

International Symposium

# The role of elites of the 1st millennium BC between Central Europe and Southern Balkans

with the case study of the “Horse and Rider of Babunja”



May 13-15, 2025  
Natural History Museum Vienna



Botschaft  
der Republik Albanien  
Wien



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## **Programme of the International Symposium**

# **The role of elites of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC between Central Europe and the Southern Balkans with the case study of the "Horse and Rider of Babunja"**

**May 13 – 15, 2025**

**Venue of the conference:** Natural History Museum Vienna, Room 19, Burgring 7, A-1010 Vienna

### **Hosts of the conference**

Natural History Museum Vienna

Albanian Academy of Sciences

in cooperation with the Ambassador of the Republic of Albania in Austria

### **Approach and content of the conference**

The diverse aspects of the role of members of the elite will be presented and discussed at the conference. The academic discourse on the accompanying material culture, the prestige goods, the corresponding trade routes and communication networks between Central Europe and the Balkans in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC will be the focus of the conference. In order to embed this in a larger framework, theoretical concepts on social structure and identities in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC will also be the subject of discussion. Grave finds in particular are able to demonstrate an impressive picture of the differentiated role of elites and their multi-layered social, political and ritual-religious functions, but also the specific roles of female and male elite members on the basis of their specific grave inventories.

The occasion for the conference is the outstanding bronze statuette of the so-called "Horse and Rider of Babunja", a settlement near Apollonia of Illyria, located in present day Albania. Discovered during the Albanian-German research excavations in 2018, the artwork is now to be presented to the public at the Natural History Museum Vienna in 2025 following its subsequent restoration at the Getty Museum in the USA and its return to Europe. The statuette, which was made in a Greek workshop in the Late Archaic period around 510–490 BC, is a unique artistic masterpiece of Greek bronze sculpturing. Although the person on horseback is carrying weapons, the stylistic (iconographic) peculiarities of archaism make it unclear whether it is a horseman or perhaps even a horsewoman. The outstanding statuette also offers a good opportunity to discuss the interaction of Greek Poleis and settlements with the local inhabitants and especially their elites.



# Conference Programme

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

**From 12:00** Registration Conference Office, Lecture Hall, Natural History Museum Vienna

## Greeting Words and Introduction

13:00–13:20 **Katrin Vohland**, General Director and Scientific CEO of the Natural History Museum Vienna, Austria  
**Fate Velaj**, Ambassador of the Republic of Albania in Austria  
**Adem Bunguri**, Institute of Archaeology, Academy of Sciences of Albania  
**Karina Grömer**, Head of the Department of Prehistory, Natural History Museum Vienna, Austria

## Elites, Luxury and Representation

*Chair: Tiefengraber, Georg*, Natural History Museum Vienna, Department of Prehistory

- 13:20–13:40 **Mückler, Hermann**, University of Vienna, Anthropological Society Vienna  
*Eliten aus ethnohistorischer Sicht im Kontext von Machtgefälle, Hierarchien und Funktionseliten*
- 13:40–14:00 **Stegmaier, Gerd**, fodilus GmbH  
*Bodies of importance: On the role of body preparation and presentation in the context of Early Iron Age elite burials*
- 14:00–14:10 **Discussion**
- 14:10–14:30 **Golec, Martin / Golec Mírová, Zuzana / Chytráček, Miloslav / Kučera, Lukáš / Martínek, Jan / Kagemann, Katja / Mischka, Doris / Zemek, Vojtěch**, Palacký University Olomouc / Friedrich-Alexander-University of Erlangen-Nürnberg  
*The gold of the north: The role of elites for the amber trade in Early Iron Age Europe*
- 14:30–14:50 **Grömer, Karina**, Natural History Museum Vienna, Department of Prehistory  
*Representation of elites through costume*
- 14:50–15:00 **Discussion**
- 15:00–15:30 **Coffee break**

## Albanian Archaeology

*Chair: Horejs, Barbara*, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Austrian Archaeological Institute

- 15:30–15:50 **Bunguri, Adem**, Institute of Archaeology, Academy of Sciences of Albania  
*Albania in the 1st millennium BC. Illyrian elites through the protective helms in Albania and Kosova*
- 15:50–16:10 **Shehi, Eduard**, Albanian Institute of Archaeology  
*Between Greeks and Illyrians: The Role of Historical Manipulation in Power Legitimization after the Civil War in Epidamnos*
- 16:10–16:20 **Discussion**



- 16:20–16:40 **Ceka, Neritan**, Albanian Institute of Archaeology  
*The monumental royal graves of Selca e Poshtme*
- 16:40–16:50 **Selaj, Erilda**, Shtëpia Studio Kadare  
*The Treasure of Selca: A story of “conservations” and displays*
- 16:50–17:10 **Lahi, Bashkim / Lahi, Sokol**, Albanian Institute of Archaeology / Cultural Tours Albania, Shkoder  
*Archäologische Ausgrabungen und Kulturtourismus in Albanien*
- 17:10–17:20 **Discussion**
- 17:20–18:00 **Break**

### Keynote Speech

- 18:00–19:00 **von Hesberg, Henner / Daehner, Jens / Döhner, Gregor / Fiedler, Manuel / Gänsicke, Susanne / Lahi, Bashkim / Martin, Thomas / Pánczél, Szilamér-Péter / Shehi, Eduard**, University of Köln/German Archaeological Institute / J. Paul Getty Museum / Humboldt-University Berlin / Albanian Institute of Archaeology  
*Der Reiter aus Babunja – Selbstrepräsentation der Eliten in griechischen Apoikien des Adriaumes*

Followed by a **buffet by the Embassy of the Republic of Albania in Austria** in the Upper Dome Hall of the NHM Vienna

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

### Elites and equestrians

*Chair: Grömer, Karina*, Natural History Museum Vienna, Department of Prehistory

- 09:00–09:20 **Bühler, Birgit**, University of Vienna, Vienna Institute for Archaeological Science  
*Ancient horse-riding styles & mounted combat techniques – a transdisciplinary approach*
- 09:20–09:40 **Nebelsick, Louis Daniel**, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw  
*Weapon bearing indigenous elites and the divergent impact of Scythian raids in Central Europe during the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC*
- 09:40–10:00 **Maraszek, Regine**, State Office for Heritage Management and Archaeology Saxony-Anhalt, State Museum of Prehistory  
*Lady on horseback. The horsewoman and charioteer 1300–800 BC in north central Europe*
- 10:00–10:20 **Stoychev, Ruslan**, Institute of Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences  
*The Ancient Horseman of Thrace: a case study of the Lukovit Treasure*
- 10:20–10:30 **Discussion**
- 10:30–11:00 **Coffee break**



## Elites in Ancient Thracia

Chair: Trinkl, Elisabeth, University of Graz, Department of Antiquity

- 11:00–11:20 **Nankov, Emil**, The National Archaeological Institute with Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences  
*Archaeology of Gender, Rank and Status: The Alabastra from the Thracian Royal Burial in the Golyama Kosmatka Tumulus*
- 11:20–11:40 **Pramatarov, Kaloyan**, National Archaeological Institute with Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences  
*Rich Tumuli Graves in Thrace. Origin, Essence, Main Characteristics (5<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC)*
- 11:40–12:00 **Emilov, Julij**, Sofia University, Department of Ancient History, Thracian Studies and Medieval History  
*Stories of Three Ladies in Early Hellenistic Thrace (the Late 4<sup>th</sup> – Early 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC)*
- 12:00–12:10 **Discussion**
- 12:10–12:30 **Poster Presentations (with short comments)**
- 12:30–14:00 **Lunch break**

## Central and Southern Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean Area

Chair: Wendling, Holger, Bavarian Archaeological State Collection, Munich

- 14:00–14:20 **Guštin, Mitja**, Emeritus of University of Primorska, Koper  
*Princesses from Lyhnydos, place of the light*
- 14:20–14:40 **Strobel, Karl**, University of Klagenfurt  
*Macedonia – Land of Women. A Historical and Archaeological Analysis of Internal Structures of the Macedonian Elite Society*
- 14:40–15:00 **Trinkl, Elisabeth / Regina Klöckl-Zorić**, University of Graz, Department of Antiquity  
*Observations on the role and identity of elites based on the material culture from Peloponnesian sanctuaries*
- 15:00–15:20 **Schmid, Stephan G.**, Humboldt-University Berlin, Institute of Archaeology  
*The female elite(s) of ancient Idalion (Cyprus) and their self-representation*
- 15:20–15:30 **Discussion**
- 15:30–16:00 **Coffee break**

Chair: Nebelsick, Louis, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw

- 16:00–16:20 **Wendling, Holger**, Bavarian Archaeological State Collection, Munich  
*Hallstatt Period Sumptuous Burials of the Central Balkans – Iron Age Societies shaped by Tradition, Communication and Innovation*
- 16:20–16:40 **Peška, Jaroslav**, Archaeological Centre Olomouc  
*Reiche Gräber der Angehörigen der Oberschicht von Kneževića Glavica in Montenegro*
- 16:40–17:00 **Heilmann, Daniela**, Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich / Romano-Germanic Commission Frankfurt/Main  
*Between Representation and Crafts: Investigating the Lives of Elite Women in the 1<sup>st</sup> Millennium BC Southern Balkans*



- 17:00–17:10 **Discussion**
- 17:10–17:30 **Gavranovic, Mario**, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Austrian Archaeological Institute  
*Early Iron Age female costumes from Bosnia in light of recent discoveries*
- 17:30–17:50 **Papazovska, Aleksandra**, Archaeological Museum of the Republic of North Macedonia  
*The concept of a female role in the social structure of the Late Bronze and Iron age society in the Axios valley*
- 17:50–18:10 **Perkić, Domagoj / Dizdar, Marko / Potrebica, Hrvoje**, Dubrovnik Museums, Archaeological Museum / Institute of Archaeology, Zagreb / University of Zagreb  
*Bright and shiny ladies from the Early Iron Age on the southern part of the eastern Adriatic coast*
- 18:10–18:20 **Discussion**
- 18:30 **Guided tours through the Natural History Museum Vienna, Restoration labs, storage facilities**
- 20:00 **Dinner**

## Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025

### Slovenia and Croatia

*Chair: Amann, Petra*, University of Vienna, Department of Ancient History, Papyrology and Epigraphy

- 09:00–09:20 **Fileš Kramberger, Julia / Mavrović Mokos, Janja / Potrebica, Hrvoje**,  
University of Zagreb, Department of Archaeology  
*From Burial to Household: Real Lives of Elite Women in Early Iron Age Croatia*
- 09:20–09:40 **Ložnjak Dizdar, Daria / Metzner-Nebelsick, Carola / Dujmic, Domagoj / Dizdar, Marko**,  
Institute of Archaeology, Zagreb / Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich / Archaeological Museum Osijek  
*Women in elites of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC in the middle Danube region: the sites of Batina and Sotin*
- 09:40–09:50 **Discussion**
- 09:50–10:10 **Grahek Lucija**, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Institute of Archaeology  
*A Girl with a Gold Coin: Female Burials from the Iron Age in Bela Krajina, SE Slovenia*
- 10:10–10:30 **Križ, Borut**, Dolenjski muzej Novo mesto  
*Princely barrow 66 on Kapiteljska njiva in Novo mesto (Slovenia)*
- 10:30–10:40 **Discussion**
- 10:40–11:10 **Coffee break**

### Italy

*Chair: Potrebica, Hrvoje*, University of Zagreb

- 11:10–11:30 **Negrini, Claudio**, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Austrian Archaeological Institute  
*Zwischen Identität und Netzwerk: Helme und Kriegertracht eisenzeitlicher Eliten im nordadriatischen Raum*



- 11:30–11:50 **Weidig, Joachim**, Albert-Ludwigs-University Freiburg  
*Die „Amazonen“ aus Belmonte Piceno. Eisenzeitliche Frauenbestattungen mit Waffen aus Ostitalien*
- 11:50–12:10 **Amann, Petra**, University of Vienna, Department of Ancient History, Papyrology and Epigraphy  
*Reich beschenkt! Gaben an Frauen im Rahmen der orientalisierenden Eliten Etruriens*
- 12:10–12:20 **Discussion**
- 12:20–13:30 **Lunch break**

## Central Europe

*Chair: Metzner-Nebelsick, Carola*, Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich

- 13:30–13:50 **Rudorfer, Johann / Obernberger, Jana / Seisenbacher, Alexander / Baumgartner, Nina**, Natural History Museum Vienna, Department of Prehistory  
*Beispiele für elitäre Bestattungen aus dem Gräberfeld von Hallstatt*
- 13:50–14:00 **Ramsl, Peter C. / Kohl, Leona / Urban, Patrik / Novotny, Friederike / Spannagl-Steiner, Michaela**, University of Vienna, Department of Prehistoric and Historical Archaeology / FWF-Project CATA, Natural History Museum Vienna, Department of Anthropology  
*The elite of women in the Middle European corridor with special reference to the Northeast Austrian Group (NAG) in the La Tène period*
- 14:00–14:10 **Discussion**
- 14:10–14:40 **Coffee break**

*Chair: Stegmaier, Gerd*, fodilus GmbH

- 14:40–15:00 **Trefný, Martin / Mangel, Tomáš / Stolz, Daniel**, University of J. E. Purkyně, Ústí nad Labem  
*Social elites of the Early Iron Age in Bohemia. But based on what criteria?*
- 15:00–15:20 **Salayová, Ivana**, Charles University Prague  
*La-Tène metal bracelets/armlets from Moravia and their relation to the female elites*
- 15:20–15:30 **Discussion**
- 15:30–15:50 **Melichar, Petr / Golec, Martin / Golec Mírová, Zuzana / Kučera, Lukáš / Tiefengraber, Georg / Grömer, Karina**, Palacký University Olomouc / Natural History Museum Vienna, Department of Prehistory  
*Gems from the fire: tracing the Glass Jewels of Moravian Hallstatt elites*
- 15:50–16:10 **Józefowska-Domańska, Anna**, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology Polish Academy of Science  
*Transformations in Elite Identity of the Hallstatt B–D period. The Case of the Cemetery in Domasław, Poland*
- 16:10–16:30 **Concluding Discussion**



## Poster

**Gergova, Diana**, National Academy of Art, Sofia

*The Thracian woman. Ancient accounts and archaeological evidence*

**Hirsch, Barbara**, Natural History Museum Vienna, Department of Prehistory

*Einfach Mensch – prähistorische nicht-geschlechtsspezifische Darstellungen*

**Karwowski, Maciej**, Independent researcher

*La Tène Period Connections: Interactions between the Austrian Danube Region and the Balkans*

**Novotny, Friederike / Spannagl-Steiner, Michaela / Kohl, Leona / Urban, Patrik / Rams, Peter C.**, Natural History Museum Vienna, Department of Anthropology / University of Vienna, Department of Prehistoric and Historical Archaeology, FWF-Project CATA

*Children with special needs – part of an "elite" society*

**Pomberger, Beate Maria / Sauderson, Kayleigh**, Natural History Museum Vienna, Department of Prehistory / University of Vienna, Department of Prehistoric and Historical Archaeology

*Glocken und Schellen als Kennzeichen der Eliten*

**Tiefengraber, Georg / Tiefengraber, Susanne**, Natural History Museum Vienna, Department of Prehistory / Institute for Southeastern Alpine Bronze- and Iron Age Research ISBE

*Iron Age elites in the Inner Alpine region – Stettweg and beyond*

**Tóth-Vásárhelyi, Maté / Kreiter, Attila / Fehér, Kristof / Aradi, László Előd**, Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Archaeology / Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Center / Hungarian National Museum Archeometry Laboratory

*A South Daunian crater from a warrior grave in Százhalombatta*

**Turner, Manuela**, Verein EXORATA

*The Schandorf cemetery – final resting place of an "elite"?*

**Weidig, Joachim / Coen, Alessandro / Micozzi, Marina / Martinez-Labarga, Cristina / Pauselli, Rebecca / Pusceddu, Allegra / Ottoni, Claudio**, Albert-Ludwigs-University Freiburg / University of Urbino Carlo Bo / Viterbo University of Tuscia, Department of Humanities, Communication and Tourism / Tor Vergata University of Rome, Department of Biology / University of Urbino Carlo Bo, Department of Humanistic Studies / Tor Vergata University of Rome, Department of Biology

*Der Schmuck der reichen Schwestern. Prunkbestattungen von Frauen in Spoleto und ihr verwandtschaftliches Verhältnis*

### Venue

Natural History Museum Vienna, Room 19, Burgring 7, 1010 Vienna, Austria

Homepage: <https://www.nhm-wien.ac.at/>

### Organizing committee:

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### Contact

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### Framework program to the conference

On May 13, 2025, a **festive reception** organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Albania in Austria will take place in the evening with an Albanian cultural programme, during which the "Horse and Rider of Babunja" will also be presented in the Gold Cabinet of the Natural History Museum Vienna.

Special **guided tours** of the collections of the Natural History Museum Vienna are also offered as a supporting programme.