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Ironing out the Data: A Review of Chronometric Hygiene for Iron Age Sites in Southern India

In southern India the Iron Age is usually dated to about 1500-200 BC using carbon-14 dating. However, since the early advent of C14 dating in the late 1940s, our knowledge of how carbon decays over time has changed thanks to advancements in science. Some of the earlier archaeological dates have the potential to be less useful than others due to older collection practices and processing methods. This paper presents results from a chronometric hygiene process that was applied to the current data. Chronometric hygiene is vital to continually assess the viability and accuracy of C14 dates. Dates that cannot be verified as scientifically sound have been culled from the data set and the valid data has been updated using the new IntCal20 radiocarbon curve for assessing accurate dates. The work has the potential to change generally accepted dates for time periods in southern India and open the flood gates to new discovery and knowledge of the region. This work will also go hand in hand with all of the recent work being done on the Iron Age in southern India and has the potential to be an excellent point of reference.

keywords: iron age, Southern India, carbon-14 dating, chronometric hygiene