
Networking an old archaeological concept: birth, life, (death?) and future of the Atlantic Bronze Age

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Résumé

Since its creation in the 1940's, the "Atlantic Bronze Age" concept has been used to refer to the different types of similar bronze metalwork found all over Atlantic Europe. However, each author has defined it in a different way understanding it as a culture, a group of cultures, a technological complex, a mentality, etc. Partly because of this, in 1998 the concept was put into question in the congress "Is there an Atlantic Bronze Age?" and since then it has been barely used with a few exceptions. Furthermore, it has been contested and similar regional versions have been proposed. Far from criticising these contributions, they have inspired us to attempt to update it. To do this, we have combined the analysis of its changing meaning and the problems encountered by authors when defining it with network theory and the remarks made in the last decades. The result is not another definition of the Atlantic Bronze Age but a new model to understand and study it. We believe this model would allow us to analyse the regional and global levels of Atlantic Europe in the Bronze Age and overcome the problems encountered in the past. More important, by doing this we believe it would be possible to connect the important labour done prior to the 1990's and the accurate observations made in recent times.

Mots-Clés: Bronze Age, Atlantic Bronze Age, metalwork, network theory

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