

Europe before the Roman Empire

The cultural and historical background of Central Europe is often divided into the Stone Age, The Bronze Age and The Iron Age. The dates of these periods vary based on location. In this seminar we will consider European cultures of the late Stone Age thru the early Iron Age as shown in the Table on the next page. We will include seminar topics such as the tools, economic life, farming practices, women in the society, dwellings(both religious and social), family and social groups, religious practices, Bog bodies and art of these periods in Europe before the spread of writing.

If you have questions about the seminar, you may contact me at ambs@umass.edu

Significant early European cultural dates

- c. 45000 BCE Potential earliest arrival of Homo sapiens in Europe.
- c. 40000 BCE -c. 28000 BCE Aurignacian culture of Homo sapiens in Europe.
- 40000 BCE - 10000 BCE Venus figurines are produced in Europe.
- c. 20000 BCE Cave painting flourishes in Spain and France, the most famous being the Cave of Lascaux in France.
- 5000 BCE Hierarchical societies emerge in southeast Europe.
- c. 5000 BCE Cultivation of peas in Europe.
- 4300 BCE First megalithic tombs in Europe.
- 3500 BCE Farming has spread across Europe.
- c. 3300 BCE-c. 1200 BCE The Bronze Age, lasting from
- c. 3300 BCE- c. 1200 BCE in the Near East and South Asia and c. 600 BCE in Europe.
- 2800 BCE - 1900 BCE Bell beaker culture in western Europe.
- 2300 BCE Bronze is used in the Aegean.
- 2000 BCE - 1500 BCE Wessex culture introduces bronze working to Britain.
- c. 2000 BCE Bronze Age begins in Northern Europe.
- c. 1860 BCE The beginning of construction of Stonehenge in Britain.
- 1500 BCE Pastoral farming spreads across Eurasian steppes.
- c. 1400 BCE The beginning of Celtic culture in the upper Danube region of central Europe.
- 1100 BCE Hillforts in western Europe.
- 1100 BCE Dorian peoples occupy Greece.
- 1000 BCE Iron working in southern Europe.
- c. 900 BCE Celtic Migration begins in Europe with many Celts landing in Scotland.
- c. 800 BCE -c. 600 BCE Early Iron Age Hallstatt culture flourishes across Europe.
- 750 BCE Emergence of Hallstatt Iron Age culture in Europe.
- 700 BCE Iron in wide use across Europe.
- c. 500 BCE - 450 BCE Hallstatt kingdoms and chiefdoms collapse for reasons unclear.

Although the dates vary depending on one's location in Europe, the dates in the table below are good estimates.

<u>Period</u>	<u>Tools</u>	<u>Economy</u>	<u>Dwelling sites</u>	<u>Society</u>	<u>Religion</u>
<u>Paleolithic Stone age</u> <u>Before 8000 BCE</u>	Handmade tools and objects found in nature – cudgel, club, sharpened stone, chopper, hand axe, scraper, spear, harpoon, needle, scratch awl.	<u>Hunting and gathering</u>	Mobile lifestyle – caves, huts, tusk/bone or skin hovels, mostly by rivers and lakes	<u>A band of edible-plant gatherers and hunters (25–100 people)</u>	Evidence for belief in the afterlife first appears in the Upper Paleolithic, marked by the appearance of burial rituals and ancestor worship.
<u>Mesolithic Stone age</u> <u>8000-4000 BCE</u>	Mode V tools employed in composite devices – harpoon, bow and arrow. Other devices such as fishing baskets, boats	Intensive hunting and gathering, porting of wild animals and seeds of wild plants for domestic use and planting	Temporary villages at opportune locations for economic activities	<u>Tribes and bands</u>	Shamans, priests and sanctuary servants appear in the prehistory.
<u>Neolithic Stone age</u> <u>4000-2500 BCE</u>	Polished stone tools, devices useful in subsistence farming and defense – chisel, hoe, plough, yoke, reaping-hook, grain pourer, loom, earthenware (pottery) and weapons	Neolithic Revolution - domestication of plants and animals used in agriculture and herding, supplementary gathering, hunting, and fishing. Warfare.	Permanent settlements varying in size from villages to walled cities, public works.	<u>Tribes and formation of chiefdoms in some Neolithic societies the end of the period</u>	Polytheism, sometimes presided over by the mother goddess, shamanism
<u>Bronze Age</u> <u>2500-700 BCE</u>	<u>Copper tools, potter's wheel, Bronze tools</u>	<u>Civilization, including craft, trade</u>	Urban centers surrounded by politically attached communities	<u>City-states*</u>	Ethnic gods, state religion
<u>Iron Age</u> <u>700BCE-43CE</u>	<u>Iron tools</u>	Includes trade and much specialization; often taxes	Includes towns or even large cities, connected by roads	Large tribes, kingdoms, empires	One or more religions sanctioned by the state