PAVLOV'S DOG AND THE LITURGY
LISTENING AND RECOGNITION IN GREGORIAN CHANT

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Izvleček: *Glasba, še posebej gregorijanski koral, je v življenju srednjeveške Cerkve funkcionirala tudi kot množina akustičnih spominov na različne dogodke dneva, različne čase in priložnosti. Med primeri, ki v razpravi prikazujejo glasbeno zaznavo časa s teološkim sporočilom, so zvonjenje cerkvenih zvonov, melodije Kyrie eleison, obrazci za petje beril, melodije himen in nekateri drugi melodični obrazci.*

Ključne besede: *gregorijanski koral, akustični spomin, kirial, glasbena teologija, gregorijanska semiologija*

Abstract: *In medieval life, church music, especially Gregorian chant, serves to create many acoustic memories: daily events and various times and occasions. Examples of this music perception of time include church bells, the melodies of the Kyrie eleison, chanted readings, the use of hymn tunes, and melodic formulae as theological messages.*

Keywords: *Gregorian chant, acoustic memory, Kyriale, musical theology, Gregorian semiology*

1. Preliminary remarks

My opening considerations regard acoustic perception and related conditioning in a context that may feel foreign even to practising Christians: the sounds of monasteries, both medieval and contemporary, which represent a closed system within which the passing of each day, week, and year is closely ordered through liturgy, manual labour, academic study, and recreational periods. Medieval monastic practices are noted in minute detail in *libri ordinarii*,[1] or ordinals with regard to liturgical arrangements, and *consuetudines*

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[1] Lohse, "Stand und Perspektiven."

for matters of everyday life and certain extraordinary events. As a result, we can explore the daily routines of spiritual communities from the Middle Ages as far apart as Cluny, St. Victor's in Paris, Salisbury, Trondheim, Melk, Salzburg,[2] or Esztergom, to name but a few. We are furthermore able to compare the historical details with today's practices and discover continuities and differences. Our knowledge, crucially, extends to the sound of the ancient monasteries: what was sung, and to a certain extent also how, and by whom. The actual sound of any particular choir of monks or nuns is of course left to our imagination – but that is not a problem limited to the field of Gregorian chant.

Second, I should briefly locate my thoughts within the exploration of hitherto neglected perspectives concerning the "oral and improvisational practices as well as the lifeworld of the [e.g. medieval] epoch and the deep impact that local conventions in society, culture, and mentality had on the perception of music."[3] The specific local conventions I hope to explore are variations in the daily performance of up to six hours' worth of liturgy, in which music plays a central role, well beyond mere aesthetics.

This insight leads my third preliminary remark: music is an integral component of the liturgy. It serves, principally, as a specific way of presenting liturgical text, which (with the exception of private masses historically and more recent developments in the last centuries) was rarely if ever spoken, but rather cantillated or chanted. Music, furthermore, creates its own liturgical structures.[4] Our impression of particular ecclesiastical events, or their specific audible instantiation, takes the form of melodies that are repeated at particular moments, days, or occasions, so that over time a particular feast will become firmly linked to one melody. *Silent Night*, for example, is clearly associated with Christmas, even though its text is less and less well known. The prisoners' chorus "Va Pensiero" from *Nabucco* has become an expression of Italian national identity, even though foreign occupation of northern Italy is a thing of the distant past. These are but some of the many ways in which a tune can become a crucial ingredient in identity; up to and including such seemingly irrelevant areas such as advertising jingles.

My fourth and final preliminary remark returns to Gregorian chant, within which all of the phenomena just outlined can be analysed and described. Such an analysis remains incomplete, however, without subjective evidence to underline and confirm its key tenets. Our primary point of view is an external one, focussing on the daily reality of a dwindling number of monks and nuns or canons who remain committed to the active practice of musical traditions. Our discussion must also include this internal point of view, however, thus allowing for a methodology that takes account of both historical examples and current practice—particularly where there is a high degree of consistency between the two, or where the latter has been developed and updated on the basis of the former.[5]

[2] For recent research concerning Austria cf. Klugseder, *Cantus Planus*.
[3] Flyer of the conference "Geschichte und Gegenwart," introductory notes.
[4] Cf. Prassl, "Liturgie verstehen durch Musik."
[5] Cf. Prassl, "Wovon man nicht sprechen kann."

2. Church bells: acoustic signs for the liturgy

A first consideration, then, concerns church bells.[6] Whilst few people would intuitively conceive of them as musical instruments or as an integral part of liturgical music, these bells have an important signalling function, during services and beyond. Liturgical rites rely on *campanae*, the large (nowadays usually machine-operated) bells in church towers and *nolae*, small bells to be rung by hand. Every major church will have a significant array of such bells, ordered not randomly but according to fixed historical conventions. The pentatonic scale a-g-e-c, for example, is a common sequence; frequently rung in combination with the d, after the intonation of a well-known antiphon to the Virgin Mary, the *Salve Regina*, according to the baroque melody.

Even today the ringing of bells is thus rarely random, but rather structured by a clear set of rules.[7] These conventions ensure that particular messages are associated with individual sounds: a mid-level bell may invite thrice-daily prayer, not unlike the muezzin's call from his minaret. The smallest bell is usually the death bell, spreading the news of a recent passing throughout the village, and accompanying the hearse's final procession. It is therefore entirely unsurprising that these sounds and our resulting experience condition those living within the respective social systems. Pavlov's dog struck with a vengeance when a young intern in a rural parish once activated the wrong set of bells, leading to a flurry of calls in the parish office enquiring as to the identity of the deceased.

To this day, a particular sequence of bells rung in the Basel Minster opens city council meetings. The Christian Sabbath is rung in on Saturday evening with a full set of bells, whereas mass on ordinary Sundays is announced by the three highest bells. The sound of the largest, and thus deepest, bell remains reserved for the highest celebrations and special events, such as a bishop's solemn entrance into his cathedral, or when the Pummerin bell at St. Stephen's in Vienna rings in the New Year.

Small bells are similarly used to give specific instructions in the course of the liturgy; for example, when it comes to poses such as kneeling. They also serve as particular acoustic accents of greater solemnity in festive music, be it in the Te Deum or the repeated Gloria of the Easter vigil. This practice was already described in the Seckau ordinal of 1592.[8] The use of bells is therefore also linked to a wide range of emotion, triggering and accompanying strong feelings from exultant happiness to deep sadness.

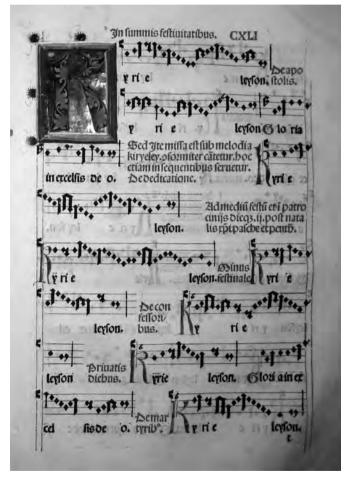## 3. Tunes as acoustic memories: the Kyrie eleison and readings

The use of certain tunes as acoustic memories and identity is equally well-known beyond the realm of the sacred: consider, for example, national anthems. In liturgical use it is frequently the melody rather than the text of a liturgical chant that signifies a particular feast

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[6] Weissenbäck and Pfundner, *Tönendes Erz*.

[7] Cf. Frei, "Nicht nur die 'Große.' "

[8] A-Gu 1566. A critical edition with comments was prepared by Réka Míklos (Ph.D. thesis at KUG Graz).

or category of celebration. The Kyrie eleison provides a fairly straightforward example.[9] By the High Middle Ages, every major metropolitan church or even diocese had its own cycle of compositions for the ordinary of mass, drawing on a combination of international and regional components to build its own repertory. The Kyrie *Fons bonitatis*, for example, was the universal Kyrie for the highest feasts; the Kyrie *Cum jubilo* for major Marian feasts, and the Kyrie *Cunctipotens genitor Deus* for major feasts of the apostles. The commonalities end there. Today's Kyrie for the ordinary Sundays, *Orbis factor*, was sometimes, but not always, found in that position, as Margaretha Landwehr-Melnicki's catalogue shows. Early prints of the Salzburg missals show the repertory of the medieval archdiocese, as for example in the printed *Missale* of 1498.

Musical example 1
Kyrie (*Missale Salisburgense*, 1498; with permission).

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[9] Landwehr-Melnicki, *Einstimmiges Kyrie*; Prassl, "Ältester Salzburger Liber Ordinarius."

All in all, there are eighteen different Kyrie variations, each dedicated to a particular liturgical occasion – fewer than in today's *Graduale Romanum*,[10] but certainly more than in the (in-)famous *Editio Medicaea* of 1613/14.[11] If one compares the use of particular melodies in the Salzburg missal of 1500 with today's practice, the continued use of key melodies can sometimes betray their deployment in entirely different contexts. The Kyrie *Fons bonitatis*, for example, continues to be used for major feasts; from Easter Sunday onwards, however, the so-called Kyrie *Paschale* takes its place (when in the original Salzburg scheme it would have only begun to be used *after* the Easter holy days, including Easter Monday and Tuesday). Today's Kyrie of the Apostles is found in Salzburg as the Kyrie *Ad medium festum* and of the second day of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, in the face of internationally prevailing trends. The Salzburg Kyrie *De apostolis* is the Kyrie XIV of the modern *Graduale Romanum*, a Kyrie of minor celebrations. The Virgin Mary's Kyrie, (Nr. IX of *Graduale Romanum*) on the other hand, is exactly identical.

The acoustic profile of a liturgical day is shaped not only by the prescribed musical repertory, but also by its concrete practice. The canon of Paris St. Victor will associate the Kyrie *Orbis factor* with Sunday; whereas martyrs will come to his Salzburg colleague's mind. The specific use of certain melodies creates a particular local flavour of the liturgy clearly distinct from its various neighbours – a fact noted in Salzburg in particular. There, even the cathedral (at the same time a house of Augustinian canons) and its immediately adjacent Benedictine abbey of St. Peter have come to rely on a distinct repertoire of Kyries, as noted by Stefan Engels:[12] historically, the degree of overlap was a lot smaller than today's attempts at more uniform practices would have us believe.

A further example of acoustic conditioning is preset tones for readings (Examples 2a–2c).[13] There is a clear order, in principle, as to which melodies should be used for readings from the Old Testament, for the letters of the apostle Paul, and which ones for the Gospels.[14] These melodies in turn are distinct from the melodies used in the Matins (the nightly liturgy).

One factor that can lead to significant disruption is the role of individuals in setting down liturgical standards. A recent example of this are different melodies for the orations in the Latin *Missale* editions of 1970 and 2002.[15] In each case, however, the basic principle remains unchanged: certain formulae enable the recognition of particular groups of text. Regular churchgoers will soon be able to determine whether a text is a prayer, reading, or Preface.

The complexity of these formulae was a clear sign of the importance of certain feasts, particularly in medieval times, as early printed Salzburg missals suggest. The basic principle is relatively straightforward. On the basis of basic syllabic recitation and repetitive structures, the melody becomes increasingly flamboyant. In an attempt to save space,

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[10] Recent edition: *Graduale Novum*.

[11] *Graduale de Tempore*.

[12] Engels, *Antiphonar von St. Peter*.

[13] An overview: Hiley, *Western Plainchant*.

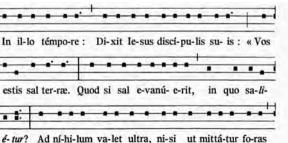[14] The present formulas are prescribed in: *Missale Romanum*, *Editio tertia*, 1145–1149.

[15] *Missale Romanum*, *Editio altera*, 940–941; *Graduale Romanum*, 800–802; *Missale Romanum*, *Editio tertia*, 1142–1145.
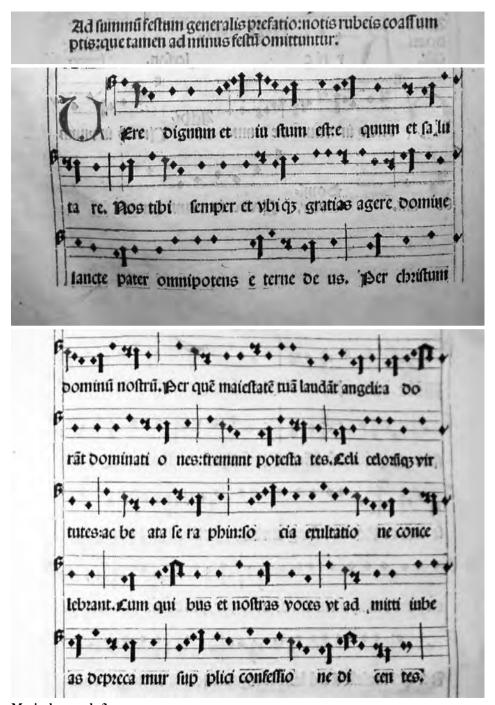
Musical example 2a
Reading tone (*Graduale Romanum*, 1974, 803; with permission).

Musical example 2b
Reading tone (*Graduale Romanum*, 1974, 804; with permission).

Musical example 2c
Reading tone for Gospel (*Graduale Romanum*, 1974, 805–806; with permission).

Musical example 3
Preface tones (*Missale Salisburgense*, 1498; with permission).

cunning printers expected a considerable degree of expertise and concentration from the clergy by printing two melodies in each space: the basic model in black, with additional ornamental notes overlaid in red. On high feasts everything is sung; on minor feasts only the black (Example 3). This ingenious economising device is, however, fairly limited in its geographical spread, according to my knowledge. Again, however, this illustrates the simple principle of acoustic hierarchy in operation: the more tones there are, the higher the feast and its celebration.[16]

4. Hymns and their function for memory

A particular *locus* of musical differentiation is the hymns[17] of the divine worship, the Liturgy of the Hours. Hymn melodies generally appear in dual roles. As all verses of a particular meter (such as the common meter, short meter, or long meter) can be set to any melody that follows the same meter, the potential for variation is nearly unlimited. Every English and American hymnal, for example, comes with an index of metres to allow the organist to replace lesser-known melodies with popular ones in order to perform a certain text. In this case, then, melodies become the neutral carrier of the text; they are "itinerant melodies" as we like to call them. They do not enter into a symbiotic relationship with the text, which would allow the latter to be experienced in unity with the former. The current catholic hymnal of Canada, *Catholic Book of Worship III*,[18] for example, lists five different texts that can be sung to the famous melody of the final movement of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, including the well-known hymn-text of Henry van Dyke: "Joyful, joyful, we adore you, God of Glory, God of Love."[19] The same was the case with many medieval *hymnaria*, which could sometimes operate with very few melodies indeed. A classic example of this trend is the late medieval Seckau Psalterium et Hymnarium, MS 204 of the Graz University library,[20] where the medieval and today's Eucharistic hymn *Pange lingua gloriosi corporis mysterium* is used as an itinerant melody for many sorts of occasions, like the feasts of St. Elisabeth and St. Catherine (Examples 4a–4b).

The opposite case is that of those hymn melodies that are exclusively associated with particular texts, occasions, and times. The melody accompanying the Advent hymn *Conditor alme siderum*, for example, could (in theory) just as well be used for the Pentecost hymn *Veni creator spiritus*, but it is not, and for good reason: seasoned users of these melodies would be astonished if one were to suggest such a disconnect, bringing together entirely incongruent music and text. The Pavlovian reflex clearly suggests that the acoustic impulse of an Advent melody may not be used in the Pentecostal context, or indeed any other – habit and conscious association cannot be tricked thus easily.

The *Liber Hymnarius* of 1983[21] suggests identical (medieval) melodies for all weekdays

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[16] Boorman, "The Salzburg liturgy."
[17] Cf. Haug et al., *Lateinischer Hymnus*.
[18] *Catholic Book of Worship III*.
[19] *Catholic Book of Worship III*, no. 511.
[20] A-Gu 204; no digital edition is available.
[21] *Antiphonale Romanum*, *Liber Hymnarius*.

Musical example 4a
"De sancta Elizabeth" (Hymnarium from Seckau, A-Gu 204, fol. 212r; with permission).

Musical example 4b
"De sancta Katherina" (Hymnarium from Seckau, A-Gu 204, fol. 213r; with permission).

in the ordinary time, even though the text of the *hymnus* of morning and evening prayer changes on a daily basis. The association of morning and evening with particular melodies is thus heightened – in contrast with the hymns of the Compline, where the opposite is true. The alternating texts of *Christe qui splendor et dies* and *Te lucis ante terminum* (which share the same metre) cycle through different melodies according to the particular day (Examples 5a–5d). In ordinary time, therefore, different melodies can be used for the normal days of the week, Sundays, memorial days, feasts, and solemnities.[22] In addition,
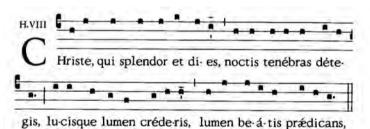
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[22] Ibid., 241–244.

Musical example 5a
Te lucis ante terminum, melody for the normal days of the week (*Liber Hymnarius*, 241; with permission).
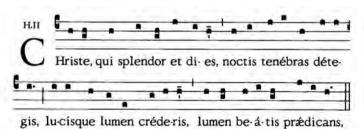

Musical example 5b
Te lucis ante terminum, melody for the feasts (*Liber Hymnarius*, 243; with permission).

Musical example 5c
Christe qui splendor, melody for the normal days of the week (*Liber Hymnarius*, 241; with permission).

Musical example 5d
Christe qui splendor, melody for the feasts (*Liber Hymnarius*, 243; with permission).

specific melodies are provided for Advent, Christmas time, Lenten time, Easter time, and Pentecost.

Similar considerations apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the constant hymns of the Little Hours: Terce, Sext, and None. The change of melody with constant text is a deliberate device to colour each liturgical occasion in a particular light, as suggested in the preface to the *Liturgia Horarum*.[23] Music thus defines the rank and character of each feast and liturgical time in a clear attempt to prevent boredom from setting in as a result of monotonous repetition. Key tenets of liturgical-theological theory remain unchanged, of course; individual aspects, on the other hand, vary according to the music through which they are presented. This provides an opportunity to experience space and time in manifold ways. It furthermore creates an expectation of a certain regularity in variation: the same should be repeated at similar times. This is not only a question of life experience, but also the desire for security and regular traditions, which can provide stability and security, but also tedium and chains, in human life.

5. Melodic formulae as theological messages

Further observations of the use of Gregorian chant in the liturgy show that melodies or melodic formulae can also be used as deliberate triggers or expressions of particular emotions or theological messages and connections.[24] A highly emotional formula, for example, can be found (with limited variations to fit each text) in contexts as diverse as "servasti vinum bonum usque adhuc" ("until now didst thou keep the good wine") in the communion chant *Servasti vinum bonum* of the wedding in Cana, and "quae dilexi valde" ("the orders of the Lord, which I loved above all else") in the offertory *Meditabor* of the second Sunday of Lent (Examples 6a–6b), or to the introit of the ninth Sunday of ordinary time nowadays, *Respice in me* to the text "et pauper sum ego" ("and I am very poor").[25] This is a torculus in which the middle note scales a major third above the tenor of its respective mode. The formula expresses high emotions, as well as emotions of joy, love, or pain and sorrow.
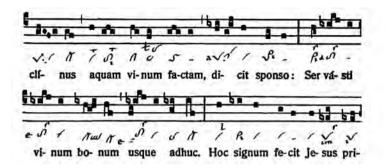
The common element in the use of this formula in different chants with distinct texts is its emotional expression. At the wedding in Cana, the good wine stands as an allegory of the eucharistic wine, which is now offered up on the altar in direct continuation of the miracle in John 2. This deep love for the word of God is the fruit of eternal meditation. The constant fascination with the depth of the word of the Scripture leads to a highly emotional identification with it. The prayer "Look at me and be merciful" is underlined by the cry "I am lonely and poor." It has become an expression of personal experience, a mystic realisation that envelops both performers and audience.

This observation cannot, of course, be the subject of empirical discussions, just as young lovers cannot discuss their relationship from an objective distance – and nor would

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[23] "Institutio Generalis," nos. 173–178, in *Liturgia Horarum*, 72–73.
[24] Cf. Prassl, "Gregorianische Gesänge"; Prassl, "Die Psalmenauslegung der Kirchenväter."
[25] *Graduale Novum*, 227, 74, and 256.

Musical example 6a
Communio *Dicit Dominus Implete hydrias aqua* (*Graduale Novum*, 227; with permission).

Musical example 6b
Offertorium *Meditabor* (*Graduale Novum*, 74; with permission).

they want to. It is a deeply subjective layer of the liturgy, in which the process of individual identification is driven by, and represented in, musical expression.

Particular quotes can create surprising cross-connections, as exemplified by the introit of the first Sunday of Lent. Its content can only be understood when seen against the context of the allegorical exegesis of the Bible in late antiquity and medieval times. According to St. Augustine, "Psalmus totus Christus"[26] ("in the Book of Psalms you will find everything about Christ"): the central Psalm 91 (90) of that Sunday prophesises Jesus' route to the events of Easter in Jerusalem. Several of its verses make up that Sunday's introit, in allegory to the voice of God the Father who talks about his Son at the beginning of the Easter week: "eripiam eum et glorificabo eum" ("I shall tear him out and will glorify him"). At the beginning of the path of the Passion we therefore find not an announcement of death, but of resurrection. This is impressively reflected in the music, which repeatedly cites a melodic formula that will be repeated in the *cantica* of Easter Night, not least with the specific melody of the announcement of the resurrection there (Examples 7a and 7b). With a suitable knowledge of the repertoire, these messages can be decoded to this day.

Another example is the opening of the introit *Laetare* of the so-called Laetare Sunday, the fourth Sunday of Lent, at the middle of this period of fasting and penitence.

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[26] Fiedrowicz, *Psalmus vox totius Christi*.

Musical example 7a

Introit *Invocabit* (*Graduale Novum*, 60; with permission).

Musical example 7b

Tract *Cantemus* (*Graduale Novum*, 152; with permission).

In today's time of abundance it is difficult to fully understand the emotions of those who had reached the halfway point in a period of strict abstinence. The music renders this emotion in the form of a curious introduction; namely, the standard cadence that is usually deployed at the end of a chant: to be precise, the Alleluia of Easter Night! On a Sunday that opens with the key message that "Jerusalem be happy," it is hard to imagine this as a mere coincidence (Examples 8a and 8b).

Final remarks

In the modes of hearings discussed here, the musical perception of time is a key element. Each hour is to be understood in the context of the day, each day in the context of the week, and each week in the context of larger time spans. In addition, there is the realisation of feasts and celebrations in the everyday context. This perception of time is, however, limited to "meaningful time," in which daily routines are interpreted in the light of their

Musical example 8a
The beginning of the introit *Laetare* (*Graduale Novum*, 83; with permission).

Musical example 8b
The beginning of Alleluia of Easter Night (*Graduale Novum*, 159; with permission).

background, their metaphysical aspects, and put in direct relation with them. Time in the context of the spiritual place is to be consciously experienced and reflected, as this time is also a directional time aimed at the eventual goal of life: eternity. In this sense, the liturgical year is rarely understood as a circle, but rather as a spiral: with each turn (that is to say, with each passing of another year) there is a deeper engagement not only with musical associations, but with the very essence of faith.

St. Augustine was deeply sceptical when it came to music in the liturgy.[27] He was frequently pained by the question of whether music would keep humans at the surface, or assist them in approaching the unexplainable. In the end, his own musical experience led the great teacher to favour sacred music as a crucial element of each liturgy—not, however, without attaching a crucial *caveat*: music would only be useful if performed professionally and to a high standard.

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[27] Cf. Kurzschenkel, *Theologische Bestimmung*, 123–130.

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PES PAVLOVA IN LITURGIJA: POSLUŠANJE IN PREPOZNAVANJE
V GREGORIJANSKEM KORALU

Povzetek

Zvoki (iz) samostanov so posebni primeri akustičnega zaznavanja, povezanega z glasbenim spominom. Vsaka ura je razumljena v kontekstu dneva, vsak dan v kontekstu tedna in vsak teden v kontekstu daljšega časovnega obdobja. Poleg tega imajo svoje mesto v kontekstu vsakdana še prazniki in slovesnosti. Takšna zaznava časa pa je omejena predvsem na "pomenljivi čas." V njem vsakodnevne rutine interpretiramo v luči njihovega vsakokratnega konteksta in njihovih metafizičnih aspektov ter jih z njimi neposredno povezujemo. Čas mora biti v kontekstu duhovnega prostora povezan z zavestno izkušnjo in refleksijo, saj je ta čas tudi usmerjeni čas, ki stremi h končnemu cilju življenja: večnosti.

V vsakodnevni izkušnji je zvonjenje zvonov strukturirano kot jasen niz pravil: pomeni namreč signale za dnevno rutino in izjemne dogodke. Različne melodije za Kyrie eleison predstavljajo različne značaje in stopnjo svečanosti praznikov tako v širšem kakor tudi v lokalnem kontekstu. Tovrstne "ključne melodije" služijo identiteti in ob uporabi besedil tako še dodatno ustvarjajo značilne liturgične strukture. Nizi obrazcev za petje

starozaveznih beril, pisem apostola Pavla in evangelijev ter drugi melodični obrazci prav tako ponazarjajo značaj, slovesnost praznika in liturgično funkcijo določenega besedila. Melodije himen lahko uporabljamo kot "potujoče melodije," ki so v rabi za več besedil hkrati, zelo pogosto pa se povezujejo predvsem z določenimi besedili, liturgičnimi priložnostmi in časom. Posebne melodije so namenjene posebnim priložnostim: akustičnega impulza adventne melodije binkoštni kontekst ne sme uporabljati. Nadaljnja opažanja o rabi gregorijanskega korala v liturgiji kažejo, da z določenimi melodijami in melodičnimi formulami lahko namerno sprožimo ali izrazimo določena čustva in teološka sporočila. Zveze med njimi, posebej v melodičnih citatih, lahko ustvarijo presenetljive navzkrižne povezave. Glasba gregorijanskega korala se tu zagotovo kaže kot sredstvo, ki nam pomaga pri približevanju nerazložljivemu.