

CfP MS workshop III: Text and Sound in Manuscript Cultures: Cognitive Approaches

17.-18. October 2024, [Center for Literature, Cognition and Emotions](#), University of Oslo

Sound, silence and rhythm are key to our embodied interaction with the world around us, to our moving through space and perception of temporality. Attending to sounds and rhythms is fundamentally an embodied process, just as reading and writing. Reading and writing, in turn, are profoundly related to questions of sound and silence – think of the rhythm of a poem, the narrative pace of a story, the flow and interruptions of the reading process, practices of reading out loud or in silence, and, not least, fuzzy boundary between language and music.

While manuscripts, as any other written documents, are in themselves silent, the relationship between manuscript cultures and sound is complex and entangled with both the status and role of sound in a specific culture and with the manuscript's materiality and visuality. Traces of sound, silence and rhythm are abundant in manuscripts from all periods and cultures, from music annotation, visual clues on the manuscript page (or lack of these) that may suggest whether a manuscript was to be read aloud or silently, philosophical or theological reflections about the relation between thought, word and voice, to writers' reflections about music or their use of it as a resource in the writing process, and composers' creative use of texts.

Our hypothesis is that by studying sound (or its absence) in interaction with the materiality and visuality of manuscripts/manuscript cultures through the lens of 4E cognition, we can enhance our understanding of the interplay between written and oral culture, music and literature, rhythm and temporality, sound and space.

We invite papers discussing the interplay between sound (in the broadest sense), word and materiality in manuscripts from various periods and cultures, in connection to production (composing/writing) and performance, meaning making and interpretation.

We welcome:

- Case studies across periods, languages and geographical areas, across genres (prose, poetry, drama; opera, songs) and disciplines (literary studies, theology, art history, musicology)
- Theoretical and methodological contributions

Topics may include but are not limited to:

- The different roles text (in all its material dimensions) and sound may have in relation to each other – complementing, contrasting, emphasis or narrative?
- The affordances of sound/music and silence in the writing process (e.g. writers' use of music as cognitive scaffolding or for the purpose of emotion regulation);
- The interplay between text and sound in the creative practice of writers and composers
- Music as technology of the self: music and habits of intimacy/everyday practices in manuscript cultures;
- The interplay between text and sound in the reading process; the role of sound/music in guiding readers' attention and absorption
- The performing of manuscripts with or without musical annotation (e.g. for recitation, public readings); improvisation practices
- The social dimension of sound in manuscript cultures (e.g. solitary or collective reading/performing)

Our invited external speaker is Professor of Classics [Bissera V. Pentcheva](#) (Stanford University, confirmed).

If you're interested to participate, send a working title, a brief abstract of 200 words, and a short bio to <s.g.eriksen@iln.uio.no> and <stijn.vervaet@ilos.uio.no> by **15 September**.