



THE ORIGINS OF BELL-RINGING IN KIEVAN RUS

BOHDAN KINDRATIUK

Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, Ukraine

bohkind@ukr.net

There is a long history of gathering information about the thousand-year existence of percussion. On the basis of archeological findings, collecting and classification of antique monuments of bell-ringing culture in different parts of the world, English and German encyclopedias have introduced articles with illustrations of sources concerning the history of bells. However, Kievan Rus and its role in spreading bells and bell-ringing have remained unmentioned. In the event that bell founding is noted in this territory before the 13th century, it is referred to as having taken place in Russia.¹

The existence of bells and bell-ringing in the territory of Rus or Ukraine within Russia was to a certain extent covered by special Russian scientific studies which appeared since the second half of the 18th century.² However, they were often written following the Moscow methodology of history and there were no references to the so-called Belarusian-Lithuanian chronicles where bells and bell-ringing are also mentioned.

Campanological research on the factual evidence of bell-ringing of Kievan Rus was obstructed in the USSR by the struggle of the Church, the destruction of bells, the ideological orientation of the humanities and the control over their development, the limited access to archives, the ignoring and even the destruction of many documents, and the falsification of sources. Some references to bells were made in Soviet publications from time to time but they were, as a rule, based on Russian research that had been conducted before 1917. New archaeological findings which confirmed the development of bell-ringing in Kievan Rus³ were not always taken into consideration. At the same time there were attempts to summarize the history of bellfounding in Ukraine. As their manufacturing took place concurrently with the production of cannon⁴, this topic was highlighted in the works of researchers who studied bell alloys, techniques of founding and information about the masters.⁵ This is perhaps why the existence of bells and the development of the art of bell-ringing on the territory of Kievan Rus have occupied a humble place in the history of Ukrainian culture until quite recently.

1 "Bell." *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*. Volume 2. Chicago–London–Toronto–Geneng 1993, 67.

2 Никаноров, А., Старостенков, С. "Опыт библиографии по русской кампанологии 1785–1940 гг." *Рукописные памятники, вып. 5: Из истории музыкальной культуры*. Санкт-Петербург 1999, 179–213.

3 Каргер, М., *Древний Киев: в 2-х томах*, т. 1. Москва–Ленинград 1958, 378–379.

4 See, for example: Сидоренко, В. "Зброя місцевого виробництва на Україні епохи визвольної війни." *Український історичний журнал* (1978/9), 75–80.

5 Петриченко, А., *Книга о литве*. Киев 1972; Жолтовський, П. *Художнє лиття на Україні в XIV–XVIII ст.* Київ 1973.

The analysis of the origins of bell-ringing necessitates some discussion on the meaning of rhythmic beats and ringing sounds in a primitive culture. Percussion occupied a significant place in the daily toil and the spiritual life of the different cultures which inhabited the territory of modern Ukraine. The consolidation of the Eastern Slavs into tribal unions ruled by princes and the appearance of fortified centres as well as their growth into industrial cities further facilitated their use.

The adoption of Christianity in Kiev and the establishment of a written culture predetermined the development of new literary and artistic genres., and the custom of bell ringing began to develop at the time the Christian liturgical cycles were adopted. Its rapid development resulted in the overlap of the new with the old; the former well-established use of idiophones received a fresh impulse in the development of bell-ringing in different spheres of life. However, not everything is yet clear about the beginning of church bell-ringing in Kievan Rus. The problem concerns the determination of the earliest place and time of the use of bells and their distribution after the Mongol-Tatar invasion. Archaeological monuments should provide information concerning this. By complementing this information with other sources, it should be possible to confirm the existence of the art of bells as early as the Kievan Rus period.

The construction of churches and monasteries in Kievan Rus, in Kiev itself in particular, promoted the dissemination of bells and the development of a bell-ringing culture. The city was famous for the St Sophia Cathedral, decorated with frescoes and mosaics, as well as for the monastic complexes, churches with sacred images and its fortifications, featuring the Golden Gate. Laws established in the 13th-century "Russian Truth [Law]" ("Ruska pravda") helped strengthen the Kievan state. The princes, Yaroslav the Wise (c. 978–1054) in particular, ensured the rise of education, gathered copyists and writers, created libraries; chronicle codices, among which there were some with illustrations, were written. Knowledge of different spheres was accumulated, a phenomenon facilitated by the dissemination of books.

The increase in the number church manuscripts testifies to the development of liturgical singing⁶ and to the further establishment of Christianity in Rus. At the same time, all this affirms the formation of reliable sources concerning the history of bell-ringing.

At first, the bells were perhaps imported. The first bells were called by the term "*kampan*", deriving from the Latin *campana*, in turn likely referring to Campania, a province in southern Italy, which had the best ore for smelting bell bronze. It could thus be suggested that the expansion of the use of bells into Slavonic territory originated in the Adriatic region, supported by the importation of such products from Germany.⁷ At the same time, the Germans influenced the Polish with their manufacturing of bells, which in turn had a notable impact on the Ukrainian *lyudovisarstvo*.⁸ In order to confirm that the bells were brought not from Byzantium, where they were not established until the 9th century, but from the Latin West, there is a story in the Venetian chronicle of Deacon Ioann about a gift from the doge Orso, who presented twelve bells for newly-built cathedral of St Sophia in Constantinople in approximately 877–879.⁹ Yet this innovation did not become as widespread in the East as it did in the West.

The spread of bells in mediaeval Kiev is confirmed not only by chronicles but also by archaeological monuments. Two ancient bells of unique shape were found not far from the ruins of the Church of the Tithes. One of them was well preserved – cast bronze (40 and 44,4 cm, weight 2 p. 10 f.).¹⁰ The second one was broken and as if damaged by fire. Only its lower

6 Ясіновський, Ю., "Кулізм'яні нотовані пам'ятки княжої доби." *Записки Наукового товариства імені Шевченка*, т. ССXXXII: Праці Музикознавчої комісії. Львів 1996, 7–40.

7 Мурьянов, М. *Гимнография Киевской Руси*. 2-е изд. Москва 2004, 203.

8 Модзалевський, В. "До історії українського ліярництва (про людвисарів та конвисарів)." *Збірник секції мистецтв / Українське наукове товариство*, вип. 1. Київ 1921, 5. *Lyudovisarstvo* – from the 15th-century form of metal casting, manufactured from copper, mainly bells and cannons.

9 Б-в, Н., Р. В., Соловьев, Н. "Колокола." *Энциклопедический словарь*. Изд.: Ф. Брокгауз, И. Ефрон: в 43 т., т. XV: Керосин-Конкордия. Санкт-Петербург 1895, 722.

10 Закревский, Н. *Описание Киева*. Вновь обработанное и значительно умноженное издание с приложением

part and the crown remained. This bell is different from the rest in its appearance (it lacks inscriptions and images) and the quality of the metal. It is presumed to date back to the 12th–13th centuries.¹¹

There were bells also in the church in Irpin (known since the middle of the 11th century), which is confirmed by the finding of broken pieces of this instrument in 1833.¹² A whole bell with a hive-like shape (36,5 and 29,7 cm, from the 11th–12th centuries, of German origin) and some objects belonging to the church were found in the present Khoryv street in Podil, Kiev.¹³ A part of a bell was found on the ruins of an ancient church in Kudryavets,¹⁴ and yet another remnants of a bell with letters “Н” and “И” were found in the centre of the city among the ruins of a stone temple from 12th century, which the chronicles leave without mention.¹⁵

If, initially, the bells were imported, captured or bought, later they may have been founded in Kiev itself. We find confirmation for this in a discovery near the village of Sovok (Pronivshchyna – now within the city), where 32 pieces of copper weighing 13 pounds, possibly originally parts of casters, were found among coal and loam.¹⁶ That parts of the bells were founded locally we have proof of in a broken piece of a bell with a part of a relief inscription in Cyrillic letters (“ть”...), found in the present Velyka Zhytomyrska street, not far from the ruins of houses from the 13th century.¹⁷

The founding of bells requires great care and responsibility, and the masters of Rus learned how to arrive at the correct composition of the bell alloy. This is confirmed by the results of chemical-analytical research on 11 fragments of bells from the Pre-Mongol time, from ancient Putyvl, Pereyaslavl, Izyaslavl, Horodesk, Voyin, Sakhnivka, Kiev and Mstyslavl. The data obtained showed a high empirical level of physical and chemical knowledge on the part of the masters, skill in treating the metals and alloys and continuity in the development of this complex craft.¹⁸

Bells and their fragments are described in the archeological findings from all parts of the territory of Ukraine. A copper bell was found in Vshchyzh in Chernigiv Principality.¹⁹ In the small towns of the Kievan land, where it is hard to imagine that any bell foundry workshops could have been, monuments of bell-ringing are also found. First of all, there is a copper bell weighing 3 poods, the upper part of the bell having a loop-like crown (which resembles the bells of a particular shape discovered near the Church of the Tithes), found in the fortified settlement Divych-Gora near Sakhnivka (now the Korsun-Shevchenkivskiy district of the Cherkasy region). On the Kniazha Gora, broken pieces of three bells were found, as well as the fastening of a small bell that was found in the fortified settlement of Ochakiv near Nabutiv village (both villages belong to the Korsun-Shevchenkivskiy district of the Cherkasy region). Fragments of an ancient bell were discovered on the so-called “Letska bozhnytsia” of Volodymyr Monomah (1053–1125), and a broken piece of a bell in the fortified settlement of Sniporod (Snieporod).²⁰

Analysis of abundant archaeological material shows that one of the centres of metallurgy mentioned in chronicles was Horodesk (today the village of Horodsk in the Korostyshiv district,

рисунков и чертежей, т. 1. Москва 1868, 289. Hereinafter the first figure will signify the height of the bell, and the second its lower diameter.

11 *Указатель святыни и священных достопамятностей Киева*. Киев 1850, 128; *Указатель святыни и священных достопамятностей Киева*. Изд. третье, исправ. и доп. Киев 1867, 181.

12 “Документы, известия и заметки.” *Киевская старина* (1889/XXVI), 252.

13 Даркевич, В. *Произведения западного художественного ремесла в Восточной Европе (X–XIV вв.)*. Москва 1966, 10.

14 Каргер 1958, 378.

15 Боднар, Н. “У Києві виявлено досі невідомий храм *Нова Зоря*.” *Івано-Франківськ* (2003/24 верес.), 2.

16 Модзалевський 1921, 11.

17 Каргер 1958, 378–379.

18 Шашкина, Т., Галибин, В. “Памятники древнерусского колокольного литья (результаты химико-аналитического исследования).” *Советская археология*. Москва (1986/4), 236–237, 241.

19 Філиць, Б. “Музична культура східних слов’ян.” *Історія української музики: у 6-ти томах, т. 1: Від найдавніших часів до середини XIX ст.* / Л. Архімович, Т. Булат, М. Гордійчук (відп. ред.) та ін. Київ 1989, 142.

20 Каргер 1958, 378–379.

Zhytomyr region). A series of findings, bells in particular, affirm that it was also a significant church centre.²¹ Here there was discovered a bell (43 and 34,5 cm, weight 19,4 kg) from the 11th–12th century Germany (Saxony ?);²² its clapper was missing. At the height of 27 cm from the base, there was an inscription around its circumference: GODEFRIDUS. ISTUT. VAS. TITULAVIT (“This vessel is named Gottfried”). It is presumed to have been cast in Germany, the largest centre of bell casting in the 11th–13th centuries in Europe. Its hive-like shape allows one to propose that the bell dates back to the 11th–12th centuries.²³

In princely Galych, many parts of broken church bells were found in the lowest “layer of ruins, mostly on the surface of the foundations of [Uspenskyi] cathedral”.²⁴ On the basis of facts discovered, in particular the fragment of the crown of a large bell from the 12th–13th centuries found on the fields of ancient Galych, it is possible to state that such pendulous instruments were widespread in Kievan Rus.²⁵ Many wooden churches have been discovered in different kinds of ancient settlements (towns, castles, monasteries, villages). This enables archeologists to speak about the considerable spread of wooden churches of various types and forms in the territory of Galicia in the 12th – first half of the 13th centuries.²⁶ In big cities, sacred buildings were made mostly from bricks. In ancient Galych alone, which occupied over 80 square kilometres, approximately 40 churches²⁷ were in function. There were also many monasteries. Among the archeological materials from the princely age, a broken piece of a bell (second half of the 12th – beginning of the 13th centuries) found in Krylos is particularly valuable. It allows us to confirm that at that time, the period of the prospering of Galych mentioned in the chronicles, there was a wooden church-chapel which could also function as a bell tower.²⁸

In Volodymyr at Volyn, during the search for a church mentioned in the ecclesiastical chronicles of the year 1291, archaeologists also unearthed part of a bell.²⁹ A similar fragment was found in a 14th-century archaeological layer in Berestya (Brest), which belonged to the Principality of Galicia–Volhynia.³⁰ These examples also bear witness to the popularity of bell-ringing in the Rus.

The numerous findings of bells and parts of bells give more credibility to the records of the recollections of an Arabian traveller, Al-Masudi (between 920 and 950), who describes, in a variety of Slavic cities, churches with attached bells “that are beaten with a hammer – like us, Christians beat with wooden hammers on a board”.³¹ It seems that not all bells had beaters or used this technique of bell-ringing to produce a better sound. At the same time, it could be argued that there are no reasons to associate the appearance of bells in Rus only with the date of its official baptism, because there are many hints of their earlier use.

Even after the baptism of Prince Volodymyr in 988 in Korsun (Chersonese), the Ipatiyiv Chronicle does not mention bells among the church utensils that were brought: “Volodymyr, having taken a queen [Anna], with Anastas, and the priests of Korsun, brought relics of St Clement and his follower Fiv, church utensils [and] icons”.³² In the present author’s opinion,

21 Толочко, П., *Киев и Киевская земля в эпоху феодальной раздробленности XII–XIII веков*. Киев 1980, 157.

22 Даркевич 1966, 14, 66. Similar “hive like” bell of Saxon origin was found near Divgolts (to the North of Bremen) (*idem*, 10).

23 *Idem*, 14.

24 Пастернак, Я., *Старий Галич: Археологічно-історичні дослідження у 1850–1943 рр.* Краків–Львів 1944, 70.

25 Пеленський, Й., *Дзвони на Україні-Руси. Діло*. Львів (1910/126), 1.

26 Томенчук, Б., “Археологія дерев’яних храмів Галицького князівства.” *Вісник Прикарпатського університету: мистецтвознавство*. Івано-Франківськ (1999/1), 23.

27 Лукомський, Ю., *Архітектурна спадщина давнього Галича*. Галич 1991, 3.

28 Лукомський, Ю., “Воскресенська церква XII–XIII століть у Крилосі.” *Записки НТШ*, т. ССХІ: Праці Комісії архітектури та містобудування. Львів 2001, 296.

29 Малевская, М., Шолохова, Е. “Раскопки архитектурных памятников в Любомле и Владимире-Волынском.” *Археологические открытия 1975 года*. Москва 1976, 355.

30 Лысенко, П., *Берестье*. Минск 1985, 270.

31 Гаркави, А., *Сказания мусульманских писателей о славянах и русских (с половины VII века до конца X века по Р. Х.)*. Санкт-Петербург 1870, 125.

32 *Полное собрание русских летописей*, т. 2: *Ипатьевская летопись*. Изд. 2-е. Санкт-Петербург 1908, 101.

these very uncritically rewritten passages have been the cause of erroneous thinking concerning the bringing of bells from Chersonese.

The first mention of bells in the Kievan state is in a statement of the Novgorod Chronicle from 1066: “Vseslav [Polotsky, about 1029–1101] comes and takes over Novgorod [...] and removes the bells from St Sophia” (“Приде Всѣславъ [Полоцький, бл. 1029–1101] и възя Новѣгородъ [...] и колоколы съима у святыя Софіе”).³³ Yet this mention does not mean that the first bells appeared in this territory. The cultural-historical situation, based on the recognition of Kiev and the Kievan lands as the political, ecclesiastical and cultural centre of the Rus whence Russian clerical singing and the copying of liturgical texts spread and was organized both theoretically and practically, points to the role of the capital Kiev, as well as of the episcopal centres and monasteries of Southern Rus in the development of church bell-ringing. This conclusion derives from the suggestion that bells were used in Kiev much earlier than their earliest mention in the Novgorod Chronicle. (The situation changed only as time passed and Novgorod became one of the biggest cultural and spiritual centres of Rus. It was in Novgorod that, under Prince Mstislav I (1076–1132), the final edition of the “Tale of Bygone Years” (Primary Chronicle) was finished, forming the first historical myth “about the primary equality” between Kiev and Novgorod. In the 12th century, their rivalry shifted into an epoch when Kiev became “the mother of all Russian cities” and Novgorod remained a small frontier outpost on the edge of the Veps and Ingrian lands³⁴.)

“The Tale of Igor’s Campaign” confirms the spreading of bells and of the culture of bell-ringing in Kievan Rus through descriptions of their use in liturgies and mentions of sonorous bells from Polotsk that were rung at St Sophia (“Toll a bell in the morning for morning prayer”). The author of the “Tale”, as an expert of the past, either points directly to bell-ringing or uses a metaphor, but either way, he clearly wants to show that bells and bell-ringing were understood as a ceremonial, solemn, glorifying action: “Horses neigh at Sula – glory tolls in Kiev”.³⁵

The chronicles speak from time to time about the summoning of popular assemblies through bell-ringing. When the enemy troops surrounded Volodymyr at Volyn, “the townsfolk tolled popular assembly”.³⁶ In 1149, Prince Iziaslav Mstislavich (c. 1097–1154) of Kiev, that is Volodymyr-Volyn, came with his military brigade to his son Yaroslav (†1178) to Novgorod, and on the second day “sent Iziaslav to Yaroslav’s yard” and started to toll, and then the Novgorod Pleskovichi gathered at a meeting³⁷. Such facts imply a custom of summoning people to meetings, popular assembly, in particular, with the help of bell-ringing. Later, when the prince of Lithuania and Rus, Mingailo Erdzyvinilovich (12th century), who ruled in Novgorod, gathered troops from the whole of Rus and Viliya in Lithuania and marched off to Polotsk, the Polotsk people are reported as having “tolled a bell in panic”.³⁸

The rapid spread of bells and bell-ringing in Rus-Ukraine in the first centuries after the adoption of Christianity is explained both by the pre-Christian traditions of using the semantron, bells, or small bells, and by the historical fact that the baptism of Rus and the establishment of the new religion took place under the authority of a well-organized Church with a network of temples and monasteries with numerous priests who fulfilled their duties diligently and took care that the people followed ecclesiastical instructions.

Prior to the Mongol-Tatar invasion, there were 17 (?) eparchies in Rus. A number of parishes and monasteries had been founded. The way of life in the monasteries required the daily use of

33 “Новгородская первая летопись старшего извода (Синодальный список).” *Новгородская первая летопись старшего и младшего изводов* / ред. и предисл. А. Насонов, отв. ред. М. Тихомиров. Москва–Ленинград 1950, 17.

34 Уханова, Е., “К вопросу о месте Мстиславова евангелия в культуре Древней Руси конца XI – начала XII в.” *Palaeoslavica* 14. 2006, 17.

35 *Слово о полку Игоревім*. Вступ, ред. текстів, ритмічний пер. “Слова” і прим. Л. Махновець. Київ 1970, 25.

36 *Літопис руський*. Пер. з давньорус. Л. Махновець. Київ 1989, 152.

37 *Полное собрание русских летописей*, т. 2, 369–370.

38 Стрийковський, М., “Хроніка польська, литовська, жмудська і всієї Русі.” *Дзвін*. Львів (1990/4), с. 116.

wooden planks, the semantron and bells, and the fundamental principles of bell-ringing were followed particularly strictly. Later, larger monasteries featured sets of bells ranging from large summoning bells to small chimes. It is estimated that starting from the 10th up to the 13th century, approximately ten thousand churches were built.³⁹ Donations and gifts made up the main source of property in these churches. The Church became an important spiritual and cultural centre, and a great land-owner. The spread of bells and bell-ringing contributed to the building and equipping of new churches and monasteries. The chronicle confirms this in the description of the building of the Church of the Holy Virgin (*Desyatynna*) in the 11th century. The name of the church bears witness to the material support from Prince Vladimir who, after baptism, ordered this church to be given a tithe⁴⁰ which included church bells in the form founded originally in Western Europe. The Chronicle of 1051 informs us that the Grand Duke Iziaslav Yaroslavich (1024–1078) donated the Pechersk Hill to the newly-founded monastic cloister.⁴¹ Nestor the Chronicler (c. 1055–1113) often mentions villages owned by this monastery. The chronicles also mention gifts from Yaropolk Iziaslavych (†1086) to this monastic cloister.⁴² The chroniclers, probably somewhat hyperbolically, mention about 600 churches extant in ancient Kiev.⁴³

From around the same time, there is testimony that bells were also an important military trophy. This becomes clear in the chronicles, and particularly in a story about Prince Izyaslav Mstislavich who together with his allies seized the city of Putyvl in 1146. They plundered the local church of the Dormition and took, together with silverware, gold-decorated altar robes and service clothes, “books and bells”⁴⁴. Stories of taking bells from Kiev are very frequent.⁴⁵ After the seizure of this city in 1169 by the troops of the Volodymyr-Suzdal prince Andrey Bogolyubskiy (c. 1111–1174), “the churches were left without icons and books, robes and bells”⁴⁶. These examples indicate not only the considerable attention given to bells and bell-ringing by the compilers of the chronicles, but also the fact that there were “bells” – not “a bell”, which in turn signifies the use of more than one bell in the churches of Kievan Rus.

During the 11th–12th centuries, the vocabulary concerning bell-ringing vocabulary was formed: “било”, “благовѣствование”, “благовѣстникъ”⁴⁷, “колоколь трапезный”, “в колокола латыни звонят”, “колоколы разлишася”, “повелѣ сълѣяти колоколь великъ”, “колокольница”⁴⁸, “пономарь”⁴⁹ “повелѣ сълѣяти колоколь великъ”, “колокольница”, “пономарь”, etc.

After the capture of Kiev in 1240 by the Mongol-Tatars, bells continued to be founded in the Principality of Galicia–Volhynia which functioned as a *de facto* independent state for as long as hundred years after the enemy invasion. The process was advanced by the general development in the craft, particularly in the extraction of iron ore and the bronze foundry industry. It was based on a close connection with the tradition of foundries in Kievan Rus and was strengthened through the refugee movement from the east to the Galician–Volhynian lands. We find evidence of this in the chronicles that mention the “pavement [...] of copper and pure tin”⁵⁰ cast for a church in Kholm, the copper door of the Lyuboml church of Saint George.⁵¹ Besides craftsmen

39 Толочко 1980, 199.

40 Полное собрание русских летописей, т. 2, 109.

41 Летопис русьский, 97.

42 Idem, 271.

43 “Волынская краткая летопись.” Полное собрание русских летописей, т. 35: Летописи белорусско-литовские. Москва 1980, 119.

44 Полное собрание русских летописей, т. 2, 334.

45 Летопис русьский, 295, 418.

46 Полное собрание русских летописей, т. 2, 545.

47 Срезневский, И., Словарь древнерусского языка, т. 1, ч. 1: А–Д. Москва 1989, 86, 93.

48 Idem, т. 1, ч. 2: Е–К, 1256–1257.

49 Idem, т. 2, ч. 2: П, 873.

50 Летопис русьский, 418.

51 Idem, 448.

from the eastern principalities, foreign artificers played a significant role.⁵²

The biggest cities of Galician–Volhynian Rus (Volodymyr, Lviv, Peremyshl, Syanok, Kholm, etc.) were at the time already multinational. Foreign craftsmen – Armenian, German, Polish, Tatar, Jewish – settled in these cities.⁵³ There were favourable conditions for interaction between eastern and western cultural elements, and this was also reflected in the use of bells and ringing.

The political construction of the Principality of Galicia–Volhynia motivated its ruler, King Daniel (1201–1264), to strengthen the Church. With the aim of promoting Christianity he not only built churches and restored ruined ones, but in order to strengthen worship, he also equipped them with icons and books, as well as bells. After building a church dedicated to St John Chrysostom in Kholm by order of Daniel of Galicia, the masters were asked to cast some of the bells, while the rest he would “bring from Kiev”.⁵⁴

This favoured the production of bells in Galician–Volhynian Rus, of which we find another mention in the chronicles. After the death of the king’s nephew – prince Volodymyr Vasylykovich (+1288) – it was mentioned among his good deeds that “the bells are heard amazingly, the like was never heard in the whole land” (“поля же и колоколы дивны слышаніємъ, такихъ же не бысть въ всей земли”)⁵⁵. The new sound of these bells can probably be explained not only by better alloy, and the greater weight or quality of the foundry, but also by a new form that replaced the previous ones and enriched the overtone palette of bell-ringing.

Another evidence of the development of bell-ringing on the lands of the Principality of Galicia–Volhynia, following the traditions of the Kievan state after the Mongol-Tatar invasion, is the only completely surviving bell in Ukraine found up to the present, made in 1341 (its size large for its time: 85 and 71 cm, weight 415 kg⁵⁶) in the St Yuriy (George) church in Lviv. This creation of a master called Yakov Skora was skilfully founded, constructed with good proportions (comparison with the previous findings confirms that after the “hive-like” and “sugar head” bells, another type, the so-called “gothic” form, became widespread; correspondingly the sound also changed; it became more pleasant). On the edge of the bell there is an inscription: “This bell was founded for saint Yuriy in the times of the rule of Prince Dmytriy, through the efforts of Igumen Yevfymiy” (“Въ лѣто 6849 солянь бысть колоколь сїи святому Юрью при князи Дмитрии игуменомъ Евѣфимьемъ”)⁵⁷. Neither wars nor fires destroyed the most ancient of the largest bells in Ukraine which is still used for its intended purpose, together with a larger one and five small bells.

Bells are an important part of human culture and they have been known in Ukrainian lands from the ancient times. The introduction of Christianity to Kievan Rus provided a new impulse for the development of bell-ringing, new functions of which were established in church and secular life. This caused the appearance of local production of bells, methods of hanging them and diversified styles of bell-ringing, and bells and their sounds became one of the brightest elements of the acoustic space of cities, towns and villages.

52 Жолтовський, П., “До історії художнього лиття металу на західних землях України в XIV–XVII ст.” *Матеріали з етнографії та художнього промислу*. Київ (1957/3), 121.

53 *Літопис руський*, 418.

54 *Полное собрание русских летописей*, т. 2, 844.

55 *Галицько-Волинський літопис*. Дослідження. Текст. Коментар / ред. М. Котляр. Київ 2002, 153. The chronicler’s keen perception of the characteristic bell timbre provides us with a witness to the extraordinary level of musical skill among the people at that time and of the original reaction to bell-ringing.

56 Szydłowski, T., *Dzwony starodawne z przed r. 1600 na obszarze b. Galicji*. Kraków 1922, 88.

57 *Ibid.*