

## A definition of Gregorian chant as concept and phenomenon and interpretational preferences from the point of view of present-day practitioners

Eerik Jöks

### Abstract

The article uses a quantitative sociological approach to find an answer to the question: How do present-day practitioners of Gregorian chant (1) define the concept and phenomenon of Gregorian chant and (2) describe their preferences in interpretation? The study is based on an international sociological survey among the performers of Gregorian chant conducted from 2006 to 2008 with 127 respondents. The results indicated that the respondents shared a vision of Gregorian chant as having a primarily spiritual value, considering Gregorian chant to be a form of prayer. The most important element in this shared definition is a personal and essential assessment, which is followed by various musicological and/or institutional definitions. As could be expected, the Roman Catholics prefer a significantly more institutional concept of Gregorian chant than respondents from other denominations. The common opinion in terms of interpretational preferences clearly emphasises the same values that are important in performing any musical repertoire. Specific properties associated with religious music and with Gregorian chant are believed to be less important, or there are different opinions about their importance. The regional origin of the respondents seems to be the main factor influencing interpretational preferences.