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Multimetallicity in and between central milieus

Iron Age network implications of the project 'From the Crucible and at the Anvil'

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**Multimetallicity in and between central milieus – Iron Age network implications of the project
‘From the Crucible and at the Anvil’**

The connection between metal use and elite strata in Iron Age society has long been firmly established. This association is also spatially detectable with regards to the localities of metalworking milieus in the landscape. It is commonly held that non-ferrous metalworking, including precious metal use, were linked to elite milieus (i.e. central places including their zones of dominance). Ferrous metalworking, on the other hand, is normally attributed a different spatial pattern, located to resource zones beyond the central areas (i.e. peripheral outland zones). Contrasting this spatial pattern is the often-emphasised importance of iron production to economic affluence and, hence, social and political power in Iron Age society.

Within the project ‘From the Crucible and at the Anvil’, the macro-spatial patterns of metal use has been tested within the region of south-east Scandinavia. The results largely supports the spatial link between centrality and non-ferrous metal use and, likewise, the deliberate positioning of ferrous metalworking in connection to resource zones. There are however notable exceptions, suggesting important divergences to the main pattern.

The analyses of metallurgical debris from selected central sites within the study area have also revealed high ratios of ferrous metalworking within the crafts-milieus. This highlights the importance of ferrous metalworking in connection to socio-economic and political centrality, and above all, the networks between centre and periphery.

In this paper, the centrality of metal craftsmanship is discussed with specific focus on the divergences in the overall spatial pattern of non-ferrous metalworking. The spatial reach of “fine metalworking” is gauged and used to elucidate the *betweenness* of metal use beyond the central milieus. The networks of both ferrous and non-ferrous metalworking that the spatial analyses that the project ‘From the Crucible and at the Anvil’ have produced will drive a discussion on socio-economic structures in the Scandinavian Iron Age.