

October-18



Dear Club Member,

The Bronze Age represents a period of history characterised by the use of bronze. Prior to this tools were either stone, or made from pure Copper. Bronze is harder and much more durable so is much more efficient for making tools.

The use of bronze requires a technological innovation, and a series of production techniques. Bronze took the copper smelting and processing techniques, and refined them by adding tin. This combination of metals is what makes the bronze alloy. Tin is relatively rare, and only found in a small number of sites that were accessible to ancient miners. Therefore extensive trading networks became established, with tin being transported vast distances around Europe.

In terms of dates, the Bronze Age, defined as the period when Bronze is used as the primary metal, varies depending on geographical location. The beginning of the Bronze Age began in around 3300BC in the hotbed of civilisation in ancient Mesopotamia (modern day Turkey, Syria and Iraq). From there the technology spread across the rest of Europe, but didn't arrive in Asia and China until around 2000BC.

Bronze was used for a huge number of items, not just tools and weapons. The Bronze Age craftsman was highly skilled and made sculptures, jewellery, and any number of decorative items.

The Bronze Age was eventually replaced by the Iron Age. This isn't the point at which iron is being processed, but rather the point at which steel is being manufactured, because iron is not a superior material than bronze for many purposes. One of the reasons why steel production had to develop was due to the population disruption in the Mediterranean area in 1200-1100 BC. Tin became harder to obtain. Bronze production never stopped however, because for many things it is a better material. It carried on being used for cannon production right up until the modern period.

For your fibre this month I've chosen to go for the colour of the ancient objects, rather than the bright yellow colours for newly cast objects.

Happy Spinning,

Katie

Further Reading-

Visual Representation of the time period of the Bronze Age in different locations-
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bronze_Age#/media/File:Metallurgical_diffusion.png

Video showing how casting might have been done in the Bronze Age-
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FluDODRdK2Y>

The largest ancient bronze found- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bronze#/media/File:HouMuWuDingFullView.jpg>

230 year old Bronze cannon being fired-
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUbnMDckkSE>

Where did Bronze come from-
<https://en.natmus.dk/historical-knowledge/denmark/prehistoric-period-until-1050-ad/the-bronze-age/the-roerby-swords/where-did-the-bronze-come-from/>

Bronze Artefacts in the Victoria & Albert Museum
<http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/b/bronze/>

Timeline of Bronze-
<http://www.makin-metals.com/about/history-of-bronze-infographic/>