

Frequency Distribution and Assertive Object Theory: An Exploration of the Late Bronze Age Italian Ceramic Landscape

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Abstract : In the 2nd millennium BCE, maritime networks became essential to the Mediterranean lifestyle, creating an interconnected world. This phenomenon of interconnected cultures has often been misinterpreted as an “effect” of the Mycenaean “influence” without considering the complexity and role of regional and cross-cultural exchanges. This paper explores the socio-economic relationships, in both cross-cultural and potentially inter-regional settings, present within the archaeological repertoire of the southern Italian Late Bronze Age (LBA 1600 -1140 BCE). The emergence of economic relations within the connectivity of the regional settlements is explored through ceramic contexts found in the case studies Punta di Zambrone, Broglio di Trebisacce, and Nuraghe Antigori. This work-in-progress research is situated in the shifting theoretical views of the last ten years that discuss the Late Bronze Age’s connectivity through Social Networks, Entanglement, and Assertive Objects combined with a comparative statistical study of ceramic frequency distribution. Applying these theoretical frameworks with a quantitative approach demonstrates the specific regional economic relationships that shaped the cultural interactions of the Late Bronze Age. Through this intersection of theory and statistical analysis, the case studies establish a small percentage of pottery as imported, whilst assertive productions have a relatively higher quantity. Overall, the majority still adheres to regional Italian traditions. Therefore, we can dissect the rhizomatic relationships cultivated by the Italian coasts and Mycenaean and their roles within their networks through the intersection of theoretical and statistical analysis. This research offers a new perspective on the connectivity of the Late Bronze Age relational structures.

Keywords : late bronze age, mediterranean archaeology, exchanges and trade, frequency distribution of ceramic assemblages

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