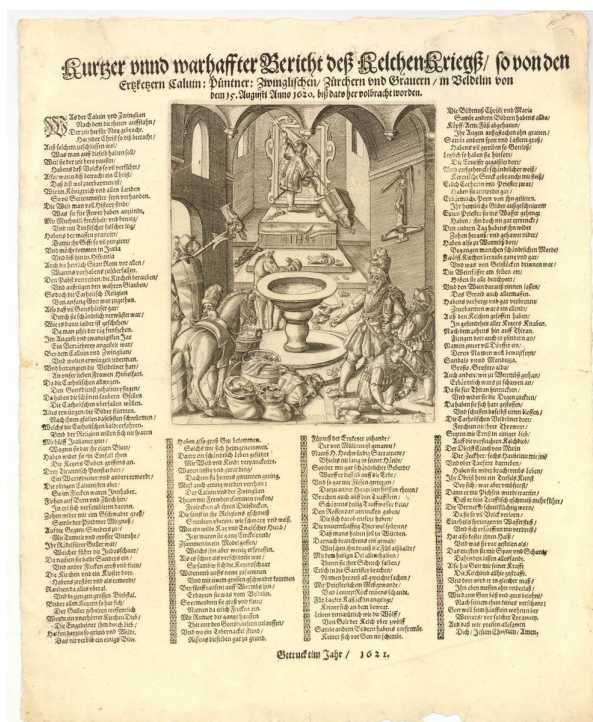


A Short and Faithful Account of the Chalice War [...] (1621)

Abstract

This broadside refers to the so-called Valtellina Murders of 1620, in which Swiss Reformed [Protestants] living in Valtellina were massacred by Catholics. It was part of Catholic propaganda efforts against the Reformed. Accordingly, it shows the “heretics” destroying a church and desecrating saints. The broadside aimed to present Protestantism as unchristian and Catholicism as pleasing to God.

Source



A Short and Faithful Account of the Chalice War, as Waged by the Notorious Heretics Calvin, Graubünden citizens, Zwingli followers, Zurich citizens, and Members of the Grey League in Veltlin [Valtinella] on August 15, 1620 (1621)

When Calvin and Zwingli
After they had rebelled /
Made use of the time.
Every Christian who saw this /
Concluded from what he saw /
What people should think about it /
As they did nothing in the time since /
They seduced so many people /
When a Christian considers this /

What a great pity it is /
That in the kingdom and all the countries
There are so many leaders of sects.
We find the world full of stories /
About the flames they lit.
With willfulness, insolence, and deceit /
And with devilish false lies /
To such an extent they acted so /
That their poison purged so much /
And sought to move to Italy
And all the way to Spain.
Even beautiful Rome in particular /
It was their plan to attack.
To drive out the Pope / rob the churches /
And destroy the true belief /
Even though God favored
The Catholic religion from the start
So many of God's houses /
Were disgracefully ravaged by them /
As it sadly came about /
On the fifteenth day by count,
In August and the twentieth year,
Treachery was carried out /
By Calvin and Zwingli /
They wanted to strangle everyone.
And set upon the Veltlin citizens with force /
On the assumption day of our dear lady.
As Catholics everywhere
Usually attend church services /
The fine clean fellows
Sought to attack the Catholics.
To strangle them all / to storm the pictures
To swarm there at their pleasure /
As the Catholics soon learned.
For religion's sake they did not spare themselves.
With the good Italians' help /
They risked their own blood /
Made a strike against them
They attacked the heretics' boys.
Three Thiran [Tirano] officials there /
A preacher/ and others were murdered /
But the remaining Calvinists /
Who were owners in the place.
Fled to Berne and Zurich /
Quickly they gathered there.

And moved again with a large band /
Together with their companions from Graubünden /
To the Sander [Sondrio] region /
With tumult and great commotion /
It was their ringleader, the deceiver /
Who led the Judas band /
They soon captured Sander /
And other places, large and small /
The churches and the cloisters there.
They destroyed them and murdered all /
Stole everything everywhere.
And committed great theft.
Of all the heretics /
The deceiver behaved most fervently
He became an outrageous church thief /
The Engadin men, for love /
Helped him in it, raging and wild.
So that not a single picture remained
They thus gained much loot.
And took it home with them
Thus they led a villainous life.
Feasting with their wives and children.
They were merry and had it good/
They thought they had quickly won.
They had to be quickly put down:
Calvin and Zwingli
Moved closer together with glee /
Celebrated their stolen things.
And otherwise in their religious bilge
All raged/ like black and white /
Like a wild cat and an English dog /
Now they were all around in a circle /
Poured together in a mold /
Which, however, helped them little.
When it was almost all squandered /
The heretic band gathered
Together once again anew
And came with a great throng
Of five thousand to Worms [Bormio] /
Caught those from Veltlin.
Murdered them, large and small /
They captured many places.
With clamor, the whole bunch of them
ran to the churches /
And where a tabernacle stood /

They tore it completely to the ground.
Up front the notorious heretic /
Von Mülin [Niklaus von Mülinen] by name /
At once took the valued sacrament /
Held it not long in his hand /
But with a very shameful gesture /
Threw it on the ground /
And even stomped on it with his feet /
And more, other captains, helpful advisors /
Brought up the baptismal font /
They valued Holy Water little /
Gave it to the horses to drink /
The horses took fright from that /
The unreasoning animals sensed well /
That it should be shown respect.
After that they used force /
Too soon thereafter they wash their feet in it /
With the Holy Oil they /
Smeared their shoes everywhere /
Some broke into the sacristy /
And took out all the sacred things /
With the priestly mass vestments /
And Levite robes they behaved shamefully.
They put on servants' cassocks /
No one went near them.
They lived unnaturally, like wolves /
They stole over twelve gold chalices /
And other pictures.
None of them were ashamed before God.
From the image of Christ and Maria
And other pictures there, they /
Hacked off head, arms, feet /
Poked out their eyes without horror /
With other taunts and great vice /
They did much godless harm /
Finally, they then /
Whipped the crucifix there /
And hung up shamefully /
Heretical things used a great deal /
Many canons and priests /
Were murdered by them /
Suffered wretched pain from them.
And had their private members cut out
They hung one priest in water
But did not drown him completely /

The next day they again
Pulled him out / and cut him down /
Thus, there at Worms /
They committed many shameful murders /
Completely robbed twelve churches /
And whatever coins were within /
All the wine barrels at the same place /
They pierced through /
And let the wine run out /
All the grain as well.
They destroyed or even burned /
So wretched, it was misery /
They guzzled from the chalices /
To health, all the heretics' boys.
After that, they moved on to Thiran.
They began to plunder there /
First captured many villages /
Whose names are well-known /
Sondalo [Sondalo] and Monduzza [Mondadizza] /
Grosio [Grosio], and Grosuto [Grosotto] there /
Others, too, that belonged to Worms /
It was wretched to witness /
When they moved on Thiran /
And drew their daggers again /
And shot there only one /
The Catholics from Veltlin there /
Did not fear their threatening words /
United in love, set in earnest /
Upon the cursed chalice thief /
The commander [Ni]Claus von M[ü]lin[en] /
Went there, six leaders with him,
And they again killed /
Over a thousand more /
The commander had the devil's arts /
About him / but it was in vain /
For he was done in with guns /
So that he would lead no more devilish filth /
The Bernese fled so fast /
That they lost many men /
Part jumped in the river /
And drowned themselves, to death /
Thus, it cost them their necks /
And all that they had stolen before /
With taunt and shame, they had
To leave it behind, all of it.

Thus God, with his power,
Punished the chalice thieves here.
And there he will, in equal kind /
Measure them exactly without cease /
In the way God then rewards bad and good /
No one's actions are spared.
God will stand by his flock
Further / in the face of such tyranny.
For that, all of us together praise
You / Jesus Christ / Amen.

Translation: Kathleen Dell'Orto

Source: Kurtzer vnnd warhaffter Bericht des KelchenKriegß/ so von den Ertzketzern Caluin; Püntner; Zwinglischen/ Zürchern und Grauern/ in Vetlin...volbracht worden. German broadside, printed 1621. British Museum. Object Number: 1880,0710.404. Available online at:
https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1448077&partId=1&subject=24390&sortBy=objectTitleSort&page=1

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License.
Only noncommercial uses of the work are permitted.

Recommended Citation: A Short and Faithful Account of the Chalice War [. . .] (1621), published in: German History Intersections, <<https://germanhistory-intersections.org/en/knowledge-and-education/ghis:image-67>> [July 14, 2025].