is added the delivery cost, ten baiocchi ("E per portatura della suddeta Campana - _:10"). And so the new bell cost twenty-four scudi and seventy baiocchi ("Resto ad havere - 24:70"). In the lower part of the page Angelo states that on 26th February 1746 he received twenty-four scudi and seventy baiocchi from the hands of Mr Giuseppe Gagliardi, the camerlengo of the church of San Giacomo of the Spanish, for the bell he cast. Therefore, the receipt of the bell is followed by the cancellation of the debt. At the end of the document is the signature of Angelo Casini.

The document specifies four amounts: The total price for the new bell, the amount to be deducted, the delivery cost and the final sum. This way Angelo clearly calculates the amount that he is owed. The delivery cost shows that he had to transport the new bell to Piazza Navona. That founders had to take bells to the place where these were going to be rung was also quite common. Since the payment was done on 26th February we infer that Angelo approximately needed a month and a half to cast and deliver the new bell. The church saved about more than a third of the cost by recycling the broken bell. It is worth noting that the new bell was larger than the broken one that it replaced. In any case, we are not dealing with a rather large bell. In fact, the medieval bell of the church -bell no. 1- is larger. Certainly, the openings of the bell gable of the church limited the dimensions of the new bell.

References to the bell are also found in other lists of payments made by the church. Those related to the sacristy and dated to January 1746 include the sum paid for the rope of the new bell, 62 baiocchi ("Por una querda para la Campana Nueva - 00:62"). The general list of payments made in February includes the amount paid for the bell. In this case, Angelo Casini is mentioned as bell founder ("Campanaro").

4. Conclusions

The four bells discussed in this article are important instances of the material culture of Santa Maria in Monserrato degli Spagnoli. Even though they are not as well-known as other art works preserved in the church, their historical and artistic value cannot be underestimated. Their significance also lies in the fact that each one represents a different moment in the centuries-long history of the Spanish community in Rome. Bell no. 1 takes us to the second half of the fifteenth century, when Alfonso de Paradinas founded the church of San Giacomo. More than two centuries later, its staff commissioned Angelo Casini to cast bell no. 2 to replace a broken instrument. This replacement indicates the relevance of bell ringing in the daily life of a religious foundation. When San Giacomo was abandoned, these two bells were taken to Santa Maria in Mon-

serrato, which became the Spanish church in Rome. The instruments continued to ring in their new location, less than ten minutes away from Piazza Navona. In the early twentieth century the acquisition of bells nos. 3 and 4 raised the number of instruments to four. Even though these bells were employed by the Spanish community, their texts are mainly written in Latin, showing the importance of this language for the Catholic faith throughout the centuries. Indeed, Ecclesiastical Latin still is the official language of the Catholic Church. In bells nos. 3 and 4 the founder employed Italian to write his signature. For centuries founders had employed Latin to write their names. The use of Italian reveals the increasing role of this language in inscriptions on bells.

After playing a crucial role for centuries, the function of bells has diminished in contemporary society. Yet, their sounds continue to be heard throughout the streets near Santa Maria in Monserrato. Some churches in Rome do not ring their bells anymore, others do it rarely. For this reason, the pealing of bells of the Spanish church contributes to the preservation of a key element of the religious soundscape of the Italian capital. Further studies focusing on the bells of specific churches will not only uncover their artistic value, but they will also fill a notable gap in the history of bell casting in Rome.

Figures



Fig. 1. Bell cast in 1650 (San Francesco a Ripa, Rome). The author



Fig. 2. Detail of the inscription on a bell cast in 1675 (Santi Quattro Coronati, Rome). The author



Fig. 3. Bell gable of Santa Maria in Monserrato degli Spagnoli, with four openings for bells.
The author



Fig. 4. The three bells on the top part of the bell gable. The author



Fig. 5. Bell no. 1, cast by an anonymous founder in 1478. The author



Fig. 6. Part of the inscription on bell no. 1. On the bottom right is the smaller seal with the coat of arms of the founder of San Giacomo, Alfonso de Paradinas. The author



Fig. 7. The larger seal with the coat of arms of the founder of San Giacomo, Alfonso de Paradinas. The author



Fig. 8. Crown of bell no. 1. The handles show a rope motif. The author



Fig. 9. Coat of arms of Alfonso de Paradinas decorating his funerary monument (Santa Maria in Monserrato). The author



Fig. 10. Bell no. 2, cast by Angelo Casini in 1746. The author



Fig. 11. Crown of bell no. 2. Part of the top inscription is also visible. The author



Fig. 12. The hand with a finger indicating the beginning of the top inscription on bell no. 2. The author



Fig. 13. Bottom half of bell no. 2. One of the realistic leaves and part of the bottom inscription are visible. The author



Fig. 14. Mortar cast by Angelo and Felice Casini in 1768 (Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome). The author



Fig. 15. Bell cast by Angelo and Felice Casini in 1769 (Santa Agnese fuori le mura, Rome). The author



Fig. 16. Two hands with a finger indicating the beginning of two inscriptions on a mortar cast by Angelo and Felice Casini in 1768, fig. 12 (Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome). The author



Fig. 17. Realistic leaf and hand with finger indicating the beginning of an inscription on a bell cast by Angelo and Felice Casini in 1769, fig. 13 (Santa Agnese fuori le mura, Rome). The author



Fig. 18. Bell cast by Innocenzo Casini (Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome). The author



Fig. 19. Bell no. 3, cast by Eugenio Lucenti in 1909. The author



Fig. 20. Crown of bell no. 3. The author



Fig. 21. Image of St Michael trampling the demon decorating one side of bell no. 3. The author



Fig. 22. Image of St John the Baptist decorating bell no. 3. The author



Fig. 23. Bell no. 4, cast by Eugenio Lucenti in 1910. The author



Fig. 24. Top part of bell no. 3. The handles of the crown and part of the top inscription are visible. The author



Fig. 25. Bust of the Virgin with Child decorating one side of bell no. 4. The author



Fig. 26. Bottom part of bell no. 4. Both soundbow and rim are visible. The author



Fig. 28. Detail of a painting entitled Market in Piazza Navona. It shows the façade of the church of San Giacomo degli Spagnoli, with its bell gable visible on the rooftop. On display at Museo di Roma – Palazzo Braschi (MR 3651). The author



Fig. 29. Current state of the former church of San Giacomo degli Spagnoli, today Nostra Signora del Sacro Cuore, in Piazza Navona. The author

Conto della V. e Regia Chiesa delli S. Giacomo, e Paolo
 fondo della Natione Spagnola con Angelo Casini
 Fodiceora di Macallo.

Per prezzo, e fattura d'una Campana di fusione di Re-
 gia Chiesa delli Centovenesino, e mezzo Macallo
 calcolato a 30 La. l. così d'accordo importo 38.85

Da quali Levaci il prezzo di 15 Macallo che
 pesava la Campana Vecchia Valutato d'ac-
 cordo di 15 La. l.

+ portatura della sud. Campana ————— 24.75
 ————— : 10

Resto ad avere ————— 124.70

Io Sotto. ho ricavo dalla V. e Regia Chiesa di S. Giacomo
 di Spagnoli per le mani del Sig. Giuseppe Sghiarzi
 suo Cameriere lungo soldi ventiquattro, e bindocchi sex-
 tanta Moneta il saldo del sud. Conto, ed in Confer-
 mazione del obbligo da me fatto a favore di S. Regia
 Chiesa. In Sede l. Q. d. di 26 Febbrao 1746

Angelo Casini Mano ff

Fig. 30. Receipt of bell no. 2, drafted in February 1746 (AOP 292). The author

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