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PEER-REVIEWED

Bell Ringing in Latin Pera: Sounds and Silence

Alex Rodriguez Suarez

Abstract
The cultural and architectural history of Pera, also known as Galata, has been the focus of many studies. However, its soundscape has not attracted much scholarly interest to date. The present study fills part of this gap by tracing the history of bell ringing in the settlement. Written and material evidence sheds light on the use of bells by the Latin community of Pera from the period of Genoese rule until the late Ottoman Empire. Sounds and silence provide new insights into the long history of the Latin presence in Pera and its evolution throughout the centuries.

Keywords: bell ringing, Genoese Pera, Ottoman Galata, soundscape, church bells

Latin Pera'da Çan Çalmak: Sesler ve Sessizlik

Özet
Pera ya da Galata'nın kültür ve mimarlık tarihi birçok çalışmaya konu olmuştur. Ancak bölgenin ses peyzajı (*soundscape*) araştırmacıların şimdiye değin çok ilgisini çekmemiştir. Bu çalışma, bu eksikliği kısmen giderme amacıyla bölgede çan çalmanın tarihine bakıyor. Yazılı ve maddi bulgular, Pera'nın Latin cemaatinin çan kullanımının, bölgedeki Ceneviz idaresinden geç Osmanlı dönemine uzanan tarihine ışık tutuyor. Ses ve sessizlik, Pera'daki Latin varlığının uzun geçmişine ve yüzyıllar içindeki değişimine dair yeni bir bakış sağlıyor.

Anahtar kelimeler: çan çalma, Ceneviz Pera'sı, Osmanlı Galata'sı, ses peyzajı (*soundscape*), kilise çanları

The soundscape of Pera is a topic that has not received much attention from scholars to date.[1] This article explores one aspect of the acoustic environment of the settlement, that is, the use of bells by the Latin community throughout the centuries, from the introduction of the practice in the thirteenth century until the late Ottoman period. The area across the Golden Horn from Constantinople, which the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII (1261–1282) granted to the Republic of Genoa in 1267, developed into the colony of Pera. Its expansion witnessed the foundation of Catholic churches and monasteries. Under the Ottomans, Pera remained the home of a Latin community that included clergymen, diplomats, and merchants. Thus, the Latin presence in the settlement lasted for centuries and witnessed significant evolution. Through a combination of written sources, mainly Western, and instances of material culture (bells and bell towers), I trace the history of bell ringing in Pera, today part of the Beyoğlu district. This brief exploration offers an alternative approach to the history of the Latin presence in Pera, highlighting important changes that the community experienced throughout the centuries. While Byzantines and Turks called the area Galata, in the article I will refer to it as Pera, since the latter was the name frequently employed by Westerners.[2]

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1 The soundscape of Constantinople's Historic Peninsula, or Istanbul proper, has been the subject of some studies. See, for instance, Nina Ergin, "The Soundscape of Sixteenth-Century Istanbul Mosques: Architecture and Qur'an Recital," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 67, no. 2 (2008): 204–221; Bissera V. Pentcheva, *Hagia Sophia: Sound, Space, and Spirit in Byzantium* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017); Arietta Papaconstantinou, "The Sound of a Thousand Tongues: Visitors to Constantinople from the Eastern Provinces in the Sixth Century," *YILLIK: Annual of Istanbul Studies* 2 (2020): 179–183; Marie-Emmanuel Torres, "Echoes of Constantinople: Rewriting the Byzantine Soundscape in Travel Accounts," in *Voyages and Travel Accounts in Historiography and Literature*, ed. Boris Stojkovski (Budapest: Trivent, 2020), 1:193–213.

2 Geo Pistarino, "The Genoese in Pera – Turkish Galata," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 1 (1986): 82, n. 2.

Additionally, I use Latin community to refer to the population that professed the Catholic faith; in many cases these individuals were migrants (and their descendants) from Western Europe that had moved to Pera or lived there temporarily.

The Genoese Colony: Latin Sounds in the East

The use of bells for religious purposes, mainly to call the faithful to service, was introduced in Constantinople in the thirteenth century, following the establishment of the Latin Empire.[3] Until that time, Orthodox churches and monasteries in the city had only employed the *semantron*, usually an elongated piece of wood that was struck with a mallet.[4] It is unclear how fast the use of bells spread through Constantinople, but the practice seems to have been common during the late Byzantine period (1261–1453).[5] Latins had rung church bells for centuries and, if they could, always used them wherever they had religious foundations. One such locality was Pera where the establishment of the Genoese across the Golden Horn was accompanied by the construction of several Latin churches and monasteries with bell towers. For example, written documents refer to the bell tower of the most important church in the settlement, which was dedicated to Saint Michael.[6] Specifically, a note dated to April 8, 1391, informs us of the money spent on the church bell.[7] The monasteries of Pera also had bell towers; two of which are still extant, the only such structures to have survived in Istanbul from this period. That of Saint Benoît is the only one to have resumed its function as a bell tower (fig. 1). The date of its construction is unclear. It had been dated to the first half of the fifteenth century,[8] however, Philipp Niewöhner has recently argued that the tower was part of a previous Byzantine church, perhaps built around 1300, which Benedictine monks took over in 1427.[9] The other extant bell tower, that of a Dominican Monastery built in the early fourteenth century, is presently used as the minaret of the Arab Mosque (fig. 2).[10] Another Latin monastery was that of Saint Francis, which burnt down in 1696 and was replaced by the Galata New Mosque.[11] A drawing of the complex dated to the Ottoman period shows its bell tower.[12] Monasteries did not only ring bells to announce the service, but they also regulated the everyday life of monks. While Latin monasteries only used bells, during the Palaiologan period, Byzantine monasteries seem to have employed both bells and *semantra*.[13] As a result, while church bells were used both in Constantinople and Pera, the religious soundscape of each settlement was different. A visitor to the Byzantine capital experienced an eclectic soundscape since it included the sound of bronze (bells) and wood (*semantra*); this mixture representing the Orthodox Church. On the other hand, the soundscape of Pera would have signified the Catholic Church since its Latin foundations did not employ *semantra*.

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3 Church bells were already employed in Latin churches in the capital—for instance, those in the Venetian quarter. See Alex Rodriguez Suarez, "Towards a New Religious Soundscape: The Introduction of Bell Ringing in the Byzantine Empire," in *Rituels religieux et sensorialité (Antiquité et Moyen Age). Parcours des recherches*, ed. Béatrice Caseau Chevalier and Elisabetta Neri (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2021), 337–338. However, they do not seem to have been adopted by the local population.

4 Bojan Miljković, "*Semantra* and Bells in Byzantium," *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 55 (2018): 271–281.

5 Ibid., 287–8.

6 Luigi Tommaso Belgrano, "Documenti riguardanti la colonia genovese di Pera," *Atti della società ligure di storia patria* 13 (1877), 167 (October 26), 170 (May 17), 969 (May 27); Naz Ecem Çınaryılmaz and Bilge Ar, "San Michele Church of Genoese Galata (Pera): Historic Records and Material Evidence on its Chronology," *A/Z ITU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture* 17 (2020): 19–20.

7 "Et pro aliquibus expensis factis in campana sancti Micaelis." Belgrano, "Documenti," 162.

8 Robert Ousterhout, "Constantinople, Bithynia, and Regional Developments in Later Palaeologan Architecture," in *The Twilight of Byzantium: Aspects of Cultural and Religious History in the Late Byzantine Empire*, ed. Slobodan Ćurčić and Doula Mouriki (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 78; Paolo Girardelli, "Architecture, Identity, and Liminality: On the Use and Meaning of Catholic Spaces in Late Ottoman Istanbul," *Muqarnas* 22 (2005): 237, fig. 6.

9 Philipp Niewöhner, "Saint Benoît in Galata. Der byzantinische Ursprungsbau," *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 125 (2010): 173–176, 222–229, 231–232.

10 Johannes Cramer and Siegrid Düll, "Baubeobachtungen an der Arap Camii in Istanbul," *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 35 (1985): 311–313.

11 Muzaffer Özgüleş, "A Missing Royal Mosque in Istanbul that Islamized a Catholic Space: The Galata New Mosque," *Muqarnas* 34 (2017): 157–195.

12 Girardelli, "Architecture, Identity, and Liminality," 238, fig. 7; Özgüleş, "A Missing Royal Mosque," 160, fig. 4.

13 For example, the *typikon* for the convent of the Mother of God Bebaia Elpis, which was founded by a relative of Michael VIII, refers to the wooden instrument twice. See John Philip Thomas and Angela Constantinides Hero, ed., *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2000), 1539–1540. A later addition to the document mentions a bell tower. Thomas and Hero, *Documents*, 1568. The use of the term suggests that this Byzantine foundation also employed bells.

Figure 1: Bell tower of Saint Benoît, Istanbul. Photograph: Alex Rodriguez Suarez, 2016.

Figure 2: Minaret of Arab Mosque, former bell tower of the Dominican Monastery. Photograph: Alex Rodriguez Suarez, 2016.

Written evidence also provides details regarding the secular use of bell ringing in Pera. For instance, one of the statutes of the government of the colony mentions the evening bells.[14] This law informs us of what would have happened if someone was found in the street after the evening bells had been rung. The practice of ringing a bell in the evening, normally at sunset, was common in cities of Western Europe.[15] Its pealing signaled the end of the working day and the beginning of the nighttime. In Renaissance Venice, this signal was known as the "*campana de sero*" (the evening bell).[16] In some locations the instrument was also known as the bell of the drinkers, since once it was rung the sale of wine was forbidden and taverns closed their doors.[17] The evening bells reminded the inhabitants of the Genoese colony that several restrictions were in place until the beginning of the next day. Their sound would have also signaled that the gates of the settlement were going to close. The instruments may have been rung for some time, allowing people enough time to make their way in or out of Pera before its gates were closed until the morning.[18]

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14 "De illis qui sunt inventi post campanas serotinas." Vincenzo Promis, ed., *Statuti della colonia genovese di Pera* (Turin: Stamperia reale, 1871), 174, doc. CLXXXV.

15 For cities in Italy, see Alessandro Lattes, "La campana serale nei secoli XIII e XIV secondo gli statuti delle città italiane," in *Indagini e postille dantesche*, by Francesco Novati (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1899), 163–170.

16 Victoria Avery, *Vulcan's Forge in Venus' City: The Story of Bronze in Venice, 1350–1650* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 86.

17 Chiara Bernazzani, "La campana civica: tra *signum*, simbolo e celebrazione visiva," *Opera · Nomina · Historiae: Giornale di cultura artistica* 2, no. 3 (2010): 302.

18 As it was the case in the northern Italian city of Pavia. See Aldo A. Settia, "Codici sonori e nomi di campane nelle

The existence of evening bells in Pera is mentioned in another document dated to September 23, 1357, in which we are told that certain individuals met in the communal palace to do business when the evening bells were rung for the safety of the territory.[19] This piece of information confirms that the purpose of the evening bells was the security of Pera. During the night, guards likely patrolled the streets making sure that no crimes were committed. This and the previous document refer to more than one bell, and so it seems that the government of Pera employed at least two. Such instruments were usually located in a tower found in or near the seat of the city government. They might have been in the communal palace of Pera, mentioned in the second document. These documents demonstrate that the government of the colony used bell ringing to regulate time and thus control both inhabitants and activities. By doing so, the government was reproducing Western practices in the East. That bells were employed for religious and secular purposes reveals that the soundscape of Pera was dominated by their pealing. The use of such civic bells was not reported in the Byzantine capital. Hence, while bells were rung on both shores of the Golden Horn, in Pera they signaled further messages and instructions. This additional use was another significant difference between the soundscape of Latin Pera and Orthodox Constantinople.

The impending threat of the Ottomans was obvious by the end of the fourteenth century, when the Turks had conquered Thrace, and Constantinople had been cut off from the rest of Byzantine territory. In fact, Bayezid I (1389–1402) laid siege to the Byzantine capital between 1394 and 1402.[20] Among the expense records of the government of Pera is a note dated to December 3, 1390, which informs us about the purchase of a bell for the castle of the Holy Cross.[21] It has recently been suggested that the instrument may have been used to sound the alarm in case of an enemy attack.[22] Another entry, dated to March 16, 1391, records the acquisition of thirteen small bells.[23] These were to be placed in the towers built along the walls of the districts of Spiga and Lagirio. While we are not told about their use, these small bells were certainly set up for defensive purposes;[24] the guards of the walls and towers of the Genoese colony would ring them when they perceived an attack. This purchase demonstrates that the Ottoman threat was imminent and so the communal government decided to upgrade the security measures. It is not a coincidence that these instruments were acquired in 1391; by that year Ottoman troops had captured the territory that surrounded Constantinople.[25]

The Ottoman Period: A Centuries-Long Silence

After Constantinople was conquered by the Turks, the Genoese colony surrendered to Mehmed II (1444–1446/1451–1481). Bell ringing was forbidden in Muslim polities and so its use came to a sudden end.[26] The fate of bells in Pera once the Turks took over the settlement is mentioned in multiple written sources. For example, the Polish historian Jan Długosz mentions that they were confiscated and turned into cannons.[27] Cardinal Isidore, who spent a few days in Pera in June 1453, was a witness to the changes brought by the Ottoman

città medievali italiane," in *Del fondere campane. Dall'archeologia alla produzione*, ed. S. Lusuardi Siena and Elisabetta Neri (Florence: All'Insegna del Giglio, 2007), 80–81.

19 "Hora campanarum que pulsantur in sero pro custodia terre." Laura Balletto, "Brevi note su Pera genovese a metà del XIV secolo," in *Shipping, Trade and Crusade in the Medieval Mediterranean: Studies in Honour of John Pryor*, ed. Ruthy Gertwagen and Elizabeth Jeffreys (Farnham: Routledge, 2012), 201.

20 Dionysios Bernicolas-Hatzopoulos, "The First Siege of Constantinople by the Ottomans (1394–1402) and its Repercussions on the Civilian Population of the City," *Byzantine Studies* 10 (1983): 39–51.

21 "Pro una campana pro ponendo eam in castro sancte Crucis." Belgrano, "Documenti," 153. It is unclear which part of the Galata fortifications is meant. See Hasan Sercan Sağlam, "Galata Kulesi'nin Ceneviz Dönemine Yönelik bir Yeniden Değerlendirme," *YILLIK: Annual of Istanbul Studies* 2 (2020): 53–80.

22 Sağlam, "Galata Kulesi," 59.

23 "Pro campanelas XIII positas in turribus burgorum Spiga et de Lagirio." Belgrano, "Documenti," 161.

24 Rafał Quirini-Popławski, *Sztuka kolonii genueńskich w Basenie Morza Czarnego (1261–1475): Z badań nad wymianą międzykulturową w sztuce późnośredniowiecznej* (Kraków: iMEDIUS Agencja Reklamowa, 2017), 68.

25 Nevra Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins: Politics and Society in the Late Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 149.

26 Alex Rodriguez Suarez, "The Fate of Bells under Ottoman Rule: Between Destruction and Negotiation," in *Cross-Cultural Interaction between Byzantium and the West, 1204–1669: Whose Mediterranean Is It Anyway?*, ed. Angeliki Lymberopoulou (London: Routledge, 2018), 303.

27 "Campanae sublatae et in bombardas resolutae." Agostino Pertusi, *Testi inediti e poco noti sulla caduta di Costantinopoli*, ed. Antonio Carile (Bologna: Pàtron, 1976), 236–237.

takeover. In a letter he informs the pope that the Turks do not permit ringing a small bell or any bell during the elevation of the body and blood of Christ, that is, in the most important part of the liturgy.[28] The Ottoman conquest silenced the Christian soundscape across the Golden Horn. This is confirmed by a Greek document that Mehmed granted to the Genoese authorities which lists their rights; while they are entitled to keep their churches, they are not allowed to employ bells or *semantra*.[29] Hence, Ottoman authorities tolerated the existence of the Latin community in Pera, but the latter did not have representation in the religious soundscape of the settlement. All other bell ringing that had previously been heard, such as the evening and martial bells, also ceased. In addition, the reference to *semantra* in the document is particularly intriguing. Since the text was addressed to the Genoese community, it is strange that the Orthodox instrument is mentioned. It may well be that the Ottoman authorities precluded the future use of *semantra* by the Latins. In any case, the document indicates that no Christian instrument—bell or *semantron*—was allowed. Soon after, another significant event took place—namely, the *ezan*, the Islamic call to prayer, was introduced. Numerous Muslim families moved into Pera, and the foundation of mosques resulted in the emergence of the Islamic soundscape.[30] For example, the church of the Dominican Monastery, mentioned above, was converted into a mosque in the late 1470s.[31] Since then, from the top of the former bell tower, a muezzin has called the Muslims to pray.

So far, no bell dated to the medieval period has been discovered in Istanbul. A bell on display at the Istanbul Archaeological Museums, which has been dated to the fourteenth century, is reported to have come from the Galata Tower.[32] However, this tower suffered many reconstructions throughout the Ottoman period and so it is unlikely that the bell could have survived since the Middle Ages. The decoration of the bell is reduced to a band with vegetal motifs around its top section. This is similar to that of a bell found on Mount Athos and cast in 1874.[33] It is unclear if the same bell founder cast both artifacts, but the similar decoration shows that the bell at the museum is not medieval. Instead, the artifact may have been part of a mechanical clock that was installed in the Galata Tower by 1849.[34]

After the Ottoman conquest, no bell ringing was allowed for centuries. Western travelers noted that the Christian foundations of Pera did not have bells. For instance, a French priest who visited the Ottoman capital in 1544 informs us that Pera has three Catholic monasteries; however, they do not ring bells.[35] The Apostolic visitor Pietro Cedulini, who was in the city in 1580–1581, recorded that the bell tower of the monastery of Saint Francis, mentioned above, did not have bells.[36] Another report concerning the same monastery, dated to 1622, tells us that while the bell tower was still standing, it did not have bells.[37] In 1613, the Latin community requested that Ahmed I (1603–1617) renew the privileges granted to them in 1453.[38] The new

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28 "Quod non sinunt in exaltation sacratissimi corporis et sanguinis Christi tintinnabulum aut ullam campanam sonari aut pulsar." Marios Philippides and Walter K. Hanak, *Cardinal Isidore, c. 1390–1462: A Late Byzantine Scholar, Warlord, and Prelate* (London: Routledge, 2018), 240, n. 114. Henry of Soemmern must have read this letter, as he also reported this detail. Agostino Pertusi, *La caduta di Costantinopoli. L'eco nel mondo* (Milan: Mondadori, 1976), 2:90–91.

29 "Μώνον καμπάνας και σιμανδίρηα να μηδὲν χτηποῦν απο τας εκλησίας [sic]." (Campane et simandirio non sone.) Eugenio Dalleggio d'Alessio, "Le teste grec du traité conclu par les Génois de Galata avec Mehmet II le Ier Juin 1453," *Ελληνικά* 11 (1939): 118. For the Italian version of the document, see Pertusi, *Testi inediti*, 177.

30 Eric R. Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 155.

31 In general, bell towers were dismantled under Ottoman rule. Slobodan Ćurčić, "Byzantine Legacy in Ecclesiastical Architecture of the Balkans after 1453," in *The Byzantine Legacy in Eastern Europe*, ed. Lowell Clucas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 68–72.

32 Inv. no. 5127. Alpay Pasinli, *Istanbul Archaeological Museums* (Istanbul: A Turizm Yayınları, 2010), 143, fig. 158; Rodriguez Suarez, "The Fate of Bells," 303–304.

33 The bell, which was formerly rung at the Protaton Church (Karyes), is cracked. It was the work of a certain Ioannis Nikolau, a bell founder that cast several bells for Athonite monasteries in the second half of the nineteenth century.

34 BOA, A.AMD, 16/23 (4 Safer 1266 [December 20, 1849]). The document indicates that the device had to be repaired.

35 "Non vi si sona ca[m]pana nisuna." Léon Dorez, trans. and ed., *Itinéraire de Jérome Maurand, d'Antibes à Constantinople (1544)* (Paris: Leroux, 1901), 200.

36 "Privo tuttavia di campane." Gualberto Matteucci, *Un glorioso convento francescano sulle rive del Bosforo: il S. Francesco di Galata in Costantinopoli, c. 1230–1697* (Florence: Biblioteca di Studi Francescani, 1967), 105–106.

37 "Ma senza campane." Georg Hofmann, *Il vicariato apostolico di Costantinopoli 1453–1830* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1935), 50.

38 Eugène Dalleggio d'Alessio, "Traité entre les Génois de Galata et Mehmet II (1er Juin 1453). Versions et commentaires," *Échos d'Orient* 39 (1940): 168–170.

document, which was drafted in Ottoman Turkish, included the prohibition to ring bells.[39] Nevertheless, a few references show that bells did not vanish completely. In a document dated to December 1, 1475, we read that in the monastery of Santa Maria della Misericordia de Sisarna, small bells were employed to gather the community for a meeting.[40] These instruments would not have been heard outside the building, but this piece of information demonstrates the significant role that bells played in Latin monasteries. So much so that they secretly refused to obey the sultan. In 1635, during the reign of Murad IV (1623–1640), we are told that the Kapudan Pasha (the grand admiral of the Ottoman fleet) ordered the demolition of a small chapel built by the French ambassador, Henri de Gournay, in his "palace." The reason for this was that from the chapel one could view the palace of the sultan. A report of the event informs us that they began by tearing down the bell of the chapel.[41] France was then the most significant ally of the Ottoman Empire in Western Europe; had the French ambassador been granted the right to employ a bell in his palace? It may well be that since the bell was employed inside the building its sound was not perceived outside the embassy. That the ambassador allowed the use of a bell in the chapel, even though he was aware that bells were forbidden, is further proof that the instruments played a key role in the Catholic faith. Moreover, that the bell was the first item to be destroyed, even before the altar, corroborates the Muslim aversion towards the Christian instrument.

Seventeenth-century accounts claim that bells were rung in the four chapels located inside the main jail for Christian prisoners.[42] This place, usually referred to as "the bath," was located near the shipyard in Kasımpaşa, to the west of Pera.[43] In a letter dated to March 1714, a Jesuit missionary informs us that the prison had two double chapels. One was for the slaves of the Latin rite, while the other was for the Orthodox. He describes the bells of the chapels as satisfactory.[44] We are also told that they were removed five or six years prior. According to the Turks, their sound awakened the angels that came during the night to sleep on the roof of a mosque recently built in the neighborhood. The story suggests that the pealing of bells could be heard from the new mosque and its staff requested the bells to be removed. In the aural competition between Christians and Muslims, the latter prevailed.

The use of bells was also allowed in a chapel of another prison located in Beşiktaş, to the east of Pera.[45] Cornelio Magni, a traveler that visited the Ottoman capital in 1672, described the chapel in his account. We are told that after entering the small chapel he found the altar with a large bell, reminding him of the prison of the sultan.[46] According to Magni, the chapel was established by Uluç Ali Pasha, the grand admiral of the Ottoman fleet between 1571 and his death in 1587. Born Giovan Dionigi Galeni in Calabria, he was captured and served as a galley slave before he converted to Islam.[47] Could this detail explain why the chapel was allowed to ring a bell? On the other hand, the instrument was inside the chapel and so it

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39 Adel Ismail, *Documents diplomatiques et consulaires relatifs à l'histoire du Liban et des pays du Proche-Orient du XVIIe siècle à nos jours* (Beirut: Éditions des œuvres politiques et historiques, 1994), 34:132.

40 "Congregati et cohadunati in capitulo dicti monasterii, sono campanelle, ut moris est." Ausilia Roccatagliata, *Notai genovesi in oltremare: Atti rogati a Pera e Mitilene* (Genoa: Università di Genova, 1982), 1:220. This monastery is probably that of the Benedictine community established in 1427, today Saint Benoît. Eugène Dalleggio d'Alessio, "Le monastère de Sainte-Marie de la Miséricorde de la Citerne de Péra ou de Saint-Benoît. Des origines à l'occupation du monastère par les Jésuites (12 mai 1427–18 novembre 1583)," *Échos d'Orient* 33 (1934): 60.

41 "La cloche de la chapelle." Adel Ismail, *Documents diplomatiques et consulaires relatifs à l'histoire du Liban et des pays du Proche–Orient du XVIIe siècle à nos jours* (Beirut: Éditions des œuvres politiques et historiques, 1995), 36:1054.

42 "E dentro al Bagno vi sono 4 capelli con le campane, quali si suonano." Hofmann, *Il vicariato apostolico*, 71. "Il vit aussi les chapelles des Latins, des Grecs et des Roux [Russes] où on a soin de dire la messe, à laquelle son appelés par une cloche assés raisonnable." Charles Schefer, ed., *Journal d'Antoine Galland pendant son séjour à Constantinople, 1672–1673* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1:81. "E per esser luogo priuilegiato vsano in questo li schiaui grosse campane, il che viene precisamente vietato all'altre chiese." Cornelio Magni, *Quanto di più curioso, e vago ha potuto raccorre Cornelio Magni nel primo biennio da esso consumato in viaggi, e dimore per la Turchia* (Parma: Galeazzo Rosati, 1679), 163. "E quello, che è più degno d'osseruazione, sono in possesso dell'uso delle campane, proibito altroue intieramente." Magni, "*Quanto di più curioso*," 613.

43 Godfrey Goodwin, *The Janissaries* (London: Saqi, 2006), 106.

44 "Ces chapelles avoient en commun d'assez bonnes cloches." *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangeres* (Paris: Merigot, 1780), 1:17–18.

45 Mattia Cerracchi, "La comunità latino-cattolica di Istanbul nella prima età ottomana (1453–1696). Spazi sacri, luoghi di culto." *Eurostudium 3w* 38 (2016): 136–138.

46 "Vi trovai un altare co' grossa campana all'uso del bagno del Gran Signore." Magni, *Quanto di più curioso*, 632.

47 Tobias P. Graf, *The Sultan's Renegades: Christian-European Converts to Islam and the Making of the Ottoman Elite, 1575–1610* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 127–128.

might not have been heard outside the building. A report concerning the Catholic churches in Constantinople, dated to 1665, informs us that the chapel was dedicated to Saint Roch and at the time had two bells.[48] It has been argued "that permission to use the bells was given to churches that were not integrated in urban life."[49] Certainly, the pealing of bells for religious purposes would have not been allowed in major urban centers. In this period, church bells were only tolerated in a few locations with no significant Muslim population, such as Mount Athos and the Cycladic Islands. Thus, the use of bells in chapels located in the outskirts of the capital was an important exception. Nevertheless, these instances were ironic; while employing the musical instruments was a rare concession, the prisoners must have found it bittersweet. The pealing of bells was meant to be a joyful sound, but these individuals listened to it while incarcerated and forced to work, for example, in the construction of galleys.

In the eighteenth century, the use of bell ringing is reported in two European embassies. A document dated to 1734 informs that a bell knelled in a lugubrious fashion while two thieves awaited to be executed by an Ottoman hangman in the backyard of the Dutch embassy.[50] The size, function, and exact location of this bell is unclear. However, in 1711, we know that a chapel was built within the grounds of the embassy, which was attended by a Protestant congregation, and thus, we could assume that it was the bell of this chapel that rung during the execution. It has been claimed that the chapels of Western ambassadors were the only churches in Constantinople that could ring bells.[51] While the Dutch instance could suggest this was already the case in the eighteenth century, the information discussed below indicates that such a privilege was only granted in the nineteenth century. It is necessary to note that the chapel at the Dutch embassy was not a Latin church. The Reformation in the sixteenth century witnessed the formation of several Protestant churches. Consequently, a number of Europeans established in Pera could not attend the existing Catholic churches. The construction of the chapel at the Dutch embassy indicates the lack of Protestant places of worship in the city. Protestantism also employed bells for religious purposes and thus, Protestants in Pera—diplomats, merchants, and artisans—also intended to use them in their churches. Another bell is reported in the French embassy in 1794. Two letters inform us that the embassy's bell gathered the people to celebrate the *fêtes décadaires*, that is, the festivals organized every *décadi*, the day of rest in the ten-day week of the republican calendar.[52] These festivals replaced the Sunday worship. Once again, the size of the bell is unclear, but its use in the embassy suggests that it was rather small. That the French embassy employed bell ringing to call the attendees of the Decadary cult is paradoxical. During the French Revolution the use of church bells was opposed, and many were melted down.[53] The bells reported at the embassies of the Netherlands and France suggest that their diplomatic staff was allowed to employ bell ringing for certain purposes. These instruments may not have been heard outside the grounds of the embassies and so their pealing did not have any impact on the soundscape of Pera. In other words, their use does not show a change in the Ottoman attitude towards bell ringing; the practice continued to be forbidden. Nevertheless, it shows once more the significance that the musical instrument—or more particularly, its sound—had for the Europeans.

The Last Ottoman Century: Reintroduction as a Sign of Political Decline

By the first half of the nineteenth century, church bell usage was found in other locations of the Ottoman Empire, for instance, in Mount Lebanon.[54] On the other hand, the instruments continued to be forbidden in Ottoman cities.[55] However, a remarkable change

48 "A Bissictas, vi è la chiesa di S. Rocco con due campane che pur si suonano." Hofmann, *Il vicariato apostolico*, 71.
49 Girardelli, "Architecture, Identity, and Liminality," 261, n. 27.
50 Gerard R. Bosscha Erdbrink, *At the Threshold of Felicity: Ottoman-Dutch Relations during the Embassy of Cornelis Calkoen at the Sublime Porte, 1726–1744* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1975), 123.
51 Philip Mansel, *Constantinopla: la ciudad deseada por el mundo* 1453–1924, trans. Fernando Miranda (Granada: Almed, 2005), 220.
52 Pascal Firges, *French Revolutionaries in the Ottoman Empire: Diplomacy, Political Culture, and the Limiting of Universal Revolution, 1792–1798* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 244, 246.
53 See Alain Corbin, *Les cloches de la terre. Paysage sonore et culture sensible dans les campagnes au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994).
54 Lady Francis Egerton, *Journal of a Tour in the Holy Land, in May and June, 1840* (London: Harrison and Co., 1841), 107.
55 Several cities and towns, mainly in the European provinces of the empire, employed bells as part of public clocks. However, their use was not religious.

Figure 3: Bell of Saint Benoît, cast in Genoa in 1839. Photograph: Alex Rodriguez Suarez, 2016.

Figure 4: Bell of Saint Benoît, cast in Genoa in 1856. Photograph: Alex Rodriguez Suarez, 2016.

took place before the Tanzimat period. According to the British admiral Adolphus Slade, who traveled through the Ottoman Empire between 1829 and 1831, Catholic churches in Thessaloniki, Pera, and Smyrna had "the privilege of using bells."[56] We do not know when they were granted the right to ring bells, but this must have been a recent development. The pealing of bells in a Latin church in Pera is confirmed by a French historian who visited Istanbul in the early 1830s. He tells us that the Turkish government had allowed the Franks to have one bell.[57] Apparently, the monks frequently pealed the instrument. We are told that they liked to ring it so that the Turks could hear it, showing in this way their joy and pride. They were aware that using a bell in the Ottoman capital was a significant privilege. That is why the monks did not simply ring it to announce the services, they also seem to have done so to annoy the Muslim population living within reach or just passing by. Indeed, the sound of bells must have shocked them since this had not been heard publicly for centuries. However, it is unclear what church he was referring to; yet, in a later letter he tells us that he had not heard a bell since he had left the neighborhood of the Capuchin convent in Pera[58]—that is, the church of Saint Louis of the French, the foundation built in the grounds of the French embassy and which served as its chapel.[59]

The writings of Antonio Baratta, a diplomat from the Kingdom of Sardinia who sojourned in Istanbul between 1826 and 1831, also provide details about the Latin use of bells in Pera. Describing the region, he tells us that Pera displays all the external signs of Catholicism: festivities, processions, funerals, and masses. And, he adds, several churches' resounding of organs and bells scandalize the devout Muslim.[60] In another publication, he explains that the Catholic faith enjoys the same protection in Constantinople that is given only by the most tolerant and religious states in Europe, at the time he was writing (ca. 1831).[61] The local authorities allowed and protected external and sonorous offices. For example, we are told how the sound of bells called the faithful to church, exactly as it did in his homeland. Nonetheless,

56 Adolphus Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey, Greece, etc. and of a Cruise in the Black Sea, with the Capitan Pasha, in the Years 1829, 1830, and 1831* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1833), 2:451–452.
57 Joseph-François Michaud and Baptistin Poujoulat, *Correspondance d'Orient 1830–1831* (Paris: Ducollet, 1833), 2:382.
58 Ibid. (Paris: Ducollet, 1835), 7:481.
59 François Alphonse Belin, *Histoire de la latinité de Constantinople* (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1894), 302–315.
60 Antonio Baratta, *Costantinopoli effigiata e descritta con una notizia su le celebri sette chiese dell'Asia Minore ed altri siti osservabili del Levante* (Turin: Alessandro Fontana, 1840), 585.
61 Baratta, *Costantinopoli nel 1831 ossia notizie esatte e recentissime intorno a questa capitale ed agli usi e costumi de' suoi abitanti* (Genoa: Pellas, 1831), 443.

he states that bells are neither as numerous nor as large. And, he explains, this is not because of any prohibition of the government. Whether all Catholic churches in Pera employed bells is unknown; another church that did was the convent of Saint Anthony. A drawing of the building, dated to 1836, shows a bell gable on the roof.[62] Its legend includes a note describing the belfry as "the first to have been erected in public in Constantinople after the fall of the Greek Empire."[63] While the church was granted the right to use bell ringing, the bell gable indicates that the construction of bell towers, structures that were visible in the skyline of the city, were not allowed yet.

Another church to employ bells was Saint Benoît, mentioned above. Today, its medieval bell tower has three bells.[64] They were produced in Western Europe and show figurative decoration and Latin inscriptions. One is dated to 1839 and may be among the oldest church bells preserved in Istanbul (fig. 3).[65] Its nameplate reads GIOVANNI BOZZOLI / F.(ONDITORE? ECIT?) GENOVA—that is, the object was cast at the foundry of Giovanni Bozzoli, in Genoa, a city, at the time, in the Kingdom of Sardinia.[66] A second bell, dated to 1856, was also cast in Genoa (fig. 4).[67] The nameplate reads FRATELLI BOERO / FONDITORI / IN / GENOVA. In this case the bell was produced at the foundry of the Boero brothers.[68] The two bells share some decorative details. For example, a line of beads divides the main body of the bells into two parts. Below are two motifs that intercalate, a leaf pointing down and a piece of fabric in the shape of a garland.[69] It may be that the Boero brothers, who were active in the second half of the nineteenth century, copied the motifs from bells cast by Giovanni Bozzoli. It is worth noting that bells cast in Genoa hang from a bell tower that witnessed Genoese rule in Pera. The reason why these bells were imported from Genoa is unknown; perhaps the community of Saint Benoît had a contact in the Ligurian city or one of the monks was from there. That Saint Benoît acquired bells cast in Western Europe is not surprising; since bell ringing had been forbidden for centuries, there was no significant bell casting activity in the Ottoman Empire and so churches had to import the instruments from abroad.[70]

Bells were not only found in Catholic churches of Pera. Through the work of Reverend Robert Walsh, who was twice chaplain of the British embassy in Istanbul (1820–1828 and 1831–1835), we learn that bells were employed elsewhere. One of which was the chapel of the British Palace; this was a small building located in the garden of the embassy. In fact, Walsh informs us how the bell of the chapel was introduced:

> A bell stood at the palace gate, to announce the approach of visiters to the Ambassador, whose rank was declared by the number of strokes given. The Turks hold bells in religious service as an abomination; so no sects were allowed to use them for the place of worship. . . . It occurred to me, however, that the same bell which rang at our gate for the honour of man, might be also allowed to do so for the service of God, and his Excellency, to whom I mentioned the idea, thought so too. He accordingly applied for the permission to have it tolled on Sunday, to announce our time of service, and it was granted; so that our congregation, I believe, was the first that was permitted in Turkey to assemble by tolling a bell. The sound of a bell on Sunday, and divine service, are so associated together in our minds in England, that even this little privilege in a foreign country is felt as a grateful favour.[71]

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62 Girardelli, "Architecture, Identity, and Liminality," 252, fig. 21.
63 Ibid., 240.
64 Niewöhner, "Saint Benoît in Galata," 176.
65 On the top section of the main body, the inscription reads "LAUDATE DOMINUM DE CAELIS. 1839." This is the first verse of Psalm 148 (Praise the Lord from the heavens), followed by the year of production.
66 Giovanni was still active in 1843, when he cast a bell for a church in Sestri Levante, Eastern Liguria, Cristina Barbarossa, *Campane e campanari nella Liguria di Levante* (Chiavari: Grafica Piemme, 2006), 365.
67 On the top section of the main body, the inscription reads "BENEDICTUS DOMINUS DEUS ISRAEL and 1856." These are the first letters of the Latin version of the Benedictus (Blessed be the Lord God of Israel), also known as Song of Zechariah (Luke 1:68–79), followed by the year in which the bell was cast.
68 The Boero brothers also cast bells for other churches in the Ottoman Empire; for instance, in 1877, they cast four bells for the church of the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem. They were active since at least 1850, when they cast two bells for a church in Santa Vittoria di Libiola, Eastern Liguria, Barbarossa, *Campane e campanari*, 334.
69 In 1860 the Boero brothers cast a bell for the church of San Siro, Genoa, that also shares all these features.
70 Alex Rodriguez Suarez, "Two Church Bells from Antalya: Traces of the Religious Soundscape of the Late Ottoman Period," *Adalya* 23 (2020): 525.
71 Robert Walsh, *A Residence at Constantinople, during a Period Including the Commencement, Progress, and Termination*

Thus, at least one non-Latin chapel in Pera employed a bell just before the Tanzimat reforms. This was not the first bell to be rung for religious purposes in Turkey, but it might have been among the first ones to do so in Istanbul. Since the bell was used for household purposes, the instrument was probably rather small. In any case, Walsh's account highlights the significance of the event. The congregation amounted, according to him, to about fifty individuals: the ambassador and his family, British merchants, and some French Huguenots.[72] That is, the use of a bell at the British chapel was intended for a Western audience; the bell reproduced the religious soundscape that these individuals knew back home. That the bell was first used at the gate of the embassy shows that Europeans imported the various uses for which such instruments were employed in their countries. The request of the ambassador to use the bell in the chapel is proof that the pealing of bells for religious purposes was still strictly forbidden by the Ottoman authorities. That the petition was granted, however, reveals a change in the latter's approach. Bells were also found in the Prussian embassy. Reporting a minor earthquake, Walsh tells us that it was "distinctly felt in the upper rooms of the British Palace, and in the Prussian Palace the bells were all set ringing."[73] It is unclear if these objects were used to call the embassy staff or to announce the religious service, perhaps both.

Pera was the first area of the Ottoman capital to openly experience the pealing of bells for religious purposes since the Middle Ages. The combination of several causes led to this reintroduction. First, the embassies of Western European countries were located there. A few had their own chapels; for example, France and Great Britain. Moreover, the embassies of Catholic states such as France and Austria protected Latin foundations in Pera.[74] Second, the role of Great Britain, France, and Austria in the politics of the eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans gained momentum throughout the nineteenth century. Finally, the Ottoman Empire faced many challenges and threats in the 1800s. The difficult situation of the empire required a new attitude towards Western powers. Consequently, it is no surprise that the Ottoman authorities allowed their chapels and the churches they supported to employ bells. The freedom to use the instruments differentiated them from the other churches in Pera, for instance, Greek Orthodox foundations, which could not announce their services through sound. For a few decades, the pealing of bells highlighted the privileged position of the Latin (and Western) community in the capital. This is demonstrated by a petition dated to October 18, 1855, which members of the Greek Orthodox church of Saint John submitted to Fuad Pasha (1814–1865), the Ottoman minister of foreign affairs. In the document, drafted in French, they requested that the Ottoman government grant the authorization to install bells in their church so that they can call the faithful to service.[75] In order to make their case they note that all Latin churches in Constantinople already employ bells for that purpose. Ultimately, in 1856, the proclamation of the Imperial Reform Edict granted equality to all subjects of the Ottoman Empire, regardless of their religion.[76] While the document does not actually mention the religious use of bells, churches and monasteries slowly obtained the permission to employ them. Consequently, the other Christian churches in Pera began to acquire bells as well. A few were placed in grand bell towers; one such case is that of the Greek Orthodox church dedicated to the Holy Trinity. Built next to Taksim Square, it was completed in 1880. The pealing of bells and the construction of bell towers can be regarded as sonic and visual indicators of the rapid decline of the Ottoman power.

of the Greek and Turkish Revolutions (London: Frederick Westley and A. H. Davis, 1836), 1:234.

72 Walsh, *A Residence at Constantinople*, 1:235.

73 Ibid., 2:114–115.

74 Belin, *Histoire de la latinité*, 178. According to Walsh, "The other Frank nations had their respective places of worship in other parts of Pera, consisting of about six thousand persons, under the protection of their respective embassies." Walsh, *A Residence at Constantinople*, 1:235.

75 "Ils désirent ardemment obtenir de la Sublime Porte l'autorisation d'établir dans l'église de Saint Jean de Galata, ... des cloches pour appeler les fidèles au service divin, ainsi que cela se pratique dans toute la chrétienté et même dans toutes les églises Latines de Constantinople." BOA, HR.TO. 421/17/1 (October 18, 1855).

76 Rodriguez Suarez, "Two Church Bells," 523.

Conclusion

The pealing of bells dominated the soundscape of Western Europe. Consequently, Europeans took the practice wherever they settled. In Pera, the sound of bells and likewise its absence provides details about the political and religious history of the Latin community. For almost two centuries, from the establishment of the Genoese colony until the Ottoman takeover, bell ringing was the most important element of the soundscape of Pera. Churches and monasteries employed bells to call the faithful to mass while the communal government rang them to control the everyday life of the settlement. The Genoese colony was located in the East, but its soundscape recalled a city in the West. The surrender of Pera to Mehmed II resulted in the sudden interruption of all bell ringing. Bells were seized and the *ezan* was introduced. This aural change symbolized the new ruling power, the Ottoman Empire, and its official religion, Islam. Until the nineteenth century, the Latin population of Pera did not contribute to the religious soundscape of the settlement. In a few cases, bells were employed, but these instances did not have any impact in the public sphere. The use of church bells was allowed in a few locations of the Ottoman Empire; however, the instruments were forbidden in Pera for more than three centuries. This compulsory silence indicated the subordinate status of all Christian communities in the Ottoman capital. The reintroduction of bell ringing in the first half of the nineteenth century was a major change in the sonic history of Pera. Even though its Latin population was small, this was the first Christian community in Istanbul to ring bells again. The privilege resulted in the emergence of a multi-confessional soundscape. From that time onwards, the *ezan* and the pealing of bells coexisted—that is, sound represented a religion other than Islam. The church bells of Pera can still be heard today. The artifacts, which are important instances of material culture, await to be examined. Their study will bring to light an untold chapter of the history of the Ottoman capital.

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