

The Uses of Bells in Counter-Reformation Bavaria

Alex Fisher, University of British Columbia (fisher@mail.ubc.ca)

AMS San Francisco, 11 November 2011

Example 1: Jacques-Auguste de Thou on bells and civil unrest, from *Iacobi Augusti Thuani Epigrammata*, II*

Tinnula secreta quae bruta tonitrua quaeque
 Daemonas aërios aera fugatis ope,
Dicite: quid merui quod nocte dieque sonore
 Attonitas aureis frangitis assiduo?
Non ego Pisaea Salmoneus alter arena
 Audaci vexi tela trisulca rota.
Non Lemerum ritu geniorum aut more malorum
 Miscere horrifico cuncta iuvat strepitu.
Nil mihi vobiscum est, ô tintinnabula: tandem
 Desinite immeritum frangere saeva caput.
Vis sitis potius civilis classica belli:
 Pacis amans ego sum: quid mihi cum lituis?

Mysterious bells who with your power drive away the
 heavy thunder and demons flying through the air,
Tell me: why do I deserve that day and night
 You assault my ears with such unceasing sound?
For I am not Salmoneus in that other arena of Pisa,
 My daring wheels inviting [Jove's] thunderbolts.
It pleases me not to be vexed always by such a racket,
 Like the rites of the lemures or of exorcisms.
I want nothing to do with you, o bells: so cease
 Your assault on this undeserving head.
You are better suited to sound the signal for civil war:
 I am a lover of peace: what use to me are war-
 trumpets?

Example 2: from Angelo Rocca, *De campanis commentarius* (Rome: Apud Guillelmim Facciottum, 1612), 132

Nam sicut Campanarum pulsus Christi Fidelibus mentem excitat, & ad hæc facienda extollit; ita è conuerso Dæmones per aërem cursitantes, earundem sonum, tamquàm diuino cultui, & Sanctorum honori dicatum, mirum in modum effugiunt, & abhorrent, quippe qui ex eo Campanarum pulsu non parum affliguntur.

For just as the ringing of bells stirs the mind of those faithful in Christ, and moves [them] to do [good] things, conversely demons flying through the air, and particularly those who are wont to be vexed by such bell ringing, flee and abhor that wondrous sound which is dedicated to the divine cult and the honor of the Saints.

Example 3: from Guillaume Durand, *Rationale divinarum officiorum* (Lyon: sumptibus Ioannis Baptistae Buysson, 1592), 131–3

Cæterum campanæ in processionibus pulsantur, vt dæmones timentes fugiant, prout in quarta parte sub titulo de accessio. Pontifi. ad alta dicitur. Timent enim auditis tubis Ecclesiæ militantis, scilicet campanis, sicut aliquis tyrannus timet audiens in terra sua tubas alicuius potentis regis inimici sui. † Et h[æ]c etiam est causa quare Ecclesia videns concitari tempestatem, campanas pulsat, scilicet vt dæmones tubas æterni regis, id est, campanas audie[n]tes, terriri fugia[n]t, & à tempestatis concitatione quiesca[n]t, & vt ad campanæ pulsatione[m] fideles amoneantur, & prouocentur pro instanti periculo orationi insistere.

* Qtd. in Ingrid A. R. de Smet, “Contre les cloches: pour une lecture de neuf épigrammes inédites de Jacques-Auguste de Thou (1553–1617),” *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 66 (2004): 101.

Example 3 (continued):

Furthermore, bells are rung in processions so that demons shall flee in fear [...] Indeed they fear hearing the trumpets, indeed the bells, of the Church militant, just as a certain tyrant shall fear hearing the trumpets of his enemies, of some powerful king, in his lands. And this is the reason why the Church rings the bells when storms rise up, for obviously demons flee in fear when they hear the trumpets, that is, the bells, of the eternal King, and refrain from the stirring up of tempests; and [this is why] the faithful are admonished by the ringing of bells, and are moved to persist in their prayer despite the present danger.

Example 4: 2 Maccabees 12:39–45 (NRSV)

On the next day, as had now become necessary, Judas and his men went to take up the bodies of the fallen and to bring them back to lie with their kindred in the sepulchres of their ancestors. Then under the tunic of each one of the dead they found sacred tokens of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids the Jews to wear. And it became clear to all that this was the reason these men had fallen. So they all blessed the ways of the Lord, the righteous judge, who reveals the things that are hidden; and they turned to supplication, praying that the sin that had been committed might be wholly blotted out. The noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened as the result of the sin of those who had fallen. He also took up a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin-offering. In doing this he acted very well and honourably, taking account of the resurrection. For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, so that they might be delivered from their sin.

Example 5: Michael Praetorius, *Syntagmatis musici tomus primus* (Wittenberg: Johannes Richter, 1615), 131–2.

Von der BeteGlocken/ oder *pro pace* leuten.

Man helt im Bapstumb Morgens/ Mittags vnd Abends einen sonderlichen Glockenschlag/ dadurch das Volck vermahnet sol werden/ die Jungfraw Mariam anzuruffen. Weil aber die hochgelobte Jungfraw Maria solche Ehre/ die Gott allein gebüret/ nicht haben wil/ vnd auch wieder Gottes Wort ist/ sol davon das Volck vnterrichtet werden.

Es kan aber der Glockenschlag an ihm selber/ wie auch in den benachbarten *reformirten* Kirchen behalten werden/ vnterscheid der Morgens- Mittags- vnd Abendstunde/ dem Volck damit anzuzeigen/ vnd daß dadurch das Volck erinnert vnd vermanet werde/ daß sie Morgens/ Mittags vnd Abends für gemeinen Frieden vnd gut Regiment bitten sollen: In welchem Gebet man gleich für die Obrigkeit/ vnd wieder alle Feinde/ des gemeinen Christlichen Friedens/ bittet. Daher man es in den benachbarten *reformirten* Kirchen sehr fein nennet: die BeteGlocke/ oder/ *pro pace* leuten: Vnd ist Christlich/ gut vnd nützlich/ daß das gemeine Volck darzu gewehnet werde/ daß sie solches nötigen Gebets nicht vergessen. Weil es aber gar offte vergessen wird/ kan der Glockenschlag dazu erinnerung geben/ daß sie an solch Gebet zuthun gedencken/ wenn sie hören *pro pace* leuten/ sie seyn im Hause/ im Garten/ auff der Gassen/ oder auff dem Felde. Vnd man mag alßdann die Kinder im Hause auch singen lassen: Erhalt vns HErr bey deinem Wort/ etc. Item: Verley vns Frieden gnediglich. Solch Gebet ist in diesen letzten gefehrlichen Zeiten hoch von nöhten.

Example 5 (continued):

Of bells for prayer, or for peace.

In the papacy there is a particular striking of the bell at morning, noon, and evening, by which the people are admonished to call upon the Virgin Mary. But since the highly-praised Virgin Mary refuses such an honor that is fit for God alone, and since it is against God's Word, the people shall be instructed to reject it.

But the striking of the bell in itself, as it has also been observed in the neighboring Reformed churches, distinguishes the morning, noon, and evening hours, showing, reminding, and instructing the people that they should pray for general peace and good government at morning, noon, and evening. In this prayer they pray for officials and against all enemies of general Christian peace. In the neighboring Reformed churches, then, it is rightly called the prayer bell, or bell for peace. And it is Christian, good, and useful that the people be admonished not to forget this necessary prayer. But since it is often forgotten, the bell stroke can remind them of this prayer, and they [can] hear the ringing for peace, whether they are in their homes, in the garden, in the streets, or in the fields. And then one might have the children at home sing "Erhalt uns Herr bei deinem Wort," etc., or likewise "Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich." This kind of prayer is most necessary in these recent perilous times.

Example 6: Maximilian I of Bavaria to the Landshut City Council, 28 May 1615 (BayHStA GR 1254/1/19):

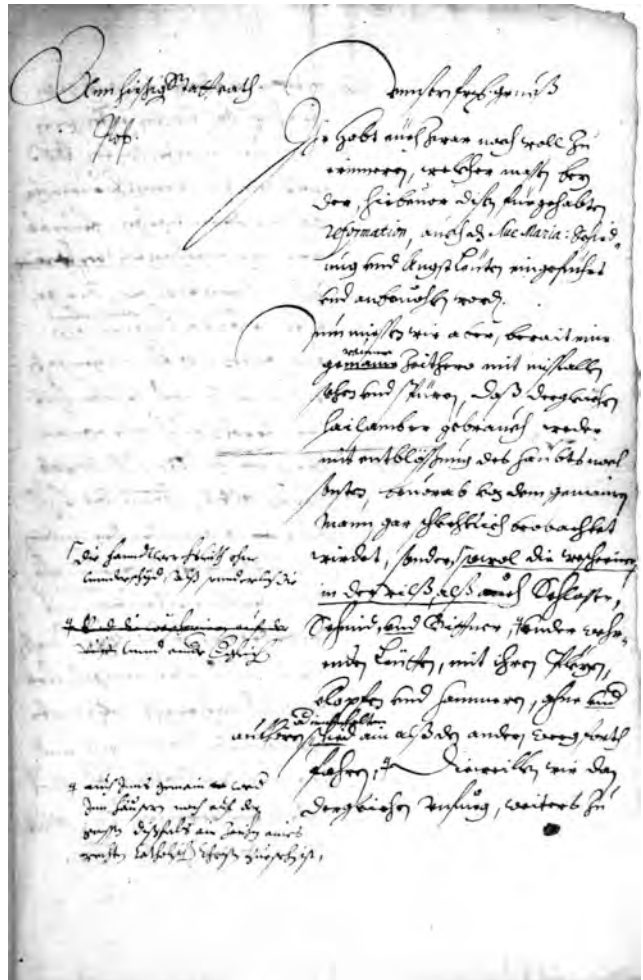
Wir haben in jezige vnsern alhie sein, gesehen, vnd souil wahrgenommen, wie das zur Zeit mann abents das gebett, oder *Aue Maria* leüttet, schier niemandts, wie sich gebürt, niderkhniet, vnnd sich andechtig erzaigt hette, sonnder wanns wol geraten, hat manicher nur bloß den huet abgezogen, vnnd ist dannoch in seinem gschwetz, od[er] waß er zuschaffen gehabt, vortgefahren, wie gahr eüer aigner amtmann, oder Stattknecht eben selbst der Jenig gewest, so vnndter bettzeit stillgesessen, vnnd geschwezt hat, vnnd mann disfals auf dem Lanndt vnnder em gemainen Paursmann vil ein mehrere andacht sihet; Ja so gahr die Khezer an orth, vnnd Zeit Ires bettens, vil eüferiger, vnnd Exemplarischer sein, welches dann zue sonndern vnehrn Gottes, vnnd seiner gebenedeüten Mutter, dann auch zue gemainer ärgernus geraichen thuet. Beuelchen eüch demnach hiemit ernstlich, das Ir bej der Burgerschafft alhie disen misbrauch, vnnd vnauferbeülichen wann dl, als paldt abstellen, vnnd menigentlich dahin haltet, damit ain Jeder, alten Catholischen gebrauch, vnnd gebott nach, sobaldt mann das *Aue Maria* leüttet auf d[er] gass[en] so wol alß in den heüsern niderkhnüe, vnnd sein gebett v[er]richte [...].

We have seen and determined during our presence [in Landshut], that in the evening when the prayer, or *Ave Maria*, is rung, almost no one kneels and shows his devotion, as would be fitting. Rather when it is heard, some only remove their hats, and continue in their conversation or business. In fact it was your own official, or officer who during prayer-time remained seated and talking, such that better devotion could be seen in the countryside among the common peasantry. Indeed during their times of prayer the heretics are more zealous and exemplary, which leads to the special dishonor of God and his blessed Mother, and to general annoyance. We command you with all gravity, therefore, that you end this abuse and immoral behavior among the citizenry immediately, and hold everyone to this, that each person, according to old Catholic usage and commandment, shall kneel and make his prayer as soon as he hears the Ave Maria, whether he be in the streets or in his house.

Example 7: Bavarian electoral government to the Amberg City Council, 11 December 1637 (draft) (BayStA Amberg, GS 822):

Nun miessen wir aber, bereit einer geraumer Zeithero mit misfallen sehen vnd spüren, daß dergleichen hailsamer gebrauch weder mit entblössung des hauts noch sonsten, beorab von dem gemainen mann gar schlechtlich beobachtet wirdet, sonder, die hanndtwercksleith ohne vnnderschÿd, alß sonnderlich die sowol die wescherinen in der Vilß, alß auch Schlosser, Schmid, vnd Bittner, vnnd annd[er]e d[er]gleichen, vnder wehrenden Leütten, mit ihren Pleÿen, klopfen vnd hammern, ohne aufhören [illegible] ain alß den andern weeg forth fahren, auch Inns gemain wed[er] Inn häusern noch auf der gassen dißfals ain Zeichen aines rechten Catholisch[en] Christen zusehen ist. Dieweillen wir dan dergleichen vnfueg, weiters zu also gestatten nit gedacht sein, auch gegen ihr Churfl: drl. vnnsern ggsten: herrn nit zuuertworten wusten, Alß wollen wir hiemit ernst zueuerlessig, daß ihr derentwegen, beorab aber, bey obgedachten wescherinnen, vnnd handwerckhsleütten, die gebürende abstellung thun anstalt machen lassen : auch sonsten, vf öffentlicher gassen vnd Zu weillen nach beschaffenheit der Persohn auch mit abnam der hüett oder anddere Spottraf v[er]fiegen vnd darob halten sollet, damit die leüth wan ia ain: oder der andern nit lust zubetten hette, vnd[er] wehrenden dergleichen Leütten wenigstens mit vnbedeckten haubt seyen.

You will well remember the manner in which, during the previous reformation, the Ave Maria, Parting-, and Passion bells were introduced and mandated. But now for some time we have seen and noticed with displeasure that this salutary practice is observed poorly by the common man, neither with doffing of hats nor otherwise, but rather that the craftsmen without exception, and particularly the washerwomen in the Vils [river], the locksmiths, blacksmiths, and coopers, and others of the same, continue with their noise, rapping, and hammering without stopping [...]; and in general at this time the signs of being a good, Catholic Christian are to be seen neither in homes nor on the streets. As we are not willing to tolerate such abuse and are responsible to your Serene Elector's officials, we thereby command you firmly that you make the appropriate prohibition, especially to the aforementioned washer-women and craftsmen; and further, according to the rank of the person, hats may be confiscated or other mocking punishments be made in the open, so that during this bell ringing the people will least appear with uncovered heads, even if one or the other wishes not to pray.



Example 8: Mandate of Duke Wilhelm V of Bavaria, 12 August 1592 (BSB Kloeckeliana 21/18):

[...] So ist hiemit vnser beuelch an dich/ daß du alsbald vnd vuerzogenlich diß beyligendes getrucktes Gebett zu allen in deiner Gerichts verwaltung/ ligenden Clöstern/ Stifften/ Pfarren/ in Stätten/ Märckten/ vnd auff dem Landt schickest/ die Pfarrherrn/ Prediger vnnd Seelsorger/ do es von den Herrn *Ordinarijs* mit alberait/ wie wir verhoffen/ beschehen/ von vnserntwegen erinnerst/ daß sie alles fleiß von der Cantzel/ das Volck zu hertzlicher beständiger Rhew/ Bueß/ Gottsforcht vnd embsigem Gebett/ vermahnen/ vnd dann allwegen nach vollendter Predig/ mit andacht vorermelts Gebett verlesen. Deß versehens/ sie werden nach anordnung jedes orts hoher geistlicher Obrigkeit/ vnnd für sich selbs/ wochentlich *Litanias*, auff wenigst/ am Freytag/ oder an ainem andern gelegnen Tag anstellen vnnd halten. Wöllest auch darob seyn/ daß täglich nach dem Mittag leütten/ mit ainer andern Glocken gelitten/ vnnd meniglich/ so bald er die Glocken hört/ für das anligen der Christenheit/ Kriegsempörungen vnd sonderlich für deß Türcken Tyranney zubitten/ vermahnt werde.

Therefore it is our command to you, that you immediately and without delay send the enclosed printed prayer to all cloisters, foundations, and parishes in cities, markets, and in the countryside; and that you remind the priests, preachers, and ministers on our behalf, if they have not already [been informed] by their superiors, as we hope, that they diligently admonish the people from the pulpit to heartfelt, constant remorse, penitence, fear of God, and arduous prayer, and that after the completed sermon they read aloud the aforementioned prayer with reverence. To aid in this they shall, according to the direction of the higher clergy of each place, and for themselves, introduce and hold weekly litanies, at least on Friday or on another suitable day. You shall also see to it that daily after the midday bell, another bell shall be rung, and all who hear the bell shall be admonished to pray for the needs of Christendom, [against] the trials of war and especially [against] the tyranny of the Turks.

Example 9: Mandate of Duke Wilhelm V of Bavaria to the Geistlicher Rat, 22 October 1594 (BayHStA Staatsverwaltung 2812, 4v):

“[...] Od[er] wann man das Türkhen bett leutt, das sÿ mit Trumel vnnd Pfeiffen, oder sonst zum schießen hinauß gehen, dieweill mans darnach auch *debito modo* verrichten khan. Man solle auch die Leuth dahin halten vnnd zwingen, das sÿ so wohl offentlich auf der gassen, als daheimb, wann man das Türkhengebett, oder das Aue Maria leutt, nider khnien, sich vhor Gott nit schemen, vnd sollen aigne Leuth darzue bestellt vnnd verordnet werden (wie in Inspruckh vnd andern orthen geschicht) die darauf acht geben, vnnd die Leuth mit Irem heerumb gehen, darzue vermahnen, auch khains verschonen, alle freidenspill vnnd Tänz werden gentzlich abzuschaffen.

[It is to be forbidden] that when the Turk bell is rung, that [the people] go out with drums and pipes, or go shooting, as they can easily do this afterwards. The people are also to be held [to this] and compelled, that whether they are on the streets or at home, when they hear the Turk prayer [bell] or the Ave Maria [bell] they shall kneel, and not shame themselves before God. For this purpose special persons are to be engaged and ordered (as is the case in Innsbruck and elsewhere) to pay attention, and admonish people who are walking around, and spare no one; [further] all celebrations and dancing are to be entirely forbidden .

Table 1: The bells of Unsere Liebe Frau, Munich, ca. 1620

Herrenglocke. Not extant, date unknown, ca. 100 kg. Inscription: “ANNA MATER MARIE” [Anne, Mother of Mary].

Wandelglocke. Not extant, date unknown, ca. 300 kg. No inscription.

Mittaglocke or Aveglocke. Not extant, date unknown, ca. 1000 kg. Inscription: “PIA LAUDETUR VIRGO MARIA LXM TRIA ME RESONANTE, VIRGINIS ASSUMPTÆ DIES SEPTENNOS HIS SUPER ADDE”.

Klingl or Primglocke. Extant, 14th c., ca. 350 kg. Inscription: “LVCAS MARCVS MATTAVS JOHANNES”.

Frühmess. Extant, 1442, 800 kg. Inscription: “O REX GLORIE XSTE / VENI CUM PACE + / MAISTER PAVLVS / ANNO DM M CCCC XLII / VND ICH HAIS”.

Winklerin. Extant, 1451, 2000 kg. Inscription: “ANNO DNI M CCCC LI / O REX GLORIE / VENI CUM PACE / LVCAS MARCVS JOHANNES MATEVS / BIST DAS DER HER SELBST GOT / AVE MARIA / GRACIA / IST ER / HAT VNS GESCHAFFEN / VND NIT BIR VNS SELBS / O FILI DEI / MISERERE MEI / DEO GRACIAS AMEN. / LIS MICH / HAT MAISTER PAVLS GOSEN MICH / ICH RVEFF / DEN LEBENDIGEN / DIE DOTEN CLAG ICH / VND GIB STURMES DON / GOT GEB DEM MAISTER / DEN EBIGEN LON / IHS / CHSTS V R I / AVE MARIA / GRACIA PLENA / DOMINVS TECVM / BENEDICTA TV / IN MVLERIBVS / AMEN”.

Pfarrglocke, Sperrglocke, Guldein Kron, or Rosenkranzglocke. Extant in Munich city museum, 1452, ca. 2000 kg. Inscription: “O REX GLORIE VENI CUM PACE. / ANNO DM M CCCC LII / UND IST VOL PRACHT PEI HER KASPERN AINDORFFERN. / ICH LOB JESUS MARIA JOHANNES UND SAND KASPERN. / ICH HAIS DIE GULDEIN KRON / GOT GEB MAISTER PAVLSSSEN DER MICH GOS DEN EBIGEN LON”.

Susanna. Extant, 1490, 8000 kg. Inscription: “SVSANNA HAISS ICH / IN IHESUS MARIA VND LVKAS MARKVS MATHEVS JOHANNES IN DER NAMEN GOS MAN MICH / DER DVRCHLEUCHTIG HOCHGEBORN FVRST VND HERR / HERR ALBRECHT PFALTZ GRAVE PEI REIN HERZOG IN OBERN VND NIDERN PAIRN WAS STIFTER MICH / VON REGENSPVRG HER PRACHT ER MICH / DIE POSEN WETER VERTREIB ICH / DEN TODEN PEERE ICH / HANNS ERNST DER GOS MICH ALS MAN ZALT VON GOTTES GEVRT TAUSEND VIER HVNDERT VND IN DEM NEWNTZIGISTEN IAR / TETRAGRAMATAN”.

Praesenzglocke. Extant, 1492, 1600 kg. Inscription: “AVE MARIA GRACIA PLENA / DMS TECV + / BENEDICTA TV / ANNO DM 1492 JAR / GOS MICH ULRICH V ROSE / GLOCKGISER ZV MVNCHN”.

Frauenglocke. Extant, 1617, 3000 kg. Inscription: “ZU GOTTES ER HAT MICH GEGOSSEN MEISTER BARTHOLOMAE WENGLE ZU MINCHEN ONFEDROSSEN IM J M:DC:XVII”.

Bennoglocke. Extant, 1617, 2100 kg. Inscription: “BARTHOLOMAE WENGLE HAT MICH GOSEN IM MDCXVII / VOX EGO BENNONIS / CREPERUM JOVIS ARCEO FULMEN / ET PLACO COELUM / NE SATA GRANDO NECET / PELLO STRIGES / COGO POPULOS / AD NUMINIS ARAS / QUAS COLEREM / SI NON VOX SINE MENTE FOREM. / HIC EST FRATRUM AMATOR / HIC EST QUI MULTUM ORAT / PRO POPULO / MACHABAEOR II”.