**Course:** British Civilization

**Lesson one/ Part two:** The History of Britain

**Semester:** 3

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**The Iron AGE**

‘Iron Age’ is a modern concept that archaeologists created in the nineteenth century as a means for organizing their study of prehistoric materials.

They define the Iron Age in Europe as the period between the times that communities first began to adopt iron as their principal material for making tools and the Roman conquests of the last century BC and the first century AD.

**The Stone AGE**

The Stone Age began around 30,000 BCE and lasted until 3,000 BCE, although some researchers argue it actually started approximately 2.6 million years ago. This era is defined by the creation and use of tools and weapons made of stone, as well as materialslike horns, ivory, and wood.

**The Bronze AGE**

The Bronze Age began around 3300 BCE, but its start varied by region. It lasted approximately two thousand years, dominating much of the ancient world until around 1200 BCE.

1. **The Celts:**

* In the **‘Iron Age’**, Britain came to be dominated by a group of people known in modern time as the Celts.
* The Celts were a collection of people who spread across Europe.
* There is still much debate about the origins of the Celts amongst historians (they arrived probably from central Europe or Southern Russia with peace or with invasion )
* They did not have written historical records.
* They were more developed then the ‘**Pre-Celts**’ because they are skilled in farming and had more advanced ploughing methods.
* They obliged the older inhabitants to move westwards into Wales, Scotland and Ireland.
* The Celts arrived gradually in waves over 700 years.
* They are the ancestors of many people in Highland Scotland, Wales, Ireland and Cornwall today.
* Leaders of the Celtic tribes were the chieftains or king.
* There were equality between sexes (male and female) among the wealthy Celts.
* Women from the Nobel class could became rulers as well the case of Boudica of the Iceni and Cartmandua of the Brigants.
  1. **Social division:**

They were divided into three classes:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Class | Roles | Characteristics |
| Nobility | Military leaders | Powerful, bound to the king |
| Priests (Druids) | Memorized and transmitted religious teaching, laws, history, medicine and folklore | Knowledgeable, oral tradition |
| Commoners | Skilled craftsmen (potters, carpenters, metalsmiths) | Highly respected, essential for society. |

* 1. **Celtic’s Religion:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Aspect** | **Details** |
| Belief system | Polytheism |
| Worshiped deities | Various local goddesses |
| Venerated animals | Horses, Pigs |
| Venerated plants | Oak, mistletoe |
| Sacrifices | Animals and occasionally humans |

* Druidism is considered fragmented because there are few written resources available.
  1. **Celtic culture: branches and tribes**

There were three main branches of Celts, and within these branches were many tribes. The three main branches were:

**Brythonic** (also called Britons), who lived around modern-day Cornwall and Wales.

**Gaelic** (also called Gaels), who were based in Scotland, Ireland, and the Isle of Man.

**Gaulic** (also called Gauls), who lived across modern-day France, Belgium, Switzerland and Northern Italy.

1. **Roman Invasion**

For nearly a century, the Roman army expanded its empire throughout Europe. The Roman invasion of Britain may be the most important event in the British Isles history. The Romans influenced their language, culture, geography, architecture, and even the way they think.

* **The two main reasons for the Roman invasion of Celtic Britain:**

| **Reason for Invasion** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| **Support for Gaul** | The Celts in Britain were aiding the Gauls by providing food and shelter, which posed a threat to Roman interests. |
| **Rich Agricultural Land** | Britain was seen as a resource-rich territory including gold, tin, iron, and cattle, with fertile land that could support Roman expansion and agriculture. |

* **Who attempted to invade Britain?**

1. In 54-55BC Julius Caesar tried to invade but failed (The initial conquest).
2. In AD43, ordered by Emperor Claudius, a big Roman army landed on the beaches in Kent.

* **Did the Romans and Celts live in peace?**

The brutality of roman rule led to the largest revolt in the history of Britain shortly after the initial conquest (AD 60-61): the British Celtic Iceni tribe occupied the land of modern East Anglia. Although, 70,000 inhabitants died at the hands of the Iceni, finally, they were trapped and killed.

* **What happened to Boudicca?**

Boudicca, the leader, was fogged, and her daughters were violated. Sources differ regarding her death: she either poisoned herself or died of illness.

* **What happened next?**
* Consequently, East Anglia was pacified, and southern Britain got under roman control.
* Over the next 300 years, Britain remained a peaceful and successful province of the Roman Empire.
* New cities, roads, villas, and baths were constructed, and many Celts became Roman citizens, adopting Latin as their language.

**References:**

Burns, William. A brief history of Great Britain. Infobase Holdings, Inc, 2021.

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