

Blood and Bile

Deadline: Aug 6, 2025

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Blood and Bile: Perspectives from the humanities, art and gaming culture on Blasphemous. Open access anthology, Berlin Universities Publishing.

In the fictional world of 'Cvstodia', a nameless 'penitent' traverses a world in which the 'miracle' - a divine entity - is worshipped through physical torment and suffering in a gloomy body horror style. In doing so, 'Blasphemous' transforms the established conventions of the 'souls-like' genre: the difficulty typical of the genre and the cyclical approach to failure are theologically charged. The progress made by defeating boss enemies is enhanced by sacred weapons and rituals, while the level design is recontextualised as a spiritual pilgrimage. These elements are embedded in an elaborate ecclesiastical infrastructure and open up multiple levels of analysis, e.g:

- Theological: Guilt, atonement and redemption as a cyclical game system
- Cultural-historical: appropriation of Andalusian religiosity
- Aesthetic: Transformation of Christian iconography into pixel art
- Narrative: Hagiographic narrative traditions as a game world
- Ludic: Integration of religious practices in game mechanics
- Psychological: Religious guilt induction as a game experience

With our planned diamond open access collective volume, we not only want to explore these levels of analysis, but also challenge the academic publishing tradition itself. The aim is not to collect isolated individual analyses, but to develop a conversation about the cultural significance and transformative power of games using the example of the Blasphemous games.

Instead of a collection of classic long papers, we would like to try out new approaches with you and take so-called 'interdisciplinarity' to the extreme. This call explicitly addresses interested parties from all academic disciplines (whether institutional or independent), from the gaming industry and gaming culture as well as creative professionals. If in doubt, please get in touch with your ideas and suggestions.

Conditions for participation in the anthology

- Willingness to work collaboratively and to transcend academic publishing conventions
- Willingness to work with and on unconventional contributions

Possible formats (summarised length approx. 4500 words, can be discussed)

- Thematic tandems (joint long paper)
- Annotated analyses (analysis and additional commentary by another person)

- Documented discussions (for AV: transcription is printed)
- Thesis-answer (thesis is formulated, justified and answered by another person)
- Discussion of video essays
- Video essays (transcription/script is printed)
- Performances/artistic discussion (scripts, concept, concept sketches, etc. are printed)
- Long paper (if absolutely necessary, supplemented by a short answer)
- Other (feel free to be creative)

Please send your proposals (German or English) to jonas.mueller-laackman@sub.uni-hamburg.de AND victoria.mummelthei@fu-berlin.de by August 6, 2025.

Tentative schedule

Aug 6, 2025: Deadline for the submission of proposals or expressions of interest (max. 150 words) and short self-introduction (max. 4 sentences, no CV) in a PDF. All interested parties will receive read-only access to all submitted proposals and ideas.

Aug 18, 2025, 10:00 CEST: Meeting (online) to consolidate, find and assign topics.

Sep 15, 2025: Deadline for abstracts (max. 1 page). All contributors will again have access to the abstracts.

Oct 13, 2025: Deadline review phase abstracts

Nov 3, 2025, 10:00 CEST: Meeting (online) to present the topics

Feb 28, 2026: Deadline writing phase

Apr 13, 2026: Deadline review phase Contributions. These reviews and responses will appear in the anthology

Planned publication: Q3-2026

Please note that participation in the anthology requires participation in the online sessions.

Publisher: Berlin Universities Publishing

Editors: Jonas Müller-Laackman (Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg) ; Victoria Mummelthei (Freie Universität Berlin)

Also see the record here: Müller-Laackman, J., & Mummelthei, V. (2025). [Call for Participation] Blut und Galle: Perspektiven aus Wissenschaft, Kunst und Gaming-Kultur auf die Blasphemous-Spiele. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15462758>

Reference:

CFP: Blood and Bile. In: ArtHist.net, Jul 19, 2025 (accessed Jul 21, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/50425>>.