

## Call for Papers: DAW Conference 2026

### Memory and Oblivion: Ancient Societies in Perspective

The DAW Conference is a one-and-a-half-day event that has been bringing together both young researchers and experienced scholars from a broad range of disciplines at the University of Basel's Department of Ancient Civilizations since 2009. The next edition of the conference, which takes place on **Monday and Tuesday, 23–24 November 2026, at Hotel Odelya in Basel**, will explore the topic *Memory and Oblivion: Ancient Societies in Perspective*. Confirmed speakers include Leire Olabarria (University of Birmingham) and Verena Schulz (LMU Munich).



Ara Pacis, © Cinzia Tuena.

## Overview

In ancient Mediterranean societies, memory constituted not so much a passive record of past events as a dynamic and often contested process that shaped identity, justified authority, structured rituals, and sustained communal bonds across generations. Memorial and commemorative practices, whether enacted in ceremony, embedded in language, or engraved into stone, reflected cultural values, political aims, and religious beliefs. Equally significant were acts of forgetting. Erasures, silences, and revisions were not accidental; they functioned as instruments of resistance, control, and transformation.

This interdisciplinary conference invites reflections on how memory was constructed and negotiated in ancient contexts, through funerary architecture, monumental inscriptions, linguistic conventions, textual transmission, and the performance of rituals. These are the primary questions we want to address: What guided ancient individuals and communities in selecting what to preserve or discard, and by what means was memory both crafted and suppressed? What were the strategies through which people remembered – or chose to forget – their past? How did memory and oblivion intersect with issues of power, place, and poetics? And how do researchers today reconstruct these ancient practices when working with biased and fragmented materials?

## Participation

The conference organisers, Massimo Cè and Cinzia Tuena, invite original contributions for a 20-minute presentation; submissions from early-career researchers, including PhDs and postdocs, are particularly welcome. Abstracts of **no more than 500 words** (excluding bibliography), along with the author's name, institutional affiliation, and current position, should be submitted in PDF format **by 30 June 2026 to [c.tuena@unibas.ch](mailto:c.tuena@unibas.ch)** with the subject heading "DAW Conference 2026: Abstract". All decisions will be communicated to the authors by the end of July.

## Select Bibliography

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- Castagnoli, Luca, and Paola Ceccarelli (2019, eds.). *Greek Memories: Theories and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
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