

## **DEMHIST Special Project Grant 2025 report**

Scientific symposium

### ***POMPA FUNEBRIS***

(Rundāle Palace Museum, September 12, 2025)

The symposium was inspired by the Vault of Dukes of Courland and Semigalia in Jelgava Palace, which is under the care of Rundale Palace Museum since 1987. In the Baroque era, funeral ceremonies with their attributes – coffins, sarcophagi, funeral ritual accessories – became a diverse field of monumental and decorative art and music. Tombstones were erected in memory of the dead, epitaphs and coats of arms were made, but especially ornate were the metal sarcophagi, which became real works of art.

The splendour of these funerary traditions has led us to explore the topic further by organizing a scientific symposium *Pompa funberis*.

To the open call for symposium responded 14 researchers of whom 10 were approved. It resulted in a dynamic interpretation of the given topic exploring the funerary traditions from 16<sup>th</sup> century until mid-20th century covering different societal structures (See attachment No 1 for the detailed symposium programme in English, and No 2 for Latvian version).

Symposium gathered 100 guests (See attachment No 3) the maximum capacity for the premises. Information about the event reached both national and local printed media, their digital resources and national TV and Radio news channels. All presentations were video recorded and now are in the process of post-production to be subtitled in English and published in museum YouTube account this year.

To organise the symposium different funding opportunities were used. Funding for speakers' stipends were covered by The State Cultural Capital Foundation of Latvia; video recording of presentation and post-production of video files were possible with the support of The United Funds of the Courland Knighthood (Germany); whereas catering expenses for coffee breaks was covered with the support by DEMHIST special grant 2025 programme; the remaining expenses were covered by museum (See attachment No 4).

## Selected images from symposium *Pompa funebris*

Photos by Ltd 'Phos'



Morning coffee before the presentations begin



Traditional apple bread, puff cakes, bacon breads, coffee, broth and water served at coffee breaks



Symposium opening remarks by Laura Lüse, director of Rundāle Palace Museum



The conference attendees



Flower arrangements and decoration of premises in the mood of funeral tradition

Attachments:

1. Symposium programme in English (p.5)
2. Symposium programme in Latvian (p.6)
3. List of attendees (p.7-12)
4. The confirmed costs for symposium *Pompa funebris* (p.13)
5. Payment order for coffee break catering, company "KOMMATS, SIA" (p.14)
6. Payment order for speakers' lunch, company "OZOLLADE SIA" (P.15)

Invoice to DEMHIST for agreed sum of 500 EUR you will find in separate document.

Laura Lūse

Director of the Rundāle Palace Museum

Signature valable



Digitally signed by LAURA LŪSE  
Date: 2025.10.12 14:13:00 EEST