

# SOUND IN/AS RELIGION

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## XXth QUINQUENNIAL WORLD CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS CALL FOR SYMPOSIUM PAPERS

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The principal goal of the symposium is to account for and redress the scholarly neglect of the relationship of sound, including music, to religion. By the same token, there is a need to develop the concepts and parameters of a sonic approach to the study of religion. How can such an approach balance acoustics and sound production with auditory experiences and listening practices, while not forgetting the mediatory role of interpretive communities? How should an acoustic turn in studies of religion relate to the broader sensory turn in anthropology and cognate disciplines? What are the merits and the dangers of singling out sound among the sensorium? How does hearing interact with other senses?

As the thrust of the Congress Call for Papers <http://www.religion.utoronto.ca/resources/iahr/Home.htm> is on *methodology*, this symposium encourages submissions in the following areas:

- reasons for, and consequences of, the inattention to the acoustic and auditory dimensions of the study of religion and culture
- challenges and/or merits of conducting research on soundscapes and sonic effects in relation to both public and private expressions of religion
- examples of productive methodological and theoretical angles on sources, objects, perceptions, interpretations, experiences, performances, and uses of sound(s) deemed to be vectors or representations of spiritual power(s)
- acoustic and auditory dimensions of religious imaginaries, aesthetics, and practices
- exploring the parameters of sound/noise/music/voice/silence in divergent historical and contemporary contexts in relation to religious ideas and praxis
- how religious sounds bind or divide communities through the construction of identity and difference
- (interreligious) conflict over religious sound/noise/music
- examining religious auditory cultures from the perspective of agency and resistance
- situating religious sonic cultures in relation to (post)modernity, (post)colonialism, and globalization
- how modern technologies of reproduction and transmission expand and/or transform processes of (re)mediation of sound in/as religion
- the importance of the audio dimension of religious audiovisual media
- how the least material of the senses can be interpreted in terms of materiality; the interplay between the immaterial and the material dimensions of sound
- relating the ear to the wider sensorium in religious schemes of interpretation
- religious or cultural conceptions/ideologies of sound, hearing, and the ear (also in relation to other senses)
- bodily engagement with technologies of auralization
- aurality and evidentiality, relation of the audible to the invisible and occult
- simulation and authentication of religious power through the medium of sound
- sound and (public) space: as in the sacralization of space through sound, the role of sound in religious politics of presence

In sum, the symposium aims to stimulate a new focus on the acoustic, auditory, and sonic dimensions of religion. To this end, it will draw on comparative, cross-cultural research on the power, spirituality, and materiality of religiously perceived or designated sounds in local and global environments (as has been done by scholars of visual culture and religious images). Actual case studies incorporating critical reflection on historical, empirical, and contextual factors, would be welcomed, as would those that foreground linguistic, psychological, phenomenological, cognitive, acoustic, anthropological, spatial, legal, or (ethno)musicological angles.

An edited publication is planned that will include papers from the Congress.

