



*This gold necklace came from a priestess's tomb at Taranto, a Greek city in Italy, c.350BC.*

## IRON

From about 1050BC, the Greeks discovered how to work iron, to make harder, sharper tools and weapons. They continued to make many things from bronze though, because it was cheaper. Iron was harder to work because it took a higher temperature to extract the metal from the ore.

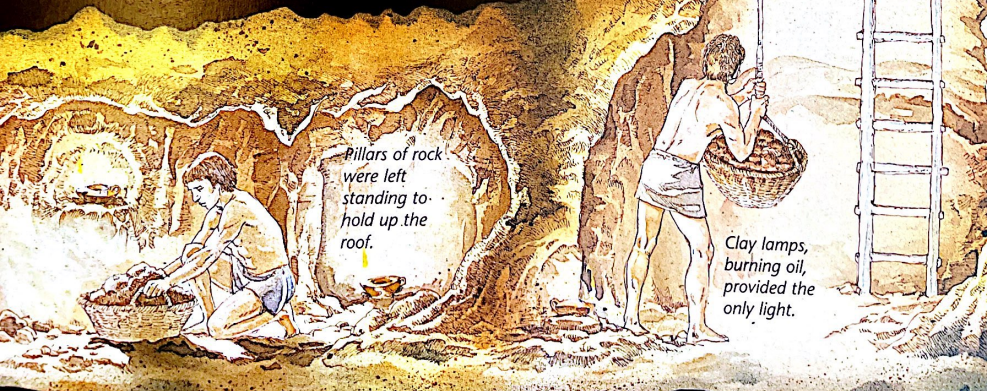
First, iron ore was heated in a brick furnace, insulated with clay. Molten (hot liquid) iron collected at the bottom and was removed with a special tool. Then, while the iron was still hot, it was beaten to remove impurities.

## GOLD AND SILVER

Gold and silver were used for coins, ornaments and even for very large statues. Very little has survived though, as most of it was melted down or stolen by the Romans, or by tomb robbers.

Most Greek silver came from mines at Laurion near Athens. The mines were owned by the state and leased to private contractors. By the 5th century BC, there were as many as 20,000 slaves working there, in dark, cramped conditions, in shifts of up to 10 hours long.

*This is a reconstruction of a silver mine, showing how the silver ore was extracted.*



*Vertical shafts less than 2m (6.5 ft) wide led down into the mine. Miners climbed up and down wooden ladders.*

*Ropes were used to haul the ore up to the surface in baskets.*

*Pillars of rock were left standing to hold up the roof.*

*Clay lamps, burning oil, provided the only light.*