

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# A *Rebato*: Popular uprisings and the striking of the bells in eighteenth-century Castile

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## Abstract

This paper delves into the dynamics of popular revolt in early modern Castile, taking as a viewpoint a revealing feature of these disturbances, the bell-ringing widely known as *rebato*, an equivalent to the French *tocsin*. While alarm bells have long been recognised as a prevalent element of popular revolt in Europe from medieval times, they have received limited specific scholarly attention. This study provides an overview of the historical significance of this distinctive sound and examines its material aspects. Subsequently, the paper investigates several instances of bell-ringing during Castilian riots, as reflected in archival sources, and analyses its meaning both for townspeople and the authorities. In attempting to elucidate the reasons behind the aversion this sound provoked among the privileged classes and the authorities, the study explores the political, ritual, and sonic dimensions of the *rebato*.

La propriété, c'est le vol! Voici le tocsin de 93! Voici le branle-bas des révolutions!

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1840), *Qu'est-ce que la Propriété? ou Recherches sur le Principe du Droit et du Gouvernement*

In Castilian cities and towns in the eighteenth century, as in Paris in 1793, revolts were often announced with the clanging of bells, a repetitive and intense sound known as *campana a rebato*. Authorities regarded such incidents as so dangerous as to warrant a death sentence. Indeed, an 'enlightened' prosecutor of the royal Council of Castile, probably José Moñino, the future Count of Floridablanca, in 1766 considered convoking citizens via bells to be as dangerous as the revolt itself.<sup>1</sup>

This will not surprise anyone with even a basic knowledge of popular uprisings. Bell-chiming is a well-known feature of popular protest in Europe. References to it can be traced back to at least the twelfth century, when bells began to adorn monasteries and churches.<sup>2</sup> Over time, this practice spread to other Christian regions, transcending geographical boundaries. Examples range from Bogotá in 1810, where bells were used to summon the people to join the struggle for independence from Spain, to early twentieth-century Portugal, where workers assembled to the sound of bells *a rebate*, as they did in early Soviet Russia when peasants voiced their opposition to collectivisation.<sup>3</sup> In France, the renowned *tocsin*, which is the exact equivalent of the *rebato*, was cited in Georges

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Rudé's 1959 work *The Crowd in the French Revolution* and is ubiquitous in Jean Nicolas' comprehensive study of popular upheaval in early modern times.<sup>4</sup> Regarding Britain, the abundance of testimonies is such that only a hardy few would even attempt to compile them. To mention an early case, the *communis campana* was rung in Winchester during the 1381 peasants' revolt; and some 350 years after, in Rhuddlan (Wales) in 1740, bells chimed to celebrate the granting of concessions to food rioters.<sup>5</sup> The same can be said for Spain. That said, the role there of bell-ringing has been frequently highlighted in urban revolts, but less often its pervasive presence has been remarked in smaller communities, which constitute the focal point of this work. And it is also true that it has been more usually referred to in brief mentions of revolts than analysed in any detail.

This article, based largely on the rich archive of the Council of Castile, examines the role that the specific striking of the bells played in a number of rural uprisings in the eighteenth century. While some might see it as playing a bit part in a much larger drama, closer study may shed light on certain aspects whose interest goes far beyond the history of these remote Castilian towns.

I will try to do so from three different angles. First, examining the material substance of revolt and its real and symbolic meanings helps us to approach popular protest in a context where it has been traditionally dismissed as a rarity. Quite a few scholars have written about revolts in early modern Castile, mostly in the form of monographs on particular episodes or general analyses of important and exceptional cycles of rebellion such as the one in spring 1766 known as the Esquilache riots.<sup>6</sup> But only rarely have historians to analyse more extensive series of cases in order to draw general conclusions, as was undertaken by Pedro Lorenzo Cadarso for Castile and both Manuel Ardit and J. M. Palop for Valencia.<sup>7</sup> In any case, the consensus is that in early modern Spain, and especially in Castile, uprisings – be they called *alborotos*, *motines*, *asonadas*, or *conmociones populares*, interchangeable terms that appear in contemporary documents, all essentially meaning 'riots' – were exceptional events, unlike what occurred during the same period in France and England. This clearly contributed to the idea that Castile was not a revolutionary society, as J. H. Elliott wrote years ago.<sup>8</sup> Whether or not that is true, and one could argue with the thesis, it does not at all imply that Castilian society was free of serious social conflicts, though they may not have always been very overt or visible, as Ruth MacKay has shown in her work.<sup>9</sup> The revolts discussed in this study are yet another manifestation of tensions and conflicts that, though they may have been relatively uncommon (though the 1766 cycle and a subsequent one at the end of the eighteenth century to some degree disprove that), were serious enough to concern the authorities, who did not take them lightly at all.

Moreover, these riots may give us access to important features of popular politics. The latter is an important field, increasingly studied by Spanish historiography on the modern era but still neglected for early modern times.<sup>10</sup> This article will approach this matter from an acute angle, looking at popular politics basically in rural areas of eighteenth-century Castile by focusing on examples of acts and speech in situations that were intensely politicised. Special attention will be paid to uprisings, specifically those in which people were summoned by the striking of bells.

Finally, but not less important, this work can contribute to foreground a local fragment of a broader phenomenon now known as the social history of sound.<sup>11</sup> Riots were noisy episodes *per se*. Rumours, shouts and screams, as well as the sound of breaking doors and windows, drumrolls, and the occasional firing of weapons were all integral parts of uprisings. In some ways, riots were a very specific mode of noise. Bell striking was an important part of this soundscape, as it announced and opened a time of subversion.

This brief study starts by discussing *rebato*, both the concept and the material nature and circumstances of the pealing of bells. It then analyses its presence in popular upheavals in towns throughout the Crown of Castile, considering a number of episodes from the early eighteenth century until the 1780s. After speculating about how and why the authorities feared bells so much, it finally reaches some conclusions on the meanings and functions of the tolling of bell, and what they tell us about riots, the soundscape in which they were involved and the role of bells in the 'politicisation' of unrest.

## The striking of the bells

In towns and cities throughout early modern Spain bells were a fundamental component of the acoustic landscape. They summoned people to Mass, announced the time, alerted people that a captain general or bishop had arrived, warned that there was snow on a nearby mountain or that bandits were approaching, mourned the death of a monarch or a neighbour, and gathered inhabitants for town meetings.<sup>12</sup> We do not know much about the striking of the bells despite having such fascinating primary sources such as the Valencia Cathedral's bellkeeper's notes from 1912.<sup>13</sup> Of course, their regular, liturgical, use was governed by monks or priests. But we do know also that they were often struck in special occasions: pirates attacked, an enemy approached, fire broke out, or there was a protest. It was therefore considered an alarm, which is what *toque a rebato* (or *toque de rebato*) came to mean.

The expression comes from the Arabic word for fortress or lookout post, *ribāṭ*, which in Castilian Spanish became *rebato* already before the twelfth century, meaning an attack or incursion by a small group of warriors.<sup>14</sup> It alludes to an energetic (*arreatado*) striking of the bells to warn people about one of these incursions. Later on, it was used for any dangerous situation that called for inhabitants to mobilise.<sup>15</sup> As a military alarm it appears in an order by viceroy Gonzaga in 1576 in Valencia<sup>16</sup>, and in Jerónimo Castillo de Bovadilla's treatise on local government in 1597. It remained in use in the eighteenth century and was broadly used in coastal regions to convoke the militia.<sup>17</sup> The word *rebato* also appeared in the 1737 *Diccionario de Autoridades* with another meaning: 'It also refers to a popular convocation due to some sudden event. Latin. *Conclamatio ad arma*'.<sup>18</sup> What interests me here is the use of the word 'popular' because it involves the fundamental agent of protest (the people: *el pueblo* or, in a more disparaging tone, the *populacho*, or mob), making this agent both active and autonomous. Here, it is neither the clergy nor the local authorities who are ringing the bells, as in Valencia in 1576 or in the Canary Islands in the eighteenth century. It is the people, *el pueblo*, who 'convokes' the bells.

We have very few precise descriptions (let alone recordings) of what the striking of the bells sounded like in the early modern era. There are modern recordings of *rebato* in the towns of Nidáguila (Burgos) and Ezcaray (La Rioja), which give us an idea of how the continuous and quick hammering of the bells sounded, though there might be differences from one place to another.<sup>19</sup> They definitely sounded different from other civic uses of bells, as when used to summon town council members to a meeting or call neighbours to an open meeting (*concejo abierto*).<sup>20</sup> It is not always easy to distinguish the rapid sound of the *rebato* from the bells used as a fire alarm (*toque a fuego*).<sup>21</sup> But in most cases witnesses immediately and decidedly identified the bell-ringing as a *rebato*. Any available bells were used, usually those of the principal church, though sometimes other bells are mentioned. The bell tower of the town hall, when existed, was used to summon townspeople to open meetings, as was the case in Medina del Campo (Valladolid), a sound nearly always described as *a campana tañida*. We know that squares in certain towns in the mountains of León contained a structure built with beams holding up a little bell; in Lorca (Murcia) there was a clock tower bell, probably a free-standing tower near the main square similar to those in other towns in that region. But the most common arrangement, given that these were small towns, was that the only available bells were those of the local parish church.

Although we cannot reproduce *rebato* except through present-day echos, we can infer how it sounded in eighteenth-century episodes of unrest. It was certainly energetic: in 1720, in Santa María la Real de Nieva (Segovia) the sound was described as rapid (*a toda priessa*). Usually, it was uninterrupted for a long time, as long as six hours (Lorca, in 1766).<sup>22</sup> That same year, in Azpeitia (Guipúzcoa) it went on all night, even after negotiations with the *corregidor* (governor) had concluded at 3 a.m.; the protesters 'continued until morning striking the bell and raised a ruckus in the streets, but without causing any damage'.<sup>23</sup> In these circumstances, *rebato* was obviously recognisable and familiar.

It is hard to know how far away the sound of the bells could be heard beyond the town borders<sup>24</sup>, though in Babilafuente (Salamanca) they were loud enough in 1789 to summon 'inhabitants of the other villages in the *señorío*'.<sup>25</sup> In Villademor in 1766, the bells did not actually ring, but townspeople said that if they had 'they would have gathered together many more people, both from the town itself and from elsewhere'.<sup>26</sup> However, bells were rung in Elgóibar (Guipúzcoa) that same year, drawing townspeople and also those who lived in the surrounding countryside.<sup>27</sup> The bells of Azpeitia were rung out just as inhabitants of the nearby town of Azcoitia (some four kilometres away) approached, meaning the latter had been alerted in some other manner.<sup>28</sup>

The impact of the bells was immediate. Testimony is not explicit on this point, but it can be inferred that people hurried to reach the square, leaving behind their daily chores and activities and telling people along the way that they, too, should join them. I have not found any exact description in this regard, but there are many indications of how news of the uprising spread among towns and villages; people went to other people's homes to get them to join the crowd, sometimes even forcing them (according suspiciously self-serving testimonies) to participate.

It is hard to know what sort of danger people envisioned as they heard the bells. It might have been fire – as we have seen, the *toque de rebato* and the fire alarm bell were not clearly distinguishable – but fire can also be detected in other ways, such as smoke, flames, or smell. Along the coast, during the period when pirate attacks took place, that might also have been a reason for sounding the alarm, but it is not the case for most of the towns we are referring to, not even Lorca in 1766. Enemies in peace time? Hard to believe. Thus, it is difficult to think anything other than that for eighteenth-century Castilian peasants, and probably for those in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as well, the *toque de rebato* could mean only one thing: a call to mobilise or, more precisely, to revolt.

### Bells amid unrest

So let us now turn to the *rebato popular*, the striking of the bells by the townspeople in the context of a revolt. At first glance there is nothing new here; as already said, episodes of rebels using the *toque a rebato* are frequent in descriptions of medieval and early modern riots and unrest into the nineteenth century. Strangely, bells are absent from the most famous tale of popular revolt in Spain's Golden Age, *Fuente Ovejuna* (1612), written by Lope de Vega. They are also absent from Pedro Lorenzo Cadarso's study, *Los Conflictos Populares en Castilla (siglo XVI–XVII)*, which does not even mention bells or address the matter in a section devoted to actions taken by protesters. This is especially surprising given that it is the only general synthesis about civil unrest based on primary sources which, we must assume, included references to bells.<sup>29</sup>

In contrast, the *toque a rebato* appears just about anywhere we looked in our broad search through primary documents concerning mainly rural riots and unrest in eighteenth-century Castile. The oldest example is from Santa María la Real de Nieva (Segovia) where, on 1 January 1720, townspeople gathered to elect their municipal leaders: judges (*alcaldes*), council members (*regidores*), public defenders (*procuradores*), and the official in charge of town properties. There was tension in the air, and the documents refer back to conflictive episodes in 1687 and 1717. On the day of the elections

the horde shamelessly and tumultuously swore publicly that the judges and councillors whom they wanted were the ones who had to win, and if not then the whole town would be lost, and *they struck the town bells past midnight, inciting the whole town* and engaging in other very scandalous actions such that, in order to avoid any unfortunate occurrences, the governor [of Arévalo, who oversaw the election] thought it best that the following day, 2 January, between 10 and 11 in the morning, he convoke many of the leading townspeople, which he did, and they were armed and on the alert for anything that might happen until the said elections were over.

The pealing of the bells in this case, which is not specifically referred to as *rebato*, is clearly an abnormal occurrence (it was midnight) aimed at spreading alarm (inciting the whole town) to the point that the authorities had to put a stop to the proceedings and take more serious precautions to ensure that the townspeople did not go wild.<sup>30</sup> Witnesses remarked that the bells were struck rapidly (*a toda priessa*) and that some inhabitants had ‘climbed up to the roofs and did many very scandalous things’. It is important to remember, as this witness did, that the uprising coincided with a popular election for town leaders and that everyone (here meaning men) participated ‘regardless of who they were’. The electoral session of the *hijosdalgo* (the lower nobility), in contrast, lasted just two hours.

Two years later, in Cazalilla (Jaén), during an upheaval aimed at overthrowing a judge because he had allegedly ‘stolen from the granary’ and replacing him with someone more to the townspeople’s liking, the church bells chimed again, again at night, though this time it was the church bells. Three inhabitants had confronted the current *alcalde*, grabbing his rod of justice (the emblem of jurisdiction) and ‘yelling long live Philip V and death to bad government, as a result of which the people gathered and the unrest grew with women and children and the church bells were rung’.<sup>31</sup> In Puertollano (Ciudad Real) in 1734, likewise, some three hundred townspeople, ‘at the striking of the bells [*tocando para ello a rebato*]’ gathered heavily armed. This time the trigger had been one typical of food riots: in a year when wheat was scarce, the people had tried to capture a shipment of grain near the town of Almodóvar.<sup>32</sup> That incident occurred during the day, but it is still remarkable how many people participated, armed to the teeth according to the accusations against them by the people of Almodóvar.

In Viso del Marqués (Ciudad Real), an uprising occurred in 1742 on the occasion of a dispute regarding who should be the town doctor. A crowd of people had already gathered in a place called El Pradillo where ‘they tried to ring the church bells *a fuego* [as if a fire alarm] so as to stir up the people even more with their rioting and serious disturbances, which the sacristans managed to contain, holding back the people as they marched to the church; rushing the prayer of the Rosary, shut the church, and removed the keys’.<sup>33</sup> This account would be of importance later on in the defence of the prime defendant.

Nor were the bells struck *a rebato* in Herencia (Ciudad Real) during a food riot in 1735, but many witnesses said that that would have happened had the price of bread gone up.<sup>34</sup>

But they were struck, leading to long litigation over who did it and when, in Lorca (Murcia) in one of the best known episodes of the 1766 Esquilache riots. In the words of the city council,

the miserable commoners, their suffering having grown more intense, threw off the proper limits of obedience and respect they owed to their judge, Don Juan Palanco, and they captured the bell in the clock tower as it rang the curfew and, *tocando a rebato*, they summoned most of this city’s inhabitants and those of the outskirts and, infuriated, attacked the halls of justice with the goal, according to their shouting and yelling, of casting off the yoke of tyranny and violence that they attributed to the governor of this city.<sup>35</sup>

Palanco himself offered the telling detail that after nine o’clock ‘at three quarters [9:45 p.m.] the bell began sounding *a rebato* and continued incessantly until three in the morning’.<sup>36</sup>

The bells also were rung in Azpeitia (Guipúzcoa) in 1776: ‘Having those who had left taken control of the bells, they began . . . to *tocar a rebato*, and with that, so many people were riled up that they entered, the flag carried by the chaplain, into a small square where I have my house’, wrote the governor, ‘and there were more than two thousand men, some with shotguns, others with sticks’.<sup>37</sup> That same year, in Villademor de la Vega (León), protesters attempted to strike the bells though they were prevented by the wily sacristan.<sup>38</sup> Years later, in 1779, the bells were struck again in Casarrubios del Monte (Toledo).<sup>39</sup>

The roster of examples is long and could be even longer.<sup>40</sup> *Toque de rebato* is a well-established custom in eighteenth-century Castile and appears in all corners of the country, from Guipúzcoa to

Murcia, as well as in Aragon and the Canary Islands, though it appears to have been most common in the southern *meseta*, possibly because the documentation is more abundant for that region.

As mentioned, sometimes bells were not rung, because the people in charge of guarding them had managed to prevent it. In addition to what happened in Viso del Marqués, in Villademor in 1766 people gathered in the town square and ‘fearlessly commenced to break down the door to the church bell tower, shouting that they would sound the fire alarm (though there was no fire nor any need to do so), attacking and trampling the sacristan to force him to give them the keys to the tower, and he refused’.<sup>41</sup> The sacristans knew how much was at stake in these sorts of situations and the severity of the punishments awaiting those who rang the bells *a rebato*, more on which below. Indeed, after the uprising in Lorca, a priest told the investigating judge about a plot to free one of the prisoners and he advised that the bell tower ‘be patrolled every night and that we not rely on the padlock on the door, which is not strong’. The judge took the advice seriously, along with other suggestions, and he ordered that the bell, called the *alfonsina*, be removed from the castle and taken to the home of the castle governor.<sup>42</sup> On many other occasions rebellious townspeople managed to get hold of the bells and ring them, either through force or wile, or in the unlikely case that the bells were not under lock and key. This was the case in Babilafuente, where Manuela Moreno ‘requested the bell keys in order to go up and she was involved in their striking’, for which she would be severely punished.<sup>43</sup>

When the bells were finally struck, the ringing produced an almost immediate effect, drawing many or all the townspeople to some central place, usually the main square, the centre of public life and also of unrest. But it is important to keep in mind that the *toque de rebato* did not mark the start of the uprising; rather, it was just one more step along the way, indicating that troubles were already in progress to some degree.<sup>44</sup> The example of Madrid in 1766 is an obvious case: bells were rung on Holy Monday, one day after the first upheavals, by which time seventeen people had already been killed. The bells also were a response to the Walloon guards, the King’s *garde du corps*, having attacked the crowd, killing more people. By that time Madrid had practically fallen into the hands of the mob.<sup>45</sup>

Similar sequences can be found in other, smaller uprisings. In Cazalilla, for example, people gathered as some cried out the commonest of the rioting slogans in Spain: ‘long live Philip V and death to bad government!’. These were the people said to have summoned all their neighbours, including women and children, and only later they rung the church bells [*hasta tocar a rebato*].<sup>46</sup> Unrest in Azpeitia was already under way, as we saw. In Viso del Marqués, a crowd of people had gathered before ‘they tried to ring the church bells *a fuego*’.<sup>47</sup> In Villademor, as well, people had already gathered in the town square: the rebels ‘organized themselves into groups of those already mentioned, along with some young men and women . . . yelling and shouting rebellious things’ before trying to break down the door to the bell tower. Only when they failed in their attempt did they turn their attention to the dwelling where the bishop of Oviedo lived, throwing stones at his doors and windows.<sup>48</sup> In Casarrubios in 1779, after the first round of troubles and the arrival of an investigating judge, ‘at nearly midnight the townspeople withdrew to their houses, but before 5 a.m. they once again rang the bells *a rebato* [one witness clarified that the bells were at ‘both parish churches’] and again gathered with the same yelling and commotion; they broke into the jail and freed the judge’s four prisoners’.<sup>49</sup> In Babilafuente bells were rung two nights in a row, first on 17 May 1789, after the Duke of Alba’s home and bread ovens had been broken into, and the following day, by which time the governor of Salamanca, José de Azanza, had arrived with troops to put down the troubles.<sup>50</sup> In short, when the bells rang *a rebato* one can assume that mobilisation was already under way. The bells were rung at that moment of imminent danger in order to gather more people – everyone, in fact. All were called; men and women alike.

Who gathered at the sound of the bells? The documents are generic in this respect, speaking of the people, the neighbours (*vecinos*, which can also mean citizens), the townspeople. Probably only men at first, though women are frequently mentioned as having had a role in mobilisations,

even in bell-ringing as we saw. Did they also feel themselves to be summoned? In theory all neighbours without distinction were there, but in fact one can think that the call was aimed at the lower classes, or especially to them. Indeed, it was these journeymen or small holders, artisans (if there were any), and modest farmers who appear in the authorities' reports, where they are referred to as *vecinos*, the people (*gente*), the town (*pueblo*), but also the *plebe* and the mob (*populacho*).<sup>51</sup> Lists of prisoners sometimes included professions, and authorities often stressed the fact that belongings could not be seized because they had none. Moreover, petitions for release generally mentioned prisoners' need to provide for their families, all of which points to the 'popular' nature of disturbances. And though occasionally someone higher up on the social ladder might be among the accused, for example a physician who acted as a leader in Viso del Marqués, it was generally the plebe who responded to the sound of the bells while the better-off and those in power kept a prudent distance. In fact, those were sometimes summoned by authorities to enforce law and order, and almost always as main witnesses after the riot.

There was nothing ordinary about such a mobilisation. To begin with, it was armed. The *toque de rebato* was a call to arms, either an indication that townspeople knew what to expect or simply a precautionary measure.<sup>52</sup> Weapons played a role in most uprisings, even if they were sticks and agricultural implements, though we cannot always say how they were linked to the striking of the bells. Occasionally, however, we can. For example, in Puertollano in 1734 the *toque a rebato* summoned 'some three hundred people with all sorts of firearms, small arms and long guns, knives and daggers, pikes, shotguns, sticks and clubs'.<sup>53</sup> It is worth noting that the town had around 2,000 inhabitants in 1752, the year of the famous census known as the Catastro de Ensenada.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, in Azpeitia in 1766, townspeople gathered at the sound of the bells in the little square where the governor had his home, and there were 'more than two thousand men, some with shotguns, others with sticks'.<sup>55</sup> In Cazalilla, a town with just shy of fifty *vecinos* (so, fewer than 250 people), the crowd was gathered 'in the square with knives and clubs', where the visiting judge came upon them with his troops.<sup>56</sup>

Many cases do not mention weapons, however, and such omission is unlikely if they had been present. In the case of Viso del Marqués, defendants pointed to the absence of weapons along with other exculpatory evidence, such as the absence of *toque a rebato*, to deny the very existence of the uprising.<sup>57</sup>

But the point of striking the bells was not only that people gather, even if heavily armed. It was also to strike fear and alarm, especially if it took place at night, which was often the case, or if it went on for a long time. There are multiple references to the cumulative effect of the sound of the tolling. In Santa María la Real de Nieva, the sound of bells past midnight 'roiled' the people.<sup>58</sup> In Viso del Marqués, the *toque a fuego* would have served to 'excite people more',<sup>59</sup> and the same word, *conmover*, was used in Azpeitia in 1766.<sup>60</sup> That same year, in Lorca, we see it again: the bell, *tocando a rebato*, excited [*acabó de conmover*] most of the people in the city and the surrounding countryside.<sup>61</sup> Documentation from Lorca provides some interesting details; we know that they were ringing until 3 a.m. on the night of 25 April. The parish priest in June told the governor there was a conspiracy to strike the bells again, and he warned, 'if they should take control of the said bell the sound and echo is very frightening even for the quietest and most pacific person', as a result of which the bell was removed.<sup>62</sup> Commotion among townspeople translated immediately into fear among authorities. In 1779, the judges of Casarrubios wrote a dramatic letter to the Duke of Peñaranda, lord of the town, describing the tremendous resistance the townspeople were putting up in the face of arrests despite the fact that the judges were accompanied by as many as fifteen soldiers:

This letter serves to inform Your Excellency that after [the judge] gave orders to capture the delinquents, using troops of countrymen divided into four squadrons so as to be able to control as many as possible and identify those who feared being captured, their voracity was such that they trampled everything and stirred up the town and they have taken control of it, mocking the troops and cornering us. It was a miracle we survived. We are united in the

judge's house with the troops and are ready to defend it to the extent possible, *though we are afraid of the bells striking a rebato*, as they have taken control of them.

This is the situation we are in, with no other salvation than divine providence and that we can hope for from Your Excellency. May we be granted piety, rectitude, and the justice for which your Illustrious self is known.

We cannot write more now, as it is already 2 a.m. We ask God to protect Your Excellency for many years. Casarrubios, 3 March 1779.<sup>63</sup>

Their fear was such that the Council of Castile sent yet another special judge, this time backed by three hundred infantry and cavalry. The town had no more than around 1,700 inhabitants.<sup>64</sup>

### The perspective of authorities

It is important to underline the duality between official and popular use of the bells. The former includes all liturgical uses by the clergy, but also some lay ones. It is the case the military peals of *rebato*, but also, for instance, of a 1789 instruction regarding firefighting in Madrid. In such a case, the parish sacristan was to 'ring one or two bells at full peal' to warn that a fire had broken out.<sup>65</sup> These were instances ordered by authorities, in this case delegated to the sacristan, aimed at mobilising townspeople in the face of danger, whether it be fire, enemy soldiers, or prowlers (including cattle and horse thieves).<sup>66</sup> They were under the jurisdiction of local officials such as governors (*corregidores*) or judges (*alcaldes*), which could not be usurped. This was stated clearly in a law during the reign of Enrique IV in 1462 that survived into the nineteenth century: 'In order to avoid gatherings of people, it is prohibited to strike town bells without the authority of the town council and judicial officers'. The same stricture appeared in the nineteenth century under the section devoted to 'rebellions, riots, and popular uprisings'.<sup>67</sup>

This was no laughing matter, and the punishment was death. Three hundred years later, in 1774, in the wake of an order (*pragmática*) on 17 April regarding unrest, the clergy was asked to be vigilant regarding access to bell towers:

Given that in such circumstances rioters often take control of the bells and spread confusion among town dwellers with their chimes, violently profane sacred temples and even spill blood, officers of the law, priests, and ecclesiastical authorities would do well to guard bell towers safely and close convents, monasteries, and churches any time prudence dictates in the face of disrespect, profanation, or violence in the House of God.<sup>68</sup>

So now the crime of rioting is joined with that of profanation. This not only gives us an idea of how serious the matter was but also shows that, despite the control that authorities exercised over bell towers, access to which was usually gained through a locked door, townspeople frequently managed to strike the ominous bells. It also shows that in early modern Castile, as in Normandy in 1789, people believed that '*les cloches appartenaient aux habitants et non pas aux curés*'.<sup>69</sup> Authorities indeed radically disagreed, which points to the important duality between the official sounding of the bells and that of the popular classes.<sup>70</sup>

Our sources show us how this worked in concrete instances. As chance would have it, we have a statement by one of the prosecutors for the Council of Castile (probably Moñino) concerning the troubles in Lorca in 1766. To him, the striking of the bells in the clock tower was an extremely serious matter:

The *toque a rebato* on the 25th aimed at stirring up the people deserves corporal and capital punishment for those using this form of subversion, in accordance with the laws of this



kingdom. Thus these two crimes [*toque de rebato* and expelling the governor from the town], independent of the uprising, though they were antecedent and consequent to it, cannot be pardoned, and the kingdom cannot be subject to the erosion of obedience to judges who are at the mercy of the people, being called tyrants and bad governors by the leaders of these riots . . . *The riot is the least of it* if the two incidents, the *toque arrebatado* and the indecent expulsion of the governor, given his status as a venerated subject, with his robes and long experience, had not also occurred . . . If Don Juan Palanco [the governor] has committed excesses, then it is the Council, in the name of royal authority, that must examine and punish him if such measures are legitimately justified. *The people [el Pueblo] never has the authority in and of itself to judge its superiors.* Allowing this would have deadly consequences.<sup>71</sup>

What the protesters were doing, practically at the first sound of the bell, was subvert the legitimate order and take upon themselves powers that corresponded solely to royal authorities (who were legitimate by nature), thereby occupying a space and function that was not theirs. ‘Allowing this would have deadly consequences’.

The investigating judge must have read the prosecutor’s statement carefully; the harshest of the sentences he handed out went to ‘one of the main prisoners, the man who that night rang the clock tower bell, Andrés González, *el Ciego* [the blind man]’ who was sentenced to be ‘hanged at the public gallows, his head then separated from his body and put into an iron cage that shall be hung atop the clock tower on the side facing the main square, a fitting punishment for the atrocious crime of stirring up the people by striking the bells’.<sup>72</sup> But in the end, the sentence was not carried out; the Council commuted González’s punishment and that of the other man also sentenced to death and instead gave them two hundred lashes and ten years in a military prison (*presidio*). But the severity of even that punishment and the symbolic component (the head hanging in an iron cage atop the bell tower) are eloquent proof of the seriousness of the crime, and the fact that popular political action under the Old Regime was regarded as an atrocity.

The case was not unusual. In fact, things could have been worse for *el Ciego*. In Azpeitia that same year (authorities must have been extremely nervous after the spring uprisings), the provincial governor sentenced Bartholomé de Olano, a shoemaker, to be

transported under guard from the San Sebastian city jail to the jail of this town and then taken from the latter jail and placed sidesaddle on a mule, with his hands and feet tied and a rope around his neck and taken through the usual streets of this town with the town crier walking ahead and crying out his crimes until they reach the town square where there will be a gallows erected and there he shall be hanged until he dies and once dead his head shall be cut off and placed in an iron cage atop the bell tower, the first bell that this prisoner and his comrade, Domingo Celaiarán, a prisoner released on his own recognizance [*con caución de sagrado*], struck *a rebato* in this province, and no one may remove it [the head] without permission from me or whoever succeeds me in this governorship.<sup>73</sup>

But these are exceptional cases. More than twenty years later, after the troubles in Babilafuente in 1789 the first person sentenced was a woman, Manuela Moreno, known as *la Pecera* (probably fishwife), ‘the one who most heatedly stirred up both sexes and demanded the keys to the bell tower in order to go up, and she was involved in the striking of the bells, and she made evident her fury with the repetition and constancy of her excesses’. She was sentenced to three years in jail (in the Real Casa de San Fernando) and was banished for life from Babilafuente and six leagues surrounding it.<sup>74</sup>

Authorities thus had a well-defined opinion, reinforced by published law, regarding the atrocity of this crime, suitable punishment, and the substantial role that *toque a rebato* played in protests. Those accused of inciting riots, curiously enough, sometimes managed to turn this argument around: if the bells did not ring, even if that were due to efforts by the authorities, then there was

no riot. If there was no riot, then they could not be punished. That was the argument put forth by the alleged leader of the disturbances in Viso del Marqués in 1742, Dr. Juan Sánchez Tarazaga, who said ‘the disturbance in question did not occur’. Lawyers with whom he had consulted had assured him, he said, ‘that it cannot be considered as such, given that no weapons were found, nor did people challenge the judiciary, nor was there any intention of committing excesses, nor were bells rung *a rebato*’. So those were the defining features of the crime of rioting.<sup>75</sup> Tarazaga unsurprisingly omitted to note that the reason the bells had not been rung was because the sacristan had closed the church.

But authorities at times seemed to have shared his logic. During the *annus horribilis* of 1766, the same Council prosecutor quoted above, in his closing statement regarding the events in Villademor, said the episode,

though it was a considerable attack that could have caused much disorder if in fact they had managed to ring the bells, cannot be called a tumult or a riot [*tumulto ni asonada*] because it was not preceded by gatherings or meetings, *nor did the bells ring, nor were other instruments used as signals of a specific uprising*. The whole thing was the outcome of inopportune chance and actions both ill conceived and poorly advised, but these actions were not aimed at the riot that in fact occurred.<sup>76</sup>

So the absence of bell-ringing would suggest a lack of intentionality, and thus of felony.

One final element, perhaps anecdotal but also important: once the repression was under way, we have not found a single case in which the bells were taken down. This marks a contrast with France.<sup>77</sup> It also differs from Barcelona, where Philip V in 1717 ordered that the cathedral bells be destroyed as a punishment for having rung them during all the disturbances in the Catalan capital.<sup>78</sup>

Why were authorities so upset with *rebato* that they would prosecute it this severely? I will discuss it in the conclusive section. But what can be said is that it revealed a notion of popular legitimacy that allowed people to take control of ‘their’ bell tower and strike the bells for all to hear. Such usurpation was a serious challenge, both political and symbolic, to authority, it subverted the established order, it turned the world upside down. It was as if subjects were passing judgement on authorities; recalling Moñino, ‘The people [*el Pueblo*] never has the authority in and of itself to judge its superiors’. Indeed, that would be intolerable.

### Conclusion. *Rebato*: meanings and functions

The *rebato* bells had symbolic power, which was ‘real’ power. We can see them associated to other powerful symbols: in a Salamanca food riot in 1764, participants went up to the San Martín tower ‘and waved a red cloth, as if it were an insurrectionary flag, and summoned the people *a toque de rebato*, and they filled the squares and gathered in groups’.<sup>79</sup> The clanging of the bells called townspeople to participate on the uprising: once in the streets, they did not yield them until the revolt was over. The bells marked the opening of this extraordinary time that Hamon wrote about, a time of ‘people power’ or ‘popular power’, with apologies for the anachronism. They announced the suspension of normality, the cessation of respect and deference for authority and its symbols (including the rod of justice, often seized or broken). That is the very essence of the uprising and what made it so feared by authorities. It was the moment when the people discovered (or just remembered) that the emperor had no clothes.

If we accept that the regulated uses – both ecclesiastical and secular – of bells constituted the ordinary state of affairs, the *toque a rebato* was clearly an ‘out of order’ element, not only in its form but also in its meaning. It is true, and we have emphasised it, that the neighbours (*vecinos*) considered themselves as much owners of the bells as the authorities; however, these rights were

only exercised in exceptional circumstances, such as during a riot. This was evidenced by the fact that those involved in the tumult had to force their way into the bell towers, exerting coercion or outright violence against their guardians.

The ritual elements have long been highlighted as a crucial aspect of revolts.<sup>80</sup> Many of them refer to the rites of inversion, as pointed out by M. Bakhtin, which were characteristic not only of carnival but more generally of popular culture in the early modern age.<sup>81</sup> G. Seal lists several ritual elements present in traditional protest that subsisted in nineteenth-century England, including disguise, perambulating, rough music, and mock violence.<sup>82</sup> Although certain forms – such as the use of women’s clothing – rarely appear in our Castilian riots, other elements of inversion are present: cloaks and disguises, threats of violence, obscene language, discordant noises, marches, a proliferation of libelous or threatening anonymous writings,<sup>83</sup> or the display of horns at the homes of the victims. *Rebato* is clearly one of these elements, and not a minor one, carrying strong symbolic weight. By replacing the secular or ecclesiastical authorities in controlling the bells, the rioters asserted their power as a community. By seizing the bellfries – as well as public squares – they demonstrated their dominion over these spaces. By replacing *quietud* (tranquility, but also silence), with a deafening and frightening noise, they also became masters of the acoustic space of the locality.

Additionally, there is a political reading of bell-chiming. The concept of ‘politicisation’ has been widely applied (and debated) in political history to describe the process of ‘popular classes’ to political agency but is often identified as starting with the French Revolution and stretching along the nineteenth century. Only recently – Hamon among other, and somehow Imízcoz and Artola for Spain – it has been applied to early modern contexts.<sup>84</sup> However, I find it particularly powerful for the explanation of ‘popular’ mobilisation in preindustrial societies.

‘Politicisation’, conceived not as a descendent phenomenon, is evident in many prosecutions for rebellion, though in various forms: the self-organisation of townspeople ignoring the usual figures of authority, election in some cases of new leaders, collective agreement regarding goals, negotiations with authorities regarding these goals, autonomous action against certain ‘enemies’, evident scorn for social superiors, and resistance against investigations, with frequent inklings of pacts of silence.

The *toque de rebato* works as the starting point of what Hamon describes as ‘the time of the extraordinary’, when people who are ‘normally’ peaceful undergo an ‘abnormal’ transition in which the legitimacy of institutions is challenged.<sup>85</sup> The crucial moment of initial deliberation (obscured in judicial records, which keep only bits and pieces) was ignited by the gathering prompted by *rebato*. What followed were actions that can only be described as political.<sup>86</sup> Information was exchanged and objectives were set; leaders were chosen or confirmed; enemies were identified: the riot was on its way.

Finally, we may examine the soundscape of protest. To begin with, it may be worth noting that bells were not the sole mobilising artefact: the sound of seashells has been already identified as such<sup>87</sup>. However, initially, this practice was concentrated in coastal regions and spread particularly towards the end of the eighteenth century, perhaps as a way dodging the fierce legal punishment for bell-ringing. Other devices, such as drums of fifes also appeared occasionally, especially accompanying the initial parade to gather townspeople.

Riots are inherently noisy. There are rumours, which leave a significant trace in the documentation (through witness statements), but few concrete elements to reconstruct their content and dissemination.<sup>88</sup> The shouts of the rioters appear in almost all cases, taking the form of slogans, insults, or acclamations. The sound of stones hitting windows, doors, or roofs serves as a clear example of symbolic violence and forced the victims to lock inside their houses.<sup>89</sup> The formulation of claims and their approval or rejection by the crowd at the public square were also made at the top of their lungs.

All of these elements – in which we miss songs or rough music – play various central functions in the tumult. Among them, we believe that the *toque a rebato* played a fundamental role. Many of

these functions were communicative.<sup>90</sup> They summoned and informed the neighbours but also reinforced a powerful sense of community in an extraordinary situation. The ringing of bells also confers legitimacy to the protest by appropriating an instrument typically controlled by the powerful. On top of that, there is the emotions aroused: the noises of the tumult further fuel the excitement of the participants, keeping them alert (why else would the bells be ringing all night?), but also instilling fear in the victims, as we have seen. In summary, this entire soundscape shapes both the ‘real’ and symbolic dimensions of the tumult.

Diversity in actions, actors, motives, ideas, strategies, geographies, and time frames is a mantra among researchers of popular protest. Notably, even E.P. Thompson, the proponent of the influential concept of ‘moral economy’, initially restricted its applicability primarily to the ideas of the British poor in late eighteenth-century food riots.

However, the pervasive and enduring nature of bell-ringing, nearly universal in Christian societies, warrants meticulous examination. Its multifaceted roles within the acoustic landscape of protest and its potential as a factor in politicisation contribute to explain its widespread presence. Thus, this study on the *toque a rebato* in small towns in Castile can offer key insights to scholars investigating riots.

Today hardly anyone remembers what the sound of *rebato* might signify. These Castilian riots remind us of the power of bells.

## Notes

1 We do not know for sure if the author of this unsigned ruling was indeed Moñino. But there are stylistic and thematic indications that it was; see **de Castro, C.** 1996. *Campomanes: Estado y Reformismo Ilustrado* (Madrid).

2 **Arnold, J. H and Goodson, C.** 2012. ‘Resounding community: the history and meaning of medieval church bells’, *Viator* 43: 99–130; **Sizer, M.** 2015. ‘Murmur, clamor, and tumult: the soundscape of revolt and oral culture in the middle ages’, *Radical History Review* 121: 9–31.

3 **Pareja Ortiz, M.** 2014. ‘El “pueblo” bogotano en la revolución del 20 de julio de 1810’, *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 71: 281–311; **Palacios Cerezales, D.** 2011. *A Culatazos: Protesta Popular y Orden Público en el Portugal Contemporáneo* (Palma de Mallorca), pp. 44, 120, 226; **Viola, L.** 2011. ‘Muzhiks y babas. Confrontaciones con el poder soviético en el torbellino de la colectivización’, *Historia Social* 77: 133–47, esp. 142.

4 **Rudé, G.** 1959. *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (London); **Nicolas, J.** 2002. *La Rébellion Française. Mouvements Populaires et Conscience Sociale (1661-1789)* (Paris) contains sixty-six mentions to *tocsin*; see also **Hamon, P.** 2019. ‘Le Tocsin de la révolte: Comment l’entendre? (France, XIVE-début XIXe siècle)’, *Histoire, économie et société* 38: 101–17.

5 **Hinck, H.** 2010. ‘The rising of 1381 in Winchester’, *The English Historical Review* 512: 112–131, esp. pp. 118–19; **Griffin, C.** 2020. *The Politics of Hunger. Protest, Poverty and Policy in England c.1750-c.1840* (Manchester), p. 31.

6 The bibliography on specific uprisings is too large to cite here. On the Esquilache riots there is also a broad selection; see in particular the classic work by **Vilar, P.** 1972. ‘El “motín de Esquilache” y las “crisis del antiguo régimen”’, *Revista de Occidente* 107: 199–249; the encyclopedic work by **Andrés-Gallego, J.** 2003. *El Motín de Esquilache, América y Europa* (Madrid); and **López García, J. M.** 2006. *El Motín contra Esquilache* (Madrid).

7 **Lorenzo Cadarso, P. L.** 1996. *Los Conflictos Populares en Castilla (siglo XVI-XVII)* (Madrid); **Ardit Lucas, M.** 1977. *Revolución Liberal y Revuelta Campesina: un Ensayo sobre la Desintegración del Régimen Feudal en el País Valenciano (1793-1840)* (Barcelona); **Palop Ramos, J. M.** 1986. ‘Tumultos populares en el XVIII valenciano’, *Saitabi: revista de la Facultat de Geografia i Historia* 36: 213–226.

8 **Elliott, J. H.** 1990. ‘A non-revolutionary society: Castile in the 1640s’, in *Études d’Histoire Européenne. Mélanges Offerts à René et Suzanne Pillorget* (Angers), pp. 253–269.

9 MacKay, R. 1999. *The Limits of Royal Authority: Resistance and Obedience in Seventeenth-Century Castile* (Cambridge).

10 A point underlined in a suggestive text by **Kamen, H.** 2001. ‘Revuelta popular, comunidad y sociedad en la España Moderna’, in J. M. De Bernardo (ed.), *El Hispanismo Anglonorteamericano: Aportaciones, Problemas y Perspectivas sobre Historia, Arte y Literatura Españolas (Siglos XVI-XVIII)* (Córdoba), pp. 263–274.

11 A fine recent example for Spain is **Martínez Bermejo, S.** 2019 ‘Miquel Parets y los sentidos del artesano’, in F. Andrés Robres, M. Hernández, and S. Martínez Bermejo (eds.), *Mirando desde el Puente: Estudios en Homenaje al Profesor James S. Amelang* (Madrid), pp. 95–106.

12 We do not have for Spain an equivalent to **Corbin, A.** 1998. *Village Bells: The Culture of the Senses in the Nineteenth-Century French Countryside* (New York). More limited, though valuable, are F. J. Guerrero and E. Gómez Pellón (eds.), *Las Campanas: Cultura de un Sonido Milenario: Actas del I Congreso Nacional* (Santander, 1997); **Bejarano Pellicer, C.** 2015.

*Los Sonidos de la Ciudad. El Paisaje Sonoro de Sevilla, Siglos XVI al XVIII* (Seville), and more focused on small villages, **Marín, M. A.** 2002. 'Sound and urban life in a small Spanish town during the *ancien régime*', *Urban History* 29: 48–59.

**13 Aguado Romaguera, R.** 'Cuaderno de todos los toques de campanas así ordinarios como extraordinarios que se tocan en esta Santa Iglesia Metropolitana de Valencia, escrito por el campanero Rafael Aguado Romaguera en el año 1912.' Manuscript. <https://bivaldi.gva.es/es/consulta/registro.cmd?id=10545> (accessed July 2023).

**14** According to the *Diccionario de Autoridades*, published in six volumes by the Real Academia Española in 1737, it means 'a sudden and deceptive attack against the enemy.' That was the meaning used by Andrés Martínez de Burgos in his *Relación verdadera del rebato q vieron quatrocientos y cincuenta Turcos en el almadrava de Za ara . . .* (Seville, 1562) <https://books.google.es/books?id=zLE6AQAAAJ&printsec> (accessed July 2023).

**15 Oliver Asín, J.** 1928. *Origen Árabe de Rebato, Arrodda y sus Homónimos: Contribución al Estudio de la Historia Medieval de la Táctica Militar y de su Léxico Peninsular* (Madrid). See also the review of that work by **Nallino, C. A.** 1930. *Oriente Moderno* 10: 95–96. In addition, **Ricard, R.** 1933. 'A propos de rebato. Note sur la tactique militaire dans les places portugaises du Maroc', *Bulletin Hispanique* 35: 448–53; and **Ricard, R.** 1937. 'Sur 'rebato', *Bulletin Hispanique* 39: 244–45.

**16 Orden de su excelencia de lo que en esta Ciudad de Valencia se ha de hazer, y a las partes a donde ha de acudir la gente della quando succedere rebato de dia y de noche, 1576.** Printed document, <https://bivaldi.gva.es/es/consulta/registro.cmd?id=1433> (accessed July 2023).

**17** J. Castillo de Bovadilla, *Política para Corregidores y Señores de Vasallos*, esp. book 4 ch. 4; for military uses in the eighteenth century, examples can be found in three different articles in vol.2 of A. Jiménez Estrella and J. J. Lozano (eds.), *Actas de la XI Reunión Científica de la Fundación Española de Historia Moderna: Comunicaciones* (Granada, 2012).

**18** *Diccionario de Autoridades*, vol. 5, 'rebato.'

**19** The videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-M9grQhwqOo> (Nidáguila) and, for Ezcaray, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yy6F3IULJZQ> (both accessed July 2023).

**20** An ambitious research project proposed in 1982 by F. Llop i Bayo unfortunately was never completed: 'Investigar los toques de campanas: La recogida de datos', *Revista de Folklore* 20 (1982) <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/nd/ark:/59851/bmc5f0m5> (accessed July 2023). Also by **Llop i Bayo**, 1986. 'El campanero, un comunicador extinguido', *Revista de Folklore* 62. <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/nd/ark:/59851/bmc001x6> (accessed July 2023). See also **del Campo Jesús, L.** 1988. 'Algunos aspectos del tocar de las campanas', *Cuadernos de etnología y etnografía de Navarra* 51: 165–78.

**21** According to a description of Valencia by Rafael Aguado in 1912, in this case uncharacteristically vague: 'If it were necessary to ring on account of fire or *arrebato* (God forbid) the María is struck as it is struck ordinarily in the parishes. But in the cathedral it may be struck only with an order by the vicar general through the sacristans, because this sort of bell-striking [*toques*] takes place only rarely;' Aguado, *Cuaderno*, not paged. This ambiguity is discussed in more detail later in the paper.

**22** Archivo Histórico Nacional [AHN], Consejos Suprimidos [CS] leg. 11, expediente [exp.]. 2; AHN, CS leg. 419, exp. 6. During the Fronde, in 1649, one source reported that the *tocsin* could be heard for six days and six nights, Hamon, 'Le Tocsin', p. 107.

**23** AHN CS leg. 420. The *corregidor* was both judge and governor.

**24** **Alonso Ponga, J. L.** 'Refuerzo de identidad, fragmentación temporal y delimitación espacial a través de las campanas: el caso de la provincia de León', in Guerrero and Gómez Pellón (eds.), *Las campanas*, pp. 87–112.

**25** AHN CS leg. 1.147, exp. 11, fol. 1.

**26** AHN CS leg. 521, exp. 2, fol. 82.

**27** AHN CS leg. 533, exp. 3.

**28** AHN CS leg. 420.

**29** Cadarso, *Los Conflictos*. This absence intrigued me so much that I decided to check as many as sixteen of Lorenzo's sources in AHN, and I only found one almost obscured mention – for bell ringing, not specifically *rebato* – in a riot in Calahorra in 1665: AHN, CS 25817, exp. 5. However, on reviewing this material, it is evident that some of his case studies were far from being 'popular' riots, which could explain this striking silence.

**30** AHN, CS leg. 11, exp. 2. Eleven people were jailed in Valladolid on account of this incident, and an additional group of suspects and/or prisoners fled. Emphasis added.

**31** AHN CS leg. 67, exp. 14.

**32** AHN CS leg. 60, exp. 1. See also J. Díaz-Pintado, 'El motín de 1734 en Puertollano', in *VII, VIII y IX Semanas de Historia de Puertollano* (Ciudad Real, 1989).

**33** AHN CS leg. 92, exp. 3. The underlining is from the original.

**34** AHN CS leg. 72, exp. 6.

**35** AHN CS leg. 419, exp. 6, fols. 6–9. On the Lorca riot see J. Hernández Franco, 'Lorca, 1766, motín oligárquico e inmovilismo frente a las reformas carloterceristas', *Cuadernos de investigación histórica* 8 (1984), 149–70.

**36** AHN CS leg. 419, exp. 6, fols. 34–40.

**37** AHN CS leg. 420.

**38** AHN CS leg. 521, exp. 1.

**39** AHN CS leg. 924, exp. 29, fol. 1.

- 40 The issue of how representative the documents from the Council of Castile are will be analyzed more precisely in a forthcoming paper regarding uprisings.
- 41 AHN CS leg. 521, exp. 1.
- 42 AHN CS leg. 419, exp. 6, fols. 83–88.
- 43 AHN CS leg. 1.147, exp. 11, fol. 66.
- 44 See also Hamon, 'Le Tocsin', p. 107.
- 45 López García, *El Motín contra Esquilache*, pp. 95–130; the bells appear on p. 112.
- 46 AHN CS leg. 67, exp. 14.
- 47 AHN CS leg. 92, exp. 3.
- 48 AHN CS leg. 521, exp. 1, another clearly symbolic act.
- 49 AHN CS leg. 92, exp. 29, fol. 16.
- 50 AHN CS leg. 1.147, exp. 11.
- 51 The latter two terms are common, for example, in the official report on events in Casarrubios; AHN CS leg. 924, exp. 29, e.g. fol. 3.
- 52 This was also true in France; Hamon, 'Le Tocsin', pp. 105 and 110.
- 53 AHN CS leg. 60, exp. 1.
- 54 **Adrados Villar E. and Gómez Vozmediano, M. F.** 2003. 'Biografía colectiva de un pueblo: Puertollano y sus aldeas según las respuestas generales del Catastro del Marqués de la Ensenada (1752–1753)', *Campo de Calatrava. Revista de Estudios de Puertollano y comarca* 6: 171–298.
- 55 AHN CS leg. 420.
- 56 AHN CS leg. 67, exp. 14.
- 57 AHN CS leg. 92, exp. 3.
- 58 AHN CS leg. 11, exp. 2.
- 59 AHN CS leg. 92, exp. 3, *memorial*.
- 60 AHN CS leg. 420.
- 61 AHN CS leg. 419, exp. 6, fols. 6–9.
- 62 AHN CS leg. 419, exp. 6, fols. 83ff.
- 63 AHN CS leg. 924, exp. 29, fol. 1. My emphasis.
- 64 On Casarrubios and how, in the 1790s, it became a nest of 'subsistence bandits,' see **Madrazo, S.** 2014. 'Toledo, territorio sin ley', in P. Díaz Sánchez, P. A. Martínez, and Á. Soto (eds.), *El Poder de la Historia: Huella y Legado de Javier María Donézar* (Madrid), vol. 1, pp. 501–14.
- 65 *Novísima Recopilación de las leyes de España. Dividida en XII libros*, 6 vols. (Madrid, 1804), book. 3, tit. 19, law 11, note 5.
- 66 This law first appeared during the reign of Enrique II and was consolidated by Isabella the Catholic in 1499; *Novísima Recopilación*, book 9, tit. 14, law 4.
- 67 *Novísima Recopilación*, book 12, tit. 11, law 2.
- 68 *Novísima Recopilación*, book 12, tit. 11, law 5, paragraph 10.
- 69 Hamon, 'Le Tocsin', p. 105.
- 70 Such distinction closely connects with the dichotomies (specially 'ways of fact' vs 'ways of law' and people vs. magistrates) deeply embedded in the 1774 order as analyzed in **Garriga, C.** 2017. 'La constitución fundamental de la nación española. En torno a la pragmática preventiva de bullicios y conmociones populares de 1774', in J. A. Pardos (ed.), *Historia en Fragmentos: Estudios en Homenaje a Pablo Fernández Albaladejo* (Madrid), pp. 737–746.
- 71 AHN CS leg. 419, exp. 6. Emphasis added.
- 72 *Ibid*, fol. 162.
- 73 AHN CS leg. 570, exp. 8, case of Bartolomé de Olano.
- 74 AHN CS leg. 1.147, exp. 11, fol. 66.
- 75 AHN CS leg. 92, exp. 3.
- 76 AHN CS leg. 521, exp. 1, fol. 181v, emphasis added.
- 77 Hamon, 'Le Tocsin', p. 115. As the reader may remember, a bell was taken down in Lorca, but that was *during* the riot (let us say preventively), not *after* it, as in some sort of symbolic punishment.
- 78 **Perarnau de Bruse, C.** 1962. 'Cuando el bronce es historia. Las campanas de la Catedral de Barcelona', *Blanco y Negro* 2639. =<http://campaners.com/php/textos.php?text=1002> (accessed July 2023).
- 79 Villar y Macías, M. *Historia de Salamanca* (1887), cited in **Andrés-Gallego, J.** 1987. 'Economía, psicología y ética de un motín: Salamanca 1764', *Hispania sacra* 80: 675–711, p. 695. Andrés-Gallego refers to the bells' symbolic importance on p. 700.
- 80 **Burke, P.** 2009. *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London), ch. 7; **Wood, A.** 2002. *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (New York), pp.103–104; **O'Gorman, F.** 2000. 'Ritual Aspects of popular politics in England (c. 1700-1830)', *Memoria y Civilización* 3: 161–186.
- 81 **Bakhtin, M.** 1984. *Rabelais and its World* (Bloomington), ch. 2.
- 82 **Seal, G.** 1988. 'Tradition and agrarian protest in nineteenth-century England and Wales', *Folklore* 99: 146-169.

**83** Some of these elements in the context of riots in **Hernández, M.** 2022. 'De pasquines y libelos: delitos de anonimato en la Castilla del siglo XVIII', *Historia social* **103**: 21–44.

**84** In addition to Hamon, 'Le Tocsin', see also L. Bourquin and Ph. Hamon (eds.), *La Politisation: Conflits et Construction du Politique depuis le Moyen Âge* (Rennes, 2019), pp. 7–15; **Hamon, Ph.** 2015. 'Politisation', in C. Gauvard and J-F. Sirinelli (eds.), *Dictionnaire de l'Historien* (Rennes), pp. 538–40; **Imízcoz, J. M. and Artola, A.** 2022. 'Avant la politisation. Économies morales en tension dans le monde hispanique au XVIIIe siècle', *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* **52**.

**85** Hamon, 'Le Tocsin', p. 109.

**86** *Ibid.*, p. 111, points out that the sound of the *tocsin* signals the start of a period of exchange and deliberation.

**87** **Ardit Lucas, M.** 1969. 'Los alborotos de 1801 en el reino de Valencia', *Hispania* **29**: 526–42. I have also found other examples in Villanueva del Rey in 1801 (AHN CS leg. 2.059, exp. 34), Madridejos in 1802 (AHN, CS, leg. 2.118, exp. 8), or Arucas in the Canary Islands where their use was specifically prosecuted in 1800 (AHN, CS, leg. 2.159, exp. 3).

**88** **Awcock, H.** 2021. 'Handbills, rumours, and blue cockades: Communication during the 1780 Gordon Riots', *Journal of Historical Geography*, **74**: 1–9; Sizer 'Murmur, clamor'.

**89** Sizer 'Murmur, clamor' p. 20 cites E. Canetti when describing the sound of smashing things as 'the applause of objects'.

**90** Awcock, 'Handbills, rumours'.