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Call for Papers

Heritage in War and Peace V

Technology and Heritage through Past, Present and Future

December 4-5, 2025



Partners



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Vytautas Magnus University Faculty of Law, Department of Public Communication, and Vytautas Kavolis Transdisciplinary Research Institute and Heritage International Institute (HII), in partnership with the University of Roma Tre (TBC), the McGill University's Institute of Air and Space Law (IASL), the University of Mississippi, 'For All Moonkind', the Universities Network for Children in Armed Conflict (UNETCHAC) and One Ocean Hub kindly invite you for the fifth edition of the International Conference 'Heritage in War and Peace'.

What is the International Conference on Cultural Heritage 'Heritage in War and Peace'?

The annual Conference gathers leading global experts on heritage, from all regions of the world, with the aim of developing innovative approaches to heritage and direct dialogue among all the relevant stakeholders.

The event aims at looking in greater depth at the very notion of cultural and natural heritage, proposing to focus on diverse aspects of heritage protection in conflict and peace, conceptualize more critically the notion of tangibility and intangibility, address all kind of heritage issues – such as conflict-related heritage destruction, digital transformation, and climate threats – and put forward innovative ways to deal with heritage preservation and management.

In line with Heritage International Institute mission, the Conference wants to contribute to guarantee peace and international security, human rights and sustainable development, by exploring innovative approaches and promoting policy responses for a more effective protection of heritage, all over the world and under every circumstance, both in time of war and peace.

The objective is also to build cultural bridges between countries and people, celebrating cultural diversity, and sharing knowledge and experiences, leading to a deeper and more enriching understanding of the cultural world around us.

Why 'Heritage in War and Peace'?

Following the success of the first four editions organised at the Sapienza University in Rome (December 2021), McGill University in Montréal (November 2022), the University of Bologna (January 2024), and the University of Strathclyde (December 2024) as well as the successful publication of the monograph collecting selected conference papers, ['Heritage in War and Peace. Legal and Political Perspectives for Future Protection'](#), the interdisciplinary conference is now coming to Kaunas, Lithuania for its next iteration.

What is the theme of this year's edition?

As stated by UNESCO *'Digital technologies have a profound impact on our lives, including the way we experience and access culture. As cultural practices and irreplaceable heritage of humanity face novel challenges such as climate change, unsustainable developments and growing tourism, innovations can offer solutions.'*¹.

¹ <https://www.unesco.org/en/culture-and-digital-technologies>



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Digital and new technologies, including artificial intelligence, virtual reality, block chains, data networks, cloud computing, mobile applications, smart sensors, have become crucial for the creation, preservation and transmission of knowledge. Within this evolving technological ecosystem, which also raises unprecedented risks, cultural heritage finds itself at a crossroads.

On the one hand, digital and new technologies offer innovative advancements in documenting, preserving, accessing, and experiencing cultural heritage. Information Technology (IT) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) could significantly contribute to safeguard and promote cultural sites, including the World Heritage ones, and intangible heritage, with a view to transmitting them to future generations. New technologies enable the creation of immersive and interactive experiences, such as virtual museums, that enhance public engagement, community participation and education and facilitate remote access to collections and sites. Such technologies also allow monitoring of environmental threats and detecting of illicit trafficking of cultural objects.

On the other hand, such technologies present multifaceted challenges to heritage, including those related to digitization processes, digital obsolescence, accessibility, copyright and ownership, sustainability, ethical use, digital divide, disparities in digital infrastructure. Moreover, cybersecurity is a crucial element that must be considered for ensuring the integrity, authenticity, and protection of digital heritage assets from tampering, loss, or malicious attacks – especially when heritage data is stored, shared, or accessed through online platforms and cloud-based systems. Immersive environments, such as the metaverse, raises also new questions about the authenticity and ethical curation of cultural content in virtual spaces, risking distorting historical narratives or prioritizing commercial over cultural values.

The situation is even more complex when it comes to armed conflicts, where cyber warfare, drones and autonomous weapon systems are often used to target and damage cultural sites. In post-conflict or post-disaster scenarios, digital reconstruction sparks intense debate: does virtual restoration risk replacing or devaluing the original, or can it serve as a powerful tool for memory, education, and community healing?

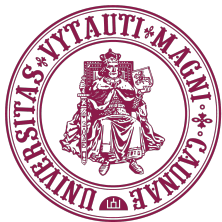
In the context of cyberwar, cultural heritage faces growing risks as digital repositories, archives, and databases can become deliberate targets of cyberattacks aimed at erasing cultural memory. Addressing these risks requires the strategic use of emerging technologies, not only to safeguard digital and digitized heritage, but also to ensure its long-term preservation, integrity, and accessibility for future generations.

Rapid technological advancements may also outpace existing laws and regulations, making it harder to legally protect cultural heritage. Building proposals for future strategies at the intersection of heritage and technology is more necessary than ever before, also considering the intricate relationship between geopolitical events and the role of digital strategies in safeguarding and showcasing cultural heritage globally.

That is why, this year's edition is organised under the general theme of '*Technology and Heritage through Past, Present and Future*'. In line with their mission and their future-focus and interdisciplinary approach, Heritage International Institute and Vytautas Magnus University aim at identifying new measures and tools that use new technologies in favour of heritage, also raising awareness on the importance to fully guaranteeing cyber security.

Will all the panels have a technology focus?

Not necessarily. We invite all the participants to follow an integrated and comprehensive approach to heritage (archaeology, landscape, architecture, design, fashion, music, dance, theatre, cinema, photography, traditional sports and games, accessibility and inclusion strategies) with a possible special focus on new technology. In the belief that the benefits of heritage can only be fully realized through a truly inclusive vision, encourage consideration of the complex interconnections between the social, cultural, environmental, and economic dimensions of diverse



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cultures. This approach will offer unprecedented opportunities for the preservation of heritage as irreplaceable source of knowledge, growth, identity, while also opening the path for ground-breaking cultural services and possibilities.

What is the Virtual Museum on Cultural Heritage?

In the belief that digital language can be a fundamental tool for promoting the importance of human rights and cultural heritage, at the same time providing a further possibility of conservation, the event will also host the Virtual Museum on Cultural Heritage, promoted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation together with the Italian Ministry of Culture. The Virtual Museum, officially recognized as a good practice in the Human Rights Council's Resolution A/HRC/58/L.4/Rev.1, is the first initiative at a global level on such an important topic, offering an example of digital interpretative exegesis of cultural heritage that combine different digitisation models and clearly shows the advantages of digitisation in the cultural sector. The Virtual Museum also encourages access for all to cultural heritage in order to stimulate human rights, particularly cultural rights and contributes to enable older generations to approach the digital world and make cultural sites accessible to people with motor difficulties

How will young researchers be supported?

Papers by young scholars and early career researchers will be considered by members of the academic committee for a selection of prizes (details will be provided at a later date).

How to submit a paper proposal?

We invite you to engage with the above-mentioned heritage-related themes by preparing a **250-word abstract** by **August 31, 2025** and submitting it through a dedicated form. This year once again we ask you to specify which session best fits your paper in your opinion when submitting the proposal. Please note that exploration of the intersections between heritage and technology are encouraged in all panels. The submissions will be considered on a rolling basis from June.

- ❖ Heritage and Emerging Digital Technologies – Special Session (co-chairs: Julija Kalpokienė & Ignas Kalpokas)
- ❖ Heritage and Digital Humanities – Special Session (co-chairs: Ignas Kalpokas & TBC)
- ❖ Heritage in War and Peace – General Session (co-chairs: Gianluigi Mastandrea Bonaviri & Mirosław M. Sadowski)
- ❖ Different Dimensions of Water and Heritage (chair: Gianfranco Nucera)
- ❖ Nature and Heritage (chair: Luca Cetara)
- ❖ Law, Culture and Politics in Heritage (chair: Mirosław M. Sadowski)



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- ❖ Archaeology and Heritage (co-chairs: Gianluca Miniaci & Camilla Saler)
- ❖ Heritage, Human Rights and Vulnerable Groups (co-chairs: Laura Guercio & Andrea Sòcrati)
- ❖ Heritage, Restitution and Trafficking (co-chairs:): (co-chairs: Maria Font & Isabella Salsano)
- ❖ Heritage, History and Country Case Studies (co-chairs: Tania Atilano & Nora Weller)
- ❖ Outer Space Perspectives for Heritage (co-chairs: Michelle L. D. Hanlon & Andrea Harrington)
- ❖ International Humanitarian Law, International Criminal Law and Heritage (co-chairs: Ahmed Khalifa and Martin Faix)
- ❖ Heritage, Landscape and Architecture (co-chairs: Maria Teresa Idone, Giovanna Piccinno & Luca Cetara)
- ❖ Heritage, Design and Arts (co-chairs: Luca Fois, Giovanni Conti, Enrico Carrocci, Veronica Pradaelli & Giorgia Fiorio)
- ❖ Heritage, Tourism and Food (co-chairs: Gianluca Frinchillucci)
- ❖ Heritage and Digital Twins (chair: Davide Scalmani)
- ❖ Intellectual Property Rights and Cultural Heritage (co-chairs: Dominik Świątkowski and Julija Kalpokienė)
- ❖ *Special Roundtable** Heritage Law and Digital Preservation (co-chairs: Marie Sophie de Clippele & Mirosław M. Sadowski)
- ❖ *Special Roundtable** Ceremonies and Rituals of Authority in Legal and Political Systems (co-chairs: Larry Catá Backer, Martin Belov & Mirosław M. Sadowski)

* Special Roundtables both have more detailed Calls for Papers (below).





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What is the key information?

CfP deadline: August 31, 2025 (submissions considered on a rolling basis)

Abstract word limit: 250 words

Abstract submission form

Conference dates: December 4-5, 2025

Conference location: Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

Conference format: in-person (hybrid allowed only in specific circumstances)

Email contacts: ignas.kalpokas@vdu.lt; julija.kalpokiene@vdu.lt

Conference fee: TBC (the fee is unlikely to exceed EUR 100.00)



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CfP Special Roundtable

Preserving Heritage: Law, Technology, and Digital Culture

Marie Sophie de Clippele & Mirosław M. Sadowski

New and emerging technologies present opportunities for the preservation and promotion heritage but also significant challenges that should be addressed also at a legal level, including in the international, regional and national framework. Existing legal instruments, such as the 2003 UNESCO Charter on the Preservation of Digital Heritage, offer a valuable foundation for expanding and adapting protections in the digital era. As digital cultural heritage faces heightened risks during armed conflicts, additional legal support can be drawn from frameworks like the Tallinn Manual on the International Law Applicable to Cyber Warfare, which, in Rule 82, underscores the need to safeguard digitized cultural heritage in times of conflict. However, despite these references, international legal frameworks remain limited. Therefore, the development of new, forward-looking legal instruments is essential to effectively meet the evolving challenges posed by technology in the preservation, access, and dissemination of cultural heritage.

International Criminal Law opened a new pathway, by acknowledging the need to address and prosecute the challenges and threats posed to cultural heritage, the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) of the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued its *Policy on Cultural Heritage*, showing how 3-D mapping, 3-D laser scanning, 3-D modelling and drone imagery may be used to overcome issues with evidence collection in the cases of heritage destruction.

Nevertheless, significant gaps remain in international law governing the application of these technologies to cultural heritage, with particular reference to protection of digital-born and digitized cultural heritage, definition of digital cultural heritage, jurisdiction over digital assets, long-term accessibility, intellectual property rights (IP), crowd sourcing, data protection issues, the governance of digital platforms. Additionally, challenges arise in translating certain works of art into virtual formats without altering their meaning or legal status and in the digital reproduction and duplication of cultural contents, thereby requiring new legislative measures. The use and transmission of culture and cultural heritage (methods of crowd sourcing, storytelling, citizen science...), through digital tools linked to artificial intelligence and virtual reality raise also legal issues connected to authenticity, ethical use, equal access and data preservation. Among the main legal challenges is the risk of cyber-attacks. Since cultural heritage is often not classified as a critical asset, cybersecurity measures are rarely applied to its digital or born-digital forms, highlighting the urgent need for a dedicated framework to ensure its protection.

Regional organizations, such as the European Union, are committed to working in this direction by developing strategic policies and funding programs aimed at strengthening the digital resilience of cultural heritage. Notable initiatives include the European Commission's Digital Europe Programme and the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage, which promote digital innovation, cross-border cooperation, and ethical standards in the preservation and dissemination of cultural assets. Other regional bodies, such as the African Union, Arab League, and Organization of American States (OAS), are increasingly recognizing the need to integrate cultural heritage protection into their digital transformation agendas, although progress remains uneven.

At the national level, countries are increasingly adopting strategies to safeguard digital cultural heritage. France's Patrimoines 2020 emphasizes digital preservation and public access, while Italy has developed the Digital Library initiative under the Ministry of Culture, aiming to digitize and provide access to vast collections of cultural assets, including through partnerships with institutions like ICCU (Central Institute for the Union Catalogue). Japan employs AI in its Cultural Properties Database for virtual reconstructions, and Rwanda integrates digital storytelling with



inclusive cultural policies. These examples highlight emerging best practices in cybersecurity, digital access, and ethical use, though broader alignment with international and regional frameworks remains essential.

As such, questions related to the intersection of the legal language with the more general matters of heritage protection are also of interest to this section, which aims to address the myriads of challenges and opportunities in protecting cultural heritage in the digital age.

Potential topics of examination include, but are not limited to:

- **Legal Frameworks for Cultural Heritage Protection:** An overview of the laws and regulations that protect cultural heritage, especially in the context of digital era. The section will examine how these frameworks deal with new challenges posed by digital technologies and global cultural exchanges, and how they can be further developed.
- **The interaction between intangible heritage practices and digital technologies also raise particularly innovative questions:** how to safeguard a digital cultural practice? Is the digital world a threat or an opportunity for tangible and intangible cultural heritage?
- **AI in Cultural Heritage Preservation and Law:** Exploring the role of AI in documenting and preserving cultural heritage. This part will discuss how AI technologies can be used to create digital archives and interactive path to experience cultural heritage, analyze cultural artifacts, and ensure the longevity of tangible and intangible cultural assets. Of particular interest will be legal questions surrounding the data framework in which these AI technologies operate and the collective use of these technologies.
- **Case Studies on Heritage Law and Digital Preservation:** Presenting international, regional and national case studies where legal language has played a significant role in the preservation of cultural heritage. These examples will illustrate the intersection of law, technology, and culture in safeguarding global heritage in the digital era.

Selection process

Following a first round of reviews, authors of the selected abstracts will be invited to participate in the roundtable “Heritage in the digital age” at the *V Heritage in War and Peace* conference on the 4th and 5th of December 2025, where draft papers will be presented.

Selected authors will be then invited to prepare full papers of 7,000-8,000 words by the end of 2026 for publication as a part of *Section 46 of the International Handbook of Legal Language and Communication: From Text to Semiotics*.



CfP Special Roundtable

***Social Practices, Rituals and Festive Events in Legal and Political Systems:
the Role of New Technologies***

Larry Catá Backer, Martin Belov, Mirosław M. Sadowski

Societies, and their social organization, have made tangible and authoritative steps towards the legitimization of their collective institutions through the performance of rituals. Social practices, rituals and festive events, also recognized as a “domain” by the 2003 UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, contribute to define social solidarity, identities, principles, power, and have helped incarnate the authority, legitimacy, and powers of social collectives since the start of historical record keeping; and perhaps longer.

These practices enhanced the connection between individual and collective by mediating relationships with exogenous sources, such as political systems, law, and emerging technologies. Certainly, from the 20th century many societies embraced the view that law also constituted an equally potent exogenous autonomous force, whose rituals helped embed and naturalize its authority within systems. As political systems evolved, these rituals adapted, often incorporating new technological advancements that shaped their performance, reach, and impact, further solidifying their role in legitimizing authority and maintaining social order.

It was more than a century ago that Émile Durkheim noted how in modern societies law has taken over religion as the main organiser of social rituals, thus taking the lead of our community life. Geoffrey Miller more recently noted the functional alignment of law and rituals — in the old days in religious spaces, now in judicial ones. At the same time, the structuring premises of political ideology also produced its own ceremonies that displaced religious, ethical, social, and cultural systems, as the apex framework for perfecting social solidarity. Contemporary liberal democracy and Marxist-Leninism developed their own rituals and ceremonies that self-reflexively underscored and naturalized their authority and the *lebenswelt* within which such authority had meaning in ritual.

Recording, representing, and reviving of the living nature of social practices, rituals, festive events and all other forms of intangible cultural heritage is crucial in order to preserve them forever. New and emerging technologies could significantly contribute to find appropriate forms, together with efficient methods, to document the ephemeral aspects of intangible heritage. When combined with appropriate analog safeguarding measures, digital preservation becomes even more effective. This need is particularly urgent in contexts where political systems evolve and either reshape existing rituals or introduce new ones, thereby influencing the cultural landscape. In such cases, a balanced approach that respects authenticity while embracing innovation is key to safeguarding the dynamic character of intangible heritage.

Today, Durkheim’s words ring as true as they did at the turn of the century over a hundred years ago, with law, going hand in hand with technological advancements, encroaching numerous areas of our everyday lives – a large portion of which is today lived online. With the continuous deepening and development of science and technology, the development of digital acquisition technology, storage technology, remote sensing technology, and spatial modelling technology provides a corresponding realistic basis and platform for the protection of different types of intangible cultural heritage (Liu, 2022²). At the same time, we should not forget about the more traditional way

² Liu, Y. (2022) Application of Digital Technology in Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection, Hindawi Mobile Information Systems. Volume 2022, Article ID 7471121, 8 pages. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/7471121>



social practices, rituals and festive events engage within our political and legal systems, from the way judges and barristers need to dress in court to the way parliamentary debates run.

This section explores how the development and integration of technology have increasingly shaped the performance, preservation, and transformation of rituals—particularly those that connected to law and political systems. From the earliest uses of audio and visual recording tools to today's immersive digital platforms, societies have turned to technology not just to document ritual practices but to redefine how they are enacted and experienced. It focuses on the symbolic, cultural, and historical dimensions of such events that are increasingly diffused, and sometimes manipulated, through new and emerging technologies, including presidential inaugurations, judicial inductions, and the nomination of key figures. And it is sensitive to the way that context produces difference in the form and meaning of rituals among political, social, cultural, and economic systems. These rituals serve as public affirmations of legitimacy and continuity, blending tradition with the evolving needs of governance; they also underscore the direction in social development toward which rituals point.

With the advent of digital acquisition, remote sensing, and spatial modelling technologies, rituals once rooted in localized, ephemeral contexts can now be preserved, simulated, and even reimaged in digital environments. The section examines the semiotics of the social practices, rituals and festive events in these spaces occupied by law and politics, and how they have evolved over time with technological advancements. Through comparative analysis and case studies, the contributions envisioned for this section will highlight the global diversity in practices while emphasizing their shared significance in upholding legal and political order.

Meanwhile, the session aims at dealing with the problems existing in digital protection of social practices, rituals and festive events and examining the features of digital protection of intangible cultural heritage, with a view to developing protection platforms and management mechanism, and puts forward the application of new strategy in the protection of intangible cultural heritage, putting at their heart new technologies.

Potential topics of examination include, but are not limited to:

- **Symbolism in Social Practices, Rituals and Festive events in face of technological advancements:**
Examination of oaths, attire, gestures, and artifacts (e.g., constitutions, gavels) as symbols of power and commitment, and how they are understood when incorporated in digital formats
- **Ceremonial Spaces and Public Participation and the role of technologies:**
The role of architectural, public settings and new and emerging technologies in legitimizing authority and engaging audiences.
- **Historical and Cross-Cultural Perspectives:**
Evolution of social practices, rituals and festive events across time and their adaptation in various legal and political traditions as technological evolutions influence them.
- **Impact of digital and broadcast media in amplifying the reach and significance of these events.**
The art models, projects, and technical practices that have advanced the digitization lifecycle for ICH resources. The review focuses on several critical but less studied tasks within digital archiving, computational encoding, conceptual representation, and interactive engagement with the intangible cultural elements.



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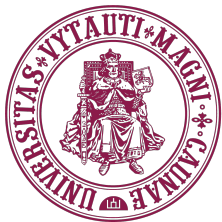
- **Case Studies of Iconic Social Practices, Rituals and Festive Events:**

Analysis of landmark inaugurations, inductions, and enthronements as transformative events in governance, while also delving into how they change when connected to new and emerging technologies, including the use of artificial intelligence.

Selection process

Following a first round of reviews, authors of the selected abstracts will be invited to participate in the roundtable “Heritage of Legal Rituals” at the *V Heritage in War and Peace* conference in December 2025, where draft papers will be presented.

Selected authors will be then invited to prepare full papers of 7,000-8,000 words by the end of 2026 for publication as a part of *Section 23 of the International Handbook of Legal Language and Communication: From Text to Semiotics*.



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Who is involved in this edition?

Conference Committee Co-Chairs

Ignas Kalpokas (Vytautas Magnus University)

Julija Kalpokienė (Vytautas Magnus University)

Gianluigi Mastandrea Bonaviri (Heritage International Institute)

Miroslaw M. Sadowski (University of Strathclyde)

Filippo Ceccotti (Heritage International Institute)

Artistic Director

Sergio Iovino

Organisational Assistant

Viktoriiia Oksymets

Organisational Committee

Genny Barrozzi (Heritage International Institute)

Hani El Debuch (Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna)

Camilla Saler (University of Pisa)

Academic Committee

Ahmed Aubais Alfatlawi (University of Kufa)

Tania Atilano (University of Zurich)

Marco Balboni (Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna)

Gianluigi Mastandrea Bonaviri (Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna)

Janeen Carruthers (University of Glasgow)

Giovanni Conti (Milan Polytechnic)

Fabio Cubellotti (University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli")

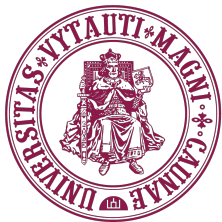
Jennifer Davidson (University of Strathclyde)

Yaëll Emerich (McGill University)

Martin Faix (Palacký University Olomouc)

Luca Fois (Milan Polytechnic)

Maria Font i Mas (Universitat Rovira i Virgili)



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Emanuela Fronza (Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna)

Thomas Giddens (University of Dundee)

Andreas Giorgallis (University of Glasgow)

Edita Gruodytė (Vytautas Magnus University)

Laura Guercio (Universities Network for Children in Armed Conflict)

Adam Harkens (University of Strathclyde)

Andrea Harrington (McGill University)

Michelle L.D. Hanlon (University of Mississippi)

Maria Teresa Idone (Italian Ministry of Culture)

Stuart Jeffrey (The Glasgow School of Art)

Kristina Juraitė (Vytautas Magnus University)

Ignas Kalpokas (Vytautas Magnus University)

Julija Kalpokienė (Vytautas Magnus University)

Jurga Bučaitė-Vilkė (Vytautas Magnus University)

Ahmed F. Khalifa (Ain Shams Law School)

Andrea Manzo (University of Naples)

Sergio Marchisio (Sapienza University of Rome)

Lisa McCormick (University of Edinburgh)

Frédéric Mégret (McGill University)

Saulė Milčiuvienė (Vytautas Magnus University)

Gianluca Miniaci (University of Pisa)

Federica Montagna (Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna)

Pierre-Emmanuel Moyse (McGill University)

Ermanno Napolitano (McGill University)

Mara Ntona (University of Strathclyde)

Gianfranco Nucera (Sapienza University of Rome)

Therese O'Donnell (University of Strathclyde)

Neringa Palionienė (Vytautas Magnus University)

Giulia Parenti (Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna)

Giovanna Piccinno (Milan Polytechnic)

Federica Piccirillo (Italian Ministry of Culture)

Fausto Pocar (University of Milan)

René Provost (McGill University)

Francesca Ragno (Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna)

Michael Randall (University of Strathclyde)

Christa Roodt (University of Glasgow)

Fearghus Roulston (University of Strathclyde)

Miroslaw M. Sadowski (University of Strathclyde)

Davide Scalmani (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation)

Francesco Sindico (University of Strathclyde)

Andrea Sòcrati (Omero State Tactile Museum)

Ipek Türeli (McGill University)

Saskia Vermeylen (University of Strathclyde)

Giovanna Vitelli (University of Glasgow)

Elaine Webster (University of Strathclyde)

Nora V. Weller (University of Cambridge)

Samuel White (University of the West of Scotland)

Adelyn Wilson (University of Strathclyde)