

PREFACE

On February 23rd and 24th 2007 the last workshop on “LH III C Chronology and Synchronisms” was held at the Austrian Academy of Sciences at Vienna. These workshops were part of the “End of the Mycenaean Culture” project within the framework of the Special Project Group SCIEM 2000 (“The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the 2nd Millennium B.C.”). In 2009 this large-scale interdisciplinary research programme has come to a close.

As will be remembered, the “LH III C Chronology and Synchronisms” workshops served the purpose of developing a generally applicable chronological framework of the LH III C period and to contribute to a better understanding of the history of this important phase of the early history of Greece.¹ We now present the proceedings of “LH III C Chronology and Synchronisms III: LH III C Late and the Transition to the Early Iron Age”. To our great satisfaction many contributions were made by scholars of the younger generation. We take this as a sign that our project has fallen on fertile ground. Apart from the presentation of mostly unpublished materials from old and new excavations, many subjects concerning the transition from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Ages were discussed. One of the main topics was the much debated question whether or not a so-called Submycenaean period existed, and if so, how should it be defined? Several speakers pointed out that the end of the Mycenaean civilisation and the transition to the Early Iron Age were expressed by different phenomena in the various regions of Greece. Therefore Submycenaean ought to be viewed as a separate chronological phase rather than merely as a pottery style. Moreover, a new proposal for the absolute chronology of the end of the Late Bronze Age was suggested which will certainly raise a lively discussion (see below).

It had been planned to organise a further workshop on the synchronisation of cultures of the 12th century B.C. in the Aegean and in Italy. However, in the course of SCIEM 2000 this subject was treated monographically and was included into the “End of the Mycenaean Culture” project.²

A final volume containing a summary of the results of the workshops, a LH III C bibliography and a gazetteer of LH III C sites is in progress. It is expected to be ready in 2010.

It may be stated that the “LH III C Chronology and Synchronisms” project has been widely acknowledged by the international academic community. Above all, the period of LH III C is increasingly attracting the attention of scholars, and particularly of young researchers in the

¹ For the three previous workshops see S. Deger-Jalkotzy – M. Zavadil (eds.), *LH III C Chronology and Synchronisms. Proceedings of the International Workshop Held at the Austrian Academy of Sciences at Vienna, May 7th and 8th, 2001* (DenkschrWien 310 = Veröffentlichungen der Mykenischen Kommission 20 gemeinsam mit SCIEM 2000). Vienna 2003. – S. Deger-Jalkotzy – M. Zavadil (eds.), *LH III C Chronology and Synchronisms II: LH III C Middle. Proceedings of the International Workshop Held at the Austrian Academy of Sciences at Vienna, October 29th and 30th, 2004* (DenkschrWien 362 = Veröffentlichungen der Mykenischen Kommission 28 gemeinsam mit SCIEM 2000). Vienna 2007. – Section: “Mycenaeans and Philistines in the Levant”, 501–629 in: M. Bietak – E. Czerny (eds.), *The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C. III. Proceedings of the SCIEM 2000 – 2nd EuroConference, Vienna 28th of May – 1st of June 2003* (Contributions to the Chronology of the Eastern Mediterranean 9. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften / Denkschriften der Gesamtakademie 37). Vienna 2007.

² See R. Jung, *Χρονολογία comparata. Vergleichende Chronologie von Südgriechenland und Süditalien von ca. 1700/1600 bis 1000 v. u. Z.* (DenkschrWien 348 = Veröffentlichungen der Mykenischen Kommission 26). Vienna 2006.

field of Aegean Prehistory and Early Greek history. LH III C is no longer merely regarded as an anti-climax to the era of the Mycenaean palaces or as the first phase of an inglorious “Dark Age”. The period is now accepted as a historical period in its own right which played a decisive role during the transition from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age of Greece.

Secondly, the “End of the Mycenaean Culture” project has, indeed, contributed to the promotion of a chronological framework for LH III C. A new phasing system for the Argolid is being developed jointly by excavators and pottery specialists from Mycenae and Tiryns in close co-operation with Dr. P. A. Mountjoy. It may be expected that it will be applicable to the cultural elements of LH III C in other Aegean regions. Moreover, B. Weninger, R. Jung and St. Andreou have discussed the absolute chronology for the end of LH III C and the transition to the Early Iron Age.³ Thus two new starting points for the relative and the absolute chronology of LH III C have emerged.

However, in our mind the most important result of the “LH III C Chronology and Synchronisms” workshops rests with the development of a continuing international dialogue. Further conferences on the period between the fall of the Mycenaean palaces and the rise of the Protogeometric Age have since been organised e.g. at Athens in 2003, Edinburgh in 2003, Zagreb in 2005, Udine in 2006, Volos in 2007 and Oxford in 2009.

Furthermore, Homeric scholars, too, have become aware of the post-palatial period. It has become increasingly clear that LH III C must have had an impact on the transmittance of Greek epic poetry. This is borne out in particular by the representations of the “Pictorial Style” in vase-painting of LH III C Middle. It will perhaps take some time until the results of the “End of the Mycenaean Culture” project will be received by scholars in other fields of Antiquity and Classical Studies. However, we are confident that the results will soon begin to show.

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The Editors

³ See JUNG – ANDREOU – WENINGER this volume. – WENINGER – JUNG this volume. The chronology suggested by these authors is based on an interdisciplinary scrutiny of the recent tree-ring calibrated radiocarbon data from Macedonia, Tiryns, Tell Kazel and Ugarit.