

METALWORK

Bronze was the main metal used by the Greeks for their weapons and tools from Mycenaean times on. Iron was introduced in the Dark Ages. Gold and silver were used too, but only for more precious items.

METALSMITHS

Most metalsmiths worked in small workshops at home, but in Athens they had their own quarter near the temple of Hephaestus, the patron god of metalsmiths.



The picture on this pot shows a metalsmith at work on a helmet.

BRONZE

Bronze is a valuable metal, made by mixing a small amount of tin with copper. Many of the larger statues that were made of bronze were melted down for reuse, so very few still exist today. Two larger than life-size statues that have survived were fished out of the sea off southern Italy in 1972. They date back to 450BC and are known as the Riace warriors.

This is the head of one of the Riace warriors. The lips were made of copper, and the eyelashes and teeth of silver.

WORKING BRONZE

HAMMERING

The earliest bronze statues were made from flat sheets of bronze which were hammered out and riveted over a wooden core, sometimes called a shape.

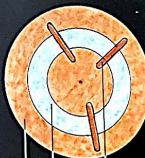
CASTING

Later, small statues were made of solid metal, cast inside a shape. Larger statues were made in several sections, then joined together afterwards.

LOST WAX

Some statues were made by a method called lost wax.

1. The statue was shaped in wax around a clay core.
2. The model was covered with more clay and heated. The wax melted and ran out, leaving a gap between the two layers of clay.
3. Molten bronze was poured into the gap. When it cooled and set, the clay shape was removed, revealing the statue.



Pins hold core in place.

Outer clay shape

