

EVENTS IN THE FIELD OF ARCHAEOLOGY ORGANISED IN HONOUR OF THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

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In October 2025, Section II of Philosophy and Historical Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences organised [several events](#) within the programme series “Colourful Science” in celebration of the 200th anniversary of the foundation of the Academy. Conferences, exhibitions, book launches and accompanying events presented the rich traditions of the humanities and social sciences as well as the results of important research projects. These programmes offered not only the scholarly community but also the wider public an opportunity to become acquainted with the diversity of the disciplines represented by Section II, together with the methods and achievements of recent research.

The opening event of the programme series was the conference *Chapters from the 200-Year History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences*, held on 2 October 2025, which provided an overview of the history of the disciplines represented within Section II. The [lectures](#) discussed the planned volume on the history of the Academy as well as the wide range of research projects supported by the Academy over many years. The eleven speakers, representing history, archaeology, psychology, sociology and political science, not only presented the institution’s achievements but also addressed criticisms directed at it over the decades, long-standing operational problems, and the ways in which the Academy’s goals may be realised in an ever-changing social and political environment.

The introductory lecture was delivered by academician Elek Benkő. This was followed by presentations examining the history of the institution, the careers and scholarly work of its members, and the development of individual fields of research over the past two centuries. In a lecture connected to archaeology and related disciplines, Péter Langó (ELTE HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities) reviewed the history of research into the origins of the Hungarians, a subject that has interested the Academy from its very beginnings. The topic also demonstrated how recent scientific results, including genetic research, are fundamentally reshaping our knowledge alongside linguistic and archaeological investigations in a field that has often been influenced by political or ideological considerations and has long attracted broader public interest.



Fig. 1. Opening of the exhibition “Centuries on the Danube Bank” (photo by Tamás Szigeti, HAS)

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Following the conference, a [chamber exhibition](#) entitled *Évszázadok a Duna partján. Contra-Aquincumtól az Akadémia palotájáig* [*Centuries on the Danube Bank: From Contra-Aquincum to the Palace of the Academy*] opened in the entrance hall of the Academy building in connection with Széchenyi Square. The exhibition presented the history of the Pest bank of the Danube up to 1865. In addition to the art historian curator Gábor György Papp (ELTE HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities), five archaeologists and historians – Elek Benkő (ELTE RCH), Viktória Horváth (HNM), Balázs Sudár (ELTE RCH), Ádám Szabó (HNM) and Tivadar Vida (ELTE FH, ELTE RCH) – used archaeological, archival, material and visual sources to present the urban and institutional history of the area, with special emphasis on the planning and construction of the Academy building. Among the exhibits were several finds previously little known even to specialists, including a finely carved white marble female head of Roman or possibly Renaissance date found during the construction of the Parliament foundations, medieval small finds from Molnár Street in the city centre, and nineteenth-century stove tiles uncovered during the construction of the underground car park beneath Parliament. The most recent finds were plaster ornaments recovered from the fill beneath the floor of the ceremonial hall of the Academy building during its 2025 renovation, testifying to the more restrained original appearance of the hall before its colourful decoration of the 1880s–1890s. A short report on the exhibition is available on the Academy's [YouTube channel](#), while the full material has been published in a small catalogue by the Section of Philosophy and Historical Sciences.

Following the conference and exhibition opening, six important [publications](#) were presented on 2 October 2025. The volume *Levelek II [Letters II]* is an important collection of correspondence from the period of József Eötvös's first ministerial office and provides new information on the diverse official duties and activities of the member of the Batthyány government. The exhibition catalogue *MS mester és kora. Kiállítási katalógus [Master MS and His Age]* presents the material of the 2025 exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts dedicated to the outstanding late medieval Hungarian artist known as Master MS. The volume *The Self in Ancient and Early Modern Philosophy*, written by an international group of authors, examines the complex concept of the self in Graeco-Roman and early modern contexts. The volumes *Ókortörténet és feliratok. Studia Epigraphica Pannonica 15–16 [Ancient History and Inscriptions: Studia Epigraphica Pannonica 15–16]* and *Studia Epigraphica Pannonica Suppl. III* contain new results concerning the inscribed stone monuments of Roman Pannonia.

Visitors also became acquainted with two archaeological publications. First, Mária Bondár presented Viktória Kiss's book *Bronzkori élettörténetek Magyarországon: Kr. e. 3–2. évezred (Bronze Age Life Stories from Hungary: Third–Second Millennia BC)*. The volume summarises the results of nearly ten years of research in an accessible yet scholarly style. One of the aims of the Momentum research projects led by Viktória Kiss since 2015 has been to reconstruct the histories of Bronze Age societies and individuals living some 4,000 years ago through interdisciplinary methods. The volume has been published in Hungarian and English as Volume 5 of the *Hereditas Archaeologica Hungariae* series in a joint edition by the Institute of Archaeology and Archaeolingua Publishers, with support from the Academy's programme for book and journal publication.

Finally, László Borhy presented Kata Dévai's volume *Vessel Glass from Late Roman Burials in Pannonia (Dissertationes Pannonicae Series IV, Vol. 5)*, published in the *Dissertationes Pannonicae* series of the Institute of Archaeology at ELTE. Based on the examination of nearly one thousand Late Roman glass vessels from Pannonia, the author established a new typological system and provided an overview of characteristic forms, the role of glass vessels in the province, possible workshop identifications, and the main tendencies of Pannonian glass production. The full book launch programme is available on the Academy's [YouTube channel](#).

The next event in the programme series was the all-day conference *Multidiszciplináris kutatások a régészetben [Multidisciplinary Research in Archaeology]*, held in the Great Hall of the Academy on 7 October 2025. The conference introduced the many possibilities offered by complex methods used in archaeological research, from environmental archaeology through archaeometry to archaeogenomics. Organised by the Archaeological Scientific Committee of the Academy, the speakers presented the latest results of cooperation between archaeology and other disciplines over recent decades. Joint research projects relied



Fig. 2. Session of the conference “Multidisciplinary Research in Archaeology” (photo by Tamás Szigeti, HAS)



Fig. 3. Presentation on the scholarly work of academician László Török (photo by Tamás Szigeti, HAS)

heavily on non-invasive investigation methods applied to archaeological sites and finds, opening new perspectives in the study of landscapes, environments and climatic change. Archaeogenetic, physical anthropological and isotope-chemical methods also provided new opportunities for investigating the origins, mobility and social organisation of historical communities. The fifteen lectures followed recent research from prehistory to the early modern period and demonstrated the new narratives made possible by these methods. The first part of the conference focused on prehistoric research from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age, including the latest results of two Momentum and European Research Council projects. Research into the Roman period and Late Antiquity was presented through archaeometric studies and bioarchaeological approaches employed by Momentum research groups. Two lectures discussed migration-period mobility and kinship organisation in the framework of the ERC Synergy HistoGenes project. The history of the ninth to eleventh centuries was explored through bioarchaeological and archaeogenetic research in the region between the rivers Tisza and Maros and around the Carolingian centre of Mosaburg/Zalavár. Medieval studies were represented by environmental archaeological research in the Pilis Hills and archaeometric investigations of glass finds. The lectures may be viewed on the Academy’s [YouTube channel](#).

The final event of the programme series was the international conference *Ókortudomány és azon túl – Ancient Studies and Beyond*, organised by the Section of Philosophy and Historical Sciences and the Scientific Committee for Ancient History on 17 October 2025. The conference honoured both the relationship between the Academy and the study of antiquity and the scholarly work of academician László Török (1941–2020). The all-day event offered an opportunity to present recent Hungarian and international research concerning ancient Egypt, the Near East, Greece and Rome in the fields of ancient history, archaeology, linguistics and philosophy. The complete lectures may be viewed on the Academy’s [YouTube channel](#). Following the presentations, participants had the opportunity to ask questions during an informal discussion held in the Library of the Institute of Archaeology at ELTE. Thanks to the support of the Hungarian National Museum, participants were also able to visit the Seuso exhibition with professional guidance.

In his introductory lecture, Tamás Bács vividly recalled the figure of László Török, the distinguished scholar of Nubia and the art of the Late Antique Nile Valley, as well as the cultivated intellectual behind the academic achievements. The Egyptologists and Nubian studies scholars participating in the conference presented new research results connected to specific questions and narrower themes within Török’s exceptionally broad field of interests, including the gods, social organisation, representational culture and historical events of the ancient Nile Valley, often recalling earlier friendly debates with Török on these subjects. Scholars representing the wider field of ancient studies honoured the memory of their teacher and colleague through lectures connected to Török’s pioneering work in methodological questions related to historical reconstruction based on textual and material evidence, the study of modern forgeries of ancient artworks, the interpretation of ancient thinkers, and the investigation of Late Antique cultural transformations.

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The programme series, which began last year and continued this year, clearly demonstrated the wide range of archaeological events organised within the framework of the Academy's anniversary celebrations. In addition to presenting research results of broad public interest, these events placed strong emphasis on archaeology's connections with other disciplines and on the diverse activities of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.