



Welcome to the first **Prayticipate Newsletter!**

This is a round-up of recent events and forthcoming opportunities from our COST Action.

Please check our project website regularly for updates (www.prayticipate.eu) and follow us on Bluesky (@prayticipate.bsky.social) and Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/prayticipate/>).

Image: Half of a Prayer Bead with the Prayer of the Rosary, early 16th century, Netherlandish; Boxwood, silver; 3 × 0.6 cm, Sculpture-Miniature-Wood, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 17.190.457a, b – Public Domain

1 Round-up of Prayticipate activities

The Prayticipate COST Action was ‘born’ on the 19 September 2024, and it has achieved a lot for a sixteenth-month old!

The initial group met in the COST offices in Brussels, and shared initial ideas, hopes, and acronyms. The Action membership has continued to grow, and currently has 264 participants in total, from 38 countries. We have 18 ITC countries involved, and a wonderful 49.6% of our researchers are YRI (or young researchers) – the remainder are, of course, young at heart. The Action Chair is Professor Youri Desplenter (University of Ghent) and the Action Vice-Chair is Professor Anna Dlabacova (Leiden University).

The group met together in Zagreb on February 6-7 2025, resulting in very rich event. The first Action Summer School, focusing on effective research communication skills, was led by Dr Kathryn Rudy at the University of St Andrews, on June 18-20, 2025. A number of researchers have been supported to develop and share their research through the Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs), expertly coordinated by Dr Carolin Gluchowski. A list of our awardees can be found here:

<https://prayticipate.eu/grant-awardees/>

Dr Gluckowski also coordinates the ongoing ‘Praying with Objects’ online seminar series, which brings together a wide range of fascinating scholars to explore Details of forthcoming sessions can be found here: <https://prayticipate.eu/activities/online-lecture-series-praying-with-objects/>

As well as these Action-wide activities, the individual working groups have been busy with a wide range of activities, and these are outlined below.

This newsletter provides an update on Working Group Activities over the past year, as well as forthcoming Calls for Papers and events which may be of interest.

2 Working Groups

2.1 Working Group 1: Material Realities of Prayer



Image: Reliquary cross pendant, unknown creator (Spanish/ English), 16th century, H 16.5 x W 7, Hunt Museum, Limerick. CG 085.

Working Group 1 is led by Dr. Stefan Matter (Universität Bern), with Dr. Sara Carreño (UNIVERSIDADE DE SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA, Facultade de Xeografía e Historia) as co-leader.

In September 2025, Working Group 1, together with colleagues from the Library of the Czech Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Art History at the Czech Academy of Sciences, gathered in Prague for a workshop on the **Material Realities of Prayer**. This was an extremely rich workshop, expertly organised by Veronika Sladká & Jan Dienstbier.

It included discussion of extraordinary manuscript examples, as well as two fascinating excursions: the iconic Stone Bell House in Prague and the Rare Books & Manuscripts Study Room of the National Library.

As well as this stimulating in-person event, Working Group 1 regularly holds online meetings, with scholars presenting their research with the aim of identifying potential synergies within the group and building a forum for open discussion. Details of previous speakers can be found here:

<https://prayticipate.eu/wg1/2025-material-realities-of-prayer-wg1-online-meetings/>

2.2 Working Group 2: Social Realities and Networks of Prayer

Working Group 2 has been expertly led by Dr. Eleonora Lombardo (Università degli Studi di Padova) and Marlene Schilling (University of Oxford). Surveys have been carried They will be passing the baton to Dr. Ottó Sándor Gecser (ELTE), and Dr. Iliana Kandzha (University of Copenhagen).

Image: The Cashel Pyx, 18th century, gilded silver, Irish, D 7.5; Diam. 8.1, Hunt Museum, Limerick. HCM 125



2.3 Working Group 3: Immersive Realities of Prayer



Image: Apostles in Prayer, ca. 1400–1410, South Netherlandish, oak, Dimensions: without base: 49.1 × 32.7 × 11.1 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1916, 16.32.214 – Public Domain.

Working Group 3 has been extremely active, and is led by Dr. Dominika Ruszkiewicz (Ignatianum University in Cracow) and Dr. Lieke Smits (Universiteit Leiden).

WG3 has run two successful online workshops, focused on sharing research across the group. The theme of these workshops was **Theories of Immersive Prayer** and involved a very wide range of speakers and topics. Full details of the programmes can be found here:

<https://prayticipate.eu/wg3/theories-of-immersive-prayer-workshops/>

The WG3 team is also organising a **Participatory Pilgrimage and Prayer Immersion Research Skills Sharing Event** in Albania in 2026. More details on this unique opportunity can be found here:

<https://prayticipate.eu/wg3/prayer-and-setting-space-place-movement-ritual-service-and-text/>

3 Bibliography update

One key project led by the Prayticipate COST Action is the Bibliography. This is being led by Prof. Ángel Manuel Olmos Sáez, PhD, GEMBA, with collaboration from a wide range of colleagues across the Action.

This project is underway and will be a great resource when it is completed.

4 Grants Awarded

One of the great benefits of this COST Network is the ability to support scholars through a series of grants. All information is available via the Prayticipate website.

Scholars supported through the Prayticipate grants to date include:

Dr Vladimir Cvetković, Research Professor at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade.

With the support of the PRAYTICIPATE ITC Conference Grant, Dr Cvetković participated in the international conference “On the Future of the Una Sancta: Incarnate Reality and Eschatological Hope”, held on the island of Syros, Greece, from 29 May to 2 June 2025.

Dr Despina Iosif, a historian of the Greco-Roman world from College Year Athens and the Hellenic Open University in Athens. Dr Iosif carried out her Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) at Durham University, UK, where she conducted research on the topic “Prayer Inside Prisons According to the Christian Martyr Acts.” Her project explores how early Christian narratives portray prayer as a vital source of strength, identity, and divine intervention for imprisoned believers facing persecution.

Dr Emine Bilgiç Kavak, a historian based at Sakarya University, Turkey, whose research focuses on epigraphic sources from Late Antiquity. During her Short Term Scientific Mission Grant (STSM), Dr Bilgiç Kavak was hosted by the University of Oxford, United Kingdom, where she carried out a project titled “Epigraphic Traces of Participatory Prayer in Late Antique Anatolia: A Library-Based Approach.”

Dr Carolin Gluchowski, a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Hamburg. Dr Gluchowski was awarded a Young Researcher and Innovator Grant in order to participate in the 19th Biennial Conference of the Early Book Society, taking place at New York University, New York, from 23 to 27 June 2025. At this international gathering of manuscript and book historians, she presented a paper entitled: “Languages of Devotion: A 15th-Century Latin-Low German Psalter from the Cistercian Convent of Medingen.”

5 Grants Available

STSM Grants are now available for periods throughout 2026, and we encourage Action members to engage with these Grant opportunities.

Please ensure that you check our website regularly for all Action opportunities.

Full information about these grants, including information on eligibility and application processes, can be found on the Prayticipate website: <https://prayticipate.eu/grants/call-for-applications-itc-conference-grant-january-2026-and-october-2026/>

A short guide to the available grants that are currently open is provided below.

Open Call for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs)

For missions undertaken between January 2026 and November 2026

Important Information

- **Mission period: 10 January 2026 – 30 November 2026.** Please allow ~1 month between submission and the planned start date.
- **Call closes: 15 October 2026** (or until the WBP-allocated STSM budget is spent, whichever comes first).
- **Notification of results:** within **20 working days** of receiving a complete application.
- **Maximum amount:** 4.000 €

What is an STSM?

Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) are research visits that support mobility, strengthen collaboration, and contribute directly to the Action’s scientific aims. Examples include: archival work; access to unique

collections or tools; developing or learning methods; annotating or harmonising data; co-designing resources; and writing joint outputs.

- **Duration:** from **3 calendar days** to **3 months** (longer durations encouraged where feasible).
- **Grant amount:** up to **4.000 €** per STSM (the MC/Core Group may award a lower amount than requested).
- **Payment:** grants are normally paid **after successful completion**. **Applicants from ITC countries** may request an **advance of up to 50%**, subject to GH funds and host confirmation that the mission has started.

6 Events and Conferences

Current calls for papers and information about upcoming relevant events are regularly published on the Prayticipate website – we encourage all Action members to check our website and the ‘Activities’ section for this information.

Upcoming event – Reconsidering the Vocabulary of Prayer through Objects

Hamburg, Universität Hamburg / Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, 29 May 2026 (online) / 10–12 June 2026 (Hamburg) / autumn 2026 (online)

Organisers: Dr Sara Carreño (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela); Dr Carolin Gluchowski (Universität Hamburg); PD Dr Stefan Matter (Universität Bern); Dr Katrin Janz-Wenig (Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg).

Expressions of interest by participants should be sent by **28 February 2026**.

Full information about this exciting upcoming event can be found here: <https://prayticipate.eu/wp-content/uploads/Gluchowski-Call-for-Papers-18-Jan-1-1.pdf>

Upcoming event – Staging Prayer: gesture and performance in prayer practice.

Online workshop, April/May 2026

Organiser: Dr Lieke Smits, (Leiden University)

Immersive prayer practices of the past can be studied through the texts, images, and objects that have survived throughout the centuries. But these do not tell the entire story of how prayer was practiced. The performance of prayer involved bodily performances such as postures, gestures, and speech; the sensory experience of handling objects or leaving through books; and spatial settings that allowed for certain movements, acoustics, and other sensory impressions.

Aims and format of the workshop

In order to understand the role of gesture and performativity in premodern immersive prayer practices, this workshop invites participants to experiment with the performance of their sources. Handling objects, reading or singing texts out loud, or moving through a historical space can lead to new insight into the actions and experiences that these sources afford. The aim is not to reconstruct the historical prayer

experience, but to experimentally enrich our perspective and to think about different ways of generating knowledge.

The workshop will consist of discussions on the basis of videos of max. 12 minutes, recorded by the participants and circulated and watched before the event. As theoretical underpinning, we will use the following publication during the workshop: Laura Weigert, “Performance,” *Studies in Iconography* 33 (2012): 61–72. Further literature may be circulated at a later point and participants are welcome to make suggestions.

Video instructions

If you would like to contribute with a video, you can, for example, think of showing your interaction with an object, making an acoustic performance, or moving through a space. Alternatively, you can film someone else engaged in such a performance, and/or interview someone with relevant performance experience.

Please make sure to include basic information about the source or space and its historical context in your video. Videos will not only be shared among the workshop participants but will also be made public on the PRAYTICIPATE website, so please keep copyright issues in mind. A document with tips for creating a video will be available on the website.

Planning and timeline

March 1: Register for the workshop via the following [google form](#). Please indicate whether you want to participate

with or without recording a video. In the former case, please give a brief description of the planned topic of your video.

April 15: Deadline for submitting videos.

April/May: Workshop ‘Staging Prayer’.

Thank you!

Please stay in touch with the COST Action by visiting our website and our social media profiles. We hope to see you at a Prayticipate event in person or online soon.