WHEN WAS ‘THE IRON AGE’ (AS A PERIOD) INVENTED?

The National Museum Copenhagen
FOUR QUESTIONS …

1. WHEN WAS ‘THE IRON AGE’ (AS A PERIOD) INVENTED?

2. HOW IS THE BRITISH IRON AGE DATED?

3. WERE BRITAIN’S IRON AGE INHABITANTS ‘CELTS’?

4. WAS LIFE IN THE BRITISH IRON AGE THE SAME EVERYWHERE?
HOW IS THE BRITISH IRON AGE DATED?
Britain v. the continent: well-dated continental deposits

Grave at Vix
Llyn Fawr Hoard

Distribution of Hallstatt-type swords
Making iron

*Figure 76 Schematic representation of the stages of prehistoric iron production. 1: extraction of ore. 2: ore piled in a heap for drying. 3: crushing of ore into suitable sizes for the furnace. 4: construction of the furnace. 5: the furnace is preheated and filled with ore and charcoal. 6: when the iron has been reduced from ore, the shaft is broken down and the bloom, a lump of iron and slag, is removed. 7: the bloom is repeatedly heated up in a smithing pit. 8: the bloom is cleansed of as much slag as possible.*
Dating by Typology/Sequence/Seriation
Coins and texts
More dateable imports by the 1st century BC
So dating the Iron Age – a simplified view

Rare absolute dates (e.g. dendrochronology)

Radiocarbon: not always magic for the Iron Age but Bayesian Probability may help..

Variations on typology of objects

Broad periods (archaeologists tend to home in on Early Middle and Late ..)
WERE BRITAIN’S IRON AGE INHABITANTS ‘CELTS’?
1. LANGUAGE
2. RITUAL AND BELIEFS
3. DECORATIVE STYLE
So, were they Celts?
WAS LIFE IN IRON AGE BRITAIN THE SAME FOR EVERYONE?

REGIONALISM .....
1. Burial style
2. Settlement character (a)
And finally, to infringe on other speakers’ territory …

HILLFORTS – How many are there?
Iron Age Ritual
a hillfort and evidence for a minster at Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire

THE Book!