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SEMANTRA AND BELLS IN BYZANTIUM*

*Τίς ζῶν οὐκ ἐλάλει καὶ ἀποθανῶν ἐλάλει
καὶ οἱ ἀκούοντες τὸν θεὸν ἐδόξαζον;
Τὸ σήμανδρον*

According to written sources, semantra were used to summon the faithful to prayer throughout the history of Byzantium, during more than one millennium. Semantra were first made exclusively of wood, while as of the mid-11th century some monasteries used three types of semantra – a small and big semantron made of wood, and the third, bronze semantron. Up until the Fourth Crusade, lay churches in Constantinople, including Hagia Sophia, as well as cathedral temples in the interior, maintained the ancient tradition of using wooden semantra only. The first reliable example of the use of bells originates from the mid-12th century. At a least hundred years earlier, they were brought to the Empire's territory by traders from the Apennine peninsula for their places of worship. The erection of a high belfry in front of the Constantinople *Great Church* at the time of the Latin Empire had the decisive influence on the acceptance of bells after 1261, first in the liturgical practice of the capital, and then in the entire territory of the restored Empire under the Palaiologoi dynasty. The new practice did not uproot the older one – semantra continued to be used.

Keywords: semantron, bell, monastery, typikon, belfry, church

The use of semantra in monastic communities with centuries-long tradition, such as on Mount Athos, inevitably attracted attention of contemporary researchers in whose world bells only were used for liturgical purposes. Some of them were founders of Byzantine studies in their countries, such as Karl Krumbacher, Gabriel

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Millet or Filaret Granić. The first work on this topic which remained practically unknown outside Russia, and which in terms of its conclusions still deserves attention, is a short study about the manner of summoning to the divine service in the *Eastern Church*, written by Russian theologian, historian and full professor at the Moscow Spiritual Academy, Pyotr Simonovich Kazansky, in the late third quarter of the 19th century.¹ Around twenty years later, Karl Krumbacher, who later founded the Byzantine Studies Department at the University of Munich, wrote about this subject in the review of the edition of *The Life* of St Theodosios the Koinobiarches, which is at the same time the oldest written source about the use of semantra, in the part of his study titled *Weckholz*. In the early 20th century, while collecting Athonite inscriptions, meritorious Gabriel Millet, associate of the French School in Athens, saw a poetic inscription engraved on the marble slab from the monastery's library in Great Lavra, and wrote about it a separate paper. Familiar with Krumbacher's study and based on his own research of written sources, Millet correctly interpreted the word σάλπιγξ in the second part of the inscription as the semantron. These works explain the appearance and liturgical use of semantra. Their comprehensiveness is the main reason why studies on this topic have remained few until today.² Two works appeared between the two world wars. First, in the third decade, architect and Professor Theodor Dombart from Munich wrote about semantron as the early Christian *wooden bell*. Around ten years later, Krumbacher's disciple and professor of the Belgrade Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, archimandrite Filaret Granić dealt with the place of the semantron in the liturgical practice of the oldest monasteries.³ In the early eighth decade of the 20th century, an attempt was made to ascertain the origin of the semantron in Judean tradition based on late apocryphal texts.⁴ Bells are incidentally mentioned in the majority of these works, while the history of their appearance and use on the territory of the Byzantine Empire was sometimes outlined as an introduction to more comprehensive studies.⁵ Almost six decades ago, under the mentorship of her professor Anastasios Orlandos, Charikleias Mparla gave a satisfactory overview of Byzantine belfries.⁶ Particularly important are also the entries in several professional lexicons and encyclopaedias.⁷ Scientists' opinions have differed as to the time and manner of introduction of bells in the divine service on the Orthodox East, which will be elaborated in this paper based on a new analysis of available written and pictorial sources.

¹ *Казанский*, О призывѣ, 300–318.

² *Krumbacher*, Studien, 355–361; *Millet*, Recherches, 105–141.

³ *Dombart*, Semanterium, 51–63; *Гранић*, Бјело и клепало, 302–307.

⁴ *Stichel*, Jüdische Tradition, 213–228.

⁵ *Williams*, Bells, 7–24.

⁶ *Mparla*, Μορφή και εξέλιξις.

⁷ Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne, 1954–1982; Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium, I, III, 279–280, 1868; Lexikon des Mittelalters, IV, VIII, 1497–1503, 265–266; Православная энциклопедия, V, 211–214.

In monasteries on the territory of the Empire restored under Justinian's sceptre, monks were summoned to the *katholikon* to prayer in two ways. It is possible to claim that the use of bells had already been customary in some regions restored under the rule of the Byzantine sceptre – such as those in the Maghreb or on the south-west of the Apennine peninsula. This can be concluded based on a letter which diacon Ferrandus from Carthage sent to abbot Eugippius in Naples around 515.⁸ On the other hand, the *semantron* was largely used on the east of Justinian's Empire. This is best evidenced by the texts of hagiographies written by two of emperor's contemporaries and gifted writers – Theodore, the bishop of Petra, and Cyril of Skythopolis. The incidental mentions of the *semantron*, its sound and the prescribed time when it was struck in monasteries, clearly witness to a customary, everyday practice. In the *enkōmion* dedicated to St Theodosios the Koinobiarches († 11 January 529), the former writer highlights that by striking the *semantron* – κρούειν τὸ ξύλον, monks as *Christ's soldiers are called to the invisible warfare* with demonic forces,⁹ which will be a favourite metaphor in later exegetic and poetic treatises inspired by the *semantron* and its sound. In *The Lives* of the best-known fathers of Palestine monasticism, somewhat younger Cyril of Skythopolis († after 559) mentions in several places, also incidentally, the sound of the *semantron* and the time determined for it – κρούσματος ὥρας, and gives valuable information that κανονάρχης was in charge of waking up monks with the *semantron*.¹⁰ The mentioned duty of the *canonarches* in the most respectable Palestine monasteries is also confirmed in John Moschos' work *The Spiritual Meadow* from the start of the following, 7th century.¹¹ In these oldest sources, and most frequently later as well, the *semantron* is simply called ξύλον, according to the material it was made of.

In the form σημαντήριον, the name deriving from its function, according to Greek σῆμα – a sign, signal for waking up, i.e. start of a divine service, it first appeared in comments on the liturgy ascribed to Moschos' disciple, companion and later patriarch of Jerusalem Sophronios († 11 March 638). This text gives another symbolic interpretation of the *semantron*, which is compared to angelic trumpets that will *awaken all peoples on the doomsday*.¹² As in the earlier period, the most frequent are incidental mentions of *semantra* at monasteries in hagiographies, such as *The Life of*

⁸ *Reifferscheidius*, *Anecdota Casinensia*, 6 – cui ministerio sonoram servire campanam beatissimorum statuit consuetudo sanctissima monachorum; this is at the same time the oldest example of the use of the noun *campana* for a bell, which unequivocally suggests the area it originates from, where the first church bells were made – the present-day Italian province Campania, with Naples as its capital.

⁹ *Usener*, *Heilige Theodosios*, 86–87.

¹⁰ *Schwartz*, *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, 65.23 (Euthymios the Great), 133.18–19, 133.27–134.1, 159.25, 160.8 (Sabas the Sanctified), 227.4–5 (Kyriakos the Anachoret).

¹¹ In this work which contains descriptions of anecdotes from the lives of venerable monks on the eve of Persian conquests of provinces in the East, the *semantron* is found, among other places, in the Lavra of St Gerasimos on the river Jordan and in the monastery founded by St Theodosios the Koinobiarches, near Jerusalem, PG 87/3, 2860, 2905, 2961, 2964.

¹² *Ibidem*, 3985.

St Symeon of Emesa, compiled by Leontios, the bishop of Neapolis on Cyprus, or the lives of St Euphrosynos the Cook and St Martha, the mother of St Symeon the Stylite the Younger, whose writers are unknown by name.¹³ They were used not only in monasteries, but also in lay churches, as witnessed by the narrative about wonders of St Anastasios the Persian from the same period.¹⁴ During the translation of the relics of this martyr from his native Persia where he perished to the monastery of St Sabas the Sanctified, where he spent his last years as the monk, when the procession with the relics approached the walls of Caesarea Maritima on the Palestine shore where his suffering began, a lite with crosses was formed at the sound of the semantra and headed towards the procession, accompanying the relics to the city cathedral church, where they were exposed for veneration for some time.

Although the largest number of examples originating from sources about semantra in the early Byzantine period is related to Palestine, there are testimonies about their use in other regions as well. Thus, the patriarch of Constantinople Germanos, in his work *Ἱστορία ἐκκλησιαστικὴ καὶ μυστικὴ θεωρία* from around 720, equates the sound of the semantra with the angelic trumpets summoning to the struggle against the *invisible enemy*.¹⁵ On the other hand, Leontios, Germanos' contemporary and hegoumenos of the monastery of St Sabas the Sanctified on *Piccolo Aventino* at Rome, in his *Life* of St Gregory, the bishop of Akragas on the south Sicilian coast – reveals that archdeacons in urban cathedral churches were in charge of summoning the faithful to prayer with a semantron.¹⁶ The westernmost point of the central Mediterranean where the use of the semantra was recorded is the island of Pantelleria, in the middle of the maritime road between Akragas and Carthage, closer to the African coast. It was recorded in one of the oldest preserved typika in Greek, written for the monastery of St John Prodromos on this island in the late 8th century by the monastery's founder and first hegoumenos, hieromonachos John.¹⁷ The semantron was used to summon for special prayers as well. Thus, monk Stephanos used it to announce the death of his spiritual father John on Mount Auxentios, near Chalcedon.¹⁸

¹³ According to Leontios, the first saint σαλός lived at the time of emperor Maurice (582–602), PG 93, 1693; for Euphrosynos' *Hagiography*, cf. *Clugnet*, Vies et récits, 44.20; the biography of St Martha was published in *Vie ancienne*, 283, 41.1.

¹⁴ He died as a martyr on 22 January 628, killed upon the order of his former master, Persian ruler Chosroes II, for whom he fought before conversion, *Sacrorum conciliorum*, XIII, 21.

¹⁵ St Germanus of Constantinople, *On the Divine Liturgy*, 56–58; the ecumenical patriarch was obviously familiar with *The Life* of St Theodosios the Koinobiarches and manuscripts ascribed to Sophronios of Jerusalem. In this text, the word semantron appears for the first time in its present-day form – σημαντρον.

¹⁶ PG 98, 645.

¹⁷ *Мансветовъ*, Церковный уставъ, 443–444.

¹⁸ *Life* of St Stephen the Younger was written in 809 by the eponymous diacon of the Great Church, upon the wish of abba Epiphanius from Mount Auxentios, 42 years after Stephen's martyr death in the streets of the capital, *Vie d'Étienne le Jeune*, 107.25–27.

At the same time, around 800, the sound of the *semantra* became subject of poetic inspiration in iambic verses of Theodore of Stoudios. He sang about the *semantron*, as an integral part of monastic life, in three poems dedicated to the *canonarches*, *awakeners* (ἀφουρνισταί) and the *dormitory*. The first poem suggests that the precentor, as in older Palestine monasteries, was in charge of summoning the brethren to prayer with the *semantron*, whose sound this author also associates with the sound of the trumpet.¹⁹ The *typikon* of the Stoudios monastery, rightfully ascribed to the same author, though compiled in its present form after 842, more than 15 years after Theodore's death, offers most data about the role of the *semantra* in everyday monastic life in this early period.²⁰ A usual prayer day began with the morning service before dawn. The *awakener* and the precentor would get up together as the water clock ticked the right time and go to the hegoumenos for a blessing. Then, the former, with a lamp in his hand, would go to the residence with monastic cells to wake up the brethren, while the latter would sound the call to prayer with the *semantron*.²¹ The same practice was also applied on great holidays, such as Easter. In the morning of the second day of this greatest Christian holiday, two hours after dawn, the *canonarches* summoned again the brethren with three strikes at the *semantron*, to the *temple of the Great Prodromos* (the monastery *katholikon*), where hieromonks clothed service vestments and, together with other brethren, took on their shoulders crosses and icons, forming a *lite* up to the vineyard near the monastery and to the maritime coast around two hundred metres away. Upon returning, before the procession entered the main church, the *canonarches* gave a sign with the *semantron* that the liturgy would begin. Such *lites* were held in the monastery two more times a year – on Palm Sunday and Annunciation,²² if the weather allowed. The *voice* of the *semantron* summoned to the evening service as well. The *semantron* was also used for special purposes. On non-working days, a monk with the duty of a librarian would strike the *semantron*, inviting his brethren to come and get books, if they wished to read, which they had to return by the evening. Before the *semantron* was sounded to invite to the evening service, the librarian would strike it again, calling the brethren to return the borrowed books. In addition, the *typikon* defined that the *semantron* for the liturgy would be sounded on the third hour after dawn on ordinary days; after the liturgy ended, the monks were invited with three *semantron* strikes to receive *antidoron* and go to the refectory. During the Great Lent, the monks were summoned to the evening prayer with three *semantron* strikes, which was followed by a meal. In other days of the year, when *the hours were not sung*, three *semantron* strikes in the morning and on the

¹⁹ Theodoros Studites, *Jamben*, 133, 146, 153, n^{os} 10.3, 16.4, 20.7.

²⁰ It was written for the brethren who returned to the monastery after the death of Theophilos (829–842), the last iconoclastic emperor.

²¹ One of the two preserved versions of the Stoudios' *typikon* mentions more than one *semantron* (τὰ ξύλα ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω). In this version, the *ekklesiarches* was in charge of the *semantron*.

²² On Annunciation, monks would gather at the sound of the *semantron* in the Theotokos' *pareklesion*, wherefrom a *lite* set off and where the liturgy was served after the *lite*. Spanish writer Clavijo also mentioned this little church, decorated with mosaics, five and a half centuries later, cf. *Narrative*, 34.

seventh hour²³ signalled going to work. At dawn, the precentor sounded the singing of the canon in the morning service with three semantron strikes, too. The singing of the canon εις την τρίτην δόξαν τοῦ καθίσματος and reading of the catechesis of Theodore of Stoudios were announced in the same way.²⁴ It is well-known that the Stoudios' typikon had a significant influence on the organisation of life in later monasteries, including the Great Lavra of Athanasios Athonite.

Semantra and their use are also sporadically found in hagiographies of the middle Byzantine period, which clearly indicate that their sound was an integral part of everyday life. A woman from Syracuse heard the sound of the semantron, announcing the death of Leo, bishop of Catania, at one of the gates of this town, on the eastern coast of Sicily. The same source claims that announcing the death of a local archpriest in this way was customary.²⁵ The mention of the semantron, simply called ξύλον, is also found in the hagiographies of holy monks and ascetics – Ioannikios, Michael Synkellos or Paul of Latros,²⁶ and in contemporary art. The left margin of page 62^v of the psalter which used to belong to Moscow trader and collector Aleksey Ivanovich Khludov, and which is usually dated to the second half of the 9th century, contains a picture of two diacons, with their arms spread and raised, holding a semantron in their left hands, and a wooden mallet, used to strike the semantron and produce the sound, in their right hands. The diacons with semantra illustrate the psalm LXV, i.e. its two initial verses *Ἀλαλάξατε τῷ θεῷ, πᾶσα ἡ γῆ, ψάλατε δὴ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ, ὅτε δόξαν αἰνέσει αὐτοῦ*, which summon to the universal glorification of God.²⁷

When writing about ceremonies before horse races at the Hippodrome, Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (913–959) notes precious information that citizens of the capital were summoned to the Great Church – Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, by the semantron, too (τοῦ δὲ ξύλου σημαίνοντος τῆς ἁγίας ἐκκλησίας).²⁸ All these sources, including the last one, testify to the centuries-long use of semantra on the entire territory of the Constantinople Patriarchate. On the other hand, however, there are two sources about the use of bells, which are often used in hitherto literature, but whose testimonies are justifiably subject of suspicion. The first is Athanasios' typikon for Athonite Great Lavra, which records dual practice of summoning to the common meal, i.e. three strikes at the semantron, taken from the Stoudios' typikon, whereas the second place reads: ὡς τῷ συσσήμῳ τοῦ κώδωνος.²⁹ This *rule* is dated to the years

²³ The eighth hour according to the second version of the typikon.

²⁴ *Дмитрієвскій*, Описание, 225–226, 228, 231–233, 236–237.

²⁵ ... ἠκροάσατο κρούματος τοῦ σημαντήρος, ὡς ἔθος ἐστί, Greek Life of St. Leo, 186, 37.7–8.

²⁶ Acta Sanctorum Novembris, II/1, 405; Life of Michael the Synkellos, 120.1, 3; Vita S. Pauli Iunioris, 28, 160.

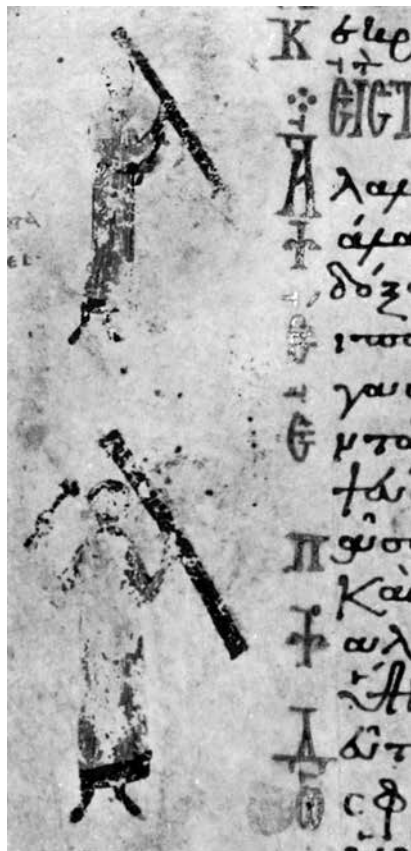
²⁷ *Щеткина*, Миниатюры; the same illustration with diacons designated as παπάδες embellishes the margin on page 80^v of the psalter of the Stoudios monastery from 1065/6, kept today under number Add. 19.352 in the British Museum, *Der Nersessian*, Illustration des psautiers grecs, 36.

²⁸ Constantine Porphyrogennetos, Book of Ceremonies, 334.1–2.

²⁹ *Meyer*, Hauptkunden, 133.23–25, 136.22–23.



Khludov Psalter, fol. 62^r,
the second half of 9th century



Stoudite Psalter, fol. 80^r,
British Museum (Add. 19.352), 1065/6

between 964 and 973,³⁰ and the quoted part may have been interpolated later.³¹ The second source is the notice from the oldest *Chronicon Venetum*, from the early 11th century, according to which autokrator Basil I (867–886) ordered and received from his contemporary, Venetian doge Orso I Participazio (864–881) twelve bells for his *Nea Ekklesia*, which was often taken as the beginning of the use of bells in Byzantium.³² Older sources do not confirm this notice – for instance, the detailed description of Basil's endowment in the Great Palace, created around seventy years after the

³⁰ Actes de Lavra, I, 21–22.

³¹ The critical edition of this text could resolve the dilemma.

³² Domnus quidem Ursus dux, efflagitante Basilio imperatore, eo tempore duodecim campanas Constantinopolim misit; quas imperator in ecclesia noviter ab eo constructa posuit, et ex tempore illo Greci campanas habere ceperunt, cf. Cronache veneziane antichissime, 126.13–16.

construction of this church, would have certainly mentioned bells, as a novelty in the liturgical practice.³³ They are not mentioned in the texts of other chroniclers of this period either, i.e. those from the mid-10th century, who write about the construction of the church called Νέα,³⁴ or in its oldest description, created soon after the consecration of the temple, on 1 May 880, written by a foreign writer.³⁵ It is possible to claim with a lot of certainty that this is also a later interpolation into the main text of the chronicle, which cannot be older than the 13th century.³⁶

Contrary to the above two, there are many other written sources originating from the 11th century, which are not dubious and testify to the exclusive use of semantra. First of all, those are again hagiographical texts describing the lives of venerable monks, then monastery typika, as well as contemporary epigraphy and works of historians. Thus, in *The Life* of his master Lazaros Stylite from Mount Galesios, Gregory the *Cellarer* notes an interesting event which once again confirmed the old beliefs in the power of the semantron to banish demons. A monk called Symeon was determined to settle in a cave near the monastery of Christ the Saviour on Mount Galesios near Ephesus.³⁷ Being his spiritual father, Lazaros tried to dissuade Symeon, knowing he was not prepared for such a rigorous form of asceticism, and warning him that he would not withstand demonic temptations. Nonetheless, undisturbed by demons, Symeon lived in his new abode for some time. One night, however, while he was standing in prayer, the cave was first filled with glowing coal, and instantly, howling on the ascetic, demons hurled on him, as he later testified, knocked him down, beating him so hard that he soon fell almost unconscious. The demons took the battered and almost numb monk to the cave exit, where they flung him to earth at the sound of the semantron from the nearby monastery and disappeared.³⁸ At almost the same time when Gregory the *Cellarer* wrote these lines, in 1060 on another monastic mountain, on Athos, in Great Lavra of St Athanasios, the original *phiale* was built upon the wish of hegoumenos John, as witnessed by the poetic inscription engraved in 14 lines on a marble slab, which is today kept in the monastery's library.³⁹ The first part of

³³ Chronographiae, 258–260, 272–280.

³⁴ Symeonis Magistri, 264–266; Leonis Grammatici Chronographia, 256–258.

³⁵ *Vasiliev*, Harun-ibn-Yahya, 156–157; it is worth reminding that later Muslim writers, due to their religious beliefs, were highly sensitive to the penetrating sound of bells, which is why this writer, during his not such a short time in Constantinople, would have certainly mentioned them if their ringing had resonated across the Great Palace.

³⁶ According to the *Short Chronicles*, the construction of the first belfry in front of St Mark's Church in Venice was completed only in 1149, cf. *Schreiner*, Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken, I, 291, 363, 368.

³⁷ The brethren was formed by Lazaros' followers and disciples in the third decade of the 11th century, around the *pillar*, the place of this famed stylite's ascetic feats.

³⁸ Monks in other two monasteries – dedicated to the Theotokos and Christ's Resurrection, which Lazaros founded after 1030/1 on the same mountain, where he died, aged 86, on 7 November 1053 – were also summoned to prayer with the semantron, *Life of Lazaros*, 129, 146, 257, 258, 269, 318.

³⁹ Today's construction above the basin for holy water in front of the katholikon of Great Lavra originates from the early 17th century. After the original *phiale* was dismantled, the slab with the inscription was incorporated at the angle of the erstwhile exonarthex, which was remodelled in the early 19th

the inscription suggests that, in addition to the basin for holy water, which still today serves the same purpose, the original colonnettes and parapet panels around it were made of marble, and the slab with the inscription was an integral part of the *phiale*. From this part of the inscription one can also read that its ktetor was the monastery superior, hieromonk John. The second part of the inscription indicates that a *semantron* hung under this construction, whose sound *resembling the trumpet* called the awakened monks, *the armoured warriors of Logos*, to banish *demonic legions* by chanting. Originating from the same period, i.e. the mid-century, is the hagiography of St Nikon τοῦ Μετανοεῖτε. In *The Life* of this *myroblytes* and wonderworker from the 10th century, born on Pontos, the *semantron* summoning to prayer is mentioned for the first time in the section describing the departure of the future saint from the brethren in which he took monastic vows, the monastery of the *Golden Rock* in eastern Paphlagonia. In other two cases, the *semantron* was used to mark miraculous healings after Nikon's death – one over the shrine with the relics of the saint in his monastery dedicated to Christ on the agora of Sparta, and the other, deep in the night, through the saint's icon in St Nicholas' monastery on the maritime coast of Lakedaimon.⁴⁰

The *typikon* of the Euergetis monastery outside the Constantinople walls, which after the *rule* of the Stoudios monastery had the greatest influence on the organisation of later monasteries, particularly those which were fully independent from any secular and ecclesiastical authorities and for which the Euergetis monastery was archetype, mentioned for the first time three types of *semantra* – the small and the big wooden one and the bronze *semantron*. The small *semantron* was used to designate the hours – the third, sixth and ninth, and to wake up the brethren to the midnight service, followed by the Matins, announced first by the big (τὸν μέγαν σημαντήρα), and then by the bronze *semantron* (τοῦ χαλκοῦ σημαντήρος). There was also a separate *semantron* used to invite for the common meal (ξύλον τῆς τραπέζης). The *Synaxarion* of the *typikon* contains even more detailed information about the use of *semantra* throughout the year, stating that the ecclesiarch was in charge of them.⁴¹ The creation of this *rule* is dated after 1054 and is ascribed to Timotheos, the second ktetor and hegoumenos of this monastery dedicated to the Theotokos. His contemporary, Nikon of the Black

century. The slab stood, for more than half a century, at the entrance to the refectory, where it was found by the first modern researchers of Athonite antiquities, Russian archimandrites Porphyrius Uspensky and Antonin Kapustin, Προσκνητάριον, 43; *Recueil des inscriptions*, 107–108, n° 333; *Millet, Recherches*, 105–141.

⁴⁰ *Life of Saint Nikon*, 62, 176, 218, 13.7–8, 55.35, 63.81.

⁴¹ *Gautier, Typikon de la Théotokos Évergétis*, 23–27, 33; *Synaxarion* (September – February), 200–204, 212, 322, 404, 410; (March – August; The Movable Cycle), 34, 70, 178, 340–342, 362, 414, 434, 472, 484–488, 492–494, 506, 518, 522, 656, 688–694, 706, 712; for instance, it is possible to state some provisions from the liturgical part of this text – large, hanging *semantra* were used to announce the main services during the day – the matins, liturgy, vespers or the fifth hour of the day and start of the lite within the monastery on Annunciation; while the sound of the manual *semantron*, τοῦ μικροῦ σημαντήρος, with three, six or nine strikes, clearly indicated daily hours, summoned to the *apodeipnon* on some days, announced the start of the matins on the second day of Easter or called to the all-night vigil on the eve of Sunday.

Mountain near Antioch, in his *typonikon* from almost the same period, mentions only a wooden *semantron* used to invite monks to the church or refectory.⁴²

In works of historians from this period, *semantra* are mentioned in describing events that took place in the century before. When writing about the reconquest of Crete led by magistros and domestikos of the *entire East* Nikephoros Phokas in 960/1, as his first endeavour upon landing on the island, Michael Attaleiates describes the construction of the Theotokos' church, later called after its ktetor τοῦ Μαγίστρου, near the walls of *Chandax*, the main Saracen stronghold and port on the northern coast of Crete.⁴³ As the church was very quickly built, the future emperor ordered that the army be called by the *semantron* to its consecration. The learned historian compares the sound of the *semantron* with that of the trumpet, saying that this sound instilled the Saracene defenders with fear, foreshadowing the future Byzantine victory.⁴⁴ Around ten years before, an interesting event took place in Herakleia in Cappadocia, noted by John Skylitzes. Emir of Tarsos went through the *Cilician Gates* on Taurus to another looting campaign in the Byzantine territory, which was frequent at the time. Herakleia was the first point of attack of Saracene troops. A liturgy was underway, and priest Themel served. Hearing about the incursion of Saracene warriors, he interrupted the service, took the church *semantron* (τοῦ σημαντήρος τῆς ἐκκλησίας) and, in full priestly vestments, went out before the church and knocked down with it several attackers, while forcing others to flee. The manual *semantron* could also be a *deadly weapon*, as it is a solid wooden plank, almost two metres long and around ten centimetres wide.⁴⁵ The illustration of this event, titled ἐπ(ι) τοῦ Θέμελι τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου in a Madrid manuscript of Skylitzes' *Synopsis historiarum* (fol. 135^v), seems to supplement the text. In the picture, κόμη becomes a fortified town, in front of whose church in the suburbs ὁ Θέμελ fights off the attack of Saracene warriors with a *semantron*. The left margin contains an explanation, written in another hand, of the *weapon* used by the priest to meet the attackers – ὁ σημ(αν)τήρ.⁴⁶

The exclusive use of the *semantra* is also prescribed by the *typika* of two monasteries from the capital, established in the first half of the 12th century by members of the ruling Komnenos family – the sisterhood of the Theotokos Kecharitomene, the endowment of augusta Irene, from the first half of the second decade, and the Pantokrator

⁴² Тактиконъ, 23–25, 27, 34; the text is dated to the second half of the sixth decade of the 11th century.

⁴³ Today's Heraklion; the temple was erected around five hundred metres from the walls of the besieged town, at the very place where the rock fell, launched from the catapult from the city walls without injuring anybody, although it hit the camp where Phokas had just convened his comrades, military and maritime commanders to counselling about the further course of military operations.

⁴⁴ Michael Attaleiates, *History*, 410–412.

⁴⁵ The epilogue of this unprecedented event was also interesting. Due to the desecration of vestments and the church *semantron*, the local bishop forbade Themel to serve and the latter, embittered over the pronounced punishment, fled to the *Hagrites*, renounced Christianity and took part in their campaign which wreaked havoc in a significant portion of Asia Minor. The historian steered clear of describing the monstrosities that the renegade committed on that occasion, Ioannis Scylitzae *Synopsis historiarum*, 240.

⁴⁶ Grabar, *Manoussacas*, Illustration, 79, n° 334.



Madrid Skylitzes, fol. 135^v, mid-12th century

Monastery, erected by basileus John II, who wrote the *typikon* for this brotherhood in October 1136. The first *rule* was written largely reflecting the Euergetis' *typikon*, which is why it mentions three types of *semantra* – the small, big and bronze ones, with the *ekklesiarchissa* in charge of them.⁴⁷ It seems that older practice was applied in the basileus' endowment, similar to that in the Stoudios monastery and the Athonite Lavra. Only wooden *semantra* – the big and the small ones, were in use. The monks were awoken by the sound of the small *semantron*, while, after they gathered in the narthex of the *katholikon*, the big *semantron* announced the start of the midnight service. Monks were invited to meals with three strikes at the *semantron* (τοῦ ξύλου κρουσθέντος ἐκ τρίτου).⁴⁸ Even more eloquent is the Latin text written by an unknown writer, which can be dated to the same period.⁴⁹ He was attracted by the *customary miracle* in the church of Blachernai⁵⁰ and writes that it was announced by strikes at a *wooden plank* (*percussitur tabula lignea*). This was the *semantron* call to the evening service, during which the *customary miracle* took place. The writer then notes that the *Greeks* summoned the faithful to the church in such way, not because they did not have metal to make bells (*signa more Latinorum*), but because, as citizens of Constantinople explained to him, such practice was ancient, dating to the period of the apostles and persecutions, when the Christians gathered in their homes to serve the divine service and when, due to the fear from the pagans, services could not be announced otherwise.⁵¹

⁴⁷ *Gautier*, *Typikon de la Théotokos Kécharitóménè*, 81, 85, 87, 89.

⁴⁸ *Idem*, *Typikon du Christ Sauveur Pantocrator*, 31, 47, 53.

⁴⁹ The beginning or the first half of the 12th century, *Миљковић*, *Чудотворна икона*, 88.

⁵⁰ The icon of the Theotokos Blachernitissa with Christ was revealed by miraculous rising of the heavy cover, each Friday after sunset.

⁵¹ *Ciggar*, *Description*, 121–122.

The oldest reliable example of the existence of bells in Byzantium and their use for summoning to prayer is the inventory of movable property of the Athonite monastery of Xylourgos, compiled on 14 December 1142 for newly elected hegoumenos Christopher. Among bronze items, owned by this Russian monastery dedicated to the Theotokos, two bells, a big and small one, as well as the refectory handbell, are mentioned the first.⁵² In this act, the corrupted form $\kappa\alpha\upsilon\pi(\acute{\alpha})\nu(\alpha)$, of Latin *campana*, is an unambiguous indicator of the Western origin of the bell. Bells may have appeared in the Russian monastery on Mount Athos in two ways. On the one hand, this could be practice transferred together with bells from their Russian homeland. For instance, when the Kiev chronicler from the 12th century writes about events in 1146, the first year of rule of Prince Iziaslav II Mstislavich, and about gifts for the church of Christ's Ascension in Putyvl, *колоколы* are mentioned together with holy vessels, clothes, vestments and books.⁵³ On the other hand, although the power of the Byzantium was recognised in some regions, notably the maritime towns of Zeta and Dalmatia, where long-lasting practice of using bells certainly existed until the mid-12th century,⁵⁴ their use across the Empire was spread by traders from towns on the Apennine peninsula, where bells were first created. Expanding their activity across the Empire, traders from Amalfi, Venice or Pisa began to permanently settle in Constantinople, and later in other towns as well, where they, along with trading privileges received separate quarters to live and work. Permanent settlement implied the construction of parish churches and monasteries, and resulting in the use of bells *in the Latin way*. Traders from Amalfi, the coast-town of Campania, the *homeland* of bells, were in the forefront. Their colony in the capital existed back in the mid-10th century. Until the middle of the following, 11th century, they had two abbeys dedicated to the Virgin Mary, one in Constantinople, the other on Mount Athos.⁵⁵ By all odds, the Benedictines from Amalfi were the first to announce the start of a divine service by bells, both in the capital and on Athos.

The gradual introduction of bells to the liturgical practice in Byzantium and their use in parallel with *semantra* can be reliably followed in somewhat later sources from the second half of the 12th century. At the first place, there is the *typonikon*

⁵² Actes de Saint-Pantéléémôn, 74, n° 7.28; the last item is assumed to be a handbell used by the hegoumenos to signal the start and end of a meal at the refectory, BMFD 3, 1192; cf. Athanasios' *typonikon* for Great Lavra.

⁵³ Полное Собрание Русскихъ Лѣтописей, II, 334.

⁵⁴ This is best evidenced by the belfries from this and the previous period, preserved to a smaller or larger extent, such as the one in front of the church of the Holy Saviour at the Cetina Spring, or the one above the church of *Gospa od zvonika* in Split. In the same time appeared and the oldest examples of the simplest belfries, or the *bell-gables*, which adorned the fronts of village and smaller urban churches in the later centuries, Prilozi istraživanju starohrvatske arhitekture, 93–94. Written sources testify to trade links of these maritime towns with the wider hinterland, while belfries in the hinterland testify to the use of bells upon the model of communes on the East Adriatic coast. The impact of the front façade with two belfries of the cathedral of St Tryphon in Kotor on similar buildings in medieval Serbia is well known in science, cf. *Kopač*, Првобитна архитектонска концепција, 1–27; *Марковић-Кандић*, Куле звоници, 3–71.

⁵⁵ *Balard*, Amalfi et Byzance, 85–96.

written in 1152 by sebastokrator Isaac Komnenos, the uncle of autokrator Manuel I, for his endowment, the monastery of the Theotokos Kosmosoteira near Bera. It is interesting to compare the practice prescribed by this document with the provisions of the one-century older *rule* of the Euergetis monastery, claimed by the compiler, sebastokrator Isaac, not to be paralleled in the organisation of monastic life, saying he used this text in writing the *rules* for his endowment. Highlighted as a novelty are two bells (δύο κώδωνας), which the ktetor placed on the highest floor of the specially built tower, opposite hanging *semantra*. According to provisions of the *typikon*, these bells, after the wooden ones and instead of the bronze *semantron*, announced divine services on Sundays and all holidays during the year, especially those dedicated to the Theotokos, and primarily the monastery feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos.⁵⁶ Πύργος built for the bells mentioned in this text is the oldest mention of a belfry in Byzantine sources.

Also interesting are the testimonies of Eustathios, the archbishop of Thessalonike, about the use of *semantra* and bells during the short Norman rule in the second town of the Empire, from 24 August to November 1185.⁵⁷ Conquerors responded quickly at the first sound of the wooden *semantron* of the cathedral church in the conquered town – with their swords drawn, they stopped the ritual and forbade the further use of the *semantron*. As the holiday of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross ensued several days later (1 September), priests in charge of announcing the service on the eve of the holiday went to καθολικοῦ ἱεροῦ κορυφήν,⁵⁸ aiming to summon the faithful to prayer with only several *semantron* strikes. However, this triggered a strong reaction of Norman warriors, who threatened priests with execution, requesting from them, with curses and insults, to admit who they were actually inviting in such way. As the invaders did not mind the sound of big bells of *Myroblytes*, but only the sound of *semantra* of the *Metropolis*, Eustathios concluded that among the Normans there were some participants of the street riots and struggles in Constantinople at spring 1181, when it was believed among the Latins of the capital that those barricaded in the Great Church were sending, by the sound of wooden *semantra*, calls for help to Andronikos Komnenos.⁵⁹ The described events and thoughts of the learned archpriest of Thessalonike are a significant testimony that the most famous sacred place

⁵⁶ On other days, the three already mentioned types of *semantra* for the church were used, as well as the fourth one, for the refectory, according to the text of the Euergetis *typikon*, cf. *Petit*, *Typikon*, 23.30–34, 25.39–26.5, 28.24–25, 29.29–30, 30.10–15, 32.37–38.

⁵⁷ Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *Capture*, 134.23–136.19.

⁵⁸ The opened galleries of the highest floors of buildings often served for keeping of hanging *semantra* because the sound spread farther from there. The second version of the Stoudios *typikon* from the mid-9th century already mentions the *upper* and *lower*, i.e. big and small *semantron*, cf. note 21. This centuries-long practice was also illustrated in drawings of Athonite monasteries made in 1744 by Vasil Grigorovich-Barsky. Wooden hanging *semantra* can be seen on the top floors of dormitories in the Koutloumousiou and Dionysiou monasteries, or above the narthex as in the Philotheou monastery, cf. Βροπое посѣщеніе.

⁵⁹ The archbishop of Thessalonike called this conflict ἱερός πόλεμος, as it unfolded around the Hagia Sophia of Constantinople. The adherents of omnipotent nun Xene, the emperor-mother and regent of underage Alexios II stood outside. Closed inside, with the blessing of patriarch Theodosios, was

of Thessalonike – the basilica of St Demetrios had bells already in the late 12th century, while the cathedral churches of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople and Thessalonike still used wooden semantra.

At first sight, a pictorial source from this period – *Synopsis historiarum* of John Skylitzes from Madrid may serve as evidence of the dual practice of the use of semantra and bells. In addition to the above illustration of the episode with priest Themel, where the semantron was practically the *main protagonist*, another illuminator in intention to represent the monastery environment, drew, among other things, a young monk with the semantron on his shoulder (fol. 28^r), while the third artist painted



Madrid Skylitzes, fol. 28^r, mid-12th century

caesarissa Maria Porphyrogenete, the first-born daughter of Manuel I, whom her step-mother accused of high treason, Maria's husband and their adherents, Eustathios of Thessaloniki, Capture, 18–28.

Eustathios correctly concludes that only such rumours could have caused the said reaction of the Normans, later in Thessalonike, because they were well familiar with the sound of the semantron. The *typikon* compiled in 1131/2 by hegoumenos Luke for his monastery of Christ the Saviour in Messina, suggests that only semantra were used there. As this was the most respectable Greek monastery in the Norman Kingdom, whose hegoumenos with the title of an archimandrite was also the head of all other Greek monasteries in the state, it may be claimed that only semantra were used in them as well. According to the above *typikon*, whose *Synaxarion* is the largest after that of Euergetis, there are also three types of semantra – the small and big wooden ones, as well as the bronze semantron, which were used in almost the same way as in the Constantinople monastery, *Typikon*, 5, 55, 78, 94–95, 131, 192, 197, 199, 201–205, 208, 210, 223, 234, 244, 247, 250–252, 290–291. The sound of big wooden semantra must have reverberated far away from the monastery walls as they were placed on the highest buildings in the monastery; in the monastery of Christ the Saviour in Messina in south-eastern Sicily, it was ο ἄνω σημαντ(ηρίω) τῷ μεγάλω, *ibidem*, 291.6, while *The Life of St Cyprian* from Calamizzi of Calabria from the late 12th century explicitly notes that the semantron was located on top of the *pyrgos*, *Schirò*, Vita inedita, 88.



Madrid Skylitzes, fol. 144^r, mid-12th century

the representation of the church in general, with a belfry and two bells (fol. 144^r). Although this manuscript and the miniatures adorning it are dated to the mid-12th century, the last mentioned illustration cannot be taken as a credible reflection of practice in Byzantium, because it was created by artists from the West.⁶⁰ Certainly the *most palpable* evidence of the new practice introduced as of the second quarter of the 12th century is the oldest preserved belfry in Byzantine architecture – the Theotokos' church from Samarina in Messenia in the very south-west of the Peloponnese.⁶¹ It is thus necessary to correct the common mistaken dating of the use of bells and construction of the first belfries on the territory of Byzantium to the period after 1204, i.e. the crusaders' conquest of Constantinople.⁶²

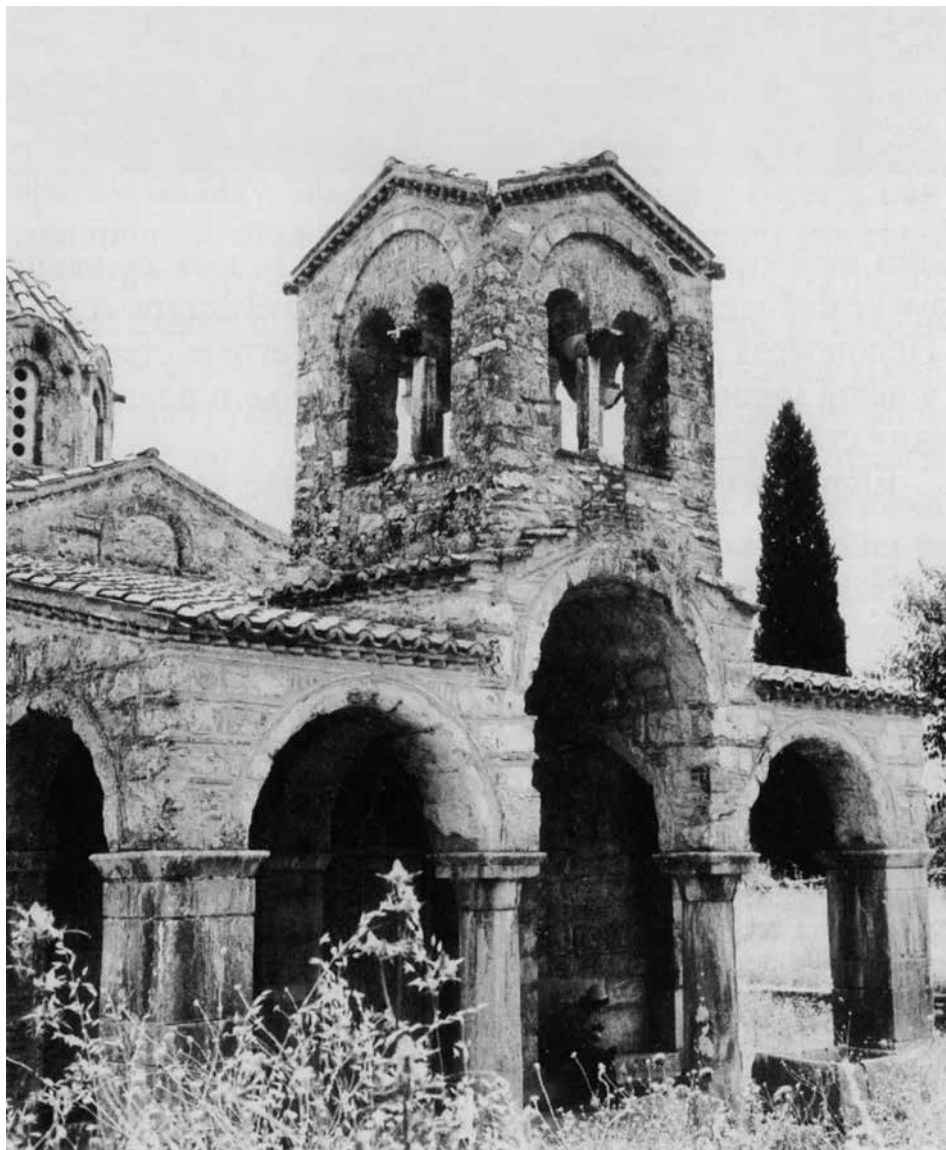
It is interesting that this novelty did not take root in the capital and also that the introduction of bells to the liturgical practice can be considered truly rare in the religious and social life of Byzantium which did not look up to Constantinople. The attitude of the highest authorities of the Ecumenical Patriarchate certainly played a decisive role in this matter. This attitude was perhaps best elucidated by the learned canonist, patriarchal nomophylax and chartophylax, and titular patriarch of Antioch, Theodore Balsamon, who vatically wrote about three types of semantra in monasteries. He compared the small semantron used to summon for the evening service with the Old Testament as a shadow and foretoken, and the big semantron with the New Testament which spreads the evangelical truth throughout the earth and ecumene, while the bronze semantron warned the Christians of the last days and the Second Coming of Christ. According to Balsamon, city cathedral churches did not have three types of semantra, but only the big wooden one.⁶³ That only the Latins used bells in

⁶⁰ Grabar, *Manoussacas*, Illustration, 32, 84.

⁶¹ Κοραή, *Шуγуйи*, Архитектура, 195–196.

⁶² All such assumptions are based on Millet, *École grecque*, 135–139.

⁶³ PG 119, 1221–1224.



Belfry of the church from Samarina in Messenia, second quarter of the 12th century

Constantinople is also confirmed around 1200 by his younger contemporary,⁶⁴ Russian pilgrim Dobrynja Jadrejkovich, later archbishop of Novgorod as Anthony. His observation *а колокола не держатъ во святѣи Софѣи* suggests that he expected bells

⁶⁴ ... а въ колокола Латыни звонятъ.

in the Great Church, bearing in mind the practice in Russia.⁶⁵ At the same time, before the first fall of Constantinople in 1204, perhaps the most beautiful description of the *semantron* sound was created, by the *skeuophylax* of the Pharos Church, Nicholas Mesarites. In the description of the famous church of the Apostles in Constantinople, the writer praises the position of the temple in the city centre, and goes on to poetically compare the church with the heart, the sound of the *semantron* with heart beats, and the faithful who three times a day head into the temple with blood.⁶⁶ *Semantra* were also the subject of riddles and conundrums – *Grown up in the forest or a wild ravine, I now announce the service and chanting, with a voice not truly clear, but melodious or Who was it that while alive, did not speak, but when he died, he spoke up, and those who heard him gave praise to the Lord?*⁶⁷

The few sources created until the late 13th century suggest that the capital's tradition of the exclusive use of *semantra* was maintained in the Empire of Nicaea, and its main territories in Asia Minor even after 1261, which can be supported by two examples – the founding act of hieromonk Maximos for the brethren of the Theotokos τῆς Βορηνηῆς near Philadelphia from November 1247 and the *typikon* of Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259–1282) for the monastery of Archangel Michael on Mount Auxentios, near Chalcedon, mention only the *semantra* that the ecclesiarch was in charge of.⁶⁸ However, until the last quarter of the 13th century, bells gradually assumed the role of *semantra*, including in Constantinople as well. Thus, in the evening of 31 December 1282, all *semantra* and bells of the Great Church announced and greeted the return of Joseph I to the patriarchal throne. Around ten days later, bells announced the start of the council at which ousted patriarch John XI Bekkos, the adherent of the union of the churches, was defrocked.⁶⁹ The sound of bells also accompanied military commanders to campaigns from which a lot was expected, as we learn from a poem of Manuel Philes, created between 1297 and 1304, which describes the departure of a celebrated protostrator Michael Tarchaneiotēs Glabas from Constantinople.⁷⁰ Dual practice was prescribed by the then monastery *typika* – the *rule* of the Monastery of Christ's Resurrection in Constantinople, the endowment of Constantine Akropolites, dated to the very end of the 13th or the first quarter of the 14th century, prescribes that the bell should wake up the monks; while a somewhat later *statute*, compiled in around 1330 by Theodora Synadene, as un-

⁶⁵ Книга паломникъ, 18; Dobrynja also notes the unpreserved legend according to which the *semantron* was used upon the order of the *guardian angel*, well known from the *Narrative about the Construction of Hagia Sophia*, *Accounts of Medieval Constantinople*, 241–253.

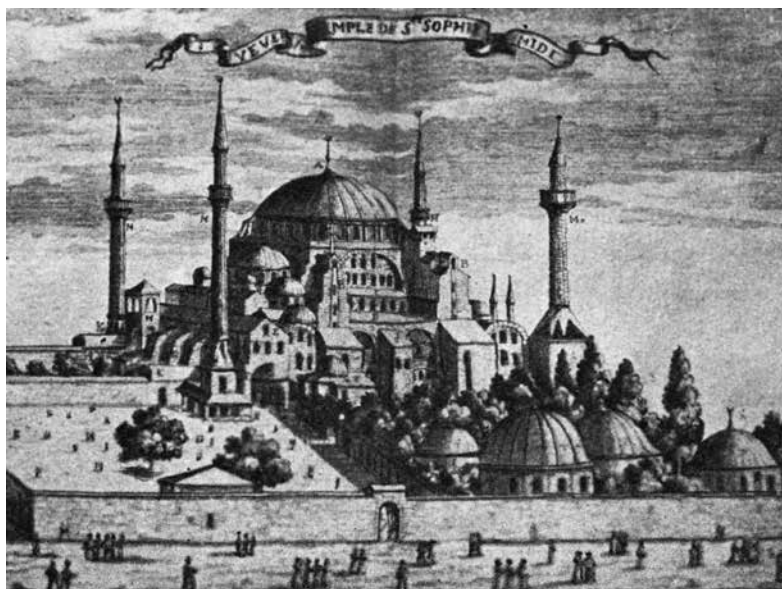
⁶⁶ Downey, Nikolaos Mesarites, 897.

⁶⁷ The Greek text of the first riddle reads: *Τραφὲν ὄρεσι καὶ φάραγγιν ἀγρίαις, κήρυξ πέφυκα τῶν λόγων ὑμνωδίας· φωνὴν μὲν οὐκ ἔναρθρον, εὐήχον δ' ἔχω*, while the text of the second one is the motto of present study; for this two riddles, cf. Βυζαντινὰ αἰνίγματα, 31, 106, 6p. 24, 168.

⁶⁸ The part of the older document which gives an inventory of movable monastery's property mentions two handbells for the refectory (see note 52), *Actes de Vatopédi*, I, 155, 158, n° 15.96, 189; BMFD 3, 1224.

⁶⁹ Georges Pachymérés, III, 29.5, 8–9, 45.10; IV, 723.6–7.

⁷⁰ Manuelis Philae carmina, 107, n° 57.96



Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, after the drawing of Guillaume-Joseph Grelot, 1672

Theodoule, in the capital's nunnery of the Theotokos of *Sure Hope* (*Bebaias Elpidos*) stipulates the use of the semantron for such purposes, though the monastery had a bell-fry back at the time of its foundation.⁷¹ Bells also found their place in civil wars which internally undermined the strength of the Empire during the 14th century – thus, at the start of the first civil war, in 1322, to the followers of Andronikos III in Thessalonike were given the signal by bells for mutiny against despotes Constantine, son of Andronikos II and the then governor of the city, while at the end of this conflict, in autumn 1327, Patriarch Isaias summoned by bells the capital's citizens to the Great Church, publicly threatening with an anathema to all priests who failed to mention the name of the young emperor at services, thus unequivocally siding with Andronikos III.⁷² The most illustrative is the description of the Muslim writer of Berber origin, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, born in Tangier, who in June 1334 found himself at one of Constantinople gates when bells were sounded from all city churches at the prescribed hour, so that it seemed to the learned writer that their ringing *shook the very heavens*.⁷³

⁷¹ *Delehay*, *Constantini Acropolitae*, 282–283; *idem*, *Deux typica*, 49.22–23, 52.20–21; testifying to the existence of a bell-tower (τοῦ καμπαναρίου) in the Theotokos' monastery is the penultimate note at the end of the typikon, according to which the great-granddaughter of the ktetorissa, nun Eugenia Kantakouzene, gave in September 1400 two hundred hyperpyra for the restoration of the church and bellfry prone to falling, so it is possible to conclude that both buildings originated from the period of the establishment of the monastery at the very end of the 13th century, *ibidem*, 104.22–23.

⁷² Nicephori Gregorae *Byzantina Historia*, 356.13–14, 406.3.

⁷³ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Travels*, 157.



Omorphokklesia near Kastoria, second half of the 13th century

It seems that the erection of the belfry beside the western front of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople at the time of the Latin Empire,⁷⁴ during the period of Palaiologoi decisively influenced the acceptance of bells in the capital, and their widespread use on the entire territory of the Empire. The appearance and position of the belfry are known only from old engravings made upon the drawing dated in 1672 and made by French writer Guillaume-Joseph Grelot during his visit to Constantinople.⁷⁵ It was positioned north to the four counterforts around the main western entrance into the temple, reaching with its height to the foot of the western semicalotte, i.e. it was higher than 30 metres.⁷⁶ The oldest preserved belfry from the period of the Palaiologoi is beside the church of St George, also known as Ομορφοκκλησιά, near Kastoria, originating from the second half of the 13th century.⁷⁷ Dating to this period are also the oldest images of bells in wall painting – the scene from St Nicholas' cycle (Cheirotomia for the priest) in the church dedicated to this saint in the Niata village

⁷⁴ Millet, *École grecque*, 135–136.

⁷⁵ Grelot, *Relation nouvelle*, 111, 124, 128, 132, 143; the belfry was mentioned for the last time in 1784, Ebersolt, *Constantinople*, 154.

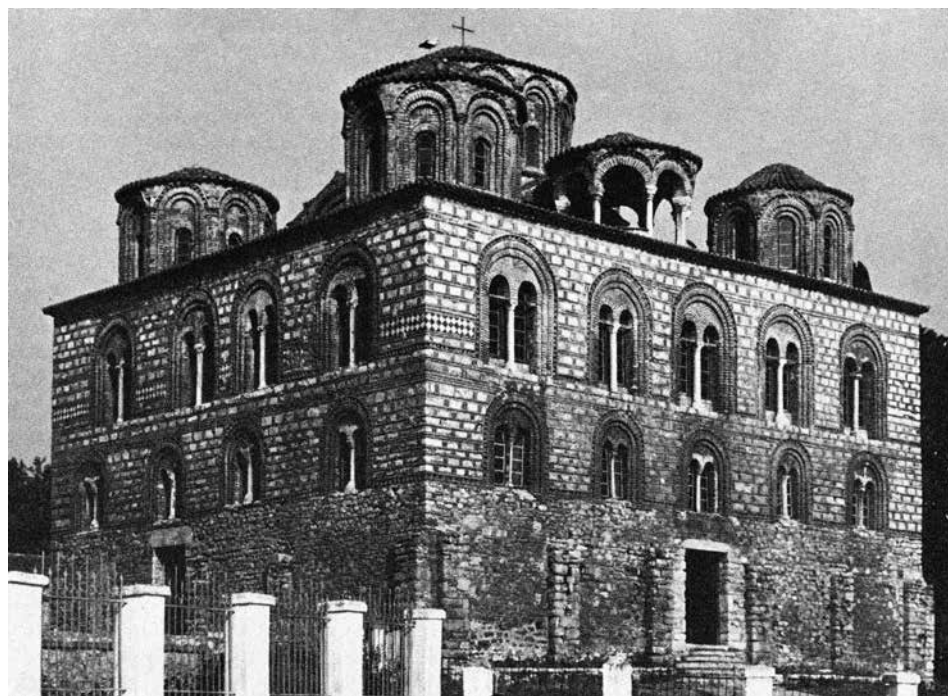
⁷⁶ Not even later Constantinople belfries have been preserved, which were most often added to older churches, such as the Theotokos Pammakaristos, the church of Christ in Chora or Kilise Camii. There are only ground-floor constructions of these towers which were integral part of the added narthexes, cf. Belting, *Mango, Mouriki*, *Mosaics and Frescoes of St. Mary Pammakaristos*, 24–25; Ousterhout, *Architecture of the Kariye Camii*, 106–110; Hallensleben, *Zu Annexbauten der Kilise camii*, 208–217.

⁷⁷ Кисас, *Оморфоклисија*, 51.

near Epidauros Limera in Lakonia on the south-east of the Peloponnesos.⁷⁸ Judging by this fresco, if there was no belfry, bells were hung on wooden beams – trusses of built arcades. The example of the metropolitan church Theotokos Paregoretissa in Arta is unique – it was built around 1290 by the despotes of Epiros, Nikephoros I Komnenos Doukas, and its bells were placed under the open baldachin carried by eight marble colonnettes on the roof of the temple, between the western pair of cupolas, exactly above the central part of the western church gallery.⁷⁹

St Nicholas' church, Niata, Peloponnesos,
second half of the 13th century

Paregoretissa, Arta, ca. 1290



⁷⁸ *Drandakes, Kalopise, Panagiotide*, "Έρευνα στην Έπίδαυρο Λιμηρά, 224–225.

⁷⁹ *Orlandos, Παρηγορήτισσα*, 42–47.



Theotokos Hodegetria – Afendiko, Mistra, beginning of the 14th century

Only four belfries have been preserved from the 14th century, all of them on the Peloponnesos. Three are in Mistra – the Metropolis, Theotokos Hodegetria – Afendiko and Hagia Sophia, the last two attract attention with their triphoras on all four sides of the upper levels, while the fourth one is the belfry of the Theotokos' church in Karytaina in Arkadia.⁸⁰ Written sources provide again useful information about the use of bells. As earlier, the inventories of monasteries' movable property are important. We thus find out that two bells each existed in the Theotokos' monasteries – of Spelaiotisa in Melnik, according to the inventory created soon after 15 January 1365, when John Uglješa gave this monastery as a metochion to the Vatopedi monastery, and of Gabaliotissa in Voden, as suggested by its inventory from May 1375, compiled upon the wish of despotes Thomas Preljubović.⁸¹ The history of the Preljubović's rule, better known as the *Chronicle of Ioannina*, notes that in 1387 a thunderstroke killed 14 persons who found shelter from the storm in the belfry of an unnamed monastery in Ioannina.⁸²

Symeon, who was the archbishop of Thessalonike from 1416/7 until his death in mid-September 1429, testifies that bells were used in his time to summon the faithful

⁸⁰ Chatzidakis, *Mistra*, 29, 48, 56, 69–70; Moutsopoulos, *Ἀρχιτεκτονική*, 56–60.

⁸¹ Actes de Vatopédi, II, 303, n° 120.20; Actes de Lavra, III, 107, 147.21; *Ραγουσεβιή, Συβοῦιη, Богородица Гавалиотиса*, 244.

⁸² *Branouses, Χρονικὸν τῶν Ἰωαννίνων*, 97.

to the main daily services in Hagia Sophia both in Constantinople and Thessalonike.⁸³ It is interesting, however, to note that all the sources mentioned here, unless a general plural is used, suggest only two bells. *Ὑποτύπωσις* written by Symeon for the cathedral church in Thessalonike explains why.⁸⁴ On ordinary days, one bell was rung once to summon for prayer. On Sundays and lesser holidays both bells were rung once,⁸⁵ while both bells were rung three times each on the following holidays: the Church New Year and a lite in the city, Birth of the Theotokos, John the Theologian (1, 8 and 26 September), Evangelists Luke (18 October) and Matthew (16 November), Presentation of the Theotokos and Andrew the *Protokletos* (21 and 30 November), Nicholas' Day and Conception of the Theotokos (6 and 9 December), Circumcision of Christ and Basil the Great, Athanasios of Alexandria, Three Holy Hierarchs (1, 18 and 30 January), Finding of the Head of John the Prodromos (24 February), John the Theologian, Constantine and Helen (8 and 21 May), Birth of John the Prodromos, Assembly of the Holy Apostles (24 and 30 June), Dormition of St Anna (25 July). Both bells were rung several times on the greatest holidays – movable: the Palm Sunday, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost; and immovable: the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (14 September), St Demetrios (26 October), John Chrysostom and Gregory Palamas (13 November), Nativity (25 December), Epiphany, Gregory the Theologian and Dedication of Hagia Sophia of Thessalonike (6 and 25 January), Hypapante (2 February), Annunciation (25 March), Apostles Peter and Paul (29 June), city lite, Transfiguration and Dormition of the Theotokos (1, 6 and 15 August). On the other hand, the same author, in his treatise *On Prayer* also testifies that the wooden semantron was still in use and that it was used to wake up, i.e. summon to the midnight service. He compares its sound, just like Sophronios of Jerusalem did almost eight centuries before, with the angels' trumpets of the *Judgment Day*.⁸⁶

⁸³ *Darrouzès, Sainte-Sophie de Thessalonique*, 47, 51, 61.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, 76–78.

⁸⁵ The Miracle at Chonai (6 September), Conception of Saint John the Prodromos (23 September), Thomas' Day (6 October), Apostle James, son of Alphaeus (9 October), Apostle James, brother of Jesus (23 October), Anargyroi (1 November), Philip the Apostle (14 November), Stephen the Younger and Symeon Metaphrastes (28 November), Barbara and John of Damascus (4 December), Sabas the Sanctified (5 December), prophet Daniel and three youths (17 December), Forefeast of Christmas and Ignatios the Theophoros (20 December – two bells rang up until Epiphany), Christmas Eve (24 December), Synaxis of the Theotokos (26 December), Stephen the First Martyr (27 December), Forefeast of Epiphany and Pope Sylvester (2 January), John the Prodromos (7 January), Gregory of Nyssa (10 January), Theodosios the Koinobiarches (11 January – introduced by Symeon), Antony the Great (17 January – introduced by Symeon), Translation of the Relics of John Chrysostom (27 January), Symeon the Theodochos (3 February), Theodore Stratelates (8 February), Theodore Teron (17 February), Forty Martyrs (9 March), George's Day (23 April), Mark's Day (25 April), Apostle James, brother of Apostle John (30 April), Translation of the Relics of Athanasios of Alexandria (2 May), Apostle Simon (10 May), Third Finding of the Head of John the Prodromos (25 May), Translation of the Relics of Theodore Stratelates (8 June), Cyril of Alexandria (9 June), Apostles Bartholomew and Barnabas (11 June), Jude the Apostle (19 June), Anargyroi of Rome (1 July), Maphorion of the Theotokos (2 July), Prokopios (8 July), Elijah the Prophet (20 July), Panteleemon (27 July), Apostle Matthew (9 August), Beheading of John the Prodromos (29 August), Girdle of the Theotokos (31 August).

⁸⁶ PG 155, 557.



Vatopedi belfry (right), 1426/7

At the same time when Symeon wrote in Thessalonike the instruction for the use of bells during the year, three belfries were erected on different sides of the once united Empire. The time of their construction is precisely defined by inscriptions and records. The oldest is the Vatopedi belfry, built in 1426/7, south-west from the katholikon, with the terracotta inscription on the northern side – Κώδωνας ἄνω λαμπρὸν ἠχοῦντας φέρει πιστοὺς καλοῦντας εἰς Θεοῦ ὑμνωδίαν. In the same year, the construction of the belfry in the monastery of Hagia Sophia in Trebizond, west to the main church, began, as attested by the inscription scratched onto fresh mortar on the inside of the eastern wall at the ground floor of the belfry. In September 1428, the katholikon of the Theotokos Pantanassa in Mistra was consecrated, its integral part being the belfry at the north-western angle of the church, the endowment of protostrator John Phrangopoulos.⁸⁷ Written sources for this later period, such as the *Short Chronicles*, give sporadic data about bells and belfries. For instance, the oldest Peloponnesos' chronicles note that on Wednesday, 17 December 1420, Nauplia was hit by severe storm, which destroyed the narthex of the church of St Andrew. Bells collapsed together with the church door, which suggests that the church had a *bell-gable*. Belfries were often erected separately from church buildings, as seen in the short note about the death of Maria Laskarine Leontarine. She died on the fifth hour of the day, on Friday, 16 January 1450, and was buried in the Prodomos' monastery τῆς Πέτρας in Selymbria, in the tomb of her father-in-law Demetrios, under the belfry close to the monastery entrance.⁸⁸

According to the testimony of a Russian eye-witness of the fall of Constantinople, before and during each of the onslaughts of Turkish troops at the capital walls, bells rang from all city churches. Their sound called the defenders to the walls, encouraging them in their clash with the conquerors, while the elderly gathered with children in temples and prayed for the salvation of the city.⁸⁹ Nonetheless, on 29 May 1453, bells were overwhelmed by the sounds of bagpipes, trumpets and kettledrums.

Today, there are few bells that can be ascribed, primarily based on inscriptions, to Byzantine craftsmen. Two oldest were found in the temple of St Nicholas, the cathedral church of Melnik.⁹⁰ The older bell for the temple was ordered by one of the

⁸⁷ Recueil des inscriptions, 35–36, n° 115; Millet, *Monastères et les églises de Trébizonde*, 432; *Idem*, *Inscriptions byzantines de Mistra*, 134–138, n°s 31–34.

⁸⁸ Schreiner, *Byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, I, 234, 247–248, 647–649; upon the model of the famed Constantinople shrine, the monastery was founded by Alexios Apokaukos as a parakoimomenos before 1341 in the upper town, *Eyice*, Alexis Apocauque, 77–104; *Feld*, *Noch einmal Alexios Apokaukos*, 57–65; *Eyice*, *Encore une fois l'église d'Alexis Apocauque*, 406–416; *Magdalino*, *Byzantine Churches*, 309–318.

⁸⁹ Cf. *Повесть о взятии Царьграда Турками в 1453 году* in *Памятники литературы Древней Руси*, 226, 230, 232, 248.

⁹⁰ Герасимова, *Две камбани*, 42–48.



Pantanassa, Mistra, 1428

two of its ktetors – despotes Alexios Slavos, who appeared as an independent local lord with his seat in Melnik, during the second and third decades of the 13th century.⁹¹ The second bell was cast in March 1270 upon the wish of hieromonk Theodosios for the church of *Archistrategos* Michael in Melnik. Both bells are of almost the same dimensions – somewhat higher than half a metre with the diameter somewhat longer than 40 centimetres. Almost twice bigger is the bell ordered in 1458/9 by *dame* Helen, the daughter of grammatikos Nicholas Deskos, for the church of Archangel Michael, located in an unnamed fortification. This bell is kept today in the collection of the Dečani monastery.⁹²



Bells of despotes
Alexios Slavos, ca. 1215 (1),
hieromonk Theodosios, 1270 (2)
and *dame* Helen, 1458/9 (3)

3



⁹¹ Рагућ, Обласни господари, 240–245.

⁹² Анастјасијевић, Неколики неиздати грчки текстови, 9–10, бр. 3; Шакојић, Дечанска ризница, 211.

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КЛЕПАЛА И ЗВОНА У ВИЗАНТИЈИ

У манастирима на територији царства обновљеног под Јустинијановим жезлом, монаси су на два начина позивани у католикон на молитву. У области Магреба или на југозападу Апенинског полуострва, већ је раније била одомаћена употреба звона. С друге стране, на истоку Јустинијанове империје увелико је коришћено клепало, које се, као најчешће и касније, једноставно назива ξύλον, по материјалу од кога је начињено. Као σημαντήριον, назив је изведен од његове

функције, по грчком σήμα – знак, сигнал за буђење, односно почетак богослужења, први се пут јавља код Софронија Јерусалимског († 11. март 638). Била нису коришћена само у манастирским, већ и у мирским црквама, о чему сведочи приповест о чудима светог Анастасија Персијанца из истог времена. Иако је највећи број примера из извора о клепалима у рановизантијском периоду везан за Палестину, постоје сведочанства о њиховој употреби и у другим областима, од Мале Азије и Цариграда, до Сицилије и острвца Пантелерија, на пола морског пута између Акраганта и Картаге, ближе обали Африке. Звук клепала је, око 800, постао и предмет песничке инспирације кроз јамбске стихове Теодора Студијског, а о улози клепала у свакодневном животу једног братства из овог раног периода, највише података пружа управо типик Студијског манастира.

Када пише о свечаностима уочи коњичких трка на Хиподрому, Константин VII Порфирогенит (913–959) бележи драгоцен податак да су и у Велику цркву, цариградску Свету Софију, житељи престонице позивани клепалом. Типик Евергетидског манастира ван цариградских зидина, који је после *йравила* Студијског братства извршио највећи утицај на устројство млађих манастира, први помиње три врсте била – мало и велико дрвено, и клепало од бронзе. Настанак овог *ушјава* се дагује после 1054. године. Искључиву употребу клепала прописују и типичи два престоничка манастира које су у првој половини XII столећа основали чланови владајућег дома Комнина – Богородица Кехаритомени и манастир Пантократора. О употреби клепала речито говори и један латински текст именом непознатог путописца, чији се настанак може сместити у исто време. Привучен *убичајеним чудом* у влахернски храм, пише да је оглашавано ударцима у *дрвену таблу* (*percuitur tabula lignea*). Реч је о позиву клепалом на вечерњу службу током које се дешавало *убичајено чудо*, а путописац потом бележи да *Грци* на овај начин позивају верне у цркву, не зато што немају метала од којих би начинили звона (*signa more Latinorum*), већ је, како су му житељи Цариграда објаснили, у питању древна пракса још из времена апостола и прогона, када су се хришћани по својим домовима окупљали на богослужења и када се оно због страха од пагана није могло другачије огласити.

Најстарији поуздани пример постојања звона у Византији и њиховог коришћења за позивање на молитву, представља инвентар покретних добара атонског манастира Ксилурга, сачињен 14. децембра 1142. за новоизабраног игумана Христофора. У овом акту искварени облик $\kappa\alpha\upsilon\lambda(\acute{\alpha})\nu(\alpha)$ од латинског *самрапа* представља недвосмислен показатељ који јасно указује на западњачко порекло звона. Њихову употребу по Царству су ширили трговци из градова са Апенинског полуострва, на којем су звона и настала. Ширећи своје послове по читавом Царству, трговци из Амалфија, Венеције или Пизе почињу и трајно да се насељавају у Цариграду, а потом и у другим градовима, где су уз привилегије у пословању, добијали и посебне квартове у којима су живели и радили. Насељавање је подразумевало подизање храмова, чак и манастира, а самим тим и употребу звона *на латински начин*. У овоме су предњачили трговци из

Амалфија са обала Кампаније, *ἡοσίοῖοῖβινε* звона. Њихова колонија се у престоници среће још средином X столећа, а до средине наредног XI века, имали су и две Богородичине опатије, једну у Цариграду, а другу на Светој Гори. По свему судећи, бенедиктинци из Амалфија су били ти који су први звонима огласили почетак неке службе Божије, како у престоници, тако и на Атону.

Постепено увођење звона у богослужбену праксу Ромеја и напоре до коришћења са клепалима, поуздано се могу пратити у нешто млађим изворима из друге половине XII столећа. Ту се на првом месту може навести типик једног члана владајуће породице Комнина, који је 1152. за своју задужбину, манастир Богородице Космосотире близу Вире, написао стриц автократора Манојла I, севастократор Исак Комнин. Πύρους који је сазидан за звона из овог текста, јесте најстарији помен звоника у грчким изворима. Ту су и сведочанства солунског архиепископа Евстатија о употреби клепала и звона, по коме је најпознатије светилиште Солуна, базилика Светог Димитрија, већ крајем XII столећа имала звона, док су се у катедралним црквама, Светој Софији цариградској и солунској, и даље користила дрвена клепала. Свакако *најоῖийῖльивији* доказ нове праксе која се уводи од друге четвртине XII столећа јесте најстарији сачувани звоник у византијској архитектури, Богородичина црква из Самарине у Месинији на крајњем југозападу Пелопонеза. Стога треба исправити нека уврежена мишљења, по којима се употреба звона и градња првих звоника код Ромеја дају тек после 1204. и крсташког освајања Цариграда.

Занимљиво је да новотарија није заживела у самој престоници и да се увођење звона у богослужбену праксу може сврстати међу заиста ретке појаве у религиозном и друштвеном животу Ромеја, којима узор није био Цариград. Свакако је пресудну улогу по том питању имао став самог врха васељенске патријаршије, који је можда најбоље образложио патријаршијски номофилакс и хартофилакс, а затим титуларни антиохијски патријарх, Теодор Валсамон. Учени канониста је надахнуто писао о три врсте клепала у манастирима. У градским саборним храмовима је, по његовим речима, било само једно, велико дрвено било. Да су у Цариграду само Латини користили звона, потврђује око 1200. године и његов млађи савременик, руски поклоник Добриња Јадрејкович, потоњи новгородски архиепископ Антоније.

Ипак, најкасније од последње четвртине XIII столећа, звона су постепено преузимала улогу клепала, и у самом Цариграду. Чини се да је подизање звоника уз западно прочеље цариградске Свете Софије за време Латинског царства, у доба Палеолога пресудно утицало на прихватање звона у самој престоници, а затим и њихову широку употребу на читавој територији Царства. Изглед и положај овог звоника су познати само са старих гравира. Из времена Палеолога, најстарији сачувани звоник је на храму Светог Георгија, познатом и као Ομόρφοκλήσις, близу Костура, који потиче из друге половине XIII столећа. Из XIV века је сачувано свега четири звоника и сви се налазе на Пелопонезу. У Мистри су три – Митрополија, Богородица Одигитрија – Афендико и Света

Софија, од којих последња два привлаче пажњу својим трифорама на све четири стране горњих етажа, као и звоник Богородичине цркве у Каритени у Аркадији. Симеон, који је био солунски архиепископ од 1416/7. до своје смрти средином септембра 1429, сведочи да се у његово време на главна дневна богослужења позивало звоном, како у цариградској тако и у солунској Светој Софији, док се клепало и даље користило у манастирима за буђење, односно позивање на *полунућницу*.

У исто време када Симеон у Солуну пише упутство за начин коришћења звона током године, на различитим странама некада јединственог Царства подижу се три звоника, чије је време градње прецизно одређено натписима и записима. Најстарији је ватопедски звоник саграђен 1426/7, југозападно од католикона, са натписом од опека на северној страни. Исте године је започета градња звоника у манастирском комплексу Свете Софије у Трапезунту, западно од главног храма, а септембра 1428, освећен је католикон Богородице Пантанасе у Мистри, чији је саставни део био звоник на северозападном углу ове грађевине, задужбине протостратора Јована Франгопула. По сведочењу једног руског очевица пада Цариграда, уочи и током сваког од јуриша турских чета на престоничке зидине, звонила су звона са свих градских цркава. Данас су малобројна звона која се могу, пре свега на основу натписа, приписати византијским мајсторима. Најстарија су пронађена у храму Светог Николе, катедралној цркви Мелника.