

IMPORTANT DATES IN EARLY HISTORY

Early, Middle, Late Bronze Age

Dates are only approximate

3300 BC - 2100 BC Early Bronze Age

2100 BC - 1500 BC Middle Bronze Age – era when cuneiform writing developed by Mesopotamian civilizations starting with Sumerians and continuing with Babylonians and Assyrians

Code of Hammurabi (1792 - 1742 BC ruled Babylonia) – code developed during this reign
– stele of Code discovered in Elam dig in 1901 – stele is in the Louvre

Late Bronze Age 1500 BC until collapse of Bronze Age and beginning of Iron Age with invasion by ‘Sea Peoples’ armed with iron weapons that raided and destroyed many coastal cities of the Bronze Age civilizations

Roman Republic – begins around 500 BC with expansion from central Italy over next two centuries to include the whole Italian peninsula

End of the republic?

Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon River in 49 BC,

Caesar's appointed dictator for life in 44 BC and stabbed to death on Ides of March

Mark Antony and Cleopatra defeated at the Battle of Actium in 31 BC.

Roman Senate grants extraordinary powers to Octavian (Augustus) in 27 BC

Collapse of the Roman Empire

Roman Empire reached widest expanse around 115 AD

(Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Western Roman Empire (vol.I 1776)

313 AD Constantine declares official toleration of Christianity and beginning of assault on pagans and non-orthodox Christians

410 Sacking of Roman by the ‘barbarians’ – mostly Germanic tribes

Beginning of Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire, centered in Constantinople, which continued in various guises until conquered by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

Dark Ages

Vague term, sometimes referred to as the Middle Ages or medieval period, sometimes a shorter period from the 5th C. to the first Crusade (1096-99), sometimes the end point is identified as the beginning of the Renaissance (14th to 17th C.)

The Crusades

First Crusade (1096-1099)

Second Crusade (1147-1149), first Crusade led by kings of Europe, this Crusade was a failure

and led, ultimately, to the fall of Jerusalem in 1187 to Saladin

Third Crusade (1189-1192), attacks on Saladin largely successful in capturing major cities in the Levant but the Crusade failed to conquer Jerusalem – this Crusade was continued in the German Crusade of 1197

Fourth Crusade (1202-04) – largely concerned with sacking of Constantinople.