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WHEN THE PENDULUM SWINGS BACK: THE 12TH CENTURY BCE AS THE BEGINNING OF A PERIOD OF GROWING EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

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As the title of this session clearly emphasizes, the beginning of the 12th century BCE is considered in the Eastern Mediterranean as the first step in the quick dismantlement of the sophisticated Late Bronze Age social and political structure. Such a point of view would likely be dismissed by an archaeologist studying Western European Late Prehistory. In western context, the 12th century may rather be considered as the beginning of increasing connectivity (thus giving birth to wide complexes such as the Atlantic one), growing technological complexity (development of copper alloy sheet hammering and lost-wax technique), dynamic social changes, etc.: the beginning of a new dynamic that would last until the 10-9th centuries BCE at least, with strong regional variations. In some regions, as in the north-western Mediterranean, it is probably the beginning of *longue durée* processes, that will develop well into the Late Iron Age. This paper will defend the idea that the “collapse” observed in Greece will mark the beginning of a period when social and political structures were more akin to forms observed elsewhere in Europe, in particular in Western Mediterranean Europe. Last, this paper will question the possible dynamics of this process (without trying to provide an explanation to the fall of the Palaces!) and to broadly assess its consequences. This will lead us to have a glance beyond the threshold of the 2nd millennium into the first centuries of the 1st millennium BCE, if the organizers allow me.

Keywords

Bronze Age, Iron Age, Europe and the Mediterranean, Crisis, Social complexity, Connectivity

Note/comment

I am not really happy about my title. If you consider my proposal worth of your session, I would gladly welcome suggestions about it.