

Wealth, Power, and Hierarchy in the Prehistoric Balkans

(working title)



Exhibition Overview

You know what kings and queens are, but how did we get here? This exhibition will chronicle how societies transformed from simple farming villages in southeast Europe to complex kingdoms.

Drawing from the collections of more than two dozen museums and archaeological institutes in the Balkan Peninsula, *Wealth, Power, and Hierarchy in the Prehistoric Balkans* (working title) explores how a small number of individuals established tremendous power and influence over others. Beginning in the Neolithic Period and ending in the world of Iron Age Thracian kings (about 8,000 to 2,500 years ago), visitors will encounter archaeological finds that have never been shown in North America—including weapons, jewelry, tools, and more. These objects tell the story of how individuals grew their power and influence by amassing wealth and controlling trade, rituals, ceremonies, and warfare.



1

Last Crown

Queen Maria of Romania wore the last royal crown made in Europe in the 20th century. A replica establishes the idea of the crown as a symbol of royalty and power. From there, visitors travel back in time to discover how societies ended up having kings and queens.



2

Age of Farmers

8,000 years ago, in the Neolithic Period, societies in the Balkan Peninsula lived in simple farming villages. People in these villages were mostly equal. Their kinship groups were important and competed with one another. Encounter the simple-but-mysterious, ethereal ceramic figures these people left behind, and the austere ways they honored their dead.

3

Age of Leaders

By the Copper Age, technology had progressed enough that some people had learned to extract copper from the earth and turn the ore into tools, weapons, and jewelry. To everyone else, creating a gleaming axe out of rock was like magic. With these skills came power and wealth for the few, seen through what they're buried with: copper axes, gold adornments, ornate jewelry, and more.

4

Age of Warriors

A massive (replicated) war horse with a mounted soldier reflects how, in the Bronze Age, warriors fought their way to the top of the social ranks. With horses they could travel farther than ever before, and amassed wealth and influence—so much so they buried hoards of valuables just to show off. Visitors will encounter a replica funerary pyre. Elaborate helmets, greaves, and weapons on display show how their legacies endure thousands of years after their deaths.



5

Age of Kings

Gold diadems, ferocious helmets, and gleaming swords impress upon visitors the emergence of Europe's first kings and queens during the Iron Age. Intricate drinking vessels, ceremonial objects, and an ornate Thracian tomb reconstruction show that extreme social differences were solidified in the region.

Exhibition Specifications

Size

7,500 ft² (700 m²)

Ceiling height

13 ft (3.96 m)

Security

Exhibition requires a limited-access, lockable space with security staff during public hours

Shipping

One-way, inbound, paid by host venue and a share of artifact return expenses

Language

All text in English and Spanish; language may be converted by host venues

Rental fee

Please inquire

Features

- More than 200 artifacts and artifact groupings from 25 museums in 11 countries
- Full-size replications and touchable models
- Mechanical and digital interactives
- Large media elements and videos
- Gallery-wide soundscape
- Companion exhibition catalogue

Contact

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