

Interactions with the Dead

Conference - The PresentDead Project 2026

This conference brings 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. We ask: 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?

CONTACT

thomas.gobbitt@uni-graz.at



Meeting ID: 696 5120 3565

Passcode: 243495

The Conference will be hybrid.

2.- 4. September 2026

University of Graz

Main Building

SZ 01.18

Universitätsplatz 3/I

8010 Graz



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

Wednesday, 2. September

18:00 - 19:00 **Thom GOBBITT:** Robbing Rothari: Grave Re-opening in Lombard Italy

19:00 - 20:00 Wine reception
Gipsmuseum - Main Building, Universitätsplatz 3/II

Thursday, 3. September

08:30 - 09:30 Coffee, Meet & Greet

09:30 - 10:00 **Edeltraud ASPÖCK:** Welcome - Introduction to the PresentDead Project

10:00 - 12:00 Session 1
Moderator: Thom GOBBITT

Chris WHITE Lessons for Life: Finding the Living through Stories of the Dead

Bruno SCHALEKAMP Abhinc de furto et rapina: Systematizing Rules on Grave Robbing within the Context of Thievery in the Carolingian Realm

Clemens GANTNER Digging up his bones: Pope Formosus and the Cadavaer Synod in 897

12:00 - 13:00 Lunch

13:00 - 15:00 Session 2
Moderator: Alex NĂCHESCU

Friedrich BECHER Dead People or Corpses? (In)visibility in Exhibition Contexts

Inès LIMAM Touching the Dead, Mourning the Saint: Visual Grammar of Posthumous Gender Reconfiguration and Emotional Care in the Death Scenes of Marina/Marinos and Euphrosyne/Emerald

Samantha SANDY Not a Man, Not a Woman, But a Secret Third Thing (A Revelation): Christina Mirabilis, Galatians 3:28, and a Queer Reading of A Medieval Purgatorial Mediatrix

15:00 - 15:30 Coffee

15:30 - 17:30 Session 3
Moderator: Crystal HOLLIS

Alex NĂCHESCU Disturbing the Dead in the Peaceful Capital: The Different Meanings of Reburial in 5th - 6th Century Northern China

James BAILLIE Tomb Openings in Medieval Persian and Caucasian Literature

Gunhyak LEE Caring for the Dead through Gift and Liturgy

18:30 Conference Dinner
Gösser Bräu Graz - Neutorgasse 48, 8010 Graz

Friday, 4. September

08:30 - 09:00

Coffee

09:00 - 10:30

Session 4
Moderator: Michaela SELWAY

Crystal HOLLIS

The Less Than Quiet Dead: Historic Graffiti on Medieval Tombs

Josip PARAT

Siste, viator: Epitaphs and Communication with the Dead in Roman Dalmatia

10:30 - 11:00

Coffee

11:00 - 12:30

Session 5
Moderator: Clemens GANTNER

Francesco VERONESE

A Dead King's Skull as Tableware. Reconsidering Alboin's Murder and the Ethics of Royal Banquets in Paul the Deacon's History of the Lombards

Michaela SELWAY

When the Dead Are Cast Out: Gregory of Tours on Hidden Transgressions and Eternal Consequences

12:30 - 13:30

Edeltraud ASPÖCK, Thom GOBBITT:
Final discussion and closing remarks
Lunch



The PresentDead

Investigating the practical, conceptual and emotional dimensions of engagements with the dead in early medieval Central and Eastern Europe from the 5th to 8th centuries CE

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We work for
tomorrow

