

Elite Mobility and Funerary Practices in Iron Age Europe

International conference organized by
Laurent Olivier, Robert Schumann & Sasja van der Vaart-Verschoof
in the framework of the 2nd Joseph Déchelette European Archaeology Prize,
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Elite Mobility and Funerary Practices in Iron Age Europe

The Early Iron Age was a key time in European Prehistory during which cultural clusters developed and cross-continental connections formed that persisted through the subsequent Roman Period and beyond. The elites who arose during this period – whose remains are found in elaborate ‘princely’ burials all over Europe – played a key role in this process, yet due to nationalistic research traditions we have yet to understand their role in connecting and re-shaping the continent.

Modern borders and language barriers are a huge hindrance in the field of Early Iron Age research. This conference will strive to overcome this by having specialists from Western and Central Europe (Austria, Belgium Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Netherlands, Slovenia...) and the British Isles present research on elite graves found in their regions (in English) and consider a range of topics that contribute to our understanding of the rise of Iron Age elites throughout Northwest Europe and their large-scale networks.

The conference will build on the results of an international workshop hosted by Sasja van der Vaart-Verschoof and Robert Schumann in Leiden in 2015, which emphasised that Early Iron Age elite burials signal interaction on a continental scale and need to be studied as such. The first *Déchelette Prize Conference*, however, will not only have a larger geographic focus but also a wider chronological framework. The latter will correspond to the sequence running from the end of the Late Bronze Age (Ha B2-3) to the beginning of the Late Hallstatt period (Ha D1-2), in order to contextualise the Early Iron Age Princely graves in the long duration of the first half of the last millennium BC. The large geographical framework chosen should allow us to reveal a diversity of trajectories within a common network, depending on the location of the sites and their chronology.

The conference will address long-standing questions regarding the origin and nature of Iron Age elites and their contact-networks, thereby yielding valuable insights into the fundamental changes that took place during this period in which ‘Europe took shape’. It is the conference’s ambition to provide a methodological and theoretical milestone for European Iron Age archaeology. If our attention will be focused on the anthropological interpretation of the archaeological evidence provided mainly by funerary assemblages, we shall favour scientific approaches based on detailed analysis of archaeological remains.

PROGRAM

(preliminary)

Wednesday 19-10-2022

Welcome	
18.00	REGISTRATION OPEN & WELCOME RECEPTION

Thursday 20-10-2022

Origins & Development of Elite Graves		
9.30	WELCOME WITH TEA & COFFEE	
10.00	Sasja van der Vaart-Verschoof	Fascinating Fragments. How practice-based research changed our understanding of Early Iron Age elite graves in the Low Countries
10.45	Nico Roymans	Early La Tène elite burials in the Lower Rhine-Meuse region: material culture, connectivity and social change
11.15	COFFEE/TEA	
11.45	Eugene Warmenbol	Swords and shrouds, rings and razors. Late Hallstatt B and early Hallstatt C metal-bearing graves of the Low Countries .
12.15	Matthew G. Knight & Brendan O'Connor*	Where are all the 'Elites'? Hallstatt C metalwork from Britain and connections with the Continent
12.45	<i>Discussion on the Origins & Development of Elite Graves</i>	
13.00	LUNCH	

Elite Identity, Status & Prestige		
14.00	Laurent Olivier	"funerary memory" of the Early Iron Age elite graves, between the 7th and the 5th century BC
14.30	Christophe Snoeck & Guy de Mulder <i>et al.</i>	The spread of the Early Iron Age elite graves: Networks and mobility
15.00	Karina Grömer	Ritual, Functional, Meaningful - Textiles from Iron Age graves in Central Europe with focus on Elite Burials
15.30	COFFEE/TEA	
16.00	Rena Maguire	All along the watchtower. Memorialisation and mobility of Iron Age Irish elites
16.30	Maria Kohle	A ritual of the elite? Thoughts on social aspects of Early Iron Age burials with anthropomorphisation
17.00	Carola Metzner-Nebelsick, Robert Schumann & Rupert Gebhard*	An unexpected find from Lower Bavaria. Investigating an ostentatious EIA burial from Otzing
17.30	<i>Discussion on Elite Identity, Status & Prestige</i>	
18.00	DRINKS & DINNER (at own expense)	

Friday 21-10-2022

The Spread of Elite Graves: Networks & Mobility		
9.00	WELCOME WITH TEA & COFFEE	
9.30	Martin Trefný	The Early Iron Age (Ha C-D1) elite graves in Bohemia as evidence of the mobility of the contemporary communities
10.00	Dirk Krause, Leif Hansen & Quentin Sueur	Origins and development of the Hallstatt elite burials in Southwest Germany with a special focus on new data from the Heuneburg region
10.30	Erika Makarová	Hallstatt period hoards from Slovakia – the evidence of supra-regional contacts
11.00	COFFEE/TEA	
11.30	Réjane Roure	Mediterranean Celts: a society without elite or a historiography which refuse them?
12.00	Holger Wendling	An Iron Age Spider's Web. Trans-regional Elite Communication at the Dürrnberg 'Salt Metropolis'
12.30	Jutta Leskovar	Ways to and from Mitterkirchen – Rich Hallstatt C Graves and 'Elite Mobility'
13.00	<i>Discussion on the Spread of Elite Graves: Networks & Mobility</i>	
13.15	LUNCH	
14.15	Bettina Arnold	The Wandering Warrior: New Approaches to Understanding Early La Tène Migration
14.45	Barbara Armbruster & Maryse Blet-Lemarquand et al.	Bright Elites - Precious metal finds in Hallstatt and Early La Tène burials as indicators of contact and exchange
15.15	Lisette Kootker & Sasja van der Vaart-Verschoof	An isotopic perspective on (elite) mobility in Iron Age the Netherlands
15.45	<i>Discussion on the Spread of Elite Graves: Networks & Mobility</i>	
16.00	General discussion	
17.30	DRINKS (at own expense)	

*Speaker will not be present in person.

ABSTRACTS

Fascinating Fragments: How practice-based research changed our understanding of Early Iron Age elites in the Low Countries

Sasja van der Vaart-Verschoof

A practice-based approach to graves should be standard practice in funerary archaeology and in-depth primary examination of *all* grave goods—including all fragments—is of crucial importance. Analysing how objects were made, used in life and treated during burial rituals enables the reconstruction of object life histories, which can be used to reconstruct and interpret the cultural and social practices reflected in graves. This allows interpretation of burials to advance beyond listing the presence/absence of specific artefact types per grave. By taking this approach, even graves with little to no context information can yield (new) relevant insights, as long as the disparate data qualities are taken into account. The Chieftain's grave of Oss—one of the most iconic prehistoric finds from the Low Countries—is presented as an example of the benefits of this approach. This famous complex has been studied repeatedly in the almost 90 years since its discovery. Yet even so, examining it—and all grave goods, including uninspirational fragments—from a practice-based perspective over the last decade has radically altered and improved our understanding of both it and the Early Iron Age elite burial phenomenon.

Early La Tène elite burials in the Lower Rhine-Meuse region: material culture, connectivity and social change

Nico Roymans

In 2018 an Early La Tène chariot burial was found at Heumen in the Dutch eastern river area. This newly discovered burial is not unique for the Low Countries, but is part of a broader cluster of some 38 Early La Tène elite burials and related conspicuous burials in an area indicated as the 'Lower Rhine-Meuse region', which roughly corresponds to the sand landscapes of the southern and eastern Netherlands, northeast Belgium and the adjacent German Lower Rhine region.

The graves share several characteristics: the use of a cremation ritual and the deposition in the graves of bronze vessels, horse harnesses, weapons and in some cases the remains of two-wheeled vehicles. This group of burials can be considered the most northern off-shoot of an elite culture that has its roots in the Late Hallstatt and Early La Tène culture of more southern regions in France and the German Rhineland. In contrast to the older horizon of essentially 7th-century BC elite burials from the same area, those from the Early La Tène period have not been comprehensively investigated so far. Aim of the current project Chariots on Fire – carried out by a team of Dutch and Belgian archaeologists - is to analyse this horizon of conspicuous burials in the North. The objectives can be specified as follows:

1. presenting an overview of the Hallstatt D3/La Tène A elite graves in the study area.
2. analysing the graves within the context by of the 5th-century BC social dynamics in the region
3. placing the elite burials in a broader European context.
4. investigating the impact of human mobility, thereby integrating archaeological and science-based methods.

In the 5th century BC we are not only dealing with an influx of southern imports, but human mobility probably also played a role. Part of the elite in our study area may have been an immigrant elite which had moved north and settled down with relatives and attendants. Network analysis and interregional connectivity are key terms for understanding the broader European context of the patterns sketched for the Lower Rhine-Meuse region, and core-periphery models - be it in a 'soft' and flexible variant - are also used. Our study shows that Early La Tène elite networks went further north and were more intense than expected so far, but at the same time they were highly fragile, already breaking off towards the end of La Tène A. The 5th century BC manifests itself as a highly dynamic period. For understanding this regional dynamics we need an approach that offers space to demographic fluctuations, discontinuities and crisis situations.

Our social interpretation of the elite burials in the Lower Rhine-Meuse region oscillates between the poles represented by 'regionality' and 'connectivity'. From a European perspective this northern cluster of conspicuous burials offer us ample opportunities to study patterns of connectivity with southern regions, but the appearance of this horizon of burials can only be understood within its proper regional context.

Swords and shrouds, rings and razors. Late Hallstatt B and early Hallstatt C metal-bearing graves of the Low Countries

Eugène Warmenbol

At the turn of the 9th and the 8th century BC, at the dawn of the Early Iron Age, all of a sudden, grave-goods characterizing a warrior elite, and more specifically sword-bearers, make their appearance between the Rhine and the Seine. Unfortunately, in the Low Countries, we have to deal with a lot of older finds, such as those from the well-known sites of Court-Saint-Etienne, thoroughly published by Marc-Edouard Mariën, who took this elite for « invaders ». As a matter of fact, the same kind of material is indeed known earlier, during the Late Bronze Age, but in other contexts, especially wet contexts, material showing sword-bearers are not a new phenomenon in the area. A lot of new research is going on, though, especially within the context of the CRUMBEL project (the acronym stands for 'Cremations, Urns and Mobility. Ancient population dynamics in Belgium'), new research that will allow new approaches. These men are buried under barrows, as others were before, and they are cremated, as usual since half a millennium at least. Some cemeteries, such as the one in Neerharen-Rekem (Limburg, B.) and Weert-Boshoven (Limburg, NL), obviously continue in use from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age. The bronze swords, chapes, but also the razors and tweezers (yes, the warrior's beauty) are all 'Atlantic' types, with North-West European roots, but sometimes distributed more widely, a distribution that obscured the truly endogenous nature of the Gündlingen/Villement swords or the Coplow Farm/Sion Reach chapes. We are definitely dealing with a 'local' phenomenon, as was also demonstrated by Pierre-Yves Milcent for 'Atlantic' France, but indeed, these elites will soon build or rebuild an exchange network with South-Western Germany, the Rhine acting as the main channel of exchange. Their paraphernalia will thus, but later in the Early Iron Age, include horse-gear, as horse-drawn wagons get widespread.

Where are all the 'Elites'? Hallstatt C metalwork from Britain and connections with the Continent

Matthew G. Knight & Brendan O'Connor

It is well-established that, in contrast to many parts of the Continent, Britain lacks clear evidence of ostentatious funerary practices so, as a result, evidence of elites during the Hallstatt C period is largely circumstantial. Many bronze and a few iron objects of the Llyn Fawr metalwork assemblage remain some of the clearest archaeological evidence of how we might interpret prehistoric social structures in Britain and what inter-regional connections people had. This paper collates existing evidence and presents new discoveries of metalwork that are refining how we might understand Britain's relationship with contemporary developments on mainland Europe. These include bronze swords with related chapes and trapezoidal razors, which must belong to the beginning of Hallstatt C, hoards, and socketed axeheads.

“Funerary memory” of the Early Iron Age elite graves, between the 7th and the 5th century BC

Laurent Olivier

The transition to the Iron Age is marked by several important changes in the modes of representation of death, such as the restitution of funeral practices. These transformations were characterized in particular by the rise of a class of warrior-horsemen fighting with the sword and whose funerary monuments, built by the community, gradually become places of collective burial. Funerary offerings are now part of a “deposit policy”, according to which the prestige goods possessed by the deceased accompany the deceased in his burial, as social markers. These new funerary practices of the Iron Age appear to be based both on relationships of individual debt, which are expressed by the dependent for the benefit of the wealthy, and on relations of redistribution, which are exercised by the wealthy for the benefit of their obligated. By developing from the 7th to the 5th century B.C., this system of social relations produces a real «funerary memory» of the dominant classes of Celtic society, which are drawn into a dynamic of «concentration of power» leading soon to the collapse of the «princely» society of the end of the Early Iron Age.

The spread of the Early Iron Age elite graves: Networks and mobility

Guy De Mulder, Christophe Snoeck, Dries Tys, Martine Vercauteren, Mathieu Boudin, Eugène Warmenbol, Giacomo Capuzzo, Kevin Salesses, Charlotte Sabaux, Sarah Dalle, Elisavet Stamataki, Amanda Sengeløv, Marta Hlad, Rica Annaert, Barbara Veselka & Ioannis Kontopoulos

The Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age cremation cemeteries in Belgium are characterised by a sober funerary ritual of deposition of the cremated remains of the deceased in an urn or an organic container. Accompanying funerary gifts are scarce. During the transition of the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age important changes are ascertained in a limited number of cemeteries with the appearance of so-called elite burials. They are characterised by a specific funerary set and the construction of large barrows above the grave. These burials are concentrated in certain areas. One of these areas is the Dyle valley in Central Belgium with a series of cemeteries at Court-Saint-Etienne, Limal and Wavre. The cemetery at Court-Saint-Etienne/ La Quenique-Ferme Rouge stands out among these barrow cemeteries due to the rich sets of funerary goods. A second concentration of elite burials has been detected in Haine valley where Havré and Harchies are among the most important elite sites. Next to these two regional groups, isolated elite graves were discovered at Hofstade, Neerharen-Rekem and Louette-Sainte-Pierre.

Through osteoarchaeological and various analytical analyses such as carbon, oxygen and strontium isotopes and infrared analyses, links between these different groups will be assessed. This presentation will discuss how the combination of archaeological, osteological and analytical techniques can help understand better the spread of Elite burials in Belgium.

Ritual, Functional, Meaningful: Textiles from Iron Age graves in Central Europe with focus on Elite Burials

Karina Grömer

This contribution discusses the significance of textiles for the expression of identity, prestige and status in Iron Age graves. For prehistory in the region of Central Europe, this is a challenge because textiles are among those organic materials that are rarely preserved under the prevailing climatic conditions. Nevertheless, archaeological evidence for actual textile finds from graves increase in the last centuries.

Additionally, the textiles found in graves had different purposes and functions, not all connected directly with the main topic – identity, status and prestige. The interpretation of textiles from funeral contexts is complex and goes far beyond clothing of the deceased. Different circumstances of deposition in funeral rites suggest the use of textiles with a variety of purposes, belonging to the mere ritual sphere of burial customs, or being more functional. From the archaeological evidence in Central European Iron Age, the six main purposes of textiles can be distinguished: 1) textiles used as garments for the deceased; 2) textiles used as burial gifts; 3) textiles serving as cover or wrapping for grave goods or the deceased (such as a shroud); and 4) textiles used as soft furnishings for the grave chamber. In addition to these purposes, 5) textiles can sometimes be found in graves as an integral part of other artefacts such as textile linings in sword scabbards. 6) Recycled textiles are also identified among grave finds (e.g. textiles stuffed into hollow bracelets of the Early La Tène period).

Here, textiles serving as coverings or wrappings, as grave goods and clothing are to be discussed and their inherent symbolism and meaning for the expression of identities. In the conference “Connecting Elites and Regions” in Leiden, Netherlands, different kinds of visual qualities have been described for textiles (textures, colours, patterns, weave types) in the 1st millennium BC and what may have been their impact on society. Here, those categories are applied to the different textile categories in graves, and also distinguishing between what textile types can be found in elite graves in opposition to the burials of broader parts of Iron Age societies. Statistical data in this respect might provide some hints for textile identities.

All along the watchtower. Memorialisation and mobility of Iron Age Irish elites

Rena Maguire

The IRC funded project Making Time sets out to use the metal-working technologies of Ireland's Iron Age, not just to establish a tighter chronology of the period, but to deepen and enhance our understanding of the people behind the objects.

Ireland's Iron Age is very different from either that of Britain or Europe, and yet, much feels familiar, just re-imagined and reworked. One of the great differences is that there are very few burials in Ireland which can be confidently dated to the Iron Age, so little is known about the nature of grave goods for the period. Yet what we can see of the ornate non-ferrous objects of the elite shows robust mobility across the island, as well as extending Britain.

Irish Iron Age equestrian equipment is a good example of this. The equipment is unique and ornate, very clearly objects used by the upper echelons of their society. Their find-spots (where known) are divided mostly between wetland and commonage, with these contexts also being on the *sligheann*, ancient trackways across Ireland. These tracks/*sligheann* have deep associations with ancient pre-Christian battles and heroic myths, which were recorded in the early medieval period in texts such as the Annals of the Four Masters, although by then they were re-imagined through an early Christian prism.

Using GIS modelling combined with Landscape Character analysis, to scrutinise the distribution of tack along the *sligheann*, this paper offers the hypothesis that the deposition patterns of tack along these ancient routes may well represent funerary memorials, or even possible burials, offering a glimpse at a sophisticated, mobile and martial ruling class who have been obscured by the murk of myths and legends.

A ritual of the elite? Thoughts on social aspects of Early Iron Age burials with anthropomorphisation

Maria Kohle

With the beginning of the Early Iron Age an increasing use of the human image can be documented in prehistoric iconography. The anthropomorphic representations appear in burial contexts all over Europe in the form of small ceramic or bronze figurines (free standing or as an application on vessels), incised decorations and urns that are made up to look human. In fact, the anthropomorphisation of urns is a quite common aspect of Iron Age burials on both sides of the alps. Apart from the well-known face urns there are many examples of urns that are dressed with textiles, jewellery and other clothing accessories and are thus anthropomorphised. So far it can be stated that only a small percentage of graves within a cemetery contain an anthropomorphic urn. Even taking taphonomic processes into consideration it raises the question whether only certain people in the community received the ritual of anthropomorphisation and whether these people have common social traits.

In Italy, where the ritual of anthropomorphisation is already an integral part of funeral studies, burials with anthropomorphic representations are often described as “princely” or “rich” because they differ from other graves (of the necropolis) in terms of quantity and/or quality of the grave goods. Interpretations concerning social differentiation, for example an important role or a high social rank of the deceased, are often linked to these observations.

Based on my analysis of circa 800 graves with dressed or human faced urns, their anthropological data, grave goods etc., I will discuss the (social) meaning of the ritual of anthropomorphisation as well as the previously made interpretations on the topic.

An unexpected find from Lower Bavaria: Investigating an ostentatious EIA burial from Otzing

Carola Metzner-Nebelsick, Robert Schumann & Rupert Gebhard

In 2010, an unexpected discovery was made in the Lower Bavarian village of Otzing during pre-construction excavations. In addition to several Neolithic finds and almost completely destroyed burials of the Early Iron Age, an undisturbed burial chamber of the Hallstatt period came to light. The grave inventory of the inhumation of an adult male buried in the chamber, stands out because of thousands of bronze studs. Already at an early stage of the excavation pieces of a wooden yoke, parts of the railing of a wagon box and leather straps belonging to the wagon and harness became visible. They had been preserved by the studs. Due to the exceptional preservation, the find was recovered in a block and was subsequently uncovered under laboratory conditions in the restoration department of the Archäologische Staatssammlung in Munich. During further investigation, numerous grave goods were discovered, which revealed one of the most prominent ostentatious burials of the Early Iron Age in Europe. In addition, the 'excavation' in the laboratory made it possible to take numerous samples and to work out microstratigraphic references, through which it is possible to reconstruct the original condition of the burial chamber. The Otzing grave thus provides a detailed insight into an ostentatious burial site of the Early Iron Age in a region where, due to intensive agricultural land use, grave finds are in many cases only preserved in pitiful remains. In addition, the grave goods of the burial ground provide essential information to the current discourse on the social and political structure of Early Iron Age societies in Central Europe. In our talk we will highlight the gain in knowledge the find of Otzing provides for the understanding of the Early Iron Age in southern Bavaria and beyond.

The Early Iron Age (Ha C-D1) elite graves in Bohemia as evidence of the mobility of the contemporary communities

Martin Trefný

The Early Iron Age princely graves in Bohemia are closely connected to the social elite of the Central European area, reflecting its political, economical or social role in the contemporary society. Nevertheless, these graves are also the fundamental sources for our knowledge of the mobility of these populations, as well as of the existing communication network, connecting distant areas in the Western, Central or Eastern Europe, but also the Transalpine world with the regions in the south of the Alps.

The material culture, characteristic for the princely graves of the Early Iron Age in the broader Central Europe, represents a significant evidence of the transmission of the specific ideology, ritual practices, manufacturing technologies, and other related phenomena for the considerable distances. It is not by a chance that the Early Iron Age in the Transalpine area is sometimes understood as the early form of the European unity.

The present contribution is focused on the latest knowledge in the field of the interregional contacts, acquired by recently excavated Early Iron Age graves in the Bohemian territory. It is not surprising that the wide application of the modern research methods or documentation technologies has brought new evidence not only in respect to commonly identified artefacts or known issues, but also in the area of so problematic aspects as is the use of the textile during the funerary ceremony or related topics. The complex scientific approach to the abovementioned problems clearly indicates that the civilization of the Early Iron Age princes was absolutely far from the imagination of the isolated rigid communities. On the contrary, these communities show a significant ability of adopting and reshaping various external impulses and their integration to their own life.

Origins and development of the Hallstatt elite burials in Southwest Germany with a special focus on new data from the Heuneburg region

Dirk Krausse, Leif Hansen & Quentin Sueur

The evidence of rich elite burials in the environs of the central places in Southwest Germany is, among other things, an indication of their political and administrative functions. In the area around the Hohenasperg near Ludwigsburg there are numerous monumental burial mounds which testify to the role of this centre of power and cover several generations, from the beginning of the second half of the 6th century until the Early La Tène period (Hochdorf, Grafenbühl, Kleinaspergle).

The Heuneburg, one of the most important central places north of the Alps during the Early Iron Age is surrounded by numerous burial mounds dating from Ha C to Lt A serving as last resting places for members of the social elite and their relatives. One of the most important research questions on social structure is the differentiation between status that is earned, and status that is attributed. In particular the rich children's burial from the Bettelbühl necropolis appears to suggest that during Ha D1 social rank and status were gradually becoming inheritable. The burial finds from the Bettelbühl cemetery also bear testimony to the exceptional social role that some women in the ruling class possessed.

Furthermore, new burial mounds near Unlingen on the periphery of the Bussen promontory, about 11 km from the Heuneburg, demonstrate that local elites were already present, before the Heuneburg was built.

Hallstatt period hoards from Slovakia – the evidence of supra-regional contacts

Erika Makarová

While hoards are one of the typical features of the Bronze Age, in the Hallstatt period the custom of storing objects is not so popular and widespread. In some areas (e.g. Slovakia, north-western Hungary) they occur rather sporadically, in others (e.g. Austria) not at all. In the territory of present-day Slovakia, hoards usually originate from fortified hilltop settlements representing the residence of elites and/or economic centres built in strategically advantageous locations, or from their vicinity. Unfortunately, they are the type of archaeological sites that are most at risk from robbers using metal detectors. And this may be why only a few hoards are known so far. However, in the last two decades, several new hoards have been discovered, expanding our knowledge of Early Iron Age societies and their intercultural relationships in Europe. Although the reasons for depositing the hoards may vary, their composition points to the connection of the territory of today's Slovakia with more distant regions. This applies not only to the area of the Kalenderberg group in south-western Slovakia, but also to the area of central and northern Slovakia culturally belonging to the Lusatian culture.

Mediterranean Celts: A society without elite or a historiography which refuse them?

Réjane Roure

Reading the main literature about Mediterranean Celts, their societies doesn't count elite in the early Iron Age, only some big men and chieftains (Garcia 2004 et 2012). According to a large part of the searchers, a real social differentiation would appear only at the end of the Iron Age, or even for some of them during the romanization process, with the apparition of aristocracy.

So, the South of France always seemed to have been different of the rest of the Celtic Europe during the Early Iron Age and the concept of princes and princess had never been used in this area, while it was so important in the study of Hallstattian Society.

However, new lectures of the southern data could be proposed. Through graves, settlements and their involvement in the Mediterranean trades, the role of elite had to be re-examined. Classical texts from Greeks and Romans authors mentioned kings and kingdom. There are many statues in the South of France which could be considered as representations of important people. Recent archaeological excavations demonstrated the presence of people with a special status near some settlements, and revealed also new perspectives on the occupation of space during the Early Iron Age. Material studies also showed the links between some productions and the presence of real networks between South and North. With those new light, we can propose another interpretation of the presence of elite in the southern Societies.

An Iron Age Spider's Web. Trans-regional Elite Communication at the Dürrnberg 'Salt Metropolis'

Holger Wendling

As one of the major centres of Iron Age Europe the 'salt metropolis' on Dürrnberg (Austria) offers extensive data on transalpine communication and interregional contact. At an intersection of far-reaching traffic routes and with a unique wealth of resources, many of its graves indicate most intensive intercultural communication beyond a purely economic exchange of goods. In addition, various burials suggest the presence of 'foreigners' in the alpine mining centre. The funeral database therefore greatly promotes diachronic research on economic organisation and social differentiation of the Dürrnberg mining community and on related issues like social dynamics, identity and cultural appropriation. Focussing on three extraordinary Late Hallstatt to Early La Tène burials, the shifting material and immaterial mobility, and communication of Dürrnberg elites will be examined. This diachronic approach provides information on the changing role of material culture in burial context, which promoted intra- and extra-societal communication of identities and cultural affiliation. The origin and assigned role of the buried individuals seems to have been deliberately exposed or concealed as an ostentatious marker of status and prestige. This changing role of origin and external connection may be variably related to supra-regional cultural identification or to local patterns of social distinction.

Ways to and from Mitterkirchen – Rich Hallstatt C Graves and ‘Elite Mobility’

Jutta Leskovar

Recent research has revealed further details about the Hallstatt C cemetery of Mitterkirchen, Upper Austria, which has been excavated and known since the 1980s. Many graves provide us with evidence for mobility: wagons and their parts, helmets from Slovenia, sets of objects like pottery, or certain rings commonly found in the north-eastern parts of Bavaria. A wagon’s purpose is to be moved and imported helmets and other objects have – obviously – been moved. As objects of this kind are usually found in richly furnished graves, archaeology’s common interpretation is to place the inhabitants of these graves on top of the Iron Age social ladder.

The aim of this paper is to question the close link between the so-called “elite”, high mobility, and rich objects/graves in Early Iron Age archaeology, while presenting different views on a cemetery and a prehistoric society.

The Wandering Warrior: New Approaches to Understanding Early La Tène Migration

Bettina Arnold

Martial ensembles in mortuary contexts are one of the characteristic features of the initial phase of the La Tène period. Helmets and swords decorated in the elaborate vegetal style have traditionally been interpreted as representing the movement of male warriors across the Alps from Germany and France into Italy and even as far as Greece. The assumption has been that this movement was largely out of the La Tène “core area” and into the Mediterranean world. However, a recent burial ensemble from a tumulus associated with the Heuneburg hillfort suggests that this may be only part of a much more complex picture of largely gender-specific mobility during the Early La Tène. Speckhau Tumulus 17 Grave 1 contained several iron weapons in addition to the only metal drinking vessel recovered from a burial in this region since the 1950s. The slashing sword, long, narrow spear points and iron helmet attachment have no local parallels but they do suggest possible connections to the Iberian Peninsula. This paper will discuss the ramifications of this find for current interpretations of differential gender mobility, elite status and regional interaction during the Early La Tène in Europe.

Bright Elites: Precious metal finds in Hallstatt and Early La Tène burials as indicators of contact and exchange

Barbara Armbruster, Maryse Blet-Lemarquand, Sebastian Fürst, Nicole Lockhoff*, Pierre-Yves Milcent*, Marilou Nordez, Laurent Olivier, Martin Schönfelder, Susanne Sievers & Roland Schwab*

This paper deals with precious and luxury items as ideal markers of cultural and economic contact and exchange during the European Iron Age. Gold ornaments, vessels, and decorative elements were abundantly deposited in “princely” graves and served as powerful symbols of identity, status and prestige. Locally manufactured, imported from distant territories or products of hybridisation, noble metal objects can reflect interaction of ruling elites

The purpose of this paper is to present the results of two Franco-German research projects on Iron Age gold in Central Europe (ANR/DFG "West-Hallstatt Gold" and "Celtic Gold" programmes). Through an interdisciplinary methodology, combining archaeological, stylistic, technological and analytical approaches, relationships between distinct funeral contexts and different geographical regions have been highlighted. We can identify local techno-stylistic traditions as well as external influences and affinities, in particular with the Mediterranean domain (Greece, Italy and the Iberian Peninsula). The use of different gold alloys brought to light by archaeometallurgical investigations can also indicate connections, raw material supply and particular choices of material composition. The technological aspects of Iron Age goldwork point out workshop traditions and the integration or adoption of new inventions. Through several case studies concerning Hallstatt and Early La Tène burial sites from Germany, France and Switzerland, we will present relationships between elite contexts at various spatial and temporal scales.

An isotopic perspective on (Elite) mobility in Iron Age the Netherlands

Lisette M. Kootker & Sasja van der Vaart-Verschoof

Often referred to as ‘the third science revolution in archaeology’, isotope research has become a staple in bioarchaeological and archaeometric research. In particular the isotope systems of strontium ($^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$) and oxygen ($\delta^{18}\text{O}$) on skeletal remains provide invaluable data on individual mobility patterns, and offer essential insights into trade routes or (inter)regional contacts of exchange. The last three decades, the international research in the field of provenancing human remains has concentrated on Sr-O isotope analysis of inhumation burials, as dental enamel proved to be invaluable for the investigation of childhood mobility patterns. Due to the fact that the archaeological skeletal assemblage in the Dutch Iron Age is dominated by cremated remains, the Iron Aged human remains represent an incredibly under researched archive of a period characterised by major social and cultural changes. Recent developments, however, have demonstrated the high potential of calcined bones for Sr isotope analysis. In particular the use of the *pars petrosa* (specifically the otic capsule, the osseous labyrinth of the inner ear), allows to identify childhood mobility in cremated remains. This paper aims to provide a complete and detailed overview of the isotope research conducted on inhumed and cremated Iron Age individuals from the Dutch river area, including the famous early Iron Age Elite burials from Oss. Combined with the scientific analysis of their cultural manifestation, the human isotopic data allow constraints to be placed on the geographic origin of the investigated individuals, and provide further evidence of extensive interregional contacts between the Netherlands and for instance the French Aisne–Marne region.