

A Journey Through Archaeology

Episode 5 - After The Excavation

There are lots of post-excavation activities which can help archaeologists come up with further ideas about what they have uncovered. One of the main questions we want to answer is how old are our finds to understand the date range for the activities taking place on site. Looking at coins and pottery can help with this.



Coins often feature the names and portraits of political leaders, such as kings, queens or emperors. They are really useful to archaeologists when dating other objects and features found nearby - the archaeology cannot be from any earlier period than the reign of that particular ruler!

The styles and designs of **pottery**, the types of clay used and the methods for firing it all varied over history. Different types of pottery are called **wares**. Pottery specialists can identify the periods when certain types of pottery were produced and this can also help with dating.

Activity

Lots of Roman discoveries have been made in York, as it was once an important Roman fortress and town called Eboracum. But the Romans were living in Eboracum for over 400 years, so we want to narrow down the possible dates of our discoveries. Use the pottery dating chart and the Roman coin timeline below to help you date the archaeological sites described on the clipboards on the next page!



					
Samian Ware	Ebor Ware	Black Ware	Mortaria	Decorated Ware	Grey Ware
Phase 1 Early Roman Occupation 71-120 AD		Phase 2 Flourishing Fortress 120-200 AD		Phase 3 A Civilian City 200-280 AD	
				Phase 4 The Later Roman City 280 - 410 AD	



Claudius
41-54 AD



Vespasian
69-79 AD



Hadrian
117-138 AD



Marcus Aurelius
161-180 AD



Septimius Severus
193-211 AD



Diocletian
284-305 AD



Constantine
306-337 AD

(Coin images all credited to The British Museum)

Site A

A cemetery containing 20 well-preserved burials. Some of the burials included grave goods, such as hair pins, beads and Decorated Ware pots. One burial included a coin of the emperor Constantine.

Likely date range:

Site B

A wood-lined well close to the city walls. A coin of Emperor Diocletian was discovered at the bottom of the well, along with small fragments of Grey Ware pottery.

Likely date range:

Site C

A dump of animal bones, shells and pottery, including Black Ware and Mortaria. Small finds included two coins of the emperor Marcus Aurelius and a broken oil lamp.

Likely date range:

Site D

The remains of a stone building. Fragments of Samian Ware and Ebor Ware were found, along with a stash of coins of Emperor Septimius Severus hidden underneath a loose stone in the wall.

Likely date range:



Answers: Site A - 306 AD onwards
Site B - 284 AD onwards
Site C - 200 AD onwards
Site D - 193 AD onwards

Do Your Own Study!

Think about the objects in your everyday life. How easy would these be for future archaeologists to date? Do they include any written information, like dates that could tell a future archaeologist what period they're from? Are any of them made from specific materials which could only be from the 21st century?

Have a go at creating a time capsule for future archaeologists! Gather together some of your most-used objects and treasured possessions in one place. Take a photograph of them to print and stick below, or sketch them.



How puzzling would your time capsule be to future archaeologists? Is there one object that can easily be dated to this year, or are there any that could cause confusion? Have you included any objects that were used in the past and could be difficult to establish a precise date? Do you have any objects are made to look like they were from the past? **Write your thoughts below:**

