### **Late Bronze Age**

The Late Bronze Age saw a change in the Irish climate with wetter and colder conditions prevailing. Archaeologists believe this may have impacted heavily on the agricultural economy in Ireland with bogs expanding and the countryside becoming more heavily forested. The increased quantities of weaponry (swords, spears, rapiers, knives, dirks and halberds) in hoards may indicate a rise in warfare between communities.

Why might this be?

Cremations were a popular burial practice in the later Bronze Age. The burnt bones were often placed within a food vessel. Occasionally this vessel was inverted (turned upside down) in the burial site.

A common ritualistic practice in the later Bronze Age was the deposition of hoards in sacred places. These hoards may have represented votive offerings to gods or have been left for safekeeping, or a mixture of both. Bogs have proven to be a rich source of Bronze Age artefacts, with the anaerobic environment preserving even organic material. An exceptional example of a hoard from Dowris, Co. Offaly can be seen in the Museum of Archaeology. It comprises of approximately 218 objects and includes swords, spearheads, axes, gouges, knives, razors, cauldrons, buckets, horns, crotals and other miscellaneous objects.

The Dowris Hoard was accidentally discovered in the 1820s by two men digging trenches for potatoes and was probably a ritual deposit, perhaps for religious purposes. Archaeologists are not sure if it was one deposit, or a series. Current thinking tends to see it as a series, possibly over a very long period, of ritual deposits into a lake.

The late Bronze age is sometimes referred to as the Dowris Phase after this hoard.

#### Late Bronze age Artefacts.

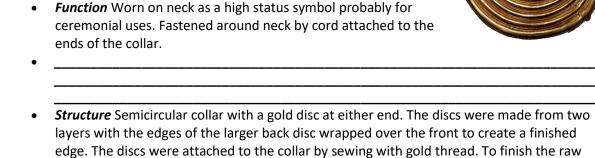
## <u>Fibul</u>a

Clones, Co. Monaghan (800 -700 BC)

	Function Used as a dress fastener, some were very heavy, so may have only been used fo ceremonial use.
t	Structure 21.5 cm long, Made from a kilo of solid gold. Gold bow or handle connected to two gold hemispheres. Handle cast in mould, flat metal hammered into shape for the cup then soldered together.
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	<b>Decoration</b> Decorated with rows of small concentric circles with a hollow in the centre of each. Area where bow joins has incised triangles and bands of lines. Unadorned handle

## Gorget

Gleninsheen Gorget found in Burren, Co. Clare (800-700 BC)



edges of the collar narrow strip of gold was rolled all around the edge.

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•	<b>Decoration</b> Crescent shaped body decorated with rows of decorated bands alternatively
	rope and smooth plain patterned. On the discs, 11 incised concentric circles surround a large
	concentric circle with a conical boss in the centre. Beads surround the perimeter and the
	centre concentric circle. Smooth and textured patterns on the surface capture the light
	beautifully.


# Lock Rings

Uniquely Irish Gorteenreagh Co. Clare (800-700 BC) Discovered along with a hoard of other artefacts including gold collar and gold bracelets



,	Eunction Used as hair ernaments. Plait of hair clinned through enening and turned out
	Function Used as hair ornaments. Plait of hair slipped through opening and turned out ine to hold the hair in place. Hair held in place by protruding bosses from tube in cent
	Structure Double cone shape with a narrow opening down one side, bound together by
	pand of gold. They have a diameter of 10 cm and length of 5 cm.
_	Decoration cone made up of fine gold wires soldered together