**Development of Prehistoric Tools and Technology**

**Neolithic Age** dates from about 5,000 to 3,500 years ago. It developed from the Stone Age, during which hunter-gatherer societies prevailed. The Neolithic period saw the development of polished stone tool technology and agricultural societies. Neolithic communities established permanent settlements, grew plants, raised animals, weaved clothes, and used pottery.They buried the dead with pottery, tools, and personal belongings intended to be of benefit to the dead in the afterlife.

**Bronze Age** dates from about 3,500 to 2,500 years ago. Traditionally considered the first stage of the Metal Age, the Bronze Age followed the Neolithic and is characterized by the use of bronze. Communities began to smelt copperores and alloy with other metals to produce bronze tools, ornaments, and weapons. Tools made of bronze were harder and more durable than their stone counterparts. With this technological innovation, local and long-distance interactions between communities increased. Precious grave goods were included in burials to signify the status or position in society of the dead.

**Iron Age** dates from about 2,500 to 1,500 years ago. During this period, societies began to make tools from iron for domestic use and exchange. Some communities involved in long-distance trade with India, China, and the Middle East. Compared to the previous period, the Iron Age economy was diverse including production activities such as salt making, coppersmelting, and iron smelting.

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