

## Circulating sound in the city: The procession in the context of Historical Sound Studies

### La circulación del sonido en la ciudad: La procesión en el contexto de los *Historical Sound Studies*

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#### Resumen

*Los conceptos de movilidad y redes están adquiriendo cada vez más relevancia en todo lo que se refiere a las cuestiones relacionadas con la circulación de músicos y sus repertorios, poniendo mayor énfasis, por ejemplo, en las trayectorias diplomáticas de transmisión e intercambio o en la difusión de música impresa a través de las rutas comerciales, el mercado y las ferias de libros. En general, el movimiento de personas —compositores y músicos— y el movimiento de objetos materiales —como libros de música o instrumentos musicales— constituye el enfoque prevalente en la investigación de la música histórica que abraza la temática de la movilidad y de las redes musicales. En este breve artículo, sugiero la posibilidad de una perspectiva distinta, proponiendo que si —como sucede en los Sound Studies— se considerara la relación simbiótica entre sonido y espacio acústico en términos de lo que se podría denominar un ‘objeto inmaterial’, entonces podría considerarse la posibilidad de desarrollar una aproximación más hermenéutica de la circulación del sonido en el entorno urbano, proporcionando así un punto de arranque para escribir una ‘historia conectada’ sobre la significación y el impacto de lo sonoro. El sonido circulaba en las ciudades de muy distintas maneras —a través de pregones urbanos y comerciales o en canciones acompañadas de instrumentos de mendigos y de músicos itinerantes— filtrándose en las calles por barberías y a través de ventanas del entorno musical doméstico. Sin embargo, las procesiones urbanas creaban una fluidez performativa (un flow) que comunicaba significado y aumentaba el impacto sonoro de lo que se escuchaba —a menudo en passant— por oyentes situados dentro del territorio acústico específico del circuito procesional. Las distintas procesiones —desde la magnificencia ceremonial del Corpus Christi hasta el sencillo canto llano de los cortejos fúnebres locales— formaban parte de los eventos cotidianos, transmitiendo los sonidos del ceremonial urbano al umbral doméstico. En definitiva, lo que sugiero es que, a través de detalladas historias locales informadas sónicamente, podrían compararse las ‘sonoesferas’ de distintas ciudades, incluso las de diferentes áreas geográficas y confesiones religiosas, con el fin de aproximarse a una historia conectada, concebida ‘desde abajo’ y pensada a partir de las prácticas cotidianas y del habitus social.*

#### Palabras clave

Sound Studies, *Historia conectada*, Habitus, Paisaje sonoro procesional, Comunidad acústica, Territorio acústico.

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### Abstract

*Questions of mobility and networks have become increasingly relevant to issues behind the circulation of musicians and musical repertoires, with greater emphasis on, for example, diplomatic channels of transmission and exchange, and the diffusion of printed music through book fairs and along trade routes. Movement of bodies —composers and musicians— and movement of material objects —such as music books or musical instruments— generally provide the focus of mobility and networking in historical studies of music. In this brief article, I raise the possibility of a different perspective, arguing that if, as in Sound Studies, the symbiotic relationship between sound and acoustic space is taken into consideration as what might be termed an immaterial object, it may prove possible to develop a more hermeneutical approach to the circulation of sound in the city, and to afford a starting-point for writing a connected history on its meaning and impact. There are various ways in which sound circulated through the city —through town and trade cries or the instrumentally accompanied songs of beggars and itinerant minstrels— and spilled out into the streets from barbershops and music-making in the domestic sphere, but the urban procession created a performative flow that lent impact and meaning to the sounds heard, often en passant, by those within ear-shot of the specific acoustic territory outlined by the processional circuit. Processions of many different kinds —from the ceremonial magnificence of Corpus Christi to the chanting of small-scale, local funerary cortèges— were daily events, and brought the sounds of urban ceremony to the doorstep. I suggest that through in-depth, sonically informed local histories, it should prove possible to make comparisons between different cities, including those in different geographical regions and confessional domains, and to approach a connected history written from the bottom up in the context of everyday, deeply habituated practices.*

### Keywords

*Sound Studies, Connected history, Habitus, Soundscape of processions, Acoustic community, Acoustic territory.*

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In this brief essay, I will focus on the mobilisation of performance and listening practices in connection with the circulation of sound in the context of urban processional ritual in the early modern period. Notions of circulation and mobility have opened up many new perspectives in the field of musicology, and the movement of musicians and diffusion of musical ideas, repertoires, styles and practices have become central issues in music history and historiography, while concepts of flow, networks, connection and exchange, much influenced by anthropological and sociological approaches, have filtered through what were once the perceived boundaries of musicology to increase awareness of the potential for cross-disciplinary research. For example, recent studies of the material culture of processions have taken into consideration how the potentially diverse meaning of processional objects was enhanced by movement, by taking such objects as insignia, relics or the Host along ceremonial circuits of significance to the inhabitants of the city. Pascale Rihouet, in her study of Renaissance Perugia, has argued that the sensory stimuli intrinsic

to these elements were heightened by movement,<sup>1</sup> while Andrew Brown has also addressed the kinaesthetic impact of processions on experience of them in medieval Bruges: *Participants in processions may experience values and symbols, but the key thing is that they do so while being made to move through structured spaces.*<sup>2</sup> Several questions arise here as regards the musics that circulated in processions: the extent to which sound can be considered to have been embedded in values and symbols and how these might have been conveyed sonically; in which ways movement highlighted the importance of sound in this performative act; and if it is possible to consider sound, with its intangible and ephemeral essence, as, paradoxically, a material object. I would argue that if, as in sound studies, the symbiotic relationship between sound and acoustic space is taken into consideration as what might be termed an immaterial object, it may prove possible to develop a more hermeneutical approach to the circulation of sound in the city, and to afford a starting-point for writing a connected history on its meaning and impact.<sup>3</sup>

Before I consider the potential of meshing urban musicology with historical sound studies, a succinct summary of the historiography of processional ritual, particularly as regards the recent shift of emphasis from text to act—or performance—might be helpful in analysis of the processional soundscape. In 1997, Edward Muir, one of the leading historians of civic ritual over several decades, suggested that processions were devised in such a way as to stimulate the senses *through musical performances, artistic splendour and sumptuous display*, thus making them more attractive and memorable for those residing in or visiting the urban milieu.<sup>4</sup> This emphasis on the historical procession as performance was relatively new, and led, in 2005, to the concept of the *performative turn* in studies of the history of ritual, as brokered by the cultural historian Peter Burke, although he preferred to use the expression *occasional turn*, since processions marked and were mobilised by occasions.<sup>5</sup> Burke acknowledged the influence behind this

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<sup>1</sup> RIHOUEY, P., *Art Moves. The Material Culture of Processions in Renaissance Perugia*, Turnhout, Brépols, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> BROWN, A., *Civic Ceremony and Religion in Medieval Bruges, c. 1300-1520*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> This would also involve other historical disciplines, such as sensory history and history of the emotions, but discussion of these aspects would go beyond the limits of this essay, and here I will focus on how the theoretical framework of historical sound studies might prove useful in the context of urban musicology [KNIGHTON, T., “Historical Soundscapes: Between Urban Musicology and Sound Studies”, in Lessa, E., Moreira, P. and Paula, R. T. de (eds.), *Ouvir e escrever. Paisagens sonoras: abordagens teóricas e (multi)disciplinares*, Braga, CEHUM, 2020, pp. 37-49].

<sup>4</sup> MUIR, E., *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 254.

<sup>5</sup> BURKE, P., “Performing History: The Importance of Occasions”, *Rethinking History*, 9/1, 2005, pp. 35-52, espec. pp. 44-45.

historical turn of anthropologists such as Victor Turner, who used the notion of *flow* to describe how the procession as performance moves into an intermediary or liminal phase in which its function within the community becomes open to multivalent interpretation and ambiguity.<sup>6</sup> Other historians have followed this line of thought, with Andrew Brown, for example, stating with regard to processional ritual in Bruges that *There was nothing certain about the effects of a procession, even if properly performed.*<sup>7</sup>

Burke went further to link the notion of processional fluidity with Pierre Bourdieu's more sociologically based concept of *habitus* and the principle of *regulated improvisation* in which a community's *practical sense* involved both intentional action and habituated behaviour in the creation of identity.<sup>8</sup> Within a given urban centre, the *rules* implicit in social behaviour—which would include the mounting of processions and the multivalent interpretation of the sounds that circulated with them—were inextricably linked to its geographical situation, topography, demography, institutional structure and networks and cultural practice and expression. Implicit knowledge (or *practical sense*) of the procession, and its sonosphere were ingrained in the social practices of daily life, and stored in the *habitus* consisting of *schemes of perception, thought and action that produce individual and collective practices.*<sup>9</sup> So the procession should be seen not only as performance but also as practice. In practice theory, individuals behave according to patterns that their community requires: such behaviour is not learnt only through regulation, but also through collective memory and implicit knowledge.<sup>10</sup> Practices can be seen as skilled behaviours, becoming automatic through repeated action (just as a trained pianist does not consciously think about fingering), so that *People move about in their social environment (...) supremely practiced at the subtleties of movement, posture, gesture, and expression that connect them with others as well as communicate to themselves who they are.*<sup>11</sup>

Monica Scheer does not specifically include sound in this list, but the subtleties of the sonic experience of processions—not only as regards sound type (bells, instruments, voices), but also as regards sound sources and their directionality, reach, ebb and flow, and the *acoustic habitus*—contributed to communication and the creation of a sense of identity

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<sup>6</sup> TURNER, V., "Frame, Flow and Reflection: Ritual and Drama as Public Liminality", in Benamou, M. and Caramello, C. (eds.), *Performance in Postmodern Culture*, Madison WI, Coda Press, 1977, pp. 33-55.

<sup>7</sup> BROWN, A., *Civic Ceremony and Religion...*, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

<sup>8</sup> BURKE, P., "Performing History...", *op. cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>9</sup> BOURDIEU, P., *The Logic of Practice*, Stanford, University of Stanford Press, 1990, pp. 53-54.

<sup>10</sup> SCHEER, M., "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and is that what makes them have a History)? A Bourdieuan Approach to understanding Emotions", *History and Theory. Studies in the Philosophy of History*, 51/2, 2012, pp. 193-220, espec. pp. 202-203.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 202.

among the urban community. It is suggested here that analysis of the moving sonosphere of processions as social practice might be assisted by drawing on concepts and methodologies from sound studies, and, in particular, those developed by Barry Truax, one of the pioneers in the field as a member of R. Murray Schafer's research group.<sup>12</sup> The concept of the acoustic community in which implicit (or *tacit*, the term used by Truax) sonic knowledge habituated in social practice enables sound to communicate information and allows for the ambiguity of meaning by which sounds are open to multivalent interpretation and have the potential to mobilise a range of emotional response. The acoustic community might be formed by the inhabitants of and visitors to the city as a whole, or by local or neighbourhood communities within the larger community, based on parish, confraternity or guild, as well as social, institutional or trade networks. Likewise, the acoustic territory delineated by a procession involved a greater or lesser occupancy or urban space according to its nature: a royal entry or major procession such as that held annually for the feast of Corpus Christi or patron saint followed a trajectory that brought the acoustic resonance of emblematic spaces into play; by contrast, the local confraternal processions, usually from the confraternity's *casa* or headquarters to the parish or convent church where it had a chapel or altar, occupied a much smaller territory, possibly of a few streets or even a single square. Such local processions, however, quite often brought civic ritual to parts of the city not traversed by the major processions. Members of an acoustic community acquired what Truax has described as soundscape competence, that is the ability of the community to communicate and self-identify through listening to the sounds produced in an acoustic territory. The ear-witness to a procession as it circulated sonically through acoustic space would have had an implicit knowledge of the prevailing structure of environmental sound gained through *lifelong exposure* (and, I would add, collective memory), that resulted in a *complex body of knowledge about how to recognise and interpret it*. In this way, sound acquires meaning that generates action in response to it.<sup>13</sup> Soundscape competence lies close to the ethnomusicologist Steven Feld's definition of acoustemology (a fusion of *acoustic* and *epistemology*) as an inquiry into what is *knowable, and how it becomes known, through sounding and listening*.<sup>14</sup> It also entangles

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<sup>12</sup> TRUAX, B., *Acoustic Communication*, Wesport, CO & London, UK, Ablex Publishing, 2001, pp. 57-58.

<sup>13</sup> TRUAX, B., *Acoustic Communication...*, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>14</sup> FELD, S., "Voices of the Rainforest: Politics of Music", *Arena*, 99/100, 1992, pp. 164-177, cited in WILBOURNE, E. and CUSICK, S. G. (eds.), *Acoustemologies in Contact: Sounding Subjects and Modes of Listening in Early Modernity*, Cambridge, UK, OpenBook Publishers, 2021, p. 6.

with the notion of the historical ear or, as coined in the November 1997 issue of *Early Music*, listening practice.<sup>15</sup>

I find these concepts are useful not only to the urban musicologist in general, but also to developing a theoretical framework as to how sound might be perceived as an immaterial object and thus more open to a connected history of the sonic aspect of processions. Before I consider a specific case study, based on recent research in Barcelona archives, the question of methodology needs to be addressed, since sound studies has primarily been concerned with sonic-spatial environments that can be assessed through fieldwork today, or through recorded sounds within living memory. Ethnography and acoustic measurement are two of the main methodologies proposed in sound studies, and already in *The Tuning of the World* (1977), Murray Schafer acknowledged the problem that this posed for historical soundscapes: *for the foundation of historical perspectives we will have to turn to earwitness accounts from literature and mythology, as well as to anthropological and historical records.*<sup>16</sup> In terms of the historical ethnographer *interested in the evolution of urban sociability*, the cultural historian James Amelang has reiterated the need for the range of historical records to be as broad as possible, highlighting documentation relating to criminal and Inquisitorial documents, those relating to associations such as confraternities and guilds, chronicles, memoirs and diaries and travel-writing.<sup>17</sup> In this way, the historical ethnographer may be able to tap into the *practical sense* of the social milieu as a whole.

Travel-writing has increasingly become a source used in urban musicology;<sup>18</sup> the written testimony of the contemporary ear-witness is of great value to the historian seeking to chart patterns of urban sociability, as well as the soundscape competence of acoustic communities within a city, often with a comparative element that has potential for the writing of connected history. However, as Amelang points out, historical ethnography based on travellers' accounts is limited by an individual traveller's

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<sup>15</sup> See also the October 1998 issue of *The Musical Quarterly*, dedicated to the history of listening, and, for example, ROSENFELD, S., "On Being Heard: A Case for Paying Attention to the Historical Ear", *The American Historical Review*, 116/2, 2011, pp. 316-334, and BOYNTON, S., KAY, S., CORNISH, A. and ALBIN, A., "Sound Matters", *Speculum*, 91/4, 2016, pp. 998-1002.

<sup>16</sup> Cited from the second edition, SCHAFER, R. M., *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, Rochester, VT, Destiny Books, 1994, p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> AMELANG, J., "The Myth of the Mediterranean City: Perceptions of Sociability", in Cowan, A. (ed.), *Mediterranean Urban Culture 1400-1700*, Exeter, Exeter University Press, 2000, pp. 15-30, espec. p. 22.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, CARRERAS, J. J., "Topography, Sound and Music in Eighteenth-Century Madrid", in Knighton, T. and Mazuela-Anguita, A. (eds.), *Hearing the City in Early Modern Europe*, Turnhout, Brépols, 2018, pp. 85-100, and FABRIS, D., "Urban Musicologies", in Knighton, T. and Mazuela-Anguita, A. (eds.), *Hearing the City...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-68.

relatively short stay in the city, a sojourn not usually sufficiently extended to discern embedded patterns of social (and acoustic) practice, despite his or her *acute interest in local customs and folkways*.<sup>19</sup>

The Swiss medical student Thomas Platter was a traveller with just such an acute eye—and ear. When he visited Barcelona in 1599, he commented on the way in which traders *sounded* each lot as it was put up for sale:

*Every Thursday, traders take their wares—clothing, foodstuffs, furniture and household utensils—to the site opposite their houses; they hang them on display-stalls set up for the purpose there; and they sell them, one item after another, to the sound of cries and trumpet calls.*<sup>20</sup>

This aspect of the daily soundscape of Barcelona attracted Platter's attention, perhaps because of the prime position and sheer length of the street (which he also commented on),<sup>21</sup> as well as the way in which these wares were displayed and sold. The acoustic cues of cries and trumpet calls vividly evoke the daily event in question, but the degree to which they differed from sounds of street selling in other cities is not mentioned, possibly because even an outsider to the acoustic community could easily understand the significance of these sounds, whether they differed or not. While street cries undoubtedly differed from city to city, the acoustic competence needed to interpret their essential message was not high, even though subtleties—not least linguistically—were surely lost.

Another sound—and one that circulated throughout the whole city— attracted the ear of the Swiss medical student, that of the blind beggars (*oracioners*) who gathered alms by singing prayers and songs to the accompaniment of plucked or bowed string instruments in streets, squares and doorways: *in exchange for a little money, they entertain the audience for some time in this way*, he comments.<sup>22</sup> Blind street musicians were also a common sight—and sound—in Italy and elsewhere,<sup>23</sup> but Platter's

<sup>19</sup> AMELANG, J., "The Myth of the Mediterranean City...", *op. cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>20</sup> LE ROY LADURIE, E. (ed.), *Le voyage de Thomas Platter, 1595-1599, Le siècle des Platter, II*, Paris, Fayard, 2000, p. 441: *Tous les jeudis, ces marchands portent leurs marchandises, vêtements, denrées, mobilier et utensils de ménage sur l'emplacement qui est vis-à-vis de leur maison; ils les accrochent à des étaliers qu'ils ont dressés pour la circonstance; et ils les vendent à la criée, un article après autre, au son de la trompette.*

<sup>21</sup> Platter is presumably referring to the carrer Ample that runs parallel to the sea, a major keynote sound of the city.

<sup>22</sup> LE ROY LADURIE, E. (ed.), *Le voyage de Thomas Platter...*, *op. cit.*, p. 480: *En échange pour un peu d'argent, ils divertissent ainsi l'auditoire, pendant un long moment*; see KNIGHTON, T., "Orality and Aurality: Contexts for the Unwritten Musics of Sixteenth-Century Barcelona", in Knighton, T. and Mazuela-Anguita, A. (eds.), *Hearing the City...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 295-308, espec. pp. 304-307.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, CARNELOS, L., "Street Voices. The Role of Blind Performers in Early Modern Italy", *Italian Studies*, 71/2, 2016, pp. 1-13, and DEGLI-INNOCENTI, L. and ROSPOCHER, M., "Street Singers: An Interdisciplinary Perspective", *Italian Studies*, 71/2, 2016, pp. 149-153.

attention seems to have been caught by the density of their presence in the streets of Barcelona and their ability to hold an audience. Not being a member of the acoustic community, Platter may well not have been aware of the subtler aspects of the association of the sound of string-instruments circulating through the city in major processions such as that for Corpus Christi or the feast-day of the Immaculate Conception. By the second half of the sixteenth-century, the blind *oracioners* were auditioned and hired by the city council, ecclesiastical institutions and confraternities to dress as angels and perform before the monstrance, image or relic mobilised by the procession; in this way they added a celestial dimension to the processional soundscape and gained official recognition and prestige for their contribution to it.<sup>24</sup> Only the local acoustic community would have been aware of this practice and its significance.

A little later in his account, Platter makes a comparison between French and Spanish dances, the Spanish dances being less elegant, in his opinion,<sup>25</sup> though his curiosity was piqued by the castanets played in the *sarabanda* —a sound he had clearly not come across previously—, and he bought some to send back to Basel.<sup>26</sup> Would this have marked the first time that castanets were seen —and possibly heard— in Switzerland? Whether or not this was the case, Platter’s castanets afford a glimpse into how sounding material objects might circulate between cities. The question remains, however, of how a connected history might confront the challenge of how sound was mobilised in different cities as an immaterial object, and how locally embedded sonic practices in one city might have had resonances in another. Amelang’s suggestion that an approach based on urban sociability works particularly well at a local, microhistorical level is pertinent here; the intensity of neighbourhood life means that *social relations are lived to the fullest with small-scale ‘micro-communities’, or cities within the city as a whole.*<sup>27</sup> Burke’s emphasis on the importance of the *occasional* is also helpful in establishing how different types of procession —and their respective soundscape— were mobilised within an acoustic community. For example, the rituals generated by death, including processions,

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<sup>24</sup> This aspect will be discussed in my forthcoming book entitled *Daily Musical Life in Early Modern Spain: Hearing Barcelona, 1470-1620*.

<sup>25</sup> LE ROY LADURIE, E. (ed.), *Le voyage de Thomas Platter...*, *op. cit.*, p. 485: *Les danses des Espagnols ne sont pas aussi élégantes qu’en France.*

<sup>26</sup> LE ROY LADURIE, E. (ed.), *Le voyage de Thomas Platter...*, *op. cit.*, p. 485: *on their thumbs they have instruments of wood or bone that they strike from above with their middle fingers, and this emits a very loud sound; they call these objects castanets, and I’ve sent some back to Basel (ils ont aux pouces des instruments en bois ou en os, qu’ils frappent dessus avec les doigts de milieu; cela produit un son très fort; ils appellant ces objets des castagnettes; j’en ai envoyé quelques-unes à Bâle).*

<sup>27</sup> AMELANG, J., “The Myth of the Mediterranean City...”, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

were common to all cities as habituated social practices whose essential meaning would have been understood, with many elements—including sounds—shared in urban contexts throughout western European cities and beyond. As Riitta Laitinen and Dag Lindström have pointed out, *funeral processions were an important social event and the street was their logical setting*,<sup>28</sup> and even these most basic, yet habituated commonalities might provide a starting-point for transnational study of the immaterial object that was the local soundscape of the ritual of death. Death-related ceremonial varied according to locally established custom, habituated ritual practice, the deceased's status within the community and the resources available and earmarked for such occasions. By taking a single parish as an acoustic territory within which the parishioners—of whatever social standing—formed an acoustic community not only reduces some of the variables, but could also establish a model by which comparison with other parishes in other cities might become viable.

A brief consideration of processions related to the taking of communion and extreme unction to the moribund, and funerary processions with the transferral of the body to the church and burial site in the parish of Santa Maria del Pi, Barcelona, through the lens of historical sound studies, might serve as an example here.<sup>29</sup> The acoustic territory of the parish church of Santa Maria del Pi was in effect demarcated by the everyday sound signals of death as the processions went from church to house and back, tracing a web of sound with the church as the centrifugal point. The acoustic borders of a parish were inevitably porous,<sup>30</sup> and it was the nature of the sounds and the demarcation of areas of sonic activity that determined the acoustic territory of the parish. As I have discussed elsewhere, the tolling of the parish church bells—all clearly differentiated by their size and distinctive timbre—<sup>31</sup> communicated information about the deceased, and the kind of funeral service they had specified by the number of tolls: twelve for a beneficed priest, nine for a Marian funeral

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<sup>28</sup> LAITINEN, R. and LINDSTRÖM, D., "Urban Order and Street Regulation in Seventeenth-Century Sweden", in Laitinen, R. and Cohen, T. V., *Cultural History of Early Modern Streets*, Leiden & Boston, Brill, 2009, pp. 63-93, espec. p. 75.

<sup>29</sup> This research forms part of the project I+D "The Contribution of Confraternities and Guilds to the Urban Soundscape in the Iberian Peninsula, c. 1400-c. 1700" (PID2019-109422GB-I00), financed by the Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación.

<sup>30</sup> The parish of Santa Maria del Pi was in large part bounded by city walls and market gardens so that beyond these fringes of the acoustic territory, the acoustic community would essentially have been non-existent, there being no ears to hear.

<sup>31</sup> Studies of bells as sonic communicators have proliferated in recent years (CORBIN, A., *Les cloches de la terre*, Paris, Éditions Albin Michel, 1994, and ATKINSON, N., *The Noisy Renaissance. Sound, Architecture, and Florentine Urban Life*, University Park PE, The Pennsylvania University Press, 2016, espec. pp. 121-151).

ceremony and six for a *sepultura general*.<sup>32</sup> This general principle of sonic social identification in death was common to other churches in the city,<sup>33</sup> as it was to other churches in other cities, but it was the members of the parish in question who formed an acoustic community with the soundscape competence to interpret the nuances of campanological communication and identity. Bell sounds also moved through the parish at street level, notably the handbells of confraternities based in the parish or convent churches that were rung to inform other members of the life-and-death situation of their colleague. Each confraternity had its own bell,<sup>34</sup> whose sound would have been recognisable to members and determined the actions of these acoustic micro-communities.<sup>35</sup>

The parish community as a whole was thus alerted by the sound of bells to the mortal illness and death of its members, and would also have been attuned to the almost daily sound of the different processions—last communion, extreme unction, funerary, burial—as they passed through the streets to the homes where they were needed.<sup>36</sup> The repertory of sounds included the recitation and chanting of prayers and psalms, handbells, the clanking of the censer as it was swung and the tread of priestly feet as the soundscape of the church entered the domestic domain. A wide range of documentation feeds into the microhistory of these occasions: the Ordinaries published in Barcelona in 1563 and 1620 provide details of liturgical practice; minutes of parish meetings and other documents shed light on how death rituals were enacted and formed part of the daily duties of priests; and wills of individual parishioners afford insight into their personal wishes in terms of place of burial, ceremonial, commemorations and endowments, including sung Masses, and the sound of singing, bells and organ (even, on occasion, wind band). The series of documents preserved in the archive of Santa Maria del Pi denominated *Funeràries* even permit the mapping of these death-related rituals; in addition to recording the date of the procession, its type, the name and trade

<sup>32</sup> KNIGHTON, T., “Historical Soundscapes...”, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>33</sup> PÉREZ SAMPER, M. A., “El patrimoni sonor de Barcelona: la veu de les campanes”, in Knighton, T. (ed.), *Els sons de Barcelona a l'edat moderna*, Barcelona, MUHBA, 2016, pp. 47-65.

<sup>34</sup> Handbells are often listed in inventories of the possessions of confraternities. For example, the Confraternity of the Most Pure Blood of Christ based at Santa Maria del Pi owned a *small copper bell to accompany cries (vna campaneta de coure per fer crides)* [Arxiu Històric de Protocols de Barcelona (A.H.P.B.), 383/64, Paul Mallol, Plec d'inventaris i encants, 1550-1586, (30-IX-1565), unfoliated].

<sup>35</sup> Members of confraternities were generally duty-bound to attend funerals of their confreres—and usually of their wives—and, according to statute, were fined if they did not provide a good reason for their absence.

<sup>36</sup> See KNIGHTON, T., “Music for the Soul: Death and Piety in Sixteenth-Century Barcelona”, in Filippi, D. V. and Noone, M., *Listening to Early Modern Catholicism: New Perspectives from Musicology*, Leiden, Brill, 2017, pp. 238-258.

or social status of the individual concerned, and the sonic resources they wished to involve in the ceremonial (number of priests, bell-ringer, chapel master, boy singers, organ), they also note the address of the moribund or deceased.<sup>37</sup> The trajectories of funerary processions from church to home and back again, the likely duration of processions and their occupancy of acoustic space can be analysed using techniques of digital cartography to assess and visualise the density and occupation of acoustic space and of sonic experience in different parts of the parish. Other written testimony in the form of synodal acts, sermons, religious literature, Inquisition records, chronicles and diaries deepens our knowledge not only of soundscape competence and habituated devotional practices, but also the interpretation of their meaning: for example, eschatological beliefs shared by the acoustic community, such as those relating to freeing the soul from purgatory.<sup>38</sup> The diarist Miquel Parets, a tanner, described the death of his son from the plague that swept Barcelona in 1651; the dying boy had visions of being surrounded by saints and angels, smelling sweet odours and hearing wonderful music, none of which was experienced by his parents.<sup>39</sup> Here the soundscape of death moves into a celestial dimension, and Parets interpreted this as a sign that his son, because of his youth, innocence and innate goodness would be taken straight to heaven.

A local or microhistorical approach to studying processions thus enables analysis of habituated social practices, such as those pertaining to the ritual of death, and helps to locate and identify an acoustic community and its soundscape competence. If sound is considered and analysed as being mobilised in this way as an intrinsic part of daily social communication and response, it can be viewed as an immaterial object, and one that was shared by many people across many cities with relatively minor variations that can be identified as local practice. On this basis, with a number of in-depth, sonically-informed local histories, it should prove possible to make comparisons between different cities, including those in different geographical regions and confessional domains, and to approach a connected history written from the bottom up in the context of everyday, deeply habituated practices.

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<sup>37</sup> The address is identified by reference to the street, but further descriptive details quite often enable a more exact location, as, for example, being situated where two streets intersect or opposite or next to a church or other landmark.

<sup>38</sup> KNIGHTON, T., "Music for the Soul...", *op. cit.*, pp. 234-242.

<sup>39</sup> AMELANG, J. S. (trans. and ed.), *A Journal of the Plague Year. The Diary of the Barcelona Tanner Miquel Parets 1651*, New York & Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 69-70. Parets's son was buried in the other main parish church of Barcelona, Santa Maria del Mar.

