



UNIVERSITY OF GRAZ
Department of Classics



Interacting with the Dead in Antiquity & the Middle Ages

Call for papers (conference) and contributions (edited collection)

Wednesday 2nd September (evening) - Friday 4th September, 2026

Call for contributions

The PresentDead project (ERC No. 101089324) investigates the re-opening of graves and interactions with the dead and their materials across the 5th-8th centuries. While the main focus of the project is archaeological, it also includes written texts from and about the period, including historiographical and regulatory texts from histories and chronicles to saint's vitae, and from penitentials and sermons to Roman and Barbarian Laws. The project's geographical area of focus – spanning Central and Eastern Europe, from the eastern Alps to Transylvania – is one that is poorly attested in terms of literary sources, for the period, with most of the textual tradition at large arising only at the edges of the space and often much later. And seen in those sources, interactions with the dead are only infrequently mentioned. As such, the textual perspective of the project is very much that of the outsider looking in (or around), indirectly revealed in political, religious and rhetorical terms. Contributions are welcome from within the disciplines of Classics and Medieval Studies, as well as History, Law, Linguistics, Literature, Philosophy, Theology, etc.

This conference, following on from a successful workshop held in November 2025, will bring together historians working on a wide range of texts from across the antique and medieval world, that reveal different attitudes to and contexts of interacting with the dead, as a way of pooling knowledge and experience about the scope of what was considered possible or imaginable by various people living, writing and re-writing in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, when they turned their minds to the re-opening of graves and interactions with the dead.

If you are **interested in presenting**, please send a **title, abstract** (250-500 words), and **short biography** to: **thomas.gobbitt@uni-graz.at** by **04 May 2026**.

An **edited collection** is planned in relation to the conference (chapters due Monday 30 November 2026), and while participation in both parts would be the ideal, do let me know if you can only commit to one or the other.