

Sensory Aspects of Muslim Preaching

Workshop at the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen

25-27 October 2023

Convenors: Simon Stjernholm and Christoph Günther

In many religions, sermons play an important role in the teaching of doctrine, theology, and faith practice. Seen as a form of communication involving a claim to authority, preaching is by no means limited to the oral transmission and interpretation of texts. In fact, the modalities in which preachers deliver their homilies, as well as the ways in which practitioners receive and comprehend a sermon, are informed by a combination of rational and emotional processes and a multiplicity of sensory factors. Preachers offer not only normative and cognitive but also aesthetic orientation, as their homilies are experienced through visual, auditory, and other sensory cues simultaneously. Practices of preaching thus open up complex communicative relationships between preachers and audiences, for which the sensorium of all participants is essential. Sensory experiences that help to induce this relationship may include the sounds and rhythms of the preacher's and the audience's voices reflected by architectural features of a prayer hall; gestures, mimics, clothing, and other bodily techniques; the haptic of furniture, and wall decorations; the temperature in a mosque or prayer hall, among many others.

As these perspectives have only received passing attention in previous research, the workshop *Sensory Aspects of Muslim Preaching* will focus on the significance of sensory experiences in Muslim preaching practices and their reception. We invite scholars of all qualification levels to share research addressing the following or other aspects of the above outlined field:

- The entanglement of haptic, olfactory, kinaesthetic, and gustatory stimuli with auditory and visual sensations in the delivery and/or reception of homilies.
- Sensory experiences in relation to preaching techniques and skills, such as the perception of clothing, gestures, mimic, or vocal volume, intonation, and colour.
- The ways in which bodily expressions such as voice colour, intonation and volume resonate with the audience's body knowledge and body experiences.
- Relevance of the senses in the creation and/or reception of audio-visual mediations in contemporary Muslim preaching.
- Sensory aspects of preaching content, for example in narratives, metaphors, and suggestions as well as in preaching instructions and training.
- Methods of researching sensory experiences.

This workshop, led by Simon Stjernholm (Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen) and Christoph Günther (Department of Religious Studies, University of Erfurt), will take place in Copenhagen, DK, on 25-27 October 2023. Proposals from scholars based in the Global South and early career researchers are particularly encouraged. Funding is currently being sought to bring as many participants to the event as possible.

Workshop papers will be published in either a special issue or edited volume. By submitting a proposal, contributors agree to take part in workshop publication plans. Interested contributors should submit:

- Contributor contact information and short bio (~ 150 words)
- Paper title
- An abstract of no more than 500 words

These should be sent to stjernholm@hum.ku.dk and christoph.guenther@uni-erfurt.de by 07 April 2023, with the subject line "Sensory Aspects submission." Selections will be finalized by 21 April and the deadline for submitting draft articles for the workshop is 08 October 2023.