

MAGIST[ER] LUCAS DE VENECIIS ME FECIT: A VENETIAN BELL FOUNDER FROM THE MIDDLE AGES

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This paper examines Master Lucas, a bell founder based in Venice who was active between the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries. Through the examination of sixteen bells, some of which are no longer extant, the career of one of the earliest known Venetian bell founders can be traced. A catalogue of the bells describes their measurements, inscriptions and decorations. The distribution of his products to locations in Montenegro and central Italy demonstrate the importance of Venice as a bell casting centre in the Middle Ages. Written documents are cited to provide further information about Lucas's life and some of the bells that he cast. Collation of this evidence sheds important light on the practices of bell casting in Venice around AD 1300.

Keywords: church bells; bell casting; Venice

INTRODUCTION

A few scholars have claimed that Venetian bell casting already existed in the ninth century¹ when, according to a Venetian chronicle, the Doge of Venice Orso I Participazio (864–81) sent twelve bells to the Byzantine Emperor Basil I (867–86).² While this account does not in itself prove that bell founders were already established in Venice at this early date, Venetian bell production certainly became an important industry in following centuries.³ So far, the earliest known bell master based in Venice is reported in a document dated to June 1128.⁴ He was a certain *Petrus campanarius*, that is, a bell founder named Peter. By the end of the thirteenth century, Venetian bell founders had statutes that regulated the industry, providing evidence that bell casting was firmly established in Venice by this time.⁵ This document informs us that officers checked the quality of founders' products (Statute no 1). It includes an oath that members had to swear in order to join the guild (Statute no 2), and it stipulates that they had to have a *signum*, or foundry-mark, to identify their products (Statute no 3). Consequently, the activity of bell masters based in Venice and that of travelling ones was different.

Of the surviving bells to have been cast by founders established in Venice, the earliest are dated to the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries. One of

1. Monticolo and Besta 1896–1914, III, 107, n 1; Gattinoni 1910, 132; Brunello 1981, 51.

2. Monticolo 1890, 126.

3. Avery 2011, 69–87.

4. Dorigo 2003, 429, n 213.

5. Avery 2011, 9, 14–15. The first ones were written down in 1282 and new ones were added later: Monticolo and Besta 1896–1914, III, 107, 110–12.

the founders that can be identified is Manfredinus, a bell founder mentioned in the statutes of the Venetian bell masters (Statute no 11).⁶ His bells are found in a number of locations, including Verona, South Tirol, Istria, Krk Island and northern Apulia. In 2009 a temporary exhibition provided the opportunity to investigate bells linked to Manfredinus in detail. Extensive comparative data was collected about the objects, including the percentage of copper, tin and other elements that were used to cast them.⁷ Such details are rarely found in other studies about bells.

A contemporary of Manfredinus was Lucas of Venice, who until now has not received much scholarly attention. He is known for having cast the oldest bell in the Venetian lagoon.⁸ Like Manfredinus, he produced bells that found their way to several locations in northern Italy and Istria. Anton Gnirs dated Lucas' activity to the beginning of the fourteenth century.⁹ More recently, it has been proposed that he was already active around the turn of the century.¹⁰ A few documents dated to the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries mention a Venetian bell founder named 'Lucas'.¹¹ To date, this evidence has not been studied together. For this reason, the present article examines both artefacts and documents to trace the career of one of the most prolific bell founders of medieval Venice. The first part of the paper describes a detailed catalogue of bells linked to Lucas of Venice. Information about his bells is then compared with those cast by his contemporary, Manfredinus. The aim is to shed light on bell casting in Venice between the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries. By examining in depth the objects manufactured in this period and their distributions, it will be shown that Master Lucas was one of the main bell founders of Venice, a city that by then was already a major centre for the production and export of bells.

There has been previous work on Venetian bell casting; for instance, Victoria Avery has looked at production from the mid-fourteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries.¹² However, for the preceding period, the only study to explore Venetian bells in depth is the aforementioned work on Manfredinus. Therefore, this article significantly expands our understanding of Venetian bell founding in this formative period.

CATALOGUE

The instruments are listed in chronological order; undated bells appear at the end (nos 7–17). I have only examined three artefacts *in situ*: nos 2, 6 and 9; information about the remainder is collated from primary and secondary sources. Whenever possible, entries include measurements and inscriptions. Unless I have been able to visually inspect the inscriptions,¹³ they appear exactly as transcribed by previous authors. The abbreviated parts of the inscriptions – those that the bell founder marked with a titulus – are shown in parentheses. Between square brackets are added letters that are missing, and that the bell

6. Monticolo and Besta 1896–1914, III, 111.

7. Moroder and Planker 2009, 160–3.

8. Gattinoni 1910, 139–40.

9. Gnirs 1917, 218. He did so because one of Lucas's bells (no 6) is dated to 1318.

10. Because bell no 1 is dated to 1290: Bistrović 2017, 29–30.

11. Dorigo 2003, 429, n 213.

12. Avery 2011.

13. Photographic evidence was inspected to ascertain comparable data.

founder did not note in any way. While every endeavour has been made to make this list comprehensive, further bells cast by Lucas may be identified in the future.

1) Supetarska Draga, Rab Island, Croatia (1290).¹⁴

This artefact is in the bell tower of St Peter's Church in Supetarska Draga.

Measurements: height, 880mm; diameter, 680mm.

Inscription(s): two, the one around the top reads: +MAGIST(ER) LUCAS ChENDRIGETUS FR(ATR)ES DE VENECIIS ME FECERUNT. The one around the bottom has multiple messages: +AN(N)O D(OMI)NI MCCLXXXX VIII M(EN)SE +PS REGNAT XPS INP(ER)AT +MENTE(M) S(AN)CTAM SPONTANEAM hONORE(M) DEO PATRIS LIBERATIONEM. Translation: +Master Lucas and Hendrigetus, brothers of Venice, made me. +Year of the Lord 1290, 9th month. +Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ commands. +Had a holy mind, wilful; gave God honour and freedom to her homeland.

Nikola Radić claimed that the earliest dated bell in the catalogue was cast by Lucas Chendrigetus and brothers of Venice. Gnirs read that the artefact was cast by two brothers, Lucas and Rendigretus, in 1299.¹⁵ Both transcribed the inscription incorrectly, inferring that the bell was cast by two brothers from Venice. In fact they have misunderstood the symbol for ET, namely, and in Latin. The same symbol appears twice on bell no. 2, which I have been able to examine. Bell casting was frequently an activity that was taught from father to son and so it is not surprising that two brothers were working together.¹⁶ The inscription also tells us that the casting took place in September 1290. Such an early date makes it one of the oldest bells cast in Venice to have survived until the present. Thus, Master Lucas was already active at the end of the thirteenth century, when he was working with his brother Hendrigetus. The inclusion of the month in the inscriptions of medieval bells was not common; however, it also appears on the bell in Mantua (no 2). The bell also shows a formula praising Christ, *Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat*. This is the beginning of the *Laudes Regiae*, a hymn employed in the rites of the Catholic Church.¹⁷ It is also found on other instruments cast by Lucas, those at Cetinje (no 3), Ravenna (nos 4 and 9), Mazzorbo (no 6) and Scritto (no 7). Indeed, it is one of the most popular formulas to be inscribed on medieval bells; examples by several masters are found in Italy, Croatia, France, Spain, Portugal and Andorra.¹⁸ The inscription shows a second formula, which reproduces the text that was apparently written on a marble tablet over the tomb of St Agatha, a third-century Christian martyr from Catania, Sicily: *Mentem sanctam*

14. Gnirs 1924, 67; Radić 2012, 508–9.

15. He also suggested that this Lucas and Lucas of Venice may have been the same individual: Gnirs 1924, 86.

16. For example, see the family tree of a Venetian family of bell founders active between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries: Bottazzi 2008, 372. In the 18th century two sisters, Catherina and Anna Castelli, managed the workshop set up by their father: Avery 2013, 1, 654–70.

17. It was not only inscribed on bells, see Kantorowicz 1958.

18. Calzini 1911, 152, 1912, 64 and 72, and 1913, 157; Bulić 1920, 31; Mollà i Alcañiz 2001, 112–15 (nos 30–2), 126–7 (no 44), 130–3 (nos 47 and 49); Cantini 2006, 79; Moser 2007, 418; Sebastian 2008, 63–4, 76; Gonon 2010, 104–5; Ruiz i Engra and Sarrió Andrés 2019, 46–7; Lizarte Fernández 2022, 102–6.

spontaneam honorem Deo et Patriae liberationem,¹⁹ which can be translated as [Agatha] had a holy mind, wilful; [she] gave God honour and freedom to her homeland. The text refers to the belief that the saint had saved the city of Catania from a volcanic eruption. This inscription also appears on two other bells cast by Lucas (nos 2 and 9). St Agatha is the patron saint of bell founders.²⁰ Moreover, this text was considered to protect against the dangers of fires and thunderstorms. These probably explain why the formula was inscribed on many medieval and later bells cast in Italy, France, Spain, Portugal and the Crusader states.²¹ Lucas used the combination of the two formulas – one praising Christ and the other St Agatha – in all the instances where he inscribed the latter (nos 1, 2 and 9). They also appear together on other bells dated to the thirteenth century.²²

2) Mantua, Italy (1296).²³

This bell is currently on display at the entrance of the clock tower of Mantua (fig 1). Its decoration is unfortunately facing a wall and so it cannot be properly examined.

Measurements: height, *c* 1200mm; diameter, 900mm.

Inscription(s) (figs 2 and 3): two, the one around the top reads: +AN[N]O D(OMI) NI MCCLXXXVI M(EN)SE OTVBRII. The one around the bottom has multiple messages, which read: +MAGIST[ER] RI[?] LVCAS ET MAT(T)H(AEV)S ET HENDRIGETVS FR(ATR)ES DE VENECIIS ME FECERV(N)T. +XPS^[24] VINCIT ·XPS REGNAT ·XPS INP(ER)AT.^[25] +MENTE[M] S(AN)C(T)AM SPONTANEA(M) HONORE(M) DEO PATRIE LIBERATIONEM. Translation: +Year of the Lord 1296, month of October. +Master Lucas and Matthew and Hendrigitus, brothers of Venice, made me. +Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ commands. +Had a holy mind, wilful; gave God honour and freedom to her homeland.

Decoration: A representation of St George riding a horse and slaying a dragon with a spear (fig 4). The saint has a halo and wears a cape. He also holds a triangular shield decorated with a cross filled with dots. The dragon has horns and wings. The relief is on top of the start of the formula praising Christ. It is labelled: S(ANCTVS) IEGIORIVS. The dimensions of the figure are *c* 560mm by 560mm; it occupies the whole space between the two inscription bands.

19. Favreau 1982, 235–44; Pignatiello 2016.

20. There are several hypotheses for this association. One claims that melted bronze looks like lava flowing: Alonso Morales 2005, 134, n 25. According to a legend, the people of Catania asked for her intercession when the lava of Mount Etna threatened the city. It must be noted that the statues of the Venetian bell founders do not mention St Agatha.

21. Hill 1919–20, 47–57; Boiteux 1927, 264–73; Gerola 1931, 472–3; Mollà i Alcañiz 2001, 92 (no 12), 100 (no 22), 119–20 (no 37); Cantini 2006, 45–6, 83, 85, 90, 93, 99, 108, 114; Sebastian 2008, 60, 62, 75–6; Bautier-Bresc and Bresc 2010, 49–71; Ruiz i Engra and Sarrió Andrés 2019, 44–5.

22. Favreau 1982, 239–40.

23. Peron 2010, 63–7.

24. XPS, the abbreviated name of Christ, shows in the titulus on the top. This is also the case for the other instances that I have been able to check, nos 3, 6 and 9.

25. The abbreviation of INPERAT is marked by a horizontal stroke through the descender of the P. In the bells I have been able to check, Lucas always inscribes INP(ER)AT. The correct spelling should be IMPERAT.



Fig 1. Bell no 2, cast by the brothers Lucas, Matthew and Hendrigitus in 1296 (Clock tower, Mantua). *Image: author.*

The inscriptions inform us that the bell was cast by three brothers from Venice, Lucas, Matthew and Hendrigitus, in October 1296. Six years after Lucas and Hendrigitus had cast bell no 1, a third brother, Matthew, had joined them in the foundry. The crown – the top section of the bell designed to hang the instrument – is made of six handles attached to one large ring. It has been suggested that the bell was cast for a church dedicated to St George; when this building disappeared, the instrument was reused in the clock tower of the city.²⁶ This theory was put forward because of the image adorning the bell. Certainly, the representation of St George slaying the dragon suggests that the church for which the bell was cast was dedicated to him. In fact, there was a church of St George in Mantua. Apparently built in 859, it was located across the lake and gave the name to one of the city's suburbs, which grew around the building.²⁷ The church was rebuilt in 1325,²⁸ but it was demolished along with the suburb in 1808 during the Napoleonic wars.²⁹ It is at this time that the bell was probably transferred to the centre of Mantua. The decoration of the bell indicates that it was commissioned. In figs 2 and 3 we can observe the lines left by the

26. Peron 2010, 65.

27. Amadei 1954, I, 140; Aldegheri 2001, 48.

28. Amadei 1954, I, 491.

29. Aldegheri 2001, 102–3.



Fig 2. Crown and top part of bell no 2 showing the inscription with the date. *Image: author.*



Fig 3. The end of the formula praising Christ on the bell in Mantua. *Image: author.*



Fig 4. Part of the figure of St George decorating the bell in Mantua. *Image:* author.

moulds that Lucas used to inscribe the bells. This technique resulted in clear and legible letters.

3) Cetinje, Montenegro (1306).³⁰

This bell, one of the oldest in the Balkans, is on display at the treasury of Cetinje Monastery (fig 5). It was found buried, together with two other bells, in the monastery of St Nicholas, a foundation located on Vranjina Island in Skadar Lake, Montenegro. Both were probably hidden when the area was conquered by the Ottomans in the second half of the fifteenth century.

Measurements: height, 800mm; diameter, 550mm.

Inscription(s) (figs 6 and 7): two, the one around the top reads: +MAGIST[ER] LVCAS DE VENECIIS ME FECIT. Around the bottom are two messages on the same line that read: +XPS VINCIT·XPS REGNAT·XPS INP(ER)AT· +A·N[N]O D(OMI)NI MCCCVI. Translation: +Master Lucas of Venice made me. +Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ commands +Year of the Lord 1306.

30. Rodriguez Suarez 2021a, 472–5.



Fig 5. Bell no 3, cast by Master Lucas of Venice in 1306 and discovered in Vranjina Monastery (Treasury of Cetinje Monastery, Montenegro). *Image:* Deacon Nikola Petrović, with permission.

Of all the bells cast by Lucas, this is that found furthest away from Venice, in what is now Montenegro. The inscription mentions Lucas alone, which suggests that by 1306, when the bell was cast, he was probably working on his own. The bell is inscribed with the same formula praising Christ that is found on bells 1 and 2. It was rung in an Orthodox monastery founded in the thirteenth century. As in the case of the previous bell, the crown is composed of six handles connected to one large ring. Also, the marks left by the moulds used by Lucas to inscribe the bells are visible in figs 6 and 7.

4) Treviso, Italy (1315).³¹

This bell, which was known as ‘Marangona’,³² is no longer extant. The instrument is reported in a series of documents that provide many details about the contract established between the bell founder and the party that commissioned the instrument. In 1315 the

31. Marchesan 1923, I, 114–7.

32. The bell was already called Marangona in 1328: Marchesan 1923, I, 114, n 2. The largest bell in the campanile of St Mark, Venice, also received this name: Apollonio 1909, 16–17; Avery 2011, 86; Baldan 2014, 434–6. The reason for this is that both instruments were used for the same purpose.



Fig 6. Crown and top part of bell no 3 showing the name of Master Lucas.
Image: Deacon Nikola Petrović, with permission.

government of Treviso decided to cast a third bell for the tower of the city hall.³³ We are told that this instrument was going to announce the beginning and the end of the working day, that is, it would be rung at sunrise and sunset. The council also agreed that the bell would be produced in Venice, if possible, by the son of the bell founder who cast the large bell in the tower, or another skilful master. It was agreed that the amount paid for the bell would be 400 *lire di piccoli*,³⁴ a quantity that could rise up to 500. From another meeting of the city council we learn that the bell founder chosen to cast the instrument was a certain *magistrum Lucam campanarium de Veneciis*, a bell master from Venice named Lucas.³⁵ This individual is surely our bell master: he has the same name and is based in Venice. Moreover, he was still active when the bell for Treviso was cast, since the latest dated bell in the catalogue, the one in Mazzorbo (no 6), was cast in 1318. Another document includes the actual contract signed by Lucas and the city of Treviso in September 1315. We learn that Lucas promised to cast in Venice a fine bell for the people of Treviso. This instrument, it is added, would weight 2,000 Venetian pounds. Before the production of the bell, Lucas would receive an amount of money as a deposit. Once the bell was cast, the master would

33. Marchesan 1923, I, 114.

34. The *lira di piccoli* was the money of account used in retail trade and in setting the wages of labourers: Lane 1973, 326.

35. Marchesan 1923, I, 115.



Fig 7. Inscription with the date on the bottom of the bell from Vranjina Monastery.
Image: Deacon Nikola Petrović, with permission.

take it to the shore of the church of St Margherita in Treviso. Furthermore, he also promised to place the instrument in the tower at his own expense and risk.³⁶ Fifteen days after it was first rung, twelve monks would judge the instrument and its sound quality.³⁷ If they did not find it satisfactory, Lucas would have to recast the bell. If they agreed that the bell was acceptable, Lucas would receive the balance of payment. The bell was to be decorated with two coats of arms, those of the city of Treviso and its chief magistrate, Manno della Branca.³⁸ Also, the following inscription was requested: *Campana pacis Communis Trevisii*; that is, the instrument was officially called the peace bell of the city of Treviso. Finally, Lucas asserted that the bell would be ready by October unless a major situation occurred. This last detail suggests that such an instrument could be produced in less than two months.

36. Requests such as these are reported in later contracts: Avery 2011, 73.

37. Marchesan 1923, I, 116.

38. *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 'Branca, della'. The earliest Venetian bell to show a coat of arms that I know of is that one commissioned by Federico della Scala and cast by Manfredinus in 1321. Today it is on display at the Museo di Castelvecchio (Verona): Franzoni 1979, 28–30; Moroder and Planker 2009, 106–13. Thus, the bell by Lucas for Treviso antedates the first extant instance. It must be noted that the representation of coats of arms had already appeared on bells cast in other locations, for instance in Portugal (1292): Sebastian 2008, 56.

In the event, the bell was delivered on time; however, some monks did not find it good enough, and so the city council was asked to vote on what to do with it.³⁹ Ultimately, it was decided to keep the bell. We are also told that it was so large and heavy that the two bell ringers of the tower could not manage it alone and asked the council to hire a third individual to help them. The final instrument weighed 2,305 Venetian pounds and it was paid at a ratio of 22 *lire di piccoli* per 100 pounds, as had been agreed with the master. The amount paid by the council was 587 *lire di piccoli*; more than the original budget, because the bell was heavier than expected.

The bell that Lucas cast for the city of Treviso in 1315 is an important commission that can be compared with the instrument that he produced for Ravenna a couple of years later (no 5). Both instruments were commissioned by the authorities of their respective cities, Treviso and Ravenna, and so they played an essential role in the everyday life of their communities. These were not church bells, their function was secular.⁴⁰ Because of this purpose and who ordered them, these large and expensive artefacts carried specific decorations and inscriptions.⁴¹ The documents discussed above provide fascinating details regarding the circumstances before and after Lucas cast the bell; for instance, the examination of the artefact by twelve monks. Since bell ringing was common to monasteries, monks were surely considered to be the right individuals to judge the quality and the sound of a bell. Such trials also appear in later contracts;⁴² however, they could only take place once bells were physically delivered. In any case, these evaluations indicate the significance given to the instruments and how seriously their production was taken. Finally, it is worth noting that although a bell founder is attested in Treviso in this period, a certain Avenderio or Avonderio,⁴³ the city authorities preferred to commission the bell to a master in Venice. This detail proves that instruments cast there were considered to be of better quality.

5) Ravenna, Italy (1317).⁴⁴

This bell is no longer extant. It hung from the Torre del Pubblico, also known as Torre Comunale, in Ravenna. At the end of the eighteenth century Francesco Beltrami informs us that the tower contained two bells; the larger one was cast by Lucas. Again, it would seem the bell had a civic, rather than religious, purpose. It was destroyed in 1795 or 1806.

Inscription(s): two, the one around the top read: MAGIST.(ER) LUCAS DE VENECIIS ME FECIT AN(N)O D(OMI)NI MCCCXVII. The one around the bottom apparently read: +MENTE(M) S(AN)C(T)AM SPONTANEA(M) HONORE(M) DE [*sic*] DEO PATRIS LIBERATIONEM. XPS VINCIT XPS RENAT XPS IMP(ER)AT. ISTA CA(M)PANA FVIT FACTA TE(M)PORE D(OMI)NI GVIDONIS DE POLENTA POT(ESTATIS) RAVEN(NA)E. Translation: Master Lucas of Venice made me, year of the Lord 1317. +Had a

39. Marchesan 1923, I, 117.

40. For these bells, see Bernazzani 2010.

41. Since the instrument that Lucas cast for Ravenna was inscribed with his name, we can also assume that this was the case for the Treviso bell, even though the document does not report this detail.

42. Avery 2011, 73–4.

43. Marchesan 1923, I, 120.

44. Beltrami 1791, 103–4; Novara 2013, 192–3, 2016, 113–14.

holy mind, wilful; gave God honour and freedom to her homeland. Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ commands. This bell was done in the time of Guido de Polenta, chief magistrate of Ravenna.

Decoration: Beltrami tells us that the bell was decorated with the crudely outlined figures of St Apollinare and St Vitale, the two protectors of Ravenna, one on each side of the instrument. The saints were labelled with their names spelled backwards, S. APOLENARIVS and S. VITALIS. Beltrami does not mention any other figures, but it has been claimed that there were more representations.⁴⁵

The inscription on the instrument tells us that the bell was cast in the days of Guido de Polenta, also known as Guido Novello.⁴⁶ He was the Podestà – or chief magistrate – of Ravenna between 1316 and 1322, and may thus have commissioned the instrument. Alternatively, the bell could have been ordered by the city council of Ravenna, as in the case of the Treviso bell (no 4), and simply displayed the name of the highest authority in the city. The style of the images of the patrons of Ravenna, St Apollinaris and St Vitalis must have resembled the representations found on the bells of Mantua (no 2) and Mazzorbo (no 6).

6) Mazzorbo, Venetian lagoon, Italy (1318).⁴⁷

This instrument is currently employed in the church of St Catherine (fig 8). It was transferred there from the church of the Archangel Michael, which was located on the same island, but demolished in the nineteenth century, apart from its bell tower, where this bell was originally rung, which is still standing.

Measurements: height up to the crown, c 1000mm; diameter, 750mm.

Inscription(s) (fig 9): two, around the top: +MAGIST[ER] LVCAS DE VENECIIS ME FECIT +AN[N]O D(OMI)NI MCCCXVIII. Around the bottom: +XPS VINCIT XPS REGNAT XPS INP(ER)AT. Translation: +Master Lucas of Venice made me. +Year of the Lord 1318. +Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ commands.

Decoration: A figure of the Archangel Michael standing (fig 10).⁴⁸ He has a halo and holds a sphere and a long staff. The image, which is 510mm high and occupies the whole space between the two inscription bands, is labelled in the following manner on both sides of his head: S(AN)CTVS) MICH/AEL.

Cast in 1318, this is the latest dated bell ascribed to Lucas. Presently, it is the oldest known bell in the Venetian lagoon.⁴⁹ The image of the Archangel Michael fits the dedication of the church where the bell was rung, which suggests that it was commissioned to order. A similar link between the church dedication and bell decoration has also been

45. The Virgin, a crucifixion and the arms of the city: Novara 2013, 193, 2016, 114. It is not likely that a bell cast by Lucas showed so many images.

46. *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 'Polenta, Guido Novello da'.

47. Piva 1938, 202; Molin 2010, 78–81.

48. For some reason a recent publication wrongly states that the figure depicted is the Archangel Gabriel: Comastri 1983, 100.

49. In 2018 an article published in a newspaper related how the people of the island had celebrated 700 years of the bell: Tagliapietra 2018.



Fig 8. Bell no 6, cast by Master Lucas of Venice in 1318 (Church of St Catherine, Mazzorbo).
Image: author.



Fig 9. Part of the formula praising Christ on bell no 6. *Image: author.*



Fig 10. Archangel Michael decorating bell no 6. *Image: author.*

assumed for the Mantua example (no 2).⁵⁰ These decorative figures were probably requested by the individuals that commissioned each instrument. The crown is made of six handles. The shape of the artefact has been described as Byzantine;⁵¹ however, earlier bells from the Byzantine world, such as the thirteenth-century examples found in Melnik (Bulgaria), have a different shape.⁵²

7) Scritto, Province of Perugia, Italy (undated).⁵³

The bell is found in the church of the Archangel Michael in Scritto, south of Gubbio. It was previously hung in the Franciscan convent of Caprignone, which was built in the thirteenth century.

Measurements: height, *c* 650mm; diameter, 535mm.

50. Such a correspondence is also found in later bells cast by other masters. For instance, in the 15th century a bell master named John, who was based in Venice, cast a bell decorated with a figure of the Apostle Andrew for the church of St Andrew at Mošćenička Draga, Croatia: Someda de Marco 1961, 17 (fig 9) and 19. He also cast a bell decorated with a figure of St Nicholas for the church of St Nicholas at Lovran, Croatia: *ibid.*, 20–1 (fig 12).

51. Piva 1938, 202; Comastri 1983, 78.

52. Gerassimova 2003, 42–9.

53. Cenci 1914, 17, no XXII; Biscarini *et al* 2009, 188–9.

Inscription(s): two, the one around the top reads: MENICUS ME FECIT. ET. LUCAS. ET MATEUS. The one around the bottom reads: + XPS VINCIT XPS REGNAT XPS IMPERAT. The letters are described as Gothic. Translation: Menicus made me and Lucas and Matthew. + Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ commands.

The inscription informs us that the bell was cast by three individuals, Menicus (the short form of Domenicus), Lucas and Matthew. The question arises whether this Lucas is our bell master from Venice. The bell in Mantua (no 2) was also cast by three people, and it may be significant that the names of two of them – Lucas and Matthew – coincide with those who cast the Scritto bell. Another similarity between the two bells is the formula praising Christ. If indeed this bell was cast by the Venetian brothers Lucas and Matthew, it would imply that Menicus was also based in Venice. The fact that he is mentioned first in the inscription, further suggests that Menicus was the senior master, from whom Lucas and Matthew (his assistants?) may have learnt the art of bell casting. Menicus could indeed have been the brothers' father,⁵⁴ but this does not necessarily need to be the case. Two bells cast by Menicus have been reported. One was in the church of the Holy Trinity at Račice (Istria, Croatia), the other came from a church in Tušev Dol (Slovenia).⁵⁵ His activity has been dated to the fourteenth century. However, Menicus is not mentioned on the earliest dated bell in the catalogue, that from Supetarska Draga (no 1), which was cast in 1290. This would suggest the Scritto bell was cast before 1290, and that Menicus was active in the thirteenth century, that is the earliest Venetian bell master whose production has survived until today. It would also make the Scritto bell the earliest example in the catalogue. The bell was probably taken by boat to the coast of Marche and then transported inland.

8) Florence, Italy (undated).⁵⁶

This bell is on display at the Museo Casa Rodolfo Siviero, Florence (fig 11) (inv. no 388). The crown, which was designed with one ring and two handles, has only one handle surviving, and for this reason is believed to be a defective product. This idea is implausible, as the metal would have almost certainly been recycled.

Measurements: height, 485mm; diameter, 350mm.

Inscription (fig 12): around the bottom: + MAGIST[ER] LVCAS ME FECERV[N]T. Translation: Master Lucas made me. The top part of the bell shows a band without any inscription.

The bell has been suggested to be a thirteenth-century product of a workshop from Lucca, in Tuscany. There were indeed bell casting workshops in Lucca;⁵⁷ however, the inscription would seem to identify Lucas of Venice. While on most bells his name is followed by DE VENECIIS, this example does not have this detail. The same absence is noted on one of Lucas's bells from Istria (no 12), and so should not be considered reason

54. For example, in 1319 a bell founder and his son cast a bell for San Pietro di Castello, Venice. The inscription states first the name of the master and then that of the son: Avery 2011, 63. For another instance dated to 1358, see Franzoni 1979, 32–6.

55. Šašelj 1912, 224; Gnirs 1917, 145, 219; Ambrožič 1993, 49. The inscription on both artefacts read MENICUS ME FECIT.

56. Corsini 2012, 24.

57. See, for instance, Lera 1972, 37–55; Lera and Lera 1998.



Fig 11. Bell no 8, cast by Master Lucas of Venice, undated (Museo Casa Rodolfo Siviero, Florence).
Image: Attilio Tori, with permission.

enough to deattribute the artefact to him. The shape of the letters is exactly the same as found on his other bells, and the technique used to inscribe the artefact, using a mould, is the same one that Lucas employed on bells 2 and 3. The top of the instrument shows two round holes (fig 13). These would seem to have been made after the crown broke, leaving only one handle. This made hanging the bell both difficult and unsafe,⁵⁸ so the bell was perforated in order to be suspended. The inscription says ME FECERV[N]T, that is, ‘they made me’. This grammatical error reminds us that Lucas used to cast bells with other individuals, as is the case of the bells from Supetarska Draga (no 1) and Mantua (no 2). It may be that, when he started casting bells on his own, Lucas did not realise that the tense was incorrect and/or did not change the mould. Eventually, as his later bells show, he designed a new mould with this phrase corrected.

We do not know where this bell comes from, and it may not have originally been rung in a church located in Tuscany. After the Second World War, Rodolfo Siviero, who collected the bell, recovered many artworks looted by the Nazis. Perhaps the bell was one of these artefacts and, since its original location could not be traced, it remained in his private collection.

58. Bells were also perforated when the handle of the clapper broke: Ruiz i Engra and Sarrió Andrés 2019, 91.



Fig 12. Inscription showing the signature of Master Lucas on bell no 8.
Image: Attilio Tori, with permission.

9) Ravenna, Italy (undated).⁵⁹

While this bell is thought to be no longer extant, it is actually preserved in the sixth-century church of St Vitale, Ravenna (fig 14). The building was part of a Benedictine monastery in the Middle Ages. In the eighteenth century Francesco Beltrami reported that there were two bells cast by Lucas, a medium and a small one. He added that they displayed the name of the master and the formula of St Agatha, as also appears on bells 1 and 2. The medium-sized one is the artefact discussed here. It is missing the crown, which was made of six handles. Like the previous bell, this was why four round holes were perforated on the very top of the artefact, so that it could still be hung without handles. The artefact is cracked on one side.

Measurements: height, 930mm; diameter, *c* 800mm.

Inscription(s) (figs 15 and 16): around the top are two messages, on the same line, that read: +MAGIST[ER] LVCAS DE VENECIIS M and +XPS VINCIT XPS REGNAT XPS INP(ER)AT. Around the bottom reads: +MENTE[M] S[AN]C[T]AM SPONTEA(M) HONORE(M) DEO PATRIS LIBERATIONEM.⁶⁰

59. Beltrami 1791, 104; Ricci 1914, 582; Novara 2013, 191, 2016, 114.

60. It has been suggested that M was the beginning of the date or more possibly of the words ME FECIT, which remained incomplete due to the lack of space: Ricci 1914, 582, n 4. While there is some space between the two messages, Lucas may have considered that this was not enough. Beltrami did not record Lucas's signature. Bell no 2, which I have also checked *in situ*, is inscribed PATRIE. The correct form is PATRIAE.



Fig 13. Broken crown and holes on the top part of bell no 8. *Image:* Attilio Tori, with permission.

Translation: +Master Lucas of Venice. +Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ commands. +Had a holy mind, wilful; gave God honour and freedom to her homeland. A few letters are eroded while others are corroded; this reading may contain mistakes.

The artefact does not include the date, but it has been proposed that it was cast around 1317; that is, when Lucas produced the other bell for Ravenna (no 4). However, this does not necessarily need to be the case. That two bells in the same city were cast by the same master from Venice might suggest he had a burgeoning reputation in the area and fulfilled multiple commissions. It may also indicate that there were no bell founders based in Ravenna at the time. The artefact carries the same inscription that Lucas used frequently (seven of the seventeen bells in the catalogue – nos 1–3, 5–7 and 9) on his bells: the formula praising Christ. The second formula found on the bell – that to St Agatha – also appears on two of his dated bells, nos 1 and 2.

10) Mundanije, Rab Island, Croatia (undated).⁶¹

61. Gnirs 1917, 218, 1924, 39–40, no. 67; Bulić 1920, 30–1.



Fig 14. Bell no. 9, cast by Master Lucas of Venice, undated (church of St Vitale, Ravenna).

Image: author.

Anton Gnirs reported this instrument at the parish church of St Elias, Mundanije. The bell was in the same location in 1920, when it was considered to be the oldest bell in Dalmatia.

Measurements: height, 750mm; diameter, 460mm. Weight: probably 60kg.

Inscription: MAGIST(ER) LUCAS DE VENECIIS ME FECIT.⁶² Translation: Master Lucas of Venice made me.

11) Boljun (Bogliuno in Italian), Istria, Croatia (undated).⁶³

This bell was reported at the church of St George. Gnirs claimed that this bell and the next one (no 12) were cast at the same time. However, the fact that both artefacts were found in the same church can also indicate that they were simply purchased together. Dr Tatjana Bradara, from the Archaeological Museum of Istria (Pula), has confirmed that neither of the two artefacts is found in the bell tower of the church and so they were probably melted down during the World Wars, or are preserved somewhere else.

Measurements: height, 650mm; diameter, 435mm. Weight: 59kg.

62. Inscription as read by Bulić 1920, 30.

63. Gnirs 1917, 24.



Fig 15. Top part of bell no 9 showing the name of Master Lucas. *Image:* author.

Inscription: around the top: MAGIST·(ER) LUCAS DE VENECIIS ME FECIT.⁶⁴ Translation: Master Lucas of Venice made me. On the same band, apart from this inscription, was a single letter I. Around the bottom was another band, which could have received another inscription but was left empty.

An old picture of the bell shows its crown made of six handles connected to a large ring;⁶⁵ this was also the case of the instruments in Mantua (no 2), Cetinje (no 3), Mazzorbo (no 6) and Ravenna (no 9).

12) Boljun, Istria, Croatia (undated).⁶⁶

This bell was reported at the church of St George, like the previous artefact (no 11). Gnirs dated it to the beginning of the fourteenth century.

Measurements: height, 600mm; diameter, 415mm. Weight: 48kg.

Inscription: around the bottom: + M·(AGISTER) LVCAS.⁶⁷ Translation: +Master Lucas. On the top was another band, which was left empty.

64. *Ibid.*, 39, fig 45.

65. *Ibid.*, 25, fig 16.

66. *Ibid.*, 24.

67. *Ibid.*, 206, fig 300.



Fig 16. Inscription with the beginning of the formula of St Agatha on the bottom of bell no 9.
Image: author.

13) Krbune (Cherbune in Italian), Istria, Croatia (undated).⁶⁸

This bell was reported at the church of St John the Baptist. Gnirs dated the instrument to around 1320. It is unknown if the bell is still there; it may have gone missing during the World Wars.

Measurements: height, 630mm; diameter, 425mm. Weight: *c* 57kg.

Inscription: around the bottom: + MAGISTER LUCAS DE VENECIIS ME FECIT. Translation: +Master Lucas of Venice made me. The top showed an empty band.

An old picture of the bell shows the crown made of six handles connected to a large ring;⁶⁹ the same type was used for the bells in Mantua (no 2), Cetinje (no 3), Mazzorbo (no 6), Ravenna (no 9) and Boljun (no 11).

14) Račja Vas (Racia in Italian), Istria, Croatia (undated).⁷⁰

68. *Ibid*, 84.

69. *Ibid*, 83, fig 117b.

70. *Ibid*, 145, fig 214.

This artefact was reported at the church of the Blessed Virgin Mother. Gnirs dated the instrument to the early fourteenth century. Bradara has also examined this bell tower; the bell is not there anymore. It probably went missing in the World Wars, or is preserved somewhere else.

Measurements: height, 550mm; diameter, 440mm. Weight: 61kg.

Inscription: around the top: + MAGIST(ER) LVCAS DE VENECIIS ME FECIT.
Translation: + Master Lucas of Venice made me. The bell has an empty band around the bottom.

From an old picture we can see that the crown was made of one ring and two handles. The bell in Florence (no 8) has the same type of crown.

15) Brgudac (Bergozza in Italian), Istria, Croatia (undated).⁷¹

The artefact is in the bell tower of the church of St Luke. The bell shows a welded crack, and its rim is damaged.

Measurements: height, 560mm; diameter, 415mm.

Inscription: around the top: + MAGIST(ER) LUCAS DE VENECIIS ME FECIT.
Translation: + Master Lucas of Venice made me. The bell has an empty band around the bottom.

This bell is not in the catalogue of bells compiled by Gnirs, who actually reported a bell from the church of Brgudac.⁷² For this reason, it may well be that this artefact originally belonged to another church and was transferred to Brgudac later.

16) Završje (Piemonte in Italian), Istria, Croatia (undated).⁷³

Gnirs reported this bell in the church of St Andrew, in the cemetery of Završje.

Measurements: unknown. Weight: 67kg.

Inscription: MAGIST(ER) LVCAS DE VENECIIS ME FECIT. Translation: Master Lucas of Venice made me.

Gnirs informs us that the bell is undecorated and has the profile of Venetian bells of the late fourteenth century. It is unknown if the bell is still extant.

17) Pian d'Alberi, Sassocorvaro, Province of Pesaro and Urbino, Italy (undated).⁷⁴

This instrument was reported at the church of St Mary in Pian d'Alberi. Calzini claimed that Lucas was active during the first half of the 1400s. It is unknown if the bell still exists.

Measurements: unknown.

71. Fučić 1953, 123; Bradara 2020, 98–9.

72. Gnirs 1917, 29–30.

73. Gnirs 1924, 44, no. 79.

74. Calzini 1912, 64.

Inscription: MAGISTER LUCAS DE VENECIIS. Translation: Master Lucas of Venice. The letters are described as Gothic.

MASTER LUCAS AND VENETIAN BELL CASTING BETWEEN THE THIRTEENTH AND THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

The artefacts discussed above show that Master Lucas was one of the main bell founders based in Venice at the turn of the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries. Together with Manfredinus, he may have dominated the manufacture of bells in the city at the time. While so far ten bells cast by Manfredinus have been reported, the number of bells produced by Lucas stands at seventeen. Certainly, this is only a proportion of the total number of bells that he cast during his career, but the details they provide help us to reconstruct his activity. The earliest dated bells, cast in 1290 and 1296, indicate that in the early stages of his career Lucas did not work alone. He produced the first one with his brother Hendrigetus. The second one they cast with another brother named Matthew. Although it is undated, the bell from Caprignone (no 7) is probably the earliest in the catalogue. It was cast by Lucas, Matthew and a third individual named Menicus. The latter could have been their father or uncle, from whom they learnt the art of bell casting. All the other bells reported in the catalogue were cast by Lucas on his own. Currently no other bells attributed to Hendrigetus or Matthew are known, which might suggest that they died prematurely and that Lucas continued casting bells by himself. The latest dated bell in the catalogue, that from Mazzorbo (no 6), was cast in 1318, meaning that Lucas was active between at least 1290 and 1318 – a career of almost thirty years.

A written document provides further information about Lucas. It is dated to 5 May 1290 and mentions a certain woman called Marchisina, who describes herself as the wife of Lucas, a bell founder resident in the parish of San Salvador, Venice.⁷⁵ While this piece of evidence could refer to another bell founder named Lucas, no other bell master with this name is known from Venice at this time, and the date coincides with that of a bell attributable to him. It would seem almost certain that the husband of Marchisina cast the bells in the catalogue. The reference informs us that Lucas was based in the parish of San Salvador, which is located in the *sestiere* of San Marco, one of the districts of Venice. The *Calle Dei Fabbri*, that is the street of the smiths, went through the parish of San Salvador. For centuries many bell foundries were found on that street.⁷⁶ Hence, Lucas's workshop was possibly located there or nearby.

The instruments cast by Lucas have a slender tubular profile, often referred to as a sugarloaf.⁷⁷ Most bells cast in Venice between the late thirteenth and the fifteenth century belong to this type. The largest of Lucas's bells, those from Mantua (no 2) and Mazzorbo (no 6), have a height of more than 1000mm and are decorated with religious figures. The bells of Treviso (no 4) and Ravenna (no 5), which had a civic function, must have been similar. They were also decorated and had inscriptions requested by the clients. These

75. Archivio di Stato, Venice, Cancelleria inferiore (notai), B. 107, file no. 10: *Ego Marchisina uxor Luce campanarii habitatoris ... sancti Salvatoris...*

76. Avery 2011, 36–42.

77. Someda de Marco 1961, 11; Moroder and Planker 2009, 34–5, 91. This shape was not only employed in Venetian workshops: Ferri 2005, 145.

artefacts were commissioned and must have been more expensive. By contrast, about half of the bells in the catalogue are rather small; their height does not reach 700mm. This is the case of bells from Scritto (no 7), Florence (no 8), Boljun (nos 11 and 12), Krbune (no 13), Račja Vas (no 14) and Brgudac (no 15). The bells in Završje and Pian d'Alberi (nos 16 and 17) surely belong to this group too. These bells do not have lavish decoration or inscriptions, except in one instance (no 7), and carry only the name of the bell founder, Master Lucas, with or without his provenance.⁷⁸ These bells were likely not produced to commission, and were instead made for speculative sale, that is, they were not cast for a particular church or client. Once they were manufactured they remained in the foundry until someone purchased them.⁷⁹ As a result, they were cheaper and, because of their smaller size, easier to transport. The bells in the catalogue can also be divided into two groups according to the crown they have. The more common type is that designed with six handles attached to a large ring (nos 2, 3, 6, 7, 11 and 13).⁸⁰ The other type is made of two handles attached to a large ring, a design that is found in the smallest bells in the catalogue (nos 8 and 14). Indeed, this type of crown was reserved for small artefacts, since it cannot endure much weight.⁸¹

The decoration of Lucas's bells deserves particular consideration. Only four out of the seventeen bells in the catalogue carried images (nos 2, 4–6), suggesting that decoration was not common to bells of the period. Certainly, casting such artefacts was more expensive and time consuming. Lucas's decorated bells had been ordered by a particular customer, either a church or a city council. The oldest one is that in Mantua (no 2), which is dated to 1296 and shows the image of St George spearing the dragon. The bell in Mazzorbo (no 6) has a representation of the Archangel Michael. His bells for Treviso (no 4) and Ravenna (no 5) showed two coats of arms and two saints, respectively. Thus, in this period Venetian bells could be decorated with either images of religious figures (usually saints) or coats of arms. These images were engraved by hand over the false bell and became low reliefs during the casting process.⁸² An artist probably created them; that is, Lucas sought the assistance of another individual to decorate the bells.⁸³ It is unclear when such images were first applied in Venice; so far no earlier instances have been reported. The bell in Mantua (no 2) indicates that this artistic technique was developed before the end of the thirteenth century. The number of preserved bells with representations such as those found on Lucas's bells and dated to this period is small; in the area of the Italian peninsula they seem to be reduced to the artefacts cast by Lucas and Manfredinus.⁸⁴ Consequently, while there may still be unreported instances, the available evidence suggests that Venice was one of the first locations where this type of decoration was employed. The same technique was used to decorate bells in central and northern Germany.⁸⁵ What is remarkable about these

78. According to Marialuisa Bottazzi, Venetian bells show brief inscriptions that usually report the name and patronymic of the master: Bottazzi 2007, 115. The latter is, however, missing from Lucas and Manfredinus's inscriptions.

79. Avery 2011, 76.

80. Gonon 2010, 93.

81. Sebastian 2008, 49–50. This is the oldest of the two types of crowns. The bell of Canino, which has been dated to the 9th century, was designed with this type: Deliyannis *et al* 2019, 188–91.

82. Someda de Marco 1961, 12; Ujčić and Bradara 2018; 164, 193–4. See also Dell'Era 2021, 37–51.

83. For instance, the production of a bell for the cathedral of Siena in 1381 included the payment to the goldsmith who designed the imprint of a saint and a lion that were going to decorate the artefact: Cantini 2006, 44.

84. Only one bell by Manfredinus is decorated, that commissioned by Federico della Scala: Moroder and Planker 2009, 106–13.

85. Schulze 2006.

images is their size. If we collate them with representations on bells produced in other Italian locations in the same period, which usually appear in the shape of medallions,⁸⁶ the figures on Venetian bells are large. The technique that Lucas and Manfredinus employed to decorate bells was also used by later Venetian bell founders. For example, in 1328 Belo and Vivencius cast a bell showing two figures, St Francis and perhaps St Anthony of Padua.⁸⁷ Venetian bell founders employed this decoration technique until the fifteenth century, when they started to decorate their bells with moulds. Contrary to the requested statutes, the bells by Lucas and Manfredinus do not show any foundry-mark that identifies the founder.⁸⁸ Their production would have been recognised by the inscriptions.

If we compare the production of Lucas with that of Manfredinus, we can see that there are many similarities. All bells cast by Manfredinus share the same profile. His largest extant bell, which was commissioned by a noble, is decorated with the coat of arms and the emblem of the client.⁸⁹ Also, he produced the two types of crowns found on Lucas's bells, the one with the six handles being the most common. Moreover, both individuals designed all their bells with two inscription bands, one around the top and the other around the bottom, even though they may have left one empty.⁹⁰ Both individuals usually signed their bells following a similar formula: MAGIST/ER plus the name of the bell founder plus ME FECIT (nos 1–3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 13–16).⁹¹ Finally, both Lucas and Manfredinus inscribed their bells in Medieval Latin.⁹² For these reasons, we can conclude that bell founders based in Venice in this period shared techniques and practices, resulting in bells that were quite alike. Nonetheless, the bells of Lucas and Manfredinus also have their differences. Lucas usually describes himself as coming from Venice (nos 1–3, 5, 6, 9–11 and 13–17), while Manfredinus, who was also working in the city, never inscribed this detail on his bells. In fact, we know that he was not originally from Venice.⁹³ Lucas and Manfredinus also inscribed their bells using different methods,⁹⁴ and each inscribed several bells with different religious formulas. As we have seen above, Lucas employed two throughout his life, while Manfredinus inscribed two of his bells with the first two verses of the Hail Mary, a Christian prayer addressing the Mother of God.⁹⁵ These choices might reflect personal preferences. In any case, the three formulas are among those most frequently employed by bell founders working in locations of the Italian peninsula, for instance, Pisa.⁹⁶

86. Like those decorating the bell cast by Lotteringus Pisanus in 1262: Bernazzani 2010, 326–7, 362 (13b). Today the bell is in the Leaning Tower of Pisa. See also Gonon 2010, 97–8, 101–2, 109–19.

87. Petricioli 1980, 246–51. They cast it for the Franciscan Monastery in Zadar.

88. Such foundry-marks are indeed found in later Venetian bells. One early instance is dated to 1368: Rodriguez Suarez 2021a, 475–6. See also Someda de Marco 1961, 11–12, 14–15, 21.

89. Moroder and Planker 2009, 106–13.

90. In the case of Manfredinus, all instances but one: *ibid.*, 92, 98, 120, 124, 132. He usually placed the inscription on the bottom band. Interestingly, when the inscription did not fit in the band he continued the inscription above the band: *ibid.*, 93, 101, 126. Lucas also left some inscription bands empty; however, his artefacts received more inscriptions.

91. *Ibid.*, 109, 114, 116–17, 122, 126, 134.

92. It must be noted, however, that a bell cast by Manfredinus is partly inscribed in Italian vulgar: *ibid.*, 126.

93. *Ibid.*, 140.

94. Lucas employed a mould, while Manfredinus did not: Dell'Era 2021, 46, 48, n 27.

95. AVE MARIA GRACIA PLENA DOMINUS TECUM: Moroder and Planker 2009, 93, 100–1.

96. Da Morrone 1812, II, 107, 110, 112, 114.

The places where the bells cast by Lucas are found show the area of influence of Venetian bell masters. This includes many locations in Istria (nos 11–16) and on the Adriatic coast, such as Rab Island (nos 1 and 10), areas that were under Venetian rule or witnessed significant Venetian presence. Other instruments cast by Lucas found their way to locations in northern and even central Italy: Treviso (no 4), Mantua (no 2), Ravenna (nos 5 and 9) and Caprignone (no 7). All these locations indicate that the Venetian production covered part of the demand for bells in areas close to Venice and/or under Venetian control. If we combine these locations with those where the instruments cast by Manfredinus are found, we come up with a similar map. Venetian bells were mainly exported in two directions: the Adriatic Sea and the mainland close to Venice. While in later centuries bells cast in Venice found their way to several locations in the eastern Mediterranean,⁹⁷ the area covered during the period of Lucas's activity was already significant. The commercial and political expansion of the Venetian Republic probably increased the business opportunities of bell masters based in Venice. However, the absence of local bell founders or the lower quality of artefacts surely also played an important role in the growth of Venetian bell founding. It is worth noting that in this period many bell masters travelled and cast their artefacts *in situ*, sometimes even inside the churches and monasteries that ordered the instruments.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, in this period bell founders based in Venice, such as Lucas and Manfredinus, mainly worked from permanent workshops and their instruments were shipped.⁹⁹ This detail underlines the role of Venice as a centre for the production of bells in the thirteenth and the fourteenth century. It follows that the bells in the catalogue not only shine a light on the figure of Master Lucas, but also demonstrate that, by his time, Venice had already emerged as one of the main bell casting centres of the Mediterranean.

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