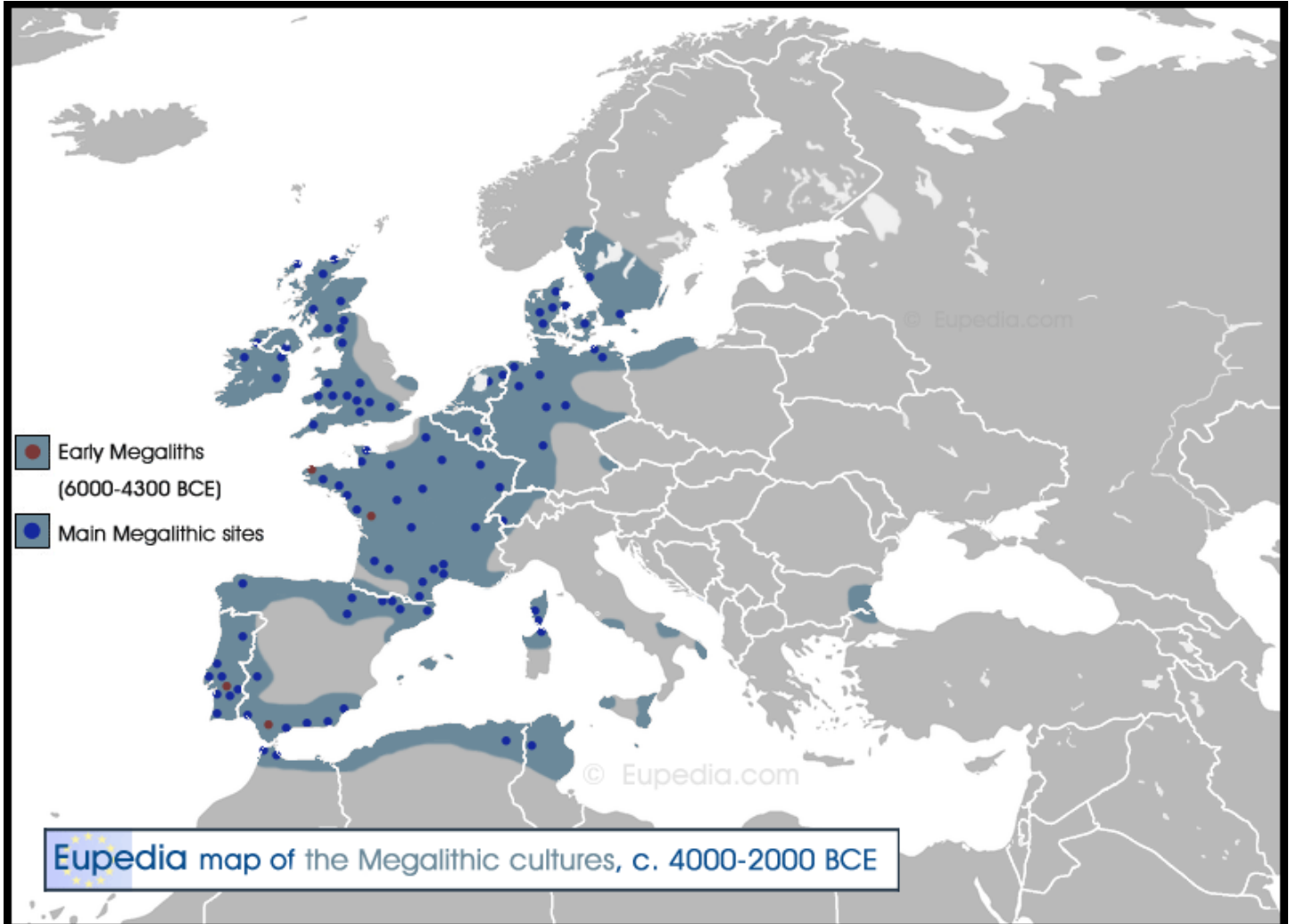


Evolution of the Celts

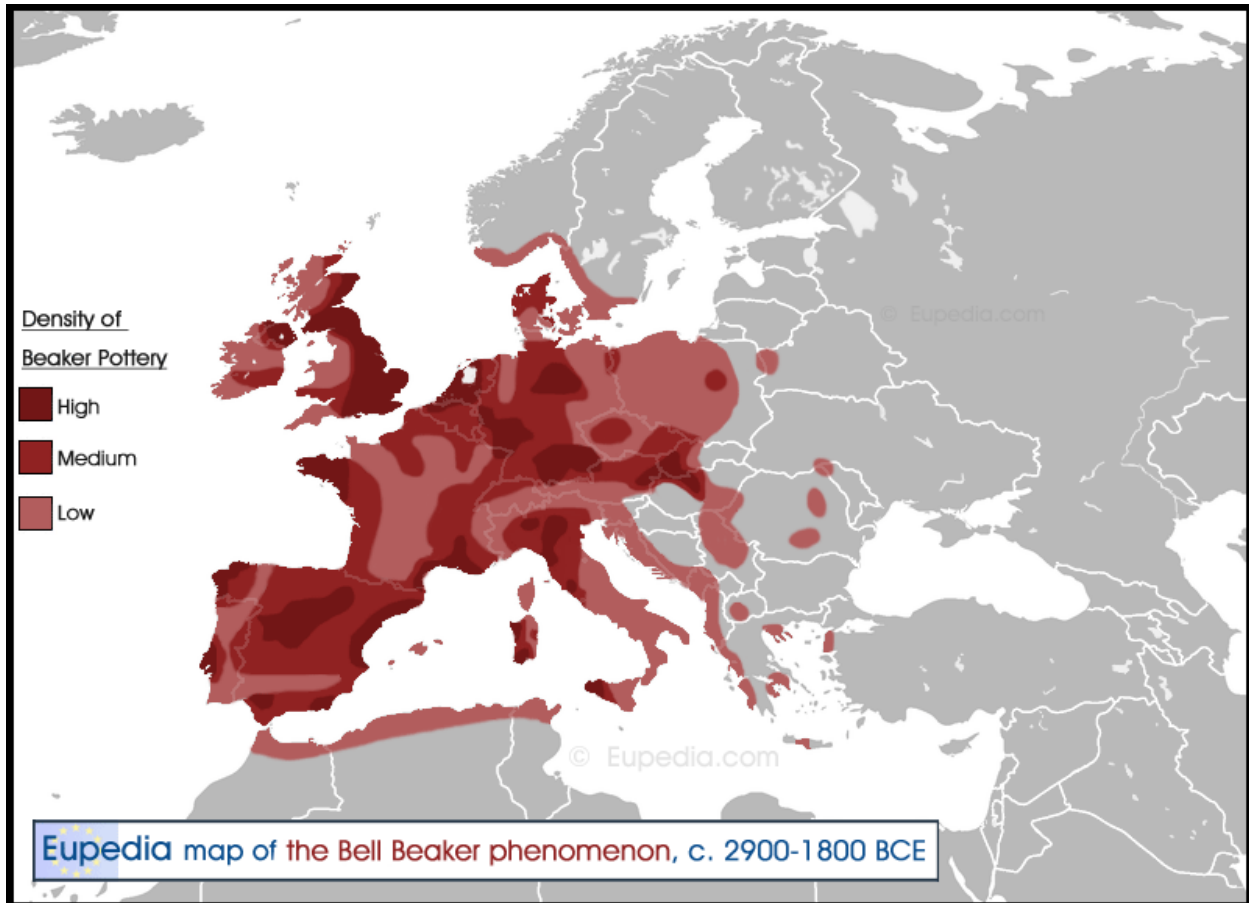


Megalithic Cultures 4000-2000 BCE

Quick Facts

- Megalithic denotes the cultures characterized by the building of large stone monuments.
- The origins of the Megalithic cultures in Europe remains controversial, but it appears to have emerged as a fusion of cultures from Mesolithic West Europeans with Near Eastern farmers who had migrated along Mediterranean coasts. DNA testing of remains from Megalithic burials showed that paternal ancestry was overwhelmingly Mesolithic European, while maternal ancestry was predominantly East Mediterranean.
- The oldest megalith in Europe is the [Cromlech of the Almendres](#) in central Portugal, built in the 6th millennium BCE. It was followed by the constructions of the [Cairn of Barnenez](#) (c. 4800 BCE) in Brittany, the [Tumulus of Bougon](#) (c. 4700 BCE) in central-western France, and the [Dolmen de Alberite](#) (c. 4300 BCE) in southern Andalusia. It is only from 4000 BCE that megaliths start appearing more widely around Western Europe. From 3500~3400 BCE, megaliths builders start moving into the Low Countries, Germany and Scandinavia, where they would integrate the [Funnel-beaker culture](#).
- Megalithic structures include the stone circle, the dolmen (portal tomb), the passage grave, the gallery grave (aka wedge tomb), and standing stones (known as menhirs in France).
- The most famous megaliths include the stone circles of [Stonehenge](#) and [Avebury](#) in Wiltshire, England, the passage graves of [Brú na Bóinne](#) (Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth) and [Carrowmore](#) in Ireland, [Maes Howe](#) in Orkney, and [Gavrinis](#) in France, and the [Carnac stones](#) in Brittany, France.

- Their Neolithic agricultural economy was based primarily on the cultivation of crops from the Fertile Crescent, especially as wheat and barley. Megalithic farmers bred livestock, mostly cattle and sheep, but to a lower extent also goats and pigs.
- Like in other Neolithic cultures, most tools were made of stone, bones or antlers. Flints and quarzes were used to make blades, cutters, scrapers and drills. Large jade alpine axes were very common in France, Belgium, and the Rhineland, and were found more sporadically in northern Spain, Britain, Ireland and Denmark.
- The last centuries of the Megalithic cultures were contemporaneous with the [Bell Beaker trade network](#), which connected the Atlantic economies to those of Central Europe. It is during this period that Steppe people carrying [Y-haplogroup R1b](#) migrated to western Europe, replacing most of the Neolithic lineages in the region (except in Iberia where their impact was more limited at first).
- Ancient DNA tests have shown that Atlantic Megalithic people had a variety of skin tones ranging from pale-intermediate to dark. Almost all had brown or black hair. The majority had brown eyes. They were lactose intolerant.



Bell-Beaker Culture 2800-1800 BCE

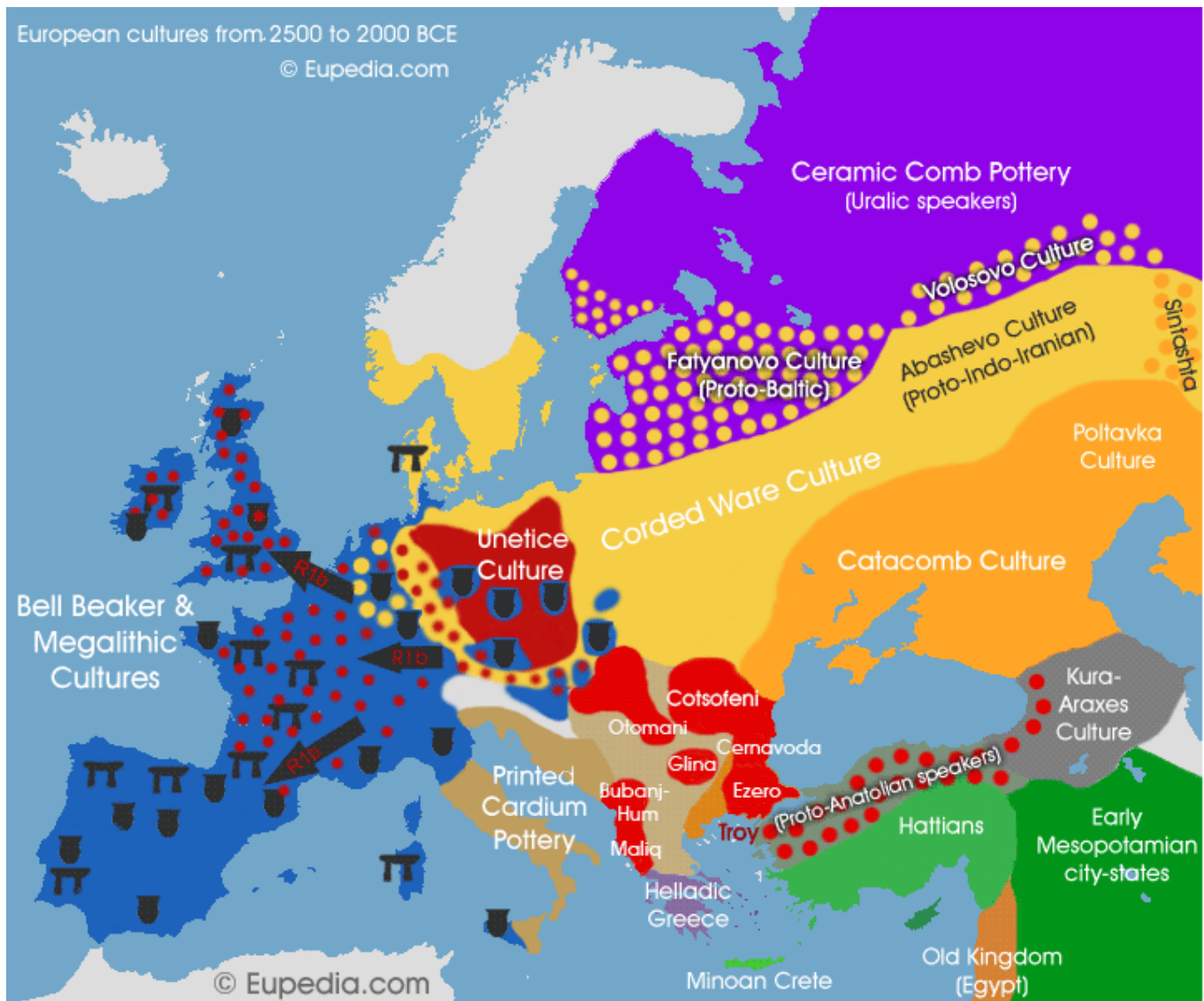
Quick Facts

- The Bell Beaker phenomenon was not an ethnic culture like most other archeological cultures of the period, but rather represents a huge multicultural trade network inside which a variety of new artefacts, customs and ideas were exchanged and diffused, notably metalwork in copper, bronze and gold and archery.
- The Bell Beaker network was contemporary with the late [Megalithic cultures](#) of western Europe and the Corded Ware culture in central Europe and Scandinavia.
- It is associated with the diffusion of Proto-Italo-Celto-Germanic speakers and haplogroup R1b-L11 (and subclades) across central and western Europe.
- Coincides with the progressive disappearance of the Megalithic culture in the British Isles, Belgium, France and northern Italy.
- The Bell Beaker period marks the transition from the Late Neolithic or Chalcolithic (depending on the region) to the Early Bronze Age.

- The [Unetice culture](#) replaced the Bell Beaker culture in Germany, Bohemia and western Poland from 2300 BCE. The Bell Beaker culture ended elsewhere by 2200 BCE, except in Great Britain where it lasted until 1800 BCE.

The vast Bell Beaker trade network can be divided in five main archeological cultures, each with its own distinctive type of Beaker pottery:

- Central European Beakers : Czechia, southern Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, southern Germany and Switzerland. Cord-impressed type of Beaker pottery, such as the "All Over Corded". Influenced by the [Corded Ware culture](#).
- Western European Beakers : Netherlands, Belgium, the Rhineland, France, Great Britain and Ireland.
- Maritime Beakers : Brittany and the Tagus Estuary in central Portugal. Maritime Beaker pottery was decorated with bands filled with impressions made with a comb or cord. Influenced by the Megalithic culture.
- Southern European Beakers : most of the Iberian Peninsula, the Balearic Islands and western Sicily. Influenced by the Megalithic culture.
- Southeastern European Beakers : northern Italy, Tuscany, Corsica and Sardinia. Morocco



Unetice Predecessors of Celts 2500-2000 BCE

Cultural Characteristics:

- Associated with the diffusion of Proto-Germanic and Proto-Celto-Italic speakers.

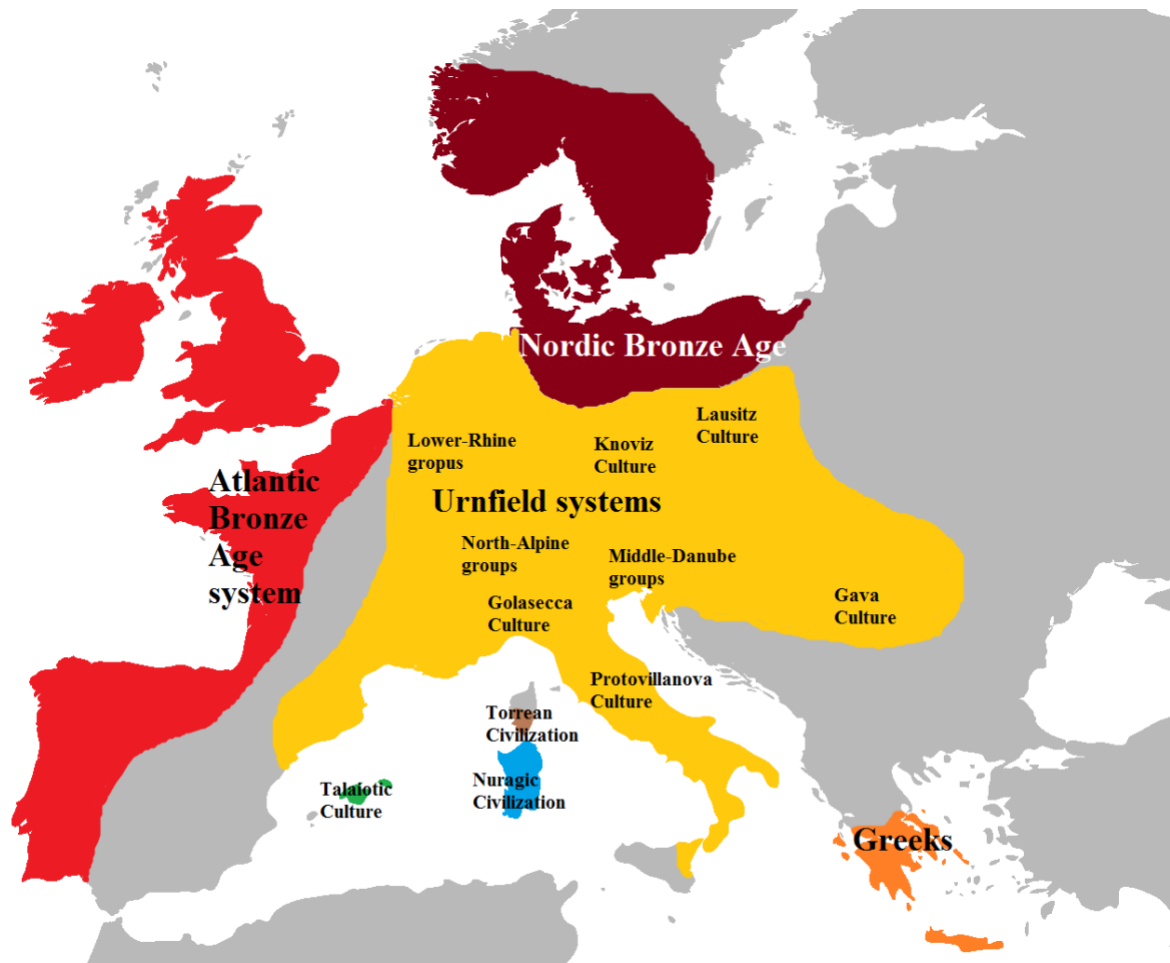
- Emergence of chiefdoms. Long-distance trade in bronze, amber, faience and gold prestige goods.
- Widespread use of bronze. Gold, copper and bronze objects include torcs, flat axes, halberds, flat triangular daggers, bracelets with spiral-ends, disk- and paddle-headed pins and curl rings.
- Coarse pottery typically decorated with twisted cord impressions, and sometimes with other types of impressions or incisions.
- The dead were inhumed in flat graves or in barrows/tumuli for richer burials. Corpses were accompanied by ceramic vessels, jewelry, personal items made of bronze or bone, and occasionally flint tools. Coffins were sometimes used.



Tumulus Predecessors of Celts 2000-1500 BCE

Cultural Characteristics:

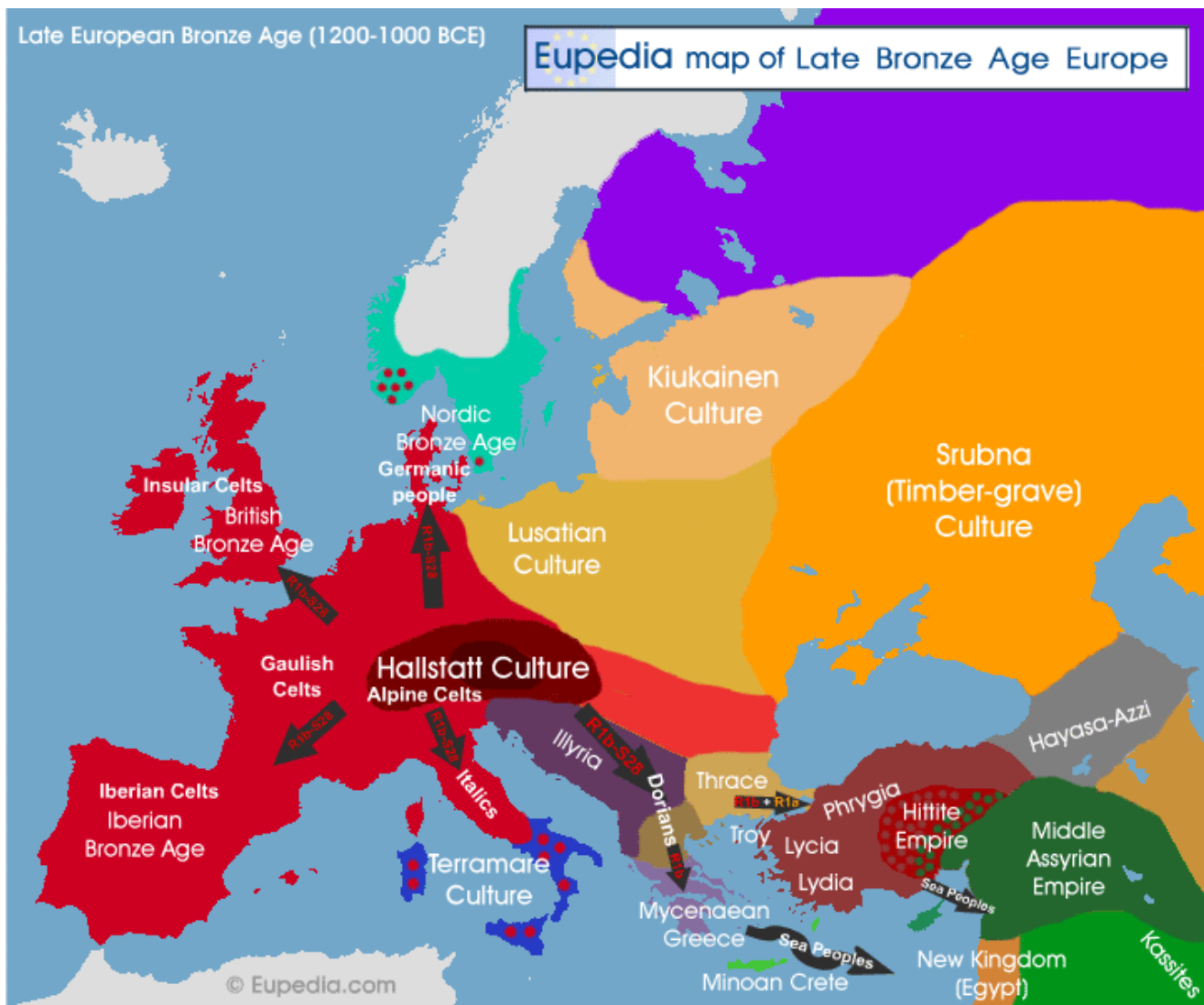
- Middle Bronze Age culture of central Danube region in Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Bavaria.
- Concentrated in Bavaria, Württemberg, and the area previously occupied by the Unetice culture.
- Distribution extended into north Germany and west as far as Alsace.
- The introduction of urnfield (cremation & burial in clay urns) burial, ended Tumulus
- Defined mainly by the dominant burial rite beneath burial mound,
- Continued earlier trends in ceramics and metalwork, though more elaborate in form and decoration.



Urnfield Culture 1300-750 BCE

Cultural Characteristics:

- Late Bronze Age culture of Europe.
- Called "Urnfield" due to custom of placing the cremated bones of the dead in urns.
- First appeared in east-central Europe and northern Italy; from the 12th century BCE onward.
- Use of urn cemeteries, or urnfields, spread to Ukraine, Sicily, Scandinavia, and across France to the Iberian peninsula.
- Warlike behavior among the culture's members appears to have been intense.
- settlements were normally fortified, and large supplies of beaten-bronze armaments have been found.
- The slashing sword, with flanged grips to protect the handle, was apparently adopted at this time.
- Uniformity of the Urnfield culture and persistence of certain pottery and metal forms had great influence on Early Iron Age.



Early Celt (Hallstatt) Expansion 1200-1000 BCE

Cultural Characteristics:

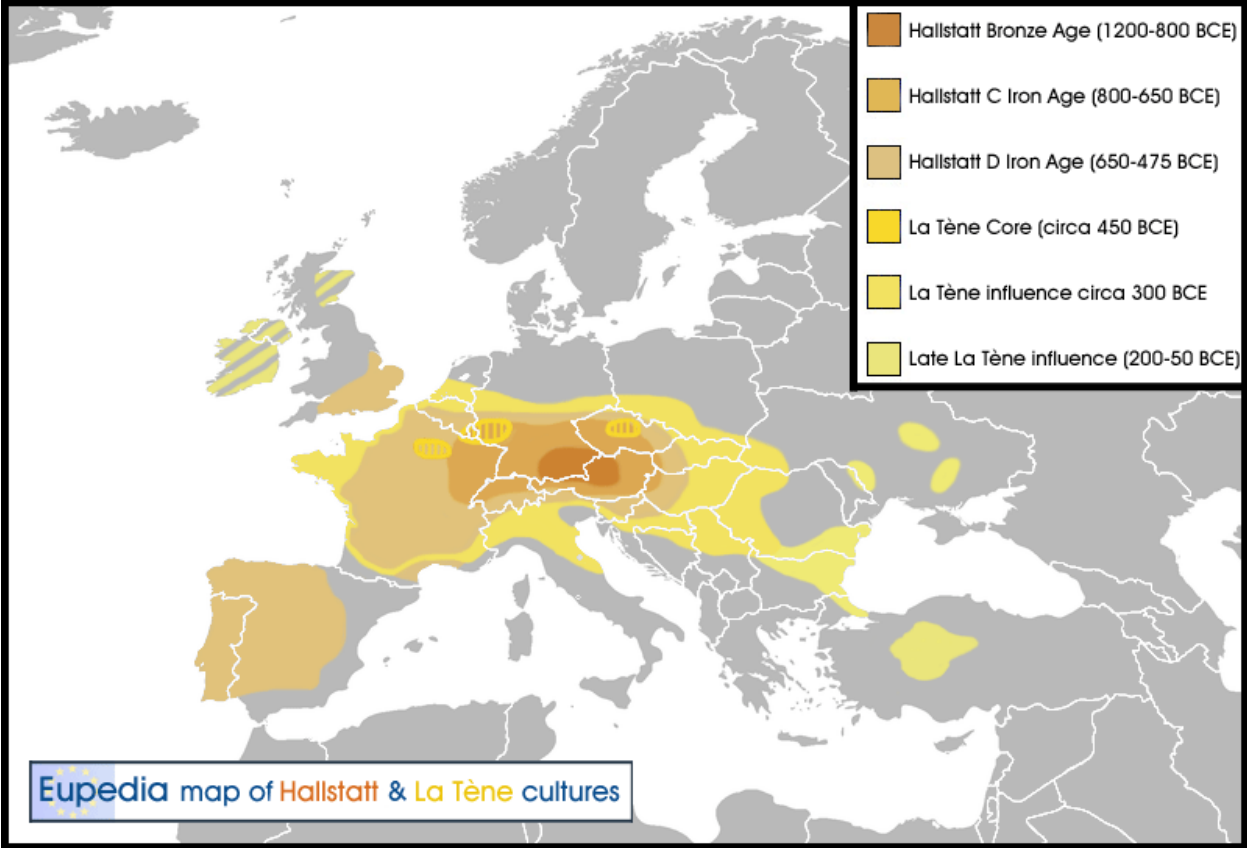
- "Hallstatt" refers to an important central European culture of the early Iron Age of the 1st millennium BCE.
- Centered around Austria and the Upper Danube area.
- Strongly associated with the arrival of Celtic tribes from the steppes of southern Russia.
- Regarded as the first clearly defined Celtic culture.
- Principal early civilization of the region from around 800 BCE until superseded by La Tene culture 500 BCE.



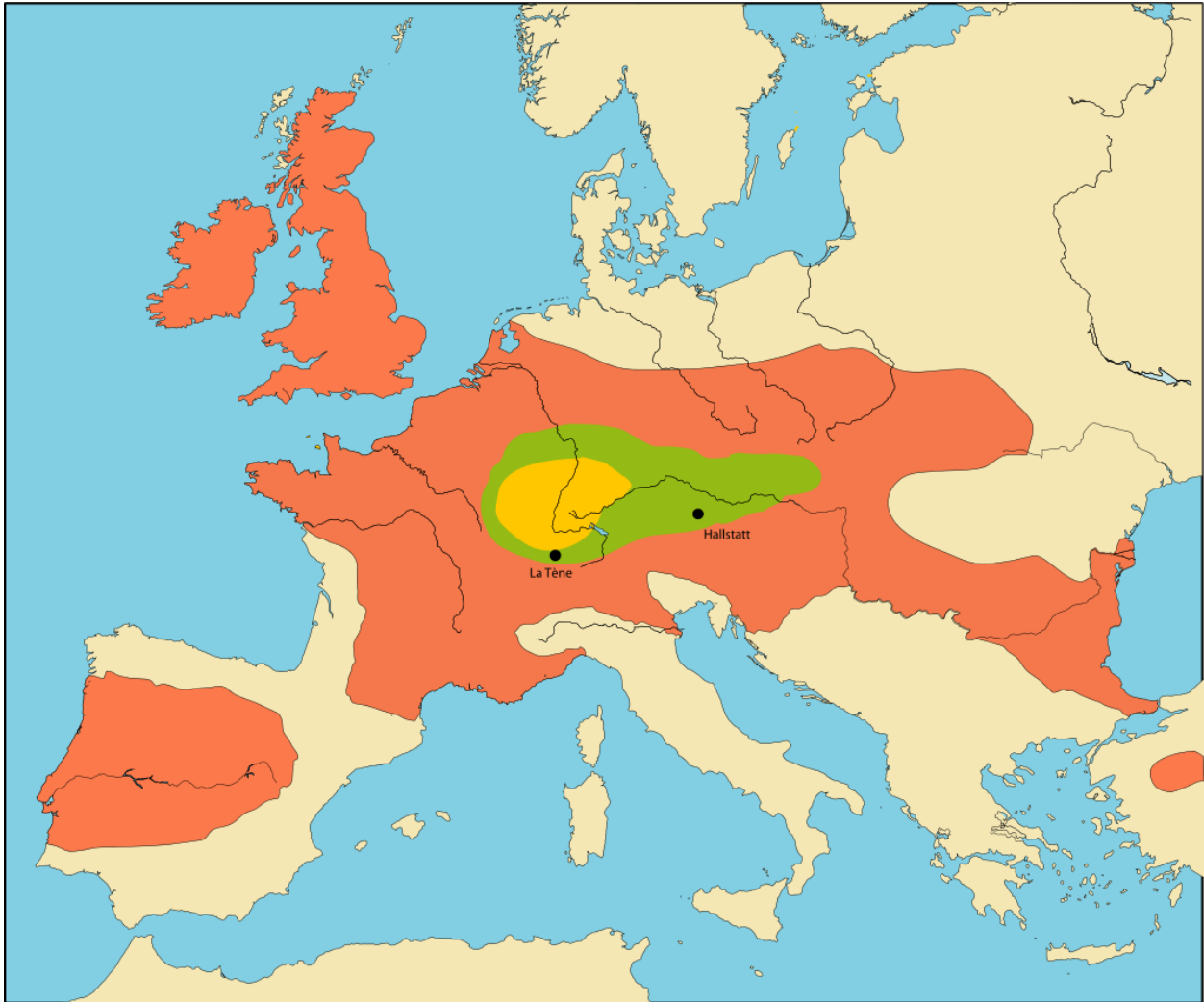
La Tene (Celtic) Culture 500-50 BCE

Cultural Characteristics:

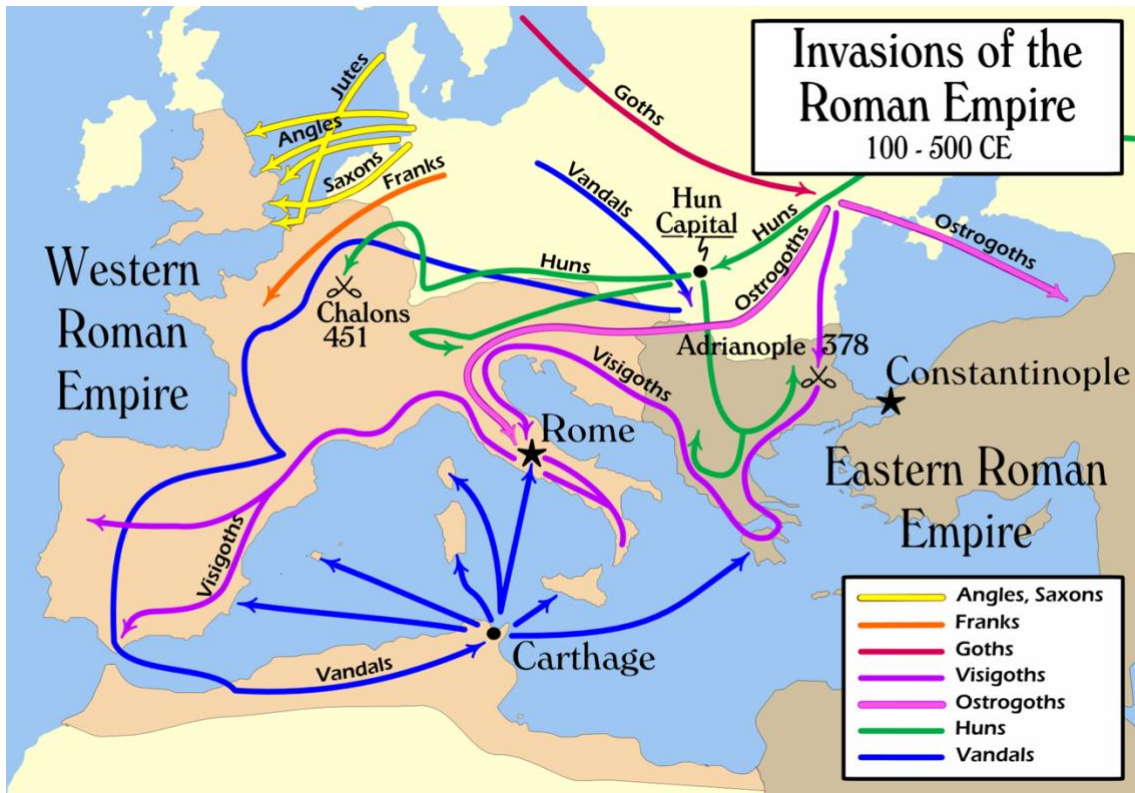
- Settled into river valleys between the mid-Loire valley in France and Bohemia.
- La Tène cultural pattern was significantly different from the earlier Hallstatt elites.
- Like the Hallstatt, elite burials included wheeled vehicles but used two-wheeled chariot.
- Imported wine vessels associated with a La Tène drinking rituals from Mediterranean.
- Combined combining stylistic elements from Etruscan, indigenous elements and Celtic symbols from north of English Channel.
- Stylistic adaptations characterized by stylized floral patterns and human and animal heads.
- Abandoned hill-forts used by the Hallstatt, and lived in small, dispersed self-sufficient settlements.
- Social stratification illustrated in cemeteries practically disappears, especially compared to Hallstatt
- Were more war-like than their Hallstatt precursors.
- Warriors obtained the closest approximation of elite status in La Tene culture through raiding.
- Their burials were marked by weaponry, swords and battle gear.



Celtic Culture Expansion 1200BCE-50BCE



Expansion of the Celtic peoples beginning with the core La Tène culture area (from 450 BC, orange), developing over the older Hallstatt culture area (green); maximum distribution around 300 BC (brown)



Invasions of Rome 100-500 CE



Later Migrations & Conquests – Visigoths (Goths)