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From the Crucible and at the Anvil

The spatial and socioeconomic aspects of metal use throughout the Iron Age

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Abstract – Tracing Transitions –

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From the Crucible and at the Anvil – The spatial and socio-economic aspects of metal use throughout the Iron Age

The project 'From the Crucible and at the Anvil' examines the socio-economic implications of metalworking in Iron Age Scandinavia, focused on the spatiality, economic remits and technological repertoires of metal use. The connection between economy and metal use is central to the project and thus economic theory and spatial statistics are paired with archaeological and archaeometallurgical analyses to interpret the role of metal use and metalworking within Iron Age society. The project advocates an inclusive perspective with regards to metal use – covering the utilization of both ferrous and non-ferrous metals and analysing the differing and similar aspects connecting and separating them, technically and conceptually.

Within one case-study of the project, metalworking sites have been analysed from a macro-level landscape perspective covering the wider south-east Scandinavian region throughout the Iron Age (500BCE-1100CE). The aim has been to infer the socio-economic implications of metal use through the macro-spatiality of metalworking sites.

In this paper, the data-set of this case study is used to elucidate the differing and/or interlinking aspects of metal use between the early and late Iron Age. This comparative analysis in a long time perspective is then utilized to highlight the societal role of metal use and metalworking in the late Iron Age specifically.

The data-set and analyses enables a challenging discussion on rigidly established interpretative narratives concerning Iron Age society, such as the role och central elite milieus within craft, production, trade and political economy. This effectively anchors the study of metal use and metalworking with the overall interpretational framework of late Iron Age society.

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