

Abstract

The bells of only a small number of churches in Rome, such as those of the four major basilicas, have received the attention of historians and been documented. Many others, however, still await investigation. Even though the city is filled with churches and monasteries, bells are among the least studied instances of material culture in the Italian capital. Because of their location in bell towers and gables, access to many of these artefacts is either difficult or impossible. In 2023–2024, the research project *Las campanas de Roma: Un patrimonio artístico desconocido* examined more than one hundred bells in churches, monasteries, palaces, and museums of the city and its surroundings. Their details – measurements, decoration, and inscriptions – were uploaded to the online database BellsBase, turning it into the largest repository of data about Roman bells. The study of this material, particularly the inscriptions, provides information about the founders active in Rome throughout the centuries. This article looks at these individuals to trace the history of bell founding in the city from the Middle Ages to the late 20th century, when the manufacture of bells in Rome ceased. The result is a chronicle of bell production in the Italian capital, revealing the names of the men – no woman has been reported so far – manufacturing bells for eight hundred years. A few, such as Luigi Valadier, are well known; others have faded into history. This timeline not only recovers the latter but also highlights the significance of their production.