

# Bronze Age and Iron Age

Protohistory, (2200 to 52 BC) is the period which sits between the Neolithic era and Antiquity. It is divided into two main ages:

- The Bronze Age (2200 to 800 BC) is characterised by the metal industry of bronze (copper and tin alloy) which quickly became widespread among all societies.
- The Iron Age (800 to 52 BC) began when Iron made its appearance and soon became the dominant metal.

The rapid transfer of knowledge and technology followed the long distance exchange trade networks that were developed in Europe during and before this period.



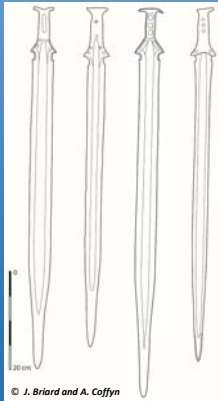
Areas of Metal production

The search for copper and tin needed to produce bronze resulted in the establishment of new maritime routes in the European Atlantic area. Metal production spread quickly and natural resources such as minerals, lithics and even amber are widely exploited throughout Europe. As an example, bronze daggers enhanced by Spanish arsenic have been found in the Tumulus of the Carnoet Forrest in Brittany (France).



Bourbriac Lunula, Brittany (France)

Common cultural connections can be seen across the region in the form of comparable similar weapon typology of weapons like the giving of gifts between social groups (e.g. Jewels such as lunulae), and even through shared burial traditions (e.g. Tumulus belonging to the Wessex culture that can be found on both sides of the English Channel).



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Swords with pectiniform blade (Bronze Age) and how it spread throughout Atlantic Europe.

During the early Iron Age (800 to 450 BC) and at the beginning of the Middle Iron Age (450 to 100 BC.), there is continuity in the characteristic of the exchanges. During the late Iron Age (2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC) a new typology of exchange finally arose with the appearance of everyday products. Wine, olive oil, fish sauce, salt, fine ceramics are examples of the variety of objects being traded widely over large areas. From the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC the use of currency is the main factor that characterises the growing trade.



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Bronze Age log boat, Peterborough (United Kingdom).



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Reconstitution of the Ancient port of Alet, Brittany (France)



Amphora Dressel I

New ports were built in the late Iron Age and bigger ships sailed the seas and rivers of Europe developing strong trade networks. This phenomena is illustrated by the trade connections between ports on both sides of the English channel, and especially between the port of Hengistbury Head in the United Kingdom and those of Alet (Saint-Malo) and Yaudet, in France, which demonstrate very active commercial exchanges of many different products.



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Coriosolite coins (Brittany)