

GUEST EDITOR'S PREFACE

Until recently, in the archaeology or anthropology handbooks, case-studies of state formation in the ancient world were mainly restricted to Near East and Meso- or South America.

Since then surveys and excavations conducted in Central and Northern Italy clearly demonstrate that in this area of the Mediterranean the appearance, around 1000 BC, of the first protourban centres coincides with the emergence of the state (or, in Leonid Grinin's classification, of an 'early state analogue') while the transformation of these centres into true cities marks the birth of a mature early state.

I dedicated my paper at the 2004 Moscow conference to this evidence; only 5 years later the powerful flow of new archaeological evidence brought a lot of new data that I will try to discuss in my contribution.

The idea behind this session was that a far advanced model of the emergence of the State can be applied to many areas of the European continent in the late Bronze and Iron Ages.

Gabriele Cifani explores the situation of Thyrrenian Central Italy in the early historical period (the 8th – 6th century BC); at the same time it is hard to believe that the birth of the Greek city-states is so late as an historical phenomenon (the 8th century BC): this was the argument in Anna Lucia D'Agata's paper that unfortunately cannot be published here.

Ian Ralston's paper deals with the archaeological record of Hallstatt D, traditionally considered as an 'age of princes' different from the late emergence of the State in Celtic Europe, in the light of new archaeological data.

Simon Stoddart tries to apply a general socio-cultural model to the emergence or the collapse of the State in the Mediterranean in the course of second and first millennium BC.

Unfortunately, we could not present papers about significant geographical areas like Spain; at the same time, Mike Parker Pearson could not come to present his paper about those parts of Europe in which the State never appeared before the first millennium AD.

This is the beginning! We hope that in future new dedicated archaeological projects can help us to explore such stimulating historical problems better.

The earlier versions of the papers were presented at the Fifth International Conference 'Hierarchy and Power in the History of Civilizations' (June 23–26, 2009, Moscow, Russia).

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