BRONZE AGE

Bronze was the metal that gave its name to an era, roughly 4000—1200 BC. Bronze is a mixture of copper and an alloy, usually tin. The Bronze Age ended with the end of the second millennium BC, with the arrival of the Sea Peoples throughout the eastern Mediterranean, and the advent of iron.

Advantages
- Lower casting temperature than copper (1200-1660 degrees, compared to 1,980 for copper)
- Harder and kept its sharp edges longer than copper weapons

Prerogative of the Wealthy
- Tin, the most common alloy in bronze, was worth (in 2nd-millenium Mesopotamia) ten times its weight in silver. Tin was also rare, and usually had to be imported from afar.
- Breeding and training with horses requires much food and land (to grow food, as well as train).
- Small armies outfitted with teams of chariots, composite bows, and bronze maces, swords, and battle-axes, could decimate larger armies of armored infantry.
- Roughly 300 medium-sized pine trees would be needed provide the charcoal needed to smelt the copper required in making enough bronze to outfit a 50-man fighting force (each soldier with body armor, and ten spears and swords); additional charcoal would have been needed for the casting process.

Increased international trade
- The two alloys (copper and tin), and huge supplies of wood, are rarely found in the same areas. This necessitated trade between wide areas to gather all the supplies needed.

Bronze Age warfare
- Armies in ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt featured teams of chariots with archers with composite bows, accompanied by archers and spearmen on foot.
- **Warfare was radically changed by Homer's time (800 BC).** Homeric warriors (portrayed in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*) used heavy body armor, with spears and swords, typically in single combat. Chariots and archers had receded to the background. This change in emphasis could very well have marked the end of the traditional Bronze Age society, whose armies could be defeated by a few well-armed and – trained warriors using swords and spears.