

## ABSTRACT

In our current political constellation, attachments to a familiar milieu are often linked to an indifference or hostility towards others: A resonant feeling of belonging seems to make a politics of exclusion more attractive. Our conference asks how, and under what conditions, attachments to a homeland become entangled with such feelings. To get rid of the blind spots resulting from an exclusive focus on the here and now, we also draw on comparison cases from antiquity. What today may be conceptualized as Heimat took different shapes in Greek polis culture, or in the history of Rome, and could be tied to different modes of indifference or repulsion.

Here, one crucial structure of feeling consists of a nostalgia that articulates itself in narratives of loss. What could appear as a gentle melancholy emotion now translates into an affective foundation for highly aggressive programs, and for the aesthetic performances that support them; e.g., as a longing for an imaginary bygone gender order, with an inbuilt hostility towards whatever does not conform to traditional gender norms. In the European post-socialist realm, the bygone “socialist” states, while experienced as oppressive, have become objects of their own kinds of nostalgia (e.g., Ostalgie, Yugonostalgie), which can support a shared hostility towards those who did not have the same kind of experience.

Such structures of feelings become entrenched, and are transformed, by being mediated through artefacts. Aesthetic objects can be used to sacralize a hostility whose justifications refer to a homeland but they can also offer an opportunity for reflection on the emotion of disgust and the sense of belonging. In ancient Rome, for example, artefacts played a crucial role in reshaping the sense of belonging of one or more individuals to a certain community through the practice of *damnatio memoriae*.

However, it would not be enough to focus on cases where an attachment to a homeland sustains a hostility towards others. In order to understand the complex entanglements of attraction and repulsion linked to Heimat, it is essential to include cases where the homeland becomes an object of disgust while potentially remaining an object of attachments, as in many situations of exile. This is already a common topic in the Old Testament, and in ancient Roman exile writings. Today, the politics of “right-wing populism” can create, among those who do not share them, a collective disgust for their homeland, and for the very idea of a Heimat. We would also like to ask: what are the consequences of such a transformation?

## CONFERENCE COORDINATION

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## VENUE

University of Graz  
Faculty of Theology  
Heinrichstraße 78 A  
Room HS 47.01

Autumn Conference 2025 – International Graduate School  
Resonant Self-World Relations in Ancient and Modern Socio-Religious Practice

## INDIFFERENCE, HOSTILITY, DISGUST: THE AMBIGUITY OF HEIMAT

20–22 October 2025

University of Graz, Faculty of Theology  
Heinrichstraße 78 A, Room HS 47.01

HEIMAT AND  
HATRED

HOSTILE  
NOSTALGIA

ARTEFACTS, BELONGING,  
AND NOT-BELONGING

AMBIGUITIES TOWARDS  
THE HOMELAND

## ORGANISING COMMITTEE:

Vincenzo Cerulli, Nicole Navratil,  
Andreas Pettenkofer, Rupert Rainer, Alina Zeller

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16:15–16:45 *First get together*  
 16:45–17:00 *Welcome*

## HEIMAT AND HATRED

CHAIR: RUPERT RAINER

17:00–17:45 heim.at? Who (no longer) belongs? Diachronic perspectives on emigrants and exiles (Sonja Schreiner, Wien)

17:45–18:00 *Coffee Break*

18:00–18:45 “Heimatliebe ist kein Verbrechen” – Affective Victimhood and the Normative Order of the German New Rightist Movement (Johanna Fröhlich, Basel)

18:45–19:30 “Heimatliebe ist nicht nur Männersache” – Homeland and Gender in Far-Right Discourses of Threat (Judith Goetz, Innsbruck)

20:00 *Dinner (optional)*

09:00–10:00 *Faculty Meeting*

## HOSTILE NOSTALGIA

CHAIR: ALINA ZELLER

10:15–11:00 Longing for a homeland that is no more: Ambiguous affective economy of Yugonostalgia (Tanja Petrović, Ljubljana)

11:00–12:00 *Volkskörper: Performing the Austrian “Hoamat” in Popular Music* (André Doehring, Graz; Kai Ginkel, Linz)

*Discussant:* Lucas Auradniczek (Erfurt)

12:00–14.30 *Lunch break*

## ARTEFACTS, BELONGING, AND NOT-BELONGING

CHAIR: VINCENZO CERULLI

14:30–15:15 *Hic Patriae Fines Siste Signa* – History and identity in the shadow of the fascist Victory Monument in Bolzano (Rupert Rainer, Graz)

15:15–16:00 *A History to Forget: Homeland, Hostility, and the Tacitean Dilemma* (Nicoletta Bruno, Basel)

16:00–16:30 *Coffee Break*

16:30–17:15 *From polarisation to relation: a new approach to “Belonging”* (Nicola Perullo, Pollenzo)

17:15–18:00 *Disgust and Imaginative Resistance: A Tool for Exclusion?* (Serena Feloj, Pavia)

18:30 *Official Dinner*

## AMBIGUITIES TOWARDS THE HOMELAND

CHAIR: NICOLE NAVRATIL

9:00–9:45 *Living in Retrotopia: Heimat as a Lost and Impossible Concept in Ovid’s Tristia and Epistulae ex Ponto* (Adrian Weiß, Bonn)

9:45–10:30 *Is it good or bad to be far from home? Israel’s and Judah’s existence in the diaspora as curse and blessing in the Hebrew Bible* (Konrad Schmid, Zürich)

10:30–11:00 *Coffee break*

## CONCLUSION

CHAIR: ANDREAS PETTENKOFER

11:00–11:45 *On Heimat and Time: A Resonance Approach to the Question of Home* (Steen Lybke, Copenhagen)

11:45–12:15 *Final Discussion, including ideas about a publication*