

Metallurgical Territories

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Abstract:

This session proposes to explore “metallurgical territories” including ore deposits and mining districts, fuel and water catchment zones, smelting and casting workshops, communication routes, consumption areas, as well as places where metal objects are deposited. They are defined not only by physical infrastructures and material remains (mines, slag heaps, furnaces, hoards), but also by skill transmission, labour organisation, control of access to resources and the symbolic meanings attached to metals and their production. Contributions may also address the role of emerging elites and central places in organising these technical territories.

The session aims to bring together case studies and synthetic or theoretical contributions that:

- analyse how metallurgical activities contribute to the definition of territories at local, regional or supra-regional scales, and how these metallurgical territories relate to other forms of territoriality (tribal, political, economic, etc.);
- explore the internal organisation of metallurgical territories, both at the level of entire production regions (e.g. subdivisions into production and settlement zones) and at the level of individual sites (from small-scale, ad hoc metallurgical activities to large, specialised production complexes);
- combine archaeological, environmental and archaeometric data – including provenance studies and advances in statistical treatment of compositional datasets – to reconstruct networks of supply, production, distribution and wider spheres of contact, for both ferrous and non-ferrous metals;
- discuss methodological and conceptual tools for identifying and comparing metallurgical territories (GIS, network analysis, chaîne opératoire, etc.).

We welcome contributions from all regions and periods, from the earliest metallurgy to the end of Protohistory. By focusing on metallurgical territories as technical territories, the session seeks to highlight how metal production and use have contributed to long-term transformations in landscapes, social hierarchies and modes of control over resources, circulation and territoriality.